



SIGNS OF THE TIMES

News Articles for Episode 319

[3 - Netanyahu issues list of 4 'nonnegotiable' demands as hostage talks slated to restart | The Times of Israel](#)

#bibleprophecy, #israel, #hamas, #hostages

Jul 7, 2024

Security officials, mediators accuse PM of intentionally sabotaging deal by highlighting gaps in positions ahead of delegation's departure to Cairo and Doha this week

Ahead of the Israeli negotiating team's departure for further hostage deal talks in Cairo and Doha later this week, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu presented a list on Sunday evening of what he said were four nonnegotiable Israeli demands, including a guarantee that Israel could resume fighting, which would need to be met in any hostage release and ceasefire deal with Hamas.

Netanyahu's statement, at a crucial phase ahead of the resumption of talks, sparked anger, both in Israel and among mediators, with some accusing him of attempting to sabotage hard-won progress.

The renewed negotiations in both Egypt and Qatar come after the Hamas terror group said on Saturday that it was ready to discuss a hostage deal and an end to the war in Gaza without an upfront commitment by Israel to a "complete and permanent ceasefire." That statement constitutes a shift in the position Hamas has held in all previous negotiations since November.

Hamas's altered stance regarding the US-backed proposal for a phased truce and hostage exchange deal in Gaza could potentially pave the way for the first pause in fighting since November, although all sides have cautioned that a deal is still not guaranteed.

The list of four demands presented Sunday by the Prime Minister's Office declared that:

1. "Any deal will allow Israel to return to fighting until its war aims are achieved."
2. "Weapons smuggling to Hamas from the Gaza-Egypt border will not be possible."
3. "The return of thousands of armed terrorists to the northern Gaza Strip will not be possible."
4. "Israel will maximize the number of living hostages who will be returned from Hamas captivity."

“The plan that has been agreed to by Israel and that has been welcomed by President Biden will allow Israel to bring back hostages without infringing on the other objectives of the war,” the prime minister’s statement also declared.

Acknowledging Hamas’s backing down from its demand for an upfront Israeli commitment to end the war and its return to the negotiating table, the statement attributed the change to “the prime minister’s firm position against attempts to stop the IDF’s ground operation in Rafah.”

Speaking to AFP on Sunday, an unnamed senior Hamas official confirmed the terror group was no longer seeking an upfront commitment to a complete ceasefire, and explained that “this step was bypassed, as the mediators pledged that as long as the [hostage negotiations continued, the ceasefire would continue].”

On Friday, Walla news reported that Mossad chief David Barnea, Israel’s lead negotiator, who made a brief trip to Doha that day for talks with the Qatari mediators, had rejected the demand for a written commitment from mediators regarding the subject, although Axios subsequently reported that Washington was working on a solution to the disagreement.

Israel has said that there were still “gaps” in Hamas’s response to the proposed deal — the details of which Netanyahu’s office appeared to publicize in its statement — but all sides are expected to step up negotiating efforts in the coming days.

An Israeli delegation led by Shin Bet chief Ronen Bar left for Cairo on Monday. Talks there were expected to address the issue of the Rafah crossing between Egypt and the Gaza Strip, including smuggling issues.

Four-way summit

An official with knowledge of the mediation said on Sunday that US Central Intelligence Agency director William Burns was expected to visit Qatar this week, and an Egyptian source said he would be making a stop in Cairo.

During his visit to Doha, Burns will reportedly hold a four-way meeting with Barnea, Egyptian intelligence head Abbas Kamel, and Qatari Prime Minister Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani.

Turkey is also expected to step up its efforts to push for a deal, the Hamas official told AFP, but did not elaborate on what that would entail.

Speaking to Reuters on the condition of anonymity, two Hamas officials with knowledge of the talks said that the terror group was waiting for Israel’s response to its submitted amendments, while another said Israel was in talks with Qatar, and a response would be forthcoming within days.

Undermining truce efforts

The statement from Netanyahu's office was met with anger by Israeli security officials and mediators, who, not for the first time, accused the prime minister of trying to sabotage the deal.

