

Netanyahu: Iran Not Popular in Arab World

Israeli Prime Minister **Benjamin Netanyahu** left for a two-day state visit to France Wednesday, his first since French President Francois Hollande took office five months ago.

The two leaders have spoken by phone twice but will meet for the first time in person during a working lunch.

Hollande twice hosted Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas as well as Shelly Yechimovich, head of Israel's Labor party, which shares similar socialist views with the French president.

Before take-off, Netanyahu spoke briefly with reporters.

"I am going to France to meet with President Hollande today. I will discuss the **Iranian nuclear threat** with him as well as the challenges of the peace process and our security situation in light of the regional unrest," he said.

In an interview with the French weekly *Paris Match* to be published Thursday, Netanyahu said most Arab countries would welcome a setback for the Iranian nuclear weapons program.

"Iran is not popular in the Arab world, far from it, and some governments in the region, as well as their citizens, have understood that a nuclear-armed Iran would be dangerous for them—not just for Israel," he said.

On Wednesday afternoon, Netanyahu will meet with French Prime Minister Jean-Marc Ayrault and Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius to continue discussions on Iran's nuclear weapons aspirations.

On Thursday, Hollande will accompany Netanyahu to a memorial service at Ozar Hatorah, the Jewish day school in Toulouse where French Muslim Mohammed Merah went on a shooting rampage

last March.

Merah killed 30-year-old Rabbi Yonatan Sandler and his two sons, 6-year-old Arie and 3-year-old Gabriel, before chasing down and killing 8-year-old Miriam Monsonego, the daughter of the school's principal.

"Netanyahu wants to send a message of solidarity with victims of terror—both Jewish and non-Jewish," a source close to the prime minister said, the *European Jewish Press* reported. "He wants to emphasize the importance of a unified international action against terrorism."