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Bring them home

Lior Rudaeff, 61, kidnapped from Nir Yitzhak

Weeds of hate

Ex-Canadian army head: Canada is failing us all

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Death of a statesman

Raisi the peddler

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MAGAZINE

'Qatar is the world's greatest funder of terror'

Inside tunnels that hid hostages' bodies

REPORTER'S NOTEBOOK
By JONATHAN SPYER

Outside a ruined house in the Jabalya refugee camp in northern Gaza on Wednesday, Lt.-Col. Almog told a group of reporters: "The enemy placed explosives and prepared ambushes and waited for us. We found explosive devices and booby traps in each of the houses. But the 202nd Battalion has been

See HID, Page 10

Norway FM: We recognized Palestinian statehood after Israel disavowed it

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW
By TOVAH LAZAROFF

The Israeli government's disavowal of Palestinian statehood, the Gaza war, West Bank settlements, and the frozen peace process prompted Norway to join Spain and Ireland in unilaterally recognizing Palestinian statehood this week, the country's Foreign Minister Espen Barth Eide told *The Jerusalem Post* on Thursday.

Eide outlined Oslo's frustration and that of other European countries with the policies of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The dramatic announcement of Palestinian statehood recognition, made Wednesday morning by the prime ministers of the three countries from their respective capitals, outraged Israel.



THREE AMBASSADORS to Israel view the Nahal Oz documentary footage yesterday in Jerusalem. From left: Ana Salomon Perez of Spain, Per Egil Selvaag from Norway, and Sonya McGuinness from Ireland. (Marc Israel Sellem/The Jerusalem Post)

See RECOGNIZED, Page 10

ICJ to rule on Rafah operation today

By STEPHANIE VAN DEN BERG

Rafah offensive in Gaza, it said on Thursday. Last week, South Africa had asked the ICJ, also known as the World Court, to order a

THE HAGUE (Reuters) - The International Court of Justice will rule on Friday on South Africa's request to order a halt to Israel's

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ISRAEL AT WAR

IDF Spokesperson: Daniela, Karina, Liri, Agam and Na'ama, we failed to protect you, Page 2

New Board of Deputies head to 'Post': UK good for Jews, but needs to fight extremism, Page 2

Speaker Ohana: Gov't failing to allow for proper oversight, Page 3

IDF source to 'Post': Hamas exploits Gazan side of crossing for its own survival, Page 4

Destinations

By Yossi Zablotki

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24/05/2024 פוסט שישי

Israeli Law in Times of War

May 26, 2024

Honorary Guest: Moshe Arbel, Minister of the Interior & Knesset Member

15:00	Welcome and Opening Remarks Dr. Elad Finkelstein, Dean of the Faculty of Law, Ono Academic College Prof. Amichai Cohen, Editor in Chief, "Kiryat Hamishpat" Law Journal	17:30	Behind the Scenes of Tort Compensation Mechanisms - The Retreat of Traditional Israeli Tort Law in High-causality Disasters: A Positive and Normative Analysis Dr. Inbal Blau, Faculty of Law, Ono Academic College; Research Fellow at The Institute for Israeli Thought and Researcher at the Minerva Center, Haifa University
15:20	Opening Lecture Brigadier General Roni Katzir, Head of the International Law Division, MAG, Israel Defense Forces	17:45	Compensation in Wars and Disaster after Iron Swords - A Proposal For a New Model Judge Daphna Blatman Kedrai, Central District Court (retired) Dr. Hanan Mandel, Faculty of Law, Ono Academic College Prof. Eliezer Rivlin, Deputy President of the Supreme Court (retired)
16:00	The Trial of the Nukhba Terrorists: Between the Eichmann Fantasy and the Demjanjuk Nightmare Prof. Yuval Elbasha, Dean of the Multicultural Campuses, Ono Academic College	18:00	Break
16:15	Break	18:20	The Case against the BBC - The Legal Duties of Impartial Reporting and the Remedies for Breach (English) Trevor Asserson, International Solicitor, Senior Partner & Founder of Asserson Law Offices
16:30	Moshe Arbel, Minister of the Interior	Fourth Session Civil Law	
15:40	Smart Choice of Legal Non-Legal Policy for Struggling Terrorist Organization Prof. Gabriel Hallevy, Faculty of Law, Ono Academic College	18:40	The Effect of the War on the Fulfillment of Contracts Dr. Elad Finkelstein, Dean of the Faculty of Law, Ono Academic College
16:45	Israel's War Cabinet Prof. Amichai Cohen, Faculty of Law, Ono Academic College and Israel Democracy Institute	18:55	Corporate Purpose in Times of Crisis: Israeli Companies' Response to the War and the Judicial Reform - Empirical Findings from TA 35 Dr. Yehonatan Shiman, Editor in Chief, "Kiryat Hamishpat" Law Journal; Faculty of Law, Ono Academic College
17:00	The Israeli Supreme Court and Israel's Wars - The IDF's Judicial Restraint David Berliner, Adv., Lecturer at Ono Academic College and Bar Ilan University	19:10	The Economic Casualties of the Iron Swords War Dr. Odelia Minnes, Faculty of Law, Ono Academic College Uriel Zeira, Adv. David Zeira Law Firm
17:15	The October 7th Victims' Participation in Legal Proceedings: The "Ethical Code" as an Example of Trauma Conscious Advocacy Prof. Dana Pugach, Faculty of Law, Ono Academic College Prof. Keren Gueta, Department of Criminology, Bar-Ilan University	19:25	Concluding Remarks Medical Ethics After October 7th - Challenges & Difficult Choices Prof. Gil Siegel, Head of the Center for Medical Law and Bioethics, Faculty of Law, Ono Academic College and the University of Virginia

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Hagari: We failed our border observers

IDF continues southeast Rafah op.

• Jerusalem Post Staff

Amid unprecedented international pressure to stop the fighting in Gaza, and as the military continues in the operation, IDF Spokesman R-Adm. Daniel Hagari on Thursday night addressed the issue of the hostages, seemingly currently at an impasse: "We failed to protect you, we are committed to bringing you home. We will not give up until you are back with us. We are fighting and will continue to fight to bring the hostages home as soon as possible."

He spoke one day after the Hostages and Missing Families Forum agreed to publicize a censored version of a compilation of body-cam footage from Hamas terrorists on October 7. Fighters breached the Nahal Oz military base, killed soldiers, and took five lookouts hostage, Liri Albag, Karina Arie, Agam Berger, Daniela Gilboa, and Na'ama Levy. In the video, the terrorists can be heard saying in Arabic, "These ones can get pregnant. We will step on you, we will shoot all of you. Quiet!"

The bodies of four hostages were recovered earlier this week in a tunnel in a home in Jabalya, in northern Gaza. The IDF had cleared it months ago, but re-invaded it in June due to increased terrorist activities. On Thursday, a soldier from the 97th Battalion was seriously wounded in battle in the northern Gaza Strip.

In Rafah, where the focus of fighting is, troops advanced in the southeast. The IDF said Givati troops encountered terrorists who exited from a tunnel shaft and fired at them. The soldiers killed them in response.

The IDF added that troops identified four terrorists coming out of a building. The terrorists were killed by the IAF. In a cemetery in eastern Rafah,

troops found launchers and numerous weapons and also operated. Soldiers of the 401st Brigade found a rocket launcher that was directed at troops. In addition, during operations in the area, forces located and demolished shafts and launchers and killed terrorists.

In the center of Jabalya, troops killed several Hamas terrorists. They found many weapons, among which were Kalashnikovs, grenades, and explosives.

The IDF said it killed Hussein Fiad, commander of Hamas's Beit Hanun Battalion, which it said was responsible for significant launches of anti-tank missiles towards Israel throughout the last eight months.

Hamas media and health officials said that 50 Palestinians were killed in aerial and ground attacks throughout Thursday. These stats do not distinguish between civilians and combatants.

In the North, there was a significant amount of rocket sirens throughout Thursday. The military said that IAF jets attacked a series of Hezbollah targets in southern Lebanon, including buildings in the areas of Aya ash Shab, Rab El Thalaithine, and Markaba. A military building and two observation posts were also targeted in the area of Odaisseh.

The IAF intercepted an unmanned aerial vehicle that was detected, which fell in the area of Kiryat Shmona. There were no casualties reported.

Sirens sounded earlier in the Upper Galilee Thursday evening as a barrage of rockets and unmanned aerial vehicles targeted Israel's northern border with Lebanon. Earlier, Hezbollah-backed Lebanese news site Al-Mayadeen reported Israeli artillery shelling on the town of Houla in southern Lebanon.

Reuters contributed to this report.

New Board of Deputies head: UK good for Jews, but needs to fight extremism

INTERVIEW

• By MICHAEL STARR

British Jews have been anxious about rising antisemitism and the war with Hamas, but the United Kingdom is still a good place for Jews to live, Board of Deputies of British Jews President-elect Phil Rosenberg told *The Jerusalem Post* in an interview, explaining how his priorities coming into office were to tackle antisemitism, extremism, and foster unity to ensure that the isles would remain a haven for Jews.

"We are on an inflection point," said Rosenberg, who was elected on May 12 to lead the Jewish community organization, succeeding Marie van der Zyl in June. "The UK is a very good place to be Jewish, and all things being well, it should be, but we're going to have to just be that much more activist to make sure it remains that way."

"We can't take it completely for granted," he said, "but if we do the right things, the UK will continue to be this brilliant and inclusive place where our communities continue to flourish and thrive. The challenges that face us are challenges that face wider society."

Britain's Jews have a unique advantage in helping their country with the increasing polarization, extremism, and lack of cohesion in UK society, according to Rosenberg, and in conversations he has had with the government and opposition, there was interest in hearing about ideas from the community.

Jews have long experienced minority status in various societies and therefore can offer a rare perspective. Rosenberg, possibly the youngest president in the organization's 264-year history, is coming into office with a manifesto of 43 different proposals that would help the problems ailing British Jews and UK society.

"It's an ambitious proposal that says not only do we have to do some of the hard stuff, we have to fight antisemitism, [and] we have to stand up for Israel's peace and security, but we also have to celebrate our culture and be proud as Jews, proud of our identity, and project that outward: be outward-reaching and proud of who we are as well," said Rosenberg.

THE ISSUE of antisemitism is



PHIL ROSENBERG, seen in front of the Western Wall in Jerusalem, wearing a hostages necklace. (Phil Rosenberg)

the most pressing one for the board's president elect and his communities. The Community Security Trust 2023 annual summary recorded a 147% increase in antisemitic incidents compared to 2022. With 4,104 CST documented incidents, 2023 was a record-breaking year for Jew-hatred.

Rosenberg said that the Jewish community had understandably been reacting to the antisemitism situation as it has been developing, but that he wanted to take a step back and to look at it from a fresh vantage point – not to try to treat the symptoms of individual incidents, but to fight the root causes as they manifest in different spheres.

He has proposed a commission on the key variants of antisemitic ideologies and has developed proposals and advocacy programs. Rosenberg wants to explore whether the law has been strong enough on certain matters, if there is enough police and law enforcement training, and if the issue is prosecutorial.

"We need to make sure that there are stiff penalties, legal penalties, but also maybe social penalties for people who are antisemitic," he said. "We also need to look at institutions – and I think this is not unique to the UK – but a lot of Jewish communities around the world have just looked at civil society and it's failed us."

One institution in which Rosenberg has seen a lot of positive change regarding antisemitism is the Labour Party. He noted that the Board of Deputies was involved in the fight against antisemitism in former Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn's party. With Labour set to make

major gains in the upcoming elections, the incoming president said he didn't think there was "anything like what we saw in 2019."

"We had a situation where a lot of Jewish people saw the Labour Party under Jeremy Corbyn as a nearly existential challenge," Rosenberg recalled. "Kier Starmer, the leader of the Labour Party, has, to his credit, done a lot to tackle the problem of antisemitism in Labour. There are still occasionally cases that need to be dealt with. It's not fully 'mission accomplished.'"

"But I think in the next election between the Conservatives and Labour, people are going to be much more able to vote on their social views and values and their economic interests in a way that in the last election, those things almost went out the window."

BOTH PARTIES still sometimes had their issues. Rosenberg noted that many of the troublesome politicians who had left or been removed from Labour had joined parties like the Green Party and MP George Galloway's new Workers' Party of Britain. The Greens weren't doing due diligence in filtering out extremists, and Galloway had fostered friendships with anti-Western regimes over the years, such as those of former Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein and Syrian President Bashar Assad.

The problem of antisemitism overlapped with the general problem of extremism, with the UK grappling with Islamist, far-right and far-left extremism, said Rosenberg.

"We need to grapple with this problem and deal with it," said

the president-elect. "Not just because it's a problem for Jews," but because "it's a problem for wider society."

The greatest victims of Islamist extremism have been Muslims, "whether that's ISIS, whether it's who the Iranians kill most days when they're not fighting others," or who "Hamas kills when they're not fighting Israel."

Rosenberg continued, noting that "in Western societies, it's Muslim kids who are being groomed and radicalized and perverted by these extremists. I think that story is about reaching out – working with moderate Muslims to fight extremism."

Rosenberg considered the potential for all 300 of the organization's deputies and their communities, from across the entire political spectrum, working together to "get messages to their local politicians, their local faith leaders, their local media, their local universities."

"I do interfaith outreach for my own synagogue," said Rosenberg, who shared a story about having joined an interfaith Iftar dinner where Muslims break their daily fast during the month of Ramadan. An Islamist extremist group called for a demonstration against the mosque where it was being held and attacked the house of worship's leadership. Rosenberg said that they needed to address such extremism.

ROSENBERG SAID that while the marches had become a focal point for extremism and antisemitism, he thought that it was because they were visible and large, but that many people who attended had good intentions.

"I find it depressing because as much as I think I want to believe that a lot of these people are of good heart, I just ask the question: 'what would have happened [if] instead of demonstrating against Israel, they had said to Hamas, 'Release the hostages'?"

While Rosenberg gave protesters the benefit of the doubt, he said that it was essential to tackle the extremists.

"One of the sharpest rises in antisemitism that we saw was not after Israel went into Gaza and responded: It was actually in those first few days after October 7, when Israel was still collecting the bodies and fighting back against terrorist infiltrators who were still running

amok in some of Israel's Southern communities," he said.

"Some Muslim friends [of mine] have said it doesn't excuse it, but maybe they didn't know exactly what was happening. They thought they'd principally 'broken out of a prison,' as they see it," he said. "I don't know what the truth is, but certainly seeing people celebrating when you know that there's these gruesome atrocities being perpetrated, that is concerning."

THE BRITISH government and opposition got a mixed grade in their response to antisemitism and extremism, but Rosenberg said that they had been supportive of the Jewish community. What they needed was the will to act stronger and faster against major problems to which there were no simple solutions. For example, he called for the government to proscribe Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps as a terrorist organization. The government has woken up to the threat of political coercion with threats to MPs and vandalism of their offices, said Rosenberg, and new counter-extremism efforts were promising, although they needed to be tough.

Part of the reason he wanted a commission was to push past finger-pointing, where politicians blame police for lack of law enforcement, and police blame politicians back for lack of legislation.

"Do we need to toughen the law? If we need to toughen the law, let's toughen the law," the board's president-elect said, noting incidents of police not understanding symbols like swastikas or the problem of Islamists calling for jihad.

"Given the rise in antisemitism and concerns about friends and family in Israel, there is anxiety," said Rosenberg. "But at the same time, the UK Jewish community is a well-organized community with many brilliant institutions, strong infrastructure, and a fantastic cultural scene."

While British Jews have a great diversity of opinion, he said that it was essential that they model the Jewish principle of *veahavta l'eyekha kamokha* – loving one another as you love yourself – a sentiment that he hopes Jews can spread through wider society.

Aunt of released hostage Abigail Idan: Deal would happen if gov't wanted it

• By EVE YOUNG

If the leadership in Israel or of Hamas wanted a hostage deal to go through and the hostages to come home, such a deal would occur, said Liz Naftali, the great-aunt of released four-year-old hostage Abigail Idan.

Naftali has been advocating worldwide for the hostages since October 8, knowing that the stories of what happened in

the South on October 7 needed to be shared.

Idan was kidnapped from Kibbutz Kfar Aza during the October 7 massacre, after witnessing the murder of her mother and father, Roy and Smadar. She took shelter with her neighbors before they were all taken hostage by Hamas.

She was released on November 26, after 51 days in Hamas captivity and two days after her

fourth birthday.

As part of her advocacy for the hostages, Naftali spoke at a conference in Doha this week, participating in a panel at the Global Security Conference that addressed the impacts of hostage-taking by state and non-state actors.

This kind of advocacy and meeting with people from different backgrounds and with different worldviews is vitally

important, said Naftali, saying that her reception in the capital has been warm and welcoming and that she has found people in Qatar to be thoughtful.

"We need to be talking and listening," she said, adding that this was even more important when having the hard conversations with those who are different from ourselves.

Naftali expressed her gratitude for US President Biden and

his administration and Qatari Prime Minister Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani and his government for facilitating the hostage negotiations that successfully freed over 100 hostages in November. The success of this deal highlights the fact that if the remainder of the hostages are not released in a deal, it is "about the interested parties," she said.

"If there was an interest of the

leadership to bring home the remaining hostages, it would have been done already," Naftali said. Though Idan was released from Hamas captivity, Naftali said she won't stop both advocating for the other 130 hostages to be freed and giving a human face to a humanitarian crisis she says can be disregarded by the news.

Brooke Sarah Borden contributed to this report.



LIZ NAFTALI (Soufan Center)



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Military: Netanyahu warned prior to Oct. 7

PMO: There was no warning, letter actually expressed opposite assessment

• Jerusalem Post Staff

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu received four warning letters between March and July 2023 from the Intelligence Division concerning how Israel's "enemies" perceived the societal divides in Israel and their effect on Israel and the IDF in particular, the military confirmed on Thursday.

The information was obtained in response to a Freedom of Information request by the "Success" movement.

The Prime Minister's Office later on Thursday denied that these letters warned of an impending attack by Hamas. "Not only is there no warning in any of the documents about Hamas's intentions to attack Israel from Gaza, but they actually contain completely opposite assessments," the statement said.

"The two mentions of Hamas in the four documents state that

Hamas does not want to attack Israel from Gaza and is inclined toward an agreement. In the first mention from March 19, 2023, it is written that Hamas's strategy is to "keep the Gaza Strip on a back burner."

The office's response also discusses what was included in the second warning on May 31, saying that in this letter it was recommended that Israel take steps to "reach an agreement with Gaza and the Hamas authorities." The letter, according to the PMO, stated that "Hamas is not interested in escalation and seeks an agreement with Israel."

According to the office, "Regarding the claim made in the documents about the negative impact of the lack of cohesion in Israel on our enemies – the prime minister himself has warned about this many times regarding the phenomenon of refusal to serve." It cited a July 17, 2023 statement, where Net-

anyahu said that Israel's internal conflict "erodes deterrence against our enemies, who could easily be tempted to commit acts of aggression against us."

Within the first month of the war, the prime minister claimed that he had not received any alerts regarding any threat to the state's security before the October 7 attack.

He then published a statement on X on October 29, after making a joint statement with Minister without-Portfolio Benny Gantz and Defense Minister Yoav Gallant the previous evening.

"Contrary to the false claims: Under no circumstances and at no stage was Prime Minister Netanyahu warned of war intentions on the part of Hamas," Netanyahu wrote in an X post.

The post sparked controversy and was deleted the next morning. That evening, Netanyahu made another official state-

ment, reiterating that he had not received any prior warnings from high-level security personnel.

"Success," which obtained this information, is a movement that has committed itself to promoting civil enforcement in Israel and encouraging effective and advanced regulation in the economy and society, according to its website.

In March, Brig.-Gen. Amit Sa'ar, head of the IDF Intelligence Branch's research division, revealed in an interview with KAN News that he wrote an emergency warning letter about a potential attack against Israel that was meant to be sent to the prime minister and members of the national security cabinet after the holiday of Simhat Torah, which fell on October 7.

Sa'ar said he warned that the letter was not sent to the prime minister and other officials before October 7.

A moment of silence for Israel's demise?

COMMENT

• By DAVID BRINN

Grabbing a plate of humus at my favorite joint down the street from the office on Wednesday, I heard about life according to Menachem, a fellow diner across the aisle.

A gruff, middle-aged Jerusalemite and a longtime supporter of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Likud, he said enough is enough.

"Bibi has to go; his time is up," he said, munching on a falafel ball. "He'll never win another election. What has he done? Nothing. The big mistake on October 8 was not leveling Gaza – including the hostages, I'm sorry to say.

"There's no way to live with these people [the Palestinians], and now, they're going to get their own terror state," he added, pointing to the TV screen on the wall as it broadcast the announcement that Norway, Ireland, and Spain would recognize a Palestinian state.

Indeed, even discounting Menachem's inexcusably cavalier attitude toward the hostages, his realization of the absurdity that has overtaken the world and its view of the Gaza war has its merit.

Besides the declaration of a Palestinian state and the International Criminal Court's leveling of the leaders of Hamas

and Israel to the same moral plane in requesting arrest warrants for Yahya Sinwar, Ismail Haniyeh, Netanyahu, and Defense Minister Yoav Gallant in the same breath – the moral center of the universe is gone.

The United Nations has been a lost cause for a long time already, with most countries no longer abiding by truth and accuracy, but by sectarianism, allegiances, and an underlying animosity toward the Jewish state.

That sentiment has merely proliferated since October 7, with outrage expressed at every turn that Israel dared retaliate for the Hamas atrocities.

Wednesday's release of the horrifying footage of the shocked and battered female IDF observers in their first moments of captivity produced nary a blip of sympathy or understanding for Isra-

el's just mission to free them and the remaining hostages and to pummel Hamas into a non-threatening entity.

Nor is it going to increase – or even initiate – any pressure on Hamas to release them. The onus is always on Israel, attacked on October 7 and still attacked today. The swelling of anti-Israel sentiment is instead growing with each day. The only conclusion that can be drawn is that most of the world believes that Hamas was justified in its attack on Israel and is now the hapless victim in the ongoing Gaza war at the hands of a genocidal, starvation-motivated Israel.

The declaration by Norway, Ireland, and Spain calls for a Palestinian state on 1967 borders with Jerusalem as the Palestinian capital and all the West Bank won by Israel in the Six-Day-War handed over to

the Palestinians.

As Salman Rushdie so astutely stated in an interview this week, any Palestinian state coming into being in the foreseeable future would turn into a terrorist state, run and manipulated by Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and their like-minded goons – for whom a state is just a means in which to continue their holy war to eradicate Israel.

But if the geopolitical trend continues, that is exactly the situation we're headed toward. Israel will soon be totally isolated, and even the goodwill of the United States will be helpless against an onslaught of a combined European/Russian/Chinese front that stands in silence in memory of Raisi and justifies Hamas barbarism with rewards of statehood.

When the world no longer cares about differentiating

between the victims and the aggressors, it's clear that a new normal has arrived and that Israel – not Iran or Syria – is a rogue state. The slippery slope is speeding up, and it's unclear whether there's any way to put the brakes on to stop it.

For the first time in some 30 years since moving to Ma'aleh Adumim, built on land won by Israel in 1967, I'm worried that I'll be forced to leave and move to Israel 'proper.'

Of course, that will be an Israel with the North and South already unlivable, which will be impossible to defend. With a hostile Hamas-run country on the border, it's only a matter of a short time before October 7 takes place again, and again.

Once Israel ceases to exist, there might even be a moment of silence at the UN. But don't count on it.



SUPPORTERS OF bereaved family members and the families of hostages who were kidnapped on October 7 protest on a Day of Disruption, an anti-government protest, outside the Knesset in Jerusalem on Monday. (Ammar Awad/Reuters)

MK Ohana: Gov't failing to allow for proper oversight

• By ELIAV BREUER

Since the outbreak of the Gaza war on October 7, Israel's government ministries have not been meeting legal requirements to report to the Knesset (parliament) to enable proper oversight of its actions, Knesset Speaker MK Amir Ohana wrote in a letter to government secretary Yossi Fuchs on Wednesday.

Israel's Knesset has two main responsibilities: creating laws and overseeing Israel's executive branch. However, the government was not meeting at least three different requirements to enable the Knesset to perform the duty of oversight, Ohana argued in the letter, which was penned by Knesset secretary Dan Marzouk with the speaker's consent.

According to Marzouk, the first requirement that was not met was for government ministers to respond to queries by Members of the Knesset (MKs) within the period required by law. The second was that government ministries were required to report within three months on their actions in response to certain conclusions approved in Knesset committees or the Knesset plenum. The third area where the government was not fulfilling its duties was that its representatives were simply not appearing in Knesset committees despite being summoned.

"Alongside the understanding that the government ministries are under a heavy workload, it must be remembered that it is the Knesset's duty, especially in these times, to continue to oversee the work of the government," Marzouk wrote. He requested that the letter be brought to the attention of all government ministers and that the ministries respond to the queries and file reports, whose deadlines have passed, within one month.

According to data included in the letter, the government has missed its deadline on 454 direct queries from members of Knesset, 305 of which are more than 50 days late. The Defense Ministry had the most unanswered queries out of all ministries with 75, some 64 of which were over 50 days late.

In addition, the ministries had not addressed 91 committee conclusions within the required three months. The National Security Ministry led this category with 15 conclusions that were not addressed.

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YESH ATID MK MOSHE TUR-PAZ:

Haredim's IDF service can expand once ultra-Orthodox are not in gov't

INTERVIEW

• By ELIAV BREUER

Haredi MKs have acknowledged, behind closed doors, that a significant increase in haredi enlistment into the IDF is only possible if the parties remain out of government for a sustained period, Yesh Atid MK Moshe Tur-Paz said in an interview with *The Jerusalem Post* on Wednesday.

The interview took place ahead of an important High Court of Justice hearing on June 2, which will determine whether to turn from temporary to permanent a ruling that the IDF is required to begin recruiting all haredi men of military age. The legal basis to exempt them expired last year, on July 1.

According to Tur-Paz – a former yeshiva student, high school educator, IDF reserve battalion commander, and Yesh Atid's leading liaison to Israel's ultra-Orthodox parties – haredi MKs admitted in conversations with him that between one-third and one-half of military-age haredi men do not actually study in yeshivot (Torah study academies), and thus, if they are drafted to the IDF, the world of Torah study would not be harmed. Rather, the haredi MK's chief concern is secularization; he worries that young haredi men will not be able to maintain their lifestyle during IDF service.

According to Tur-Paz, the majority of haredim believe that Torah study protects Israel to the same degree as military service and are unwilling to join the IDF. Haredi constituents will not accept a move by their representatives in the Knesset to push for IDF service, and the haredi MKs themselves acknowledged that for real change to happen, it must be when they are outside of the government.

This proved to be true in the past, Tur-Paz noted. The two most recent governments that did not include the haredi parties were the ones that took significant steps on the issue. In 2022, the Lapid-Bennett government succeeded in

passing the first reading of a new bill that would incentivize haredim both to join the IDF and the workforce, and in 2014, the Netanyahu-Lapid-Bennett government passed a bill that included criminal sanctions for haredi draft-dodgers, which soon led to an increase in haredi draftees. However, when the haredi parties returned to the government in 2015, they amended the bill, leading to a decrease in the number of haredi draftees.

THE HAREDI parties are diverse and include several major groups and dozens of smaller ones. There are only two haredi parties in the Knesset – the Sephardi Shas party and the Ashkenazi United Torah Judaism party (UTJ). UTJ itself includes two factions: the Lithuanian Degel Hatorah, led by MK Moshe Gafni, and the Hassidic Agudat Yisrael, led by Construction Minister Yitzhak Goldknopf.

Furthermore, within Agudat Yisrael itself, each Knesset member represents a different hassidic community. Goldknopf comes from Hassidut Gur; Jerusalem Affairs and Jewish Tradition Minister Meir Porush represents a coalition of smaller hassidic groups called Shlomei Emunim; Deputy Culture and Sports Minister MK Yaakov Tessler represents Hassidut Vishnitz; etc.

According to Tur-Paz, each faction within the haredi world has a different attitude towards the question of the IDF draft. The haredi MKs who acknowledged that one-third to a half of haredi men do not study in yeshivot belong to the Lithuanian Degel Hatorah faction, whose representatives have largely been silent in public regarding the haredi conscription issue.

Shas is considered, in general, to be a more moderate party than UTJ. Some of its members served in the IDF themselves. However, according to Tur-Paz, Shas is more concerned than Degel Hatorah over the conscription bill. The reason is that more of Shas's constituents are part of the workforce and fewer are registered as

yeshiva students. Therefore, in the case of a conscription bill that includes a requisite minimum of thousands of haredi draftees, a disproportionate amount will come from Shas, Tur-Paz explained.

The hassidic groups are the most ideologically bent against any IDF service and likely will put up the most resistance, Tur-Paz said.

He added that since the outbreak of the Israel-Hamas war on October 7, the haredi street has been more accepting of IDF soldiers in general, but unfortunately, they have not indicated a willingness to join the IDF. Economic and criminal sanctions against draft dodgers have worked in the past, and Tur-Paz argued that a combination of political, legislative, and economic pressure would be required to create real change. He said that he was optimistic because, unlike in the past, today there simply is "no other choice" – the IDF needs to swell its ranks with thousands of combat soldiers, and the only available Jewish manpower pool is that of haredim.

In 2014 and 2016, Tur-Paz was involved in forming two haredi combat units – the Givati and Paratrooper brigades. According to Tur-Paz, there are currently four haredi yeshivot, comprising approximately 500 students, that incorporate IDF service under the "hesder" model, a model developed by religious Zionists and where Tur-Paz himself began his military service. The model enables religious soldiers to serve in a socially homogeneous unit that takes their lifestyle into account. For example, Tur-Paz said, a rabbi from his yeshiva would visit the unit once a month. The model simply needed to expand to accommodate the thousands more soldiers that the IDF requires, rather than incorporating new arrangements.