"Netanyahu pretends that he wants a deal, but is working to torpedo it," an anonymous security official told Channel 12. "He's dragging out the process, trying to stretch time until his speech in Congress [on July 24] and then the [Knesset] recess."

According to the security official, there was "no enthusiasm or drive" on the prime minister's part to finalize a deal for the hostages' release, and instead of discussions being driven by urgency, they were instead built on "smears and radicalized positions."

A second source questioned Netanyahu's desire to "emphasize the gaps" in the negotiations "just before the departure of the delegation," Channel 12 reported.

Opposition Leader Yair Lapid similarly slammed Netanyahu, asking rhetorically what the point of his statement had been.

"I have one response to the announcement from the Prime Minister's Office: What is it good for? We are at a critical moment in the negotiations, the lives of the hostages depend on it; why issue such provocative messages?" Lapid asked. "How does it contribute to the process?"

A senior official from one of the countries mediating between Israel and Hamas also accused Netanyahu of trying to sabotage the deal.

The senior official, speaking to The Times of Israel on condition of anonymity, said that the nonnegotiable demand to resume fighting after the first stage of the ceasefire and hostage release deal publicized by Netanyahu's office hit at the most sensitive aspect of the ongoing negotiations, as Hamas is seeking assurances from the mediators that Israel will not resume fighting after the initial phase.

The official said the mediators had succeeded in bringing Hamas down from an earlier demand for an upfront commitment from Israel to end the war upon the start of the first stage of the agreement.

They have instead kept in place relatively open-ended language regarding the transition from phase one to phase two that allows both Israel to feel comfortable enough that it has the ability to resume fighting if Hamas ceases to negotiate in good faith and Hamas to feel comfortable enough that the mediators will prevent Israel from resuming the war instead of implementing the permanent ceasefire that is stage two of the deal.

"Statements like the one made by the prime minister severely harm efforts to maintain that ambiguity," the senior official from the mediating country said.

“One cannot help but conclude that they are being made for purely political purposes,” the official added, referencing Netanyahu’s desire to appease far-right coalition partners who oppose the hostage deal under discussion.

The Israeli-drafted outline for a hostage deal and truce in Gaza that Biden presented at the end of May proposed a phased deal that would include a “full and complete” six-week ceasefire that would see the release of a number of hostages, including women, the elderly, and the wounded, in exchange for the release of hundreds of Palestinian security prisoners.

During these 42 days, Israeli forces would also withdraw from densely populated areas of Gaza and allow the return of displaced people to their homes in northern Gaza.

Over that period, Hamas, Israel, and mediators would also negotiate the terms of the second phase that could see the release of the remaining male hostages, both civilians and soldiers, in return, Israel would free additional Palestinian security prisoners and detainees. The third phase would see the return of any remaining hostages, including bodies of dead captives, and the start of a years-long reconstruction project.

A Hamas source told Reuters over the weekend that the proposal ensures that mediators would guarantee a temporary ceasefire, aid delivery, and withdrawal of Israeli troops, as long as indirect talks continue to implement the second phase of the agreement.

Hamas also expects up to 400 trucks of humanitarian aid to enter the Gaza Strip each day of the pause in fighting, an official from the terror group told AFP.

Negotiations mediated by Qatar, Egypt and the US have so far failed to secure a truce in Gaza and release of captives there, since a weeklong ceasefire in November saw Hamas free 105 hostages in return for 240 Palestinian prisoners.

Israel believes 116 people remain in Hamas captivity following the October 7 terror onslaught, though dozens of those are no longer alive. Hamas is also believed to hold the bodies of two soldiers killed in 2014, as well as two civilians, presumed alive, who entered the Strip of their own accord not long after.

[Turkey's Erdogan to invite Syrian President Bashar Assad for talks - The Jerusalem Post \(jpost.com\)](#)

#bibleprophecy, #turkey, #syria, #alliance

Jul 7, 2024

Syrian officials however have repeatedly said that any normalization in ties can only come after Turkey agrees to pull out thousands of troops from the rebel-held northwest.

