



2 June 2025

Minister of Foreign Affairs

For approval by

3 June 2025

Israel/Occupied Palestinian Territory: Imposing Travel Ban on extremist Israeli Ministers

BRIEFING Decision Submission

PURPOSE This submission seeks agreement to impose travel bans on Israel's Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich and National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir for incitement to violence, promotion of illegal settlements and actively undermining stability and security in the West Bank.

Recommended referrals

Prime Minister	For information by	4 June 2025
Minister of Immigration	For information by	4 June 2025
Minister of Police	For information by	4 June 2025
Associate Minister of Foreign Affairs	For information by	4 June 2025

Contact details

NAME	ROLE	DIVISION	WORK PHONE
s9(2)(g)(ii)	Divisional Manager	Middle East and Africa Division	s9(2)(a)
	Unit Manager	Middle East and Africa Division	

Minister's Office to complete

☐ Approved	☐ Noted	☐ Referred
☐ Needs amendment	☐ Declined	☐ Withdrawn
☐ Overtaken by events	☐ See Minister's notes	

Comments

Israel/Occupied Palestinian Territory: Imposing Travel Ban on extremist Israeli Ministers

Key points

- s6(a), s6(b)(i)
to sanction Israel's Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich and Minister of National Security Itamar Ben-Gvir. s6(a), s6(b)(i)
- It is in New Zealand's interests to signal our strong opposition to the actions of extremist politicians in Israel. Their recent statements encourage conduct that breaches international law, and that is inimical to any peaceful settlement of the issues. We also need to be seen to be consistent in our response to breaches of international law.
- Officials propose that, s6(a), s6(b)(i)
New Zealand imposes travel bans against the two Ministers under our existing regime for individuals found to be undermining stability and security in the West Bank.
- The case against both Ministers is focused on their personal role in:
 - Encouraging and enabling continued illegal occupation and settlement of Palestinian land in the West Bank to include it unilaterally as part of the State of Israel.
 - Inciting violence against civilians.
 - Promotion of forced displacement of Palestinian civilians.
 - Undermining the authority of the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank, which further destabilises the area and the viability of a two-state solution.
 - Rejecting any politically negotiated two-state solution and the rights of Palestinians toward a future Palestinian state.
- s6(a), s6(b)(i)
- s6(a), s6(b)(i)
- Should you approve this submission, our intention would be to announce any measures in concert with other partners. s6(b)(i), s6(a)
- s6(a)
But the measures would signal a clear rejection of Israeli Ministers' violations of international law and actions which undermine regional stability.
- s6(a)
- s6(a)
-

s9(2)(g)(ii)

for Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Trade

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Israeli Ministers
Recommendations

It is recommended that you:

- | | | |
|---|---|-----------------|
| 1 | Note that Israel's Finance Minister, Bezalel Smotrich and National Security Minister, Itamar Ben-Gvir, have directly supported the expansion of illegal settlements in the West Bank and violence towards Palestinians. | Yes / No |
| 2 | Note that actions by Smotrich and Ben-Gvir reduce the viability of the two-state solution and the broader Middle East Peace Process, breach international law, and undermine the rules-based system. | Yes / No |
| 3 | Agree that New Zealand, in coordination with partners, impose travel bans on Israel's Finance Minister, Bezalel Smotrich and National Security Minister, Itamar Ben-Gvir, under our existing regime for individuals found to be undermining stability and security in the West Bank. | Yes / No |
| 4 | Note that, if you decide to proceed, officials will contact your office separately to coordinate the public announcement of the decision. | Yes / No |
| 5 | s6(a) | Yes / No |
| 6 | | Yes / No |
| 7 | Refer a copy of this submission to the Prime Minister, the Minister of Immigration, the Minister of Police, and Associate Minister of Foreign Affairs for information. | Yes / No |

Rt Hon Winston Peters
Minister of Foreign Affairs

Date: / /

Israel/Occupied Palestinian Territory: Imposing Travel Ban on extremist Israeli Ministers Report

