



# **SIGNS OF THE TIMES**

**News Articles for Episode 404**

# Nearly 20 nations slam Israel's West Bank moves as step toward 'de facto annexation' | The Times of Israel.com

#bibleprophecy, #israel, #west bank, #annexation, #two state solution

Feb 24, 2026

Nearly 20 countries on Monday slammed Israel's recent decision to smooth the path of Jewish settlement in the West Bank, characterizing it as a step toward "de facto annexation" and an attempt to undermine potential Palestinian statehood.

The condemnation followed a [security cabinet decision](#) earlier this month that changed land registration and property acquisition procedures in the West Bank, facilitating Jewish settlement in the territory, and deepening Israeli control over the territory, including at sensitive sites.

"Changes are wide-ranging, reclassifying Palestinian land as so-called Israeli 'state land,' accelerating illegal settlement activity, and further entrenching Israeli administration," said Monday's [joint statement](#), issued by 18 countries.

The nations said the moves were "part of a clear trajectory that aims to change the reality on the ground" and that such actions are "a deliberate and direct attack on the viability of the Palestinian state and the implementation of the two-state solution."

The settlements and decisions designed to further them, said the statement, are "a flagrant violation of international law" and a step toward what it described as "de facto annexation."

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The statement was signed by regional heavyweights Saudi Arabia and Egypt, European powers France and Spain, as well as Indonesia, Brazil and Turkey, among others. It was also endorsed by the League of Arab States, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation and the Palestinian Authority.

The condemnation followed a [similar statement](#), signed by some of the same countries, that was issued immediately after the February 8 cabinet decision.

Far-right Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich said at the time that the goal of the new measures was, in part, to "kill the idea of a Palestinian state."

The plan tightened Israeli control throughout the territory and eased future settlement expansion. It transferred authority over building permits for the Jewish settlement in the largely Palestinian city of Hebron from the Palestinian Authority's Hebron municipality to Israel.

The changes also affect the Tomb of the Patriarchs, a site holy to Judaism and Islam that has been a flashpoint of conflict. The decision also impacted the site of Rachel's Tomb in Bethlehem by establishing "a dedicated municipal authority" responsible for cleaning and routine maintenance of the holy site.

The plan also ordered the publication of land registries in the West Bank, meaning that potential buyers will be able to identify landowners and approach them for purchases. And it repealed a legal provision that prevented non-Muslims from buying real estate in the area, easing property purchases in the West Bank.

In addition, it expanded Israeli oversight and enforcement activities into Areas A and B, which are both meant to be under Palestinian Authority civil control under the 1990s-era Oslo Accords, with regard to water violations, damage to archaeological sites and environmental hazards that pollute the territory.

# 'Turkey is the new Iran' & Erdogan seeks to encircle Israel, fmr Prime Minister Bennett declares | All Israel News.com

#bibleprophecy, #iran, #turkey, #israel, #warning, #threats

Feb 20, 2026

Former PM Naftali Bennett warns Turkey is replacing Iran as Israel's primary security threat, citing Ankara and Qatar's growing regional influence.

Turkey is set to become Israel's new primary security threat, former Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett warned senior American Jewish leaders in Jerusalem this week.

Bennett's dire warning came as he addressed a meeting of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations' 51st Annual Leadership Mission.

His description of the rising Turkish threat followed an assessment that Israel's broader security doctrine had collapsed on Oct. 7, 2023, when Hamas terrorists invaded southern Israel from Gaza.

"Far too long, too many Israeli leaders believed that we only need to buy time and buy quiet," Bennett charged, "We have to replace the organizing principle of the past 20 years of containment with an organizing principle of initiative."

"We won't hesitate to operate throughout the Middle East to pursue enemies, to hunt them down, and to secure a future."

While the Iranian regime has been Israel's primary security threat for decades, Bennett said it is now at the "closest moment in history" to collapse.

However, the former Israeli prime and defense minister warned, "Turkey is the new Iran."

"A new Turkish threat is emerging. I want to be very clear, Turkey and Qatar have gained influence in Syria, are seeking influence elsewhere and everywhere throughout the region."

The Turkish government has long supported Syrian President Ahmed al-Sharaa and his previous terror group Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham, which he led to victory over the Assad regime under the name Abu Muhammad al-Jolani.

The State of Qatar has also been a close ally of Turkey, and its emir, Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, was the first head of state to visit Damascus after the regime change, pledging a large amount of funding to rebuild the ravaged country.

Bennett's drastic warning echoed a well-known prediction by Bernard Lewis, the eminent scholar of the Middle East, who said that after Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan rose to power, Turkey and Iran were ultimately destined to switch their regional roles.

With the ayatollahs gone, Iran would come to fulfill the hopes for moderation and friendship with Israel that were placed in Turkey not that long ago, while Erdoğan would lead Turkey down the road of Islamic radicalism in the mold of the Islamic Revolution, Lewis argued.

Bennett described Erdoğan as “sophisticated, dangerous, and he seeks to encircle Israel. We can't close our eyes again.”

He continued, “And while some senior Israelis were on Qatar's payroll, Qatar and Turkey are nourishing the Islamic **Brotherhood** monster that is growing and eventually might become as dangerous as the one created by Iran, (with) Turkey and Qatar gaining influence not only in Syria but also in Gaza, through the front door and everywhere, and trying to create a new choke ring.”

Bennett, who is seeking to unseat Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in the upcoming elections, has led the charge in **denouncing** the premier for the **Qatargate affair**, in which two of his close aides allegedly received funds from Qatar.

