



S. DANIEL ABRAHAM  
CENTER FOR MIDDLE EAST PEACE

## **Israel and Middle East News Update**

*Friday, June 6*

**Please Forward News Update to Your Friends & Colleagues. [They Can Use this Link to Subscribe.](#)**

### **Headlines:**

- **IDF attacking underground Hezbollah facilities in Beirut: 'Used to produce thousands of UAVs'**
- **Lebanese FM stresses need to disarm Hezbollah in meeting with Iranian counterpart**
- **US group distributing aid in Gaza reopens sites after deadly shootings**
- **Israel providing guns to Gaza gang to bolster opposition to Hamas**
- **Hamas chief says group did not reject US ceasefire proposal for Gaza, sought changes**
- **Over 50,000 draft orders to be sent to yeshiva students this July, A-G announces**
- **Bodies of Judy and Gadi Haggai recovered in joint IDF and Shin Bet operation**
- **Trump administration imposes sanctions on four ICC judges in unprecedented move**
- **Israel assured U.S. it won't strike Iran unless talks fail**

### **Commentary:**

- **Yediot Ahronot: Government in Crisis**
  - By Yuval Karni

- **Behadrei Haredim (Online): Haredi Street Roils Over Draft Issue: “Israel Headed for Elections”**
    - By Avraham Friend
- 

## **Ynet News**

### **IDF attacking underground Hezbollah facilities in Beirut: 'Used to produce thousands of UAVs'**

The IDF launched strikes Thursday evening targeting Hezbollah's aerial unit facilities in the Dahieh neighborhood of Beirut. The attack followed a warning issued by IDF Arabic-language spokesperson Lt. Col. Avichay Adraee to residents of Dahieh, alerting them to impending strikes on four buildings located in the neighborhoods of Al-Hadat, Haret Hreik and Burj al-Barajneh. According to the IDF, the targets included underground infrastructure used to manufacture unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs).

## **Times of Israel**

### **Lebanese FM stresses need to disarm Hezbollah in meeting with Iranian counterpart**

Lebanese Foreign Minister Youssef Raji informed his Iranian counterpart, Abbas Araghchi, on Tuesday that Hezbollah put his country in a “difficult situation” when it embarked on more than a year of fighting with neighboring Israel in 2023, and stressed the importance of disarming the Tehran-backed terror group. Araghchi met with Raji — a member of the Christian anti-Hezbollah Lebanese Forces party — in Beirut, on his first visit to Lebanon since October last year, when Hezbollah was in the midst of an all-out war with Israel in southern Lebanon.

## **Reuters**

## **US group distributing aid in Gaza reopens sites after deadly shootings**

A U.S.- and Israeli-backed organisation distributing aid in Gaza reopened two sites on Thursday, a day after halting work in response to a series of deadly shootings close to its operations. The U.S.-based Gaza Humanitarian Foundation said 26 truckloads of desperately needed food were handed out at two sites in southern Gaza's Rafah area. The GHF, which has been fiercely criticised by humanitarian organisations, including the United Nations, for alleged lack of neutrality, began distributing aid last week and had been running three sites earlier this week.

Times of Israel

## **Israel providing guns to Gaza gang to bolster opposition to Hamas**

Israel has been arming a criminal gang in the Gaza Strip as part of an effort to strengthen opposition to Hamas in the enclave, defense sources confirmed on Thursday following remarks on the matter by former defense minister Avigdor Liberman. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu later confirmed the report, saying the move helped save Israeli soldiers' lives. Liberman, who heads the opposition Yisrael Beytenu party, told the Kan public broadcaster on Thursday morning that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had unilaterally approved the transfer of weapons to the Abu Shabab clan, an armed gang or militia that is opposed to Hamas's rule in the Gaza Strip.

Reuters

## **Hamas chief says group did not reject US ceasefire proposal for Gaza, sought changes**

The head of Hamas in Gaza, Khalil al-Hayya, said in a pre-recorded speech on Thursday the group had not rejected the latest U.S. proposal for a ceasefire with Israel but demanded changes that would secure the end of the war in the enclave. The group was ready to engage in a new round of ceasefire talks, and communication with mediating countries was ongoing, he added. The latest U.S. proposal was came via President Donald Trump's special envoy, Steve Witkoff.

## **Jerusalem Post**

### **Over 50,000 draft orders to be sent to yeshiva students this July, A-G announces**

The IDF will send out over 50,000 draft orders to haredim (ultra-Orthodox) in the 2025-2026 draft year, which is set to begin on July 1, according to a summary of an oversight meeting chaired by Attorney-General Gali Baharav-Miara on Thursday. The meeting was part of a series held approximately once a month to monitor the government's implementation of the High Court ruling from June 2024 that ended the legal exemption of haredim from IDF service.