He acknowledged that haredim will require some additional adaptations to accommodate their lifestyle, but the existing haredi units have proven that it is possible.



ABOVE AND BELOW: Bedouin and Jewish youth march together in the Negev, promoting neighborly ties and partnership. (AJECC-NISPED the Negev Institute)

'A true partnership'

Arab, Jewish youth march in solidarity in the Negev

• By JUDITH SUDILOVSKY

Hundreds of Arab and Jewish youth in southern Israel took part in a march for unity and solidarity on Thursday, calling for "true partnership" to strengthen the fabric of civil society in the South, support rapid reconstruction, and foster regional prosperity.

The event, organized by AJECC-NISPED the Negev Institute, the Scouts organization, Arab schools in Israel, the Neve Midbar Regional Council, and the Education Ministry, aimed to rally against incitement and division while advocating for cooperation and understanding among different communities. Organizers emphasized that the march was the culmination of continuous collaborative efforts between civil organizations and schools throughout the year, to promote common life in the region.

Marching from the Al-Hushla school in Qasr al-Sir to the village's main boardwalk where they participated in various activities, musical performances, and discussions centered around unity and recognizing the other, the students painted their handprints on a white cloth as a "sign of hope" and standing united regardless of religion, race or gender, said the organizers.

"The march is an expression of the values of cooperation and unity in our community," said Salama Abu Adisan, head of the Neve Midbar Regional Council. "The participation of so many youngsters illustrates our vision for a shared life and the promotion of mutual understanding and respect among all res-



idents of the region."

Mika Eshel, 18, a Jewish member of a scout troop, said fostering empathy and solidarity in public discourse was especially important during times of intolerance. She said for her the march was a significant step towards this goal, reflecting the collective efforts the students had made throughout the difficult year.

"It is tough and challenging, but I believe that both our actions throughout the year and this march in which many are taking part, is a significant step towards this goal," said Eshel, who participated in the community year program of the AJECC-NISPED the Negev Institute.

Salman Abu Arar, the manager of school Scouts in Arab society, underscored the sig-

nificance of the march in promoting unity and partnership amid rising tensions. As advocates for unity, the Scouts organization played a crucial role in supporting the initiative, he said.

Organizers Suleiman El Amor and Ilan Amit, co-CEOs of AJECC-NISPED the Negev Institute, stressed the youth's understanding that progress can only be achieved together despite the challenges.

"The youth in the South understand that the only way to move forward is together. This march comes to put the solidarity and brotherhood that exists in the South at center stage, despite all the difficulties, the upheavals, the incitement, and the division that come from all sides," said Amit.

Rafah crossing worker by day, al-Qassam terrorist by night

' Hamas exploits Gazan side of crossing for its own survival,' says IDF source • Abu Marzouk: Our tunnels are only to protect Hamas members, not Palestinian civilians

EXCLUSIVE

• By OHAD MERLIN

As part of the IDF's securing of the Gaza side of the Rafah crossing, soldiers came across incriminating evidence that at least part of the staff at the crossing also served in Hamas's militia, the Al-Qassam brigades.

A worker's pass from the Rafah crossing maintenance department was retrieved, belonging to a worker named Nasser Kamal Ghizan Abu Mousa, alongside another card of his depicting him as a member of Hamas's Ezedeen Al-Qassam brigades. The Al-Qassam card also read "Please facilitate the tasks of this card's holder."

"The IDF's mission in the Rafah crossing revolves around cleansing the area from Hamas's terror activity and to make sure that the goods brought into the Gaza Strip will make it to Gazan citizens, rather than Hamas terrorists," a military source told *The Jerusalem Post*.

"There are other terrorists linked to the crossing, which we will expose in the future," the source said. "This is but one of a series of findings providing evidence to the fact that Hamas has been clandestinely running affairs de facto,



EGYPTIAN CLEANING workers are seen in front of the Rafah crossing from the Egyptian side, while trucks carrying humanitarian aid for Palestinians wait for it to open to enter Gaza in October, last year. (Reuters/Stringer)

exploiting the Gaza side of the Rafah crossing for its own survival."

The source highlighted the fact that in recent weeks, IDF forces have uncovered tunnel shafts in the area of the Rafah crossing that Hamas uses for attacking purposes. "This also demonstrates how Hamas exercised control over the vicinity of the crossing."

In the same context, Hamas has been repeatedly firing rockets aimed at the Kerem Shalom crossing and its surroundings from the Rafah crossing area, exploiting these areas to threaten aid convoys trying to reach the citizens of Gaza.

Despite ruling the Gaza Strip de facto since the last round of elections and its bloody coup more than two decades ago, over the years Hamas officials have denied responsibility for their constituency in Gaza.

In October, Hamas leader Moussa Abu Marzouk implied that the terrorist group's tunnel network was only meant to protect Hamas members, while the rest of Gaza's citizens fall under the jurisdiction of UNRWA or Israel. Likewise, several Hamas leaders escaped the Gaza Strip to the safety of their patrons in Doha or elsewhere a few days before the October 7 massacre, to avoid facing Israeli retaliation.



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Rutgers, Northwestern, UCLA heads grilled over campus antisemitism on Capitol Hill

• By HANNAH SARISOHN
Jerusalem Post Correspondent

NEW YORK – Leaders of Rutgers, Northwestern, and UCLA were in the hot seat Thursday morning on Capitol Hill before the House Committee on Education and the Workforce for their handling of antisemitism on campus since October 7 and specifically for their response to the chaotic encampments that unfolded earlier this month.

Rutgers President Jonathan Holloway, Northwestern President Michael Schill, and UCLA Chancellor Gene Block faced more than three hours of intense scrutiny in the Committee's sixth event held on the responses of schools to

antisemitism.

Last month, the encampment at Columbia University was erected in conjunction with President Minouche Shafik's Capitol Hill testimony.

"Taxpayer dollars have no business funding universities [that are] without principles that align with the principles of this country," committee chair Rep. Virginia Foxx (R-North Carolina, 5th District) said in her opening remarks.

Vitriol swept UCLA's Gaza solidarity encampment earlier this month as pro-Israeli and pro-Palestinian protesters violently clashed outside the encampment. Occupants clashed with masked counter-demonstrators, and police

did not intervene for hours.

The following day, police forcibly removed an encampment of protesters, arriving before dawn and using stun grenades and riot gear to push through lines of demonstrators who linked arms to try to stop them. The Los Angeles Police Department said 210 people were arrested at the school.

Rep. Ilhan Omar (D-Minnesota, 5th District) accused Block and other UCLA officials of failing to prevent the violence that broke out and endangered students in the encampment. She accused the university and law enforcement of standing by as the "mob of agitators" gathered nearby with the clear intention of causing violence.

Across the country at Rutgers in New Jersey, Holloway struck a deal with protesters who took down their encampment peacefully as the university promised not to retaliate against students and faculty who participated in the protests as long as they did not continue to violate school rules.

Rutgers administrators agreed to enroll Palestinian students and to continue a relationship with a West Bank university.

The state university did, however, refuse to end relationships with Israeli universities, saying only that it acknowledged a divestment request and would allow students to discuss it with an investment committee.

On Wednesday ahead of the

Capitol Hill hearing, hundreds of Jewish Rutgers University staff and students released letters describing their school as an intimidating campus environment for Jews.

AT NORTHWESTERN University in Chicago, seven Jewish members of the school's antisemitism committee resigned en masse after President Schill struck a deal with the groups behind the encampment there.

The entire committee announced that it was shutting down before it could make any recommendations. "It's a terrible mistake," Efraim Benmelech, an Israeli professor at Northwestern's

business school who resigned as the committee's co-chair, said about the deal with protesters.

Chicago's Jewish Federation condemned the agreement, saying: "The overwhelming majority of your Jewish students, faculty, staff, and alumni feel betrayed."

Holloway and Block denied allegations that their campuses have become "hotbeds of antisemitism."

Rep. Elise Stefanik (R-New York, 21st District) pressed Schill about Northwestern's downgraded ranking in the Anti-Defamation League's antisemitism report card. "Isn't it also true that Northwestern earned an F for your failure to

respond and combat antisemitism and called for your resignation?" Stefanik asked. "Let me tell you why you earned an F." The representative questioned the university president on allegations of Jewish students being verbally and physically assaulted.

"This is the beginning, not the end, of the committee's investigation into your institutions. You will be held accountable for your records," Foxx said. "Congress will not stand by while you violate your obligations to uphold Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, fail to protect Jewish students, cut deals advancing divestment, and promote terrorism and racial antisemitism ideologies."

Yellen concerned about Israel's threats to cut off Palestinian banks

• By DAVID LAWDER

STRESA, Italy (Reuters) – US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said on Thursday she was concerned by a threat from Israel to cut off Palestinian banks from their Israeli correspondent banks, a move that would close a critical lifeline for the Palestinian economy.

Yellen told a news conference ahead of a G7 finance ministers meeting beginning on Friday that the US and its partners "need to do everything possible to increase humanitarian assistance to Palestinians in Gaza, to curtail violence in the West Bank, and to stabilize the West Bank's economy."

She said she would bring up the issue at the meeting of the Group of Seven industrial democracies in the lakeside resort town of Stresa in northern Italy.

"I expect other countries to express concern about the impact of such a decision on the West Bank economy. I think this would have a very adverse effect also on Israel."

Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich has said he cannot renew a waiver that expires on July 1 that allows Israeli banks to process shekel payments for services and salaries tied to the Palestinian Authority.

In a post on X reacting to Yellen's comments, Smotrich said he could not sign the waiver because Palestinians are still funding "terrorism" and Israeli banks can be sued for violating anti-terrorism financing laws.

"The financial system of the Palestinian Authority is infected with terrorism up to its neck," said Smotrich. He called critics of the policy "hypocrites."

Yellen said it was important to keep open the Israeli-Palestinian correspondent banking relationships to allow battered economies in the West Bank and Gaza to function and help ensure security.

"These banking channels are critical for processing transactions that enable almost \$8 billion a year in imports from Israel, including electricity, water, fuel, and food, as well as facilitating almost \$2b. a year in exports on which Palestinian livelihoods depend," Yellen said.

She added that Israel's withholding of revenues collected on behalf of the Palestinian Authority also threatens the West Bank's economic stability.

"My team and I have also engaged directly with the Israeli government to urge action that would bolster the Palestinian economy and, I believe, Israel's own security," Yellen said.

Financial tensions between Israel and the US have risen over US sanctions imposed on settlers in the West Bank.

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Some pro-Palestinians call to boycott Hillel, Chabad

• BY ANDREW LAPIN/JTA

Pro-Palestinian encampment protesters at dozens of universities have called for their administrations to divest from Israel.

But on two campuses, activists are asking their schools to split from organizations closer to home that they say are complicit in Israeli crimes.

At Drexel University in Philadelphia and the University of California, Santa Cruz, pro-Palestinian protesters have demanded their universities cut ties with, or “terminate” the presence of, the schools’ Hillel chapters. The Drexel protesters also demand that the university “Immediately terminate Drexel Chabad,” an outpost of the hassidic outreach movement.

The protesters, including some Jewish students, argue that Hillel’s Zionist stance and the fact that its umbrella organization has received funding from the Israeli government make it complicit in Israel’s “genocide” in the Gaza Strip.

“Hillel receives millions from organizations financed by the Israeli apartheid state whose existence is reliant on Palestinian death,” Jews Against White Supremacy UCSC, an anti-Zionist student collective that supports the Santa Cruz encampment, wrote on Instagram earlier this month.

Meanwhile, the Drexel Palestine Coalition urged its school to “immediately terminate Drexel’s chapter of Hillel,” describing it as “a global Zionist campus organization, whose primary purpose, funding and operations are to facilitate birthright trips to Occupied Palestine.”

The demands have led to bipartisan condemnation, with major Jewish groups citing them as evidence of the encampment movement’s antisemitism.

“Calling for a ‘complete boycott’ of and to ‘cut ties’ with Hillel – the center of Jewish life on most campuses... is antisemitic. And ridiculous,” Amy Spitalnick, CEO of the Jewish Council for Public Affairs, tweeted above a list of the UCSC group’s demands.

The demands are also resurfacing longstanding intra-Jewish tensions over Hillel’s positions on Israel.

“What we have happening now is a set of conversations about what Hillels should and shouldn’t be on campus,” Lex Rofeberg, a Jewish educator and host of the Judaism UnBound podcast, told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency.

Rofeberg, who used to be an active member of IFNotNow, which harshly criticizes Israel, has been pushing to change Hillel’s attitude toward Zionism for years.

According to its guidelines, Hillel will not partner with organizations or speakers who deny Israel’s right to exist, support the boycott movement against Israel, or “delegitimize, demonize, or apply a double



ATTENDEES WATCH rapper Kosha Dillz (not pictured) perform during a We Will Dance Again event presented by MIT Hillel in Cambridge, Massachusetts, last week. (Danielle Parhizkaran/The Boston Globe via Getty Images)

standard to Israel.”

As an undergraduate student at Brown University in the early 2010s, Rofeberg served as a student representative on Hillel International’s board. During that time he was also active with Open Hillel, a progressive Jewish coalition that rejected Hillel’s policy of refusing to work with anti-Zionist student groups. (Today, Open Hillel has become Judaism On Our Own Terms, an explicitly anti-Zionist Jewish group that since October 7 has joined protests against New York-area Hillels.)

Rofeberg is no longer involved with the group, but after UCSC’s demands came out, he argued in a widely shared thread on X that Hillel had painted itself into “an impossible and unsustainable contradiction” by insisting that it is a space for all Jewish students, while excluding those who don’t meet its definition of Zionism.

“Hillel identifies itself as a ‘pro-Israel’ organization. At the same time, it claims a mantle of being there for all Jewish students,” Rofeberg told the JTA. “And when you try to do both of those things, and many of your students are saying that they identify as something else, you’re going to hit a lot of obstacles.”

On X, he wrote that people “publicly criticizing Hillel” should “accompany that with a proactive call for other forms of Jewish student life.”

Hillel stands by its Israel policies, which call the country “a core element of Jewish life.” Its defenders point to its role as, often, the main address for campus Jewish practice. In her condemnation of the UCSC demands, Spitalnick wrote that Hillel is “where students attend Shabbat & holidays, do social justice & interfaith work, and come together as a Jewish community.”

The Jewish Community Relations Council of the Bay Area described Hillel as a “safe haven” and said calls to cut it off can hurt Jewish students. “It denies them of resources, com-

munity, freedom of expression and undermines diversity and inclusion,” the group said in a statement.

THIS IS not the first time pro-Palestinian activists have targeted Hillel: In 2021, a coalition of groups at Rutgers University said Hillel had a “history of falsely conflating Palestinian advocacy with antisemitism.”

Weeks before October 7, a Rice University LGBTQ group cut ties with its campus Hillel, citing its support for Israel.

After the attacks, a student at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, was arrested for punching a Jewish student at a Hillel-led vigil for Israel. And in February, the student union at the University of British Columbia briefly considered voting on a ballot measure that would have booted its own Hillel from campus. Last week, an undergraduate at the University of Delaware was arrested and charged with a hate crime for vandalizing Holocaust memorial signs put up by that school’s Hillel.

Drexel’s encampment sprouted up over the weekend and has prompted a quick condemnation from the school’s president, who ordered the campus shut down Monday before partially reopening Tuesday.

And while UCSC’s encampment has been around for weeks, it has gained renewed attention amid a strike by graduate-student workers objecting to the UC system’s treatment of pro-Palestinian protesters. Both encampments have also been the sites of extremist language.

Adam Lehman, Hillel International’s president and CEO, said that targeting Hillel was “deeply antisemitic.” Lawmakers from both parties have also picked up the thread, with Rep. Ro Khanna (D-California) calling the demand “wrong and discriminatory” and tweeting that the group “serves as a hub for Jewish students at colleges across America, celebrating culture & tradition.”

Rep. Kevin Kiley (R-California), meanwhile, brought up

the UCSC demand during a recent grilling of Education Secretary Miguel Cardona. “Do you condemn those demands to cut ties with Hillel at universities?” he asked Cardona during a May 8 congressional hearing. Cardona declined to offer a yes-or-no response after multiple follow-ups.

Becca Ross, executive director of Santa Cruz Hillel, also called the demand antisemitic but said she wasn’t worried about its being heeded.

The director of Hillel at Drexel University, Rabbi Isabel de Koninck, told JTA in a statement that the demands “are antisemitic by any measure and fly in the face of our university’s values.” Like most Hillels, Drexel’s operates independently of the university while maintaining a close relationship to it; in 2013, the school was closely involved in developing plans for its new 13,000-square-foot building.

The directors of Chabad Serving Drexel University, meanwhile, said they weren’t fazed by the call to “immediately terminate” them.

“We don’t take them seriously,” Mousia Goldstein, the Chabad center’s co-director, told JTA. “It’s so transparent how these things are antisemitic in nature.” Her husband, Rabbi Chaim Goldstein, called the demand “laughable” and “literally the joke of the town.” They are both encouraged by Drexel’s quick condemnation of the encampment, as well as by what they said is its relatively minimal presence in a corner of campus.

Both Goldsteins are university chaplains and recently hosted Drexel’s dean of students for Shabbat dinner, though their Chabad house, like all others, operates independently of the school. In its demands, the Drexel encampment cited its opposition to Chabad hosting a former IDF soldier. The Goldsteins said the group had missed an additional bit of context: The speaker was a survivor of the October 7 Supernova music festival massacre.

Pro-Palestine groups: Yes to statehood? You are obscuring Europe’s crimes

For anti-Israel organizations in Spain, Norway, and Ireland, Palestinian state is ‘not enough’

• BY OHAD MERLIN

While Israel strongly denounced the decision of several European countries to recognize the “State of Palestine” as a reward for terrorism, local pro-Palestinians in Spain, Ireland, and Norway rejected these declarations as unsatisfactory, some even regarding them as whitewashing “European complicity” with Israeli “crimes.”

In Spain, the official accounts of the student encampments in Madrid and Barcelona rejected the Spanish government’s declaration.

“The recognition of the Palestinian state whitewashes European [Nations] while they continue to sell weapons to those who are massacring [the Palestinians],” the group said. It also demanded “a complete severance of relations with Israel” and vowed to “continue fighting until the end of Zionist colonialism.”

Al-Yudur, a group affiliated with PFLP front Samidoun, shared a thread claiming, “This symbolic recognition is important but it is insufficient, especially in the current context of Gaza. Palestine needs more than a gesture. The breaking of cultural, academic, economic relations...of our government with Israel would be a much more useful first step because we know that it does work (because it worked in South African apartheid) and that the Palestinians and the solidarity movements do ask for it.”

Ana Sánchez, speaking on behalf of the Solidarity Network Against the Occupation of Palestine

(RESCOP), another Spanish group, was also unimpressed by the Spanish government’s declaration. In an interview with Canal Red, she said, “We would have loved to wake up to the news that our government has cut its ties with a genocidal, apartheid, and colonial regime... The recognition of a state does not imply the solution to all the decades-long systemic infringements of the Palestinian people’s rights.”

Sánchez also denounced the fact that Spain will continue to hold diplomatic, economic, and cultural relations with Israel and even sell arms “to those who oppress the state which we just recognized,” likening the declaration to a “wet piece of paper.”

‘End EU-Israel agreement’

Irish and Norwegian groups also expressed doubt vis-à-vis the recent announcements made by their governments. The Ireland-Palestine Solidarity Campaign (IPSC), one of the leading pro-Palestinian organizations in the Republic of Ireland, did not refer at all to the decision to recognize Palestine directly, but rather posted a tweet, reading: “The Irish government should now sanction apartheid Israel for its crimes against the Palestinian people. End all trade with Israel. Enact the Occupied Territories Bill and Divestment Bill. End US military use of Shannon. Call for an end to the EU-Israel Agreement.”

Earlier today, IPSC also referred sarcastically to Israel’s decision to expel the ambassadors of the countries that are recognizing a Palestinian state, saying, “Well now, we’ve been calling for the expulsion of

the Apartheid Ambassador but we didn’t think they’d do it themselves.”

In Norway, the Palestine Committee, a group established as early as 1969, congratulated the government on the decision. “This is a matter we have worked on for a long time and an important signal to Israel that Norway does not accept the occupation of the West Bank or the intention that Gaza be emptied of Palestinians in order to expand the State of Israel,” it stated.

However, the group added, “Clear political signals are important, but recognition of the State of Palestine must be followed up with concrete measures that can end the Israeli occupation and contribute to the realization of an independent Palestinian state.” These include, according to the Committee’s spokesperson, Line Khatib, stopping financial support for “Israel’s colonization” through divestment from Israeli companies.

Finally, regarding the premises of a two-state solution, it said, “The Palestine Committee believes that, through elections, the Palestinians themselves must decide on their own future, whether a two-state solution or a state with equal rights for all between the river and the sea should form the basis for lasting peace. A just peace solution must include the right of return for all displaced Palestinian refugees.”

Interestingly, the Facebook page belonging to the Palestinian Community in Norway has not reacted to the decision in any way so far.

Chikli slams Spanish PM’s decision: Folly and absolute heartlessness

• Jerusalem Post Staff

The Spanish prime minister’s decision to recognize a Palestinian state was an “incomprehensible folly and heartlessness,” Diaspora Affairs and Combating Antisemitism Minister Amichai Chikli said.

He made the comments at the VOX conference in Madrid, which featured conservative leaders worldwide and included virtual contributions from Hungary’s Viktor Orbán and Italy’s Giorgia Meloni.

Chikli emphasized the existential nature of the current conflict and condemned the Palestinian Authority’s lack of condemnation regarding Hamas’s actions.

Last month, Chikli attended the CPAC conference in Hungary and praised the Hungarian prime minister, calling him “a true friend of Israel.”

In January, at a European Jewish Association conference in Krakow, Chikli stated he would not form alliances with Diaspora Jews participating in international protests against Israel’s military campaign in Gaza.

“A Jew who feels at home when surrounded by a crowd shouting ‘from the river to the sea Palestine will be free,’ I do not consider him a Jew and do not wish to build a bridge with him,” Chikli said.

The Madrid conference addressed various topics: conservatism, immigration, and the war in Israel. A significant portion of the discussion centered on Spain’s planned rec-

ognition of a Palestinian state, which some viewed as a reward for terrorism. On Wednesday, along with Ireland and Norway, Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez agreed to recognize a Palestinian state alongside Israel, advocating for a two-state solution as “essential for sustainable peace.”

Santiago Abascal, head of the VOX party, directly addressed the Spanish prime minister: “Is this your international policy in the Middle East, Mr. Sanchez? Legitimizing satanic terrorism? Recognizing a Palestinian state immediately after October 7? Despite the horrific images of women being raped and parents being murdered in cold blood in front of their children broadcast on social media – and you want to tell Israel that it does not have the right to defend itself?”

At the conference, the opposition leader in Portugal announced that, if elected, he would move the Portuguese embassy to Jerusalem.

Chikli added: “Unfortunately, the current prime minister of Spain thought that these horrific acts are the background on which it is important now to recognize a Palestinian state – incomprehensible folly and heartlessness. This war is not about the future of Gaza; it does not narrow down to the future of the State of Israel or the future of the Middle East – but an existential battle for the future of the Judeo-Christian civilization in which we live, the future of the West, the future of humanity.”

Chikli further criticized the PA, highlighting that no senior figure condemned the barbaric massacre by Hamas. “Not one senior figure in the Palestinian Authority condemned the barbaric massacre by Hamas. Not one.”

The implications of Spain’s decision to recognize a Palestinian state are far-reaching, potentially influencing international relations and the diplomatic stance of other nations. Chikli’s statements reflect a growing concern among conservative leaders about the perceived leniency towards terrorism and its impact on global stability.

During a Middle East tour, Sanchez announced that Spain will recognize Palestinian statehood by July, according to reports from state news agency EFE and newspapers *El País* and *La Vanguardia*. Sanchez made these remarks to journalists in Amman, highlighting that the decision is expected to coincide with events in the conflict ahead of the European Parliament elections in June.

He noted ongoing United Nations debates and hoped that a “critical mass” within the European Union would prompt several member states to adopt the same position. This move, which has been agreed upon with leaders of Ireland, Malta, and Slovenia, is viewed by Israel as a “prize for terrorism” that undermines chances for a negotiated resolution to the Gaza conflict.

Reuters contributed to this report.



Call to submit applications to be included in the List of Hotels for the Summer 2024 Benefits Campaign

The Jerusalem Development Authority (hereinafter: “the JDA”) hereby invites hotels in Jerusalem that meet the conditions detailed in the application documents to submit their application to be included in the List of Hotels for the Summer 2024 Benefits Campaign operated by the JDA (hereinafter: “List of Hotels” and “Benefits Campaign”).

The application documents can be reviewed and downloaded on the JDA’s website: www.jda.gov.il (under the Tenders tab - databases of suppliers, consultants and planners).

The hotels that will be included in the List of Hotels will be required to provide a benefit when booking a vacation from July to September 2024 (hereinafter: “the Activity Period”), as detailed in the application documents.

An application to be included in the List of Hotels can be submitted starting from May 23, 2024 until the end of the Activity Period of the Benefits Campaign, with the List of Hotels being updated from time to time.

The application will be submitted by sending an application form as specified in the proposal, signed by the applicant, together with the required documents and submitted by email, to the address: reut@jda.gov.il. The applicant has to verify receipt of its application.

It shall be clarified that the JDA does not undertake to approve any request, and, in particular, it does not undertake to make hotel reservations as part of the Benefits Campaign.

For questions and clarifications, please contact Ms. Reut Frankel, by email: reut@jda.gov.il.



Call to submit applications to be included in the List of Suppliers and Cultural Institutions for the Summer 2024 Benefits Campaign

The Jerusalem Development Authority (hereinafter: “the JDA”) hereby invites cultural institutions and tourist attraction operators located in Jerusalem as well as suppliers, tourism entrepreneurs, and Jerusalem businesses that meet the conditions detailed in the application documents, to submit their application to be included in the List of Suppliers for the Summer 2024 Benefits Campaign operated by the JDA (hereinafter: “List of Suppliers” and “Benefits Campaign”).

The application documents can be reviewed and downloaded on the JDA’s website: www.jda.gov.il (under the Tenders tab - databases of suppliers, consultants and planners).

Visitors who are defined as eligible for a benefit in the campaign will receive from the JDA a digital voucher (coupon) worth NIS 100 per person (including VAT, if applicable), which they will be able to redeem for various activities at suppliers of their choice from the List of Suppliers, with the suppliers being required to grant a discount in advance on its activity price list, as detailed in the application documents.

An application to be included in the List of Suppliers can be submitted starting from May 23, 2024 until the end of the activity period of the Benefits Campaign, which will be applicable from July to September 2024, with the List of Suppliers being updated from time to time.

The application will be submitted by sending an application form as specified in the proposal, signed by the applicant, together with the required documents and submitted by email, to the address: bid@jda.gov.il. The applicant has to verify receipt of its application.

It shall be clarified that the JDA does not undertake to approve any request, and, in particular, it does not undertake to use any supplier as part of the Benefits Campaign.

For questions and clarifications, please contact Ms. Ayelet Sade, by email: ayelet@jda.gov.il.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

UN: Probe shows inhuman treatment

GENEVA — A United Nations expert called on Israel on Thursday to investigate multiple allegations of cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment of Palestinian detainees in the wake of October 7. UN Special Rapporteur on Torture Alice Jill Edwards said in a statement that she had received allegations of people being beaten, kept in cells blindfolded, and handcuffed for long periods. There was no immediate reaction from the Israeli government or military. The military has said it acts according to Israeli and international law and those it arrests get access to food, water, medication, and proper clothing. The UN special rapporteur said she had received reports of some detainees being deprived of sleep, threatened with physical and sexual violence, insulted, and exposed to humiliating acts, including "being photographed and filmed in degrading poses."

"I am particularly concerned that this emerging pattern of violations, coupled with an absence of accountability and transparency, is creating a permissive environment for further abusive and humiliating treatment of Palestinians," Edwards said. "The Israeli authorities must investigate all complaints and reports of torture or ill-treatment promptly, impartially, effectively, and transparently. Those responsible at all levels, including commanders, must be held accountable, while victims have a right to reparation and compensation." •Reuters

Osem to hike price from July

Osem announced Thursday that beginning in July, the prices of many of its food products will increase by an average of 2.2%. This increase follows similar hikes by numerous Israeli food companies. Strauss announced price increases for some of its non-price-controlled dairy products earlier this month. This closely followed price hikes announced by Coca-Cola and Tnuva. Gas prices and the price of price-controlled dairy products were also recently raised. •Jerusalem Post Staff

Gantz calls for Oct. 7 state inquiry

Minister-without-portfolio Benny Gantz said on Thursday in a speech that he intends to submit a proposal to establish a state inquiry committee to investigate what happened on October 7.

"It's been nearly 8 months since the largest disaster in the country occurred. We all saw the harsh footage of the abduction in Nahal Oz, we all see the public debate about whether the alert was given to the Prime Minister or not," Gantz began. "There is no doubt — the period and events leading up to October 7, and the continuation of the conflict since then, are a national upheaval from which lessons must be drawn," he continued. "At this time, it's no longer enough to take responsibility for what has happened — it's incumbent upon us to take responsibility and act, so that it never happens again. The only way to do this is through a state inquiry committee that needs to be established promptly. I intend to soon submit a decision proposal to establish it, so that the committee can organize itself for the start of work on a date to be agreed upon," Gantz said. "This is the right action for the continued functioning of the state, and it will also assist us in the international legal challenges that lie ahead," he concluded. •Jerusalem Post Staff

The reconstruction elephant right in middle of the Gaza room

ANALYSIS

• By SETH J. FRANTZMAN

As the war in Gaza drags on, the timeline is looking more like it will continue for months or even years — because of the way the war is being waged. Israel will therefore probably settle in to control several corridors in Gaza, but much of the enclave may return to Hamas control — unless other countries can come up with a better solution.