Turkey will extend an invitation to [Syrian President Bashar Assad](#) "any time" for possible talks to restore relations between the two neighbors, Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan said on Sunday.

"We will extend our invitation (to Assad); with this invitation, we want to restore Turkey-Syria relations to the same level as in the past. Our invitation may be extended at any time," Erdogan said, according to a presidency readout of an interview by Turkish media.

Turkey severed ties with Syria in 2011 after the outbreak of the [Syrian civil war](#), in which it supported rebels looking to oust Assad.

It has carried out several cross-border military operations against militants it says threaten its national security, and formed a "safe zone" in northern Syria where Turkish troops are now stationed.

Speaking to reporters on his flight back from Berlin, Erdogan also said Ankara would reciprocate any positive steps from Damascus, and that [Russia's President Vladimir Putin](#) and Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia' al-Sudanicould contribute to facilitating the contact.

"We have now arrived at a point where if Bashar Assad takes a step towards improving relations with Turkey, we will also show that approach towards him," Erdogan said.

[Putin and Iraqi prime minister](#)

"Putin and the Iraqi prime minister have an approach for talks to be in Turkey. We are talking about mediation everywhere, why not with our neighbor?" he was quoted as saying by the Turkish presidency.

Erdogan in June did not rule out a possible meeting with Assad to revive relations.

Syrian officials however have repeatedly said that any normalization in ties can only come after Turkey agrees to pull out thousands of troops from the rebel-held northwest.

[Iran's new 'moderate' president confirms anti-Israel stance as regime increases missile production | All Israel News](#)

#bibleprophecy, ##iran, #missles, #hezbollah, #russia

Jul 8, 2024

Iranian officials admit drones and missiles will be sent to Hezbollah, Russia

Despite being thought of as “moderate,” Iran’s [newly elected president Masoud Pezeshkian](#) on Monday confirmed he would continue the regime’s anti-Israel stance, while reports showed that it recently substantially increased its missile production capabilities.

Writing to Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah, Pezeshkian said “The Islamic Republic has always supported the resistance of the people of the region against the illegitimate Zionist regime.”

“I am certain that the resistance movements in the region will not allow this regime to continue its warmongering and criminal policies against the oppressed people of Palestine and other nations of the region,” Iranian media quoted from Pezeshkian’s letter.

The candidate often described as relatively “moderate” won the recent run-off elections for the succession of Ebrahim Raisi, who [died in a helicopter crash](#) in May.

While Raisi had pushed to strengthen ties with Russia and China, leading the regime's entry into the BRICS alliance to counter Western dominance, Pezeshkian has called for “constructive relations” with Western nations and supports returning to the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) nuclear deal initiated by then-U.S. President Barack Obama.

Pezeshkian’s comments dashed possible hopes of a turning point in relations with Israel by expressing his support for the regime’s “Axis of Resistance,” which includes its military proxies across the region, the foremost of which are Hezbollah and Hamas.

Underlining the regime’s hostile stance, Reuters reported on Monday that the regime conducted “major expansions” at two key ballistic missile facilities.

According to two American researchers, the expansion will boost missile production, a conclusion confirmed by three senior Iranian officials.

This development highlights the threat of Iranian weapons, both by its active use as well as the sale and transfer of weapons to its proxies and allies, especially Russia.

In 2022, Tehran and Moscow agreed the regime would provide ballistic missiles for the Russian war against Ukraine, alongside sales of Iranian drones.

Iran also launched [hundreds of missiles and drones](#) directly at Israel in April, with Israel retaliating by [striking an Iranian military airbase](#) near the city of Isfahan.

According to satellite images from March and April that were seen by Reuters, the Modarres military base and the Khojir missile production complex showed more than 30 new buildings, many of which were surrounded with dirt berms intended to stop an explosion in one building from lighting combustible materials in nearby structures.

Three unnamed Iranian officials confirmed to the news outlet that the bases are being expanded to boost production of conventional ballistic missiles, with one official wondering, “Why shouldn’t we?”