1. s6(a), s6(b)(i) New Zealand s6(a), s6(b)(i) to sanction Israel's Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich and Minister of National Security Itamar Ben-Gvir. s6(a), ... wants to move in coordination with close partners to signal clear opposition to the rapid annexation of the West Bank, s6(a), s6(b)(i)
2. s6(a), s6(b)(i) these two Ministers on the basis that they have been acting s6(a) push forward the settler movement and incite extremists. As such, s6(a), s6(a) However, while the sanctions are deliberately designed to condemn extremist settler behaviour in the West Bank, s6(a)
3. It is in New Zealand's interests to signal our strong opposition to the actions of extremist politicians in Israel. These actions are undermining both regional security and the international rules on which New Zealand depends. While these issues are geographically distant to New Zealand s6(a) to be consistent in our approach to breaches of international law. s6(a)
4. The specific case is focused on multiple statements over an extended period justifying civilian suffering, supporting settlement expansion and Israel's annexation of the West Bank, and encouraging settler violence. Both Ministers have also acted on their statements through a range of legislative, financial and security measures. These measures destabilise the foundations for effective Palestinian governance in the Occupied Territory, threatening the two-state solution.
5. **Smotrich** continues to enact measures to re-designate thousands of acres of Palestinian land as Israeli land for future residential development, and to legalise illegal settlement outposts through Israel's Knesset. He also undermines the Palestinian Authority and security in the West Bank by taking steps to de-stabilise relations between Palestinian banks and the Israeli financial system; and refuses to release customs revenue to the Palestinian Authority, limiting their ability to deliver key services. Smotrich's policies have continued to significantly degrade the West Bank's economy, including denying work permits to Palestinians. This is seen as intentionally weakening the PA and fostering instability.
6. This week as Finance Minister and a minister with control over West Bank planning, Smotrich officially confirmed the government's approval of 22 new settlements, including the legalisation of wildcat outposts, under Israeli law. He stated it was "a strategic move that prevents the establishment of a Palestinian state that would endanger Israel." Media, civil society, commentators described this the biggest expansion of settlements in the West Bank since the Oslo Accords in 1993.
7. Smotrich said on May 19 that "we are disassembling Gaza and leaving it as piles of rubble with total destruction....and the world isn't stopping us." He has openly stated that the goal is to leave no Palestinians in Gaza.
8. **Ben-Gvir** has armed extremist settlers in the West Bank who are inflicting violence on the Palestinian population and interfered in police operational procedures to protect people and

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aid going to Palestinians. He has also disregarded the 'Status Quo'¹ at al-Aqsa Mosque, which is part of al-Haram al-Sharif (Temple Mount), which is under the custodianship of Jordan's Hashemite family. Ben-Gvir has visited the Mosque on multiple occasions, rallying extremist settlers to the Mosque for Jewish prayers and stating his intention to build a Synagogue inside the complex. These actions have been criticised by the international community and other Israeli Government officials as unnecessary and inflammatory. In 2007, Ben-Gvir was convicted of racist incitement and for supporting an anti-Arab terror organisation that has been included on Israeli and US terrorism blacklists.

9. Both Ministers live in illegal settlements in the West Bank. Further information on their actions is provided at Annex I.
10. Section 22 of the Immigration Act 2009 enables the Minister of Immigration to certify immigration instructions which set out the rules and criteria for determining a person's eligibility for the granting of visa and entry permission. Instructions may include matters relating to an applicant's character. Current immigration instructions enable New Zealand to impose travel bans on individuals involved in undermining stability and security in the West Bank. We judge that, based upon the evidence outlined in Annex I, the two Israeli Ministers described in this briefing are involved in undermining stability and security in the West Bank, and therefore should be included in the list held by Immigration New Zealand against whom a travel ban should apply. In this case, travel bans are considered appropriate and reasonable.
11. New Zealand has previously placed travel bans on officials, ministers and leaders of various other countries s6(a) These bans were in response to a range of concerns, including atrocities and human rights violations, election fraud and involvement in crimes such as murder.
12. Should you agree to these travel bans, the Ministers will have alerts placed on their identities in Immigration New Zealand's (INZ) systems to prevent the granting of any visa or New Zealand Electronic Travel Authority, and therefore the ability to travel to New Zealand. As Israeli nationals are normally able to travel to New Zealand (as a visitor) without first applying for a visa, INZ will additionally suspend the visa waiver status of the listed individuals.