In this likely scenario, there is yet another looming threat for Israel in Gaza: Eventually, there is going to come a time when there will be a ceasefire, or operations will be significantly reduced such that it will be a de facto ceasefire. The international community is likely going to want to help to rebuild the ruined Strip.

However, in past wars, what has happened with reconstruction in Gaza or Lebanon is that countries and groups that are sympathetic to terrorists seize the contracts. For instance, Hezbollah was the one to rebuild Lebanon in 2006 — look where the terrorist group is now. Likewise, Hamas benefited from reconstruction in Gaza; its leaders live in Qatar, which has sought to fund reconstruction in the past.

This scenario could be dangerous. If reconstruction begins in Gaza, and the firms involved are forced to work under mafia-like Hamas control (absent a different civil governing power), then it is likely the funds will be diverted to terror. That means the hundreds of miles of Hamas tunnels destroyed by the IDF will be rebuilt. It means that Hamas will rebuild schools and hospitals to use them for terror again. The rocket infrastructure found in Gaza is extraordinarily extensive, as we have seen nearly daily from examples uncovered



A PALESTINIAN searches through debris at a site hit by an Israeli strike on the Al-Daraj neighborhood in Gaza City, yesterday. (Omar Al-Qattaa/AFP via Getty Images)

by the IDF. They build the launchers in simple manufacturing sites, like garages.

Rocket launchers likely don't need such complicated tools — something to cut the metal and weld and press it into shapes. Once completed, they are moved in segments to a civilian area and buried in the ground or hidden in walls.

When we consider how easy it is to divert civilian items to be made into things like rocket launch tubes, we must begin to think about the dan-

gers present in reconstruction. Unless Hamas can be replaced by another authority in Gaza, it will continue to steal aid, sell it and use the cash to fund its network of fighters and position new terror infrastructure everywhere.

The ruins of many areas in Gaza are perfect for Hamas; they can move into these areas under the guise of "helping" civilians and clear rubble in such a way as to hide their new weapon launchers and tunnel shafts. Unless this is monitored more closely than

it has been in the past, within a few years, Gaza will return to what it was before October 7.

The important aspect of reconstruction is to make sure that Israel's partners and friends are involved and that any firms involved are vetted. The Jewish state has learned the hard way that many countries do not have their interests at heart.

As the war continues, it is likely that many countries and interests who back Hamas are already thinking how they can benefit from this war —

as Iran already is. Tehran will seek to advise its proxy on how to rebuild its capabilities and has already done so for Hezbollah, the Houthis, and militias in Iraq and Syria.

Israel faces many more enemies today than in the past, and many countries such as China and Russia have lined up behind Hamas. Reconstruction is going to soon become a topic and Israel will need to treat this with the kind of strategic importance it has not treated the conflict so far.

Seven-year sabbatical and the need for financial reset

Economic freedom cannot be sacrificed if political freedom is to be preserved. — Herbert Hoover



YOUR INVESTMENTS

• By AARON KATSMAN

I'll start with a public service announcement: Remember to shut all windows on Saturday and Sunday nights as it's Lag Ba'omer, which means lots of smoky bonfires. While I usually write about the special day, this year I'd like to focus on this week's Torah portion, Behar. In the beginning, we learn the laws of *shmita* — the sabbatical year, where in year seven of the cycle the fields are to lay fallow.

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks wrote, "The fundamental insight of Parashat Behar is namely that economic inequalities have a tendency to increase over time, and the result may be a loss of freedom as well. People can become enslaved by a burden of debt. In biblical times this might involve selling yourself literally into slavery as the only way of guaranteeing food and shelter. Families might be forced into selling their land: their ancestral inheritance from the days of Moses.

"The result would be a society in which, over time, a few would become substantial landowners while many became landless and impoverished. The Torah's solution, set out in Behar, is a periodic restoration of people's fundamental liberties. Every seventh year, debts were to be released and Israelite slaves set free. After seven sabbatical cycles, the Jubilee year was to be a time when, with few exceptions, ancestral land returned to its original owners."

Rabbi Sacks continued, "Three things are worth noting about the Torah's social and economic program. First, it is more concerned with human freedom than with a narrow focus on economic equality. Losing your land or becoming trapped by debt is a real constraint on freedom. Fundamental to a Jewish understanding of the moral dimension of economics is the idea of independence, 'each person under his own vine and fig tree' as the prophet Micah puts it. (Mic. 4:4) We pray in the Grace After Meals, 'Do not make us dependent on the gifts or loans of other people... so that we may suffer neither shame nor humiliation.' There is something profoundly degrading in losing your independence and being forced to depend on the goodwill of others. Hence the provisions of Behar are directed not at equality but at restoring people's capacity to earn their own livelihood as free and independent agents.

"Next, it takes this entire system out of the hands of human legislators. It rests on two fundamental ideas about capital and labor. First, the land belongs to God: 'And the land shall not be sold in perpetuity, for the

land is Mine. You are foreigners and visitors as far as I am concerned' (Lev. 25:23)

"Second, the same applies to people: 'For they [the Israelites] are My servants, whom I brought out of Egypt, they cannot be sold as slaves' (Lev. 25:42).

"This means that personal and economic liberty are not open to political negotiation. They are inalienable, God-given rights. This is what lay behind John F. Kennedy's reference in his 1961 presidential inaugural, to the 'revolutionary beliefs for which our forebears fought,' namely 'the belief that the rights of man come not from the generosity of the state but from the hand of God.'"

He concludes, "Third, it tells us that economics is, and must remain, a discipline that rests on moral foundations. What matters to the Torah is not simply technical indices, such as the rate of growth or absolute standards of wealth, but the quality and texture of relationships: people's independence and sense of dignity, the ways in which the system allows people to recover from misfortune, and the extent to which it allows the members of a society to live the truth that 'when you eat from the labour of your hands you will be happy and it will be well with you' (Ps. 128:2)."

Thinking about this it's interesting to note how Joseph's economic plan to save Egypt from famine fits in. I realize that it was a time of crisis, but it still seemingly flies in the face of what Rabbi Sacks postulates. In any event, I think that would be a whole other article. But something worth thinking about.

It's as if every seven years and the 50th year were times for both an individual and national financial reset. While we don't exactly practice widespread debt forgiveness (except for President Biden and student loan forgiveness!) nor do we require property to be returned every 50 years to its ancestral owners, I think the concept of a financial do-over should be alive and well. How many times have I mentioned the verse in Proverbs 22:7 that the "borrower is slave to the lender?"

I can tell you from years of working with many people to help get them out of debt that they don't feel like they have freedom. They are so busy juggling all the 'debt' balls in the air that they lose their internal peace, and are always on edge, and it impacts their close relationships.

Learn from this week's Torah portion. Now is the time to start over. Get out of debt, live within your means, save, and invest. That is the way to have both financial and inner freedom.

The information contained in this article reflects the opinion of the author and not necessarily the opinion of Portfolio Resources Group, Inc. or its affiliates.

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Inheritance tax changes may trap British olim

YOUR TAXES

• By ANDREW ALBUM and LEON HARRIS

It has just been announced that the relentless climb in inheritance tax receipts in the UK continued in 2023, with a record £7.5 billion in taxes received by HM Revenue & Customs. This represents a tripling in the amount paid over the past 15 years.

According to Britain's Office of Budget Responsibility, inheritance tax could be worth nearly £10b. a year to the Treasury by the end of the decade, with the percentage of estates impacted by the charge forecast to double.

This projection is before the potential impact of proposed rule changes comes into effect, including a suggestion that *olim* (immigrants) from the UK may have to wait 10 years to escape the inheritance tax net.

For most Britons, inheritance tax is levied upon death and is payable at the rate of 40% on the value of the estate to the extent that it exceeds the nil rate band, which is currently £325,000.

Olim from the UK frequently assume that by making aliyah, their liability to British estate taxes disappear. Unfortunately, this is far from true. The misconception comes from a lack of understanding about the difference between four concepts: citizenship, which has little bearing on UK-Israeli taxation; residency, which is relevant for income and capital-gains tax; situs (location), and domicile, which both affect inheritance tax.

The process of changing your domicile is a complicated issue. This is essentially achieved by shedding your UK domicile of origin and replacing it with an Israeli domicile of choice.

It is often the case that an *oleh* from Britain becomes UK tax nonresident but still has a liability to inheritance tax in one of two ways.

Firstly, due to situs rules (i.e., where the assets are situated), investments held in Britain, such as property, are usually subject to inheritance tax when someone dies even if they have lived in Israel for many years.

Secondly, if an *oleh* remains domiciled in the UK, irrespective of whether they become tax nonresident, then they will be liable to UK inheritance tax on their worldwide assets. Detailed advice is recommended.

If you can acquire an Israeli domicile of choice, it is generally advisable that as many assets as possible are moved outside of the UK. Moving invest-

ments to a third country, such as the Channel Islands, may result in benefit from the 10-year, post-aliyah exemption from Israeli income and capital-gains tax while placing such assets outside of the UK for inheritance-tax situs purposes.

An issue currently causing concern is the possible impact of the UK government's recently proposed changes to non-dom (non-UK-domiciled) rules and its move to a residence-based system, starting on April 6, 2025. There is a proposed "tail" provision that would keep a person within the scope of inheritance tax for 10 years after leaving the UK. Whether this becomes a part of the final legislation remains to be seen.

Further Israeli aspects: Israel currently does not have an inheritance tax, but after the 10-year tax holiday, Israel imposes capital-gains tax on the overall gain in inflation-adjusted shekel terms from inherited assets. This may be mitigated. One way is to pay Israeli tax on the post-10-year portion of the gain if you made aliyah. Another way may be to request a "step-up" of the cost of an inherited asset (e.g., from UK parents) to its market value upon the date of death of the deceased donor, where applicable.

Timing of aliyah also matters because olim who make aliyah after the end of 2025 must disclose their foreign income and gains to the Israel Tax Authority even if they are eligible for the 10-year exemption from Israeli tax thereon.

Special care is needed if you change your mind and/or decide to leave Israel or perhaps head to the UK. It currently takes at least four Israeli tax years to cease to be fiscally resident in Israel. But if you succeed, there is an exit tax (really Israeli capital-gains tax) to contend with. Complications arise in each country, and proposals exist to further tighten the Israeli exit tax rules, probably after the war. Again, it is recommended to take detailed advice.

What else? Tax isn't everything. Consider spreading your investments and currency risks. The sterling-shekel exchange rate has its ups and downs, and an election is on the horizon in Britain. In addition, much can be said about the Israeli economy.

As always, consult experienced tax and investment advisers in each country at an early stage in specific cases.

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Seven dead in Russian strikes on Kharkiv; Kyiv pleads for aid

• By MAX HUNDER
and ANASTASHIA MALENKO

KHARKIV (Reuters) – Russia pounded Kharkiv with missiles on Thursday, killing seven people inside a printing house, and President Volodymyr Zelensky chided Ukraine's western allies for not providing enough military support to rebuff Russian attacks.

Moscow's forces are increasingly hammering the northeastern regional capital, a city of 1.2 million, as they attempt to press a ground assault on the border region and stretch Ukrainian defenses on the eastern front.

Authorities said Russia fired about 15 missiles on the cities of Kharkiv and Liubotyn on Thursday, targeting mostly transport infrastructure and the printing house in Kharkiv, where officials said around 50 people were inside at the time of the strike.

Smoke poured out of the structure, whose roof was torn open, as exhausted rescue workers hauled bodies in plastic bags out of the building. Charred pages from books were scattered across the ground.

Speaking at the scene of the strike, regional governor Oleh Syniehubov described it as an



A FIREFIGHTER washes up his face as he works at a compound hit by Russian missile strikes in Kharkiv, Ukraine, yesterday. (Valentyn Ogiyrenko/Reuters)

"absolutely civilian" object.

"There are no military facilities either here or nearby," he told reporters.

Another 24 people were wounded in the attacks, the

regional prosecutor's office said. It added that the missiles were launched from Russia's Belgorod region, which Russian forces used to launch their May 10 incursion.

Separately, Ukraine's state railway company said six workers were wounded after several of its facilities in Kharkiv and the region had come under attack.

'NOT OUR WEAKNESS'

In a social media post, Zelensky chided Ukraine's international partners for not providing enough air-defense systems or allowing Ukraine to use Western-provided weapons to strike missile-launchers inside Russia.

"This weakness is not our weakness, but that of the world's, which for the third year already has not dared to deal with the terrorists exactly as they deserve," he said.

Ukrainian forces, outmanned and outgunned, are struggling to fend off fierce Russian assaults along multiple parts of the 1,000-km. front line as they await more shipments from a long-delayed US aid package.

In an interview with Reuters this week, Zelensky called on Kyiv's allies to step up their involvement in the war, including by shooting down Russian missiles over Ukraine.

Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba echoed Zelensky's plea for more air-defense systems on Thursday, saying Ukraine urgently needed more US-made Patriot batteries.

"Unfortunately, mere words of solidarity do not intercept Russian missiles," he wrote on X.

Seven die in India as a result of heavy rains

THIRUVANANTHPURAM, India (Reuters) – At least seven people have died in India's southern state of Kerala after heavier than normal pre-monsoon rains, authorities said, even as much of South Asia grappled with a heat wave.

Pre-monsoon rains were 18% above normal in Kerala this year, causing flooding in parts and disrupting flights at the Kozhikode airport, officials said.

According to the state's Disaster Management Authority (KSDMA), a 70-year-old man died in a lightning strike in Kasaragod district on Wednesday, while brothers aged 18 and 21 died after falling into a quarry filled with water in Palakkad on Tuesday.

Four people also died in Idukki and Pathanamthitta districts after falling into water, said an official at the SDMA.

The local weather department has issued a red alert, warning of extremely heavy rainfall in three districts on Thursday.

In contrast to Kerala, most of India and Pakistan faced

heat waves, with India's capital New Delhi ordering the closure of schools earlier this week.

Temperatures often peak during May, but India's weather department was predicting seven to ten heat wave days in northwestern regions this month, compared to the usual two to three days.

New Delhi will vote on Saturday, along with the nearby states of Haryana and Uttar Pradesh among others, in the penultimate phase of a seven-stage national vote, with temperatures predicted to touch 46° on the day.

In neighboring Pakistan, authorities advised people to stay indoors and avoid non-essential travel, as temperatures were predicted to go beyond 48° C in some parts.

"The soaring temperatures across South Asia can put millions of children's health at risk if they are not protected or hydrated," the UN children's agency UNICEF said.

Extreme temperatures in Asia have been made more likely from human-driven climate change, international scientists said earlier this month.

Boeing faces 'long road' on safety issues, FAA says

• By DAVID SHEPARDSON

WASHINGTON (Reuters) – US planemaker Boeing faces a "long road" to address safety issues, the head of the Federal Aviation Administration said on Thursday as it prepares to receive the company's plan to address concerns.

In late February, FAA Administrator Mike Whitaker gave Boeing 90 days to develop a comprehensive plan to address "systemic quality-control issues" and barred it from

expanding 737 MAX production.

Boeing has faced mounting questions after a door panel detached during a January 5 flight on a new Alaska Airlines 737 MAX 9, forcing pilots to make an emergency landing while passengers were exposed to a gaping hole 16,000 feet above the ground. An FAA audit also found serious issues.

Whitaker told ABC News the 90-day plan, due next week, "is not the end of the process. It's the beginning and it's going to be a long road to get Boeing back to where they

need to be making safe airplanes."

He said the FAA has been working closely with Boeing over the last 90 days on "what that plan is going to look like if it's to bring the quality back where it needs to be at their factories."

"It's to bring the safety system where it needs to be and bring the culture where it needs to be so that employees can speak up when they see something that is concerning."

The National Transportation Safety

Board has said the plane was missing four key bolts, and Boeing has said it believes required documents detailing the doors during production were never created.

Whitaker held an all-day meeting with Calhoun in February and the FAA plans a new round of meetings with Boeing next week. Boeing faces an ongoing Justice Department investigation into the door plug blowout as well.

Calhoun, who has since announced he plans to step down as CEO later this year,

said earlier the planemaker "will develop the comprehensive action plan with measurable criteria that demonstrates the profound change that Administrator Whitaker and the FAA demand."

Separately, Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg told Yahoo Finance on Wednesday that Boeing is "saying the right things, they're taking encouraging steps, but we need to make sure that we see it on the shop floor, that we see it in terms of the quality of the product that rolls off the line."

Putin decree outlines Russian response to any US seizure of frozen assets

• Reuters

Russia will identify US property, including securities, that could be used as compensation for losses sustained as a result of any seizure of frozen Russian assets in the United States, according to a decree signed by President Vladimir Putin on Thursday.

G7 negotiators have been discussing for weeks how to best exploit some \$300 billion worth of Russian financial assets, such as major currencies and government bonds, which were frozen shortly after Moscow invaded Ukraine in February 2022.

Russia's ability to mete out tit-for-tat retaliation if Western leaders seize its frozen assets has been eroded by dwindling foreign investment, but it may go after private investors' cash instead, officials and economists told Reuters this month.

Thursday's decree said a Russian entity can ask a Russian court to determine whether its property has been unjustifiably seized and seek compensation.

The court would then order for compensation to be transferred in the form of US assets or property in Russia from a list that would be drawn up by Russia's government



RUSSIAN PRESIDENT Vladimir Putin attends a document-signing ceremony with Bahraini King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa at the Kremlin in Moscow, yesterday. (Yuri Kochetkov/Pool via Reuters)

commission on foreign asset sales.

The decree listed securities, stakes in Russian companies, real estate, movable property, and property rights among the US-owned assets potentially liable for seizure.

Russia holds an insignificant amount of American state property, former president Dmitry Medvedev acknowledged last month, adding that any response Russia makes would be asymmetrical, focusing on private individuals' assets.

The assets of many foreign investors, including both

individuals and major US investment funds, are held in special "type-C" accounts Russia introduced shortly after sending its army into Ukraine and being hit by a barrage of Western sanctions.

Money in those accounts cannot be transferred out of Russia without permission from Russian authorities.

Washington has passed legislation allowing President Joe Biden's administration to confiscate Russian assets held in American banks and transfer them to Ukraine, something Russia has repeatedly called illegal.

Donald Trump: Putin will free jailed US reporter Gershkovich if I ask him to

• Reuters

Former US president Donald Trump intends to use his relationship with Russian President Vladimir Putin to get *Wall Street Journal* reporter Evan Gershkovich freed from a Russian prison.

This would happen soon after the November election in the United States, he wrote this week on his social-media platform Truth Social. Trump is seeking to defeat President Joe Biden and return to the White House.

"Evan Gershkovich, the Reporter from The Wall Street Journal, who is being held by Russia, will be released almost immediately after the Election, but definitely before I assume Office. He will be HOME, SAFE, AND WITH HIS FAMILY," he wrote. "Vladimir Putin, President of Russia, will do that for me, but not for anyone else, and WE WILL BE PAYING NOTHING!"

Trump did not refer to any contacts with Putin or say what grounds he had to believe that the Russian leader would release Gershkovich.

A Trump campaign spokesman did not immediately return a request for comment on whether the former Republican president or his advisers have been in touch with any Russian officials.

Asked about the comments, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Putin has "naturally not had contacts with Donald Trump."

Gershkovich was arrested in Russia in March last year on spying charges, which he, his paper, and the Biden administration have all strongly denied. He has spent well over a year in a Moscow prison, with no date set for a trial.

Putin said in February it might be possible to free him in exchange for a Russian imprisoned in Germany for



EVAN GERSHKOVICH, who is in custody on espionage charges, watches court proceedings from behind the glass wall of an enclosure for defendants before a hearing in Moscow last month. (Tatyana Makeyeva/Reuters)

murder. Peskov reiterated previous Kremlin statements that contacts with Washington regarding any exchange of prisoners must be conducted "in complete silence and absolutely discreetly. This is the only way they can be effective."

During his 2017-2021 presidency, Trump expressed admiration for Putin.

In 2018, he refused to blame the Russian leader for meddling in the 2016 US election, casting doubt on the findings of his own intelligence agencies and sparking criticism at home.

Trump has also claimed he could end the war in Ukraine within 24 hours of returning to the White House, although he has not said how he would do this.

Greece dismantles gang trafficking drugs from Latin America to Europe

• Reuters

Greek authorities have dismantled an international criminal group trafficking cocaine in shipping containers from Latin America to Europe, police said on Thursday.

Two Albanians and two Greeks were arrested after a months-long investigation launched by Greek drugs and contraband

enforcement authorities in cooperation with the US Drug Enforcement Administration.

Dozens of plastic bags containing more than 210 kg. of cocaine were found and confiscated in containers with shrimps at the port of Piraeus, police officials said.

More than €130,000 euros (\$141,000), a shotgun, bullets, mobile phones, and documents referring to drug amounts

and expected profits were also confiscated among other evidence during raids at the suspects' homes and vehicles, police said in a statement.

Based on the evidence, authorities estimate that the criminal group aimed for an illegal profit of more than €5 million.

The drugs were being transferred from Latin America to European countries and to Turkey, police officials said. Greece was

used both as a transit point and destination for the shipments.

One of the Albanians was accused of a lead role in the group.

Police said that the 48-year old man had been previously accused of operating a lab in Greece producing Captagon pills – a mix of amphetamines also known as the "poor man's cocaine."

More than 634,000 pills had been con-

fiscated at the time.

One of the Greek nationals had been previously arrested in Costa Rica on a 2012 warrant issued by the United States and sentenced over his involvement in smuggling weapons to Europe for the now demobilized Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) rebels.

The suspects were expected to appear before a prosecutor.

Report: Hamas terrorists, a father and son, admit raping before murdering women on October 7

• Jerusalem Post Staff

Two Hamas terrorists, a father and son, confessed to raping innocent Israeli civilians before killing them on October 7, the *Daily Mail* reported Thursday.

Jamal Hussein Ahmad Radi, a 47-year-old Palestinian from Gaza, was described as shameless, and his 18-year-old son, Abdallah, was called evil in the report.

The report focused on a video in which the two terrorists described murdering civilians in their

homes, kidnapping victims, and raping women before murdering them.

The report described how the two terrorists confessed to invading Israel and infiltrating Kibbutz Nir Oz, where "in each house where [they] found someone, [they] either killed them or kidnapped them."

The father described how he had raped a crying woman while holding her at gunpoint, and that after 15 minutes, he left her but did not know what happened to her

afterward.

According to the son's confession, however, his father did not provide the investigators with the entire truth. The son said his father had killed the woman after she was raped by multiple people, including himself, the report said.

"My father raped her, then I did, and then my cousin did, and then we left," he was quoted as saying. "But my father killed the woman after we finished raping her."

Another woman was raped by the two terrorists, as well as two

more people who were raped by the father, the report said, saying he had confessed to having "raped another girl as well," and that he "broke into five houses."

According to the IDF, both the father and son are in custody in Israel and awaiting trial.

The testimonies arrived two months after a report concerning sexual-violence incidents on October 7 delivered by Pramila Patten, special representative of the UN secretary-general, the report said.

Patten's report was based on

interviews with multiple October 7 victims and survivors, as well as investigating the bodies of victims at different morgues.

"It was a catalog of the most extreme and inhumane forms of killing, torture, and other horrors," the *Daily Mail* quoted Patten as saying.

Some women who were at the Supernova music festival on October 7 were also victims of Hamas's use of sexual violence as a weapon, the report said.

The report ended with an IDF

spokesperson being quoted as saying in a video: "Over the past months, we've seen countless evidence of the brutal violence used by Hamas on October 7, including harrowing acts of gender-based and sexual violence. These confessions further prove that any attempt to deny the horrors of October 7, and discredit the testimonies of witnesses, survivors, and freed hostages, is part of a campaign to delegitimize Israel and to promote the justification of terrorism."

KAN poll finds: Public wants an election now

• Jerusalem Post Staff

A majority of the Israeli public believes elections in Israel should be held in advance, with half of them saying that they should be held now, according to a poll published on Thursday by KAN News.

The poll also revealed that a near majority of the public supports a ground operation against Hezbollah in the North. These results were especially prevalent among the coalition's voters, the news outlet stated. Opposition voters, however, remained divided between those who support such a move and those who oppose it.

When looking at the distribution of Knesset mandates, the Likud received 22 man-

dates, compared with the previous poll in which it won 21, the poll showed.

Benny Gantz's National Unity Party remained stable with 29 mandates, while Yesh Atid garnered an additional mandate since the last poll, bringing the party to 16.

The KAN poll showed other parties dropping, such as Israel Beytenu, which earned ten mandates instead of 11. And Bezalel Smotrich's Religious Zionist Party dropped to four mandates instead of its previous five.

According to the poll, some parties remained stable, such as Itamar Ben-Gvir's Otzma Yehudit, which would win nine mandates, Hadash-Ta'al with five, and Meretz and Ra'am receiving four mandates each.

London cinema vandalized ahead of Nova massacre documentary screening

• By MICHAEL STARR

The London Phoenix Cinema was vandalized Thursday morning ahead of a screening of a Supernova festival massacre documentary, the Metropolitan Police and a Jewish security organization said.

The Met said police responded to reports of criminal damage at the cinema, and had launched an investigation into the incident as a potential hate crime.

The Community Security Trust said it was "appalled by the disgraceful graffiti."

Protests led by Palestine Solidarity Campaign Brixton were set to be held at the cinema just before the Thursday evening private screening of *Supernova: The Music Festival Massacre* as part of the Seret International Israeli Film Festival.

"Police had already been made aware of protests expected at the venue," said the Met. "Officers will be there to make sure those attending can protest safely."

By Thursday, a petition urging law enforcement to disallow the protests had garnered 10,000 signatures. The petition

started by London Jewish community members on Monday said "The Jewish community in this area seeks to continue living in peace, free from the threat of external provocations and disturbances."

PSC Brixton said the film festival was "part of a broader art-washing strategy by the Israeli settler-colonial apartheid state that uses culture to whitewash and cover up its crimes against the Palestinian people," and that the screening was being held against the wishes of members, staff, and patrons.

The activists said they were

holding the protest after a joint letter issued last Tuesday by Artists for Palestine UK to cinemas hosting Seret screenings.

"We ask you to stand on the side of humanity, against apartheid and genocide, by canceling your Israel-sponsored film screenings and committing to not host the UK-Israeli Film Festival in future," said the letter addressed to trustees of the Phoenix Cinema, Everyman Cinemas Hampstead and Bar-net, and JW3.

The group said the Picturehouse and Curzon cinemas had refused to host the festival.

RECOGNIZED

Continued from Page 1

The recognition does not become official until May 28, but already on Wednesday, Israel recalled its envoys from those three countries.

On Thursday, Israel's Foreign Ministry Director-General Yaakov Blitshteyn severely reprimanded the Irish, Spanish, and Norwegian ambassadors at its office in Jerusalem.

The ministry invited the media to photograph the start of the meeting, where the three envoys were shown the short video released by the Hostage Families Forum this week depicting the moment five of the young female hostages were taken captive from their Nahal Oz military base on October 7.

The five young women can be seen, in some cases, with their hands tied behind their backs and with bloodied faces.

One of the captors appears to be threatening to rape the women. Ambassadors Maria Salomon Perez of Spain and Sonya McGuinness of Ireland are themselves female.

Norwegian Ambassador Per Egil Selvaag had hosted peace activist Vivian Silver less than a week before she was killed in that attack.

Israel's Foreign Minister Israel Katz, who was in Paris on Thursday, sharply criticized the three countries, accusing them of legitimizing an invasion in which 252 people were seized as hostages and at least 1,200 people were killed. Many of the victims were raped, dismembered, and burned alive.

"Norway, if your goal was to reward terrorism by declaring support for a Palestinian state, you've achieved it," Katz wrote in a post on X, adding, "Hamas thanks you for your service."

He also posted a short video showing scenes from the October 7 attack.

Eide rejected such claims, explaining that the recognition was an attempt to strengthen moderate Israelis and Palestinians against extremist forces within their society.

Israelis, he said, are in psychological shock over October 7 and Palestinians are deeply traumatized by the Gaza war. He noted in particular the high fatality count from that conflict. Hamas has reported close to 36,000 deaths, verifying close to 25,000 of them. Israel has said some 14,000 of the Gaza fatalities are combatants.

"I have deep empathy with the state of shock, that so many people in Israel and Israel as a nation is in, after this most terrible attack on Jews since the Holocaust. I get it," Eide said.

"And I understand that that takes you into survival mode. And I have no problem with empathizing with that," he said.

"Likewise, I empathize with 35,000 people killed in Gaza, I empathize with ordinary citizens, none Hamas people everybody having lost families and so on in Gaza."

"People on both sides are captured by that drama," Eide said.

But the question now is, "How can we come out of this and look for something that looks more like a political process?"

Norway views the statehood declaration as a friendly and "pro-Israel" one that takes the moderates in "this little piece of land that we so much cherish out of this cycle of violence, which will only stimulate more extremism" on both sides, including within Israel.

Without a two-state resolution to the conflict, he said, "There will only be more [Palestinian] terror in the future; then you will have even more [Israeli] right-wing, more extremist positions in Israel and the cycle will never stop. So we would like to help you out of it," he said.

Oslo, he said, has a long history of supporting Israel, recalling that it was among those countries that supported the creation of the state in 1948. It voted to grant Israel UN membership a year later, both in the Security Council and then in the General Assembly.

