

Right-wing Israeli extremists threaten Rahm Emanuel's plan for Jerusalem bar mitzvah

By Muriel Kane
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White House chief of staff Rahm Emanuel's plan to hold his son's bar mitzvah at the historic Western Wall in Jerusalem has run into problems from two different directions.

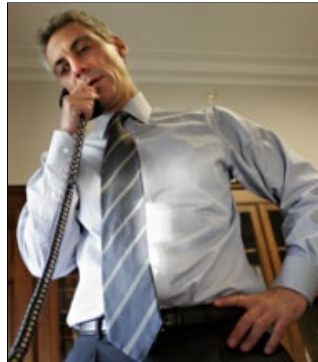
On one hand, [according](#) to ABC News, the site lies within the Old City of Jerusalem, which the United States considers to be occupied territory. US officials are discouraged from spending time there except in an official capacity.

But an even more serious issue may be a threat by right-wing Israeli extremists to metaphorically "blow up" the celebration. "We promise to accompany your son's bar mitzvah events in Israel," they [wrote](#) to Emanuel, "we will make sure to receive you as you deserve to be received—not with flowers and candy, but with catcalls and disgust at what you represent."

It appears that Itamar Ben Gvir and Baruch Marzel, who object to President Barack Obama's opposition to the expansion of illegal settlements on the West Bank, may have been taking lessons in harassment from the Westboro Baptist Church, a homophobic and "virulently anti-Semitic" group best [known](#) for picketing the funerals of American soldiers.

"I think he is worse than Hamas," Ben Gvir [said](#) of Emanuel. "If the kid would come alone to the Wall without his father, we would be happy and we wouldn't complain. But with all that Rahm Emanuel has done against the People of Israel and Land of Israel, we would have no choice but to demonstrate."

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Ben Gvir is a spokesman for the Jewish National Front. Last year he led a **march** in Israel's largest Arab city that degenerated into violence, and in 2008, he explicitly **refused** to denounce an attempt to assassinate a Israeli professor who had spoken out against the settlements. Marzel, the leader of the Jewish National Front, was formerly the **spokesman** for the late Rabbi Meir Kahane, whose Kach organization was outlawed as a terrorist group in both the United States and Israel.

According to ABC, the Emanuels' plans are now in doubt. Rahm's father, Benjamin, told the *Jerusalem Post* that he "cannot make any statement."

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