



S. DANIEL ABRAHAM  
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## Israel and the Middle East News Update

*Tuesday, November 7*

### Headlines:

- **85,000 Gather for the 22nd Anniversary of Rabin's Murder**
- **PM'S Confidant Molcho Investigated in Submarine Affair**
- **UK's Aid Minister Apologizes Over Secret Israel Meetings**
- **High Court Orders Government to Respond to Goldin Family Petition**
- **Gabbay: Everyone Will Stand in Line to Join my Coalition**
- **After Pressure: Princeton Speech by Deputy FM Canceled**
- **Israeli Media Mogul Accused of Sexual Misconduct**

### Commentary:

- **Ha'aretz: "Under Interrogation: Netanyahu's Right-hand Man and Left-hand Man"**
  - By Yossi Verter, columnist at Ha'aretz
- **Yediot Ahronot: "The Brother-in-Law and the Wallet"**
  - By Nahum Barnea, columnist at Yediot Ahronot

# News Excerpts

November 3, 2017

## Breaking Israel News

### **85,000 Gather for the 22nd Anniversary of Rabin's Murder**

An estimated 85,000 people gathered in Rabin Square in Tel Aviv on Saturday night to commemorate the passing of Yitzhak Rabin who was assassinated in 1995 during his second term as the prime minister of Israel. The rally, held under the title "We Are One People", was less focused on left-wing politics than previous gatherings in memory of Rabin, and several right-wing speakers were invited to speak. This year's rally was organized by the *Darkenu* movement and Commanders for Israel's Security (CIS). *Darkenu* describes itself as "the moderate majority" while CIS is an Israeli movement of ex-senior security officials. They are both centrist advocacy groups that support "separation" from the Palestinians as part of a two-state solution. See also [Darkenu's Videos screened in the event](#)



## Jerusalem Post

### **PM'S Confidant Molcho Investigated in Submarine Affair**

Yitzhak Molho, Israel's long time envoy to the Palestinians and special confidant to Prime Minister Netanyahu, is under investigation in the police probe into bribery investigations into Israel's purchase of German-made naval vessels. Netanyahu is not a suspect in the submarine affair known as Case 3000. Channel 2 News reported that Molho rejects any connection to the probe. See also, ["Isaac Molho Revealed to Be Netanyahu Confidant Detained in Submarines Scandal" \(Ha'aretz\)](#)

## Reuters

### **UK's Aid Minister Apologizes Over Secret Israel Meetings**

Britain's international development minister Priti Patel apologized on Monday for failing to disclose meetings with senior Israeli officials during a private holiday. The meetings were a potential breach of ministerial protocol. Patel said she met with senior Israeli figures, including Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. See also, ["PM plans new ministerial code after Priti Patel apology" \(BBC\)](#)

## **Court Orders Govt. to Respond to Goldin Family Petition**

The High Court of Justice late Monday ordered the government to respond within 10 days to a petition filed by the family of IDF Lieutenant Hadar Goldin which was filed with the goal of compelling the government to enforce its decisions regarding obtaining their son's body and the return of other living and dead Israelis from Hamas. The family filed the petition earlier Monday after holding a press conference Sunday announcing their intent to go to the High Court over the stalemate in negotiations. Goldin and IDF soldier Oron Shaul were both killed and their bodies were both taken by Hamas. See also, ["Goldin Family Sues State: 'Get Tougher on Hamas for Return of Our Sons'" \(Hamodia\)](#)

## **Gabbay: Everyone Will Stand in Line to Join my Coalition**

Labor party leader Avi Gabbay on Monday said party leaders would "stand in line" to join a future government under his leadership, amid public pledges by some right-wing leaders never to sit in a Gabbay-led coalition. Yisrael Beytenu party leader Avigdor Liberman and Kulanu leader Moshe Kahlon over the weekend said in TV interviews that they would never join a coalition helmed by Gabbay, casting doubts on the Labor party chairman's chances of ever mustering enough seats to form a coalition. Hitting back, Gabbay said the statements indicated the politicians were "afraid" of his rise and public appeal. He said he was "encouraged" by the public criticism, as it underlined concerns that he posed a significant challenge to their leadership. See also, ["Kahlon and Liberman: No Chance of Coalition With Gabay" \(Hamodia\)](#)

