

Ex-Mossad chief Pardo: Halevi should resign even if PM doesn't

'I am embarrassed to be Israeli when Netanyahu derides our best ally'

• By YONAH JEREMY BOB

Former Mossad chief Tamir Pardo on Monday called on IDF Chief of Staff Lt.-Gen. Herzi Halevi to resign, even if Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu does not.

Speaking at Reichman University's Herzliya Conference, Pardo said, "I have known Herzi for 30 years. He is a great commander. What happened [on October 7] is not connected to him as a commander. But it is not right to continue nine months after" the IDF failed to prevent Hamas's October 7 invasion.

He continued, "It is not good for the country or the IDF. On October 9, it was expected that the government would resign and then the operational level [like Halevi] would resign," but given that this has not happened, he said, Halevi needs to

resign to restore public faith in the IDF.

He added that "the IDF could replace [Halevi and others] with great people" and that the Shin Bet (Israel Security Agency) could do the same.

Pardo made it clear that he believed Netanyahu was causing "chaos" within Israel by not resigning and by making "irresponsible" policy decisions "on all fronts." Nonetheless, Pardo is confident that the Shin Bet has so many capable people that it would be impossible for Netanyahu to appoint an unqualified new chief to replace Ronen Bar, the current head.

Pardo was pushing back on Bar's reported position that he would not resign before Netanyahu did because, Bar believes, Netanyahu would politicize the Shin Bet.

In a direct attack on the prime

minister, the former Mossad chief said, "I am embarrassed to be Israeli [when Netanyahu] speaks this way to the country that gave us the greatest backing ever." He was referring to a video Netanyahu put out attacking the Biden administration for slowing or pausing aspects of weapons that it has been providing to Israel throughout the current war as a way to pressure Jerusalem to heed its recommendations regarding the battle of Rafah and the war in general.

Many defense and political officials have slammed Netanyahu on this issue, saying that making his attack public had substantially harmed Israeli security and, potentially, the continued provision of certain weapons.

Former IDF Chief and National Unity MK Gadi Eisenkot noted that Netanyahu's public

attack led to the postponement of a critical US-Israel meeting about threats from Iran, something that the prime minister has always said was his number one focus.

Pardo also warned that the world and media have missed a huge side story: the Port of Eilat has essentially closed during the war because of missile attacks from Yemen's Houthis.

The former Mossad chief said that the fact that no one is even discussing this crucial diplomatic and economic issue shows how lost Israel's current strategy is regarding the war.

Former IDF major-general Noam Tivon said that Netanyahu has significantly harmed any prospect of returning the hostages taken by Hamas by undermining negotiations and taking positions influenced by extremist members of his government.