

Beat: Politics

Netanyahu fires top military official over criticism of Gaza crisis

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USPA News - Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Tuesday fired his deputy defense minister after the latter angrily released a statement to the press that sharply criticized the government's decision to accept an Egyptian-proposed ceasefire that was later rejected by Hamas. Calling the remarks "irresponsible," Netanyahu said it could not be that a senior military official publicly attacks the country's leadership while in the midst of a military campaign.

"They also serve the Hamas terrorist organization as a tool to attack the government with as may be seen on the media networks of Hamas itself," he said. Earlier on Tuesday, Deputy Defense Minister Danny Danon released a statement to journalists in which he called for the government to launch a ground operation in the Gaza Strip. "We must not be humiliated. We must correct the mistake of the cabinet decision from this morning," he said in the statement, referring to the security cabinet's decision to accept a ceasefire. The statement, quoted by the Times of Israel, also said: "Netanyahu has already ingratiated himself to [Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas] by releasing 78 terrorists just so he could sit at the negotiating table, didn't respond to the murder of the three youths, and this morning agreed to a ceasefire that was very bad for Israel. What values will he surrender next time!? I did not agree, and won't agree, to this spirit of leftist feebleness by the prime minister, and I won't sell out my ideology for an office and a driver." Netanyahu said he had expected Danon to take responsibility for his actions by resigning, but the deputy minister refused. "Since he has not done so, I have decided - pursuant to the authority granted to me by Article 26(3) of Basic Law: The Government - to dismiss him from his post," the prime minister said. After being fired, Danon reinforced his opinions in a statement quoted by the JTA news agency, saying Netanyahu's decision to accept the ceasefire had weakened Israel. "I could not accept the defeatist atmosphere that has become prevalent in our Cabinet, and I would not compromise my values for the sake of staying in office," he said.

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