Another official said some of the new buildings were intended to double the manufacturing of military drones, while openly admitting they and the missile components would be sold to Russia, and transferred to the Yemeni Houthi rebels and to Hezbollah.

Target will stop accepting personal checks next week. Are the days of the payment method numbered? (yahoo.com)

#bibleprophecy, #target, #checks, #payments

Jul 9, 2024

NEW YORK (AP) — Target ([TGT](#)) will no longer accept personal checks from shoppers as of July 15, another sign of how a once ubiquitous payment method is going the way of [outmoded objects](#) like floppy disks and the Rolodex.

The Minneapolis-based discounter confirmed the move in a statement to The Associated Press on Tuesday, citing “extremely low volumes” of customers who still write checks. Target said it remained committed to creating an easy and convenient checkout experience with credit and debit cards, “buy now, pay later” services and the [Target Circle membership program](#), which applies deals automatically at checkout.

“We have taken several measures to notify guests in advance” about the no-checks policy, the company said.

Target's decision leaves [Walmart](#), Macy's and Kohl's among the retailers that still accept personal checks at their stores. Whole Foods Market and the Aldi supermarket chain previously stopped taking checks from customers.

[Shoppers](#) have pulled out checkbooks increasingly less often since the mid-1990s. [Cash-dispensing ATMs](#), debit cards, online banking and mobile payment systems like Venmo and [Apple Pay](#) mean many young adults may never have written a check.

Check usage has been in decline for decades as Americans have largely switched to paying for their services with credit and debit cards. Americans wrote roughly 3.4 billion checks in 2022, down from nearly 19 billion checks in 1990, according to [the Federal Reserve](#). However, the average size of the checks Americans wrote over the 32-year period rose from \$673 in 1990 — or \$1,602 in today's dollars — to \$2,652.

The drop in check writing enabled the Federal Reserve to sharply reduce its [national check processing infrastructure](#). In 2003, it ran 45 check-processing locations nationwide; since 2010, it has operated only one.

Rising incidents of [check fraud](#) are also making people shy away from check writing. It's being fueled by organized crime that is forcing small businesses and individuals to

take additional safety protections or to avoid sending checks through the mail altogether.

Former Israeli Defense Minister Urges Jews to Flee France After Rise of Far-Left: ‘There Is No Time’ (breitbart.com)

#bibleprophecy, #france, #jews, #anti-semitism

Jul 8, 2024

Former Israeli Defense Minister Avigdor Lieberman is urging French Jewry to flee France, warning that “there is no time” following the far-left’s triumph in the country’s parliamentary elections.

As Breitbart News [reported](#), French President Emmanuel Macron’s alliance with the New Popular Front delivered a victory over Marine Le Pen’s populist right, which has raised concerns about antisemitism, with many French Jews feeling increasingly uncertain about their place in France.

Des manifestants montent sur des voitures, d’autres sur les abribus, le tout encourage par les Klaxons des automobilistes qui se fraient un chemin place Jean Jaurès à Marseille. pic.twitter.com/NAYcBMwwRm

— Mathilde Ceilles (@MathildeCeilles) [July 7, 2024](#)

The unexpected shift in political power has sparked fears within the roughly 500,000-strong Jewish community, boosting worries about the potential implications for its safety and rights.

In response, Lieberman expressed his concerns regarding the matter.

“In light of the victory of the radical left in France, I call on all French Jews to immigrate to the State of Israel,” the Israeli parliamentarian [wrote](#) on Monday, warning that “there is no time.”

Lieberman, who heads the Yisrael Beytenu Party, slammed Jean-Luc Mélenchon, the new [kingmaker](#) in French politics, for having “spoken out more than once against Jews and the State of Israel.” He also described Mélenchon’s far-left France Unbowed Party as “representing pure antisemitism” and an expression of the “significant rise” in Israel hatred.

The matter comes as French-Jewish leaders [express](#) deep concern over rising antisemitism, advising young Jews to emigrate to Israel, especially in light of the recent political victories of Mélenchon and his far-left party.

