

Dear Delia, Patricia and Lidija,

Yesterday's evening the Attorney General (herein: "AG") of Israel has announced publicly his decision to indict Prime Minister Netanyahu for the charges of Bribery, Fraud and Breach of Trust in three different corruption cases.

This overwhelming severe indictment has an immediate and significant impact on the ongoing efforts of forming a Government and at the same time seems to have a destructive effect of forming a coalition before December 11 after which Israel is bound to enter into a THIRD ELECTION PERIOD within the year of 2019. In response to these indictments Netanyahu gave a ferocious speech attacking the law enforcement authorities, the State's Attorney, the police department and the media actually calling for resentment towards the Rule of Law.

"This is a hard and sad day," said the AG in a dramatic speech at the Justice Ministry. "I am bringing an indictment on public corruption against the prime minister in three cases. It is sad for me personally and for the country. Out of a deep commitment to the law and the public interest, law enforcement is not something we can choose." "This is our duty. It is not a political issue." he went on. "It is an obligation imposed on all of us – those who are part of law enforcement, and on me personally as the one who stands as its head...There is no man who is above the law."

The attorney-general indicted Netanyahu for bribery, fraud and breach of trust in Case 4000, the Bezeq-Walla Affair; for fraud and breach of trust in Case 1000, the Illegal Gifts Affair; and for fraud and breach of trust in Case 2000, the "Yediot Ahronot"- "Israel Hayom" Affair.

The main and most serious accusation in Case 4000 is that, when serving as Minister of Communications as well as Prime Minister, Netanyahu made regulatory decisions in favor of the Bezeq group, worth huge sums to the group, in return for Shaul Elovitch, at the time the controlling shareholder in Bezeq and in website Walla!, ensuring favorable and biased coverage of Netanyahu and members of his family on Walla! News.

The investigation found that in the period 2012-2017, the prime minister and his associates intervened blatantly and sometimes daily in content published on the Walla! News site, and sought to influence appointments of editors and reporters on the site, using their connections with Shaul and Iris Elovitch. The constant intervention, it was found, was aimed at promoting Netanyahu's personal interests through the publication of flattering reports and pictures lacking any critical perspective on the prime minister and his family.

It was also found that Shaul and Iris Elovitch brought influence to bear on reporting on the Walla! News website, to bias it in favor of Netanyahu's regulatory decisions benefiting Shaul Elovitch and the Bezeq group, out of a desire to continue promoting the business interests of the Bezeq group and its controlling shareholder.

Case 2000 is rather complex. According to the investigation findings, as reported by Israel Police in its summary of the investigation in February 2018, from 2009 for a period of years, Netanyahu and Arnon (Noni) Mozes, publisher of popular Hebrew daily "Yediot Aharonot", held meetings in which they discussed assisting each other in promoting their respective interests.

In this context, there was talk of Mozes assisting Netanyahu in bolstering his standing through positive and favorable coverage in "Yediot Aharonot", in exchange for Netanyahu promoting the newspaper's economic interests by initiating and supporting moves to curb the growing strength of free daily "Israel Hayom".

In Case 1000, the suspicion was investigated that businessman Arnon Milchan provided, frequently and over a period of years, valuable bottles of Champaign and expensive cigars to the Prime Minister worth thousands of shekels each time. The suspicion was also investigated that Milchan bought valuable jewelry for the Prime Minister's wife, Sara Netanyahu. Altogether, according to the police, the gifts were to a value of some NIS 750,000 in the period 2006-2017.

According to the police, Netanyahu acted on Milchan's behalf in several matters relating to the communications market, helping him to

promote investment in Channel 2, and tried to assist him in promoting a commercial venture with Indian company Tata.

Legal proceedings against Benjamin Netanyahu, Shaul Elovitch, Iris Elovitch and Arnon Mozes are still in progress. They deny the charges against them, and are entitled to the presumption of innocence.

As the attorney general stressed these are very sad days to all of us, and as it seems the worse is still to come in an aggressive election period which awaits us.

We will keep you posted of course on any legal events that will occur in these cases.

Looking forward to a new, better, more transparent and ethical government, which hopefully may be formed in the near future.

Chair Nili Arad and ED Heli Olami – TI-ISRAEL