Bilateral implications of imposing travel bans on Smotrich and Ben-Gvir

13. Israel would react negatively to travel bans. s6(a)

14. s6(a)

¹ The Status Quo agreement was enacted in 1852 by the Ottoman Empire. The Status Quo seeks to prevent conflict between religious groups at Jerusalem's holy sites by determining the powers and rights of various denominations at each site. Jewish prayer at the al-Aqsa Mosque contravenes the Status Quo and has been banned by Israel.

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15. s6(a)

Partners approaches to sanctions on Israeli Ministers

s6(a), s6(b)(i)

s6(a)

Proactively Released by the
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Resourcing

23. This action will not require additional funding or resources.

Annex I: Actions by Bezalel Smotrich and Itamar Ben-Gvir in the West Bank

The information set out below has been obtained from open sources ^{s6(a)} The information includes statements and actions by Israel's Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich and Minister of National Security Itamar Ben-Gvir, demonstrating their ongoing support for illegal settlements and violence in the West Bank. These statements and actions clearly undermine stability and security in the West Bank by:

- Encouraging and enabling continued illegal occupation and settlement of Palestinian land in the West Bank.
- Inciting violence against civilians.
- Promotion of forced displacement of Palestinian civilians.
- Undermining the authority of the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank, which further destabilises the area and the viability of a two-state solution.
- Promoting annexation of the West Bank to include it unilaterally as part of the State of Israel.
- Rejecting a two-state solution and/or any future Palestinian state.

Israel/Occupied Palestinian Territory: Imposing Travel Ban on extremist Israeli Ministers Actions and Statements from Israel's Minister of Finance Bezalel Smotrich

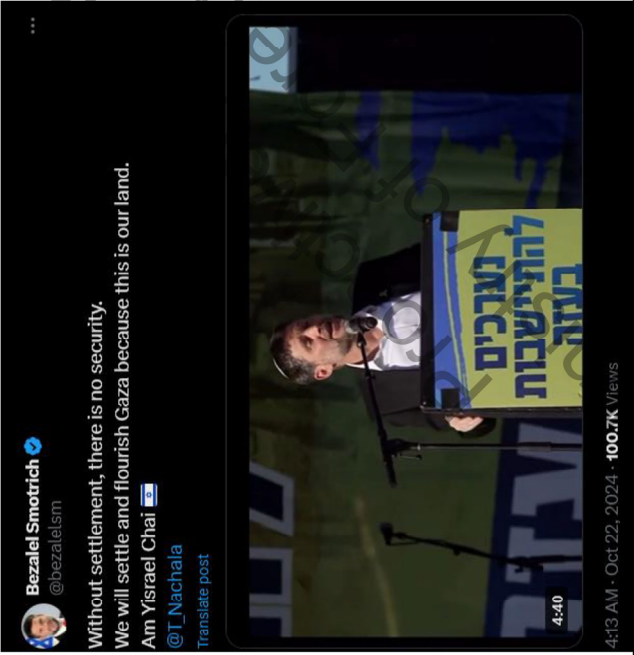
Bezalel Smotrich is the leader of the Religious Zionist Party and the Minister of Finance in Benjamin Netanyahu's Cabinet. He has a central and expansive role in shaping Israeli policy and actions in the West Bank, particularly since his appointment as Minister of Finance in 2022 and with additional ministerial authority within the Defense Ministry. His influence over the West Bank extends across civilian administration, settlement planning, and land management, with a clear ideological goal of expanding Israeli control and presence in the occupied Palestinian territory.