He also warned, “Turkey is trying to flip Saudi Arabia against us and establish a hostile Sunni axis with nuclear Pakistan,” referring to reports that Erdoğan **considered** joining the **defense alliance** between Pakistan and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Bennett later shifted his comments into election mode, arguing that the current government has “divided us and is dividing us now, more than ever”, and calling for its replacement.

“I will not let the leadership that failed continue. I intend to lead Israel into its next chapter – stronger.”

“After three decades since coming to power, and after the greatest disaster in Israel's history occurred on his watch, a leader must know when to step down with dignity. Israel is greater than any one person. The next chapter must be written by a new leadership, without those people responsible for the disaster,” Bennett urged.

# [Iran signs €500 million arms deal with Russia for advanced shoulder-fired missiles | The Jerusalem Post.com](#)

#bibleprophecy, #iran, #missles, #russia

Feb 23, 2026

[Iran](#) agreed to a 500 million Euros arms deal with [Russia](#) to acquire thousands of advanced shoulder-fired missiles, London-based outlet *Financial Times* reported on Sunday.

This comes as part of an effort to rebuild Iran's air defenses, which were heavily reduced by [Israeli airstrikes](#) in June.

The agreement, signed in Moscow in December, will commit Russia to deliver 500 "Verba" launch units and 2,500 "9M336" missiles over three years, according to leaked Russian documents seen by *FT*, and other people familiar with the deal.

The Verba is one of Russia's most modern air-defense systems, according to *FT*. It is a type of system known as a Man-Portable Air-Defense System (MANPADS). It fired an infrared-guided missile capable of targeting cruise missiles, low-flying aircraft, and [drones](#).

Under the contract, Russian deliveries to the Islamic Republic are scheduled in three phases, running from 2027 until 2029. A person familiar with the deal said it was possible a smaller number of systems could have been delivered to Iran early, the outlet cited.

Tehran formally requested the systems last July, shortly after the Israel-Iran war, according to the contract.

Russia would likely have viewed the deal as an opportunity to rebuild ties with Iran after Moscow refused to aid Tehran against Israeli and US airstrikes, a former senior US official was cited as saying.

"They [Russia] want Iran to remain their partner. And so even if they can't react in the middle of a crisis, they're going to look after the crisis to try to patch up the relationship," the former official said.

## **Kremlin, Iranian ministry responsible for arms trade deal**

The deal was negotiated between Rosoboronexport, the Kremlin's state arms export agency, and Moscow's representative to Iran's Defense and Armed Forces Logistics Ministry (MOADAFL), *FT* noted.

It was also arranged by a Moscow-based MODAFL official, who helped to broker Iran's sale of Fath-360 ballistic missiles to Russia for the war in [Ukraine](#), the report added.

*FT* contacted the Iranian embassy in London, which did not respond to questions about the deal. Additionally, the Kremlin declined to comment, and Rosoboronexport did not respond to a request for comment.

# [Iran close to buying the supersonic Chinese missiles that could pose threat to US Navy | The Jerusalem Post.com](#)

#bibleprophecy, #iran, #missles, #russia

Feb 24, 2026

Iran is close to a deal with [China](#) to purchase anti-ship cruise missiles, according to six people with knowledge of the negotiations, just as the United States deploys a vast naval force near the Iranian coast ahead of possible strikes on the Islamic Republic.

The deal for the Chinese-made CM-302 missiles is near completion, though no delivery date has been agreed, the people said. The supersonic missiles have a range of about 290 kilometers and are designed to evade shipborne defenses by flying low and fast. Their deployment would significantly enhance Iran's strike capabilities and pose a threat to US naval forces in the region, two weapons experts said.

Negotiations with China to buy the missile weapons systems, which began at least two years ago, accelerated sharply after the 12-day [war between Israel and Iran](#) in June, according to the six people with knowledge of the talks, including three officials who were briefed by the Iranian government as well as three security officials. As talks entered their final stages last summer, senior Iranian military and government officials traveled to China, including Massoud Oraei, Iran's deputy defense minister, according to two of the security officials. Oraei's visit has not been previously reported.

"It's a complete game-changer if Iran has supersonic capability to attack ships in the area," said Danny Citrinowicz, a former Israeli intelligence officer and now senior Iran researcher at Israel's [Institute for National Security Studies](#) think tank. "These missiles are very difficult to intercept."

*Reuters* could not determine how many missiles were involved in the potential deal, how much Iran had agreed to pay, or whether China would go through with the agreement now given heightened tensions in the region.

"Iran has military and security agreements with its allies, and now is an appropriate time to make use of these agreements," an Iranian foreign ministry official told *Reuters*.

The Chinese delegation to the United Nations directed *Reuters* to seek comment from the Foreign Ministry in Beijing. The foreign and defense ministries did not respond to requests for comment.

The White House did not directly address the negotiations between Iran and China over the missile system when asked by *Reuters*. US President Donald Trump has been

clear that “either we will make a deal or we will have to do something very tough like last time,” a White House official said, referring to the current standoff with Iran.

The missiles would be among the most advanced military hardware to be transferred to Iran by China and defy a United Nations weapons embargo that was first imposed in 2006. The sanctions were suspended in 2015 as part of a nuclear deal with the US and allies, and then reimposed last September.

## **US forces gathering near Iran**

The potential sale would underscore deepening military ties between China and [Iran](#) at a moment of heightened regional tension, complicating US efforts to contain Iran’s missile program and curb its nuclear activities. It would also signal China’s growing willingness to assert itself in a region long dominated by US military might.