Norway was also instrumental in launching a two-state peace process through the 1993 Oslo Accords, which bears the name of its capital.

That agreement, launched on the White House lawn with much fanfare, normalized the idea of two states, but never led to a final status agreement that turned the

vision into a reality.

The purpose of those accords, he said, "was to work towards a peaceful solution, a two-state solution; the establishment of a Palestinian state, living beside Israel with appropriate security guarantees for both."

The idea was to build Palestinian institutions, including the Palestinian Authority, from the bottom up and to leave some of the central issues of dispute such as Jerusalem, refugees, security and borders, till late in the negotiations," he said.

One of the tenets of that process was that "bilateral recognition of Palestine would happen at the end," Eide said.

Decades later, and with the last bilateral peace process failing in 2014, Western countries, including Norway, had revised the logic of holding onto the delay in Palestinian statehood recognition, Eide explained.

"Some years ago, a number of countries started to think that maybe recognition could come earlier, not at the end, but a point where it would be supportive of the process," he said.

Already last year, he explained, the government, led by Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Store, adopted that position with broad support from parliament.

"This was partly driven by the fact that we saw that no real negotiations were happening and there wasn't any progress towards the two-state solution," Eide said; the events since October 7 have only made that worse.

The United Kingdom this year, Eide said, also concurred that statehood did not have to occur at the end of the process.

Countries that wanted to recognize Palestine as a state, like Norway, wanted to do it at a moment when it could be helpful to a peace process.

"The act of recognition of Palestine which, of course, in itself - even by itself - does not change much... But as a contribution to this process, it might help," he said.

It's not a policy change, he said, but more a policy update on one specific issue.

Norway's stance has remained the same: It supports two states based on the pre-1967 borders, with agreed-upon land swaps, Eide said.

Wednesday's declaration, he said, sent "a strong signal."

It's "the kind of card you can play only once and we decided to do it now," Eide said.

"We have a good reason to believe that more countries will follow in the coming weeks," he said.

"What remains is that we still need to end up with a Palestinian state that is constructed in such a way that Palestinians can run their own affairs inside Palestine but with strong and credible security guarantees for Israel."

Eide said he believed that his country's ties with Israel remained strong.

Israel's decision to recall its ambassador and the reprimand, he said, "are tools in the diplomatic toolbox."

"When the ambassador one day will come back to after his consultations, I will be the first one to invite him for a coffee in my office."

RULE

Continued from Page 1

halt to Israel's offensive in Gaza, and in Rafah in particular, saying this was necessary to ensure the survival of Gaza, much of which has been reduced to rubble.

Israel maintains that Hamas's last operating brigades are in Rafah, along with the hostages its fighters took on October 7. Israel's military operation in Gaza, encompassing Rafah, was triggered by Hamas's brutal cross-border massacre attack nearly eight months ago.

The demand for such an emergency measure is part of a larger case brought before The Hague-based court by South Africa accusing Israel of genocide.

An Israeli government spokesman, speaking in Jerusalem ahead of the decision, said: "No power on Earth will stop Israel from protecting its citizens and going after Hamas in Gaza."

ICJ decisions have in the past been ignored. The top UN legal body has no way to enforce its decisions, but they carry international weight. A ruling against Israel could add to its political isolation after a series of set-

backs this week.

Several European countries said they would recognize a Palestinian state and the chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court announced an application for arrest warrants against Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, as well as leaders of Hamas.

The ICC prosecutes individuals for alleged war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide, while the ICJ is the highest UN body for disputes between states.

Israel has denounced South Africa's claim that it is violating the 1948 Genocide Convention, saying this makes a mockery of the crime of genocide.

The court has previously rejected Israel's demand to throw out the case and has ordered it to prevent acts of genocide against the Palestinians while stopping short of ordering a halt to Israeli military operations.

South Africa asked for additional emergency measures to protect Rafah, where more than a million Palestinians have been sheltering. It also asked the panel of 15 permanent judges and one ad hoc Israeli judge to order Israel to allow unimpeded access to Gaza for UN officials, organizations providing humanitarian aid, journalists, and investigators.

HID

Continued from Page 1

fighting for eight months in Gaza; the weaponry and means of combat we found there weren't any different. There was an enemy here - a stubborn one. They fought for this place - and died in it."

Almog, 36, from Kibbutz Neot Mordechai in the Upper Galilee, is the commander of the Paratroopers Brigade's 202nd Battalion.

It is a regular formation, one of the three battalions of this most-storied of IDF infantry brigades. The 202nd has spent the last two weeks in the heart of Jabalya. The area is still not completely pacified, and small arms and tank fire could be seen close by.

In the course of its operations in Jabalya earlier this week, the 202nd recovered the bodies of four Israelis murdered by Hamas on October 7: Itzik Gelenter, 57; Amit Buskila, 28; Shani Louk, 23; and Ron Binyamin, 52.

I attended the funeral of Louk in her hometown, Moshav Srigin, south of Beit Shemesh in the Eila Valley. Coming to this place can tell us more about how her body was found and about the soldiers who carried the mission out.

"The intelligence we had on this place came from the brigade and battalion intelligence level," Almog said, "and we came to the conclusion that something was unusual here... It's a combination of several factors - intelligence at the brigade level, the tactical force that locates the site, and then the force from the Yahalom [Combat Engineering Corps reconnaissance] unit that carried out its specialized work."

The paratroopers' tactical force, which entered the house and located the shaft in which the bodies were located, was led by Lt. Roi Beit Yaakov, 22, from Eli, who was killed last week in Gaza fighting.

His squad captured the house as part of the 202nd's battle with Hamas terrorists.

"Something seemed to Roi to be unusual in this house," Almog said. "So he started to investigate, moving furniture around, shifting rugs, and they found an opening in one of the rooms, leading to a shaft."

Beit Yaakov reported the finding of the shaft to his company commander, Maj. Gal Shabbat, who was killed later in the week. Shabbat then set in motion the process of searching the shaft. A Yahalom unit was called in.

"They reached the bodies themselves, and they were identified, and in the end, it became clear that they were the bodies of the four people that you were aware of," Almog said.

Inside the house, we must move carefully over the rubble. Through the darkness, we found our way to the room where the shaft was located. It was still open. We approached it carefully, shining flashlights in the darkness.

The shaft is a nondescript hole in the floor. The opening is narrow, one meter by one meter, and there is a



A SHAFT in a Jabalya home that leads to a tunnel. (Jonathan Spyer)

metal ladder leading down. The shaft is about 10 meters deep and leads to a tunnel.

When Beit Yaakov's force entered, it was concealed by a rug. The atmosphere in the house is close and fetid.

Maj. A, a member of the Yahalom unit that searched and secured the shaft, told us outside the house: "We were able to identify unusual elements, and these, in the end, led us to find the bodies... When we entered the shaft, we didn't know that there were bodies down there."

He carefully avoided any discussion of the precise methods used by his force.

A Channel 13 reporter asked Maj. A about the dilemma of risking the lives of soldiers to extricate the corpses of the dead.

"No dilemma," he said. "We're committed to hunting Hamas tunnels and to bringing all the hostages home to Israel, dead or alive, everyone."

Almog later said it was "enough for a commander to miss something, and it might never be found. It's about the instincts and the field knowledge of the commander, who in this case chose to go that little bit further. To move a rug, which he could have ignored. But he didn't."

"So he found a shaft. We've found many in the past. But Roi decided to stay and search the house. He could have kept going. Roi was a squad commander of the highest level, and his memory will be with us forever, like all the fallen of this war and all the wars of the past," Almog said.

Beit Yaakov was killed two days after the discovery of the bodies. He was killed along with four of his comrades in a friendly fire incident in the heat and confusion of the battle in Jabalya. That same day, Shabbat, from Katzir, Roi's company commander to whom he reported the discovery of the shaft, was killed by an enemy sniper.

The fight for Jabalya continues, and the main battle in Gaza is now farther south in Rafah, while politicians continue to squabble and maneuver for position.

It's difficult to spend any amount of time with the fighters on the ground in Gaza and not conclude that they deserve better than all that. Not that this seems to affect the starkness and strength of their commitment.

"There is an organization here that had a long time to prepare," Almog said, "and war isn't a matter of a few months, and we're done. War, as the cliché has it, is the kingdom of the unknown. And we'll return to places where we were before because the enemy doesn't always cooperate, and intelligence improves and sharpens. That's legitimate. It's a long war. No one thought it would finish quickly. We started in winter; now it's summer. And if we have to fight again in winter, that's fine, and in the end, we'll bring security for Israel."

Yosef, one of his paratroopers, from a haredi family in Jerusalem's Bayit Vagan neighborhood, standing in the rubble outside the building where the bodies of the murdered Israelis were found, said: "We keep on going. It's hard work but satisfying." Then, reaching for an appropriate metaphor, he concluded, "It's an extraordinary feeling to be here, you know. Like Samson, in a way."

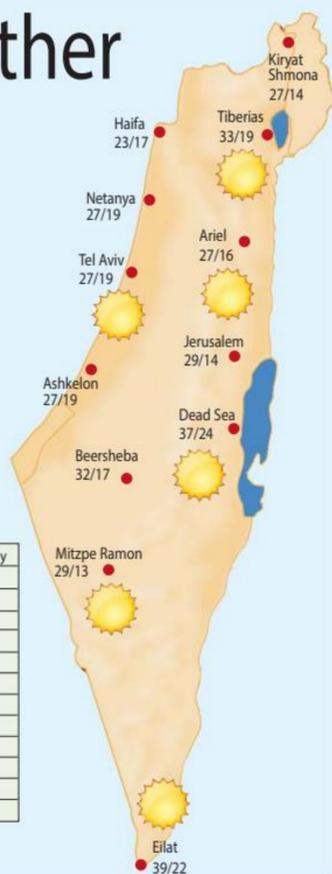
At Louk's funeral in Srigim, her father, Nissim Louk, told the mourners: "The blood of the murdered ones, and Shani among them, was not abandoned and cried out from the ground."

This is the story of those who heard and those who brought her home.

• Sports Editor: URIEL STURM
Comments/Questions: sports@jpost.com

Weather

Today	Sunny
Saturday	Unchanged
Sunday	Sunny



North America Weather Today



Zoos just enjoying hooping with Jerusalem

Veteran Israeli shares rare emotion after Hapoel's State Cup conquest over former club Maccabi Tel Aviv

INTERVIEW

• By JOSHUA HALICKMAN

Yovel Zoosman is without a doubt one of Hapoel Jerusalem's most satisfied and happiest players after capturing the State Cup last week.

The veteran Israeli, who grew up in the Maccabi Tel Aviv system, celebrated in front of the yellow-and-blue at his former stomping ground in Yad Eliyahu with a 85-72 victory as he put in an excellent performance with nine points, six rebounds (three offensive boards) and a +26 in 20 minutes.

Following the contest, Zoosman conducted an exclusive interview with *The Jerusalem Post* in which he referred to, among other things, overcoming a personally difficult start to the season as well as the experience of the final as he looks ahead to the upcoming postseason in domestic league play.

"Every win is special," Zoosman began. "I think this time even more so because we looked very, very good in the second half, we were very sharp and we were together. We achieved one of the goals we set for ourselves, we'll celebrate, but we are not satisfied because we get right back at it again with plenty of games and the playoffs just around the corner."

Jerusalem has had issues at the start of games throughout this season and that was also the case in the State Cup final, but the Reds were able to find a way to come back with a tremendous second half on both sides of the court.

"This is the heart of the team, this is who we are. We always struggle at the beginning of the game and we have some difficulties, but we find a way at the end. I'm full of emotions and I think you saw how happy we were because we've been working very, very hard for this since the beginning of the year. We had endless issues that have come and gone throughout the season. I'm happy."

Zoosman himself did not have an easy start to this game as the swingman went 0-of-4 from the field including 0-of-3 from deep, but he did not give up and in the third quarter he helped turn the game around and he scored all of his nine points in this one period alone.

"This is who I am, if I don't shoot the ball then I won't contribute and if I don't



AFTER A tough start to the season, Hapoel Jerusalem's Yovel Zoosman has begun to find his rhythm. The 26-year-old swingman led the Reds with a +26 plus/minus in their 85-72 State Cup final victory over Maccabi Tel Aviv last week at Yad Eliyahu. (Dov Halickman)

shoot I'm not Yovel Zoosman and that's what I do," he explained. "I work very hard to improve my percentages and while I had a bit of a tough time, I didn't stop shooting. I've been working so hard for so long, hundreds of thousands or millions of shots in my life and I had no doubt that it would go in. That's who I am; if I don't do that then I don't contribute to the team as much as I can. This is where it all starts."

Jerusalem began the campaign with head coach Aleksandar Dzikić on the sidelines, but the bench boss left the club due to the ongoing war against Hamas. At that point the Reds brought in Greek tactician Ilias Kantzouris, but he was unable to get the capital city club over the hump in the Basketball Champions League and bid adieu to the team soon thereafter.

At that point, the team's Sports Director, Yonatan Alon, decided to move down from the front office and to the bench, a place that he had been to before back a couple of seasons ago in almost the exact same situation.

So far, Zoosman is very content with Yonatan Alon and his play has no doubt shown that on the floor.

"First of all, they scored 46 points in the first half and 26 in the second half. That shows that we defended very, very well, moved the ball, ran in transition and made the game a little more fluid. I think what Yonatan is trying to instill in us is being a winning team and a team that has common values, and that you can't take someone out of the team. We're all a team together where the sum of the whole is greater than the individual players and I think that we saw that in this game."

As much as Zoosman loves offense, he knows it all begins at the other end of the floor.

"We realized that we can't continue like this, that we can't win if we don't defend. 46 points in the first half is way too much, Alon warned us about this at halftime and we took it to heart. In the end, defense and doing things right wins games and I think we saw that here."

"I think that in these kinds of games there is no tomorrow, you can't think about what was and what will be, you just give everything at any given moment. While we shot in poor percentages at the beginning of the game, we came prepared and very hungry as we said from the outset, 'let's see if they can take the trophy from us' because it was ours from last year. I'm happy that we kept it."

One player who stood out in the game and could have earned the MVP award was JaCorey Williams, who scored 21 points (10-of-15 from two-point range), six rebounds (four offensive) and two steals in 30 minutes.

The big man had played well since joining the club midseason, but has really turned it on since Coach Alon took over. JaCorey played great. I think he's a player at the highest levels in Europe in my eyes. He's motivated, he has endless energy, he's competitive, he always gives 100% and it's fun because he plays without an ego. He gives everything on the court every day and we get to enjoy it."

The swingman shared some of his feelings about some of the goals the team had entering the season and how satisfying it is when you hit the target.

"This was one of our goals. We failed in some ways this season when we didn't reach the next stage in Europe, but here you saw the fans just like me, that this cup victory makes us happy. All 5,000 fans who came here, celebrated with us and were present with us through good and bad, it's fun. I admit that I'm a player who doesn't show a lot of emotions and that's quite well known, but this fanbase brings something else out of me and I feel an amazing connection with them. It's very special to be with them."

Finally, Zoosman spoke about what this victory means for the rest of the season going forward.

"Nothing, in fact the opposite. We need to continue on because at the end of the day we will probably finish either fourth or fifth in the league's regular season. We need to do our best to come in every day and try to finish the season with some sort of home-court advantage for at least the quarterfinals. What we did here is not indicative of the future and we need to stay hungry, focused and never be satisfied."

Club-by-club review of another enthralling Premier League season



COMMENTARY

• By MITCH PHILLIPS

Manchester City won a record fourth straight Premier League crown on Sunday, finishing two points ahead of Arsenal.

Following is a summary of the campaigns of the 20 top-flight clubs, listed in order of their final positions:

1. MANCHESTER CITY

City were pushed hard by Arsenal but once again proved masters in closing a title race to become the first English top-flight club to win four successive league championships.

Liverpool cracked under City's relentless pressure and while Arsenal took it to the wire, a run of 19 wins and four draws since their last defeat saw Pep Guardiola's side prevail.

Even more impressively they had to make do without midfielder Kevin de Bruyne for several months while striker Erling Haaland also had injuries, but such is the depth of City's squad that they simply continued churning out wins.

Already the question is who can stop City making it five in a row next season.

2. ARSENAL

Arsenal proved they have come a long way since last season as they pushed Manchester City to the final day of the title race, finishing runners-up with 89 points — one fewer than the total achieved by The Invincibles in 2003-04. Ultimately it was not enough to dislodge City from their perch, but Mikel Arteta's Arsenal proved that they are now a force to be reckoned with.

Declan Rice fully justified his 100 million pounds (\$126.82 million) price tag as he commanded Arsenal's midfield, while Bukayo Saka, with 16 league goals, and skipper Martin Odegaard had tremendous seasons.

3. LIVERPOOL

Outgoing manager Jurgen Klopp

did not get the farewell he hoped for as the unlikely dream of a quadruple evaporated during a dreadful run of form beginning with a dramatic FA Cup defeat at arch-rivals Manchester United in mid-March.

Third place and the League Cup is all Liverpool have to show for a season that once again faded at the business end, just as it did two seasons ago when they lost the title by a point and the Champions League final by one goal.

The project will continue under departing Feyenoord boss Arne Slot, who inherits a high-class team but one that needs a few tweaks to match the league's latest top two next term.

4. ASTON VILLA

Aston Villa's dream season under Spanish manager Unai Emery ended with fourth place and a Champions League spot, a first qualification for Europe's elite club competition since 1982-83 when they entered the European Cup as holders.

Villa, 150 years old in 2024, were 14th and sinking fast when Emery replaced Steven Gerrard in October 2022 and he has masterminded a remarkable turnaround in fortunes with some smart additions to the squad and a more attacking mindset.

Boosted by the goals of Ollie Watkins and an eight-game winning run at home from the start of the campaign, the early momentum faltered towards the end of the season but provided the platform for their top four finish.

5. TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR

There is a sense of disappointment about Tottenham's first season under Ange Postecoglou as a wretched run of form in the closing weeks put paid to their top-four hopes.

But had fans been offered fifth place and a return to the club's mantra of 'daring football' ahead of the campaign, especially having seen England striker Harry Kane depart to Bayern Munich, they surely would have taken it.

Postecoglou's high-intensity, risk-taking style helped Spurs enjoy their best start after 10 games of a Premier League season although cracks soon appeared as it proved too much for some of the current squad.

He will not change his philosophy though with high-quality signings in the close-season, especially with a return to continental football.

6. CHELSEA

Qualification for Europe next season looked like a dream for inconsistent Chelsea during much of the season, but

a late run of form earned Mauricio Pochettino's side a Europa Conference League spot, though the coach won't be around to enjoy it. Pochetti left his job as Chelsea manager by mutual consent on Tuesday, ending the Argentine's reign at the club after one season despite a late revival in their fortunes.

March was tough, with the club in the lower half of the table and stinging from a League Cup final defeat by Liverpool. Then Chelsea put together their best form since the Roman Abramovich era, losing only once in their last 15 games and winning their last five.

Along with securing a new bench boss, Chelsea's biggest challenge may be to cope with any sales of players by the club to meet financial rules.

7. NEWCASTLE UNITED

Newcastle manager Eddie Howe must be secretly pleased that drama elsewhere in the Premier League has taken the focus off his Saudi Arabian-funded club, which has quietly but undeniably underperformed expectations this season.

A fourth-place finish last term and return to the Champions League looked to be teeing the Tynesiders up for a spell at football's top table, but a slew of injuries and controversies have seen them fall to push on.

Injuries aside, a squad of Newcastle's depth — not to mention the deep pockets of their owners — demands a top-four finish and, after falling short this year, Howe will have some thorny questions to answer.

8. MANCHESTER UNITED

A depressing season littered with comprehensive defeats by better organized and more motivated teams operating on far smaller budgets has left new owner Jim Ratcliffe with major headaches.

Manager Erik ten Hag described United as one of the most entertaining sides in the league and he was right, but only because they were so easy to play against, lacked any coherent game plan and were often guilty of shocking game management.

A highly unlikely FA Cup final victory over Manchester City would provide a bit of cheer and Ratcliffe has started the much-needed restructuring of the club's senior management team.

Dutchman Ten Hag's time is surely up and a ruthless overhaul of the squad is needed before United can even think about returning to the top of the table.

9. WEST HAM UNITED

A top-half finish and another strong run in Europe failed to placate a sizeable majority of West Ham fans who needed

little invitation to criticize departing manager David Moyes.

While West Ham suffered some heavy beatings, there were still notable scalps including wins at Arsenal and Tottenham Hotspur and they pushed Bayer Leverkusen hard in the Europa League quarterfinals.

A new approach can be expected under Julen Lopetegui next season but Moyes has handed the club over in good shape.

10. CRYSTAL PALACE

Roy Hodgson guided Palace to safety last season but results this campaign under the former Liverpool and England boss did not meet expectations and he stepped down in February with the South London club 16th in the table.

Oliver Glasner was appointed as his replacement and results quickly looked up, with a win and two draws in his first four matches lifting them out of the relegation dogfight.

In the last few weeks of the season, the Austrian has further revitalised a young Palace side, claiming big wins over Liverpool and Manchester United.

11. BRIGHTON & HOVE ALBION
Brighton completed the best season in their 123-year history in the 2022-23 campaign when they finished sixth and won rare reviews for their playing style and the tactical acumen of manager Roberto De Zerbi.

But they could not build on that success and, if anything, the 2023/24 season was one of regression where, after a strong start in which they won five of their first six games, they had to settle for mid-table mediocrity and a last-16 exit in the Europa League at the hands of AS Roma.

12. BOURNEMOUTH

Andoni Iraola had an awful start to life as a Premier League manager when Bournemouth went the first nine games without a win despite the club spending more than 100 million pounds (\$126.8 million) on new players in the close season.

Despite a dip in form earlier this year, they slowly clawed their way up the table.

13. FULHAM

Fulham may not have reached the heights of last season's top-half Premier League finish, but survival was the objective as they sought to rid themselves of the 'yo-yo club' tag.

Pre-season predictions had been pessimistic, especially when they looked set to lose manager Marco Silva, before he signed a new contract.

They did lose their leading scorer from

the previous two seasons, Aleksandar Mitrovic, but Rodrigo Muniz returned from his loan spell at Middlesbrough and while he struggled early on with injuries the Brazilian netted nine goals.

Unlike last season, Fulham managed wins over top clubs this campaign, with victories against Arsenal, Tottenham Hotspur and Manchester United, and if Silva remains at the club their future in the Premier League looks promising.

14. WOLVERHAMPTON WANDERERS

Despite some gloomy predictions for Wolves, they stayed well out of the relegation zone throughout the season, produced some memorable performances, and would surely have finished better than 14th had star man Pedro Neto stayed fit.

Fans would say the Video Assistant Referee (VAR) also took the shine off their season after more than their fair share of dubious decisions that began on the opening day when wrongly denied a penalty away at Manchester United.

However, Gary O'Neil's side managed some eye-catching results, including victory over league champions Manchester City at home and doubles over both Tottenham and Chelsea.

15. EVERTON

For the third year in a row Everton spent most of the season worrying about relegation, and though they had to deal with the added problem of an eight-point deduction for financial irregularities, they still looked and played like a team for whom mid-table mediocrity would represent success.

They did finish with a flourish, winning four and drawing two in a seven-game surge to safety, including their first home victory over Liverpool in 14 years. But a 70th unbroken in the top flight is likely to be another struggle against the backdrop of their protracted takeover and move to a new stadium.

16. BRENTFORD

Brentford stayed up comfortably enough in the end but only after sliding perilously close to the drop zone in a tough season with injuries and absences taking a toll.

Ninth last season, when they punched above their weight to finish ahead of west London rivals Chelsea and Fulham, the Bees' third Premier League campaign was more challenging.

While standing out as a side painfully incapable of defending a lead, Brentford did still manage to beat Chelsea 2-0 at Stamford Bridge and Fulham 3-0 at Craven Cottage.

17. NOTTINGHAM FOREST

Following a season of toil made more challenging by a four-point deduction for breaching Premier League Profit & Sustainability Rules, Forest were not mathematically safe until the final day.

After a brush with a relegation battle in their first season back in the spotlight in 2022/23, it was expected they would kick-on, but 20 defeats in 38 games is far too many and a run of one victory in 13 led to the sacking of much loved manager Steve Cooper just before Christmas.

Forest had an average 0.82 points per game up until then and appointed Portuguese Nuno Espirito Santo to the helm. Things got marginally better, the next 21 games yielded 1.05 points per match and the side limped to safety.

18. LUTON TOWN

Few gave Luton much hope of surviving their first top-flight season for more than 30 years and while they did go straight back down Rob Edwards's team won plenty of respect.

After losing their first four games Luton were already written off but they found their feet and a fine run of form either side of the new year had them dreaming of staying up.

Injuries to key players such as Albert Sambi Lokonga hit hard though and despite continuing to play some enterprising football against some of the big clubs, a run of one win in 17 from early February sealed their fate.

19. BURNLEY

While the Claretts won promotion back to the Premier League with a Championship record seven matches remaining last season, the top flight was too steep a step up for Vincent Kompany's men, who were relegated with one game remaining.

There were glimpses of excellence from Burnley, who had a strong stretch of just one defeat in eight games between March and April, helping to stave off relegation until their penultimate game, a 2-1 loss to Tottenham. Kompany promised fans after the game that: "We will have the good times again."

20. SHEFFIELD UNITED

A horrible season saw the Blades branded as one of the worst Premier League teams of all time and dumped back down to the Championship with barely a whimper.

Their season hit a new low on May 4 when they became the first Premier League team to concede 100 goals in a 38-game season. (Reuters)

Docaviv films show life after October 7

• By HANNAH BROWN

There is a saying that journalists write the first draft of history, but that is equally true of documentary filmmakers. On that note, a number of films about the October 7 massacre by Hamas and the war that followed it are being shown at the 26th edition of Docaviv, the Tel Aviv International Documentary Festival (docaviv.co.il), which is running until June 1 at the Tel Aviv Cinematheque and other venues around the city.

These films vary in style and content. Some filmmakers began to tell stories about the aftermath of the massacre in the days immediately following the attack, with great urgency, while others have tried to relay what was happening from a more leisurely and cinematic point of view. However, despite their different approaches, these films all attempt to answer how we can move on from October 7 and honor the victims and survivors.

Jasmine Kainy's *Beyond October 7* focuses on one extended family from Kibbutz Be'eri, the Gads, who all managed to survive, and it shows how they have been coping in the days and months following the massacre. The older generation of the family, Aliza and Tzahi, are shown at first in a kind of suspended animation, sitting in a relative's house in Haifa on October 10 and trying to figure out who among their friends is still alive. "I see my wife is broken, she can't absorb the evil," Tzahi says.

In early October, Ben Gad describes the torment of not knowing who among his friends is dead or alive. He then learns that one of them hid his children and was then kidnapped to Gaza.

The director asks, "What do you do now?" and he replies, "What do I do? Now I go home, you know, I make my father a cup of tea, I turn on some soccer on the TV or something. That's what I do now. What is there to do?"

Later, he learns that this friend, Yonatan "Yoni" Rapaport, was killed, and he breaks down.



A SCENE FROM Jasmine Kainy's 'Beyond October 7.' (DocAviv)

Their daughter, Miri, has relocated with her family to a hotel on the Dead Sea. Miri is coping with a son who broke his leg when jumping out the window of their burning house to safety, and a daughter whose best friend, Emily Hand, was first pronounced dead and then listed as kidnapped and eventually released. As Miri attempts to comfort both her children - her daughter, understandably, is on an emotional roller coaster and doesn't know how to react when she learns her friend is held captive by Hamas - she also tries to organize the kibbutz's efforts to get its story out to the media. Most of the members don't want to talk, either out of modesty or an inability to relive their trauma. So, in an almost mechanical voice, she tells her story dozens of times a day to foreign journalists. It is difficult for her, but she feels she has no choice: "We have to keep what happened to Be'eri on

everyone's minds."

One revealing and touching moment shows her walking to a demonstration to demand the release of the hostages while conducting an interview with a journalist in English and telling her daughter, in Hebrew, "I don't have anything to eat."

"She's hungry," Miri explains to the reporter before going right back to answering questions.

As the months pass, they continue to struggle with their uncertain future, although remarkably early in the process, Tzahi and other Be'eri members manage to reopen the printing plant there. While he returns to the kibbutz every day to work at the plant, which is busy filling orders that are shipped all over the country, he dreams of returning there to live someday. At one point, asked what would be a "picture of victory," he says, "We didn't win; we lost."

SEVERAL SHORT films examine different aspects of life after October 7. *Tattooed4Life* by Kineret Hay-Gilgor looks at tattoo artist Liraz Uliel, a survivor of the Supernova festival massacre, where 364 civilians were murdered. To cope with the grief and loss, she creates a fractal design that represents the lives of the victims and invites others affected by the tragedy to have these fragments of a larger design tattooed on their skin. Other survivors share their stories with her, and she gradually reveals her own.

Benny Shklovsky's *Voiceless Witness* tells the story of Nikolay, a young man suffering from PTSD before October 7 who feels guilty for not being about to fight in the war and help protect his friends and family. Confused and adrift, he finds purpose in his life by adopting a stray dog that IDF soldiers found in Gaza. Not sure at first if he can commit to Khani - the soldiers named her that because they found her in Khan Yunis - he gradually bonds with her as he takes her around Tel Aviv and mediates a war at home between her and his cats. While this story may sound only tangentially related to the war, it presents an affecting portrait of someone trying to figure out a way to move on, which is something to which many of us will be able to relate.

Yoav Biran's *Deep in the Fog* focuses on the uncertainty along the borders and tells three stories depicting the high tensions in the region that lead to bizarre situations during a war with no end in sight.