Statements		
Date	Details	Source
December 2016	s9(2)(g)(i)	The Face of Israel's Far Right Wants to 'Abort' Palestinian Hope - Israel News - Haaretz.com
April 2021	s9(2)(g)(i)	Smotrich threatens to expel Arab MK, other Muslims who don't accept Jewish rule Times of Israel
October 2021	s9(2)(g)(i)	Smotrich at Knesset: Ben-Gurion should have 'finished the job,' thrown out Arabs Times of Israel
March 2023	s9(2)(g)(i)	Israeli minister's call to 'erase' Palestinian village an incitement to violence, US says Reuters

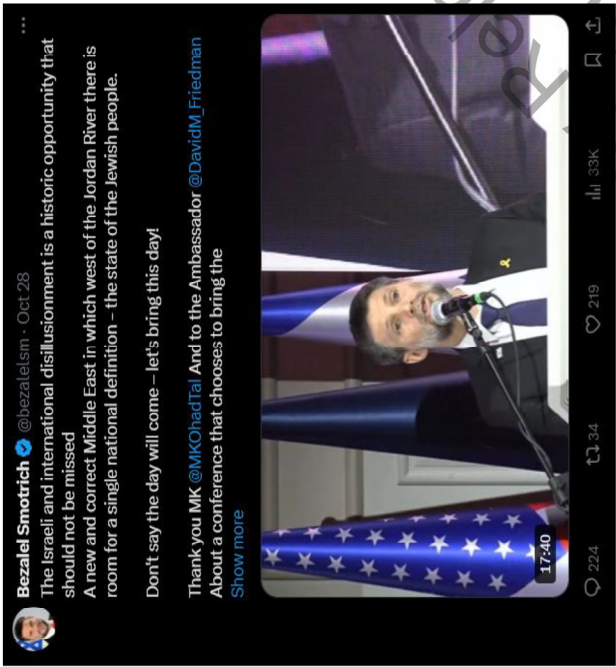
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	s9(2)(g)(i)		
June 2024	s9(2)(g)(i)	Far-right Israeli minister sets out plan to prevent West Bank from becoming part of a Palestinian state CNN	
9 September 2024	s9(2)(g)(i)	X Post: 'בצלאל סמוטריץ' on X: "כמה מנותק צריך להיות כדי?": להמשיך גם אחרי ה-7 לאוקטובר לתמור בהקמת מדינת טרור בלב הארץ ולתקוף את מי שפועל למנוע אותה? מנותק כמו לשים את זה בכותרת גדולה יותר מפיגוע שבו נרצחו שלושה יהודים. משימת חיי היא לבנות את ארץ ישראל ולסכל הקמת מדינה פלשתינית שתסכן את האיראני - דברים הולכים להשתנות" ישראל היום https://t.co/kaYitPTxnx / X	
2 October 2024	s9(2)(g)(i)	סמוטריץ': "אחרי נטרול האוימים הקרובים, אפשר לטפל באיום האיראני - דברים הולכים להשתנות" ישראל היום (israelhayom.co.il) <i>The Judea and Samaria Area is an administrative division used by the State of Israel to refer to the entire West Bank</i>	

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s9(2)(g)(i)		
22 October 2024		בלי התיישבות אין ביטחון. ניישב ונפריח את': 'בעזאל סמוטריץ' @T_Nachala זו עזה כי זו ארצנו. עם ישראל חי https://t.co/MtSxbrLIQQ / X

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28 October		'בצלאל סמוטריץ' (@bezaleism) / X
October 2024	s9(2)(g)(i)	Smotrich calls to extend Israeli sovereignty across West Bank and Gaza, expand settlements The Times of Israel
October 2024	s9(2)(g)(i)	Bezalel Smotrich calls for Israel's borders to extend to Damascus Middle East Eye

