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## ISRAEL NEWS

*A collection of the week's news from Israel*  
*From the Bet El Twinning / Israel Action Committee of*  
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### Commentary...

#### Separating 'Tikkun Olam' from Other Values

By Rabbi Steven Burg

In recent weeks, we have witnessed a disturbing phenomenon: American Jewish organizations and leaders rallying against measures designed to protect Jewish students on college campuses. As they face harassment, intimidation and even violence from anti-Israel protesters, some Jewish voices have inexplicably chosen to defend the aggressors rather than the victims. This troubling reality forces us to confront an uncomfortable truth about contemporary Jewish American identity.

The root of this problem lies in the misapplication of the Jewish concept of tikkun olam, "repairing the world." What is a beautiful component of a comprehensive Jewish worldview has, for many, become the sole pillar of their identity, divorced from the full context of Jewish tradition and values.

Let me be clear: Tikkun olam is a profoundly important Jewish value. But it was never meant to stand alone. Our tradition teaches that before we can effectively repair the world, we must first ensure the safety and well-being of our community. This is not tribalism; it is a recognition of our special responsibility to those closest to us.

Consider what we've witnessed in recent days. When the administration announced deportations of non-citizen, pro-Hamas protesters who had harassed Jewish students, numerous Jewish liberal groups condemned these actions. When threats were made against the Chabad-Lubavitch community in the Crown Heights section of Brooklyn, N.Y., earlier this month, many of these same organizations remained conspicuously silent. When Jewish students were trapped in libraries and Jewish centers on campuses across America, these groups redirected their concern to the "rights" of those threatening our children.

This inversion of priorities represents a profound distortion of values. Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker, himself Jewish, recently called for "mass protests," "mobilization" and "disruption" against the administration, which is trying to protect Jewish students. Such rhetoric mirrors the tactics used by anti-Israel protesters who have made campus life unbearable for so many students.

A letter signed by more than 500 rabbis rejecting measures to combat antisemitism on campuses exemplifies this troubling trend. They describe universities where students have been harassed and threatened as "strongholds of Jewish academic and cultural life," a characterization that would be unrecognizable to those who have fled these campuses out of fear.

What has led us to this moral confusion? I believe that it stems from reducing Judaism to a single value, tikkun olam, while neglecting the framework that gives this concept its proper context. Liberal theologians have suggested that one can fulfill their Jewish obligations merely by "making the world better," without regard for the other commandments and teachings that form the substance of Jewish life.

The consequences of this reductionist approach are now becoming clear. When Judaism is reduced to universal social justice detached from Jewish particularity, it becomes all too easy to turn against Jewish interests, Jewish security, and even Israel itself.

Our sages taught us that there is an order to our obligations. Before we can effectively heal the world, we must first ensure the safety and well-being of our community. Think of the airline safety instruction to "put on your own oxygen mask before assisting others." This isn't selfishness. It's a recognition that we cannot help others if we are in peril.

The recent events in Brooklyn illustrate this principle starkly. When pro-Hamas protesters threatened Chabad headquarters with violence, where were all of these Jewish organizations that are so quick to oppose protective measures for our community? Their silence was deafening. When Jews did stand up to defend synagogues and neighborhoods, they were characterized as "counterprotesters" rather than a community engaging in legitimate self-defense.

We now face the greatest internal division in American Jewish life in generations. Jewish organizations and leaders must make a choice: Will they stand with their fellow Jews who are under attack, or will they continue to prioritize a

distorted version of social justice that betrays their own community?

True tikkun olam is a two-step process. First, we secure the safety and well-being of our own family. Then, from that position of strength and security, we extend our hand to heal the broader world. This is not a rejection of our universal responsibilities; it is the only sustainable path to fulfilling them.

As Jews, we have been commanded to care for the stranger, pursue justice and work toward peace. But we cannot fulfill these obligations if we abandon our children to harassment and violence. When we fail to stand up for Jewish students who want to receive an education without intimidation, we betray not only them but the very concept of tikkun olam that we claim to uphold.

