

‘This Gap Can No Longer Exist’: Israel Faces Critical Haredi Conscription Decision

Keren Setton / April 2, 2024

Israel grapples with conscripting ultra-Orthodox Jews, an enduring controversy now heightened by war and legal challenges. With the conscription law expiring and public opinion evolving, the debate hits a critical juncture

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“The feeling is that a major event happened, and if so, it appears Israel is on the verge of reorganizing its social contracts with the army,” **Dr. Idit Shafran Gittleman, a senior researcher at the Institute for National Security Studies** in Tel Aviv, told The Media Line. “This is accompanied by the feeling that the Haredi society now needs to decide whether it is with the majority of society or not, and if it is, then a blind eye can no longer be turned to the exemption.”

Before the war, the army was contemplating a shortened compulsory service for some of the men who currently serve for three years. This was immediately ditched at the onset of the war, and now, an extension of compulsory service is being discussed.

“While the Haredi population is not going into the army, the burden on the population that does is only growing,” said **Shafran Gittleman**. “This gap can no longer exist.”

“If Israel thought it could rely on a small, technology-based army, Oct 7 was a sobering moment,” she said. “Such a notion—which was also adopted by the military itself—has passed from the world.”

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