

Israeli Interior Minister Resigns Over Sex Scandal



Tel Aviv, December 21 (RHC)-- The Israeli interior minister and deputy premier has resigned over a sexual harassment scandal. Silvan Shalom, a top politician in Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's right-wing Likud party, announced his decision in a statement released on Sunday, saying he had resigned "out of a feeling of having a mission and a desire to advance social and public issues of the utmost importance," the Israeli daily Haaretz reported.

Pressures mounted on the former foreign minister after his ex-staffer said Wednesday that she was sexually harassed by her boss and was "touched" against her will, detailing on how he had abused her more than a decade ago.

Subsequently, "several other women also alleged that the minister sexually assaulted them," according to the Israeli daily. At least 13 women, in total, have come forward since the past week to make allegations against him, reports said.

Meanwhile, the number of cases made Attorney General Yehuda Weinstein to tell the Israeli police to initiate an investigation into the allegations. The Israeli interior minister is by no means the first top Israeli politician to leave office over sexual misconduct. Former Israeli President Moshe Katsav stepped down in 2007 on charges of raping two women as a cabinet minister in the late 1990s, as well as sexual assault against two of his female staffers as president.

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