



PM Netanyahu's Statement from the Golan Heights

Government: The 37th Government

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"This is a historic day for the Middle East. The collapse of the Assad regime, the tyranny in Damascus, offers great opportunity but also is fraught with significant dangers. This collapse is the direct result of our forceful action against Hezbollah and Iran, Assad's main supporters. It set off a chain reaction of all those who want to free themselves from this tyranny and its oppression.

But it also means that we have to take action against possible threats. One of them is the collapse of the Separation of Forces Agreement from 1974 between Israel and Syria. This agreement held for 50 years. Last night, it collapsed. The Syrian army abandoned its positions. We gave the Israeli army the order to take over these positions to ensure that no hostile force embeds itself right next to the border of Israel. This is a temporary defensive position until a suitable arrangement is found.

Equally, we send a hand of peace to all those beyond our border in Syria: to the Druze, to the Kurds, to the Christians, and to the Muslims who want to live in peace with Israel. We're going to follow events very carefully. If we can establish neighborly relations and peaceful relations with the new forces emerging in Syria, that's our desire. But if we do not, we will do whatever it takes to defend the State of Israel and the border of Israel".