## **i24 News**

### **Bodies of Judy and Gadi Haggai recovered in joint IDF and Shin Bet operation**

In a joint overnight operation, the Israel Defense Forces and Shin Bet recovered the bodies of Judy Lynn Weinstein Haggai and Gadi Haggai from the Khan Yunis area in the southern Gaza Strip. The couple, longtime residents of Kibbutz Nir Oz, were murdered and kidnapped on October 7, 2023, by terrorists from the extremist group Kataeb al-Mujahideen during the Hamas-led attack on southern Israel.

## **Reuters**

## **Trump administration imposes sanctions on four ICC judges in unprecedented move**

President Donald Trump's administration on Thursday imposed sanctions on four judges at the International Criminal Court, an unprecedented retaliation over the war tribunal's issuance of an arrest warrant for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and a past decision to open a case into alleged war crimes by U.S. troops in Afghanistan. Washington designated Solomy Balungi Bossa of Uganda, Luz del Carmen Ibanez Carranza of Peru, Reine Adelaide Sophie Alapini Gansou of Benin and Beti Hohler of Slovenia, according to a statement from U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio.

**Axios**

## **Israel assured U.S. it won't strike Iran unless talks fail**

Israel has reassured the White House that it won't launch an attack against Iran's nuclear facilities unless President Trump signals negotiations with Iran have failed, two Israeli officials with direct knowledge tell Axios. The Trump administration has been concerned in recent weeks that Israel is preparing to launch a strike despite the ongoing talks, and President Trump said he cautioned Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu against making his move while talks are still taking place. But Trump also said his stance "could change with a phone call" if he feels the talks with Iran are going nowhere.

**Commentary:**

**Yediot Ahronot**

## **Government in Crisis**

**By Yuval Karni**

- **The countdown to elections officially began yesterday with the Haredi parties' dramatic call to dissolve the Knesset.**
- **Now, Prime Minister Netanyahu has only a few days to try to break the deadlock over the Haredi draft bill, while simultaneously undergoing cross-examination in his trial and while Israel is in the midst of a war in Gaza.**
- **After having played nearly every card in their hand and dragging things out, United Torah Judaism and Shas agreed yesterday to impose the most extreme sanction yet on the coalition: going to the polls if no draft exemption bill is passed into legislation. The bill to dissolve the Knesset is expected to be put to a vote on its preliminary reading next Wednesday.**
- **All of the opposition factions are expected to vote in favor, as will the Haredi parties, unless the crisis is resolved beforehand. Senior coalition officials said last night that the likelihood of an early election being called has significantly increased, as the Haredim can no longer be appeased by means of additional budgetary allocations or other perks, as was done in the past.**
- **However, both sides decided to make one last attempt to avert dissolving the Knesset and the political chaos of new elections. If the bill to dissolve the Knesset is passed during the summer session (which ends at the end of July), elections will be held after the High Holidays, in the second half of October.**
- **As of last night, Netanyahu and Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee Chairman MK Yuli Edelstein had not disengaged and had left open the possibility of finding a solution that the Haredim can live with.**
- **While the chances of bridging the gaps are slim, the political window has not been completely shut. The two met yesterday and issued "optimistic" statements. They are scheduled to meet again today to try to bridge the remaining gaps.**
- **In the background looms Netanyahu's threat to remove Edelstein as committee chairman in order to appoint a "yes-man" who will pass a draft-dodging bill that is tailored to the Haredi parties' needs.**
- **Minister Shlomo Karhi pitched the following idea to Netanyahu yesterday: Karhi would resign as communications minister and would take over as chairman of the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee in place of Edelstein. This would buy time, please the Haredim and ultimately allow the passage of a draft exemption bill tailor-made to fit the Haredi parties' needs.**

- **MK Edelstein faced withering criticism yesterday from both the Haredi factions and senior Likud officials, some of whom said Edelstein “already has a deal with the opposition to bring down the government.” Privately, Edelstein said he does not intend to yield to Haredi demands and is determined to present a bill to facilitate Haredi conscription, not one to facilitate draft-dodging. “I won’t back down—even if they want to fire me. The Haredim need to take responsibility too,” Edelstein told a political figure in the Knesset.**
- **Shortly before meeting with Netanyahu, Edelstein issued an official statement about the crisis and repeated the stance he has taken over the past several months. “There is nothing new under the sun,” he said. “The Haredi draft bill outline I presented in my meeting with the Haredim is the same outline we’ve been discussing for more than a year. A bill without effective personal sanctions, high draft target numbers and without a high growth rate will not be a Haredi draft bill. It will be a Haredi draft dodging bill.”**
- **Edelstein rejected the criticism aimed at him from inside the coalition, saying “I am not in favor of disbanding the coalition or breaking up the government, and I will not be a partner to hatred of our Haredi brothers. The opposite is true: As chairman of the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee who has exposure to the security challenges we face, let me say clearly: we must not stop working on the various fronts and engage in politics. It is imperative that we push forward [to pass an] effective, real draft bill. After 77 years, we can make history.”**
- **The main dispute between Edelstein and the Haredim revolves around personal sanctions. Edelstein presented a list of “penalties” for people who dodge the draft, including major restrictions on discounts and stipends, bans on leaving the country, revocation of driver’s licenses and more. One UTJ MK was outraged by the list of sanctions, and said, “An Eritrean foreign worker has more rights than a Haredi.”**
- **However, Edelstein is standing his ground. He claims the sanctions currently being legislated were drafted by the legal advisers to the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee in order to ensure the law passes the scrutiny of the High Court of Justice.**
- **In any case, the demand from the Haredi and Likud politicians to fire Edelstein is unlikely to help advance the military draft law they are hoping for. Anyone who tries to pass such a bill or to remove the sanctions won’t be able to do so without the support of the committee’s and Knesset’s legal advisers, all of whom clearly support Edelstein’s iteration of the bill.**