The time has come to reclaim a balanced understanding of Jewish values—one that recognizes our universal responsibilities and our particular obligations to fellow Jews. Only then can we truly begin the sacred work of repairing our fractured world. (JNS May 12)

#### Mikveh, Prayer and the Temple Mount By Dr. Alex Sternberg

I have wanted to visit the Temple Mount (Har Habayit) for some time. However, for many years, Jews were not permitted to do so. But they are increasingly visiting the site where the Holy Temples once stood. And during a recent trip to Israel, I finally got the chance to see it for myself.

The Temple Mount serves as a religious and a national heritage location. It defines the Jewish nation and our claim to the Land of Israel. For this very reason, Arabs attempt to prevent Jews from exercising ownership and deny our right to pray there. Unfortunately, the Israeli government continues to adhere to a misguided policy enacted shortly after the Six-Day War in June 1967 that ceded control of the mount to the Arabs.

On the second day of Chol Hamoed Passover—the intermediate days of the holiday—my son, Yonatan, and I went to Jerusalem. We stopped first at the mikvah of the Gur Hassidim. After immersing in the ritual bath, we made our way to the Western Wall, joining about 25 other pilgrims at the Mughrabi Gate. This is still the only permitted entrance for non-Muslims. We were greeted on the wooden ramp by a unit from Israel's Temple Mount police, who guided us on our journey.

We walked onto the mount and were instructed by the police to walk quickly and not linger at any one spot. Har Habayit opened up before us, revealing a vast expanse filled with fallen rocks that resemble those seen at the Western Wall ruins. Could they date back to the destruction of the Second Temple? I wondered. We continued walking, and soon, the majestic Dome of the Rock was in front of us. Seeing the shrine, built over the ruins of the ancient Jewish Temple, saddened me.

Our group stopped opposite the Dome of the Rock. Not knowing what to expect, I was surprised to see a minyan (public prayer quorum), formed since I thought Jews were not allowed to pray there. Still, I answered with a loud "Amen" as Kaddish was recited. Some in the group even prostrated themselves on the stone floor with outstretched arms in commemoration of the Temple worship that was done during the time of the Temple (Beit Hamikdash).

It's interesting to see how the situation has changed since the days when Arab women would come and stand alongside Jewish visitors to ensure that they wouldn't pray or even move their lips. Those women would even spit on visitors, making their experiences more uncomfortable. Now, though, the Israeli Temple Mount police accompany us, gently encouraging everyone to complete their visit in a timely manner. While they may wait impatiently during the prayer, they respect the process and do not interfere.

Ascending the Temple Mount is controversial in Judaism, but I found it spiritually uplifting. The controversy stems more from rabbinical disagreement about the exact location of the Holy of Holies, a sacred area Jews are not allowed to enter. The Holy of

Holies was so sacred that during the time of the Temples, the high priest was only allowed to enter it once a year—on Yom Kippur. Today, although the temples have been destroyed, the Temple Mount itself maintains a holy status that we must not desecrate.

After Israel unified Jerusalem, the Western Wall and the Temple Mount, Rabbi Shlomo Goren, the chief rabbi of the Israeli Defense Forces, requested that IDF engineers map out the Temple Mount site to determine the various locations of the Beit Hamikdash. He published the findings in a book, laying out the areas Jews may visit.

Goren, however, warned that immersion in a mikvah must precede visiting even the areas permitted.

He encouraged Jews to join the many great Torah sages who have been praying on Har Habayit for more than 1,000 years. Such rabbis included Moses ben Maimon, the revered Rambam (Maimonides), who made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem in 1165. After his visit, he wrote a letter about praying at “the great and Holy House.”

“Even though nowadays the Temple is destroyed because of our sins, nevertheless, even today everyone is required to show it respect [fear] as was practiced in the days when it stood. No one may enter it except the places that one is permitted to enter,” Maimonides wrote in “H. Beit Ha-Bechira” 7.7.

Unfortunately, Goren encountered a setback in his plans.