Yakie Ayalon's *Ye'arim* follows survivors of Kibbutz Netiv Ha'Asara and Zikim as they try to adjust to life at the Ye'arim Hotel in the Jerusalem Hills. It tells very human stories about coping without the freedoms that we often take for granted until they are gone, like the ability to go to the fridge and grab a late-night snack. In one touching moment, a volunteer art therapist talks about opening a room for children to draw and paint just a few days after the massacre, and the first boy who came in made a house. Others followed, and soon they had built a model community with a pool and an amusement park.

J'lem Jazz Festival gets its 10th run

• By BARRY DAVIS

This year's Jerusalem Jazz Festival - aka "The Art of Jazz" - takes place at its regular berth of the Israel Museum June 19-20, with an all-nighter set for the Yellow Submarine, starting on the second evening. Perennial artistic director and internationally renowned trumpeter Avishai Cohen has lined up a varied set of shows and artists, spanning a range of disciplines, genres, and sub-genres.

He gets into the hands-on thick of things with his own slot when he teams up, on June 19 (9:30 p.m.) with choreographer-dancer-multidisciplinary artist Sharon Zuckerman Weiser.

The Shmita Hour work was inspired by the need to address the emotional damage inflicted on children and adults by the events of October 7 and explore how art can help create a safe and tender domain for us all.

The barbaric Hamas attack on our southern communities and the ensuing ongoing cost of life in Gaza are, tragically, core to the "Remember" show on the first evening of the festival (7 p.m.). The concert, fronted by bassist Barak Mori, is dedicated to the memory of his nephew Omri Ben Shachar who fell in battle, in Gaza, in December.

The heartfelt program includes self-penned scores along with standards performed by Mori's quartet of pianist Katia Toobool, saxophonist Yuval Drabkin, and drummer Yehli Shimon.

One of the most intriguing events in the festival lineup is the Castle In Time orchestra's "Eruption" concert on June 19 (8:15 p.m.). The ambitious work, led by multidisciplinary artist Matan Daskal, who, on this occasion, forms part of a triad of synthesizer players, takes place in two gallery spaces.

The first features a solo rendition by bassist Or Sinai, followed by a second part, performed by all six members of the orchestra lineup for the gig, which also includes Shalev Neman and Hagai Fershtman playing percussion instruments and water sonics. The composition draws its sensibilities from the legend of the phoenix rising from its ashes, the thematic cycle of life and death, and a work by now 88-year-old American composer and performing musician Terry Riley, called "In C," which premiered 60 years ago.

There are a handful of guests from abroad on the roster,



AVISHAI COHEN and Sharon Zuckerman Weiser. (Avishai Cohen)

including Slovak trumpeter and vocalist Oskar Török, who joins forces with Israeli drummer Dani Benedict and bassist Gilad Ephrat on June 19 (8 p.m.). Together, they will ply a course through a blend of traditional and modern rhythms. The lineup also features Slovenian vocalist Simona Hulejova and Slovakian saxophonist Nikolaj Nikitin.

The program takes another ethnic turn - closer to home - on the second evening when pianist Darya Mosenzon leads her audience on a trip along the byways and highways of Andalusian music. Her June 20 (9 p.m.) show sees her front a trio with Grammy-nominated oud player Charlie Sabach and percussionist Hillel Amsalem. The show repertoire will be based on cuts off her debut album, *Darya*, which includes original scores, as well as traditional Moroccan Andalusian songs.

There is an earlier first fruits slot on June 20 (7:15 p.m.) when young pianist Stav Goldberg plays material from his own initial offering, *Symphony of Water*. The date, which sees him perform with a quintet of cellist Mayu Shviro, harpist Ada Ragimov, double bass player Gonn Shani, and drummer Amir Bar Akiva, should prove to be a highly melodic outing.

And there is a, no doubt, high-energy salute to veteran singer-songwriter Yehudit Ravitz when popular Jerusalem street band Marsh Dondurma offers its own singular take on her eponymous 1979 debut album.

For tickets and more information: jerusalemjazzfestival.org.il/soon/

The couple behind the new Israeli film 'Midlife'

• By HANNAH BROWN

Amid the current war, the creators behind the new Israeli movie, *Midlife*, which opened in theaters around Israel on Thursday, are certain that audiences will welcome the chance to see a love story that mixes questions of religious identity with romance. *Midlife*, directed by Yariv Horowitz and Danni Reinfeld, from a screenplay by Reinfeld and his wife, Hila Mor-Reisfeld, along with Livnat Vardi Orzach, and based on a novel by Dudi Goder, features a cast of some of Israel's biggest stars in the story of two sisters whose lives take different paths and are brought back together in an unexpected way.

It's a contemporary story that has some obvious biblical parallels. It opens with Ahinoam (Chen Amsalem Zaguri, best known for the television series, *Zaguri*), an ultra-Orthodox wife, browsing in a store and trying on jeans. Clearly, something is up with her and when she returns home, she takes her daughters and walks out on her husband. The police pick them up and send the children back to her husband, and she goes to see her sister, Sari (Moran Cohen Gross), who left the fold years before and is now living in Tel Aviv and married to Yonatan, a pilot (Tsahi Grad, who starred in such series as *Line in the Sand* and *Faada* and the movies *Bethlehem* and *Mossad*).

But Sari, who is pregnant, doesn't feel secure enough in her new life to welcome her sister and turns her away. Ahinoam goes back to the streets, where Nissim (Shalom Assayag of *Manayek* and *The 90s*), a spiritual leader in a West Bank community who is also from a troubled background, offers her a place to live. She takes to life in the settlement and brings back others rescued from the streets to live there, although she maintains her secular identity, which at times is a struggle.

Sari and Yonatan face a crisis of their own when Sari becomes ill. She feels guilty about having turned her back on her sister and Yonatan also has strong feelings of guilt over his philandering. They seek out Ahinoam and try to make amends, leading them



to move to the settlement and embrace a very different lifestyle, which then leads to a new love story.

The Raisfelds have a love story of their own. They have been married for 20 years and been collaborating on movies just as long. "On our first date, we wrote the synopsis for *White Panther*," said Hila, referring to their 2013 movie about a Russian immigrant, torn between life with a skin-head gang and a career in boxing, who is mentored by a Moroccan coach portrayed by Ze'ev Revach, in a role that parallels Nissim in their latest film.

Not long after they wrote the *White Panther* synopsis in 2002 (it can take quite a while to get movies made in Israel) they got word that they had received development money for the film and Danni said, "I thought, 'She's a keeper,'" about Hila, his then-girlfriend. *White Panther* is now screened around the country in schools, the military, and other frameworks to educate young people about racism and accepting diversity. They have recently shown it to evacuees from Kiryat Shmona, in the presence of Yevgeny Orlov, the star of the film, who now works full-time to help troubled youth.

They now have three children. "With every movie we make, there's a child," Danni joked.

They were given Dudi Goder's novel by a friend just as Hila went into labor with their third child. During the long and difficult labor, they read the novel and decided that it would be the basis for their next project. They are optimistic that it will find an audience, even in today's

troubled times. Quoting from a key scene in the film, Hila said, "Even darkness is part of the journey. Every human being goes into darkness, into his cave. He must light a small candle and bring the light in... 'It doesn't matter who you are, if you are secular, if you are observant, if you are ultra-Orthodox.'"

Said Danni, "That's what Hila said to me that made me want to make this movie. At first, I was talking about conflicts between religious and secular and she said, 'Let's make a love story, a romantic, impossible love story. The messages will come through the back door. But let's not focus on the messages, let's tell a love story.'"

It's a love story that goes in different directions. "It's a story about love between people of different backgrounds," said Hila. "It's also about the love of the land, the love for a place, the location where it was filmed that is so breath-taking, I get emotional just seeing the landscapes in the film." "It's a movie about unconditional love," said Danni. "It's a movie about a woman who has had a tough life falling in love, finding the right person, and it's also about loving the land and loving God and finding yourself."

The couple, whose children popped in and out of the Zoom interview, said that while it was challenging to work together so intensively, it was also rewarding. "We understand each other," said Danni. "With all the frustration and pressure of making a movie, you have to find the patience and love in yourself... I would never want to make movies with anyone else."

Brian Wilson appears at debut of Disney+ documentary 'The Beach Boys'

• Jerusalem Post Staff

Rock legend Brian Wilson, suffering from dementia and placed under a court conservatorship, made a rare public appearance on Tuesday in Hollywood, reuniting with other members of The Beach Boys at the Hollywood premiere of a Disney+ documentary on the iconic group.

Wilson, 81, was photographed, together with original bandmates, Mike Love, 83, Al Jardine, 81, and David Marks, 75, as well as later band members Bruce Johnston, 81, and Blondie Chaplin, 72.

According to Entertainment Tonight, who was present at the screening of *The Beach Boys*, Brian received a standing ovation as he arrived to the premiere.



"He is doing great," Brian's daughter, Carnie Wilson, told the publication. "Every day he is in physical therapy. I'm cooking for him, he's spending a lot of time with his children now, his

family. I'm happy he's here tonight."

Wilson also shared a moment with his first wife, Marilyn Wilson-Rutherford.

"Nothing touches my heart more than to see my

Mom and Dad tell each other they love each other. Tonight they got to do that," Carnie, 56, wrote on Instagram. Wilson's second wife, Melinda Ledbetter Wilson, died in January.

After watching *The Beach Boys* documentary, Carnie wrote on Instagram:

"I sat in back of my Daddy tonight as we watched the new documentary about The Beach Boys @disneyplus. I saw him watching himself and had to take this picture because it was blowing my mind to see him watch his history. I am proud of all The Beach Boys for their talent and gifts they've given to the world. I love you Daddy and I'm honored to be your daughter."

The *Beach Boys* debuts Friday, on Disney+.

FRONTLINES

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EX-HEAD OF the Canadian military Gen. (ret.) Rick Hillier said he didn't go far enough in a May 1 'National Post' article, stating Canada is deserting its Jewish citizens as antisemitism proliferates across the country. (Chris Wattie/Reuters)

Weeds of hate

Ex-Canadian military head: Canada failing not just Jews but all citizens

DIASPORA AFFAIRS

By MICHAEL STARR

VICTORIA, Canada – Canada is failing not just its Jewish community but all of its citizens, by fostering hate and violent rhetoric through the inaction of the country's leadership, former Canadian Armed Forces chief of the Defense Staff Gen. (ret.) Rick Hillier told *The Jerusalem Post* in an interview on Monday.

The ex-head of the Canadian military said he didn't go far enough in a May 1 *National Post* article warning that Ottawa has deserted its Jewish citizens, as antisemitism proliferates across the northern country's cities and academic campuses.

"We didn't just fail, and are not just failing, 400,000 Jewish Canadians; we're failing 41 million people. And to me, that's bloody unacceptable," said Hillier.

"You don't build a nation on hatred. We have many diverse groups across this great land of ours, which is wide and skinny and therefore very much prone to regionalism and separate factions. And those are lethal things to have for a nation, if you want to keep it together, that we have many diverse factions which make up our nation. If you accept hatred in one faction, then it's just natural down the road that you're going to have to accept hatred in other factions."

Hillier is concerned that the same weeds of hate that have been permitted to grow in the country's willful blind spot for Jews could spread in the cracks between Canadian society's many cleavages. Canada's First Nations, LGBT people, black people, and other groups would not just be at risk of being abandoned to such cultural cancer, but could also corrode the bonds between the very different provinces from Quebec to British Columbia to Alberta.

"If our leadership doesn't stand up and take steps to prevent the hatred being articulated and used in our society, then we have to expect that it's going to start exploding

elsewhere," said the retired general.

As with many countries, Canada has seen an explosive growth in antisemitism and violent anti-Israel animus sparked by Hamas's October 7 massacre. Antisemitic incidents rose by 109.1% in 2023 compared to 2022, according to B'nai Brith Canada's annual audit. There was a 208% increase in violence and a 124% increase in harassment compared to the previous year. The phenomenon has continued unabated.

In Toronto, Canada's largest city, where hate-motivated crimes have skyrocketed by 93% since the Hamas pogrom, there has been a series of defacements of synagogues since April. Jewish students were bullied relentlessly at a Toronto school; in November one 13-year-old pushed and threatened by his peers said that they would "do to him what Hamas did to Israel." On April 30, an Israeli high school student was beaten in the New Brunswick capital of Fredericton.

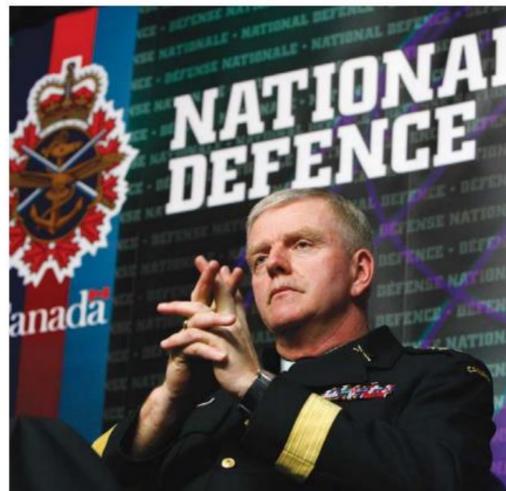
Commonplace had become "the chanting of 'From the river to the sea [Palestine will be free]' with its conclusion that Israel and the Jews there are going to be wiped off the map and it's going to be a genocide," said Hillier. "When we permit those kinds of things to occur, we are permitting now hatred and bias and prejudice towards Jews."

The intensity of the violent and pro-terrorist rhetoric at the Canadian anti-Israel protests, which often even exceeds that of its American counterparts, is often ignored or unappreciated by international media.

Hillier referenced an activist at Parliament Hill who praised the October 7 massacre. At a March 10 Parliament Hill speech, Samidoun Palestinian Prisoner Solidarity Network international coordinator Charlotte Kates praised October 7 as "brave"



AS WITH Canada's southern neighbor, many of the protesters occupying college and university campuses in Canada are not students but professional activists. Pictured here, both sides protest at the University of Toronto earlier this month. (Cole Burston/Reuters)



"WE ARE permitting now hatred and bias and prejudice towards Jews," Hillier told the 'Post' in an exclusive interview. (Chris Wattie/Reuters)



Financial Resilience Post-Divorce: How to Create a New Investment Strategy

By Douglas Goldstein, CFP® - open an American brokerage account when you live in Israel

Divorce is more than just the beginning of a new chapter; it's the start of a new financial journey. Navigating this transition involves careful reallocation of joint assets and crafting investment, saving, and spending plans that align with your evolving goals.

Post-divorce, your financial goals undergo a profound transformation as what once was a shared vision is now your own path, necessitating a fresh look at your investment strategy. This is the time to define your new financial objectives, be it securing a comfortable retirement, funding education, or ensuring lifestyle sustainability. The key to financial success lies in aligning your investment decisions with these redefined goals.

Why a Post-Divorce Portfolio Should Look Different

Diversification remains a cornerstone of any robust investment strategy, more so in the wake of divorce.

A well-balanced portfolio across stocks, bonds, and other asset classes helps mitigate risks and leverage opportunities across market cycles. Additionally, consider the impact of divorce on your tax situation, especially when discussing asset division and alimony.

Empowering Your Financial Future

Even if you are divorced, you don't need to make financial decisions alone: enlist professionals to guide you. This is particularly important if you were the weaker financial partner in your marriage. As you begin your new life, now is the time to increase your financial responsibility and knowledge. Engaging with financial professionals who specialize in cross-border investments and are familiar with the nuances of managing U.S. portfolios from abroad can provide valuable guidance and peace of mind.

Leveraging Financial Technology

In the wake of divorce, embracing financial technology can streamline your investment strategy and budgeting efforts. Tools and platforms offering real-time insights into your investments and spending can be invaluable, especially for managing cross-border portfolios. These digital resources not only simplify financial planning but also empower you with the data needed to make informed decisions, ensuring your financial strategy is robust and tailored to your new goals.

Charting a Course to Financial Independence

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THE JERUSALEM POST

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Home, now

Israel's war cabinet instructed its negotiating team to continue efforts to reach a hostage release deal after a four-hour meeting on Wednesday night, the Prime Minister's Office announced.

After more than 230 days since October 7, every effort must be made to secure the release of the hostages still being held by Hamas in the Gaza Strip.

The decision to resume the negotiations came after the Hostages and Missing Families Forum released a graphic three-minute video on Wednesday of the abduction of five *tatzpitanivot* (female IDF observers monitoring the border) from the Nahal Oz base near the Gaza border by Hamas terrorists on October 7, 2023. The video was filmed by body cameras worn by the terrorists as they ruthlessly kidnapped Liri Albag, 18; Karina Ariev, 19; Agam Berger, 19; Daniella Gilboa, 19; and Naama Levy, 19, all five of whom are still being held captive in Gaza.

It shows the female soldiers, some in pajamas, lined up against a wall, bruised and bloodied, with their hands bound, while the terrorists scream at them and bundle them into a jeep.

"Every new testimony about what happened to the hostages echoes the same tragic truth – we must bring them all back home, now," the forum said in a press release, urging TV stations to broadcast the video. Even though the most disturbing parts were cut out, the footage is harrowing and horrific.

President Isaac Herzog urged the world to look at what he called "this cruel atrocity," calling on all those who care about women's rights and who believe in freedom to speak out and do everything possible to bring all of the hostages home now.

"Five young women being dragged away by monstrous Hamas terrorists. This video shows the harrowing moments on October 7 when five young female soldiers from a lookout post protecting towns and kibbutzim in southern Israel were beaten, threatened with rape, and brutally taken hostage by Hamas terrorists from Gaza," Herzog said.

"The brave families have released the video, and we continue to offer them all our strength and love. Liri, Karina, Agam, Daniella, and Naama are all still in Hamas captivity, and we are fighting to bring them home as well as all other hostages – 128 in total!"

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said he was "shocked" by the video and pledged to do everything possible to bring the hostages home. "The brutality of the Hamas terrorists only strengthens my determination to fight with all my strength until the elimination of Hamas, to ensure that what we saw tonight will never happen again," he posted on X.

Government spokesperson David Mencer told reporters: "These girls are still in the captivity of Hamas. Please don't look away. Watch the film. Support Israel in bringing our people home."

War cabinet minister Benny Gantz said that while the video had made his stomach turn, "the responsibility of leaders is not only to look reality in the eye; it is to create a different reality even when it comes to difficult decisions."

Naama Levy's brother, Amit, on a visit to London to campaign for his sister's release, told the BBC that indirect negotiations between Israel and Hamas to secure a hostage release deal were in "a very bad place. We hope this video will encourage all sides to get back to the table and understand that an unbearable humanitarian issue must be solved. This might be the last chance to save them."

Naama's mother, Ayelet Levy Shachar, told CNN that the video should be seen by everyone. "Ministers and members of the government were asked to watch a version of this video in their meetings, and some of them refused and said we want to sleep OK at night," she said. "So if this is the reaction when it's their duty to watch these materials – this is their job, so they can make correct decisions – then we think that we should put it out there for our citizens, for the world to see."

According to Walla, the war cabinet unanimously approved new guidelines for Israeli negotiators to revive the talks on a hostage deal with Hamas. An Egyptian source told the Qatari-owned Al-Araby Al-Jadeed that Egyptian officials had begun attempts to renew the negotiations. As the saying goes, no stone must be left unturned this time: Bring them home now!

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BINYAMIN AIRLEY, who fell in battle in Gaza in November, was imbued with a love for life and love for Israel. (Courtesy Airley family)



One retreat at a time

How the parents of one fallen soldier are providing those affected by the war with a place to heal

DOMESTIC AFFAIRS

By ALEX WINSTON

The Torah portion of *Toldot* opens with the biblical story of Isaac and his struggles to come to terms with his father's death. Isaac's story unfolds through confusion and a quest for identity following a profound loss and chronicles a journey from uncertainty to self-discovery.

On Saturday, November 18, Jen Airley was in a synagogue in Ramat Beit Shemesh, listening to the reading of *Toldot*.

"It was Shabbat morning. I was in synagogue, and all of a sudden, after the Torah reading, I felt I had to leave," she shared with *The Jerusalem Post*. "I had to go home and say Psalms. I almost ran home. I was just crying and saying Psalms."

While Jen couldn't quite explain what caused her to leave the communal prayers and go home to pray in solitude, she could feel that something was going on. What she couldn't know was that her son, Binyamin, was battling Hamas terrorists in Gaza at the time.

BINYAMIN AIRLEY was imbued with a love for life and love for the Land of Israel. After making aliyah with his family in 2006 from the US, the Airleys settled in Ramat Beit Shemesh, but Binyamin was searching for more. He was the kind of boy who wanted to be outdoors, breathing in the holy air of Israel.

Binyamin's parents described their son as a boy who "saw everybody as an equal. He didn't see anybody as higher or lower than himself," which at times could lead to difficulty listening to authority figures.

"Binyamin was definitely the wildest of our kids," his father, Rob, told the *Post*. "It definitely was a challenge with him. By the time he was 16, he started to calm down. He started to really make a lot of changes in his life. He really believed in himself; he set a lot of goals for himself. He had this list of 55 different things he accomplished, such as he decided by himself like get rid of his smartphone."

"At 16, he got attracted to being on a farm and ended up going for weekends and Shabbat. He ended up going more and more. He loved the life, living on a hill. He really believed in this, and he ended up herding cows."

Along with taking care of the cows, he also found time

to plant himself a vineyard.

The Torah portion of *Toldot* describes how Isaac had "possessions of flocks, and possessions of herds, and a great household" (Genesis 26:14). It then describes how Isaac re-digs wells his father Abraham had previously dug to take care of his herds.

"He appreciated the history of the land and the sanctity of the land," Jen explained. "Beyond just the physical beauty, there was a deep connection to it. This is our homeland, our birthland, and our future. It wasn't for him just about cultivating and planting a vineyard so that you can drink wine. It was so much deeper than that."

AFTER BEING drafted into the IDF and serving in the 101st Paratroopers Battalion "Cobra," Binyamin found himself down South after October 7, helping to guard the southern settlements and clear up the tragic scenes on Kibbutz Nir Am after the deadly Hamas attacks.

He entered Gaza on November 1, and on the morning of November 18, as he and his fellow soldiers were sitting and eating breakfast, they were called to join in combat against Hamas terrorists. Several soldiers were wounded, and the terrorists were spotted running into a house nearby.

Jamal Abbas, a Druze company commander in Battalion 101, entered the house along with his deputy Shahr Friedman. Before they could get in, they found Binyamin stopping them and demanding he be allowed to join them.

"Binyamin had the Negev [light machine gun] at the time, and even though I don't even know if he knew them, he said, 'You can't go on without me; I have the Negev.' So the three of them went in together," Rob explained.

As the three searched the house, they saw one of the terrorists lying dead on the floor. Unbeknownst to them, another terrorist was still hiding, and he jumped out and shot at them.

Binyamin, Jamal, and Shahr were all killed instantly. Binyamin was only 21 years old.

That Shabbat afternoon, the Airleys were resting at their home.

"My husband was sleeping

'HE APPRECIATED the history of the land and the sanctity of the land,' Jen Airley told the *Post*. (Courtesy Airley Family)



THERAPY SESSIONS, barbecues, and tours of Safed and the surrounding area are just some of the activities on offer at Beit Binyamin. (Courtesy Airley family)



on the couch," Jen recalled. "He wakes up to a knock on the door and sees three soldiers, and he looks at them and he asks, 'Is he wounded?' And they said no. Then Rob asks, 'Is he kidnapped?' And they said no. So right away, Rob runs upstairs. I was sleeping up in the bedroom, and he said, 'You've got to come quickly.' I asked if the kids were okay, and he said no."

"I saw the soldiers there, and what can one say? I just literally looked at them and said 'Baruch Dayan Ha'emet.' I asked them when it happened. They told me the battle took place between 9:30 and 10:30 that morning, which was obviously

when I was feeling those feelings [in synagogue].

"While it's true that I was praying and crying, I do feel that God answered my prayers," Jen said. "While it's true that God still decided that he's taking Binyamin to be next to Him, we hear of all these atrocities of things that happen to other soldiers – how they were suffering or didn't have a body to be recovered, and the family had to wait in order to hold a funeral. Binyamin died instantly. And we knew exactly how he died. He died with a smile on his face. We don't take that for granted."

THE WAR against Hamas

and the loss of their son has changed the course of the Airleys' lives.

Two years ago, they bought a house in Safed with the aim of turning it into an Airbnb. They spent money purchasing the property and on renovations over the past 18 months until the war broke out.

After Binyamin's death in November, a different idea came to mind – the idea of opening up the house to those who really need it. The proposed Airbnb became Beit Binyamin.

"When Binyamin passed away, we thought, how are we going to memorialize

See RETREAT, Page 23

Death of a (dispensable) statesman

BEHIND THE LINES

By JONATHAN SPYER

In 1942, German playwright and poet Bertolt Brecht wrote a short poem entitled "On Hearing that a Great Statesman Has Fallen Ill." The poem goes: "If the indispensable man frowns - two empires quake. If the indispensable man dies - the world looks around like a mother without milk for her child. And if the indispensable man were to come back a week after his death - in the entire country there wouldn't be a job for him as a hall-porter."

I was reminded of this poem upon hearing of the death of Iranian president Ebrahim Raisi. The late president was the lucky beneficiary of a process, underway over the last decade, in which Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei has ensured the advance of ideological hardliners of Raisi's type, at the expense of more capable but less zealous technocrats.

The intention of this effort, as outlined in the "Second Phase of the Islamic Revolution" document published in 2019, is to ensure the continuation and rejuvenation of the ideological and religious outlook underlying the Islamic Revolution of 1979. Khamenei, as Saïed Golkar, a US-based Iranian academic told me, "wants to see his ideological regime outlive him."

The result, however, has been the ascent of individuals of mediocre abilities whose only qualification for occupying their senior positions is their unwavering ideological commitment to the regime. Raisi exemplified this process and was perhaps its most senior beneficiary.

The late president's main claim to senior office rested on his reputation as a zealous prosecutor-general in the late 1980s. At that time, Raisi became known as an enthusiastic member of a four-man team whose task was to sign death warrants for opponents of the regime held in regime prisons. The team was involved in the executions of more than



MOURNERS ATTEND the funeral for victims of helicopter crash that killed Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi, Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, and others, in Tehran, on Tuesday. (Majid Asgaripour/WANA/Reuters)

8,000 political prisoners.

This activity required no special skills and led to his moniker as the "Butcher of Tehran." It also led to his subsequent appointment as attorney-general, and then to his "election" as president.

The main result of the elevation of hardliners of Raisi's type, who lack any executive skills, has been chaos and dysfunction in the Iranian system. The position of "president" in the Islamic Republic of Iran contains far less authority than might be supposed. Matters of national security and foreign policy are all in the hands of Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei.

Nevertheless, in so far as Raisi was able to make decisions and exercise authority, the results were in line with what might be expected. Having campaigned on a set of promises in the

social/economic realm - to tackle unemployment, reduce inflation, and strengthen the currency - Raisi departs the scene at a time when unemployment is at 9%, inflation 38.5%, and the rial at an all-time low against the dollar.

RAISI'S DEPARTURE won't end this rise of the mediocre in the Iranian system. His temporary successor, former IRGC officer Mohammed Mokhber, is a product of the same process. An interchangeable array of regime-dependent ideological hardliners remains available to the supreme leader to fill this post in the longer term - Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, Saeed Jalili, and a few others.

A significant aspect of Raisi's demise, nevertheless, is that he may well have been Supreme Leader Khamenei's preferred can-

didate for the succession to the position of supreme leader. Raisi hailed from the same region as Khamenei, Razavi Khorasan province, held similar views, and was a Sayed, a wearer of the black turban signifying descent from Muhammad, the prophet of Islam. His disappearance, Golkar told me in our conversation, increases the chances that Mojtaba Khamenei, the current supreme leader's son, will succeed his father - turning the Islamic Republic into an example of that most Middle Eastern of systems, a republican monarchy.

Foreign minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian was also a beneficiary of the hardliners' march through the institutions that produced Raisi. The latter, however, may be a little more difficult to replace than Raisi. Amir-Abdollahian was an

energetic, activist foreign minister, deeply embedded in and connected to the proxy militia networks that are Iran's main instrument of regional power projection.

He had developed personal connections to key individuals in that nexus, including the leaders of Lebanese Hezbollah and Hamas. Abdollahian's demise does not represent a grave, serious blow to this strategy or these structures; but his successor, Ali Bagheri Kani, does not have these connections and will need to develop them.

SO WHAT might be learned from this advance of mediocre ideologues to the top ranks of the Iranian regime, at a time when Iran is just emerging from a period of great internal instability?

First, it is testament to the very different state of the Iranian regime's capacities and fortunes externally and internally. Even

though four years have passed since the killing of IRGC Quds Force commander Qasem Soleimani, the major general's project of power building by use of political and military proxies is flourishing. As a result, Iran has consolidated its control of Lebanon and Iraq, dominates a large part of Yemen, and has freedom of action in most of Syria

It has used the array of militias to launch a limited war against Israel and its Western allies which is being waged on five fronts - Gaza, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, and Yemen/Gulf of Aden. Iran's enemies have not yet come up with a strategy to turn back the march of the IRGC's Islamist proxy armies across the Arab-speaking Middle East.

It turns out that contrary to some predictions, Brecht's edict concerning the "indispensable statesman" applies even to Soleimani. The structures and approach he pioneered were sufficiently strong and developed at the time of his death that they have been able to function even in his absence.