- Senior Likud officials said Netanyahu is determined to prevent early elections from being called. Notably, even if the bill to dissolve the Knesset is passed in its preliminary reading, a compromise could still be reached before the second and third readings. A Netanyahu associate said the prime minister's plan is to manage the crisis until the end of the summer session (end of July) without the Knesset being dissolved and without setting a new date for elections.
- A Likud minister close to Netanyahu commented on the Haredi threat, saying, "It's a gun that fires in the first act. The third act will only arrive in the winter, meaning we'll manage to delay the elections until spring summer 2026."
- Edelstein wants to ensure that sanctions apply to draft-dodgers even if draft target numbers set for Haredi schools are met. This is seen by the Haredim as a declaration of war on the Torah world.
- The Haredim want the level of sanctions to be set according to the percentage of Haredim who do enlist in the IDF. For instance, if 80 percent of the goal is met, the sanctions should not be as strict.
- Edelstein wants to impose sanctions with immediate effect at the end of the [current] draft year; the Haredim want a one-year adjustment period between a person's failure to report for induction and the imposition of sanctions.
- The Haredim want the appointment of a political or bureaucratic party to oversee sanctions. Edelstein wants them to be imposed automatically.
- The Haredi politicians want Haredim who volunteer for Magen David Adom, Zaka, security detail at government offices, the Israel Police, the Border Police and more to be counted towards the draft quotas. Edelstein wants only people who enlist in the IDF and serve as combat soldiers or combat-supporting soldiers to be counted.

## **Behadrei Haredim (Online)**

# **Haredi Street Roils Over Draft Issue: "Israel Headed for Elections"**

**By Avraham Friend**

- The draft crisis, which has been mounting in recent weeks, finally exploded with full force this morning—not only in the Knesset but also in



the Haredi press, which has taken to using more aggressive language than ever before.

- Newspaper headlines in the Haredi press made clear that the sanctions proposed by Yuli Edelstein are not a “historic correction”—but, rather, are an outright decree [the implication of the Hebrew word used here for “decree” is a reference to anti-Jewish decrees by non-Jewish officials throughout history to forbid the study of Torah or performance of the religious commandments –INT].
- For example, the main headline of Yated Neeman, the newspaper affiliated with the Degel Hatorah faction of the United Torah Judaism party, described the proposed sanctions as “draconian,” and accused Edelstein of “trying to turn Torah scholars into criminals. [As a result,] Israel is approaching elections.”
- An accompanying article asserted that rabbis were shocked by the depth and scope of the sanctions, especially by the economic impact they could potentially have on Torah students—estimated to add up to thousands of shekels a year or more.
- Other newspapers in the sector echoed this tone. Hamodia, associated with the Agudat Yisrael faction of UTJ, warned that “all options to prevent the evil decrees are now on the table.” Hamevaser went even further, comparing and contrasting Edelstein’s past as a Refusenik to his current behavior: “The sword of the law has been turned against those who sacrifice their lives for Torah study,” implying a moral betrayal on Edelstein’s part.
- Efforts by Prime Minister’s Bureau officials are now underway to calm the situation, with official spokespeople claiming there is “goodwill” and that a compromise is possible.
- Behind the scenes, however, Netanyahu is reportedly considering the drastic step of removing Yuli Edelstein as chairman of the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee in exchange for a Haredi commitment not to dissolve the Knesset until the end of the current summer session.
- Even this move, however, is being met with suspicion. United Torah Judaism officials said in closed-door meetings, “Dismissing Edelstein won’t help us—the problem isn’t Edelstein; it’s the bill itself. We will not support any compromise that keeps the sanctions in place.”
- Meanwhile, internal criticism is mounting within the Haredi political bloc, with some members of UTJ openly expressing frustration with Shas Chairman Aryeh Deri, who they say takes a “militant” tone in public but

**behind the scenes has worked to smooth over confrontations in order to protect Netanyahu's government.**

- **"Deri is working overtime for the prime minister. He's stalling for time but our patience is running out," said a senior UTJ official.**