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November 2024	s9(2)(g)(i)	He posted the below on X:  Bezalel Smotrich @bezalelsm 2025 - The Year of Sovereignty in Judea and Samaria Translate post 3:03 AM · Nov 12, 2024 · 1.4M Views	"שנת הריבונות ביהודה ושומרון - 2025" בצלאל סמוטריץ' / X Smotrich says Trump's victory an opportunity to 'apply sovereignty' in the West Bank The Times of Israel
May 2025	s9(2)(g)(i)		Smotrich says Gaza to be 'totally destroyed,' population 'concentrated' in small area The Times of Israel Smotrich: Israel should embrace Gaza 'occupation'; IDF won't leave even for hostages Times of Israel

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s9(2)(g)(i)		
May 2025	Smotrich vows to 'rebuild temple' during Jerusalem Day celebrations Middle East Eye	
29 May 2025	https://time.com/7289555/israel-expansion-settlements-west-bank/#:~:text=Shawer%20%2D%20Getty%20Images-.by.established%20in%20the%20West%20Bank. https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/israel-authorizes-more-settlements-in-occupied-west-bank-strikes-on-gaza-kill-13-officials-say	
	Israel announces creation of 22 new settlements in West Bank	
Actions		
Date	Details	Source

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Ongoing	s9(2)(g)(i)		
2005	s9(2)(g)(i)	Former Shin Bet deputy chief said to claim MK Smotrich planned terror attack Times of Israel Netanyahu's political survival in hands of far-right ministers The Guardian	
2006	s9(2)(g)(i)	This Pro-settler NGO Has Been Shaping Israeli Policy for Years. Now, It's in Control - Israel News - Haaretz.com	
Supporting and endorsing Israel's unlawful occupation of West Bank and Palestinian Territories			
2017	s9(2)(g)(i)	How Bezalel Smotrich rode unfiltered radicalism and unforgiving politics to power The Times of Israel	
February 2023	s9(2)(g)(i)	Reuters Israel authorises West Bank outposts, despite U.S. admonition	

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	s9(2)(g)(i)	
June 2023	s9(2)(g)(i)	Israeli government assigns sole responsibility for West Bank settlement planning process to Minister Smotrich - Peace Now Note New Zealand is not permitted access to the Knesset website, including transcripts of their Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee. Smotrich dreams of Israel annexing the West Bank – is he doing it? Israel-Palestine conflict News Al Jazeera Israeli Government Assumes Authorities of the Palestinian Authority in Area B - Peace Now Smotrich handed sweeping powers over West Bank, control over settlement planning The Times of Israel Far-right Israeli minister sets out plan to prevent West Bank from becoming part of a Palestinian state CNN February 2024; March 2024; June 2024
February 2024	s9(2)(g)(i)	
February to June 2024	s9(2)(g)(i)	

² Since the 1993 Oslo Accord, the West Bank has been split into areas A, B and C. Area A being under the governance of the Palestinian Authority; Area B is under joint Israeli-Palestinian control; and Area C is controlled by Israel.

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April 2024	s9(2)(g)(i)	Smotrich said pushing to start legalization process for 68 illegal West Bank outposts The Times of Israel
June 2024 to present	s9(2)(g)(i)	Peace Now Smotrich: "No Funds Will Be Transferred To The PA Until Further Notice" - 124NEWS Security cabinet okays legalizing 5 outposts, sanctioning PA officials The Times of Israel Israeli outpost settlers rapidly seizing West Bank land (bbc.com)
6 May 2025	s9(2)(g)(i)	Smotrich says Gaza to be 'totally destroyed,' population 'concentrated' in small area The Times of Israel
11 May 2025	s9(2)(g)(i)	Cabinet approves West Bank land registration process to 'strengthen Jewish settlement' The Times of Israel
29 May 2025	s9(2)(g)(i)	https://time.com/7289555/israel-expansion-settlements-west-bank/#~:text=Shawer%20%2D%20Getty%20Images-by.established%20in%20the%20West%20Bank.

