

PM rejects 'false statement,' says Bar 'failed miserably'

Bar says Netanyahu demanded personal loyalty, obedience to him and not Supreme Court

In court filing, Shin Bet chief says PM wanted agency to act against anti-government protesters, rejects claims he failed to warn PM ahead of Oct. 7, expresses 'deep concern for the State of Israel'

By [Jeremy Sharon](#) 21 April 2025, 4:49 pm Updated: 22 April 2025



Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (left) and Shin Bet chief Ronen Bar, on April 4, 2023. (Kobi Gideon/GPO)

Shin Bet security agency chief Ronen Bar told the High Court of Justice on Monday that he had been fired due to expectations from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that he be personally loyal to the premier, and said it was made clear to him that he needed to obey Netanyahu and not the Supreme Court in the event of a constitutional crisis.

In a formal statement to the court regarding petitions against the government's decision to fire Bar, the Shin Bet head insisted he had been fired because of his refusal to meet those expectations of loyalty owing to decisions he made regarding investigations into the prime minister's aides; his refusal to help Netanyahu avoid testifying in his criminal trial; and the political fallout from the October 7, 2023, Hamas attack.

Bar also rejected accusations by Netanyahu and others that he and the Shin Bet had advance knowledge of Hamas's October 7 invasion and failed to warn the prime minister, and detailed the steps he and the agency took in the hours before the onslaught in response to the level of threat they believed they were facing.

Bar said that he will soon announce a date on which he intends to quit, but claimed that a court ruling on the petitions against his dismissal was more important than his personal circumstances.

Netanyahu rejected Bar's submission as "a false statement," and the Prime Minister's Office said in response that the Shin Bet head's own acknowledgement of the agency's failures justified his termination by the government. The prime minister has been asked by the court to file his response to Bar's comments in a formal statement of his own.

Bar was fired in a cabinet decision on March 21 at Netanyahu's recommendation after the prime minister said he had lost faith in Bar's ability to do his job. However, several government watchdog groups alleged that the decision was tainted by a conflict of interest amid Shin Bet investigations into Netanyahu's aides, as well as by severe procedural problems in the dismissal process.



A court hearing on petitions against the firing of Shin Bet chief Ronen Bar at the Supreme Court in Jerusalem, April 8, 2025. Photo by Yonatan Sindel/Flash90

The High Court of Justice froze Bar's dismissal and told the government and the Attorney General's Office to work out a solution for resolving the procedural failures, while also inviting Bar to submit his version of events to the court.

Bar submitted an eight-page public statement on Monday via the State Attorney's Office, along with a 31-page classified statement with five appendices providing greater detail and documentation of his claims.

In his open declaration, Bar insisted that, despite the claims by Netanyahu and his legal representative, his relationship with the prime minister only started to deteriorate at the end of 2024.

The reasons for his dismissal

The origin of the deterioration "was not on a professional level but rather [due to] the expectation of personal loyalty on my part to the prime minister," Bar wrote, adding that Netanyahu had praised the Shin Bet during the war for its part in rescuing hostages and eliminating senior terror officials in Gaza, the West Bank, Lebanon, and beyond.

Bar identified November 2024 in particular as a turning point, noting his authorization of an investigation into a leak of classified documents from the Prime Minister's Office; his rejection of a request from Netanyahu's office to tell the Jerusalem District Court that the prime minister couldn't testify in his criminal trial due to security considerations; the Shin Bet's assertion that the political leadership was in part responsible for the October 7 attacks; and the agency's position that there should be a state commission of inquiry into the catastrophe; and Bar's approval of an investigation into the Qatargate scandal, in which aides to Netanyahu are suspected of lobbying for the pro-Hamas Gulf country.

"This sequence of events is what brought about a turning point in the prime minister's attitude to me, and it alone stands at the foundation of the demand to end my tenure," wrote Bar.

Regarding Qatargate, Bar wrote that the suspicion that people employed by [Qatar,] a state supporting Hamas, are working "in the holy of holies of Israeli decision-making" and are allegedly engaged in influence campaigns, plainly requires investigation, "especially when that state is involved in mediating negotiations between Israel and Hamas." He noted the gravity of the allegations against Netanyahu's aides, and the suspicion that their activities have harmed national security and the efforts to secure the release of the hostages, and the untenability of firing the Shin Bet head in the midst of the investigation.

Asked to use powers against protesters

Bar also alleged that Netanyahu asked him on several occasions to act against Israeli citizens involved in protest activity against the government, and wanted him to hand over personal details of protest activists who “tracked” people assigned security details — presumably a reference to government officials.

Bar was likely referring to anti-government activists who followed the movements of ministers, and occasionally members of the prime minister’s family, and called on other activists to demonstrate against them when they appeared in public.

“The expectation to monitor ‘protest funders’ was made clear to me,” said Bar, emphasizing that he refused to acquiesce to such requests.

The Shin Bet chief noted that Netanyahu made such requests after formal work meetings had ended and after his military secretary and the stenographer had left the room, so that his requests would not be recorded.

“The prime minister addressed me multiple times in a manner that made clear his expectation that the Shin Bet act against citizens involved in protest action and demonstrations against the government,” wrote Bar.

Bar noted that in Netanyahu’s response to the petitions against his firing, filed to the High Court, the prime minister said that one of the reasons for the deterioration in trust was Bar’s refusal to act against people organizing mass IDF reserve duty refusals in 2023 — a central part of the protest movement against the government’s judicial overhaul.



