

Israeli Police Interrogate Prime Minister Netanyahu Again Over Corruption Probe



Jerusalem, November 11 (RHC)-- Israeli police investigators have questioned Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at his residence in occupied Jerusalem al-Quds over suspicions he illegally accepted valuable gifts from a number of wealthy businessmen for advancing their business interests.

Interrogators from the so-called Lahav 433 anti-corruption unit arrived at Netanyahu's home on Thursday afternoon to question him over his involvement in police cases 1000 and 2000.

Case 1000 revolves around alleged illicit gifts given to Netanyahu and his family by different businessmen, most notably the Israeli-born Hollywood producer Arnon Milchan. The Israeli prime minister and his wife, Sara, have denied wrongdoing in the case, claiming that the value of the items was significantly lower than reported, and that they were only "trifles" exchanged between close friends.

Case 2000 focuses on an alleged clandestine deal made between Netanyahu and Yedioth Ahronoth publisher and owner Arnon "Noni" Mozes, in which the 68-year-old chairman of the Likud party promised Mozes he would support a bill to reduce the circulation of Yedioth's main commercial rival, the Hebrew-language freebie Israel Hayom, in exchange for favorable coverage of himself in Yedioth.

This is the fifth time that Israeli police investigators are grilling Netanyahu for corruption. Reports emerged earlier this year that the president of the World Jewish Congress and Netanyahu's long-time ally, Ronald Lauder, had given the premier and his son gifts, including expensive suits. The accounts prompted Israeli police to interrogate the prime minister.

Netanyahu is currently under probe over suspicions that he accepted 1 million euros (about \$1.1 million) from accused French fraudster Arnaud Mimran for campaign funds during the 2009 elections. There are also calls for Netanyahu to be investigated for his role in a billion-dollar deal to purchase three submarines from German shipbuilder ThyssenKrupp Marine Systems GmbH. Netanyahu's personal lawyer and one of his closest confidants, David Shimron, reportedly represented the German company behind the submarine contract.

The Israeli prime minister, in an apparently unrelated case, is also subjected to accusations that he and his spouse misappropriated public funds to pay for private expenses, ranging from laundry to ice cream.

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