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	s9(2)(g)(i)	https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/israel-authorizes-more-settlements-in-occupied-west-bank-strikes-on-gaza-kill-13-officials-say
	s9(2)(g)(i)	Israel announces creation of 22 new settlements in West Bank
Continued policy of isolating the Palestinian Authority and Palestinians through financial controls		
October 2023 to present	s9(2)(g)(i)	October 2023: Finance minister says he's freezing PA funds over alleged support for Hamas The Times of Israel May: Israel Responds to Move to Recognize a Palestinian State by Withholding Funds - The New York Times (nytimes.com) August: Israel's Smotrich orders seizure of \$26 mn of Palestinian tax funds (alarabiya.net) January 2025: Israel to use withheld Palestinian tax income to pay electric co debt Reuters

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	s9(2)(g)(i)	
October 2024	s9(2)(g)(i)	Israel's Smotrich to sign waiver for Palestinian banks cooperation for one month Reuters Smotrich extends deal allowing Israel-PA bank ties, but only for 1 month, angering US The Times of Israel Smotrich: "No Funds Will Be Transferred To The PA Until Further Notice" - i24NEWS The New Arab - November 2024

Israel/Occupied Palestinian Territory: Imposing Travel Ban on extremist Israeli Ministers Statements and actions from Israel's Minister of National Security Itamar Ben-Gvir:

Itamar Ben-Gvir is the Leader of the Otzma Yehudit party and the Minister of National Security in Benjamin Netanyahu's Cabinet. Otzma Yehudit is the ideological descendant of the Kach movement, which was banned in Israel after one of its supporters killed 29 Palestinians in Hebron. Ben-Gvir has been convicted on at least eight charges, including supporting a terrorist organisation and incitement to racism.

s6(a)

Statements		
Date	Details	Source
June 2019	s9(2)(g)(i)	השר איתמר בן גביר בשדולה לחידוש ההתיישבות בחבל עזה בכנסת אנחנו מחויבים לחזור וליישב את חבל עזה, צפון השומרון ולא רק בגוש קטיף בכל חבל עזה. א"פ שאין יהודים נכנס טרור. יחד עם התיישבות צריך לבוא גם עידוד הגירה מרצו https://t.co/EGLmjBvQ0F " / X
July 2023		The Middle East, including the Palestinian Question, July 2023 Monthly Forecast : Security Council Report
August 2023		US condemns Israeli minister Ben Gvir's 'inflamatory' Palestinian comments (bbc.com) interview footage on X

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December 2023	s9(2)(g)(i)	Ben Gvir: IDF Brass Lying about 'Settler Violence' The Jewish Press - JewishPress.com David Israel 8 Tevet 5784 – Wednesday, December 20, 2023 JewishPress.com
January 2024		Itamar Ben-Gvir on X: "January 2024"
February 2024		כל עוד: "איתמר בן גביר אני בממשלה, לא תקום מדינה פלסטינית" / X
July 2024		Germany condemns Israeli MK's call to 'shoot Palestinian prisoners in the head' – Middle East Monitor
August 2024		 Hamas Reacts to Alleged Israeli Prisoner Abuse - Newsweek Residents of West Bank town say deadly settler attack was 'most vicious' yet CNN

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s9(2)(g)(i)

September 2024	Ben-Gvir - X- May 2024 Ben-Gvir- X- September 4 2024 Itamar Ben-Gvir on X: 6/09 Israel's Ben-Gvir renews call to kill Palestinian detainees, restrict movement in West Bank (aa.com.tr)
October 2024	עידוד בן גביר - הגירה והתיישבות יהודית בעזה! זה בדינו https://t.co/9LKXIL369W "/ X Israeli minister calls for 'migration' of Palestinians from Gaza Newsfeed Al Jazeera [In response to similar statements in January 2024] Rejection of Irresponsible Statements on Resettlement of Palestinians Outside of

