

Netanyahu Questioned by Police for Fifth Time in Alleged Corruption Probe

Netanyahu associates were detained in recent days as part of probe into wrongdoing in the sale of German submarines, a case in which Netanyahu has not been interrogated as a suspect

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is being questioned by Israeli police for the fifth time regarding two corruption cases. Investigators arrived at the Prime Minister's Residence in Jerusalem on Thursday afternoon, days after two of his closest affiliates were grilled by investigators in a separate case.

Senior officers of the Lahav 433, the elite special investigations unit arrived at the investigation after significant testimonies were accumulated from the prime minister's recent interrogations involving Cases 1000 and 2000.

Netanyahu is being questioned on matters involving the so-called "Case 1000," in which Netanyahu is suspected of accepting gifts from wealthy benefactors in the form of cigars, champagne and jewelry - worth an estimated total of hundreds of thousands of shekels - allegedly in return for advancing their interests.

This is his fifth time being questioned in this regard and in regards to the so-called "Case 2000," which involves recordings of Netanyahu held talks with the publisher Yedioth Ahronoth, a leading newspaper considered critical of him, to obtain favorable coverage in return for reining Israel Hayom, the paper's main rival and Netanyahu's main mouthpiece.

The climax of the investigation is likely to be in the police confrontation of Netanyahu with the testimony of his former chief of staff Ari Harow. Harow signed an agreement to become state's witness last August to provide details of the two cases in which Netanyahu is suspected.

Over the past four days, two of his closest associates have gone into police questioning in regards to the "submarine affair," or so-called 'Case 3000,' which is by far the most serious scandal surrounding Netanyahu.

A multimillion dollar submarine deal with German shipbuilder ThyssenKrupp is the focus of a police investigation probing possible wrongdoing involving Netanyahu's personal lawyer and German shipbuilder ThyssenKrupp's local representative. The case, called "Case 3000" by police, was based around the two-billion euro deal to purchase three submarines and four patrol boats intended to protect Israel's offshore natural gas platforms.

It is not clear, however, whether the police intend to extract evidence from Netanyahu regarding the "submarine affair" during Thursday's questioning. Unlike the other two cases, Netanyahu has not yet been interrogated as a suspect in Case 3000.

Police are expected to confront Netanyahu with various testimonies taken, including of Arnon Milchan, who was interrogated in London as part of a judicial inquiry a month ago.

Milchan, the Israeli Hollywood producer whose interests Netanyahu is suspected of advancing, acquired a ten-year U.S. visa with the help of then-U.S. ambassador to Israel Dan Shapiro at the behest of the prime minister. Milchan testified to police last year that he gave the Netanyahu family an estimated hundreds of thousands of shekel in gifts.

Netanyahu's investigation is also expected to be documented, as is required of any investigation punishable by ten years or more. It will also be documented for the purposes of supervision by Police Chief Roni Alsheich and Deputy State Prosecutor Shai Nitzan.

Source: <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/1.821863>

[Disclaimer]