

## Israeli Leaders on the Iran Agreement

15 July 2015

Leaders from across Israel's parties criticized the agreement signed between the P5+1 powers and Iran in Vienna on July 14, 2015. Israelis have long had doubts about the coming deal; an Israel Democracy Institute poll in February found that 61% of Jewish Israelis thought the President Obama would sign a deal even if the Israeli government said it harms Israel's security.

Both Opposition Leader Isaac (Boujie) Herzog and Yesh Atid's Yair Lapid committed to set aside political differences in order to help explain Israel's positions and concerns about the agreement around the world, particularly in Congress. While the opposition leaders criticized the Prime Minister's strategy and tactics, they agreed that the deal is bad and committed their support to Israel's diplomatic efforts against the agreement.

Meretz leader Zehava Galon took a more neutral stance, wondering if this deal is in fact the best possible alternative to allowing Iran to continue its current course. The Joint List faction, representing the mostly Arab parties, supported the deal.

Below is a collection of statements on the agreement from Israel's political leaders.

### **Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Chair of the Likud Party**

The world is a much more dangerous place today than it was yesterday.

The leading international powers have bet our collective future on a deal with the foremost sponsor of international terrorism. They've gambled that in ten years' time, Iran's terrorist regime will change while removing any incentive for it to do so.

In fact, the deal gives Iran every incentive not to change....The bottom line of this very bad deal is exactly what Iran's President Rouhani said today: 'The international community is removing the sanctions and Iran is keeping its nuclear program.'

By not dismantling Iran's nuclear program, in a decade this deal will give an unreformed, unrepentant and far richer terrorist regime the capacity to produce many nuclear bombs, in fact an entire nuclear arsenal with the means to deliver it.

What a stunning historic mistake!

Israel is not bound by this deal with Iran and Israel is not bound by this deal with Iran because Iran continues to seek our destruction.

See full English statement: <http://www.timesofisrael.com/full-text-of-netanyahus-response-to-uke-deal-it-will-fuel-irans-efforts-to-destroy-israel/>

### **Opposition Leader Isaac (Boujie) Herzog, Chair of the Zionist Union Faction**

In the next few days we will study and learn the agreement that was signed at noon time in Vienna. However, the picture that comes out of Vienna is extremely disturbing and worrying as it relates to Israel's security and regional security as well. From an Israeli viewpoint, the agreement that was signed with the Iranian kingdom of terror is a dangerous agreement. Iran is a state the funds, supports and enhances terror throughout the world and the region. It has deceived the world for years as to its intentions and activities...

This agreement is bad for Israel's security in the future...and bad tomorrow morning. And as it comes to security there is no daylight between me and the Prime Minister of Israel...

Despite our differences and the criticism that we have as to Mr. Netanyahu's activities and decisions in this process, I have updated him in the last hour that we as a responsible opposition are fully mobilized this very moment for the wellbeing, security and safety of the State of Israel...in light of this new situation.

I've discussed in recent hours with our friends at AIPAC and other bodies in the United States, and I intend to go out there to speak and meet with relevant people and organizations in order to explain the inherent risks entailed in the agreement to Israel and the region at large and to demand that Israel receive the full-fledged military and security umbrella that will keep its qualitative and military edge in order to be able to challenge the risks entailed in this agreement and further challenges coming out of this agreement in the near and long-term future.

*Link to full statement (English at 2:16)*

[https://www.facebook.com/IsaacHerzog/videos/956402487736049/?autoplay\\_reason=all\\_page\\_organic\\_allowed](https://www.facebook.com/IsaacHerzog/videos/956402487736049/?autoplay_reason=all_page_organic_allowed)

### **Education Minister Naftali Bennett, Chair of the Jewish Home Party**

This day will be remembered as a black day in the history of the free world. The history books have been rewritten again today, and this period will be deemed particularly grave and dangerous...Western citizens who get up for another day at work or school, are not aware of the fact that about half a trillion dollars has been transferred to the hands of a terrorist superpower, the most dangerous country in the world, who has promised the destruction of nations and peoples...Israel has done everything possible to warn of danger and in the end it will follow its own interests and will do whatever it takes to defend itself.

<http://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/Politics-And-Diplomacy/Israels-deputy-FM-says-Iran-nuclear-deal-is-historical-capitulation-408888>

### **MK Yair Lapid, Chair of the Yesh Atid Party**

We thought that this deal would be bad, it's even worse. This is a bad day for the Jewish People, a bad day for the State of Israel and a black day for the world. From this moment on, I am mobilized to work with the US Congress in order to explain to them the need to link the lifting of sanctions to true verification and supervision of Iran's nuclear facilities. What is written in the agreement is not supervision or verification, it's a farce.

I informed the Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Dore Gold that I will help, with all my strength, Israel's diplomatic efforts abroad against this terrible and dangerous agreement.

Beginning today, I will reach out to the news media and our friends in Washington to explain Israel's position, especially on the matter of verifications and sanctions.

I will continue to express my (legitimate) criticism of Netanyahu's failed approach to this process but only at home and only in Hebrew. In the United States and Europe, I am completely committed to the campaign against this agreement.

*[Translated from Lapid's Facebook page]*

### **MK Avigdor Lieberman, Char of the Yisrael Beiteinu Party**

The agreement with Iran will be remembered in history in the same line with the Munich Agreement and the agreement with North Korea. This agreement is an agreement which ignores great dangers, and as a result is a total surrender to terror and unbridled violence in the international arena... A black flag waves over this agreement and it will be remembered as a black day in history, and in

the entire free world...The State of Israel needs to ensure at all times and in all circumstances that it will defend itself. Today, Israel needs to remember: 'If I am not for myself, who will be for me?'"

<http://www.ipost.com/Israel-News/Politics-And-Diplomacy/Israels-deputy-FM-says-Iran-nuclear-deal-is-historical-capitulation-408888>

### **Joint Arab List Statement**

The deal is a victory of the will of the Iranian people and their struggle to remove the siege and sanctions against its country and its refusal to capitulate to international dictates...

The deal should be applied to Israel...the goal of Israel's opposition [to the deal] is to remain the only nuclear power in the region and to deflect international public opinion away from the occupation, which is the source of tensions, warfare, and instability in the Middle East...

<http://www.ipost.com/Israel-News/Politics-And-Diplomacy/Israels-deputy-FM-says-Iran-nuclear-deal-is-historical-capitulation-408888>

### **MK Zehava Galon, Chair of the Meretz Party**

...everyone needs to take a deep breath, dedicate time and read and understand the details of the agreement. It is clear that Iran has a nuclear program and I do not at all question the fact that a nuclear Iran is a threat, and that Israel, like the rest of the Western World, must use all means to prevent Iran.

...Instead of becoming a part of the international community's solution, Israel became part of the problem...We do not belittle Netanyahu's position [that the agreement will bring Iran closer to an atomic bomb and upset the regional balance], but the whole world opposes an Iranian bomb and the Americans are not naïve. Obama believes that the deal will contribute to world peace, serve American interests and strengthen Israel's security.

The deal is not perfect...but it's hard to buy Netanyahu's central argument that it would be better to let Iran continue galloping toward a bomb without a deal than reaching this deal.

[translated from Galon's Facebook page]