YET, AT THE same time that the Islamic Republic is advancing

See STATESMAN, Page 23

The life and times of Ebrahim Raisi

The deceased Iranian president epitomized the Khomeini Revolution's successes, adventures, and decay



MIDDLE ISRAEL

By AMOTZ ASA-EL

Having learned of a local farmers' revolt in Massachusetts, Thomas Jefferson jotted one of the most memorable statements about revolution:

"The tree of liberty must from time to time be refreshed with the blood of patriots and tyrants," wrote the future president. Written in Paris in 1787, Jefferson's insight soon proved prophetic when the French Revolution was followed by the Reign of Terror's more than 25,000 executions.

Now, as another revolution, Iran's, approaches a turning point following the untimely death of its eighth Islamist president, one might think that the revolution he served was but a variation on the theme that Jefferson discussed and the French endured. If only it had been that.

For the Khomeini Revolution violence was not a phase but a fixture, a reflex, and a norm, all encapsulated in the life of Ebrahim Raisi (1960-2024), an emblem of the Khomeini Revolution's successes, adventures, and decay.

BORN TO a clerical family and raised outside Mashad, Raisi was a product of pre-revolutionary Iran's social periphery. Mashad is Iran's second-largest metropolis, but, tucked at its northeastern corner, close to the Turkmen and Afghan borders, it is secondary to Tehran, some 750 km. away.

This geography, coupled with his religious family's claimed lineage to Muhammed, made Raisi a natural

recruit for Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini's revolution. Better yet, from Raisi's viewpoint, the revolution caught him at the ideal age of 19 - old enough to fulfill assignments and young enough not to be suspected of any ties to the previous regime.

Best of all, Raisi never inhaled Western civilization, unlike, for instance, future presidents Abolhassan Banisadr, who studied finance at the Sorbonne; Muhammad Khatami, who studied Western philosophy and spent years in West Germany; and Hassan Rouhani, who earned a PhD in law at Glasgow Caledonian University.

Raisi had no such secular, let alone foreign, schooling. What he attended were religious schools, in his teens. For the revolution, however, this under-education was actually an asset. Combined with his social humbleness, fundamentalist fervor, and personal ruthlessness, his was the kind of profile the revolution sought as it set out to replace the political elite it had purged.

That is how, at the tender age of 21, Raisi became a regional prosecutor in the city of Karaj, already a sizable fiefdom, but one that soon expanded by 260 km. to Hamadan, whence he leaped - at age 25 - to the capital, as deputy prosecutor of Tehran.

In normal settings, such a meteoric climb up a judiciary ladder would indicate exceptional juridical knowledge and experience. Raisi, however, brought neither. He climbed for other reasons, as he would soon make plain.

FEARFUL THAT the end of the Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988) would make the seething, bereaved, and exhausted masses restless, the ayatollahs set out to preempt a potential upheaval. The method was as simple as it was sinister: interview at length thousands of jailed dissidents about their views, and set aside those whom the interviewers would suspect as dangerous to the regime.

The result was a massacre, with at least 2,800 prisoners executed without trial in 32 cities across Iran, according to a Human Rights Watch report from June 2021. Multiple reports indicate that the then-28-year-old Raisi was a central figure in this bloodbath as a member of the committee that oversaw the inmates' selection and murders.

Raisi was there not as a prosecutor out to indict the guilty but as a hangman out to kill the innocent; not as a revolutionary out to redeem the people but as a henchman of an unelected, unworthy, and unwanted regime. The tree they were "refreshing with the blood of patriots" was not Jefferson's tree of liberty but Khomeini's tree of despotism.

However, by that point, the Iranian Revolution was no longer just a tale of despotism. It was a tale of corruption, and Ebrahim Raisi was its emblem.

HAVING BEEN 20 when the Iran-Iraq War broke out, Raisi should have gone to fight for his country as millions of other Iranians did, even at older ages, like Qasem Soleimani, who enlisted at age 23. Not Raisi. When others went to the front, he stayed at home; and when others confronted Iraqi invaders, he killed Iranian youths.



A SUPPORTER of then-Iranian presidential candidate Ebrahim Raisi kisses his poster during a campaign rally in Tehran, in 2017. (TIMA via Reuters)

It was but a detail in a broader picture of a thin ruling class that, led by the Revolutionary Guards, robbed Iran's riches and used them to serve itself. The revolution that started as a war for the people, and then morphed into a war on the people, now became a theft machine that seized an ancient nation's resources, honor, and hope.

It was natural for such a regime to crown as its president its most accomplished hangman, a dependable loyalist who quickly justified his appointment by killing 1,000 protesters and jailing 20,000 following the death in 2022 of Mahsa Amini, a 23-year-old woman who was arrested for violating the regime's dress

code.

It was also natural for Raisi, as president, to accelerate his predecessors' regional adventurism, using his impoverished country's petrodollars to spread conflict throughout the Middle East. If the people's good is not an aim, the costs of its abuse don't matter; and if the regime's survival is the aim, then shifting attention from its domestic failures to foreign realms is worth every dollar it costs.

It's a well-known course. That is how the Soviet Union journeyed from unseating the tsar to purging the elites, fighting the people, spreading mayhem abroad, and destroying the economy at home.

The Soviet Union's eventual collapse was foreshadowed by its crowning of its oppressor-in-chief, KGB head Yuri Andropov, as its leader. That was in 1982. It took a mere seven years from there for the Soviet Union to disappear. Now, following the death of its own hangman-turned-leader, the same aftermath awaits the Islamic Republic of Iran.

www.MiddleIsrael.net

The writer, a Hartman Institute fellow, is the author of the bestselling *Mitzad Ha'velet Ha'yehudi* (The Jewish March of Folly, *Yediot Sefarim*, 2019), a revisionist history of the Jewish people's political leadership.

Welcome to the archives

The National Library of Israel hosts the Fifth International Judaica Curators Conference



THE CONFERENCE'S success was guided by Dr. Raquel Ukeles, who shaped its creativity and scholarship, all of which was felt in session after session. (Yoray Liberman)

CULTURAL AFFAIRS

• By DAVID GEFEN

It's noon on Tuesday at the National Library of Israel in Jerusalem. A grandmother holds a six-month-old baby, waiting for the mother to return. They have come to tour the library.

Outside stand buses, some bringing Israelis of varying ages, from school groups to seniors, to tour the new National Library (NLI) building.

Down the massive entrance hall overlooking the circular main reading hall is a registration table with a large sign: "The Fifth International Judaica Conference: Collaborative Leadership in Judaica Curating."

Curation and archives have always played a significant role in the history of the Jewish people, whether 4,000-year-old clay tablets deciphered by scholars that give us a chance to understand our ancient origins, or digitized online Jewish historical press that provides us with insight into the recent past.

This past week, 70 professional curators of Judaica collections from many different countries convened at the library for a three-day intensive learning experience led by professionals in a variety of fields. This gathering for learning, sharing experiences, and networking aimed to make an impact on Jewish archives around the world.

The model proposed by the conference organizing team emphasized the value of shared responsibility, collaborative leadership, and teamwork. The program highlighted three relevant areas: digital collecting and curating, endangered archives, and provenance.

A key objective of the curators conference was highlighted by Dr. Raquel Ukeles, head of Collections at the library. "We gathered here in Jerusalem, curators from 15 countries, and together we seek to find ways of using the digital format, website format, to make the material in archives available to people all over the world. The tools we can use will provide methods to share the content of archives to every part of the world. The archives built from websites will tell their story without the paper collections."

The first day of the gathering focused on making Jewish Web archives and digital collections more comprehensive, representative, and accessible.

In addressing the topic of "Libraries, Archives, and Museums in the Digital Age," keynote speaker Prof. Peter Baldwin of UCLA and NYU, and co-founder of the Arcadia Foundation, challenged the audience to imagine a world – that is fast becoming a reality – where archives would be entirely digital, with the advantages of online preservation and availability, and the opportunities and threats presented by AI.

Shai Abend, director of La Experiencia Judía in Montevideo, Uruguay, gave a dynamic visual presentation on "Utilizing Historical Documents to Promote Jewish Heritage in Uruguay," describing how archival materials have inspired the Jewish Uruguayans of all ages.

Day two dealt with the preservation of endangered

Jewish archives, and proposed a practical model for a first-response "task-force" approach toward solutions for Jewish archives at risk.

During the session, "Collaborative Leadership to Meet the Challenges of Endangered Archives," Dr. Lara Lempert, of the Martynas Mazvydas National Library of Lithuania, focused on the major strides being made in collecting material and making the world aware of the roots of Lithuanian Jewry waiting to be mined.

The afternoon session focused on "Documenting the Events of October 7 and Its Aftermath in Israel and the World," in particular the challenges of digital collecting in real time.

NLI has embarked on a long-term collaborative national and global effort to document October 7 and its impact, both in Israel and in Jewish communities worldwide. The goal of this massive effort, titled "Bearing Witness," is to preserve and make the collection accessible to researchers today and in the future.

"This is the first time an archive has been built even as a war continues," noted Dr. Roni Mikel-Arieli, academic director of the Oral History Division at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, who emphasized the need for professionalism when collecting testimonies from trauma victims.

Attorney Noa Diamond of the Privacy Clinic at Tel Aviv University, discussed the numerous issues of personal privacy that have already come to the fore in the wake of October 7.

The morning of the third day examined the impact of new digital collections on traditional libraries, followed by sessions on provenance in Judaica books and manuscripts, case studies, best practices, and the presentation of a "White Paper on Judaica Provenance."

THE CONFERENCE'S success was guided by Ukeles, who shaped its creativity and scholarship, all of which was felt in session after session.

The conference, Ukeles stressed, "was convened so that Jewish archivists from all over the world could begin face-to-face interactions with each other. Here in Jerusalem, they will begin to hone their skills in a variety of new fields. Such an opportunity never existed previously."

On May 23, NLI and the Heritage Ministry co-sponsored a one-day conference (in Hebrew), titled "Israeli Archives and Special Collections," attended by select members of the Judaica curators conference.

The international Judaica curators conference is supported by the NLI and Geshet L'Europa – A Bridge to Europe, a program of Rothschild Foundation Hanadiv Europe.

Selected portions of the conference were recorded and will be made available on the library website at www.nli.org.il



THE NEW reading room of the National Library of Israel. (Aviad Bar Ness)

How could you laugh at a time like this?

Comedy for Koby brings humor in a time of tragedy

ENTERTAINMENT AFFAIRS

By AMY KLEIN

For his stand-up shows in Israel next week, comedian Avi Liberman has the perfect joke, based on the Duke students who walked out of Jerry Seinfeld's commencement speech at graduation.

"See, now Jerry knows how I feel when we do our show.... To be fair, I blazed that trail: I had Palestinians walk out on me when I performed in Dubai," he said about being the first Jew to perform there.

If, as the old saying goes, "comedy is tragedy plus time," Liberman has been forced to toy with the exact formula. "There's no yardstick for how much time or tragedy," said the doe-eyed 52-year-old from Los Angeles in his fast-talking, observational, comedic way.

He's brought comedy to lots of tragedies. Liberman started bringing stand-up shows to Israel after the suicide bombings in 2003, "just to brighten people's mood, because the mood was so awful there," he said. And for the last 16 years, he's been doing shows a few times a year to benefit the Koby Mandell Foundation, which helps bereaved families rebuild their lives after losing someone to a terrorist attack, in memory

"I think now more than ever, we need levity and to keep doing what I do, which is comedy, and bringing comedy"

of 13-year-old Koby Mandell and his friend Yosef Ishran, who were murdered by terrorists.

"I remember in the van on tour of Israel comedian John Mulrooney was reading the book *The Blessings of a Broken Heart*, which Sherri Mandell gave him, and he turned to me and said, 'When did they put that part about Koby loving comedy in the book? Like how long after we started touring?' And when I told him that Koby always loved comedy and that was always in the book, his jaw dropped."

Over the years, Liberman estimates, he has brought almost 50 comedians to Israel on the tour,

including big names like Judy Gold, Jeff Ross, Harlan Williams, Roy Wood Jr. and Craig Robinson. They played to English-speaking audiences in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Beit Shemesh, Ra'anana, Modi'in, and Gush Etzion.

"It's harder for the Jewish comics because I think subconsciously the crowd is like, this guy or girl better be as funny as Seinfeld. It's hard." But if it's a non-Jewish person, "I think they're like, oh, this is a real comedian."

Non-Jewish comedians also bring a certain perspective, Liberman thinks, such as when black comedian A.J. Jamal made a joke about changing money and he thought they asked him if he wanted "shackles"; or when comedian Ralph Harris did a joke about how his job on Shabbat was just standing in the hotel elevator and pressing it for people.

"You know, there are all these things that we're obviously not going to do, because we don't see it from that angle," Liberman said. "It's fun for the audience to see how these people see Israel, and it's also interesting for me just on a personal level, if they have any connection to faith or religion or history, to watch them."

Liberman remembers swimming with Craig Robinson at Ein Gedi and telling him that that is where King David swam, and Robinson couldn't believe it: "Right here? Here? Where I am?" he said. "It was just so hard for him, as someone who grew up in the church, to wrap his head around it."

"I think, now more than ever, we need levity and to keep doing what I do, which is comedy, and bringing comedy," said comedian Jenn Kemer (*Seinfeld*, *Curb Your Enthusiasm*, *The Tonight Show*, *Letterman*), who will appear next week with Liberman, John Roy, and Buddy Lewis.

"I'm looking forward to visiting all the historical sites, learning about the culture firsthand, eating some delicious Israeli food, taking a dip in the Dead Sea, and mainly excited to be performing comedy for what I hear are some of the best audiences a comedian could hope for."

One of Liberman's motives in bringing non-Jewish comedians to Israel is to offer them firsthand experience beyond the headlines.

"Let them see what the reality is. And then they can come back and decide for themselves," he said, noting: "They've become great emissaries for Israel."



FOR THE last 16 years, comedian Avi Liberman has been doing several shows a year to benefit the Koby Mandell Foundation. (Yissachar Ruas)

THERE MAY never be enough time after the October 7 tragedy to make jokes about it, but Liberman, who had just wrapped up a Sukkot tour in Israel with Modi when Hamas attacked, was forced to try. He'd decided to stay in Israel and volunteer, not to mention directly distribute tens of thousands of dollars his friends in America sent.

A few weeks later, he was at a Shabbat meal in Tel Aviv when a woman told him, "I need a break," and offered her apartment if he'd host a show.

"At the time you could only have 50 people or less, for safety reasons, so we set up 50 chairs, and it sold out in two seconds," he said.

Over the next six weeks Liberman participated in a dozen or more shows.

"It's harder for the Jewish comics because I think subconsciously the crowd is like, this guy or girl better be as funny as Seinfeld. It's hard"

How do you perform humor at a time like this?

"You have to assess the situation - what's tasteless and

what isn't," he said. "The first joke I did about the situation was about the sirens going off in synagogue on October 7: By the third or fourth time, half the people weren't going downstairs anymore - they'd had it. It made me realize the lengths to which Ashkenazi Jews will go to avoid cardio."

Another joke he had was about the trouble comforting women when the sirens went off. When a religious woman in Jerusalem was crying, he just had to stand next to her. But when he met a secular girl crying, "So in her case, I could pat her on the ass and say 'Everything's going to be okay'; she felt better and I felt better," he said, noting that the joke got more laughs in Tel Aviv than Jerusalem.

Israeli comedian Yohai Sponder brought Liberman to shows for

soldiers, where Liberman - who was born in Israel to American parents and lived here till age three - tried out a joke or two in Hebrew.

"A friend of mine said, 'If you go to the Western Wall and pray 40 days in a row, you'll find your soulmate, your *bashert*'; and I said that's ridiculous, but to this guy's credit, he went 40 days in a row, and shortly thereafter, he divorced his wife and found a soulmate."

"It reminded me of doing shows in Iraq and Afghanistan," he said about performing for American soldiers during the war. "The soldiers are very appreciative of it. We're trying to make an effort to brighten their day for just a minute, so it's worth it."

Comedy for Koby will appear in Israel from May 27 to June 2. <https://www.comedyforkoby.com>



US comedians Brian Kiley, Peter Berman, Butch Bradley and Avi Liberman speak to an audience at the end of a 'Comedy for Koby' comedy show at a theatre in Tel Aviv, Israel January 21, 2024. (Reuters/Alexandre Meneghini)

What the mainstream media isn't reporting



• By ANDREA SAMUELS

If you're reading this outside of Israel on iPost.com, chances are, I'm preaching to the converted as it means you get your news about what's going on here from a reliable Israeli news source – *The Jerusalem Post*.

However, those who have just stumbled across this article, whose main information concerning the situation here is the mainstream media (MSM), will probably be surprised by what they're about to read. In short, MSM will only tell you half a story, and a biased one at that.

Diaspora dwellers could be forgiven for thinking that the war in Israel is centered around Gaza alone: "Nothing about the North of Israel on any news in [the] UK. The only news at the moment is about getting food into Rafah," said Chana Werner of Bolton, UK.

Those who live stateside share the same problem, as Sandy Wasserman confirmed, "I have to seek [Israeli news] out online. Then I read it from various sources. But it's not reported in the standard US TV news. All we hear about is Trump's trial."

As we all know, or at least ought to know, on October 7, Hamas and their supporters flooded into Israel from Gaza, hellbent on death and destruction. These merciless terrorists crossed the border into Israel by air, land, and sea, brutally attacking anyone they came across in the towns and villages along the border, regardless of their age or gender.

Over 1,200 people were slaughtered in the most violent and inhuman ways possible, often after being raped and tortured in the process. Further, over 250 people, from tiny children to elderly Holocaust survivors, were kidnapped into Gaza where around 130 remain, alive or dead, some of whom are known to have been murdered there.

Naturally, an Israeli ground invasion into Gaza followed this horrific massacre, which has been the subject of much heated debate. While the operation was still in the planning stage, before a single soldier had even set foot on Gazan soil, absurdly, some were calling for a ceasefire.

Since then, the world has watched as the war has been prosecuted in the Strip, poring over every military decision, largely trying to paint Israel and the IDF as the aggressor, and regarding as victims Hamas, its supporters, and the people of Gaza – often unable to dis-

tinguish between them.

"In general, from watching MSM, we have the impression that the IDF is killing innocent children, unopposed, and there is no mention of the ongoing rocket attacks on Israel apart from the Iranian attack which was portrayed as a harmless gesture," explained Paul Martin Gurnett from Britain.

The innocent victims of October 7, however, hardly get a mention anymore. And when they do, it's perfunctory at best.

Recently, for example, well-known English sports broadcaster Gary Lineker referred to the October 7 attack simply as "the Hamas thing." Like many, he's been extremely vocal about the plight of the Gazans, and yet he's barely commented on the atrocity itself, save to minimize it.

WHAT MANY outside of Israel may not realize, however, is that the war has affected not only those who live in the Gaza border communities – many of whom have been displaced or even lost their homes – but it also affects residents in the North just as badly.

Since the conflict began, northern Israel has come under repeated rocket and drone attacks from both Hamas and Hezbollah terrorist groups stationed in Lebanon.

While such attacks from Gaza have lessened as Hamas's capabilities have been weakened, no such let-up has been apparent in the North. In fact, it's getting worse.

Currently, over 60,000 people are still displaced from their homes in the border towns and cities of northern Israel, with some completely out of bounds – entry is with IDF permission only. Many who fled their homes on October 7 left with little more than the clothes on their backs and haven't been able to return since. Pleas to retrieve precious mementos from their homes, such as photos, in case they should be destroyed in one of the ongoing attacks, have been refused, so dangerous is the situation up there.

A "war zone," is how Alex Durani, owner of Dalton Winery, located 10 km. from the Lebanon border describes the whole area.

"Is a rocket going to land on us?" He often wonders to himself, he told me in a recent interview.

Like many business owners in the area, Durani is unsure about what the future holds: "I always prepare the winery as if we're not coming back tomorrow."

And his fears are well-placed. Last week, for example, around 75 rockets were fired from Lebanon into Israel in a single day – and that's not unusual. Although many were intercepted, the damage, chaos, and fear caused by



A SOLDIER passes by a burned-out car in Kiryat Shmona in the aftermath of a rocket attack on the northern Israeli city, earlier this month. Since the conflict began, northern Israel has come under repeated rocket and drone attacks from Lebanon, the writer notes. (Ayal Margolin/Flash90)

such frequent barrages are substantial.

ANOTHER ONGOING tragedy about which many outside Israel are unaware is the deaths of soldiers on the frontlines both in Gaza, the North, and the West Bank. Men, some as young as 19, as well as reservists in their 20s, 30s, and even 40s, are making the ultimate sacrifice to keep us safe, often leaving behind young children who will grow up without a father.

Many more troops have suffered serious, life-changing injuries, including the loss of limbs.

"The impact on Israeli society moving forward in terms of rehabilitation and handicapped people living among us is going to be a tremendous shock for most people," says, Dr Shlomi Codish, director general at Soroka

Medical Center, "and that's before we even talk about mental health."

This ongoing, heartbreaking situation is one that all of us here have had to live with for eight months. Obviously, for the thousands who do not know when they will be able to return home – "refugees" in their own land – life is much tougher. And then there's the unbearable anguish of the hostages and their families, as well as those who are mourning the deaths of loved ones.

The suffering of the nation as a whole runs deep and affects every aspect of our lives.

AND YET, apart from news of the ongoing war in Gaza, with the focus mainly on the plight of the Palestinians and how to get aid to them, very little of this tiny nation's ongoing ordeal is known by the outside world.

To keep up to date with what's happening on the ground in Israel, many have turned away from the MSM altogether, instead get their information from English-language Israeli news outlets and television channels, as well as other online sources, such as the IDF Facebook page and WhatsApp groups.

With very little information getting out there about what's really happening in Israel, both Jews and non-Jews in the Diaspora must arm themselves with accurate, evidence-based information.

Anything less would be a disservice to the people of Israel whose ongoing plight must not be minimized or ignored.

The writer is a former lawyer from the UK who now lives and works in Israel as a freelance writer for *The Jerusalem Post*.

Taking Jews' agency away

It's always antisemitism

• By ARIEL MUZICANT

From Barcelona to Regensburg, it's never been too difficult to find the location of the historic and medieval Jewish quarter in most European cities. Almost invariably, it's in the dead center of the oldest part of the city, often adjacent to the city's cathedral.

European monarchs, bishops, and princes liked to keep their Jews close, and the Jews knew that without this watchful eye of the ruler, they would never be safe from the mob.

Not that this central location was really much of a permanent protection. The prince or the bishop would not hesitate to inspire the local town's folk to a pogrom once in a while – or simply expel all the Jews.

This was Jewish life in Europe in the Middle Ages from England to Poland, across the Rhine, and over the Pyrenees.

Jews had no autonomy and no right to self-protection. If they behaved, paid the special exorbitant taxes for being Jewish and demanded no rights, they might be free to go about their daily lives. For a time.

None of this, of course, prevented or reduced antisemitism, the religious Jew hate that has morphed over the centuries into racial and then political Jew hate. And it didn't stop Jews from being murdered, right through to the ultimate attempt at extermination of Jews in the Holocaust.

Eventually, both the Jews and the rest of the world came to understand, for a short time, that the only way Jews could really be in charge of their own destiny and keep their own lives was by protecting themselves, with their own national self-determination and their own state. Not for nothing do Israeli fighter jets traverse the skies above Auschwitz every year on Holocaust Remembrance Day – a star reminder that had there been a Jewish state in the 1940s, fewer Jews, or perhaps no Jews, would have been incinerated.

But that worldwide awareness no longer exists.

TODAY, THE ivory towers of international justice once again believe that Jews should have no agency over the protection of their own lives.

Terrorists, murderers, rapists, and child killers are now to be given free reign over Jews, and the world will not only turn a blind eye but do everything in its might to prevent the Jews from



SYRIA'S PRESIDENT Bashar Assad shakes hands with Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi during the signing of a cooperation agreement in Damascus, last year. The ICC has never issued an arrest warrant against Ayatollah Khamenei or Assad, the writer points out. (Yamam al Shaar/Reuters)

stopping it.

For Europe and the international community, this isn't a return to the Middle Ages, it is a return to the Dark Ages.

How else to explain the perverse decision of the chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) to seek arrest warrants for those who work to stop Jews from being murdered? How else to understand that arrest warrants were never issued by the ICC against Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, leader of the world's foremost terror-state sponsor; or to Syria's President Bashar Assad, who has presided over the massacre of more than 500,000 civilians in Syria over the past 12 years? No warrants yet for the leaders of Burma or North Korea? What's keeping the ICC?

AND THEN, to compound that decision by direct comparison between murderer and victim, as if placing the prime minister and defense minister of a democratic country on the same balance sheet as a bunch of fundamentalist terrorists and murderers indicates a fair comparison.

What is it about one tiny Jewish state that the moment it seeks to defend its

own people – bound, of course, by the demarcations of a society governed by democracy and the rule of law – the ICC immediately seeks to prevent it so doing?

It appears to be the same perverse logic that sees Israel targeted by more UN General Assembly resolutions than the totality of Syria, North Korea, the People's Republic of China, Russia, and Venezuela and all other countries combined.

We've been here before and over many centuries.

The best and most effective way to get rid of Jews is to disable their agency to act in their own defense. In medieval times, Jews were the targets of local mobs during blood libels against them [as today]; now they are [also] targets for the international mob when murderers and rapists invade their one and only safe space.

We must call this by its name: Hating and murdering Jews is antisemitism.

Enabling the continued hatred and murder of Jews, denying the victims the agency to stop it, and couching it in the terms of international law is no less.

The writer is president of the European Jewish Congress, the representative organization of European Jewry.

The need to break the military-diplomacy equation

• By FLEUR HASSAN NAHOUM and JOSEPH ROZEN

Soviet Union concentrated mainly around the Nagorno-Karabakh (Artsakh) region.

FOR too long, Israel has operated under the misguided notion that Hamas, a terrorist organization, would eventually abandon its dogmatic hatred, and choose economic prosperity over war. This profound misconception has plagued Israel's security approach, leading to continuous missteps in handling the conflict, and exposing the lack of strategic thinking on Israel's side.

Unfortunately, this misconception has not changed much. As Israel runs its limited operation in Rafah and contemplates a potential deal with Hamas, we witness yet another instance of Hamas exploiting cultural differences, leveraging public opinion, and international pressure to manipulate Israel into ending the war prematurely, without achieving its goals.

The recent negotiations on a hostage deal reached a dead end after the parties could not agree on the terms. That did not stop Hamas from cynically accepting a completely different deal, gaining support from the international community, and shifting the pressure and blame for sabotaging the negotiations on Israel.

It also increased the criticism against the government at home, with protesters demanding the resignation of the Israeli government and to accept a deal at all costs. Thus, as Israel determined to continue the military efforts and negotiate a better deal, it finds itself entrapped in a zero-sum game between securing the release of hostages and pursuing military objectives.

To break free from this self-imposed limiting paradigm, Israel needs to change its approach and restore its power projection. In the Middle East, friends and foes appreciate power and decisiveness, not hesitance and containment. Moreover, the international community tends to accept facts on the ground over time, even if they contradict its views.

In this context, Israel can learn from other conflicts and past experiences.

First, the Russian invasion of Ukraine demonstrates the impatience of Western countries for long wars. Since 2014, the US and EU have been pushing hard to protect the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine following the annexation of Crimea and Donbas.

Nowadays, exhausted by the long war and the growing fear that Russia is gaining momentum on the battlefield, they are more receptive to the idea of reaching a ceasefire without the return of annexed territories. For Israel, it exemplifies how an entity that is perceived as weak, without significant achievements on the battlefield is the one to be pressured to compromise, even if it is fighting a just war.

Another example is the recent Azerbaijan-Armenia war. Azerbaijan and Armenia had a territorial and ethnic conflict since the collapse of the

DURING THE war, Azerbaijan used simultaneously military power and diplomatic efforts to achieve its goals. In September 2020, Azerbaijan launched a massive offensive to regain most of Nagorno-Karabakh. It agreed to a ceasefire but has not withdrawn its troops and was preparing for additional military operations. Later they launched a blockade on the region, seizing the Lachin corridor that connects it to Armenia. While negotiating with the international community on an agreement to reopen the corridor and end hostilities, Azerbaijan initiated another offensive, gaining full control of Nagorno-Karabakh.

The international community criticized Azerbaijan – the UN condemned Azerbaijan, the ICJ opened an examination against Azerbaijan, and humanitarian groups expressed their concern over humanitarian issues and a possible genocide. Nonetheless, the reality on the ground set the tone, and Armenia was ready to discuss a permanent peace treaty, backed by the international community which pressured Armenia to compromise.

This example shows that diplomacy and military can be complementary rather than conflicting as in a "zero-sum" game. It also emphasizes the tendency of the international community to align with winners and accept terms that are the opposite of the ones they supported in the beginning.

There's a similar and closer example that Israeli decision-makers might have forgotten. When considering the Peel partition plan in 1937, the first prime minister, David Ben-Gurion, felt that although the plan was not ideal, the only way forward was to continue negotiating, as he wrote to his son: "a state on only part of the land isn't the end, it's only the beginning. The establishment of a state, even if it's only a partial one, will serve as a powerful lever in our historic efforts to redeem the entire country."

Ben-Gurion understood what today's leaders ignore – you don't wait for the ideal terms, you keep moving forward, militarily, and diplomatically.

Thus, Israel must shed its limiting conceptions, not be deterred by external pressures, or play by rules the other side doesn't honor. It should keep negotiations while fighting in Gaza, and even accept a bad deal with Hamas – if such a deal exists – to get our hostages home. Then, as Ben-Gurion put it, it won't be the end but rather might be the beginning of Israel's win in this war.

Fleur Hassan Nahoum is the cofounder of the UAE Israel Business Council and Gulf Israel Women's Forum, a senior fellow at the Misgav Institute for National Security and former deputy mayor of Jerusalem. Joseph Rozen is a leading expert on geopolitics and national security who served in the Israeli National Security Council for a decade. He is also a senior fellow at the Misgav Institute.