Prominent French Rabbi Moshe Sebbag of Synagogue de la Victoire told the *Times of Israel* that it appears that France has “no future for Jews” and advised young Jews to move to Israel.

Mélenchon, who has vowed to recognize a Palestinian state, is seen by 92 percent of French Jews as contributing to the increase in antisemitism.

France will recognise the State of Palestine, the leader of left-wing France Unbowed party, Jean-Luc Melenchon, promised.

The left-wing alliance, the New Popular Front, came out ahead in Sunday's parliamentary elections. pic.twitter.com/Xjh9o6bxAW

— *Middle East Eye (@MiddleEastEye) July 8, 2024*

Similar to the United States and other Western countries, France has experienced a rise in antisemitism since the October 7, 2023, Hamas attack in Israel. The French government reported more than 360 attacks on Jews in early 2024, a 300 percent increase from the previous year.

As Breitbart News [reported](#) in June, “[T]he Jewish community in France was left horrified as a 12-year-old girl in Courbevoie was subject to antisemitism-inspired gang rape by a group of boys ... [alleged](#) to have dragged her to an abandoned building where they ... raped her.”

[Persistent Heat Wave Expected to Shatter New Records | Newsmax.com](#)

#bibleprophecy, #heat wave, #america, #dangerous

Jul 7, 2024

A long-running heat wave that has already shattered previous records across the U.S. will persist, baking parts of the West with dangerous temperatures that will soar into the 100s and holding the East in its hot and humid grip throughout the week, forecasters said Sunday.

An excessive heat warning — the National Weather Service's highest alert — was in effect for about 36 million people, or about 10% of the population, said NWS meteorologist Bryan Jackson. He said he expected dozens of locations in the West and Pacific Northwest to tie or break previous heat records.

That was certainly the case on Saturday: Many areas in Northern California surpassed 110 degrees (43.3 C), with the city of Redding topping out at a record 119 (48.3 C). Las Vegas tied the record of 115 F (46 C), last reached in 2007, and Phoenix topped out at 114 F (45.5 C), just shy of the record of 116 F (46.7 C) dating to 1942.

Marko Boscovich said the best way to beat the heat in Las Vegas is in a seat at a slot machine with a cold beer inside an air-conditioned casino.

"But you know, after it hits triple digits it's about all the same to me," said Boscovich, who was visiting from Sparks, Nevada, to see a Dead & Company concert Saturday night at the Sphere. "Maybe they'll play one of my favorites — 'Cold Rain and Snow.'"

Temperatures in Oregon were expected to exceed 100 degrees Fahrenheit (37.7 degrees Celsius) on Sunday and soar as high as 115 degrees (46.1 C) in some parts of California, Jackson said. On the more-humid East Coast, temperatures above 100 degrees were expected, though no excessive heat advisories were in effect for the region on Sunday.

On Saturday, Raleigh, North Carolina, reached an all-time record high of 106 degrees F (41.1 C), with a maximum heat index of 118 F (47.7 C), he said.

"Drink plenty of fluids, stay in an air-conditioned room, stay out of the sun, and check up on relatives and neighbors," read a National Weather Service advisory for the Baltimore area. "Young children and pets should never be left unattended in vehicles under any circumstances."

Rare heat advisories were extended even into higher elevations including around Lake Tahoe, on the border of California and Nevada, with the National Weather Service in Reno, Nevada, warning of "major heat risk impacts, even in the mountains."

"How hot are we talking? Well, high temperatures across (western Nevada and northeastern California) won't get below 100 degrees (37.8 C) until next weekend," the service posted online. "And unfortunately, there won't be much relief overnight either."

Indeed, Reno hit a high of 104 F (40 C) on Saturday, smashing the old record of 101 F (38.3 C).

More extreme highs are in the near forecast, including 129 F (53.8 C) for Sunday at Furnace Creek, California, in Death Valley National Park, and then around 130 F (54.4 C) through Wednesday.

The hottest temperature ever officially recorded on Earth was 134 F (56.67 C) in July 1913 in Death Valley, eastern California, though some experts dispute that measurement and say the real record was 130 F (54.4 C), recorded there in July 2021.

