

# The Sabra Report

Raising Awareness and Encouraging Discussion About Israel

## In Largest Protest Yet, Over 10,000 Rally Against Netanyahu In Jerusalem

Times of Israel, August 1<sup>st</sup> 2020

### Recap:

Over 10,000 people attended an anti-corruption demonstration at the Prime Minister's Residence. The rallies against Benjamin Netanyahu are the largest Israel has seen since protests in 2011 against the country's high cost of living [1].

### The Context:

- ✧ Protesters have regularly held rallies outside Netanyahu's residence on Balfour Street in Jerusalem, calling on him to resign due to his indictment on corruption charges. Netanyahu is on trial for a series of cases in which he allegedly received lavish gifts from billionaire friends and traded regulatory favors with media moguls for more favorable coverage of himself and his family. The prime minister has denied any wrongdoing, accusing the media and law enforcement of a witch hunt to oust him from office.
- ✧ The rallies have picked up even more steam in response to the government's economic policies during the coronavirus pandemic. The country now faces record levels of coronavirus, while unemployment has surged to more than 20%. As of Sunday, there were more than 72,000 coronavirus cases reported in Israel with more than 530 confirmed deaths [2].
- ✧ Netanyahu slammed the media for inflaming the protests and for distorting right wing incidents of violence against the protesters [3]. Rival MK Yair Lapid criticized the Netanyahu government for tolerating "a million shekels in tax benefits for the Prime Minister when people do not have what to eat [4]."

### Conversation Points:

- ✧ How might coronavirus affect Netanyahu's trial?
- ✧ What steps can Netanyahu take to regain a mandate to lead?

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## Israel Strikes Syrian Military Positions in Response to Attempted Border Attack

Yaniv Kubovich, Jack Khoury, Noa Shpigel, Haaretz, August 4<sup>th</sup> 2020

**Recap:**

The Israeli army struck targets in southern Syria in response to an attempted border attack on Sunday night.

**The Context:**

- ✧ Targets included lookout points, intelligence gathering mechanisms, anti-aircraft weapons and Syrian military bases [5]. Israeli defense officials claimed that Iran was likely behind the attempted plot to plant explosive devices along Israel's border.
- ✧ The outpost previously housed a clinic operated by a Christian charity to treat Syrian civilians affected by the country's civil war. It shuttered when Syrian dictator Bashar Assad's forces retook the Syrian Golan in 2018 [6].
- ✧ "The IDF sees the Syrian regime as responsible for all operations carried out in its territory and will continue to act with determination against all attacks on the sovereignty of the State of Israel," said the IDF [7]. Another 15 Iranian backed militiamen were killed in an air raid in Eastern Syria near the border with Iraq on Tuesday [8].

**Conversation Points:**

- ✧ With the world now virtually silent about Syria's civil war, has Assad won?
- ✧ How might Syria up the ante against Israel now that Assad has regained control of the country?

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## Eli Rozenberg Granted Permit To Buy El Al

Yoav Yaari, Globes, August 4<sup>th</sup> 2020

**Recap:**

The Government Companies Authority has issued Eli Rozenberg a permit to buy a controlling stake in the financially troubled airline. He plans to inject \$75 million for a 45% stake of the company [9].

**The Context:**

- ✧ The state's originally proposed bailout would see El Al become a state-owned company again, while entailing painful budget cuts and layoffs whereas Rozenberg, on the other hand, would not carry such stipulations. \$60 million dollars will be returned to ticket holders unable to fly on the high holidays [10].
- ✧ Rozenberg, who lives in Israel, is the son of New York businessman Kenny Rozenberg. El Al initially refused a meeting until the identity of the bidder was clarified since a bid by Kenny Rozenberg would be invalid as he is not an Israeli citizen. Ultimately, with only one bid in hand, Rozenberg was granted the government permit [11].

**Conversation Points**

- ✧ Should a country be responsible for taking care of its national airline?
  - ✧ What are the pros and cons of El Al becoming state owned?
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**Notes:**

1. [Israel's Netanyahu rails against protesters asking him to resign](#), Al Jazeera, August 2<sup>nd</sup> 2020
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. [Netanyahu: Strange manifestations at protests](#), Gil Hoffman, Jerusalem Post, August 4<sup>th</sup> 2020
5. [Israel strikes Syria in response to attempted terrorist attack](#), Tzvi Joffre, Jerusalem Post, August 4<sup>th</sup> 2020
6. [IDF strikes Syrian military targets in response to attempted border attack](#), Judah Ari Gross, Times of Israel, August 3<sup>rd</sup> 2020
7. [Israel strikes Syria in response to attempted terrorist attack](#), Tzvi Joffre, Jerusalem Post, August 4<sup>th</sup> 2020
8. [Iranian backed operatives killed in strike on base in Eastern Syria - report](#), Ynetnews, August 4<sup>th</sup> 2020
9. [Eli Rozenberg granted permit to buy El Al](#), Yoav Yaari, Globes, August 4<sup>th</sup> 2020
10. [El Al Spurns Potential Buyer](#), Shimon B. Lifkin, Hamodia, August 2<sup>nd</sup> 2020
11. Ibid.

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**The Sabra Report** is a newsletter intended to stimulate conversation about Israel by recapping major events & providing context. Our conversation points are meant to encourage discussion amongst friends and family.

**The Sabra Report** is written by Irving Safdieh.

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