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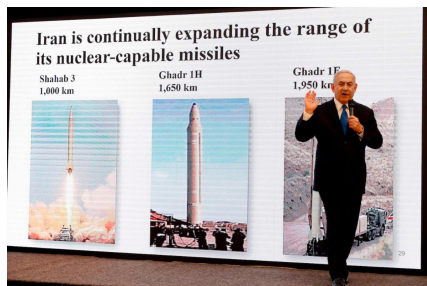
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AFL Leadership Mission to Israel, NOVEMBER 17-20, 2019

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Netanyahu calls for “snap-back” sanctions on Iran

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has called for the signatories to the JCPOA to “snap back” sanctions against Iran “until it changes its ways”.

- Netanyahu said: “It’s time for the nations of the world to resist Iran’s aggression and terror. It’s time to snap back sanctions. It’s time to pressure Iran until it changes its ways. Iran must stop attacking the nations of the Middle East. Iran must stop threatening to destroy Israel. Europe must stop stalling. It must act against Iranian aggression now.”
- Netanyahu’s statement came after the top inspector for the UN’s nuclear agency reportedly accused Iran of evading attempts to gather information on uranium production at a warehouse that was uncovered by Israel last year.
- US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has called for “serious steps” to be taken after Iran announced on Tuesday that it is resuming uranium enrichment at its underground Fordo facility – its fourth violation of the JCPOA nuclear deal. He said: “Iran’s expansion of proliferation-sensitive activities raises concerns that Iran is positioning itself to have the option of a rapid nuclear breakout. It is now time for all nations to reject this regime’s nuclear extortion and take serious steps to increase pressure.” *Israel’s Kan News* quoted an Israeli intelligence source who said yesterday saying that Iran has reduced its “break-out” time to a nuclear

weapon to less than a year.

- [In a speech](#) last year at the UN General Assembly, Netanyahu revealed the existence of a warehouse in Tehran, which he said held “massive amounts” of equipment and material that were part of a clandestine Iranian nuclear programme. Earlier this year the IAEA took samples at the warehouse and found radioactive traces, including uranium, in violation of Iran’s commitments to declare and account for such material. In September 2019 the *Wall Street Journal* reported that Iran was stymying the IAEA probe and has yet to provide an explanation for why the radioactive material found at the warehouse.



Justice minister accuses police of extortion in Netanyahu corruption case

Israeli Justice Minister Amir Ohana broke a court-issued gag order surrounding Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s corruption cases during a Knesset speech Wednesday, drawing fierce criticism from the Attorney General, State Prosecutor, and Police. Ohana, a Likud MK, claimed that the police “extorted” a key state’s witness against Netanyahu during his interrogation by threatening to use an extramarital affair against him.

- [In his speech](#) Ohana alleged that police brought in a young woman for questioning unrelated to the investigation that was rumoured to have had a relationship with Nir Hefetz, a former Netanyahu aide who subsequently signed a cooperation agreement with prosecutors. Because he made the speech in the Knesset, Ohana will be immune from any legal action that would otherwise have resulted if he had made the comments elsewhere.
- In a scathing response, Attorney General Avichai Mandelblit and State Prosecutor Shai Nitzan said Ohana’s comments were an attempt to “mislead the public” and that the allegations “misrepresent the facts and chronology of events in the course of the investigation.” They also said the allegations likely came directly from Netanyahu’s lawyers.
- Hefetz’s lawyer blasted Ohana and said the justice minister seriously harmed his client’s privacy. Another source “close to Hefetz” also said there was “no connection” between the incident and Hefetz’s ultimate decision to become a state’s witness.

Wednesday’s recriminations are just the latest in a string of incidents that have heightened tensions between criminal justice agencies and the government. The Attorney General is widely expected to issue his final decision on whether or not to indict Netanyahu for bribery, fraud and breach of trust by the end of this month.

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Supreme Court says Human Rights Watch Director must leave Israel

The Israeli Supreme Court rejected the appeal of Omar Shakir, the Israel based director of Human Rights Watch ([HRW](#)) to allow him to remain in Israel. The ruling upheld a decision of the lower court which approved a Government decision not to renew Shakir’s

visa because he supports a boycott of the State of Israel. Shakir, a US citizen will not have his work visa renewed and will have to leave the country within 20 days.

- The court said it did not find sufficient evidence to overturn the lower court's decision and described Shakir's: "Systematic support for BDS (Boycott Divestment Sanctions) which continued after he began his work for the organisation, his conduct surrounding FIFA as well as his repeated call for boycotting Israeli assets in the region, is based on a sweeping denial of the legitimacy of Israeli communities in Judea and Samaria."
- Shakir tweeted his response, saying that if the government insisted on its decision, Israel "would join the ranks" of Iran, North Korea and Egypt in blocking access of Human Rights Watch officials.

Coalition negotiations

The Israeli media report that the Blue and White party and Yisrael Beiteinu reached agreement on some economic issues yesterday. They agreed in the next budget to increase pensions for the elderly to 70 per cent of the minimum wage and also to increase disability pensions. Despite their joint announcement, *Maariv* suggests no progress has been made on issues of religion and state and speculates that Blue and White are holding secret parallel negotiations with the ultra-Orthodox parties. The paper says Yisrael Beiteinu have three options; to join a narrow right wing coalition, support a minority government or go for a new election. Benny Gantz and his Blue and White party have **12 days left to form a coalition**.

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