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Thai authorities probe Chabad-Lubavitch centers over Israeli land-grab network

The centers have drawn suspicion over their land holdings, unauthorized construction, and unexplained funding sources

News Desk

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(Photo credit: Sakchai Lalit/AP)

Thai Deputy Interior Minister Polpeera Suwannachawi this week ordered provincial governors to inspect up to nine Chabad-Lubavitch centers nationwide, broadening a probe into a “network of Israelis” that lawmakers say bought land valued at nearly \$3 million.

The centers, known as Chabad houses, belong to the

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New York-headquartered Chabad-Lubavitch movement, tied to radical settler-colonial politics in Palestine and ranking among the most influential Jewish groups in the world.

Governors were told to carry out on-site checks and work with relevant agencies to confirm the legality of the land holdings, building permits, and funding behind the centers.

Early inspections have already uncovered “irregularities in the construction permit process, such as rooftop extensions and unauthorized structures,” Suwannachawi said.

In Phuket, authorities confiscated goods from a Chabad house while checking whether they had been imported and sold without authorization.

The minister also questioned how projects with no income-generating purpose were bankrolled with investments running into tens of millions of baht.

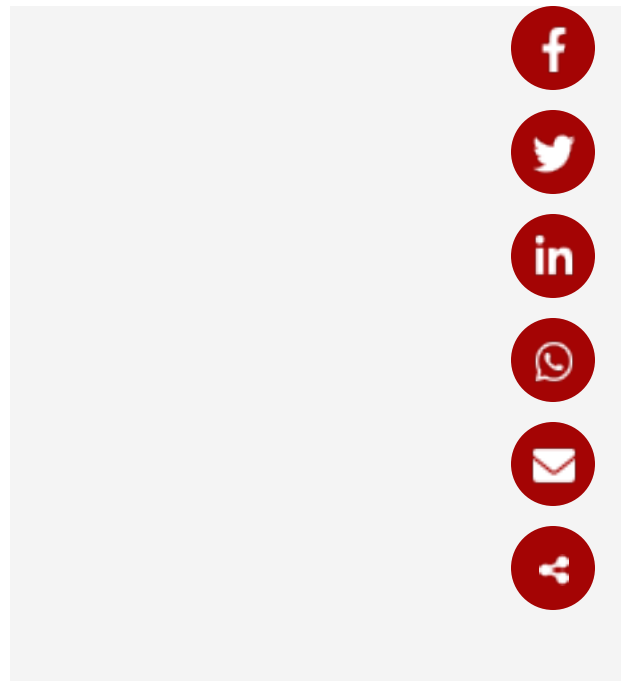
Questions over the movement's money trail are not confined to Thailand. A [2020 FBI memo](#), released on 30 January among the Epstein files, cites a confidential bureau source alleging that Chabad sought to co-opt the presidency of US President Donald Trump and that “Trump has been compromised by Israel.”

The memo names Trump's son-in-law, Jared Kushner, as a Chabad supporter. According to the document, Kushner and his wife, Ivanka Trump, were at the grave of the movement's most prominent rabbi, Menachem Mendel Schneerson, on the day Trump was elected.

The FBI memo further recommends investigating the Kushner family's charities for money laundering, describing it as a common Chabad practice.

Thailand's crackdown on the Chabad houses comes as anger boils over at the conduct of Israeli tourists, many of them discharged soldiers. Some took part in Israel's genocide in Gaza, enforced apartheid in the occupied West Bank, or fought in Israel's wars on Lebanon, Syria,





and Iran.

Residents cite displays of arrogance, contempt for local customs, dodged restaurant bills, and damaged rental properties, grievances that have fueled campaigns to ban the visitors from the country.

That frustration spilled onto the streets as hundreds rallied outside the Israeli embassy in Bangkok under the banner “Thailand is not for sale.” They condemned alleged land purchases and Israel’s genocide in Gaza, and demanded that foreigners respect Thai law and culture.

Thailand’s foreign minister warned that the country “cannot stand idly by” while visitors act against its interests.

Yet the backlash has failed to stem the influx, with more than 277,000 Israelis arriving between January and August – a jump of roughly seven percent on the same period last year, according to Thailand’s Ministry of Tourism and Sports.

Across Asia, residents of Indonesia, the Philippines, India, and Thailand are pushing back against Israeli soldiers and veterans holidaying in their countries, refusing to play host to an army waging genocide in Gaza.

Locals have turned to confrontations, street protests,

and legal action, including demands to arrest soldiers who took part in the destruction of civilian infrastructure in Gaza.

Meanwhile, Hebrew-speaking businesses and Chabad houses multiply along the backpacker routes that discharged troops travel on their post-service tours.



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