Elon Musk meets Netanyahu during Israel visit
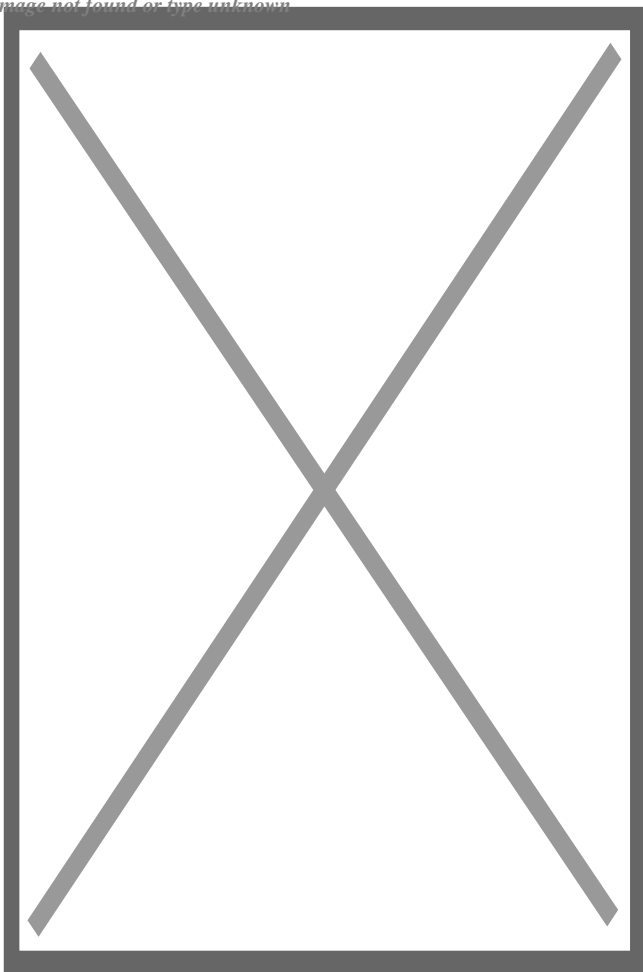
Tel Aviv, November 28 (RHC)-- Tech billionaire Elon Musk has met Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, touring a kibbutz targeted by Palestinian gunmen during an October 7 attack and expressing support for Israel's war against Hamas in the Gaza Strip.

The visit comes amid a period of controversy for Musk, who recently sparked outrage by calling an anti-Semitic social media post – one promoting the conspiracy theory that white people in the West are being "replaced" through immigration from the Global South with the help of progressive Jews – "the actual truth".

After touring the decimated kibbutz of Kfar Aza with Netanyahu, Musk said in a conversation with the prime minister on X Spaces that it was "jarring to see the scene of the massacre" and that Israel has "no choice" but to eliminate Hamas.

The trip comes on the fourth day of an ongoing truce between Israel and Hamas, during which Israel is recovering dozens of captives in exchange for the release of Palestinian prisoners.

Musk is also scheduled to meet with Israeli President Isaac Herzog, whose office said in a statement that the meeting would underscore "the need to act to combat rising antisemitism online".

Under Musk's tenure, critics have said that the social media platform X, formerly known as Twitter, has seen a proliferation of hate speech and anti-Semitism content, and several companies suspended advertising on the platform after a report accused X of running their ads alongside content from neo-Nazis and white nationalists.

X Corp is currently suing non-profit Media Matters on the grounds that it has driven away advertisers by portraying the site as rife with anti-Semitic content.

Musk has also threatened to file suit against the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), a Jewish advocacy group, over its claims that problematic and racist speech has soared on the site since he completed his $44 billion takeover.

As Musk arrived, Israel announced it had struck an agreement "in principle" to use SpaceX's Starlink communications channel in Gaza, where Musk had previously suggested it could be utilised to enhance communications. The agreement marked a major shift for Israel, whose communication minister previously dismissed the idea of opening up Starlink to Gaza because it said Hamas would use it for "terrorist activities".

But on Monday, Israeli Communications Minister Shlomo Karhi announced Israel had reached an agreement in principle under which "Starlink satellite units can only be operated in Israel with the approval of the Israeli Ministry of Communications, including the Gaza Strip".

In an X post addressed to Musk, Karhi said he hoped the entrepreneur's visit to Israel "will serve as a springboard for future endeavors, as well as enhance your relationship with the Jewish people and values we share with the entire world".

X has been a key source of information and debate about the Gaza war, with government officials, as well as pro-Israel and pro-Palestine users, sharing content. However, critics say it has also amplified misinformation, conspiracy theories, and hateful content, including anti-Semitism, during the conflict.

Following the outbreak of the Gaza war on October 7, anti-Semitism incidents in the United States rose by nearly 400 percent from the year-earlier period, according to the ADL. The Council on American-Islamic Relations reported a 216 percent increase in Islamophobic and anti-Arab incidents between October 7 and November 4.

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