An anti-overhaul protest in Tel Aviv on July 29, 2023. (Amir Goldstein)

“This shows how the prime minister viewed the job of the head of the Shin Bet and his expectations that he activate the authorities of the agency in connection with open and public demonstrations of public protest against the government and its policies in which there is no clandestine activity or threat of violence,” Bar told the court.

Ultimate loyalty

“Similarly, it was made clear to me, in reference to the dialogue over the protest [movement], that if a constitutional crisis should break out, I have to obey the prime minister and not the Supreme Court,” Bar said without stating who made that sentiment clear to him.

He said further details would be provided in his classified submission.

Israel has been beset by threats of a full-blown constitutional crisis for much of the current coalition’s tenure due to the government’s efforts to increase its control over the judiciary.

In his submission, Bar also repeated earlier allegations that Netanyahu had sought to have him tell the Jerusalem District Court, where the prime minister is on trial on corruption charges, that the prime minister could not testify due to security concerns.

Bar said Netanyahu “repeatedly” pressured him into issuing instructions for the prime minister to avoid public appearances and exposure to missile fire, “so that in practice it would not be possible to conduct his trial.”

The Shin Bet head added that he was handed a draft of a professional position paper expressing this stance, which he said was written either by Netanyahu or his aides “which I was requested to present as the position paper of the head of the Shin Bet.”

Bar said he would go into the full details of the incident in the classified submission.



Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu testifies behind reinforced protective screens at the Tel Aviv District Court for the second day of testimony in his trial, on December 11, 2024 (Amit Shabi/Pool)

Reported details of classified portion

Bar included classified details of several scandals involving the Prime Minister’s Office and alleged misconduct by Netanyahu himself in the classified submission to the court, Kan news reported Monday night.

Bar provided the court with classified details regarding the Qatargate investigation; the leaking of classified documents by Netanyahu’s aide to the German Bild newspaper; Netanyahu’s alleged requests from Bar to use the agency to act against anti-government protesters; and Netanyahu’s alleged request that Bar help him postpone testifying in his criminal trial.

The classified submission also included details of discussions between security officials and political officials “over the struggle against Hamas,” the report said.

October 7 failures

The Shin Bet head strongly rejected allegations made by Netanyahu and others in the prime minister’s sphere that the agency had advance warning of the October 7 Hamas attack and failed to alert the premier and other security services. He also provided precise details of the steps he took during the evening of October 6 and the early hours of October 7.

Bar acknowledged failures by the Shin Bet but said that allegations that he neglected to update the prime minister were part of “institutional incitement” against him and the organization.

As a prelude, Bar pointed out that the Shin Bet “strongly warned” the government that the societal divisions that erupted around the coalition’s judicial overhaul agenda in 2023 were being seen by Israel’s enemies as creating an opportunity to attack, and that the agency recommended carrying out a series of “targeted attacks” to “prevent the collapse of the balance of deterrence.”

Bar also said he warned Netanyahu in July 2023 of the severity of the security situation and of a “war alert,” which he said was an irregular and unprecedented comment from a Shin Bet chief.

On the night of October 6, Bar said, after “unusual but not unambiguous indications” were received, the commander of the IDF’s Gaza Division and its intelligence unit, and the IDF’s Southern Command, were alerted by telephone at 11 p.m.

At 3:03 a.m. on October 7, all security agencies were issued an alert about “unusual preparations and the possibility of offensive intentions by Hamas,” although he said that the level of the alert was wrong and represented a failure of the Shin Bet.

Bar said he went to the Shin Bet headquarters at 4:30 a.m., and at 5:15 gave instructions for the prime minister’s military secretary to be updated about the events.

“It is with pain that I emphasize that no one evaluated that an attack like this would erupt and certainly not on that morning,” wrote Bar. “However, the attack was ‘not coordinated by us,’ our teams were not ‘sent in order to save Shin Bet personnel,’ and on that night nothing was ‘hidden from the security establishment or the prime minister,’” he added.

Concern for Israel

“Out of a deep concern for the State of Israel in general and the ability of the Shin Bet to function in particular, I saw it as my duty to bring before the court in a full and public manner the sequence of events,” concluded Bar.

“This is my duty to my successor, so that their ability to fulfill their role with professionalism, with commitment to the country, and while insisting that the authorities of the agency and its tools be used for their intended purposes alone, be preserved, and so as to clearly delineate between the trust required in democratic systems and loyalty that characterizes other regimes.”

Netanyahu response

The Prime Minister’s Office claimed in response that Bar’s statement was “full of lies,” and said that the Shin Bet chief only called Netanyahu’s military secretary at 6:13 a.m.

“Bar confirms the assertion of all government ministers that he failed miserably on October 7,” said Netanyahu’s office. “This reason alone is cause for his termination.”

The PMO also asserted that Bar had said only two days before the Hamas attack that the “renewal of understandings between Israel and Hamas based on the principle of quiet in exchange for concessions reveals the potential for preserving stability in the Gaza Strip.”

Democrats MK Naama Lazimi of the opposition penned a letter Monday urging Attorney General Gali Baharav-Miara to launch an immediate criminal investigation against Netanyahu to probe the claims made in Bar’s statement. The left-wing lawmaker made a similar demand two weeks ago over the Qatargate scandal and Bar’s dismissal.

Lazar Berman contributed to this report.