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s9(2)(g)(ii)		Gaza - United States Department of State
April 2025		Ben-Gvir: US Republicans support bombing Gaza 'food and aid depots' Gaza News Al Jazeera
May 2025		Ben Gvir says resumption of aid to Gaza is a 'serious and grave mistake' The Times of Israel
	Date	Source
Ongoing		Israel's Ben-Gvir: far-right kingmaker who wants Hamas eliminated Reuters
		Ben-Gvir sues protesters for saying he was a draft dodger - Israel News - The Jerusalem Post (jpost.com)
June 2007		Jerusalem Post and Aljazeera
December 2022		Judicial reform, boosting Jewish identity: The new coalition's policy guidelines Times of Israel

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s9(2)(g)(i)

March 2023	Approved in first reading: Bill to repeal clauses in Disengagement Plan Implementation Law that bar Israelis from entering or staying in evacuated areas in northern Samaria Knesset News Why the Netanyahu Government's Disengagement Repeal is so Problematic for the Biden Administration J Street US opposes Israeli bill to repeal Disengagement in northern Samaria U.S. summons Israeli ambassador over legitimizing settlements
Since October 2023	Ben Gvir says 10,000 assault rifles purchased for civilian security teams The Times of Israel
November 2023	Report: IDF general, Shin Bet head claim settler violence unchecked on Ben Gvir's

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s9(2)(g)(i)	
April 2024	orders The Times of Israel Itamar Ben-Gvir on X: April 2024

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June 2024	s9(2)(g)(i) Police chief to AG: Ben Gvir pushed to prevent police from guarding Gaza aid convoys The Times of Israel AG calls on PM to weigh firing Ben Gvir over his illegal interventions in police conduct The Times of Israel Itamar Ben-Gvir on X: September 2024
	June 2024: Israeli settlers build new outposts amid rising West Bank violence Reuters Extremist MK Ben Gvir pulls out gun during Sheikh Jarrah clash The Times of Israel Blindfolded and beaten: Palestinians tell of Israeli jail abuse
August 2024	
January 2025	Ben Gvir says he promotes cops only if they implement his policy, in dig at AG The Times of Israel

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Visits, rallies and raids at AlAqsa Mosque	
Throughout 2023, 2024 and 2025	s9(2)(g)(i) January 2023: Far-right Israeli minister makes provocative visit to Al-Aqsa mosque compound (lemonde.fr) August 2024: Israeli minister Ben-Gvir says he would build synagogue on Al-Aqsa compound Al-Aqsa Mosque News Al Jazeera Israeli hardliner Ben-Gvir repeats call for prayer at Al-Aqsa mosque compound Reuters May 2025: Far-right Israelis confront Palestinians, other Israelis in chaotic Jerusalem march, witnesses say Reuters
July 2024 and May 2025	Israel's Ben Gvir says Jewish prayer 'allowed' at Al-Aqsa Mosque Middle East Eye June 2024: Thousands of Israelis march through

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	s9(2)(g)(i) Proactively Released by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade	Jerusalem, some attacking Palestinians Israel-Palestine conflict News Al Jazeera May 2025: Far-right Israelis confront Palestinians, other Israelis in chaotic Jerusalem march, witnesses say Reuters
July 2024		Ben-Gvir- X Post
November 2022	Other	
s9(2)(g)(i)		Who is Israel's far-right, pro-settler Security Minister Ben-Gvir?

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s9(2)(g)(i)

	Israel-Palestine conflict News Al Jazeera Extremist MK Ben Gvir pulls out gun during Sheikh Jarrah clash The Times of Israel
October 2023	October 2023: Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir arms Israeli settlers in occupied West Bank – Middle East Monitor; Ben Gvir says 10,000 assault rifles purchased for civilian security teams The Times of Israel December 2023: An Israeli raced to confront Palestinian attackers. He was then killed by an Israeli soldier AP News May 2024: Israeli army to give more weapons to illegal settlers in West Bank: Report (aa.com.tr) November 2024: Court orders Ben-Gvir to reexamine gun licenses issued after Oct. 7 – JNS.org

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January 2024	s9(2)(g)(i)		The extremists driving Netanyahu's approach to war with Hamas (ft.com)
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