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# Israeli Leaders and the Law

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# Contents

01

**Israeli Officials  
Convicted of Crimes**

3

02

**Ongoing Legal Cases  
Against Israeli Officials**

9

03

**Reaction of  
Israeli Society**

11

\*

**Footnotes**

13

01

[← BACK TO CONTENTS](#)

# Israeli Officials Convicted of Crimes



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01

# Israeli Officials Convicted of Crimes



## **Itamar Ben-Gvir**

**Minister of National Security of Israel<sup>1</sup>**

Ben-Gvir was previously convicted of inciting racism, destroying property, possessing a terrorist group's propaganda material, and supporting a terrorist group – for supporting Meir Kahane's banned Kach movement.<sup>2</sup>



## **Moshe Katsav**

**President of Israel, 2000-2007<sup>3</sup>**

In 2010, Katsav was convicted of two counts of rape, obstruction of justice, and other charges.<sup>4</sup> In 2011, he was sentenced to seven years in prison.<sup>5</sup>



## **Ehud Olmert**

**Prime Minister of Israel, 2006-2009**  
**Cabinet Minister, 1988-1992 and 2003-2006**  
**Mayor of Jerusalem, 1993-2003<sup>6</sup>**

Olmert was convicted of breach of trust in 2012 and bribery in 2015.<sup>7</sup> In 2015, he was sentenced to six years in prison, but his sentence was reduced to 18 months since then.

## Israeli Officials Convicted of Crimes continued...



### Aharon Abuhatzira

**Former Minister of Religious Services  
Minister of Immigrant Absorption  
Minister of Welfare & Social Services<sup>8</sup>**

Abuhatzira was convicted of larceny, breach of trust, and fraud.<sup>9</sup> He was sentenced to a suspended sentence of four years and three months: 30 months for larceny, 18 months for breach of trust and fraud by an administrator, and three months for breach of trust by a public servant.<sup>10</sup>



### Shlomo Benizri

**Former Minister of Health and Labor  
Social Welfare Minister during late 1990s and early 2000s<sup>11</sup>**

In 2008, Benizri was convicted of accepting bribes, breach of faith, obstructing justice, and conspiracy to commit a crime for accepting favours worth millions of shekels, in exchange for inside information regarding foreign workers scheduled to arrive in Israel.<sup>12</sup> He was sentenced to 18 months in jail and moral turpitude was added to the offense.<sup>13</sup>



### Aryeh Deri

**Minister of Internal Affairs, 1988-1993  
Deputy Prime Minister of Israel, 2022 (removed by Supreme Court due to prior conviction)<sup>14</sup>**

Deri was convicted of taking \$155,000 in bribes while serving as Interior Minister and given a three-year jail sentence in 2000.<sup>15</sup> He was re-elected to the Knesset in 2013, indicted for numerous crimes in 2019, and was convicted again in 2022 for several tax offenses.<sup>16</sup> He received a year's suspended sentence, paid a 180,000 shekels (approximately \$49,000) fine, and resigned from Knesset.<sup>17</sup> Due to his resignation, no decision was made on whether the offenses carried the designation of moral turpitude, which would again bar him from running for office for seven years.<sup>18</sup>

## Israeli Officials Convicted of Crimes continued...



### **Tzachi Hanegbi**

**Former Minister of Justice  
Minister of Internal Security  
Minister of Intelligence and Nuclear Affairs<sup>19</sup>**

In 2010, Hanegbi was convicted of perjury, and subsequently was fined 10,000 shekels, and moral turpitude was added to the offense. As a result, Hanegbi suspended himself from the Knesset.<sup>20</sup>



### **Avraham Hirschson**

**Israeli Minister of Finance, 2006-2007<sup>21</sup>**

In 2009, Hirschson was convicted of stealing close to 2 million shekels from the National Workers Labor Federation while he was its chairman.<sup>22</sup> Hirschson was sentenced to five years and five months in prison and a fine of 450,000 shekels.<sup>23</sup>



### **Avigdor Lieberman**

**Former Foreign Minister<sup>24</sup>**

Lieberman was convicted of threatening and assaulting a 12-year-old who had hit his son, and was ordered to pay the child a compensation of 10,000 shekels, and an additional fine of 7,500 shekels.<sup>25</sup>



### **Haim Katz**

**Former Minister of Tourism<sup>26</sup>**

Katz was convicted of fraud in 2021.<sup>27</sup>

## Israeli Officials Convicted of Crimes continued...



### **Yitzhak Mordechai**

**Minister of Defence and Minister of Transport, 1990s<sup>28</sup>**

Mordechai was convicted of harassing and sexually assaulting two women during his military service and later periods.<sup>29</sup> He received an 18-month suspended sentence, and retained his rank of Major General despite his conviction.<sup>30</sup>