China, Iran and Russia hold annual joint naval exercises, and last year the US Treasury Department sanctioned several Chinese entities for supplying chemical precursors to Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps for use in its ballistic missile program. China rejected those allegations, saying it was unaware of the cases cited in the sanctions and that it strictly enforces export controls on dual-use products.

While hosting Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian for a military parade in Beijing in September, Chinese President Xi Jinping told the Iranian leader that “China supports Iran in safeguarding sovereignty, territorial integrity and national dignity.”

China joined Russia and Iran in a joint letter on October 18 to say they believed the decision to reimpose sanctions was flawed.

“Iran has become a battlefield between the US” on one side and Russia and China on the other, said one of the officials who was briefed by Iran’s government on the missile negotiations.

The deal comes as the US assembles an armada within striking distance of Iran, including the aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln and its strike group. The USS Gerald R. Ford and its escorts are also heading to the region. The two ships together can carry more than 5,000 personnel and 150 aircraft.

“China does not want to see a pro-Western regime in Iran,” said Citrinowicz, the Israeli specialist on Iran. “That would be a threat to their interests. They are hoping that this regime will stay.”

Trump said on February 19 that he was giving Iran 10 days to reach an agreement over its nuclear program or face military action. The US is preparing for the possibility of sustained, weeks-long operations against Iran if Trump orders an attack, *Reuters* reported on February 13.

A depleted arsenal

The CM-302 purchase would be a significant improvement in an Iranian arsenal depleted by last year's war, said Pieter Wezeman, a senior researcher at the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute.

China's state-owned China Aerospace Science and Industry Corporation (CASIC) markets the CM-302 as the world's best anti-ship missile, capable of sinking an aircraft carrier or destroyer. The weapons system can be mounted on ships, aircraft, or mobile ground vehicles. It can also take out targets on land.

CASIC did not respond to a request for comment.

Iran is also in discussions to acquire Chinese surface-to-air missile systems, so-called MANPADS, anti-ballistic weapons, and anti-satellite weapons, the six people said.

China was a major arms supplier to Iran in the 1980s, but large-scale weapons transfers dwindled by the late 1990s under international pressure. In recent years, US officials have accused Chinese companies of providing missile-related materials to Iran, but have not publicly accused them of supplying complete missile systems.

### **Khamenei threatens to sink US aircraft carriers in Mideast**

This comes after Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei threatened the US military last week by saying that the "strongest military force may be struck so hard that it cannot get up again."

"Of course, a warship is a dangerous piece of military hardware. However, more dangerous than that warship is the weapon that can send that warship to the bottom of the sea," in reaction to the US sending aircraft carriers to the region.

Khamenei also commented on Iran's nuclear ambitions and hit out at the US for trying to limit the country's program.

"Peaceful nuclear energy is not for war; it is for running the country - for agriculture, for treatment and healthcare, and for everything that depends on energy. This is among the nation's rights. What does it have to do with you Americans?" he commented.

# [UK imposing 'nearly 300 new sanctions on Russia' over attacks on Ukraine | MSN.com](#)

#bibleprophecy, #russia, #united kingdom, #sanctions, #ukraine

Feb 24, 2026

The [United Kingdom](#) announced what it describes as a “[landmark sanctions package](#)” against Russia for its invasion and continued attacks on Ukraine. The “nearly 300 new sanctions on Russia,” targeting its energy revenues, are being hailed as the U.K.’s most aggressive economic action against [Russia](#) since the start of the war.

“The U.K. has announced a landmark sanctions package, cutting off critical oil revenues and further degrading the Kremlin’s ability to wage its illegal war,” read a press release issued by the U.K. government. The announcement of the package comes on the exact date that Russia invaded Ukraine four years ago.

It also comes the same day as U.K. Foreign Secretary Yvette Cooper was in Kyiv, Ukraine, announcing millions of British pounds in new [funding](#) for Ukraine, including funds for emergency energy support and “humanitarian assistance to front line communities.”

“Today I’m in Kyiv announcing £30 million in funding to strengthen Ukrainian energy resilience and support recovery, taking the total U.K. support to £21.8 billion since the start of the war,” Cooper said.

Regarding sanctions, it is the U.K.’s largest since the beginning of the war, according to the press release. The sanctions specifically [target](#) “PJSC Transneft, responsible for transporting over 80% of Russian oil exports,” which will put further economic pressure on Russia to find purchasers for its oil, which is vital to the country’s economy, as Russia is frequently referred to as a petrostate. Current Russian oil revenues are at “their lowest since 2020.”

Additionally, the U.K. targeted “Russia’s dark web of illicit oil traders,” including the critical “2Rivers oil network,” which the U.K. claimed is “one of the largest shadow fleet operators globally and a major trader of Russian crude oil.” It sanctioned 175 companies allegedly linked to the network, further hampering the Russian economy and future war efforts.

The U.K.’s new sanctions also pressure the “49 entities and individuals involved in sustaining Russia’s war machine.” This [includes](#) companies throughout the world that have contributed products to Russia’s war efforts and technological weapons, such as “Russian drones and other weapons terrorizing innocent Ukrainian civilians.” It also affects nine Russian banks, six targets of Russia’s liquefied natural gas industry -

including two Russian exporter terminals, 3 nuclear energy companies, and 2 people entrusted with securing “nuclear installations overseas,” the U.K. announced.

“Deterring, disrupting and degrading the Russian shadow fleet remains a priority for this government, and this latest swathe of sanctions includes 48 oil tankers transporting oil as part of the Kremlin’s desperate attempt to soften the blow of crushing sanctions,” read the U.K.’s release about the sanctions. “To the Kremlin and those seeking to profit from this illicit trade, the message is clear – Russian oil is off the market.”

