

Israeli Politicians Respond to Biden's Comments About Israel

Following critical comments from U.S. President Joe Biden on Tuesday, including a statement that he would not invite Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to visit the White House "in the near term," several coalition members in Israel fired back.

"It's sad that even President Biden has fallen victim to fake news broadcasted from Israel against our justified legal reforms," Israeli Culture and Sports Minister Miki Zohar wrote on social media shortly after Biden's comments.

Zohar later deleted the post, although he posted a similar one, not directed towards Biden.

Deputy Knesset Speaker and Likud party lawmaker Nissim Vaturi said that "Israel will protect itself without the U.S. if they will not support us."

Vaturi indicated that Israeli soldiers died in the 2014 Operation Protective Edge because of a U.S. embargo on the Hellfire missiles used by the Israel Defense Forces.

Israeli Education Minister Yoav Kisch, also from Likud, said, "Israel is a sovereign state and decisions are made here. American criticism can happen, but the decisions are ours."

National Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir was even more sharp in his comments to Army Radio yesterday morning, in which he emphasized that Israel is an independent nation.

While Israel "appreciates the democratic regime there [in the U.S.], it is precisely for this reason that they need to understand that Israel is an independent country and not

another star on the U.S. flag,” Ben Gvir said in his interview.

Opposition leaders were quick to latch onto Biden’s statements as an indication of Netanyahu’s alleged failures.

“For decades, Israel was the USA’s closest ally, and the most extremist government in the country’s history has spoiled that in three months,” alleged Yair Lapid, who leads opposition party, Yesh Atid.

Benny Gantz from the National Unity party was more restrained, saying that Biden’s comments are “an urgent wake-up call for the Israeli government.”

Former Justice Minister Gideon Sa’ar, also from National Unity, echoed Lapid’s remarks.

“Never before has any government caused so much damage to the country in such a short amount of time,” Sa’ar claimed.

The Israeli government’s coalition and opposition groups this week entered into negotiations over the judicial reforms. Preliminary meetings began late Tuesday night at Israeli President Isaac Herzog’s residence and continued on Wednesday. A schedule of further negotiations has not yet been released.
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