

Beat: Politics

Comatose ex-PM Ariel Sharon in his final days

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USPA News - Former Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, who has remained in a permanent vegetative state after suffering a stroke nearly eight years ago, is believed to be in `his final days` as his condition continues to deteriorate with more bodily organs failing. Dr. Zeev Rotstein, director of Sheba Medical Center, said during a daily news briefing on Friday that Sharon's condition had further deteriorated since Thursday.

"During the last 24 hours, his condition deteriorated slowly," he said. "I can't say that there is some improvement in his condition since yesterday." New test results have shown that Sharon, now 85, is also suffering from a blood infection in addition to the continuing decline of several key organs that include his kidneys. When later asked by a reporter whether he believed Sharon is in his final days, Rotstein said: "I personally feel so." "Ariel Sharon is not suffering. He is receiving maintenance treatment by his physician," Rotstein explained, adding that the former leader is closely attended by his family and medical team. Rotstein had already indicated during Thursday's news briefing that doctors regarded Sharon's critical condition as life-threatening. Sharon is by many considered to have been one of Israel's finest military commanders and was given popular nicknames such as "The King of Israel" and "The Lion of God." He joined the Likud party after retiring from the army and went on to serve in a number of ministerial posts before becoming the party's leader in 2000, after which he became prime minister in the following year. But Sharon's political career came to an abrupt end in January 2006 when he suffered a massive stroke and brain hemorrhage, leaving him in a permanent vegetative state. Some hopes were raised in January 2013 when doctors said the iconic leader had shown "significant brain activity" while viewing pictures of his family and listening to his son's voice, but no further developments were reported. During a news conference earlier this week, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry praised the former prime minister and said his thoughts are with Sharon's family. "We remember his contributions, sacrifices he made to ensure the survival and the well-being of Israel, and I have many personal thoughts about my meetings with him on many different occasions - always robust and strong and clear about his positions," Kerry said.

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Editorial program service of General News Agency:

UPA United Press Agency LTD

483 Green Lanes

UK, London N13NV 4BS

contact (at) unitedpressagency.com

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