Israel faces a world that is absurd and scary



• By YAAKOV KATZ

Abstruse and scary is the only real way to think about how the world has turned against Israel.

It is absurd because accepting the International Criminal Court (ICC) prosecutor's decision this week to recommend arrest warrants against Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, would be the equivalent of issuing warrants against Adolf Hitler but also FDR and Winston Churchill back in the 1940s. Most people would agree that doing so – had the court been around back then – would have been absurd.

It is also scary because Karim Khan's announcement shows what happens when the world turns against the Jewish state – how quickly the situation escalates, where it leads and what comes next. This week was a quick-paced blow after blow against Israel – from the ICC announcement to the decision and prize to terrorism that the leaders of Ireland, Norway and Spain made with their decision to unilaterally recognize a Palestinian state.

While this recognition will not have immediate practical impact, it shows how far the world has moved since October 7. Yes, there was a massacre against Israelis, and yes the hostages should of course be released but, these heads of state believe, the Palestinians deserve independence right now. Really? Now? To do what? Murder more Jews?

While in Israel there was natural outrage after the ICC announcement, the truth is that the writing had been on the wall for years. Exactly two years ago in these pages I told the story of former Columbian President Juan Manuel Santos who had once been a close friend of Netanyahu and Shimon Peres and then in May 2022 called for Russian-style sanctions to be imposed on Israel over its policies against the Palestinian people.

It was a call that in the aftermath of the Russian invasion of Ukraine was taking hold in parts of the West – among British MPs, some US congressmen and members of the

media who were pushing the idea that Israel should be sanctioned like Russia. We saw it again most recently when numerous people wondered why Russia was banned from the Eurovision but not Israel.

And while these comparisons are absurd, dangerous, and flawed at their core, the fact is that many people around the world do not see it that way. To many, Israeli soldiers should not be stepping foot inside Gaza and the reason Hamas attacked was because of the decades the people there had been oppressed by Israel. For these people, Israel is the "occupier" entering an oppressed people's land.

A short visit to the United States or Europe is enough to see how vastly different the world is experiencing the war from Israelis. While the Israeli media presents a picture of the war that is focused on Israel – hostages, war casualties, and the IDF operation – the world sees mostly one image: the destruction of Gaza. That is why while Israel can legitimately claim that the ICC decision is absurd, for most of the world it is a natural outcome. They see a destroyed Gaza and now hear that Netanyahu is wanted by the ICC. This, they believe, has logic.

WHILE IT obviously does not make sense, it is a hard narrative to shatter especially when almost all of the world – including Israel's closest ally, the United States – is urging it to end the war and stop the fighting. If the US, for example, can stop the flow of weapons to Israel over the Rafah offensive, then does it not make sense that the ICC should be able to call for the arrest of Netanyahu? That is the danger with all that has happened.

Israelis are legitimately frustrated. The video of the kidnapping of the female soldiers from the Nahal Oz base on October 7 that was released on Wednesday pierces the heart and is a stark reminder of why Israel is still at war and what it is that we are fighting for – not just to get our people back home, but also to prevent an atrocity like this from ever happening again.

But the world? It has moved on. People pay lip service to the need for the hostages to be released and say that it is a reminder why Hamas needs to be removed from power, but



SPAIN'S PRIME MINISTER Pedro Sanchez (left) and Irish counterpart Simon Harris meet to discuss recognizing a Palestinian state, in Dublin, last month. The writer asks: The Palestinians deserve independence right now? Why? To murder more Jews? (Clodagh Kilcoyne/Reuters)

they then call on Israel to scale back its offensive and announce – like Germany did – that if Netanyahu lands in their territory they will arrest him.

What the world fails to understand is that as long as the hostages are not released, Israelis will continue to live every day traumatized by October 7. It will not be able to move on.

Can Israel fight back? To an extent. There are steps that it can take to undermine the ICC claims and try to prevent the court from affirming the request to issue the requested warrants.

It can launch its own investigation into the prosecutor's starvation claim and hope the rule of complementarity – according to which the court does not investigate states that have an independent and functioning judiciary – works. It can also put its faith in the US and hope that the threat of sanction against the court stops the indictment from moving forward.

But the government can also do something that it has failed to do from the beginning of

the war – articulate what the plan is. It can explain what will happen after the operation in Rafah, which judging by the IDF's relative success so far of taking over the Philadelphia Corridor, the Rafah Crossing, large parts to the east of the city as well as moving out more than 900,000 people, will not carry on for much longer.

The evacuation of 900,000 Palestinians from the Rafah area is something worth lingering over. A few weeks ago, before the IDF went into Rafah, the Americans warned that the evacuation of the civilians there would be almost impossible, and that if it were to happen, it would take 3-4 months. Instead, the IDF got it done in less than two weeks.

A plan though for what is coming is critical since the end of the Rafah operation is not that far away and in the absence of a hostage deal – which for the time being appears to be tragically unlikely – Israel will need to outline what it wants to happen even if it needs to do so unilaterally. We can blame the world for a

lot, but it is Israel that needs to decide what it wants to happen next.

On Tuesday, Israel's Communications Minister Shlomo Karhi (Likud) ordered his men to confiscate a camera and broadcasting equipment belonging to the Associated Press. The reason? AP – one of the world's largest news organizations – was filming in Sderot and Al Jazeera, newly-banned in Israel, was picking up the feed. Karhi claimed that this was forbidden under the new media law and did what any heroic and fearless minister would do – he ordered his ministry's inspectors to confiscate AP's equipment.

What a hero, right? Actually, more of a fool. This decision and others that Karhi made in the past make it hard to come to terms with the fact that this person is currently serving in the Israeli cabinet and is our country's communications minister. Does Karhi not know that AP is the largest news organization in the United States and one of the largest in the world? Does he not know how agencies work? That they sell subscriptions and then their material can be used? As Yair Lapid tried to remind him, AP has won 59 Pulitzer Prizes over the years including the one for Feature Photography this past year.

Karhi's decision was eventually overturned by Netanyahu, but not before it caused Israel unbelievable damage. It was reminiscent of the decision during Operation Guardian of the Walls in 2021 to bomb the al-Jalaa building, a 12-story tower in Gaza City and home to the local AP bureau.

Also then, Israel failed to think through what it was doing. Until the bombing, the White House had stood firmly by Israel. But after the IDF destroyed the AP bureau without explaining why – it took months for the IDF to reveal what was in the building that needed to be destroyed – the Biden administration shifted gears, and called on Israel to end the operation.

I don't expect Karhi to know any of this, but is there no one in government today who can stop this type of damage? Does Israel not have enough challenges? Why allow these so-called ministers to cause even more?

The writer is a senior fellow at the Jewish People Policy Institute (JPPPI) and a former editor-in-chief of The Jerusalem Post.

Against the ICC in The Hague

We must pursue an advocacy campaign

• By DAVID BEN-BASAT

Israel should not have been surprised by the decision of Karim Khan, chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague. It had been ignoring warning lights which have been flashing for a long time.

Khan was selected to replace the previous ICC prosecutor, the controversial and hostile-to-Israel African Muslim Fatou Bensouda, who had begun the process of investigating Hamas' heinous war crimes – alongside what she referred to as "complaints against Israel for sexual crimes against Palestinian women." After Bensouda, Khan took the "investigation" a step further. Bensouda had loyally served her country, Gambia under the rule of the former dictator, Yahya Jammeh. Two of the regime's victims later testified before a commission investigating crimes committed in Gambia. The victims accused Bensouda of involvement in human rights violations and turning a blind eye to the torture suffered by opponents of the regime.

Khan is joined by UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, infamous for the "context" statement he made after October 7. Prosecutor Khan speaks of crimes committed against the "State of Palestine" and bold-facedly finds symmetry between the Nazi Hamas murderers and the Israel Defense Forces.

Let us take this opportunity to remind the impudent prosecutor that not only is there is no such country as "Palestine" but that Hamas has been designated a terrorist organization by the majority of the world.

Chief prosecutor Khan has surrounded himself with jurists, among whom are hostile Muslims, affiliated with known antisemitic organizations. Israel did not pay enough attention to those at prosecutor Khan's side who supported him in his disgraceful decision.

A little background on the participants in this theater of the absurd: Born in Scotland, Karim Asad Ahmed Khan is a member of a Muslim family that immigrated from Pakistan – and an international expert in constitutional law. He formed a legal team that escorted him during the "investigation." Among the hostile team that pushed him to request arrest warrants for Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defense Minister Yoav Gallant are well-known Israel haters, such as British Lebanese attorney Amal Clooney (wife of actor George Clooney) and Andreas Laursen, a lawyer from Denmark.

Laursen, married to a Palestinian woman, previously lived in Ramallah and specialized in a Palestinian "human rights" organization listed by the Israel Defense Ministry as a terrorist group. He also assisted the Palestinian police and has connections with the attorney general of the Palestinian Authority (PA). Back in the Fatou era at the prosecutor's office, Laursen played a central role in compiling evidence and submitting a request to investigate Israel for war crimes.

Larsen demonstrated his contemptibility by asking the families of the Israeli hostages, at the meeting, whether they were emissaries of the Israeli government.

Another name to beware of is that of American Jewish jurist, Prof. Theodore Meron, the attorney for the Israeli Foreign Affairs Ministry in the late 1960s. Prof. Meron's ugly side was revealed when he wrote in a report to the ministry that he had prepared the establishment of civilian settlements on territories "occupied" by Israel in the Six Day War and been involved in the demolition of the homes of terror suspects, as well as their deportation, in contravention of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

Meron is one of the advisers behind the ICC's decision

to issue arrest warrants against Netanyahu and Galant.

We repeatedly see how senior members of the United Nations – past and current – present accusations against Israel that outrageous and delusional. It would behoove them to dig into their past and that of those around them, and the antisemitic stances they have taken over the years – even before October 7.

The UN institutions' moral bankruptcy and antisemitic attitude toward Israel clearly indicate the long-standing shamelessness of the United Nations.

While evading its duty to visit the hostages, the UN did not hesitate to visit the damned terrorists, whose murderous acts are responsible for our victims. The UN and its institutions never miss any opportunity to dive ever deeper into moral decline.

Believe it or not, the members of the UN Security Council held a moment of silence in memory of the arch-murderer, Iranian president Ebrahim Raisi – known as "the butcher of Tehran" for massacring thousands of his people – who crashed to his death alongside his foreign minister, Abdel Hayyan.

To even attempt to think about the possibility of transferring control of Gaza to the PA the "day after" the war is to reward its Holocaust-denying chairman, Mahmoud Abbas, and his designated successor, Hussein al-Sheikh, secretary of the PLO executive committee – previously suspected of sexually assaulting an office worker. Of the corrupt Abbas, the ICC prosecutor in The Hague said, "I am sure he will be fair and impartial." This is indeed the embodiment of cynicism.

Over the generations, UN resolutions against Israel, such as "Zionism is a form of racism and racial discrimination" (1975), are automatically supported by totalitarian regimes such as Iran, South Africa, Qatar, and others, some of which have committed countless crimes against humanity – or supported corrupt rulers that have done so.

THIS IS the place to mention the report by Richard Goldstone, the South African researcher appointed by the UN in 2009 to investigate Israel following Operation Cast Lead. The Goldstone Report was proven to be false and disgraced the UN.

In April 2011, Goldstone published an article in *The Washington Post* titled, "Reconsidering the Goldstone Report on Israel and War Crimes," in which he claimed that if there had been cooperation by Israel and if he had known "then" what he knows "now," the report's conclusions would have been very different, especially regarding the accusations of "possible war crimes" against Israel.

Goldson also claimed that the UN Human Rights Council was biased against Israel. More about that in another column.

The recommendation to issue arrest warrants for Prime Minister Netanyahu and Defense Minister Galant could lead to further UN decisions against Israel, such as sanctions, if the Jewish state does not stop the war.

Israel's information-dissemination system is of paramount importance, particularly in these times, and the Foreign Ministry has allocated a substantial additional budget for this purpose.

It is not too late. It is time to start a clear and comprehensive campaign against the ICC prosecutor's application for warrants to arrest Israeli leaders.

We must fight for global public opinion and show how the ICC in The Hague not only defends but also collaborates with terrorism.

The writer is CEO of Radios 100FM, honorary consul of Nauru, vice dean of the consular staff and vice president of the Ambassadors Club of Israel.

Recognizing Palestinian pain

It doesn't negate Israeli suffering



THE BROAD PERSPECTIVE
• By TAMAR URIEL-BEERI

On Wednesday evening, the Hostages and Missing Families Forum released a video showing female IDF observers being kidnapped from their Nahal Oz base into the Gaza Strip on October 7.

The hostages' families made the courageous choice to make the video public.

"Look them in the eyes," the forum urged. "This video is a sharp indictment of the national failure – the lawlessness regarding the hostages for the past 229 days."

The forum noted that the video reveals the violent and humiliating treatment the women endured on the day of their abduction and captures the immense fear in their eyes.

To see our Israeli hostages suffering, to see their arms bound, the blood and dirt coating their bodies, is nauseating; it is more sickening than words can say.

Their torturous state is undeniable. It is unquestionable. But so is that of so many of the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip.

One does not negate the other. The Palestinian people have lost families. Everyone has lost someone. Their houses are destroyed, their futures unclear.

They are starving as Hamas steals food deliveries. They know the IDF is about to attack and cannot leave under threat by the terrorist organizations. They feel cornered and alone.

Every individual's hardships, regardless of their affiliation, is a tragedy. Acknowledging the pain of the Gazan people is a matter of human compassion and empathy, which doesn't diminish the recognition of Israel's hardships, nor does it suggest that the reason for Israel's ongoing fight in Gaza is unjustified.

Many of the families of hostages, despite the tremendous and unimaginable suffering they have experienced, have expressed similar sentiments.

Rachel Goldberg-Polin, the mother of hostage Hersh Goldberg-Polin, told Fox News just last week that there is "suffering on both sides."

She said, "There are 132 innocent civilians taken hostage from Israel on October 7, suffering in captivity, and there are hundreds of thousands of uninvolved Gazan civilians suffering greatly. Many people struggle to recognize both of these parallel truths."

Mai Albini Peri, the grandson of Chaim Peri, who has been held hostage by Hamas since October 7, told *The Jerusalem Post's* Eve Young last month that he has empathy for Gazans who are terribly miserable.

"They physically don't have homes to live in because we blew everything up. Children there don't have food," he said.

"I don't think you have to be such an enlightened and pure person to recognize suffering," Peri said.

"People make it about sides. You are with them, or you are with us. 'What? You think the people in Gaza are suffering? Are the people in Israel not suffering?'" His words ring true.

As a people, it is vital that we avoid the oversimplification that comes with what-about-isms and recognize, instead, the complex human costs involved.

When we fight a war against Hamas, we operate inside the Gaza Strip alongside children – who are educated by UNRWA, true, but children nevertheless – and people convinced of Hamas's justification – cruel in mindset, yes, but people nevertheless.

If you turn a blind eye when a pile of bodies racks up on enemy land, how do you expect them to recognize the same



RACHEL GOLDBERG-POLIN, mother of hostage Hersh Goldberg-Polin, wears the number 182, marking the days of captivity, during a visit to New York City, last month. She told Fox News last week that there is 'suffering on both sides.' (Adam Gray/Reuters)

on your territory?

The counter-argument to this, often seen on the Israeli side, is that this torment is caused by Hamas. This is true to an extent; Israel operates against Hamas, and although the methodology is questionable, the motive is true, and Hamas is hoarding supplies brought in for humanitarian aid.

That being said, we cannot ignore the fact that the IDF has left destruction in its path. That does not make it wholly wrong, but it is undeniable.

This is why, when the pro-Palestinian side – and yes, I am insisting on not using the term "anti-Israel" in this case – looks over at the Israeli side, it views any Israeli denial of Palestinian suffering as the enemy coming to pillage and later denying its actions.

It is through recognition of the other side's suffering that we can maintain morality, even when Israel is in such a difficult position militarily, one foot in, one foot out.

Let us take the case of Ms. Rachel, for example. Ms. Rachel is a widely popular baby and toddler YouTuber who makes videos that most English-speaking babies today, including my own son, have watched religiously. Her *Songs for Littles* have gotten stuck in many a parent's head.

She launched a campaign last week on Cameo, an app where one can purchase a video message from a celebrity, where she raised money for Save the Children's Emergency Fund. In the announcement of her campaign, she mentioned Gazan children and their suffering.

The pro-Israel crowd lost their minds. "I am really saddened to see that Jewish life does not seem like something that is important for her," one Instagram user said in a video that has now gone viral, just as an example.

This, in response to her donating money to an organization vetted by some of Israel's top security systems as a trustworthy donor that goes directly to the Gazans in need – and not to Hamas.

When Ms. Rachel announced the campaign and the ensuing backlash followed, she published a clarification, saying, "Children should never experience the horrors of war – nor be killed, injured or taken hostage."

While my editors would gladly have added an Oxford comma to her words, I would not change a thing because the meaning is clear: She has been forced to come forward to clarify that her support for starving, unwell children does not mean that "Jewish life does not seem like something that is important for her."

If you attempt to cancel every single person who cares about children's lives, you'll be left with very few allies indeed.

The writer is deputy Editor-in-Chief of The Jerusalem Post.

This is not normal

• By JONATHAN LIEBERMAN

A few days ago, I overheard the following conversation on the train between two 40-something people: "Hey, how are things? What's new?" "Not much! Same old! How about you?" "Yeah – same – just plodding along, you know."

I wanted to scream out, "No! This is not the 'same old.' This is not normality!"

In the last two weeks, we have commemorated the Shoah, the most horrific episode of inhumanity in history, we have gone through a Remembrance Day like no other, with hero soldiers losing their lives on a near daily basis, the losses and injured representing shattered families by the hundreds and thousands. We have celebrated the most muted Independence Day in our history. US university campuses have prevented Jewish students from entering the premises. Our representative at the Eurovision Song Contest was confined to her hotel under police guard for her own safety, and our prime minister and others have been indicted by the International Criminal (kangaroo) Court for war crimes.

This, my friend, is not normal.

What I overheard is an example of "compassion fatigue," a term that describes the emotional and physical exhaustion that can result from prolonged exposure to suffering. This has become an increasingly relevant topic in the context of the ongoing war in Israel. The initial shock of the horrific events on October 7, when some 1,200 people were massacred and over 200 hostages were taken by terrorists, left many unable to eat, sleep, or think straight. The pain of each soldier's death or injury was deeply felt. We cried every time we heard the news, we accompanied every local funeral, we ran around volunteering,

helping, comforting.

However, as the war has dragged on, this intense reaction has begun to wane for those not directly affected, transforming these tragedies into "old news." This phenomenon raises important questions about human adaptability and our capacity for empathy in the face of ongoing suffering.

Humans have an incredible ability to adapt to new situations, a trait that has been crucial for survival throughout history. This adaptability allows us to continue functioning in the face of constant stress or danger. However, the cost of this resilience can be a diminished sensitivity to the suffering of others. When we are constantly exposed to images and stories of war, famine, disaster, or other human tragedies, there is a risk that we become desensitized, experiencing what is known as compassion fatigue. This emotional numbing can lead to a decreased capacity to empathize with those who are suffering, making it harder for us to respond with the compassion and support that is needed. And, yes, it is really still needed. There remains work to do with the injured, the bereaved, the displaced, those struggling whilst their partners are serving on reserve duty.

THE INITIAL shock and horror were overwhelming, but as the conflict continues, it becomes harder to maintain that level of emotional intensity. This is not because the suffering has lessened, but because our minds and bodies can only sustain such a high level of stress and empathy for so long before needing to protect themselves. This protective mechanism is understandable, but it poses a significant moral and ethical challenge. If we allow ourselves to become too desensitized, we risk losing a fundamental part of our humanity: the ability



SHANI LOUK'S father, Nissim, looks on at Shani's funeral this week, after her body was retrieved by the IDF from the Gaza Strip. Shani was murdered on October 7 as she tried to escape the Hamas massacre at the Supernova music festival. (Chaim Goldberg/Flash90)

to feel deeply for others and to be moved to action by their pain.

There is a profound teaching in the Jewish tradition that can help us understand the importance of maintaining our capacity for compassion. Observing Passover at the Seder, there is a commandment to "see oneself as if one actually was a slave to Pharaoh in Egypt and we ourselves were actually redeemed." This commandment is not just a historical remembrance, but a call to empathy. It asks us to place ourselves in the shoes of those who suffered, to feel their pain and their joy as if it were our own. This practice of empathy is essential for truly appreciating the significance

of liberation and redemption.

Before recent events, I never fully understood what this commandment meant. However, in the face of the ongoing war and the stories of immense suffering, its meaning has become clear. To truly appreciate the suffering and the eventual joy of others, we must actively engage in empathy.

We must strive to understand their pain and not succumb to compassion fatigue. This means continuing to care, to cry, and to feel the pain of others, even when it becomes difficult to do so. By maintaining our sensitivity, we keep our humanity intact and prepare ourselves to join in

the celebration of victory and joy when it finally arrives.

The Talmud Bavli (Ta'anit 30b) teaches, "Whoever mourns for the loss of Jerusalem will merit to celebrate its rebuilding." This teaching underscores the idea that empathy and compassion are not just passive emotions but active practices that connect us to others and to the larger human experience.

By allowing ourselves to feel the pain of loss, we also open ourselves to the profound joy of rebuilding and renewal. This balance between mourning and celebration is a key aspect of maintaining our humanity in the face of ongoing conflict and suffering.

Compassion fatigue can lead to a sense of detachment and apathy, making it harder to respond to the needs of others. However, by recognizing this risk and actively working against it, we can maintain our capacity for compassion. This might involve taking breaks from distressing news, engaging in self-care, and finding more innovative ways to support those who are suffering in tangible ways. It also means reminding ourselves of the importance of empathy and the profound impact it can have on our own lives and the lives of others.

The ongoing war serves as a powerful reminder of the importance of maintaining our empathy in the face of prolonged suffering. It challenges us to stay connected to the pain of others and to continue to care deeply, even when it becomes difficult. By doing so, this not only helps those who are suffering, but also enriches our own lives. This way, we honor the humanity of those who suffer and prepare ourselves to share in their joy when peace and rebuilding finally come.

The writer is a rabbi and physician living in Ramat Poleg, Netanya, and a cofounder of Techelet-Inspiring Judaism.

Greatest source of weakness?

America's most elite campuses

• By JASON OLSON, BART MARCOIS and ALAN CLEMMONS

The latest bout of pro-terror protests on elite American college campuses has us thinking about the contributions these universities make to our national strength. Admittedly, private universities funded by private funds have every right to serve global interests instead of American ones. But the eight Ivy League campuses, plus Stanford and Northwestern, have received \$33 billion in federal grants and contracts since 2018. Are these taxpayer dollars making America stronger, or are they undermining America's interests and the resilience of its future generations?

We define strength as taking responsibility, and weakness as demanding entitlements. As an extraordinary case of entitlement, Columbia University's student protesters added a new item to their list of demands in a press briefing in April: food, which protesters said the university is under obligation to provide.

"It's ultimately a question of what kind of community and obligation Columbia feels it has to its students – do you want students to die of dehydration and starvation or get severely ill, even if they disagree with you?" said Johannah King-Slutsky, a representative for the People's University, a PhD candidate at Columbia's Graduate School of Arts and Science, and a teacher.

For many young Americans, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a microcosm of two Americas. On the one hand, those who embrace Hamas embrace the entitlement culture. Unfortunately, entitlement has been the pattern of much of Palestinian history. Instead of taking responsibility for the Palestinian people's future by accepting a state in 1947, some Palestinian leaders waged a war of annihilation on the nascent State of Israel, believing they were entitled to the entire land.

When they lost the 1948 war, they could have taken responsibility for their failure. Instead, they blamed Israel for the many Palestinian refugees and then demanded entitlements from Israel and the United Nations. Even in their loss, they could have taken responsibility through institutional growth, economic development, building infrastructure, mature executive, legislative, and judicial governance, and more skills-based education, less indoctrination – instead, the Palestinian cause has largely been a failed revolution against the permanence of the State of Israel.

Similarly, Hamas's American protesters seek revolution for revolution's sake. Israel has a right to defend itself and its citizens, and it takes that responsibility seriously. Hamas does not defend its citizens, it hides under them and behind them.

Early in this current war, Hamas claimed that it had no responsibility for governing the Gaza Strip – that was the responsibility of the United Nations, it said. Instead of taking responsibility for its own people, their real needs, and the basics of governance, Hamas embraced perpetual revolution – terrorism. This is also the goal of the campus protesters. Their goal, like Hamas's, is entirely unrealistic – the destruction of the State of Israel.

WE MUST remember that Hamas gained power and autonomy over the Gaza Strip in 2007. For 16 years, it squandered the vast majority of its donated resources on a violent revolution. And now it demands humanitarian aid, as well as the means of distribution, for a war it started. Of course we want to see humanitarian aid delivered to innocent Palestinians rather than hoarded by Hamas. But our

point of view is that, when responsibility is forfeited, accountability is required. And Israel is holding Hamas accountable.

So on the other hand, there is the culture of responsibility that the State of Israel embodies. Zionism, its founding ideology, said that the Jewish people are responsible for their own future and that self-determination is exactly what the phrase means. Before Israel attained statehood in 1948, it built all the institutions necessary for independence – ready as soon as the opportunity arrived. It built a self-reliant economic institution, the Histadrut; a national army-in-the-making, the Hagana; a democratic governing body, the Jewish Agency; a network of agriculture and settlement in the kibbutz movement; and a unified program for investment in the Jewish National Fund. Zionism prepared the Jewish people for independence and self-reliance while the Palestinian cause has mostly been focused on perpetual dependence and donations.

To stave off the entitled mindset that weakens our nation, we need American educational institutions that create environments where responsibility is celebrated, nurtured, and expected. A glimpse of responsibility was demonstrated by University of North Carolina students, which included Jewish Americans, who protected the American flag from those who would replace it with the Palestinian one. A whisper of the spirit of the Marines at Iwo Jima was there. Those students demonstrated responsibility for their flag, their campus, their country, and their future.

Our universities aren't supposed to teach students exactly what to think, but they do have a responsibility to develop American leaders, especially when taxpayer dollars are being invested. And developing leaders is about holding people accountable so that they learn to be responsible. We have seen countless university administrators and faculty failing to hold their students accountable for misconduct, even participating with them.

That breeds entitlement and weakness. Ultimately, we need new generations of American youth who will take responsibility for America's future.

No matter what discoveries are made at America's most elite campuses, they will not benefit America's national strength until the faculty and administrators develop student-leaders who will take responsibility for those discoveries, their own learning, their own personal needs, and the interests of their own nation. When students and faculty join the cause of an entitled terrorist organization, something has gone deeply wrong in the purpose of American higher education.

Jason Olson received his PhD from Brandeis University in Near Eastern and Judaic Studies in 2016 and serves as a US Navy foreign area officer.

Bart Marcois is a former US diplomat and the former principal deputy assistant secretary of energy for international affairs. He served 10 years in the Arab Middle East, and now heads a private consulting practice in Washington.

Judge Alan Clemmons is the founder of American Patriots for Israel and served for 18 years in the South Carolina House of Representatives, where he authored the first law establishing penalties for those businesses that engage in any discriminatory boycott of Israel. His state-based template has now been employed in 37 US states. He is also the author of the Israel plank in the Republican Party platform.

The writers' views are theirs alone. They wish to thank Mr. Joseph Sabag for his editorial support and various insights into the subject matter.

Focus on rehabilitating the wounded

• By IDO SHARIR

Since October 7, "rehabilitation," has become a new buzzword. In the difficult and unfortunate circumstances of war, everyone in the world of medicine is talking about the importance of rehabilitation and its contribution to improving the physical and emotional functioning of the individual.

The war presents Israel with a major challenge: ensuring the optimal recovery of the thousands who have been wounded, physically disabled, or traumatized by the events of October 7 and the subsequent war.

For years, rehabilitation medicine was, unjustifiably, relegated to the minor leagues of the medical world, even though the field is critical to a person's health, especially during a crisis. It is a window of opportunity to return to functional independence in all aspects of life: employment, family, leisure, relationship, community, and more.

Rehabilitation involves several professional teams, including doctors, nurses, and therapists in all healthcare professions, such as physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, social work, nutrition, rehabilitation psychology, complementary medicine, and more. They improve the physical, cognitive, and emotional functioning of the patients to enable them to return to an optimal quality of life.

Rehabilitation is particularly important for those who have undergone life-changing events such as accidents, strokes, fractures, contusions, or surgeries. Now, more so than ever, thousands of those wounded in the war need rehabilitation services.

The war caught rehabilitative medicine in Israel in a state of depletion after years of dealing with underfunding and a severe shortage of doctors, therapists, and physical infrastructure (primarily hospital beds).

Rehabilitation and geriatrics continue to be among the least desired medical specialization fields, despite the great demand for these services. The Health

Ministry defines them as professions in distress.

The need for experts in these fields is expected to increase dramatically, given the constant rise in life expectancy. For example, in 2030, the number of elderly people in Israel is expected to reach 1.5 million (about 13% of the Israeli population). Already today, a third of those hospitalized in rehabilitation wards are over 65 years old. As life expectancy continues to grow, so will the number of those in need of rehabilitation.

Throughout my years at Reuth, I have seen the impact of inadequate rehabilitation. It has serious consequences for the future of the patient, his/her family, and their quality of life.

Inability to function independently can seriously harm an individual's self-image and sense of self-worth. It may lead to depressive states to the point of complete withdrawal from society. This is true for people of all ages.

