

# *Israel sanctions Haaretz due to articles that supposedly hurt Israeli state*

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Israeli Justice Minister Yariv Levin, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, and National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir, in Israel's parliament, the Knesset, in Jerusalem, November 18, 2024  
[File: Ronen Zvulun/Reuters]

Tel Aviv, November 25 (RHC)-- Israel has approved a resolution to cut ties with the Israeli news outlet Haaretz and ban government funding bodies from communicating or placing advertisements with the newspaper.

The government said its decision was due to “many articles that have hurt the legitimacy of the state of Israel and its right to self-defence, and particularly the remarks made in London by Haaretz publisher Amos Schocken that support terrorism and call for imposing sanctions on the government,” Haaretz reported on Sunday.

The left-leaning news outlet added that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu approved the decision, which did not appear on the government’s agenda for the weekly cabinet meeting.

In response to the decision, Haaretz said it was an “opportunist resolution to boycott Haaretz, which passed in today’s government meeting without any legal review ... [and] another step in Netanyahu’s journey to dismantle Israeli democracy”.

“Like his friends [Russian President Vladimir] Putin, [Turkish President Recep Tayyip] Erdogan, and [Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor] Orban, Netanyahu is trying to silence a critical, independent newspaper. Haaretz will not balk and will not morph into a government pamphlet that publishes messages approved by the government and its leader,” the outlet added.

Haaretz columnist Gideon Levy told Al Jazeera that the government sanctions on the outlet “send a very bad message, both politically and morally.” “Many view it [Haaretz] as the only newspaper in Israel because, especially [in] this war, almost all the media outlets totally recruited themselves to the narrative of the government and the army,” and did not show Israelis what was happening in Gaza, he said.

The government’s dispute with the organisation intensified last month at a conference in London, where publisher Schocken said Netanyahu’s government did not care about “imposing a cruel apartheid regime on the Palestinian population”.

“It dismisses the costs of both sides for defending the settlements while fighting the Palestinian freedom fighters that Israel calls ‘terrorists’,” he added.

Following an Israeli public outcry over the comments, Schocken said that his mention of Palestinian freedom fighters did not mean Hamas. However, Communications Minister Shlomo Karhi, who proposed the sanctioning of the news outlet, launched a renewed campaign against Haaretz, calling for a boycott of the newspaper.

Last year, Karhi approached the Israeli cabinet secretary with a draft resolution to halt all subscriptions to Haaretz by state employees, including the army. Israel has clamped down on the media as the war continues, and has killed dozens of Palestinian journalists in Gaza, including Al Jazeera’s Ismail al-Ghoul, Rami al-Rifi, Samir Abudaqa, and Hamza Dahdouh.

Several other Al Jazeera journalists have been threatened by Israel, and the network has been forced to shut its bureaus in Israel and the occupied West Bank.

[ SOURCE: AL JAZEERA and NEWS AGENCIES ]

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