Israel’s defense minister at the time, Moshe Dayan, made a bizarre gesture of granting the defeated Jordanians rights over the Temple Mount. A nonreligious Jew, he either didn’t grasp the significance of the site for Jews or simply didn’t care. Once again, Jews were barred from praying at the location of our ancient Temple.

Many Jews defied this ill-considered agreement, and more are visiting and praying there annually. Yeshivahs conduct daily scheduled classes there. According to a report in the Haredi publication Kikar HaShabbat, during Passover 6,315 Jews visited the Temple Mount, nearly 2,000 more than visited during Passover 2022. Each year, more Jewish visitors come, reinforcing our longstanding bond with the two Temples that once stood there.

Israel needs to construct a synagogue on the Temple Mount and prevent Arabs from erecting any more mosques on the site. They have built five mosques there since 1967, which they had agreed not to do.

Dayan not only ceded the Temple Mount to Arab control but also the Cave of the Patriarchs and Matriarchs in Hebron. However, a motivated Israeli government arranged for Jews and Arabs to share the site, and to this day, daily Jewish prayers take place there. Perhaps an increase in worshippers at the Temple Mount would encourage the government to facilitate sharing that space, too. So we can say, “Next year in Jerusalem on the Temple Mount.”

(JNS May 13)

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## Iranian Uranium Enrichment Continues Together with US Talks

By Yaakov Lappin

Allegations of a clandestine Iranian nuclear facility have faced skepticism by observers, but nuclear experts are warning of shrinking nuclear breakout times and the Iranian regime’s deceptive tactics.

On May 8, 2025, a Fox News report, citing claims from the National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI) opposition coalition group, claimed to show satellite imagery of an alleged previously undisclosed Iranian nuclear weapons-related facility.

The extensive compound, reportedly codenamed the “Rainbow Site” (“Rangin Kaman” in Persian) by Iranian officials and allegedly operational for over a decade, is said to be located in Semnan province, east of Tehran.

According to the NCRI, as reported by Fox News, the nearly 2,500-acre site operated under the guise of a chemical production company. The primary function alleged for the “Rainbow Site” was the extraction of tritium, a key radioactive isotope of hydrogen used to significantly enhance the yield of nuclear weapons and essential for developing thermonuclear devices (hydrogen bombs).

The report suggested that Iran’s Organization of Defensive Innovation and Research (SPND), long associated with Iran’s past nuclear weaponization efforts, was involved and had recruited nuclear fusion experts for this project.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi dismissed the report on May 9 as an effort to derail upcoming nuclear talks, writing on X, “Like clockwork, more Very Scary Satellite Images are being circulated as Iran-U.S. indirect nuclear talks are set to resume.”

Andrea Stricker, deputy director of the Washington D.C.-based

Foundation for Defense of Democracies’ Nonproliferation and Biodefense Program, and an FDD research fellow, urged caution regarding the latest claims.

“Nuclear experts like David Albright are not seeing signatures of a tritium-related facility here. One must use caution regarding NCRI claims,” she told JNS.

Stricker further noted, “In any case, tritium has dual civil uses and is not inherently a red flag.” However, she also assessed, “Iran is likely experimenting with dual-use nuclear weapons activities, but it remains to be seen if they are already seeking the capability to boost nuclear weapons with a material like tritium.”

Meanwhile, Iran is widely believed to be pushing forward with its uranium enrichment activities.

Sima Shine, director of the Iran and the Shi’ite Axis Research Program at the Tel Aviv-based Institute for National Security Studies (INSS) and former head of the Research and Evaluation Division of the Mossad, told JNS she assumes Iran is continuing to enrich 60% enriched uranium, adding that to confirm this, one needs to wait for the next report by the United Nations International Atomic Energy Agency watchdog.

Iran has been enriching uranium to 60% purity—a short technical step from the 90% considered weapons-grade—for a significant period, drastically reducing potential breakout times. The IAEA in its February 2025 reports highlighted that Iran’s stockpile of 60% enriched uranium had “risen significantly” and expressed “serious concern” over this production by the only non-nuclear weapon state to do so.

The Institute for Science and International Security, which is headed by David Albright, in a May 6 report titled “Iranian Breakout Timelines Under JCPOA-Type Limits,” stressed the “shrinking timelines.”

