

Israeli attorney general orders probe against Benjamin Netanyahu

11/07/2016 19:07 by admin

Jerusalem: Israel's Attorney General Avichai Mandelblit announced on Sunday that he had ordered to open an initial probe amid criminal allegations against Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Benjamin Netanyahu

The attorney general did not specify the nature of the probe, and stressed the examination is an initial probe and not a criminal investigation, according to Xinhua.

"I wish to inform you that in light of information received regarding affairs that pertain to the prime minister, among others...the attorney general has conducted a number of discussions... decided to instruct that an examination of the matter be opened," the Attorney General's office said in a statement.

The statement also said that recent reports by Israeli media outlets on the matter were not accurate.

On Friday, Channel 2 news reported that the new affair involved the transfer of large sums of money to Netanyahu's family member for non-political purposes.

Â Â Channel 10 news reported that Netanyahu and a senior official in the judiciary establishment were involved in a corruption affair, possibly involving money laundering.

"In recent days, many reports -- which are inaccurate, to say the least -- have been published in the media. Naturally, we will not be able to refer to these reports or to elaborate as to the process of the examination at this stage," the statement added.

A spokesperson for the prime minister said in a statement to the press that allegations against the prime minister are unfounded.

"As was the case in previous affairs, when things that turned out to be baseless were attributed to Netanyahu, there will be nothing here as well, because there is nothing," the statement said.

This is not the first time Prime Minister Netanyahu and his wife have allegations surface against them.

Israeli authorities have embarked last month on investigating Netanyahu's alleged connections with French businessman Arnaut Mimran, who was recently found guilty by a French court over a massive fraud case.

The attorney general ordered to open a probe into the French businessman's claim, made during the trial, that he gave Prime Minister Netanyahu about one million euros (\$1.1 million) in 2009 for campaigning. Such sums are considered as a violation of Israel's campaign finance law.

In May, the Israeli police recommended to the Jerusalem prosecution to file an indictment against Sara Netanyahu, the prime minister's wife, for alleged improprieties at the family residence, including fraud charges.

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