## **After Pressure: Princeton Speech by Deputy FM Canceled**

A planned talk by Israel's Deputy Foreign Minister Tzipi Hotovely at the Hillel Center for Jewish Life at Princeton University was abruptly cancelled Monday, following a petition by progressive activists on campus. Hotovely, who is currently in the middle of a U.S. campus tour meant to combat the growing influence of the Boycott, Sanctions and Divestment movement (BDS) in American universities, said Hillel's decision to cancel her lecture "with no warning and without just cause" attests to a "deep and severe crisis of values." Despite Hillel's withdrawal, however, Hotovely spoke at Princeton as planned, after the Princeton Chabad stepped in and agreed to host the deputy minister. See also, ["Why was Deputy Foreign Minister's lecture canceled?" \(Arutz 7\)](#)

## **Israeli Media Mogul Accused of Sexual Misconduct**

Alex Gilady, renowned founder of Keshet broadcasting company, Senior Vice-President of NBC Sports and member of the International Olympic Committee since 1994, is in hot water after being accused of sexual misconduct by two prominent journalists. Both Channel 10 News journalist Oshrat Kotler and Haaretz columnist Neri Livne accused Gilady of sexually harassing them following the wave of confession by public figures as part of the #MeToo campaign, which started in the wake of sexual misconduct allegations against American film producer Harvey Weinstein. Kotler, who was the first to come forward, revealed Thursday that Giladi had offered her an indecent proposal.

## Under Interrogation: Netanyahu's Right-hand Man and Left-hand Man

By Yossi Verter, Ha'aretz contributor

- The common term for David Shimron and Isaac Molho is “confidants.” When the two partners in the law firm sat Sunday and Monday in separate interrogation rooms at the police anti-corruption unit Lahav 443 after they were taken from their beds on Sunday morning, that expression was somewhat ironic.
- The secrets the prime minister has confided in them over the past decades and especially in the nine years of his rule, are some of the best-kept and highly confidential in all areas: security, government and diplomacy on the one hand, and on the other, political, personal and familial. Molho and Shimron are Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s right and left hands. They are the right and left lobes of his brain. They are his interior minister and his foreign minister, as they were called in a profile in the magazine “Liberal.”
- We’re used to that already. We’re used to the fact that two private lawyers, somewhere between friends and “counselors,” who don’t account to the Knesset or the public, and sail comfortably between the public and the private, the national and the commercial, the political and the personal, and all this goodness they freely give as volunteers at no charge, while at the same time continuing to manage their little grocery store.
- By the way, this overly close relationship could not be discerned in the disparaging and haughty statement by a “senior individual in Netanyahu’s bureau” on Sunday. The senior individual recommended the media drink the juice of three lemons to wipe the smile off their faces, and reiterated that Netanyahu is not a suspect and he has no connection to the affair. There was zero empathy in the statement toward the two close friends who were at that moment in the interrogation rooms. To describe Molho as “foreign minister” undervalues him. He’s a bit foreign minister, a bit Mossad chief, a bit Shin Bet security service chief, a bit Defense Ministry security department head, and super-ambassador to countless countries. He carried out the most sensitive missions for Netanyahu. As Netanyahu wrote in his parting message to him about two weeks ago, it will not be possible to reveal all of Molho’s achievements and actions on behalf the state for at least several decades, if at all.
- Attorney Shimron is already a suspect and a veteran in interrogations over the submarine and ships affair. That Shimron was involved in the affair was obvious from the day the story broke a year ago. He was the person who represented the intermediary Michael Ganor, who turned state’s witness, The involvement of Shimron’s law firm partner Molho, whose name could not be made public until Tuesday morning is another earthquake in the shock-filled affair that is apparently one of the most grave in the history of the state.
- In light of the sensational recent development in the case, an obvious question arises: Was there another secret that those two shared within the walls of their prestigious office in Jerusalem? Another question that became even more vexing with Molho’s arrest on Sunday is this: Is it possible that those two acted – if they acted – in a way that constitutes a violation of

**the law on a mega-strategic, security-related political issue behind the back of a prime minister who was involved over his head in the exact same issue?**

**SUMMARY: Attorney Shimron is already a suspect and a veteran in interrogations over the submarine and ships affair. That Shimron was involved in the affair was obvious from the day the story broke a year ago. He was the person who represented the intermediary Michael Ganor, who turned state's witness, The involvement of Shimron's law firm partner Molho, whose name could not be made public until Tuesday morning is another earthquake in the shock-filled affair that is apparently one of the most grave in the history of the state. In light of the sensational recent development in the case, an obvious question arises: Was there another secret that those two shared within the walls of their prestigious office in Jerusalem? Another question that became even more vexing with Molho's arrest on Sunday is this: Is it possible that those two acted – if they acted – in a way that constitutes a violation of the law on a mega-strategic, security-related political issue behind the back of a prime minister who was involved over his head in the exact same issue?**