The report stated that reimposing the original 2015 nuclear deal (the JCPOA-Joint Comprehensive Plan Of Action) limits on Iran’s centrifuge program today “could not achieve a 12-month breakout timeline, only about a four-to-five-month timeline.”

More alarmingly, the organization assessed that if Iran were to return to JCPOA-type limits while storing its excess advanced centrifuges, it could achieve breakout to produce enough weapon-grade uranium (WGU) for one nuclear weapon in approximately “4.5 months.”

This combination of pictures created on April 9, 2025, shows U.S. Middle East envoy Steve Witkoff (left) and Iran’s Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi. Photo by Evelyn Hockstein and Amer Hilabi/various sources/AFP via Getty Images.

Against this backdrop of escalating nuclear concerns, a fourth round of US-Iran negotiations took place in Muscat, the capital of Oman, on May 11, 2025. The talks, originally set for May 3 but postponed amid Iranian objections over recent US sanctions on its oil industry, were described by Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmaeil Baqaei as “difficult but useful.”

Delegations led by White House envoy Steve Witkoff and Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi aimed to “better understand each other’s positions and to find reasonable and realistic ways to address the differences,” Baqaei stated.

Both parties agreed to continue talks focused on technical aspects, with a future meeting to be coordinated by Oman. However, fundamental disagreements persist.

An Iranian source told CNN on May 11 that prohibiting Tehran’s domestic uranium enrichment is a “definite red line.” Araghchi himself stated after the talks, “From our viewpoint, enrichment is a subject that should definitely continue and there is no room for compromise on that,” although he allowed that “it is possible that we consider some limits on its dimensions, amount and level for trust building, similar to the past,” according to a May 11 ABC report.

Conversely, Witkoff emphasized in a May 8 interview with Breitbart that “an enrichment program can never exist in the state of Iran ever again. That’s our red line. No enrichment.”

He specified that this entailed “dismantlement... no weaponization, and it means that Natanz, Fordow and Isfahan—those are their three enrichment facilities—have to be dismantled.”

Israel has not publicly commented on the talks, but has repeatedly reserved its right to use military force to roll back the Iranian nuclear program.

Experts from the FDD expressed skepticism about the negotiations. Andrea Stricker, commenting on the talks, stated, “An

important question is whether the two sides are simply talking for the sake of delaying a U.S. decision over military strikes against Iran's nuclear program."

She stressed the need for clarity from the US administration: "The administration needs to fully articulate its position on the dismantlement of Iran's nuclear fuel production capabilities, weaponization program, and missile delivery work—and know when it is time to walk away."

Behnam Ben Taleblu, the Iran Program senior director and senior fellow at FDD, said, "If Iranian official statements after every round of talks is a guide, differences in the U.S. and Iranian positions appear to be making themselves much more manifest."

He added, "Despite earlier statements about the ways with which the Trump administration might achieve its goal of a non-nuclear Iran, standing firm on its demand for no enrichment and full dismantlement will be crucial." (JNS May 14)

## **The Pope's 'Divisions' and the War Against the Jews**

By Jonathan S. Tobin

In an era when religion seems to be in steep decline throughout Europe and North America, it might strike some people as curious that the election of a new pope would be treated as such an earth-shaking event. But even as secularism increasingly dominates public discourse, the persistence of faith and the attention devoted to the leadership of a denomination so integral to the history of Western civilization as Catholicism is a reminder that some things transcend popular culture—and that is something all people of goodwill should celebrate.

So, it is understandable that the accession of Pope Leo XIV, the first American pope, should be greeted with universal respect. That should also apply to the Jewish community, which now approaches the papacy with the sort of expectations of understanding and support that would have been unimaginable before the second half of the 20th century. The question is not where the church stands on the points of contention of the past, but how its spiritual leadership will be deployed in the present.

Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin's much-quoted comment, in which he derisively asked "how many divisions" the pope had in his time, is generally and rightfully thought of as a clueless dismissal of the power that can stem from spiritual leadership. The Catholic Church and its new leader face many challenges, not least the fact that a growing percentage of its estimated 1.4 billion believers are in the Third World rather than Europe or the United States. It must also grapple with the conflicting demands that it be more accessible and modern while at the same time staying true to its core doctrines.

Yet the question is not whether Pope Leo XIV will be able to exercise considerable influence over world opinion on a variety of topics or whether it will be well-meaning, regardless of where people stand on the issues. Rather, it is whether the Vatican and the church it leads will play a role in combating one particularly pernicious problem with which its institutions were once closely associated. While we should not assume anything but good intentions from the pope, it is still apt to ask whether his "divisions" can or will be deployed to stem the rising tide of antisemitism sweeping across the globe as opposed to merely paying lip service to this plague—or worse, unwittingly abetting it.

After the groundbreaking stands of the Second Vatican Council and then the papacy of John Paul II (1978-2005), the historic antagonism between the Church and the Jews, as well as the State of Israel, was put aside and replaced with a more open and respectful relationship. The publication of "Nostra Aetate," the 1965 Catholic declaration on the relationship of the Church with non-Christian religions, rejected the deicide myth and established a new norm; the assumption that Catholics hated Jews became a relic of the past. That was followed up by the open philo-Semitism of John Paul II and the historic decision of the Vatican to recognize Israel in 1993. That put the unhappy history of relations between the papacy and the Jews firmly behind them.

Nevertheless, most Jews and Israelis were disappointed by the Church's somewhat feeble response to the unprecedented increase in antisemitism that followed the Hamas-led Palestinian Arab terror attacks in southern Israel on Oct. 7, 2023.

To be fair, the late Pope Francis condemned antisemitism and the increase in Jew-hatred after Oct. 7. But in the last year and a half, the Vatican appeared as critical of Israel's war of self-defense against

genocidal Hamas terrorism as it was in stating its horror about the Oct. 7 atrocities against Israelis.

To many of its constituents in Europe, around the world, and particularly in the Middle East, that morally ambivalent stand about a conflict fundamentally rooted in a desire to destroy the Jewish state seems fair. It also conforms to the Church's general opposition to war, no matter the cause or circumstances. So, it was not surprising that Pope Leo issued a call for a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip (as well as in the war between Russia and Ukraine) as part of his first Sunday sermon, even though that would essentially allow a terrorist regime to emerge triumphant from the destructive war it began.

Even more troubling, at times during the past 19 months, the Church has either seemed to endorse the false Hamas narrative about Israeli war crimes or harkened back to symbolism that is a reminder of its antisemitic past.

Some of this is connected to the Church's worries about Middle Eastern Catholics, including the small remnant living under Islamist rule in Gaza, as well as the Latin Patriarchate in Jerusalem, which seems far more interested in promoting anti-Israel Palestinian nationalism than anything else.

In this case, an understandable concern for Catholic safety in a region where, outside of Israel, religious freedom is tenuous or non-existent has most often given way to something far more troubling: a belief that the Vatican's chief obligation there is to not contradict Arab and Muslim hatred for Jews and the Jewish state.

That is the context for any discussion about the new pope and the future of Catholic-Jewish relations.

Pope Leo is in a difficult position in speaking out on any issue, let alone one as fraught as antisemitism and the global war on Israel.

His election has led to a torrent of commentary in which he is being shoehorned into various secular and political debates. That is particularly true in the United States, where some on the left are hoping that he will assume the stance of a spiritual leader to the "resistance" to President Donald Trump, as, for example, New York Times columnist David French—a rabid Never Trumper—seems to want him to be. In turn, some on the political right are making the same assumption because of his background in advocating for illegal immigrants. Yet his stands on other issues, particularly those relating to traditional morality and gender ideology, may put him on the same side of the aisle as pro-Trump conservatives.

