

# Israeli PM vows to annex 'all the settlements' in West Bank

Author:

By TIA GOLDENBERG | AP

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Mon, 2019-09-16 12:28

JERUSALEM: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vowed Monday to annex "all the settlements" in the West Bank, including an enclave deep in the heart of the largest Palestinian city, in a last-ditch move that appeared aimed at shoring up nationalist support the day before a do-over election. Locked in a razor tight race and with legal woes hanging over him, Netanyahu is fighting for his political survival. In the final weeks of his campaign he has been doling out hard-line promises meant to draw more voters to his Likud party and re-elect him in Tuesday's unprecedented repeat vote.

"I intend to extend sovereignty on all the settlements and the (settlement) blocs," including "sites that have security importance or are important to Israel's heritage," Netanyahu said in an interview with Israeli Army Radio, part of an eleventh-hour media blitz.

Asked if that included the hundreds of Jews who live under heavy military guard amid tens of thousands of Palestinians in the volatile city of Hebron, Netanyahu responded "of course."

Israelis head to the polls Tuesday in the second election this year, after Netanyahu failed to cobble together a coalition following April's vote, sparking the dissolution of parliament.

Netanyahu has made a series of ambitious pledges in a bid to whip up support, including a promise to annex the Jordan Valley, an area even moderate Israelis view as strategic but which the Palestinians consider the breadbasket of any future state.

To protest that announcement, the Palestinian Authority held a Cabinet meeting in the Jordan Valley village of Fasayil on Monday, a day after Israel's Cabinet met elsewhere in the valley.

"The Jordan Valley is part of Palestinian lands and any settlement or annexation is illegal," Prime Minister Mohammed Shtayyeh said at the start of the meeting. "We will sue Israel in international courts for exploiting our land and we will continue our struggle against the occupation on the ground and in international forums."

Critics contend that Netanyahu's pledges, if carried out, would enflame the Middle East and eliminate any remaining Palestinian hope of establishing a separate state. His political rivals have dismissed his talk of annexation as an election ploy noting that he has refrained from annexing any territory during his more than a decade in power.

Israel captured the West Bank and east Jerusalem from Jordan in the 1967 war. Over 2.5 million Palestinians now live in occupied territories, in addition to nearly 700,000 Jewish settlers. Israel already has annexed east Jerusalem in a move that is not internationally recognized. The international community, along with the Palestinians, overwhelmingly considers Israeli

settlements in the West Bank and east Jerusalem illegal.

Tuesday's vote will largely be a referendum on Netanyahu, who this year surpassed Israel's founding prime minister as the country's longest-serving leader.

He has cast himself as the only candidate capable of facing Israel's myriad challenges. But his opponents say his legal troubles – including a recommendation by the attorney general to indict him on bribery, fraud and breach of trust charges – loom too large for him to carry on.



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## [Algeria to go the polls on December 12, says interim president](#)

Author:

Sun, 2019-09-15 22:40



ALGIERS: Algeria – whose president Abdelaziz Bouteflika resigned in April following mass protests – is to hold a presidential election on December 12, his interim successor announced Sunday.

“I have decided... that the date of the presidential election will be Thursday, December 12,” said Abdelkader Bensalah, who is precluded from standing himself, in a televised address.

The announcement comes after army chief General Ahmed Gaid Salah, seen as the strongman in Algeria since the fall of Bouteflika, insisted that polls be held by the end of this year, despite ongoing protests demanding the creation of new institutions ahead of any elections.



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Algerian PM to resign, paving way for vote after protracted protests  
Algeria army chief wants presidential election in December

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# Egypt says no 'breakthrough' with Ethiopia over Nile dam

Author:

Associated Press

ID:

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Sun, 2019-09-15 16:41

CAIRO: Egypt says negotiations over an upstream Nile dam being built by Ethiopia have not led to any "breakthrough."

Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry told reporters that talks over the \$5 billion Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam have stopped for more than a year before restarting in Cairo on Sunday.

The long-running dispute centers on the filling and operation of what will be Africa's largest hydroelectric dam.

Shoukry says he hopes that Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia can agree a timetable to reach a deal over the soon-to-be-completed dam.