Cooper lauded the efforts the U.K. took in implementing the sanctions, criticizing Russia for its “barbaric assault” on Ukrainians and violating the codes of war in repeatedly harming Ukraine’s civilian population.

“Russia is now four years into what Putin believed would be a three-day invasion,” [said](#) Cooper. “As the Kremlin continues its barbaric assault against innocent civilians that have suffered their most brutal winter in a decade, the courage and determination of the Ukrainian people endures.”

“The U.K. has today taken decisive action to disrupt the critical financing, military equipment, and revenue streams that sustain Russia’s aggression, in our largest raft of measures since the early months of the invasion,” she said.

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer expressed his continued support for the Ukrainian people and emphasized that the war between Russia and Ukraine is “the most critical issue of our age.” He also declared that “Russia is not winning this war” and blasted “Putin’s aggression.”

“On this grim anniversary, our message to the Ukrainian people is simple: Britain is with you, stronger than ever,” Starmer [said](#). “That is why we are announcing new support today, and we will continue to support Ukraine for as long as it takes.”

“For all the noise in world affairs today, this war remains the most critical issue of our age,” he said. “It asks the question of whether Ukrainian and European freedom will endure. Our answer, together, is unequivocal. Russia is not winning this war. They will not win this war. Ukraine’s courage continues to hold the line for our shared values, in the face of Putin’s aggression.”

“We will stand by their side, until a just and lasting peace – and beyond,” he said. “Slava Ukraini.”

# [Anti-Israel door-to-door campaigns in UK draw accusations of 'Jew hunting' | All Israel News.com](#)

#bibleprophecy, #jews, #israel, #united kingdom, #zionism

Feb 20, 2026

Door-to-door Israel boycott campaign in UK cities sparks fears of intimidation, as Jewish leaders warn of rising antisemitism and “purity pledge” tactics.

Activists campaigning for a boycott of Israel have been going door-to-door in British cities asking people to join their cause, provoking concerns that pro-Israel homes are being marked.

Seeing Zionism as “an apartheid ideology” that should be eradicated, a group based in Bristol believed their door-knocking was “no different from the actions of a political party like the Conservative party or the Labour party, who also go door to door and ask people how they feel,” according to a *Sky News* [interview](#).

The campaigners insist that they are polite and anti-racist, saying they take issue with the State of Israel rather than Jewish people, but the fact remains that the two are largely intertwined.

"Any campaign against Israel is a campaign against British Jews. You can't separate it," [said](#) Vicky Bhogal from the organization Jewish and Proud, saying the anti-Zionist movement was “the modern face of antisemitism.”

Concerns have been raised about what could happen once anti-Israel activists have the home addresses of those who support the Jewish state.

Labour Secretary of State for Business and Trade Peter Kyle expressed his strong opposition to the campaign to create an “Apartheid Free Zone,” [telling](#) *Jewish News* that it “should not be happening.”

The MP said he immediately thought of “the appalling scenario of a vulnerable Jewish resident being door-knocked by a gang of people wanting to harangue them,” a scenario that has troubled many others. “It’s an upsetting thought and should not be happening in 2026 (in) Hove,” he said.

Kyle, whose constituency covers the Brighton and Hove area, said he had alerted the police over the matter. “The moment I became aware of this campaign to door-knock residents under the banner of ‘Apartheid Free Zone,’ I contacted the police and asked they investigate under the hate crime and the incitement laws which the Government has recently brought in.”

However, another MP for the same area publicly supported the “Apartheid Free Zone” movement when it began last year, [describing](#) it as a “brilliant grassroots community organised campaign in solidarity with the people in Palestine.”

Carla Denyer, who was co-leading the Green party at the time, announced, “They’ve already got 5,000 households already signed up to boycott apartheid goods from occupied Palestine and I’m one of those people who’ve signed up.”

“It makes me feel sick to my stomach,” [said](#) Bhogal. “Because I feel that it’s a targeted campaign to turn the people of Brighton against Jews who support Israel. They know they can get away with this. They know they can go door to door, eliciting support.”

Community liaison for the Sussex Jewish Representative Council, Fiona Sharpe, believes that the campaign is a form of bullying. “For too long these xenophobic anti-Jewish racists have been allowed to bully the Jewish and Israeli communities in Brighton and Hove,” she [said](#).

“They do so under the guise of humanitarian anti-racism. But the reality is that they want to make Jewish people feel uncomfortable in our own city and now even our homes. The idea that we should have to sign a purity pledge is obscene.”

“The Jewish community, along with our friends and allies, are calling on all decent people to stand with us on Sunday and go to your local supermarket and buy some Israeli products. Take a positive action to counter their hateful discrimination. Tell them, show them, that Brighton really is a City of Sanctuary for all people, not just those they deem worthy.”

A spokesperson for the Board of Deputies added a statement: “The ‘Apartheid-Free Zone’ door-knocking campaign in Brighton is deeply troubling for many Jewish residents. Political debate is legitimate. Coercive, purity-style pledges that have an intimidating effect (on) Jewish communities are not. Going door-to-door asking neighbours to sign ideological pledges creates a hostile and divisive atmosphere. We call on political leaders to reject this divisive politics.”

Sharpe said the Jewish community was facing the worst antisemitism she’s ever experienced, and sees the recent campaign as part of that. “I think increasingly we see Jewish communities and individual Jews almost forced to take what I call purity pledges – to say ‘Yes, I’m Jewish, but I don’t support the state of Israel, the situation in Gaza or whatever.’”