All those attempts to inject the papacy into U.S. cultural and political warfare are likely futile. The papal version of "soft power" can be formidable, but it doesn't translate well into American partisan disputes. That is something that will likely prove to be true, even if Pope Leo dislikes Trump or Vice President JD Vance, who converted to Catholicism as an adult. The left may fantasize about Leo assuming the same role in aiding their campaigns against Trump that Pope John Paul II had in opposing Soviet despotism in Eastern Europe in the last years of the Cold War. But the papacy and the American church simply aren't set up to be a religious auxiliary to the Democrats or any political party.

His need to avoid being drawn into partisan arguments in a democracy, however, is not the same thing as reluctance to play a role in stemming the current rising tide of antisemitism and support for Israel's destruction.

No one should expect the pope to endorse any military campaign or government. But the connection between those in the Catholic world who have embraced "liberation theology"—a Marxist-influenced variant of faith that is linked to other "progressive" causes aligned with the international movement to destroy the one Jewish state on the planet—and antisemitism is something that directly concerns the Church. That's especially true since, while his predecessor was not an adherent of liberation theology, many of his positions, as well as those of the current pope, seem adjacent to them in some ways.

Contemporary antisemitism is something that is different from the sort of hatred of Jews with which the Church was long associated. That was also true of the racist prejudice of the Nazis, which directly contradicted Catholic doctrine. Today's antisemites target Jews not because they think Jews killed Jesus or should convert to Christianity. Instead, they are part of a bizarre red/green alliance of Marxists and Islamists.

They view Jews as part of the class of "white oppressors" according to the tenets of woke ideology like critical race theory, intersectionality and settler-colonialism, who must be defeated. Or

they despise them as a dhimmi minority of second-class citizens condemned to perpetual subjugation to Muslims, as well as having no right to sovereignty in the Middle East, even in their ancient homeland, where they are the indigenous people.

And as much as the Vatican opposes hatred of Jews, in general, it has been awfully quiet about specifically condemning the way supposed sympathy for the Palestinian Arabs has weaponized these ideas, as well as traditional antisemitic tropes.

A general abhorrence for all wars and concern about the fate of those who live in Gaza may have led many to wrongly condemn Israel's justified effort to eradicate Hamas. Still, there is no excuse for allowing that to cause the Church to refuse to see how such moral equivalence is the foundation for an international movement that demonizes Jews and their state.

Anyone who comments on the papacy must do so with both respect and deference to its enormous symbolic importance to Catholics—something that transcends politics and culture. And there is no question that the contemporary Church is an institution that is vastly different from the one in the past that was rightly distrusted by Jews.

Nevertheless, neutrality about a war being fought by Palestinian terrorists and other Iranian proxies for the genocide of Jews and the end of Israel is neither moral nor in the interests of non-Muslim minorities in the Middle East. It is not unreasonable to expect the pope to use his influence to oppose those who act as the witting or unwitting allies of this despicable cause, whether or not they cloak themselves in the language of "human rights."

It is a tribute to the courage and the righteousness of some of Pope Leo's predecessors who fought against antisemitism that contemporary Jews can feel that they have a right to expect more from him than moral equivalence about a new war on the Jews. We should wish him well and hope he proves equal to their example. (JNS May 13)

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## Israel's Left is Engaged in Subversion to Topple the Government

By Israel Kasnett

The public battle taking place in Israel between the government and the Israel Security Agency (Shin Bet) would be dangerous enough at any time, but is doubly dangerous during wartime. This battle is intertwined with several others, including the one concerning Attorney General Gali Baharav-Miara and her efforts to torpedo government initiatives, the trial of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, the Shin Bet's targeting of Jews in Judea and Samaria, insubordination within the Israel Defense Forces, the judicial reform protests and the anti-war "Kaplan" protests. The thread that ties all of this together is the far-left's effort to paralyze and topple the government.

"It's all one big family. It's not a deep state—it's a deep shtetl," said Gadi Taub, bestselling Israeli author and co-host of the "Israel Update" podcast.

Led by several so-called elites, including former Mossad heads Efraim Halevy, Tamir Pardo and Danny Yatom, as well as former prime minister Ehud Barak and former head of the Shin Bet Ami Ayalon, these leftists are now calling to declare Netanyahu incapacitated and strip him of his prime ministerial duties.

