

Ukraine issues demands to Israel – media

Kiev wants money and public condemnation of Moscow



FILE PHOTO: Israeli Minister of Foreign Affairs, Eli Cohen, January 30, 2023 © AP / Maya Alleruzzo

Ukraine has laid out a set of requests to “test” Israel’s support and commitment during a planned visit of Foreign Minister Eli Cohen to Kiev, according to several media reports citing unnamed Israeli and Ukrainian officials on Sunday.

Kiev sees the visit by the highest-ranking Israeli official in over a year as an opportunity to verify the new Israeli government’s “intentions and policy” towards Ukraine, a diplomatic source told [Axios](#). Cohen apparently asked for a meeting with President Vladimir Zelensky, but it may depend on whether the diplomat is ready to denounce Moscow in a public speech.

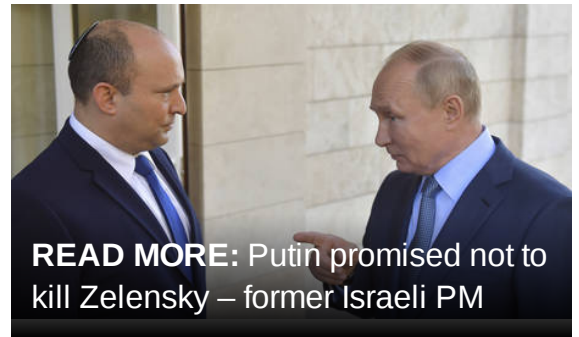
“The president won’t meet Cohen for a photo-op,” the Ukrainian source allegedly said, while the Israeli side expects the meeting to take place regardless.

Israel has tried to walk a diplomatic tightrope between Moscow and Kiev since the conflict erupted last year, refusing to impose sanctions on Russia. Former PM Yair Lapid took a harder stance on the conflict, [condemning](#) Moscow publicly, and Kiev apparently hopes for a similar pledge of allegiance from the new Israeli administration.

Ukraine also requested a \$500 million loan, according to a separate report by the Walla news site. Israeli officials cited by [Axios](#) said that Cohen was ready to offer only \$50 million.

In a phone call with his Ukrainian counterpart, Dmitry Kuleba, last month, Cohen accepted an invitation to visit Kiev, but the exact date of the trip remains unknown. He also reportedly pledged to fully reopen the Israeli Embassy in the coming months.

Cohen signaled after his appointment as foreign minister in late December that West Jerusalem would “*talk less*” about the ongoing hostilities, while vowing that Israel would continue to send “*significant humanitarian aid*” to Ukraine. Some Ukrainian officials expressed concerns that Israel could take a more “*pro-Russian*” line on the conflict.



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Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced that his new cabinet would revise the country’s foreign policy in a way to make it more suited to its national interests instead of “*giving in to dictates from the international community.*”

Unlike many Western countries, Israel has thus far not sent weapons to Ukraine and has only supplied Kiev with protective equipment, such as gas masks, flak jackets, and helmets, as well armored ambulances and various humanitarian aid. In several recent interviews, Netanyahu dodged questions about whether Israel would provide any military aid to Kiev, [saying](#) he will “*look into*” everything as part of a policy review.