“I’m a British Jew. I don’t need to justify my existence and my place in my city to anybody,” she added.

The group Campaign Against Antisemitism [alerted](#) its followers about these tactics.

“This past weekend, a woman in Sheffield was allegedly headbutted by a pro-Palestine extremist after challenging those involved in a similar campaign of intimidation.

Anyone who harasses people at their homes – demanding they pledge to boycott the Jewish state under threat of having their addresses recorded – should be under no illusion: we will always take action to ensure those responsible are held accountable.”

“I ask with genuine concern that the campaign group rethink their actions and that instead of creating an environment of fear and intolerance, they join us in solidarity with all religious communities in working for peace and the resolution of conflicts around the world,” said Kyle.

# Outcry after Ambassador Mike Huckabee suggests Israel has God-given right to Middle East land | NBC News.com

#bibleprophecy, #israel, #land, #huckabee

Feb 22, 2026

Arab states have reacted with fury after [U.S. Ambassador to Israel](#) Mike Huckabee suggested Israel has a biblical right to take over large swaths of the Middle East.

“It would be fine if they took it all, but I don’t think that’s what we’re talking about here today,” Huckabee told [podcaster Tucker Carlson](#) during an interview posted on YouTube on Friday, as the two discussed his Christian Zionist beliefs and interpretations of the Old Testament regarding land promised to Abraham's descendants, stretching across multiple modern-day countries.

[Huckabee added](#) that this was not on the table, as “they’re not asking to take all that.” Asked if it would be fine for Israel to take over countries including Syria and Lebanon, he replied: “That’s really not exactly what I’m trying to say.”

His comments drew swift condemnation from across the region.

A joint statement from the foreign ministries of over a dozen Arab and Muslim nations, [including U.S. allies Qatar](#) and Saudi Arabia, expressed their “strong condemnation and profound concern” regarding Huckabee’s comments, affirming their “categorical rejection of such dangerous and inflammatory remarks.”

“These statements directly contradict the vision put forward by U.S. President Donald J. Trump, as well as the Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict,” the statement said.

The League of Arab States, which includes all Arab states in the Middle East and North Africa, called his comments “extremist and lacking any sound basis” in a statement on X.

Saudi Arabia’s foreign ministry described Huckabee’s comments as “extremist rhetoric” and called for the State Department to clarify its position on them, while Egypt described the comments as a “flagrant breach” of international law.

Iran warned the remarks could further “embolden” Israel in its “illegal measures against Palestinians as well as its constant aggression against the nations of the region.”

Huckabee has since complained that a viral clip from the interview did not give the full context of their two-hour exchange, which Carlson posted in full on X and YouTube.

Huckabee wrote on X that they had had a “very twisty and frankly confusing discussion about the meaning of Zionism,” adding that he had been asked “as a former Baptist minister about the ‘theology’ of Christian Zionism.”

“He kept dragging it to discussions about other topics, literally other countries, things that have nothing to do with theology and certainly not with Israel, Zionism, or anything else,” he added.

In the wide-ranging interview, Carlson had asked Huckabee about a Bible verse in which God promises Abraham that his descendants will receive land “from the wadi of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates — the land of the Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites, Hittites, Perizzites, Rephaites, Amorites, Canaanites, Gergashites and Jebusites.”

Carlson, who has increasingly questioned U.S. support for Israel, said that this area would include “basically the entire Middle East,” including parts of Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia and Iraq.

“I’m not sure it would go that far,” Huckabee said, “but it would be a big piece of land.”

He added: “They’re not trying to take over Jordan, take over Syria, take over Iraq, or anywhere else, but they do want to protect their people.”

Israel's far-right finance minister, Bezalel Smotrich, a longtime proponent of Israeli expansion in the Middle East, appeared to welcome the remarks. He posted Saturday on X: “I (heart) Huckabee.”

Huckabee, a devout Christian and outspoken Zionist, has frequently drawn on the Bible when discussing the Israeli occupation of the West Bank, but the latest remarks go a step beyond that in seemingly referring to a much larger hypothetical expansion of the Israeli state.

In [an interview with NBC News in September](#), he said the U.S. and Israel shared a value system that “is rooted deeply in a biblical understanding of a worldview.”

Prior to his appointment as envoy, he was outspoken about his support for the idea that Israel should annex the occupied West Bank and incorporate its Palestinian population, a position that would represent a reversal of decades of U.S. policy.

He has continued to back the idea that the West Bank should be referred to by its biblical name of “Judea and Samaria,” a term that he uses and that right-wing Israeli and American politicians and activists have failed to get the U.S. government to formally adopt.

Huckabee called the terminology “historically accurate” and said it “has roots in a 3,800-year history.”

The ambassador’s interview with Carlson came a week after Israel’s Security Cabinet approved measures to tighten the country’s [control over the West Bank](#) and make it easier for Jewish settlers to buy land there, a move that also attracted widespread statements of concern from Western governments and condemnation from throughout the Middle East.

In Hebron, an ancient community in the West Bank that has Jewish settlements in the heart of the city, the local Palestinian governorate was stripped of planning and building authority, which will instead be controlled by Israeli officials.

The moves were roundly condemned by Palestinians, who see the West Bank as vital for a future independent state. To this day, the international community overwhelmingly considers Israeli settlement construction to be illegal and an obstacle to peace.

Neither the White House nor the State Department have issued statements about the new measures.

