# Netanyahu challenges Shin Bet chief’s claims in sworn affidavit amid legal dispute



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has submitted a sworn affidavit to Israel’s Supreme Court, vehemently rejecting allegations made by Ronen Bar, the head of the Shin Bet internal security agency, whom Netanyahu’s government dismissed last month. The affidavit comes amid an ongoing legal dispute over the legality of Bar’s removal and accusations of political interference with the agency.

Netanyahu’s affidavit, filed on Sunday in response to Bar’s initial statement to the court last week, directly challenges claims that he sought to politicise the Shin Bet—a powerful domestic intelligence agency. Bar had alleged that Netanyahu demanded personal loyalty from him in any future constitutional crisis involving the judiciary. Bar also contended that Netanyahu requested the Shin Bet to monitor anti-government protesters and to intervene in Netanyahu’s corruption trial on security grounds.

In a forceful response, Netanyahu called Bar a “liar” and accused him of presenting a “distorted picture” designed to portray himself as defending the rule of law and the agency’s independence. The prime minister categorically denied requesting surveillance of peaceful protesters, clarifying that any Shin Bet involvement pertained strictly to potentially violent activists who might incite threats against senior officials and their families.

Regarding the claim that Netanyahu sought to use the Shin Bet to halt his corruption trial, Netanyahu described the issue as a simple request for enhanced security measures following a Hizbollah drone strike on his private residence in October 2023. He stressed that neither he nor his family were at home at the time, and that the court had eventually moved his trial to an underground facility in Tel Aviv, where he later testified in his own defence in December.

Netanyahu’s affidavit did not directly refute Bar’s allegation that the prime minister expected the spy chief’s loyalty in any future conflict with the Supreme Court. He stated only that there was “no trace” of such a demand in the evidence presented by Bar.

The administration’s move to dismiss Bar last month cited a “loss of confidence” in the spy chief. However, the Supreme Court issued an injunction to halt Bar’s removal pending review of its legality, leading to the current judicial proceedings.

The dispute occurs against the backdrop of a protracted confrontation between Netanyahu’s ruling coalition and Israel’s legal and judicial institutions. Over the past two years, the government has attempted to undermine or weaken various officials and bodies working within these systems.

In his affidavit, Netanyahu questioned the need to engage in an “affidavit competition” with a senior civil servant whom the government had “unanimously” terminated. Yet the document’s most extensive section was dedicated to rebutting Bar’s narrative surrounding the events preceding and during the October 7, 2023 Hamas attack on Israel.

Netanyahu accused Bar of bearing “direct and enormous responsibility” for failing to prevent the attack, which resulted in the deadliest blow in Israeli history. Labelled by Netanyahu as “the largest intelligence failure in Israeli history,” the October assault has been a major point of contention between the government and security agencies.

Most senior security officials present at the time, except for Bar, have either been dismissed or resigned since the attack, and Netanyahu has denied any personal accountability. Efforts to establish a national commission to investigate the assault have been stalled, with Netanyahu’s government opposing such measures.

The Supreme Court is expected to continue deliberations on the legality of Bar’s dismissal and the broader issues raised in the competing affidavits. As of Sunday, there was no immediate public response from Ronen Bar concerning Netanyahu’s latest statements.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)