



Israeli army chief presses Netanyahu on military-linked laws in phone call

Ariel Oseran / December 27, 2022

Kochavi expresses concerns to incoming prime minister over authority given to Smotrich for West Bank security policies

The head of Israel's army participated in back-channel talks in recent days with incoming prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu reportedly out of concern for military linked-laws associated with the next government to be sworn in on Thursday.

Outgoing Israel Defense Forces (IDF) Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Aviv Kochavi made a rare phone call last Thursday to the Likud leader who has assembled a right-wing coalition with Religious Zionism leader MK Bezael Smotrich poised to assert control over West Bank policies. Israel's parliament, the Knesset, cleared the path for Smotrich to take an independent minister role within the Defense Ministry with the passing of an amendment to Basic Law: The Government early Tuesday morning.

[...]

"We are on a very slippery slope of the politicization process of civil-military relations or the military, generally speaking," observes **Professor Kobi Michael**, the former Director-General of Israel's Ministry of Strategic Affairs, and now a senior research fellow at the **Institute of National Strategic Studies**.

Michael says the process was begun by politicians, citing the division of the authorities the military possess, and the deep involvement of politicians in the military sphere itself.

Following the call, the IDF said Kochavi and Netanyahu agreed that government decisions tied to the IDF will be made only after consultation with the military.

"I think the idea that the chief of staff called Netanyahu and explained to him what would be the ramifications and consequences of the political decisions, and this call was publicized, I think that this is something that might affect negatively on the military," **Michael** notes.

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