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INFLUENCER INSIGHTS

TikTok sale could be 'consequential' for Israel, Jews, Netanyahu tells influencers

'We have to fight the fight' on social media, shore up support on American right, Netanyahu says



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu meets with American pro-Israel influencers in New York, Sept. 28th, 2025

By [Lahav Harkov](#) · September 29, 2025

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Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu expressed hope on Friday that the sale of TikTok to a joint venture partially owned by Oracle CEO Larry Ellison would be completed.

"Weapons change over time," Netanyahu told a group of pro-Israel influencers in New York on the sidelines of the U.N. General Assembly. "You can't fight today with swords and you can't fight with cavalry. ...You have to fight with the weapons that apply to the battlefield, and one of the most important ones is social media."

Netanyahu called the sale of TikTok "the most important purchase happening."

"I hope it goes through, because it can be consequential," he added.

Following a law requiring TikTok's owner, the China-based ByteDance, to sell the app's U.S. operations or be banned over security concerns, President Donald Trump signed an executive order last week authorizing a new company to buy over much of TikTok's U.S. business. The company started by Oracle – owned by longtime Netanyahu friend and Trump ally Larry Ellison – Silver Lake and U.A.E.-based MGX, will control a 45% stake in TikTok's operations stateside. Oracle would oversee security operations, and Trump said that

Ellison's company is "playing a very big part." China has yet to say it has changed laws needed for the deal to be completed, but Trump said that Beijing approved it.

Netanyahu also said that "we have to talk to Elon" Musk, describing the X owner as "not an enemy; he's a friend." The Israeli prime minister has met with Musk multiple times, including at [Tesla's headquarters](#) in California in 2023, and Musk paid a [solidarity visit](#) to Israel soon after the Oct. 7 attacks.

Soon after Jewish conservative influencer Debra Lea posted the video of Netanyahu's remarks on X, anti-Israel figures including Shaun King and Max Blumenthal began claiming that Israel was taking control of TikTok, an angle seized upon by [Iranian](#) and [Turkish](#) state media.

Netanyahu's remarks came in response to a question from Lea about a drop in support for Israel from Evangelical Christians.

He talked about "the woke right — I call it the 'woke reich.'"

"These people — they're not any different from the woke left; they're insane," he said. "What we need to do is secure that place of our support in the U.S. that is being challenged systematically."

That challenge, he argued, is funded by governments and NGOs.

"We have to fight the fight. Give direction to the Jewish people and give direction to our non-Jewish friends or those who could be our friends," he said.

About 15 influencers attended the roundtable with Netanyahu, including comedian Zach Sage Fox, Florida Marlins co-owner Ari Ackerman, content creator Lizzy Savetsky, sports reporter Emily Austin, podcast host Ben Soffer and former Miss Israel Noa Cochva.

Netanyahu's wife, Sara, attended, as did Israeli Consul-General in New York Ofir Akunis and his wife, Adi.

Several attendees spoke to *Jewish Insider* on condition of anonymity, as they were told the meeting was off the record, though numerous participants posted about it on social media.

Rather than conduct the event as a briefing, Netanyahu opened by asking the influencers what they thought their most significant challenges were, and their answers took up the first 20 or so minutes of the meeting. Attendees said they thought the prime minister was listening and taking them seriously, and took a lot of notes.

An attendee said he thought Netanyahu "understood the battle online and that the people in the room were fighting in their own way, in an important way."

Akunis also thanked the influencers profusely for their efforts, attendees said.

One attendee felt that Netanyahu did not give the influencers any constructive advice on how to correct lies about Israel on social media.

Some in the meeting also said Netanyahu gave the group a pep talk to continue fighting online for Israel.

Savetsky said in a video on Instagram that Netanyahu quoted the Passover *Haggadah*, which says, "in every generation they rise up to destroy us." According to Savetsky, Netanyahu said "it is not our job to cure antisemitism. It is not our job to get rid of all of our enemies, because each time we get rid of one, another one pops up. Our job is to fight each threat as it comes and to survive. Every time the Jewish people survive another threat, survive another day, that is a victory."



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