# [China pivoting toward antisemitism, driven by geopolitics, report finds | The Times of Israel.com](#)

#bibleprophecy, #israel, #land, #huckabee

Feb 24, 2026

Antisemitism is rising in China, a country previously considered almost free of anti-Jewish hatred, according to a new research [report](#) by the Jewish People Policy Institute.

Anti-Jewish tropes have moved from marginal online spaces into official media, academia, and state-sanctioned discourse, often through a deliberate and complete blurring of distinctions between Israel, Jews, and Judaism, the study found.

Using a comprehensive analysis of Chinese media publications, statements by influencers and academics and social media activity, senior JPPI fellow Shalom Wald identified an “antisemitic wave” that had intensified following the Gaza conflicts in 2021 and 2023.

This phenomenon has wide potential ramifications given China’s global influence, noted JPPI, an independent Israeli think tank.

“When the nation with the second-largest population in the world and one of the principal architects of the global information environment permits the dissemination of antisemitic ideas, fuels them, or tolerates them, its conduct resonates far beyond its borders,” said JPPI president Yedidia Stern.

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Antisemitism in China is developing without a historical background of Jewish persecution and without a significant Jewish presence in the country – a fact that makes the phenomenon particularly unique and troubling, the report found.

About 2,500 to 3,500 Jews are believed to live in mainland China, along with another 3,500 to 5,000 in Hong Kong, according to estimates.

The current trend is not “homegrown” but driven by strategic geopolitical shifts, the report said. These include China’s escalating rivalry with the United States, its growing alignment with Arab and Muslim-majority nations, and a broader adoption of anti-Western narratives.

A search for scapegoats for internal problems may also be partially to blame, it added.

China perceives Jews as having significant influence over American policy, so hostility toward the US is frequently translated into anti-Jewish rhetoric, the report said. This has led to the adoption of Western-style antisemitic tropes, such as claims of global economic control and comparisons between Israel and Nazi Germany.

The Chinese embassy in Israel did not immediately respond to a query about the report or the country's attitudes toward Jews.

According to JPPI, universities in China are "influential incubators" for anti-Jewish sentiment, with leading Chinese lecturers and students increasingly adopting extreme anti-Israel positions that cross into explicit antisemitism. This is particularly concerning because they are training the next generation of Chinese decision-makers, the report warned.

Chinese social media platforms have also become fertile ground for propaganda, as popular influencers, some with millions of followers, publish overtly anti-Jewish content.

Because China maintains strict control over digital and other media, this may suggest that these ideas are "officially sanctioned" or at least tolerated by authorities, the report suggested.

Wald noted the case of a blogger with 15 million followers who quoted from "Mein Kampf" and "The Protocols of the Elders of Zion," and told readers to identify Jews by their "long nose." Another online influencer cited in the report declared after October 7 that " Hamas acted too softly."

Antisemitism has historically been absent from China's political landscape and the country had long [celebrated](#) the role of Shanghai as a sanctuary for more than 20,000 Jewish refugees during World War II, JPPI said.

Wald himself previously [wrote](#) in 2004 that the Chinese reflect little or none of the traditional forms of antisemitism, although he warned then of the risk of a resurgence of "the old canard of a Jewish world conspiracy" in the country.

"Many Chinese often tend to see the Jews as a mirror of their own history, they admire Jewish wealth and successes, they respect the great contributions that Jews have made to Western civilization, and they perceive themselves and the Jews as representing the 'two oldest living civilizations,'" the JPPI report from 2004 said.

Since Israel and China first established formal diplomatic relations in 1992, China's mainstream discourse about Israel has been overwhelmingly positive, analysts [say](#).

A 2014 survey by the Anti-Defamation League [found](#) that 20% of Chinese agreed with negative stereotypes of Jews, placing relatively low compared to other countries.

However, government officials have recently begun to “uproot” the positive memories from the previous century, the new report indicated.

In 2024, a nonpolitical musical about the Shanghai refugees was canceled in Beijing.

In the city of Harbin, memorial plaques were removed from buildings once belonging to the Jewish community, including the former synagogue, and a small Jewish museum was closed.

“Inevitably, the Nazi practice of eliminating all traces of Jewish contributions to Germany comes to mind,” the report said.

While in the past, Chinese nationalists often commended Jewish perseverance, stereotypes of Jewish power and wealth have been reinterpreted as evidence of a malevolent force undermining the global order, the report found.

“Philosemitism and antisemitism are two sides of the same coin in China,” the report said, suggesting that the same generalizations used to praise Jews are now used to vilify them.

The report recommended Israel push against the trend by preserving diplomatic ties with China while setting clear red lines and boundaries against antisemitic expressions. It also suggests increasing ongoing monitoring of Chinese discourse, and strengthening academic and cultural cooperation where possible.

“We must view the phenomenon with clear eyes,” Stern wrote. “The diplomatic consequences are practical and immediate. Israel must continue to maintain its invaluable relationship with the United States while preserving room for constructive engagement with China. It must mobilize Jewish communities worldwide and join forces with governments – especially in Europe – that consistently condemn antisemitic speech and actions, and impose penalties for such conduct.”

# [Heaven Has a Physical Location, a Physicist Claims—And He Thinks He Knows Where in the Universe It Is | Popular Mechanics.com](#)

#bibleprophecy, #heaven, #location, #universe, #big bang

Feb 20, 2026

Here's what you'll learn when you read this story:

- A former Harvard physics lecturer and science communicator has said that heaven could have a physical location.
- While he draws on foundational ideas, such as Hubble's law and the cosmic horizon, the claim fuses modern cosmology with biblical imagery.
- Other scientists have rejected his claim, but some point out that certain scientific musings have slipped into ideas that sound at least partially religious, spiritual, or metaphysical.