In Arizona's Maricopa County, which encompasses Phoenix, there have been at least 13 confirmed heat-related deaths this year, along with more than 160 other deaths suspected of being related to heat that are still under investigation, according to a recent report.

That does not include the death of a 10-year-old boy last week in Phoenix who suffered a "heat-related medical event" while hiking with family at South Mountain Park and Preserve, according to police.

Firefighters dispatched aircraft and helicopters to drop water or retardant on a series of wildfires in California.

In Santa Barbara County, northwest of Los Angeles, the Lake Fire has scorched more than 19 square miles (49 square kilometers) of grass, brush and timber. Firefighters said the blaze was displaying "extreme fire behavior" and had the "potential for large growth" with high temperatures and low humidity.

At the Waterfront Blues Festival in Portland, Oregon, music fans coped by drinking cold water, seeking shade or freshening up under water misters. Organizers of the weekend revelries also advertised free access to air conditioning in a nearby hotel.

Angelica Quiroz, 31, kept her scarf and hat wet and applied sunscreen.

"Definitely a difference between the shade and the sun," Quiroz said Friday. "But when you're in the sun, it feels like you're cooking."

[Mel Gibson defends conservative Catholic archbishop punished by Vatican: 'You are a most courageous hero' | Blaze Media \(theblaze.com\)](#)

#bibleprophecy, #catholic, #viganò, #excommunicated, #pope

Jul 9, 2024

Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò was officially excommunicated on serious ecclesial charges.

Mel Gibson is showing his support for a conservative Catholic archbishop whom the Vatican just excommunicated.

Last Friday, the Vatican [officially excommunicated](#) Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò, finding him guilty of schism. The conservative leader, who once served as the Vatican's ambassador to the United States, is a critic of Pope Francis. Officially, Viganò was ousted for his "refusal to recognize and submit to the Supreme Pontiff" and for, among other things, questioning the "legitimacy and magisterial authority of the Second Vatican Council."

'You are a modern day Athanasius! I have all respect for the way you defend Christ and His Church.'

In the Catholic Church, excommunication is a form of censure that bars someone from participating in the sacraments, such as communion, and prohibits their fellowship with the Church. It is meant to encourage repentance and can be repealed.

But Viganò likely has no plans to repent.

"I regard the accusations against me as an honor," Viganò [said](#) last month.

After the Catholic Church took punitive action against Viganò, Hollywood superstar Mel Gibson [released a letter supporting](#) him.

"I hope you will continue to say Mass and receive the sacraments yourself — it really is a badge of honor to be shunned by the false, post conciliar church," Gibson wrote. "You have my sympathies that you suffer publicly this grave injustice. To me and many others you are a most courageous hero."

Gibson praised Viganò for calling out the "core problems" within the Catholic Church and, more importantly in Gibson's view, "the illegitimacy of Francis." Gibson, a

Catholic himself, is a sedevacantist, or someone who believes the Holy See is vacant and the last legitimate pope was Pope Pius XII, who died in 1958. Sedevacantists, moreover, reject the authority of the Second Vatican Council.

Later in the letter, Gibson compared Viganò to Athanasius.

Athanasius was a 4th-century Christian leader in Egypt. History remembers him as a chief defender of orthodox Christian theology who fought against the heresies of Arianism. His stand for the truth led him to be repeatedly exiled.

That's why, according to Gibson, Viganò should wear his excommunication as a "badge of honor."

"You are a modern day Athanasius! I have all respect for the way you defend Christ and His Church," Gibson wrote.

LifeSiteNews [first reported](#) on Gibson's letter and confirmed with Gibson himself that the letter is authentic.

Zuckerberg: AI Companies Trying to Create 'God' | Newsmax.com

#bibleprophecy, #god, #zuckerberg, #artificial intelligence

Jun 29, 2024

Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg claimed this week that artificial intelligence companies are trying to create "God or something," but said his company is different.

"I find it a pretty big turnoff when people in the tech industry kind of talk about building this one true AI. It's almost as if they think they're creating God or something. And it's like, that's not what we're doing," Zuckerberg said during an interview with YouTuber [Kane Kallaway](#).

