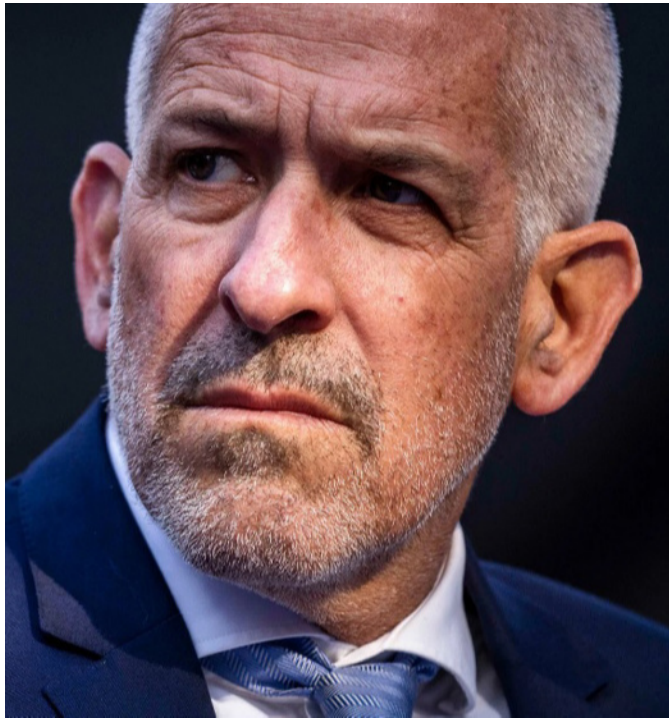


Netanyahu sacks Israeli spy chief amid warning of civil war



Head of Israel's Shin Bet internal spy agency, Ronen Bar (Photo via social media)

Tel Aviv, March 22 (RHC)-- The Israeli cabinet has voted unanimously to fire the head of the regime's Shin Bet internal spy agency Ronen Bar, triggering backlash from opposition political groups and figures against the move.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told the cabinet that he had lost faith in Bar following the surprise operation by Hamas and other Gaza-based resistance groups inside Israeli settlements on October 7, 2023.

Netanyahu added that Bar is "soft" and "not the right person to rehabilitate" Shin Bet, according to a statement from the premier's office. "He had a soft approach and was not aggressive enough." The decision to sack Bar marks the first time Israel has fired a Shin Bet chief.

The Shin Bet's chief's final day in office will be on April 10 unless a successor is appointed before then. Various Israeli opposition parties, including Yesh Atid led by former prime minister Yair Lapid, urged the

regime's supreme court to seek intervention in Bar's dismissal.

They say Netanyahu is looking to consolidate his personal grip over Israeli institutions, and also obstruct a Shin Bet investigation into his aides who have been accused of security breaches, including leaking classified documents to foreign media outlets and taking money from Qatar.

They say the decision to fire Bar was only taken after a Shin Bet investigation regarding the failure to prevent Operation Al-Aqsa Flood “clearly pointed to the political echelon’s responsibility for the catastrophe.”

On Friday, the Israeli supreme court suspended the cabinet's decision to dismiss the Shin Bet and the attorney general said the prime minister cannot name a new spy chief. The dismissal sparked protests across the occupied territories.

Hamas says the Israeli spy chief’s recent damning remarks has revealed the Israeli prime minister to be the main obstacle to effective negotiations.

Bar, in a letter to the Israeli cabinet, said the lack of trust between him and Netanyahu emanates from the management of the Gaza ceasefire and negotiations over exchange of Israeli captives for Palestinian prisoners.

Bar also pushed for a commission of inquiry into Hamas’s attack on October 7, 2023, which Netanyahu has consistently attempted to block. Netanyahu is reportedly also advancing efforts to remove Israel’s attorney general Gali Baharav-Miara, who stood against Bar’s dismissal.

Analysts and political experts believe that the dismissal of Bar signifies growing tension and mistrust between Netanyahu and the Israeli security and judicial bodies.

“This rift is getting worse and, in the end, I fear, it will be like a train that goes off the tracks and plunges into a chasm, causing a civil war,” former supreme court chief Aharon Barak said in an interview with Ynet news website.

The discharge also follows the Tel Aviv regime’s obstruction of the Gaza ceasefire deal, and the return to the bloody onslaught against the besieged coastal sliver.

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