## **The Brother-in-Law and the Wallet**

By Nahum Barnea, columnist at Yediot Ahronot

- **Yitzhak Molcho and David Shimron, the two court ministers in the prime minister's kingdom, can be compared to two men who go to swim in a public pool without noticing the sign that says "don't [urinate] from the diving board." Right now, they have the status of being questioned. It could very well be that at least one of them, perhaps both, will emerge from this saga without an indictment. But their involvement in two of the affairs now being investigated—one that focuses on submarines and vessels and one that focuses on the relationship between the Communications Ministry and Bezeq—attests to their blindness. All the warning signs were there. They did not see them because they did not want to see them.**
- **The original sin was that of the former attorney general, Yehuda Weinstein, who let Molcho work in two conflicting jobs at the same time: to both be the prime minister's special envoy, with the status of a civil servant, and also to continue his private lawyer dealings. When Elyakim Rubinstein was attorney general, he did not permit this duality due to concern of corruption. Weinstein was a lot more generous.**
- **The fact that Molcho, in the role of special envoy, and Shimron in the role of political and family attorney, were very close confidants of the prime minister, had immense financial significance. Ministers felt it necessary to do their bidding, directors general considered every request of theirs as coming from the prime minister, business tycoons sought them out. The state's most sensitive matters, Likud matters, family matters and business interests related to the government, were conducted by one law firm. Even if Shimron and Molcho had been saints, there was no way to separate [all these interests].**
- **Things got worse during this government, the fourth in Binyamin Netanyahu's career. The long stay in power created, as could have been expected, a swamp, stagnant water. Molcho and Shimron, the brother-in-law and the wallet, were the kings of the swamp.**
- **Netanyahu insisted on being communications minister in this government. He was so insistent that it seemed that the position of communications minister was more important to him than the position of prime minister. This was odd, because the Communications Ministry mainly attends to technical matters. Again and again, committees have recommended turning it into a regulatory authority under the management of a bureaucrat. Netanyahu refused to hear about it. He believed that by means of this humble Communications Ministry, he would take his revenge on the Israeli press, his arch-enemy. He would dismantle it to pieces.**
- **What remains from the two plus years in which he was communications minister? A criminal investigation of the Israel Securities Authority, which has so far brought down his close confidant, Shlomo Filber, and threatens to bring down his close friend Shaul Elovitch, and the appointment of Ayoub Kara as a minister. When Kara writes his memoir, he will be able to title it: "I was Netanyahu's successor." It will be a bestseller, without a doubt.**

- **Molcho and Shimron boast on their firm’s Facebook page that they are a leading firm in representing media organizations. As we said—they did their business from the diving board [i.e. in full view]. When we reported this fact, which was visible to all, then the State Attorney’s Office awoke from its coma and obligated Molcho to sign a secret document to prevent a conflict of interest. Molcho’s commitment also obligated Shimron. There is no way to separate between them: they both make money from the same bill.**
- **I don’t know what Attorney Molcho did, if anything, with the German government, with other governments in the region and with officials in Israel in the submarine and naval vessels affair, in the natural gas dealings and in the other matters related to the investigations. I assume that he acted in good faith, within the framework of the instructions given him by Netanyahu. But if he did this in tandem with his brother-in-law and law partner, who acted on behalf of crook Mickey Ganor, the representative of the German shipyard, this cries out to heaven. We are not talking about small sums—we are talking about millions, we are talking about the state’s security.**
- **Molcho is a very charming man. In contrast to the noisy, vulgar court that Netanyahu has placed around himself in his current term, Molcho is a refined and reasoned man. I am certain that for him, being questioned under caution, sort of being arrested for a day, no less than what the High Court of Justice judges said about him yesterday, deeply humiliated him. He is sincerely certain that he did everything for the sake of the country.**
- **But he also has another side, so it appears. Otherwise, it is hard to explain the threatening letters and messages that came from his legal firm in recent years to people who dared to criticize his client, the Netanyahus; otherwise, it’s hard to explain the crude attempt of his private law office to pick up clients from Netanyahu’s Communications Ministry; otherwise, it’s hard to explain why he did not long ago resign from his government position, or alternatively, why he did not drop his private business for a few years for the sake of the country that is so important to him.**
- **Despite the learned advice of Molcho, Shimron, Dr. Yossi Cohen, Dr. Jacob Weinroth and others, Netanyahu today is in a hopeless legal situation. Sometimes it seems that he have been better off had he gone to a young lawyer from the Public Defender’s Office, someone who isn’t quick-witted, who isn’t shrewd. Sometimes patients die because of too many doctors. Sometimes people get more deeply embroiled because of too many lawyers.**

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