Egypt fears the dam could reduce its share of the Nile River which serves as a lifeline for the country's 100 million people. Ethiopian maintains that the dam will help its development.

Shoukry says his country "respects Ethiopia's right to development" but "without affecting Egypt."



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## Pressure grows in US for firm response to Iran after Aramco attacks

Sun, 2019-09-15 19:21

WASHINGTON: An American senator has called for Washington to consider an attack on Iranian oil facilities as pressure grows in the US for a firm response to the Saudi Aramco strikes.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo blamed Iran for the drone attacks on Saturday against the Abqaiq oil processing plant and the Khurais oil field. He also suggested that unlike previous drone and missile attacks on the Kingdom, this one may not have been launched from Yemen by the Iran-backed Houthis. Reports have said that the attack may have originated in Iraq where Iran also holds sway over a large number of powerful militias.

"It is now time for the US to put on the table an attack on Iranian oil refineries if they continue their provocations or increase nuclear enrichment," Lindsey Graham, a Republican senator close to Donald Trump, said on Twitter.

Iran will not stop their misbehavior until the consequences become more real, like attacking their refineries, which will break the regime's back.

– Lindsey Graham (@LindseyGrahamSC) [September 14, 2019](#)

"Iran will not stop their misbehavior until the consequences become more real, like attacking their refineries, which will break the regime's back."

Iran on Sunday denied it was behind the attack, but the Yemeni Houthi militia backed by Tehran, claimed they had launched them.

The White House on Sunday did not rule out a potential meeting between President Donald Trump and Iranian President Hassan Rouhani, even after

Washington accused Iran of being behind drone attacks on Saudi oil facilities.



White House adviser Kellyanne Conway said the attacks “did not help” prospects for a meeting between Trump and Iranian President Hassan Rouhani during the United Nations General Assembly this month but she left open the possibility it could happen.

“You’re not helping your case much,” by attacking Saudi Arabia, civilian areas and critical infrastructure that affects global energy markets.” Conway told the Fox News Sunday program.

The Trump administration’s sanctions and “maximum pressure” campaign on Iran over its nuclear and ballistic missile program will continue whether or not the two leaders meet, she added.

The US ramped up pressure on Iran last year after trump withdrew from an international pact to curb Iran’s nuclear program.

Washington has reimposed a tough sanctions regime on Tehran, which it accuses of hiding behind the nuclear deal to advance its missiles program and aggressive foreign policy in the Middle East.

Just spoke to [@SecPompeo](#) about this egregious attack on the security of Saudi Arabia. This was a reckless attempt to damage regional security and disrupt global oil supplies. The UK condemns such behaviour unreservedly.

– Dominic Raab (@DominicRaab) [September 15, 2019](#)

Meanwhile, condemnation of the attacks continued from around the world.

Kuwait’s emir telephoned King Salman on Sunday to express his condemnation of the attack.

Secretary General Antonio Guterres condemned the attack and called upon all parties to exercise maximum restraint to prevent any escalation.

King Salman also received a telephone call from Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas expressing his deep condemnation.

Abbas affirmed that the Palestinian government and people stand with the Kingdom to confront these terrorist acts of aggression.

UK foreign minister Dominic Raab said the attack was a “reckless attempt to damage regional security and disrupt global oil supplies.”

The European Union warned of a “real threat to regional security” in the

Middle East.

\*With Reuters



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Trump calls Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman after drones attack Saudi Aramco plants  
Iraq denies links to drone attack on Saudi oil facilities

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## [Ethiopia releases Lebanese businessman held since last week](#)

Author:

Sun, 2019-09-15 18:59

BEIRUT: The Lebanese Foreign Ministry says Ethiopia has released a Lebanese businessman who had been detained in the African nation since last week. The ministry said Sunday that Hassan Jaber will head from Ethiopia to the African nation of Gabon and later will return to Lebanon.

On Friday, the ministry had summoned Ethiopia's charge d'affaires demanding information about Jaber, whom it said was detained in Addis Ababa on Sept. 7. It informed the Ethiopian diplomat that Beirut wants "clear answers" by Monday, otherwise Lebanon would take countermeasures. Some Lebanese media outlets have speculated that Israel or the United States might have been behind Jaber's arrest. The ministry did not give any explanation why Jaber was held in Ethiopia.



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