

Netanyahu steps up assault on Israel's legal authorities, confirms no end to Gaza genocide

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2 April 2025

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's far-right Israeli government is moving to dispense with all constraints on its powers and get rid of its political opponents within the state apparatus—including the head of the Shin Bet domestic spy agency Ronen Bar and Attorney-General Galia Beharav-Miara. This is part of its preparations for a broader crackdown on all opposition to its policies at home and abroad.

Last week, in an unprecedented move aimed at eliminating judicial oversight of government, the cabinet unanimously backed a no confidence motion against Baharav-Miara, who as Israel's Attorney-General is the country's most senior legal official and one of the few nominal checks on the power of the executive, while also heading the public prosecution. Her position is a fixed-term independent, not a political, appointment. The vote is the first step in a lengthy process to secure her dismissal that will likely go all the way up to the Supreme Court, which some ministers have already said they will ignore if the decision goes against them.

Justice Minister and prime mover in the government's two-year long judicial coup Yariv Levin accused Baharav-Miara of acting "as an extension of the government's opponents". She had made "effective co-operation" and was holding the government "in contempt".

The attempt to dismiss her is part of Netanyahu's bitter feud with Israel's judiciary that he accuses of organising a "left-wing coup" against him under the guise of a corruption trial. It follows a series of developments aimed at strengthening the government's powers against its political opponents—including initiatives that were put on hold after the post-October 7 assault on Gaza when opposition leaders joined the war cabinet—that are intensifying the tensions with Israel's legal authorities and precipitating a constitutional crisis.

Last month, Netanyahu announced his intention to fire Ronen Bar, the head of Shin Bet, a plan that has thus far been stymied by a Supreme Court interim injunction. Taking a leaf from their fascistic paymasters in Washington, ministers are threatening to ignore the Supreme Court if it

rules against Bar's dismissal.

Bar had provoked Netanyahu's anger by calling for a state commission of inquiry into the failures that led up to the October 7 attack that would examine Netanyahu's role as well as that of the intelligence and military services. He also authorised an investigation into potentially corrupt financial links between some of Netanyahu's closest aides and the government of Qatar that has now led to the arrest of two advisors and a summons for Netanyahu himself to testify, with the approval of the Attorney-General.

Doha has for years transferred funds, at Netanyahu's behest, to Hamas in Gaza as a means of maintaining "quiet", weakening President Mahmoud Abbas' Fatah-dominated Palestinian Authority (PA) in the West Bank and deepening the divisions between Hamas and the PA.

Last week, the Knesset passed a new law that grants the government greater powers over the selection of Supreme Court judges that have the power to overrule legislation should they consider it "unreasonable". Justice Minister Levin has also refused to recognise the authority of the head of the Supreme Court, whose appointment he sought to block over the last year.

Baharav-Miara rejected Levin's claims and accused the government of seeking to act above the law, saying that the no confidence motion "does not seek to promote trust but rather loyalty to the political leadership, not governance but... power without limits". She added, "The government is seeking to be above the law and to act without checks and balances, even in extremely sensitive periods".

Baharav-Miara has backed the government's most blatant violations of international law to the hilt and greenlighted war crimes against the Palestinians. As she acknowledged in her defence, she gave her legal support for the government's "operational approach to Gaza". In other words, she approved Israel's genocidal war on the Palestinians that led the International Court of Justice to conclude in January 2024 that the claim that Israel was committing genocide in Gaza was "plausible", and the International Criminal Court to issue arrest warrants for war crimes for Netanyahu and his

former Defence Minister Yoav Gallant.

Her support for the “war on terror and incitement to terror” has led to the arrest of thousands of Israel’s Palestinian citizens since October 7, even for the mildest expression of sympathy for the plight of the Palestinians in Gaza. She has initiated no prosecutions of far-right activists and some of Israel’s leading politicians who have made the most explicit statements to the press and on social media inciting violence and even genocide. She has backed the police in preventing protests by Israel’s Palestinian citizens.

Baharav-Miara cited her support for “the expansion of settlements and support for them” that the United Nations has described as a war crime; administrative detention whereby Palestinians are imprisoned without charge or trial; the demolitions of homes belonging to those Israel accuses—typically without charge or trial—of “terrorism”; and the withholding of Palestinian bodies as bargaining chips.

The Attorney-General has even defended the government’s “policy on humanitarian aid to Gaza”, by which she means the total block on the shipment of all goods, including food, fuel and pharmaceuticals, to the 2.3 million Palestinians in Gaza, aimed at starving them to death or forcing them to leave the besieged enclave that has now been in place for more than a month. Last week the Supreme Court signalled its own agreement with this policy.

On Monday, Antoine Renard, Palestine director for the World Food Programme, told the UK’s *Channel 4 News*, “We have perhaps one to two days to continue to support 19 bakeries. We have provided our last food parcels to the population. It will last for a week, so that’s really the fear currently in Gaza.”

There are few vegetables for sale in the markets as the war has stopped almost all local food production and aid workers cannot move around because of Israeli bombardment. The United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Thomas Fletcher, said that “many have no water, no electricity, no food and no safety”.

The dire situation provoked several days of protests in Beit Layiha, triggered by an Israeli evacuation order, demanding an end to the war and their suffering.

While Baharav-Miara has backed Netanyahu’s assault on the Palestinians, she has refused to call off his corruption trial. She has also opposed the government’s efforts to exempt the ultra-Orthodox from military service. Netanyahu has promised the religious parties, on which his coalition is dependent, that once she has been removed from office it will be easier to bypass the law mandating conscription.

It comes as the Knesset passed Finance Minister and Religious Zionist leader Bezael Smotrich’s “war budget” that allocates \$30 billion of the \$200 billion budget to the military and secures the survival of Netanyahu’s

government until the next elections due at the end of 2026. The budget slashes spending on public services and welfare while raising taxes by nearly \$11 billion to cover the ballooning cost of the war against the Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank, and against Iran and its allies in Lebanon, Syria and Yemen—ultimately aimed at securing US control of the resource-rich Middle East.

There will be a 5 percent cut for all departmental budgets, except for the police and military, with some departments facing even larger cuts: education is to lose \$125 million in 2025, transport nearly \$200 million over 2025-28 and health nearly \$75 million annually. Welfare support, already very limited, will be frozen as will the minimum wage and public sector salaries.

This massive assault on working families is to pay for the reality of an unending war. Netanyahu told the cabinet on Sunday that even if a deal is reached to free all hostages, ending the war is not on the agenda. War would only end if Hamas were disarmed and its leaders sent into exile. Israel would retain control of Gaza’s “security” and implement US President Donald Trump’s plan to expel the Palestinians. Defence Minister Israel Katz on Wednesday announced plans to seize large areas of Gaza “to crush and clean the area of terrorists and terrorist infrastructure and capture large areas that will be added to the security zones of the state of Israel.”

The Israel Defense Forces has deployed an additional division and issued evacuation orders to the civilian population in the south of the Gaza Strip.



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