According to Taub, "in the most extreme scenario, the Supreme Court could try and do that based on a Shin Bet assessment that Netanyahu has gone rogue."

"They're trying to overthrow an elected government," he said. "They invented a role for themselves and now they're telling us that the head of the Shin Bet is a gatekeeper."

They act like "an independent power that is not accountable to anybody," he added.

These so-called elites weakened Israel's deterrence before the war with their protests against judicial reform, and then sabotaged the war effort, he told JNS. Unelected officials in the judiciary, together with far-left activists (and with assistance from foreign governments such as the Biden and Obama administrations), are working against the public mandate to install their own people and prevent the elected government from governing.

Shin Bet Director Ronen Bar may have announced he will resign on June 15, but he remains the subject of heated controversy. The Cabinet voted to dismiss Bar. After it did so, a legal battle erupted, and the High Court worked to stop the dismissal, which then led to a war of affidavits.

Bar and Netanyahu both submitted competing affidavits to the

High Court. Bar claimed that Netanyahu had pressured him into acting unlawfully due to personal and political considerations, a claim which Netanyahu rejected in his own affidavit.

According to Taub, Bar "is just a branch of the Kaplan demonstrations with a secret service under him."

The anti-war demonstrations are just an extension of the anti-judicial reform protests, and are the left's attempt to create subversion by controlling the non-elected judiciary and giving it total power, he said.

The problem with the AG is that she is both the government's legal adviser and the head of the prosecution—a situation that without checks and balances makes her too powerful and creates a potential conflict of interest in some cases.

Over the last few months, Israel's government backed a bill to divide the AG's responsibilities. The proposed legislation aims to separate the role of chief prosecutor from the AG's portfolio, placing it under a new "prosecutor general" nominated by the government. The argument against the bill is that it will erode the checks and balances essential to democratic governance, but in reality, it will streamline government operations. Baharav-Miara has strongly opposed the bill, suggesting it is motivated by Netanyahu's personal interests in connection with the ongoing criminal proceedings and investigations against him.

The attorney general is tasked with advising the government and advancing its policies, while also overseeing the state's prosecution. This dual role has long been problematic for coalition ministers. The fear of potential criminal investigations led by the AG can deter ministers from challenging the office, giving the AG significant influence over government decisions. By splitting the roles, the government seeks to reduce this leverage.

The push to reshape the attorney general's role is just part of the ongoing battle between Israel's government and judicial institutions.

According to Simcha Rothman, a Knesset member and chairman of the Knesset Constitution, Law and Justice Committee, many of the individuals in the judicial system trying to topple the government "are not professionals—they are politicians."

"They don't adhere to the letter or intent of the law," he told JNS. "They do whatever they want to gain more political power and dismantle the right-wing government."

Rothman said he was referring to judges, legal advisers "and the entire deep-state apparatus that is working to undermine elected officials and actually the public."

As part of the government's effort to create checks and balances between all three government branches, Rothman successfully passed legislation concerning the bar, the judicial selection committee, and on an independent ombudsman for the judges. He said he is now working on legislation on criminal procedures.

However, Rothman told JNS, "We need to do the legislation work, but it is not enough. It is also the executive branch that needs to stand its ground and replace people who openly say they are working to undermine the government."

As for the public, Rothman said people "should make their voice heard on social media and demand from government officials to stand behind the judicial reform and repair the system."

Rothman lamented that Bar is remaining in his position for another month, suggesting that his insubordination compromises state security.

He also voiced frustration over the fact that the procedure to remove Baharav-Miara from office had not begun "because the coalition is not committed enough."

"We need to separate the role of the attorney general, not only to keep her out of office, but also to make sure the next person will not have a position that allows tyranny," he said.

"There is a lot to do and we need the full commitment of the public and elected officials," he added.

The coming months will likely see a continuation of the government's efforts to expose and eradicate leftist subversion within the judiciary.

According to Taub, Israel's Supreme Court judges have removed sovereignty itself from the elected branches of government and transferred it to themselves.

"A deep state doesn't get any deeper than this," he said.

(JNS May 13)

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