

Netanyahu assures Smotrich of extensive attacks on West Bank if he doesn't resign

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Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (R) and Minister of Finance Bezalel Smotrich (File photo by AFP)

Tel Aviv, January 22 (RHC)-- Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has assured his Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich that attacks on the Palestinians in the West Bank will continue.

According to multiple Israeli reports on Tuesday, Netanyahu assured Smotrich of extensive attacks on West Bank cities in exchange for Smotrich agreeing not to resign over a ceasefire deal in the Gaza Strip.

"After Gaza and Lebanon, today, with God's help, we have begun changing the security perception in Judea and Samaria (in the occupied West Bank) and in the campaign to eradicate terrorism in the region. This is part of the war goals that were added to the cabinet's demand for religious Zionism on Friday," Smotrich said.

Smotrich, who is the leader of a far-right party forming Netanyahu's ruling coalition regime, has been among the loudest opponents of the ceasefire deal, which he has described as Tel Aviv's "surrender" to Hamas.

In a statement on January 18, Smotrich had criticized the deal between Tel Aviv and Hamas approved by Netanyahu's cabinet a day earlier. He claimed Netanyahu had "decided to give the green light to a bad, catastrophic deal."

The extremist finance minister and his lackeys had voted against the Gaza ceasefire deal but remained as ministers in the Tel Aviv regime after Netanyahu reportedly agreed to a number of their demands.

Smotrich said while they could not prevent the deal, his faction had demanded and "received a commitment" that the method of war would be completely changed.

The minister said that his party was able "to ensure" through the cabinet and "other ways" that the war would not end without achieving the objectives, foremost of which is "the complete destruction of Hamas in Gaza."

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