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In an opinion essay published on [\*Fox News\*](#) in late January 2026, Michael Guillén, PhD, a former Harvard physics lecturer and science communicator, took the internet by storm with a provocative claim: that paradise might have a physical address.

Drawing on basic cosmological ideas—such as [Hubble's law](#), which holds that distant galaxies recede faster than nearby ones as space expands, and the [cosmic horizon](#), the theoretical limit of what we can ever observe—Guillén extended that relationship to the edge of the observable [universe](#). Pushing that reasoning outward, he wrote that what many religious traditions call “heaven” could lie roughly 273 billion trillion miles away (about 439 billion trillion kilometers), beyond the cosmic horizon.

The claim fused modern cosmology with biblical imagery—and set off a rapid scientific backlash. Multiple outlets published [follow-up pieces](#) quoting astronomers who expressed disbelief at efforts to drape the observable boundary with physical or theological significance. Alex Gianninas, PhD, an associate teaching professor of astronomy at Connecticut College, is one of the scientists pushing back.

“The cosmic horizon is not a physical place, but a finite boundary beyond which we simply cannot see or communicate,” Gianninas says. That limit exists not because the universe ends there, but because light takes time to travel and the universe has a finite age, he explains. The universe is about 13.8 billion years old, and light moves at roughly 300,000 kilometers per second—meaning we can only observe regions whose light has

had enough time to reach Earth. Some regions are simply too far away: their light hasn't arrived yet—or never will.

Then, something intriguing happened very early in the universe's history. During a brief phase known as cosmic inflation—fractions of a second after the Big Bang—space itself expanded so rapidly that some regions were pushed permanently out of causal contact with one another. That early phase matters, Gianninas says, because it effectively set the rules for how space and matter behave on cosmic scales: while matter is bound by the speed of light, space itself can stretch faster than that limit, steadily carrying already disconnected regions farther out of reach.

Guillén treats the cosmological limit as a natural stopping point for the physical universe—after which a “divine realm” may begin.

Gianninas says precisely the opposite: that space almost certainly continues beyond it. “Likely as a continuation of the universe filled with planets, stars, and galaxies, but there is no scientific basis to claim that it is the realm of God, the gods, or the peak of Mount Olympus.”

Yet, Guillén's claim didn't just pop out of nowhere—it fits into a broader moment in which some scientists, and science-informed thinkers, are publicly flirting with ideas that sound at least partially religious, spiritual, or metaphysical. Last year, cosmologist Niayesh Afshordi and co-author Phil Halper suggested that treating the Big Bang as the end-all, be-all beginning can sometimes slip into [creation-story language](#), even within the scientific community itself.

Gianninas believes the moment has less to do with new science than with the new ways ideas now spread. “In an era shaped by social media and instant publishing,” he says, “someone who once might have kept a controversial metaphysical belief to themselves can now share it widely—and quickly find validation from like-minded voices around the globe.”

This does not mean we live in a unique moment in history. Physics, Gianninas notes, has long ventured into territory that could not immediately be tested. Einstein published his paper about general relativity in 1915, but experimental confirmation didn't arrive until years later, when Arthur Eddington observed gravitational lensing during a 1919 solar eclipse. More recently, theories like string theory have proposed extra dimensions and deep mathematical structures that remain experimentally unverified decades after their introduction. The nature of physics is to push deeper into the structure of reality. It's inevitable that some ideas will run ahead of our ability to verify them.

In a recent [Popular Mechanics feature](#), University of Nevada physicist Michael Pravica, PhD, imagined concepts like heaven or hell—and even religious figures such as Jesus—as potentially hyperdimensional or liminal, emphasizing that he was speaking in

metaphysical, not testable, terms. When I asked him about attempts to locate heaven beyond the farthest visible limit for this article, Pravica “had a little bit of a chuckle.”

“Not that I reject the idea of heaven—I do believe there is a heaven—but the way it was framed was intellectually limiting,” he says.

Imagine a two-dimensional circle representing our universe. Guillén’s claim, Pravica says, places “the hereafter” outside the horizon of that circle. But the universe is expanding, which already complicates the geometry. And once you start treating heaven as something spatially “outside,” he adds, the logic quickly breaks down. “If the universe is expanding, does that mean heaven is expanding? Or is heaven being pushed out of that circle?” Still, that doesn’t mean paradise has to be “out there.” If reality includes additional dimensions beyond the familiar three, it could just as easily exist “inside the circle, in a different dimension.”

Pravica is explicit that ideas about hyperdimensional spiritual realms belong not to physics but to metaphysics, a philosophical branch that deals with concepts so abstract they may have no foundation in reality, such as identity and the nature of being. “In the future, perhaps, if we develop techniques for accessing hyperdimensional tunnels or connections—absolutely, perhaps [we could measure heaven], ” he says.

But not at the present time. “I cannot measure an energy that exists outside our spacetime bubble. We live inside the bubble. We’re talking about what’s outside it.” It would be great to pinpoint the postal code of the great hereafter using cosmological tools, but such attempts are destined to fail, because “heaven wouldn’t be tethered to normal energy or matter at all,” Pravica says. It wouldn’t obey gravity or ordinary physical interactions, because “it’s a different energy, one that exists outside the universe we know,” he says.

Gianninas says that a scientist cannot approach claims of heaven having a physical reality or dimension “without verifiable predictions and observational or experimental evidence to back up those claims,” and that they cannot be a part of scientific discourse.

“Extraordinary claims require extraordinary proof,” Gianninas says.