### **Rafael Pinhasi**

**Minister of Communications, 1990-1992<sup>31</sup>**

In 1997, Pinhasi was convicted of illegal transfer of funds and sentenced to 12 months' probation and a fine, and in 2013 was convicted of real estate crime.<sup>32</sup>



### **Haim Ramon**

**Former Minister of Health  
Minister of Internal Affairs  
Minister of Justice<sup>33</sup>**

In 2007, Ramon was convicted of an indecent assault without consent, and was sentenced to community service.<sup>34</sup> After serving his community service sentence, Ramon returned to Ehud Olmert's government in 2007 as a minister.<sup>35</sup>

## Israeli Officials Convicted of Crimes continued...



### **Gonen Segev**

**National Infrastructure Minister of Israel, 1995-1996<sup>36</sup>**

Segev was convicted for forgery, electronic commerce fraud, and attempted drug smuggling. He was sentenced to five years in prison.<sup>37</sup> He was also found guilty of spying for Iran and received an 11-year jail term.<sup>38</sup>



### **Ari Harow**

**Benjamin Netanyahu's Chief of Staff<sup>39</sup>**

Harow was convicted of bribery, fraud, breach of trust and money laundering. He accepted a plea bargain to turn in state evidence against Netanyahu for corruption.<sup>40</sup>



### **Meir Kahane**

**Former Knesset member for the Kach party<sup>41</sup>**

Convicted of terrorism for plotting to blow up the Libyan embassy in Brussels.<sup>42</sup>



02

[← BACK TO CONTENTS](#)

# Ongoing Legal Cases Against Israeli Officials



## 02

# Ongoing Legal Cases Against Israeli Officials

## Benjamin Netanyahu

In May 2024, the International Criminal Court issued an arrest warrant for Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu, for the charges of:

Starvation of civilians as a method of warfare as a war crime

- Wilfully causing great suffering, or serious injury to body or health, or cruel treatment as a war crime
- Wilful killing, or murder as a war crime
- Intentionally directing attacks against a civilian population as a war crime
- Extermination and/or murder, including in the context of deaths caused by starvation, as a crime against humanity;
- Persecution as a crime against humanity
- Other inhumane acts as crimes against humanity.<sup>43</sup>

Inside Israel, Netanyahu also has three other cases of charges against him, including fraud, bribery, and breach of trust.<sup>44</sup> He was charged in 2019 and the case has been ongoing since 2020.<sup>45</sup> If convicted, he could be removed from office and imprisoned for up to 10 years.<sup>45</sup>

The trial has been delayed due to pauses during the Covid-19 pandemic and the first months of Israel's genocide in Gaza.<sup>53</sup> The preliminary trial is expected to take several more months; the appeal process, if pursued, could take years.<sup>54</sup>

## Yoav Gallant

In May 2024, the ICC issued an arrest warrant Israeli Defence Minister Yoav Gallant for the same charges as Netanyahu.<sup>46</sup>

03

[← BACK TO CONTENTS](#)

# Reaction of Israeli Society



## 03

# Reaction of Israeli Society

Since 2017, thousands of Israelis have been protesting Netanyahu's government, initially due to allegations of corruption,<sup>47</sup> and since 7 October 2023 also due to his failure to secure the release of Israeli hostages.<sup>48</sup>

Over 100,000 protestors have attended recent anti-government demonstrations calling on Netanyahu to resign. However, these protests are unrelated to the arrest warrant and charges brought by the ICC against him.<sup>49</sup>

Despite widespread anger within Israeli society at Netanyahu's corruption, many of the Israeli officials convicted for corruption and other offences were re-elected to the Knesset following their convictions.<sup>52</sup>

Israeli society has also increasingly favoured Kahanism – the ideology of Mier Kahane – despite his terrorism conviction.<sup>50</sup> Kahane and his party advocated for the expulsion of all Palestinians from Palestine, and this idea has increasing support in Israel today.<sup>51</sup>

Kahanism is now a mainstream political opinion in Israel, with Haaretz describing Kahane as a “hero-terrorist” for young Israelis in 2023.<sup>55</sup> Kahanism supporters in Israel today also glorify Israeli terrorists Baruch Goldstein and Amiram Ben-Uleil, disregarding both their legal convictions and morality.<sup>56</sup>

Goldstein perpetrated the 1994 al-Ibrahimi mosque massacre in Hebron that killed 29 Palestinians whilst they were praying,<sup>57</sup> whilst Ben-Uleil threw firebombs into a Palestinian home in the West Bank, killing three Palestinians – including a one-year-old – and left an orphaned four-year-old child with burns over 60% of his body.<sup>58</sup>

In 2023, many leading right-wing figures, including popular rabbis, contributed to a crowdfunding campaign to improve Ben-Uleil's prison conditions and secure his release, which raised over 1.2 million shekels (approximately \$323,000).<sup>59</sup>

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