



Lemkin Institute
*for Genocide Prevention
and Human Security*

Statement on the Visit of Itamar Ben-Gvir to Marwan Barghouti in Israeli Prison

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The Lemkin Institute for Genocide Prevention and Human Security is outraged by the grotesque and cruel visit of Israeli National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir to Marwan Barghouti in the Ganot prison in central Israel.

In a remarkable and cruel video shared by the Israeli government, Ben-Gvir is seen looming over Barghouti — who is frail, shackled, and surrounded by Israeli soldiers — and proclaiming the following: “You will not defeat us! Anyone who dares to harm the people of Israel, anyone who kills our children or our women, we will wipe them out. You already know this has always been the case throughout history.”

Ben-Gvir apparently made and videotaped this visit with the sole purpose of taunting Barghouti, and, through him, all Palestinians across the world.

Ben-Gvir’s tone is chastising, paternalist, arrogant, entirely in line with the Jewish suprematism that is hurtling Israel towards ever-more destructiveness and catastrophe. Barghouti is not allowed to speak and is clearly facing the threat of violence from guards. The stark difference between the two bodies – Ben-Gvir fat and aggressive, Barghouti emaciated and stooped – is itself profoundly representative of the power dynamics in Israel’s ongoing genocide against Palestinians.

Barghouti, it must be noted, was not involved in the attack on Israel on 7 October 2023. He has been imprisoned by Israel since 2002. This is the first public appearance of Barghouti in ten years. This fact is important and would be well-known to Ben-Gvir. In choosing to address Barghouti specifically, Ben-Gvir demonstrates that his war is with the Palestinian people as such – not simply Hamas, as Israeli propaganda continues to claim.

Barghouti is a senior member of Mahmoud Abbas's Fatah movement and has widespread popularity among Palestinians across Palestine. He is broadly viewed as the one politician with the potential to unite the Palestinian people within a single political bloc. This makes him particularly dangerous to a genocidal state that wishes to keep Palestinians weak and divided. He was captured, convicted, and imprisoned during the Second Intifada (28 September 2000 – 8 February 2005) on charges of involvement in deadly attacks. Barghouti maintains his innocence and an Inter-Parliamentary Union [report](#) has questioned the fairness of his trial.

Ben-Gvir's visit to Barghouti's prison is a *[life force atrocity](#)* – a microcosm of the genocide Israel is inflicting on the Palestinian people. The ever arrogant and smug Ben-Gvir, who has been [convicted](#) for crimes including incitement to racism and support for terrorism, is engaging in a humiliation ritual aimed at not just one Palestinian leader, but the entire Palestinian people. This is in line with the common behavior of genocidaires, who have a penchant for publicly communicating their destructive plans to their victims, particularly leaders within the victim group. In this way, Ben-Gvir's visit is similar to ISIS [propaganda videos](#) directed at former US President Barack Obama and through him, the American people, as well as Azerbaijani humiliation and torture [videos](#) aimed at the Armenian people, and Azerbaijan's public airing of the [trials](#) of Armenian hostages, including former Artsakh State Minister Ruben Vardanyan, which is meant to humiliate Armenia.

It is hard to imagine something more cruel than a perpetrator visiting a leader of a threatened people in prison to inform him that the genocide will continue.

The fact that Ben-Gvir decided to make the visit, and that the Israeli state decided to film and share it, is indicative of the extent to which the Israeli state and society have embraced genocide as a normal mode of conduct in their relations with Palestinians. The video is clearly aimed to simultaneously humiliate and demoralize — destroy the spirit of — Palestinians, on the one hand, and to be celebrated by ordinary people in the perpetrator society, on the other. Genocide's zero sum logic and intimate relational dynamic is on full display.

Ben-Gvir is known for inflammatory statements and acts, so much so that he has been dubbed the "[Minister of Chaos](#)" in the *New Yorker*. His 2023 visit to the Al-Aqsa Mosque was a clear provocation aimed at creating the conditions that would justify massive violence against Palestinians. The Lemkin Institute [flagged](#) it on 30 July 2023 as evidence of a dangerous and active genocidal tendency within the Netanyahu government.



Image Credit: The Times of Israel (2025)

Most recently, on 20 August 2025, Ben Gvir directed the installation of large photographs depicting the destruction in Gaza — such as collapsed buildings and rubble — along prison corridors. Ben Gvir bragged that these visuals are deliberately positioned in areas that Palestinian inmates must walk through during their daily outdoor time. We remind readers that the vast majority of Palestinians in Israeli jails are not charged with being involved with the October 7, 2023 attack or with being members of Hamas. Many have not been charged at all. Again, evidence that Israel’s target is all Palestinians, not Hamas.

Ben-Gvir’s visit to Barghouti is also a possible threat to Barghouti’s life. Palestinian inmates have no protection from their jailers in Israeli prisons. Especially since 7 October, Israeli detention facilities have operated as torture centers. As of July 2025, 75 prisoners had died while in Israeli detention. Ben-Gvir’s video is the first public appearance of Barghouti in ten years and his declining health seems evident. Frail and wan, his condition reflects years of systematic brutality, which is common and well-documented in Israeli prisons.

Ben-Gvir’s visit is also important direct evidence of the intentional nature of Israel’s current mass murder and displacement genocide of Palestinians in Gaza, the West Bank, and East Jerusalem. By invoking “history,” Ben-Gvir reveals that this violence is not random but a premeditated policy that has existed for some time and that Israel fully intends to continue.

By involving Barghouti in this political stunt – who, as a member of Fatah, does not represent the Hamas-controlled Gaza Strip – Ben-Gvir demonstrates that Israel’s target is not Hamas, but all Palestinians everywhere in Palestine.

Ben-Gvir's visit has been denounced by Hamas, which linked Barghouti's treatment to the "war crimes committed in the Sde Teiman prison," and by the Palestinian Foreign Ministry, which characterized Ben-Gvir's conduct as "organized state terrorism." It has also been condemned by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

The Lemkin Institute denounces Ben-Gvir's flagrantly genocidal theater. We call for Barghouti's immediate release. We call for Israel's allies to place immediate pressure, including sharp financial and military pressure, on Israel to stop the genocide and to hold Israel accountable for genocide. We call for a truth commission, reparations, and justice for Palestinians.