Others, however, believe inspiration comes first—Pravica is one of them. Proof, if it comes at all, follows later. For this camp, many of science’s biggest breakthroughs began as unprovable ideas, born in an “aha” moment. Newton was once called a heretic for proposing gravity—an invisible field no one could see. String theory imagines extra dimensions without experimental proof.

“Why is hyperdimensionality unacceptable as a starting point?” Pravica asks. Even [quantum entanglement](#)—Einstein’s “spooky action at a distance”—becomes easier to imagine, he argues, if particles remain connected through unseen dimensions, like folding a sheet of paper so distant points suddenly touch. Occam’s razor, the rule of thumb that the simplest explanation is often the best, may bring us closer to the truth, he thinks.

And there's another reason to embrace inspiration as a starting point for approaching the unknown, he believes. After the *Popular Mechanics* article about his thoughts on heaven being potentially hyperdimensional or liminal ran, Pravica says he received hundreds of emails—mostly supportive—from engineers, scientists, and other readers who said they shared similar views but rarely voiced them publicly.

“I'm a physicist, but I'm also a human being,” he says [and so are they]. “I have the right to imagine what's beyond the bubble.” Gianninas disagrees. “As scientists, personal or religious beliefs have to be kept separate from science itself,” he says.

Pravica articulates the tension differently. “When you just study physics, it's kind of cold,” he says. It can describe particles and forces with extraordinary precision—but not the reason we are here.

# [Louisiana can display Ten Commandments in classrooms, appeals court rules | Christianpost.com](#)

#bibleprophecy, #ten commandments, #schools, #louisiana, #courts

Feb 23, 2026

## Quick Summary

- Federal appeals court allows Louisiana to enforce law requiring public schools to display the Ten Commandments.
- Court vacated an earlier injunction against the law in a per curiam ruling.
- The law mandates displays measuring at least 11 by 14 inches and permits additional historical documents.

A federal appeals court will allow Louisiana to enforce a state law requiring public schools to display the Ten Commandments.

In a [per curiam ruling](#) released last Friday in *Roake v. Brumley*, the 5th U.S Circuit Court of Appeals vacated an earlier block on the Ten Commandments law being enforced.

The per curiam opinion states that “the parents’ challenge turns on unresolved factual and contextual questions” and thus the injunction against the state law was “premature.”

“There can be no doubt that the Ten Commandments bear immense religious significance,” stated the appeals court. “But they also ‘have historical significance as one of the foundations of our legal system.’ ... That dual character forecloses any categorical rule against their display on public property.”

The appeals court went on to note that since the state law leaves Ten Commandments displays “entirely to the discretion of local school boards,” this means that there are “numerous essential questions unanswered.”

“We do not know, for example, how prominently the displays will appear, what other materials might accompany them, or how — if at all — teachers will reference them during instruction,” noted the per curiam opinion.

“More fundamentally, we do not even know the full content of the displays themselves. Although the statute requires inclusion of the Commandments and a context statement, it expressly permits additional content — such as ‘the Mayflower Compact,

the Declaration of Independence, and the Northwest Ordinance’ — to appear alongside them.”

Circuit Judge Irma Ramirez, a Biden appointee, authored a dissenting opinion, arguing that “no additional factual development” was necessary, given that the state law is chiefly focused on the Ten Commandments.

“Here, [House Bill 71] thoroughly outlines the mandatory religious displays,” wrote Ramirez. “Because H.B. 71 provides sufficient information about the mandatory classroom religious displays, and requires no other materials to be displayed, ‘no additional factual development’ is required to determine the statute’s facial invalidity.”

“I would hold that Plaintiffs have standing to assert their Establishment Clause claims, that they have plausibly alleged those claims, that they are likely to succeed on the merits of those claims, and that the remaining preliminary injunction factors are satisfied.”

Joseph Davis, senior counsel at the religious liberty law firm Becket, who is helping to represent Louisiana, celebrated the per curiam opinion in a [statement](#).

“If the ACLU had its way, every trace of religion would be scrubbed from the fabric of our public life,” said Davis. “We’re glad the Fifth Circuit has allowed Louisiana to display the Ten Commandments in its public school classrooms.”

The progressive advocacy groups representing the parents suing the law include the American Civil Liberties Union, Americans United for Separation of Church and State, and the Freedom From Religion Foundation.

In a [joint statement](#), the groups called the per curiam ruling “extremely disappointing” and claimed that it “would unnecessarily force Louisiana’s public school families into a game of constitutional whack-a-mole in every school district.”

“Longstanding judicial precedent makes clear that our clients need not submit to the very harms they are seeking to prevent before taking legal action to protect their rights,” they added. “But this fight isn’t over. We will continue fighting for the religious freedom of Louisiana’s families.”

In 2024, Louisiana passed House Bill 71, which requires public school classrooms to display a copy of the Ten Commandments that measures at least 11 inches by 14 inches.

Signed by Louisiana Gov. Jeff Landry, the new law also permitted schools to display other historical documents, like the Mayflower Compact and the Declaration of Independence.

Shortly after HB 71 was signed, progressive legal groups [sued](#) Louisiana on behalf of a multifaith group of parents with minor children enrolled in state public schools.

In June of last year, a three-judge panel of the Fifth Circuit issued a [decision](#) upholding a lower court injunction against HB 71, with Ramirez writing in the panel opinion that the law “inflicts significant practical harm on Plaintiffs’ First Amendment rights.”

Last October, the Fifth Circuit issued a brief [per curiam opinion](#) vacating the earlier ruling against the law and agreeing to have the full court hear the case.