

# *Israel Reportedly Tracked Anti-Government Journalists on Facebook*

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Tel Aviv, November 8 (RHC)-- Israel's ruling party used Facebook to spy on "anti-government" journalists, according to Likud parliamentarian David Bitan. Speaking in a public debate, Bitan openly said that he and others had been scouring the Facebook pages of journalists hired recently to set up a new public broadcasting service, saying they were scorned by their left-wing politics.

"We went and we checked the Facebook pages of these people. We saw what they are writing and I will tell you that we are talking about people who are leftists. They want to impose their own agenda on the new channel," he said in the forum.

Bitan has been the lead crusader against the establishment of the Israel Public Broadcasting Corporation. The new radio and TV media outlet, to be launched in recent months, is slated to replace the decades-old Israel Broadcasting Authority.

But Bitan and his cadre, including Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, are looking to stop the new broadcast service, establishing a committee tasked to find a way to keep the old Israel Broadcasting Authority.

Political analysts say that Israeli hardliners are concerned that the new public service channel doesn't have enough government supervision and is overtly critical of Netanyahu's government and policies.

Despite this resistance, work has been underway in establishing the new outlet, with deals having been made with unions and generous severance packages being offered to workers who have agreed to quit the old broadcast voluntarily.

The new media corporation has been poaching media personalities from competing outlets and preparing content for the launch date, which has already been postponed several times.

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