He also maintained that his company had other goals, such as allowing creators and small businesses to personalize their own AIs to suit their needs.

"So, a big part of the approach is going to be enabling every creator, and then eventually also every small business on the platform, to create an AI for themselves to help them interact with their community and their customers if they're a business," he said.

However, [according to The Sun](#), during his 40-minute interview, the tech CEO made no serious attempt to address the ethical concerns surrounding the technology, such as loss of jobs, privacy, and misinformation.

In a [study](#) conducted by German AI ethicist Thilo Hagendorff from the University of Stuttgart, Large Language AI Models (LLM) exhibited overwhelming "maladaptive" behavior and "Machiavellianism."

"GPT-4, for instance, exhibits deceptive behavior in simple test scenarios 99.16% of the time," the study said.

In another study published in [Patterns](#), researchers found that Meta's LLM also exhibited Machiavellian tendencies:

"Billed as a human-level champion in the political strategy board game 'Diplomacy,'" the tech zine [Futurism](#) wrote, "Meta's Cicero model was the subject of the Patterns study. As the disparate research group — comprised of a physicist, a philosopher, and two AI safety experts — found, the LLM got ahead of its human competitors by, in a word, fibbing."

[Hawaii schools ordered to allow Good News Clubs access to campus | Education \(christianpost.com\)](#)

#bibleprophecy, #good news club, #hawaii, #education, #evangelism

Jul 1, 2024

A federal court has ordered the Hawaii Department of Education and six individual elementary schools to allow Child Evangelism Fellowship's after-school Bible clubs to operate on public school campuses just like any other club. The directive comes months after CEF sued education officials for blocking their student clubs from operating in four local school districts.

The preliminary [injunction](#) protects Good News Clubs from viewpoint discrimination and compels school officials to respond promptly to facility-use applications, [according to Liberty Counsel](#), the legal group that represented CEF.

This decision stems from a lawsuit filed in January, alleging that the Hawaii Department of Education and six schools had continuously denied the Good News Clubs' access to school facilities over three years, citing instances of what the Liberty Counsel described as “blatant religious discrimination.”

During the legal proceedings, it emerged that one school had explicitly barred the club based on its religious nature, while another rejection was attributed to a misinterpretation of school policies.

“This is a great victory for Child Evangelism Fellowship, parents, and the students in Hawaii public schools,” said Mat Staver, founder and chairman of Liberty Counsel. “The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that public schools cannot discriminate against Christian viewpoints regarding use of school facilities,” he pointed out. “Child Evangelism Fellowship gives children a safe space that offers moral and character development from a Christian viewpoint.”

Before the pandemic, child Evangelism Fellowship of Hawaii had established Good News Clubs in over a dozen schools across Oahu and other islands. However, despite the restoration of after-school programs in 2022 following COVID-19 restrictions, the Department of Education, led by four superintendents and other officials, denied all requests from CEF to restart its programs. They rejected every appeal, allowing access only to other similar groups.

The Good News Clubs aim to provide a safe space for children for spiritual growth and moral character development. These clubs, which meet weekly, immediately after

school, are managed by trained local volunteers and offer religious teachings alongside activities promoting learning, service and leadership development. The clubs are free and open to children who have written permission from their parents.

In their complaint filed in the U.S. District Court of the District of Hawaii, CEF Hawaii named several defendants, including the Hawaii Department of Education and Education Superintendent Keith Hayashi; and other area superintendents such as Rochelle Mahoe, Linell Dilwith, Janette Snelling and Richard Fajardo.

The complaint argued that the denials of access violated constitutional rights under the First and Fourteenth Amendments by preventing the clubs from communicating with students on equal footing with secular organizations such as the Girl Scouts and Cub Scouts.

“Good News Clubs should be in every public elementary school,” Staver remarked.

In 2001, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled 6-3 in [*Good News Club v. Milford Central School*](#) that public schools could not ban the Christian student group from meeting on their property after class hours solely because the club was religious in nature.