In the six months that have passed since the outbreak of the war, I see Israel's story in the inspiring journeys of the wounded recuperating at the Reuth Tel Aviv Rehabilitation Hospital and the elderly living in the sheltered housing complexes we manage. They include victims of the war who bravely risked their lives for our safety and continue to wage a determined and persistent struggle in rehabilitation. Alongside them are the residents of our protected housing, some of whom are Holocaust survivors and others who have lost loved ones in the war. They now require comprehensive support from our teams.

IT WAS particularly moving to see our healthcare teams mobilize at the outbreak of the war. A tremendous effort was invested in adapting the hospital infrastructure to admit more of the wounded and improving the hospital's security measures.

Reuth Tel Aviv Rehabilitation Hospital, affiliated with Tel Aviv University, provides 15% of the total inpatient rehabilitation beds in Israel and accounts for

one third of the day care rehabilitation services in Israel today. In addition to providing rehabilitation to the wounded, we faced an increase in the demand for outpatient rehabilitation treatments among individuals whose conditions were exacerbated due to the war, including eating disorders, pain syndromes, and sexual dysfunction.

Since the war did not spare anyone, one of the questions that preoccupies our employees at the hospital and sheltered housing is "how can I support the tenants and patients when I, too, am struggling?" This is where the personal resilience of our employees is measured – their tremendous professionalism and empathy enable them to continue their work to rebuild the lives of the injured and provide an optimal quality of life to our residents.

For the past seven months, I have been dividing my time between reserve service as an officer in one of the elite divisions of the IDF, work, and my supportive family. It fills me with great pride to have the privilege to take part in the defense of Israel and to lead a public organization that provides answers to thousands of patients, injured, and elderly residents every month.

We now embark on a project of national importance to establish a new campus for the Reuth Tel Aviv Rehabilitation Hospital, which currently operates in old infrastructure that is struggling to accommodate its existing activity and cannot address the challenges of the future.

The future rehabilitation campus, which will be the largest in Israel, will respond to the country's growing rehabilitation needs, especially in light of the war and the thousands of victims who need prolonged rehabilitation.

The campus will be built in the Sde Dov area in North Tel Aviv, in full partnership with the Municipality of Tel Aviv-Jaffa and the Tel Aviv Foundation. It will play a crucial part in promoting Israel as a beacon of medical excellence and innovation in the coming decades.

The writer is the CEO of Reuth Tel Aviv Rehabilitation Hospital.



AN ARTIST'S rendering of the Reuth Tel Aviv Rehabilitation Hospital at the new campus in Sde Dov: The future campus, which will be the largest in Israel, will respond to the country's growing rehabilitation needs, especially in light of the war, says the writer. (Courtesy Reuth)

Grandstanding to defy Israel

Ersatz recognition of a Palestinian state while Hamas is at war with Israel retards peace



KNOW COMMENT
By DAVID M. WEINBERG

Purportedly, Washington has sewn up a Saudi-Israeli normalization deal, enabling construction of a more potent regional coalition against Iran. All Israel must do is end its war against Hamas and offer a “credible pathway” to Palestinian statehood including Palestinian Authority governance in Gaza as an alternative to Hamas.

And then, presto, the Israeli hostages held by Hamas will be released, Hamas’s Nukhba elite terrorists will disappear never to fight another day, Palestinian terrorist strongholds in Jenin, Nablus, and more will dissipate into thin air, Hezbollah’s Radwan forces will retreat from Israel’s northern border, the Houthis of Yemen will end their assault on global shipping lanes, and good old Yuletide cheer will wash over the Middle East.

What could be better? How can Israel say no? What could go wrong?

Well, the main problem with the Pollyannish American package is its insistence on Palestinian statehood, which after 30 years of Oslo process failures and the October 7 attack flies in the face of logic, justice, history, and basic security realities. The Palestinian national movement, Fatah and Hamas wings alike, largely has shown itself to be committed to Israel’s debilitation and destruction, not to a peaceful two-state solution.

Until Palestinian political culture matures towards accommodation, no rational Israeli government will consider ceding parts of Judea and Samaria to any Palestinian faction. And until the military power and political sway of Hamas (and Palestinian Islamic Jihad, and Fatah’s al-Qsa Martyrs Brigades, and more) is crippled, no peaceful and responsible alternative Palestinian leadership ever will emerge.

And therefore, the war against Hamas and its satellites in Gaza and the West Bank cannot end now. That’s an Israeli consensus; rare, but real and valuable.

Alas, the Biden administration and much of the international community, still with messianic devotion think that the establishment of a Palestinian state



US SECRETARY of State Antony Blinken testifies before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, this week. The US administration still, with messianic devotion, thinks that the establishment of a Palestinian state must be diligently pursued post haste via pressure on Israel, the writer charges. (Kevin Lamarque/Reuters)

must be diligently pursued post haste via pressure on Israel, regardless of the circumstances or the complete lack of interest in truly implementing such a scheme on the part of the Palestinians.

Some, like the European countries that this week unilaterally “recognized” Palestinian statehood, seek to dictate from above. They grandstand to defy Israel, no less, pretending to be advancing peace when in fact they are knowingly weakening Israel.

Smoothly, they “will no longer wait for Israel.” They opine that Palestinian independence cannot be dependent on Israel; it is imperative to be forced on Israel.

And thus, rewarding violent Palestinian “resistance” is no problem for them. Funding the recalcitrant Palestinian Authority or irredentist UNWRA is good too. Facilitating the survival of Hamas is fine, as long as Israel is forced to buckle.

And to prove their defiant fealty to the shibboleth of Palestinian freedom – costs

to Israel be dammed – they castigate Israel via labeling schemes, trade and arms boycotts, and outrageous court indictments. One gets the sense that these European freedom fighters for Palestine are but a hair’s breadth away from promoting the so-called one-state solution, meaning the dissolution of Israel.

BUT FOR people claiming to be friends of Israel, this path must be rejected. The rush to ersatz recognition of Palestinian statehood runs contrary to the experience-based views of the vast majority of Israelis and Israeli political leaders. It is not consistent with friendship for the Jewish state.

The sad fact is that the only Palestinian state that might arise at the moment would permanently be at war with Israel. A state that supports and glorifies Palestinian suicide-bombers, missile launchers, and rapists against Israel’s civilian population; a state where the airwaves and newspapers are filled with

viciously antisemitic and bloodthirsty anti-Israel propaganda; a state whose leaders crisscross the globe and lobby every international institution to vilify and criminalize Israel.

The only Palestinian state that might arise at the moment is a state whose political and religious figures outright deny the historic ties of the Jewish people to the Land of Israel, and demand settlement of Palestinian refugees in pre-1967 Israel as a way of swamping and destroying the Jewish state.

The only Palestinian state that might arise at the moment is, in fact, a state like the current Palestinian Authority in the West Bank, aside from being corrupt and tyrannical towards its people, commits all the above crimes against Israel; or a state like “Hamastan” in Gaza that would repeat the October 7 massacres one thousand times over.

And therefore, the war against the Palestinian threat in Gaza and the West Bank cannot be cut short. That’s an Israeli consensus; rare, but real and valuable.

NEVERTHELESS, the asinine storyline being sold in Washington and endlessly echoed in media around the world is that Israel is being offered a US-Saudi “lifeline,” and that Prime Minister Netanyahu is spurning it because of his far-right coalition partners. This is poppycock.

Netanyahu is completely within the consensual tradition of all Israeli leaders in insisting that Palestinian terrorism be crushed, not coddled; that a peace process be toughed out the old-fashioned way – by building confidence between the parties through measured, verifiable, and concrete steps along a long-term road map towards stability.

And Netanyahu is completely within the consensual tradition of all Israeli leaders in insisting that only clear commitments from the Palestinians that the conflict is fully and permanently over might merit the ceding of territory by Israel.

Moreover, Netanyahu is correct that a realistic peace process must consider the Iranian hegemonic drive across the region, including Iranian takeover of vast swaths of Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon,

with Jordan in sight too; imperial conquests that are being aided and abetted by the Biden administration’s quite clear acquiescence in Tehran’s status as a nuclear threshold state.

Peace processors must take into account this changed situation so that neither a second Hamastan can arise in the West Bank nor draw in al-Qaeda and ISIS elements, nor open the door to the destabilization of Jordan via the West Bank.

This means that Israel must militarily control the broad security envelope, fully. It means that hackneyed notions of withdrawal to anything reminiscent of the 1967 lines should be set aside.

In short, dismissal of the American-brokered “Saudi lifeline” involving a “pathway” to Palestinian statehood has nothing to do with Itamar Ben-Gvir or Bezalel Smotrich, the Israeli far-right. Benny Gantz and Yair Lapid in the Israeli Center and Left are no more likely to countenance the establishment of runaway Palestinian statehood over the next 50 years than Netanyahu is – again, especially after October 7.

The international community must roll back triumphalist Palestinian maximalism, not chop away at logical Israeli conservatism. If over Israel’s objections, the international community rushes to recognize revanchist, extremist, and unfettered Palestinian statehood – true peace will be pushed ever-so-much farther away.

What the supposedly pro-peace international community ought to be doing is backing Israel’s legitimate war goals until their complete execution and demanding vast reform from Palestinian leaders.

How about some sustained peace education and deradicalization programs for “Palestine”? Without that, diplomacy that demands two states (in any contours) will fail, sinking into the quicksand of Palestinian rejectionism and annihilationism.

The writer is senior managing fellow at the Misgav Institute for National Security & Zionist Strategy, in Jerusalem. The views expressed here are his own. His diplomatic, defense, political, and Jewish world columns over the past 27 years are at davidmweinberg.com.

Days of outrage



GRAPEVINE
By GREER FAY CASHMAN

This week, Israeli journalists were caught up in a web of outrage – firstly, the continuing anger that the government has not yet brought home all the hostages, and then the announcement by the International Criminal Court that arrest warrants may be issued for Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defense Minister Yoav Gallant. Israelis then learned that the government has not honored its promises to compensate reservists and evacuees for loss of income and property damage, and that, in addition to price hikes on consumer goods, Arnona rates are due to rise by 7%. Daily complaints on this score, coupled with a lack of sensitivity on the part of government ministers and MKs, were immediately followed by the news that Israel’s Communications Ministry is acting like that of Soviet Russia before the fall of the Iron Curtain. At a time when Israel is increasingly coming under criticism, is in danger of widespread isolation, and is, to a large extent, relying on Qatar’s assistance in freeing the hostages, it closed down Al Jazeera, which is owned by Qatar. As if that was not another act of folly on Israel’s part, the Communications Ministry subsequently confiscated broadcasting equipment used by AP, the largest news agency in the world, which is headquartered in the United States. Relations between Israel and the US are already problematic due to disagreements on certain issues related to the conduct of the war and humanitarian aid. Now, thanks to radical elements within the government, Israel is jumping out of the frying pan and into the fire.

The action taken against AP should come as no surprise. For months, the Foreign Press Association in Israel has been protesting against the restrictions imposed on reporters and photojournalists. All the efforts by the Government Press Office, the Public Diplomacy Authority, the Foreign Ministry, and any number of NGOs to tell Israel’s story to the world and generate awareness of the pervasive power of terrorist organizations will go down the drain if freedom of the press is curtailed. The last thing that Israel needs is for the international media to turn en bloc against the Jewish state. But if Communications Minister Shlomo Karhi continues to have free rein, the prognosis for Israel will not be good.

It was only after the action against AP caused both national and international furor, including intervention by the White House, that Karhi gave instructions for the return of the equipment and the resumption of the AP news feed.

President Isaac Herzog and Netanyahu both rely heavily on foreign media outlets to present Israel’s position to the world. Netanyahu holds occasional press conferences, and here and there, he gives interviews to Israeli media. Herzog steers clear of press conferences and rarely agrees to interviews with Israeli media outlets, preferring to issue press releases of his speeches without having to answer awkward questions.

Ironically, Karhi’s cutbacks on freedom of the press come at a time when Israeli journalists are winning awards at home and abroad.

Veteran *Yediot Aharonot* journalist Shlomo Nakhdim was among this year’s Israel Prize laureates.

The Israel Press Institute presented awards for excellence in journalism this week, in addition to the award-winning journalists mentioned in Grapevine last week and earlier this week. One of the honorees was Ynet and *Yediot Aharonot* photographer Roy Edan, who was recognized posthumously for his outstanding and courageous journalism. Edan and his wife, Smadar, were murdered by Hamas terrorists at Kfar Aza on October 7. Other honorees included *Haaretz* journalist Hagar Shezaf for her coverage of attacks against innocent Palestinians by Israeli hilltop youth and rebel soldiers; Yossi Eli of Channel 13, who covered the unwarranted killing of reservist Yuval Castleman by Israeli security after Castelmann, who had just neutralized a terrorist, emerged from his car with his hands up; and Lee Naim of Channel 12 for her coverage of the appalling conditions under which female soldiers who were observers of activities beyond the Gaza border were forced to operate, and how their warnings about Hamas were ignored. A NIS 50,000 prize was divided among the honorees, with Edan’s brother Amit accepting it on behalf of the Edan children.

IN JANUARY last year, President Herzog paid a visit to the Jerusalem apartment of journalist Walter Bingham to wish him well on his 100th birthday. This year – in, fact this week – the president hosted another hale and hearty centenarian: Rabbi Samuel Fox, who will celebrate his 100th birthday on May 28. Born in Locatz, Poland, Fox moved with his parents and two siblings to Milwaukee, Wisconsin, when he was five

years old. A student at the Hebrew Theological College (Beis Medrash LaTorah), he was ordained as a rabbi in 1948 and simultaneously obtained a law degree from DePaul University.

His first pulpit was in Little Rock, Arkansas, after which he and his wife, Miriam, to whom he has been married for 72 years, moved to Dayton, Ohio, in 1955, where he remained for the next half century, serving as the rabbi of Beth Jacob Synagogue.

Staunchly pro-Israel, Fox established several ORT chapters in Ohio and sat on the boards of various Zionist organizations. Over the years, he met numerous leading American and Israeli figures, among them Menachem Begin, Yitzhak Rabin, Shimon Peres, Ariel Sharon, and Rabbis Shlomo Goren and Avraham Shapiro, but the most meaningful, given the occasion, was with Herzog’s grandfather, the late Chief Rabbi Isaac Halevi Herzog. Among the leading American figures whom Fox met were Harry Truman, Dwight Eisenhower, Eleanor Roosevelt, Jimmy Carter, Hillary Clinton, William Fullbright, and Tip O’Neal. Fox also had the rare privilege of giving the invocation at both the Senate and the House of Representatives.

Fox and his wife have created a tribe that comprises their five children, 28 grandchildren, and 57 great-grandchildren, with many serving in the IDF. Though their actual place of residence is in the US, Fox and his wife spent a considerable part of this year in Israel, where 49 of their progeny reside. On the 87th anniversary of his Bar Mitzvah, Fox again read his Bible portion at a synagogue in Efrat and hosted a sumptuous kiddush at which the menu was identical to that at his Bar Mitzvah.

Fox brought members of his family to the President’s Residence, along with a book written by the president’s grandfather, which was now signed by the president who bears the same name as his grandfather.

A TRIBUTE gathering honoring the late Professor Reuven Feuerstein was held this week on the 10th anniversary of his passing. Feuerstein was a clinical and cognitive psychologist whose groundbreaking theory on structural cognitive modifiability helped countless children with intellectual and psychological disabilities overcome their difficulties and join mainstream society. He never gave up on any child. Among the many people who came to pay their respects, President Herzog described Feuerstein as one of the giants of his generation in the fields of psychology



PRESIDENT ISAAC HERZOG with Rabbi Samuel Fox and his wife, Miriam. (Courtesy President’s Office)

and education, recognized worldwide. “He was the kind of person for whom it was said that he was ahead of his time,” said Herzog.

Feuerstein left an indelible imprint on faith in the ability to enable children with intellectual problems to rise to a potential that neither they nor their families thought possible.

The Feuerstein Institute, which he founded, continues to build on his legacy. His son, Rabbi Dr. Refael Feuerstein, serves as president of the institute. He is also a co-chairman of the Tzohar Rabbinical Organization, which aims to bridge gaps between the Orthodox and secular sectors of Israeli society.

JERUSALEM WILL be the scene of several parades next week. At 3 p.m. on Sunday, Rabbi Yisroel Goldberg, the director of Chabad of Rehavia and Nahlaot, will lead a Lag B’Omer Parade that will march from the Gerard Behar Center on 11 Bezalel Street to Independence Park, where there will be a carnival with a variety of attractions. The event will be dedicated to the hostages, the reservists, and the IDF soldiers currently serving.

On Thursday afternoon, May 30, the annual Pride and Tolerance March,

organized by the Jerusalem Open House of the LGBTQ community, will take place in cooperation with the Hostages and Missing Families Forum. The slogan of the march is “Born to be Free.” The march, which always starts from the Liberty Bell Garden and ends at Independence Park, will include yellow flags this year. A dedicated group from the Hostage Family Forum will call for the return of all the hostages, and a group of fans of the Hapoel Jerusalem soccer club will call for the release of their fellow fan, Hersh Golberg-Polin. The Jerusalem Open House will distribute bracelets and call for the return of hostages, as well as for security, equality for all minority groups in Israel, and greater sensitivity towards the hostages and their families. Jonathan Valfer and Nilli Maderer, chairman and CEO, respectively, of the Jerusalem Open House, say that everyone has a moral obligation to stand with the families of the hostages.

Tom Barkai, who heads the Jerusalem branch of the Hostages Family Forum, said he was touched by the support demonstrated by members of the Jerusalem Open House.

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THE JERUSALEM POST

HATE

Continued from Page 13

and "amazing," as a protester wearing a shirt emblazoned with the face of Hamas Izzadin al-Qassam Brigades spokesman Abu Ubaida listened on.

Canada has become permissive of terrorist organizations, said Hillier, "thinking we're once removed" from the designs of Hamas, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, or Indian terrorist groups. Hillier said that he is not privy to current Canadian intelligence, but based on information in the public forum, he is concerned how Ottawa has ignored the operations of groups like Iran's IRGC.

"We have permitted them to potentially extend their tentacles in Canada, fundraising in Canada, and to shape what occurs in Canada," said Hillier. "And as we look at the demonstrations, they are too organized, too prepared, and too supported to be spontaneous things which occur or explode across the country."

As with Canada's southern neighbor, many of the protesters occupying college and university campuses are not students but professional activists.

"They can all afford to go out and live on the campuses. They got somebody who's going to pay for the food that they're ordering in while they are there," said Hillier, who also noted how activists who could give speeches at Parliament Hill one day could be inciting in Vancouver the next. Kates, whose organization Samidoun is allegedly a subsidiary for the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, led chants of "long live October 7" in Vancouver on April 29.

"Somebody is supporting them," said Hillier. "And whether it's Iran through the IRGC, or whether it's Qatar, or whether it's some other organization - I do not have all the details - this is not spontaneous. There is a structure to this, and there is financing."

Hillier described systematic apathy among Canadian leaders against both antisemitism and anti-Israel terrorism that is not present for other breeds of hatred.

"If one of our indigenous nations, men, women, or children, showed up at the University of Toronto and were prevented from entering because

they were indigenous, we would be in a tumultuous state, and rightly so," said Hillier. "If a black man showed up and tried to enter and was denied entry because he was black, we would be angry. Equally, if somebody showed up who espoused the fact that they were gay and were denied entry because they are gay, we would be apoplectic, and rightly so. And we should be exactly the same way with Jewish Canadians."

In contrast to the reaction when there was swastika graffiti in Toronto, or Hamas flags being waved at university encampments, "Look how, again, apoplectic the political leadership was when one Nazi flag was carried during the [2022 anti-COVID-19 mandates] truckers convoy. Yet we see the Hamas flag, which is a designated by this great country as a terrorist organization - not a murmur."

Many Canadian politicians had in the past spoken out against individual incidents and condemned the general trend of rising antisemitism and pro-terrorism, but "words mean nothing when you say those things and, on the other end, do something entirely different."

According to Hillier, "It doesn't mean anything when people use words to say, 'This is not our Canada.' Well, bull. This becomes our Canada if we don't take actions."

"In my world - and I lived it all my life as a soldier - action stops and bulls*** walks," said Hillier. "Actions speak loudly. Actions articulate your values. And actions articulate what you will or will not accept."

Not taking action is itself an action, which sends a message that Canada accepts such prejudice.

WHILE HILLIER said that there are many great elected leaders serving the nation, at every level and in every party he saw partisan vote counting and cynical gymnastic performances to avoid offending a segment of the voting population rather than advocate for the enforcement of law.

His warnings about the state of Canada have seen little response from politicians, but got "a massive response from the typically silent majority, who are frightened about what is happening to our nation and don't want it to continue."

"Where are the leaders being

in the synagogue and in the Jewish neighborhoods when they are under protest and when they are threatened and when they are fearful?" asked Hillier, referencing a series of protests that occurred in front of synagogues in Montreal and Toronto in March. "Where are the leaders going out to our synagogue services, and where are the leaders with their attorney-generals and with their ministers of public security and ministers who are responsible for police?"

"Where are they in ensuring that our police forces are enforcing the laws that are on the books right now and making sure that this kind of hatred is not only not acceptable in Canada, it's not tolerated in Canada."

As someone who spent his life in uniform to protect the rights of Canadians, Hillier said that public demonstrations should be enshrined, and if citizens wished to protest "Israel attacking in Gaza despite the horrible, brutal, barbarous actions of the 7 October massacre, that's their right in our great nation. That's part of freedom of speech." However, it was unlawful and unacceptable when demonstrations effectively turned into a pro-Hamas rally calling to spread intifada and "continue with the murder of Jews."

Hillier said that there are federal and provincial laws that need to be enforced, and that if they are not, rule of law will collapse.

"I want to see our police forces enforce the laws that we have on our books, the laws against hatred, the laws against trespassing, and the laws against destruction," said Hillier. The enforcement of law is "why we in Canada have such a law-abiding population. And if we start showing Canadians that we're not going to do that, those kinds of things are going to be rethought by Canadians who will say, 'Well, maybe we cannot depend on police forces to help us, and defend ourselves.'"

Canada is pursuing extensive online hate speech laws, but Hillier said that the current laws have to be enforced in the interim.

"I would ask the courts to take a look at people who are actually breaking those hate laws and say, 'There are certain things we are going to do to prevent you from doing that.' One is we'll put you on a no-flight list," sug-

gested Hillier. "We're going to go after your sources of financing, and we're going to go after your bank accounts, and we're going to make sure that if you're espousing hatred, you're going to pay a huge penalty for that."

Hillier called for the IRGC to be officially designated as a terrorist organization. Currently, the IRGC's Quds Force is on Canada's list of terrorist entities. Intelligence and police forces needed to crack down and diminish the organization's operation and fundraising to zero.

CANADA HAS not just encouraged pro-terrorist rhetoric to proliferate at home, but Hillier said that the Canadian Parliament's March 19 passage of a nonbinding motion to cease arms trade with Israel and correspondent March 20 policy change encourages Hamas, even if there was no practical effect.

"It immediately encourages them by saying, 'Okay, Canada is going to hammer Israel and they're on our side and therefore keep encouraging us,'" said Hillier. "And that might not be what was intended, but that sure is the consequence from that."

While there was no practical effect on Israel, because Canada exported little in the way of defense materials to Israel, the decision could backfire because Israeli weapon systems could be denied to Canada for purchase in the future, endangering Canadian soldiers.

The Canadian reaction to Israel's military operations, based on the general's assessment of publicly available materials, did not understand the challenges of such a campaign.

"Any fight where there are civilians around, particularly if they're being used as a [human] shield in many ways by one side, is going to cause the deaths of civilians who are innocent. And that's tragic and that's brutal," said Hillier.

"When the Allies were getting ready to invade Normandy and France and destroy Nazi Germany, they wanted to isolate the Normandy Peninsula - they wanted to isolate that coast. So they bombed all the railway lines and the road centers and the bridges for a solid month. With their strategic and tactical air forces, they caused the deaths of 9,000 innocent French civilians during that month alone. And against

that measurement, what Israel is doing has been more disciplined than any other military action that I know of."

Citing the Battle of Falluja in Iraq and the Battle of Stalingrad, Hillier said the regrettable consequence of warfare is civilian deaths.

"This is a tragic consequence of fighting," said Hillier, who was critical of Hamas casualty counts. "But if an enemy chooses to hide behind a population, there are going to be innocent deaths, and they simply cannot be avoided. The best way to avoid them now: Hamas, lay your weapons down. Surrender. Release those hostages. The shooting will stop in a heartbeat."

The 400,000 Jewish Canadians are not responsible for dropping bombs in Gaza, said Hillier. "They are being hated because they are Jews."

The officer added that "they're being prejudiced against. They're being hated, and they're not being supported."

"The silent majority in many countries, and I know here in Canada, has been silent too long now, and we need that majority of the population to make their voices and their actions heard," said Hillier. "And if their action is only to look at their vote on the ballots and determine who has been leading our country and on the side of right, then do that."

The silent majority has to make its voice heard to prevent the backward slide away from the country that they wish to live in. Hillier called for leaders to understand the responsibility of their role in society.

"Hold yourself accountable when you look in the mirror in the morning," said Hillier. "Rise above the partisan political fray. Be on the side of right."

RETREAT

Continued from Page 14

him?" Rob told the Post. "That's when we thought, well, maybe we could use our house in Safed and make a real, more comprehensive program, where we can have a tailor-made program for soldiers."

For Jen, the idea came after witnessing nonreligious soldiers serving in Gaza donning tefillin and tzitzit for prayer.

"[The soldiers] were experiencing this connection to

God," Jen remembers discussing with her husband. "I said maybe we should open up a yeshiva for nonreligious people, just so they can taste the beauty of Judaism. Then Rob said that if we're going to really aim it for soldiers, it also has to be pampering. It can't be that soldiers return from war and they're going to sit and learn. They need something soft and gentle."

"It's such comfort that two years ago [when we purchased the house], God was already preparing everything for right now. It was going to be Beit Binyamin."

This idea soon blossomed to include not only soldiers but all those affected in some way by the war, whether workers with United Hatzalah or ZAKA, or displaced families from the North or South, to provide them with a place to retreat and recuperate from the traumas of the past few months.

After months of preplanned construction work, the house is almost fully operational and has begun receiving its first groups. Those who come and stay can take part in therapy sessions in all different forms, spend some time learning Torah, join tours of Safed and the surrounding area, and enjoy a good barbecue.

"What people are going through, we probably need 20 of these homes," Rob ponders. "The amazing thing is because we did all this work beforehand, we are ready to go. It'll just be three or four days to get away from the world and concentrate on healing. We're going to bring in top therapists and educators, and it is meant to be pampering. Unfortunately, there's a big need. A lot of soldiers need it."

The Airleys are currently in the US fundraising to really kick-start operations at Beit Binyamin and open its doors to all those who need their help.

Toldot, the Torah portion read on that fateful Shabbat back in November, ends with the famous tale of Jacob donning Esau's clothes and receiving the blessing from a near-blind Isaac.

"So God give thee of the dew of heaven, and of the fat places of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine" (Genesis 27:28).

For Jen, the deep and burning love that her son felt for the land, and his sacrifice in protecting it and the Jewish people, are something that should be

conveyed now more than ever. "I always feel that our soldiers are trained by King David," she said. "They are the singers, the dancers, the lovers, and the fierce warriors and fighters who have God on the tip of their tongues. They are brave and strong and fierce, but also children who just sing and dance, and sing God's praises, so King David should keep watching over all our soldiers."

For more information, visit <https://beitbinyamin.org/> or <https://causmatch.com/BeitBinyamin>

STATESMAN

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impressively across the broken Middle East, the regime remains in a state of unprecedented disarray at home. Khamenei's mediocrities' mismanagement of the economy is producing seething discontent across a wide swathe of society. This is reflected in the very low participation in elections, the nationwide protests of 2022-23, and the evidence of celebrations of Raisi's and foreign minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian's demise.

The elevation of the hardliners has not led to renewed fervor on the part of the regime, but rather to the entrenchment of an elite determined to preserve the Islamic Republic at all costs because it owes its financial and political power to the regime's continuation. A Tehran-based analyst whom I spoke to estimated that this elite probably accounts for no more than 10-15% of the Iranian population.

This adds up to a regime that is externally successfully aggressive, and yet internally deeply vulnerable. If those elements opposed to the Islamic Republic's advance wanted to develop a strategy to exploit this internal weakness, the direction, the targets, and the way forward are very clear.

The loss of Ebrahim Raisi, the eminently dispensable statesman, makes very little difference either way to this. But the question of whether the regime's opponents formulate such a strategy, or fail to do so, remains the single most important variable in considering the future of the Iranian regime and, given its external successes, possibly also of the region as a whole.

Liberal Jews face Israel relationship head-on



EDITOR'S NOTES
• By ZVIKA KLEIN

The sentiments of progressive American Jews towards Israel have been in flux, especially since the traumatic events of October 7, 2023. This tragic day deepened existing divides and highlighted the intricate interplay of identity, loyalty, and political affiliation within the Jewish community.

Lately, I've been dwelling on the tremendous sense of betrayal but also on a reassessment of liberal Jews in America. Here are a few examples of some fascinating discussions I've had about the relationship between progressive Judaism in the Diaspora and Israel.

RABBI DEBORAH WAXMAN, Ph.D., president of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, described the tension that has been rippling through her community. "Our students are learning the exceptional level of care and attention necessary to navigate these difficult conversations," she explained, highlighting the Reconstructionist movement's dedication to creating a diverse, covenantal community that could handle difficult conversations and endure times of hardship.

This commitment to diversity dates back to the movement's founder, Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan, who believed in Israel's right to exist but also emphasized the importance of engaging with various perspectives on Zionism and Jewish identity.

Waxman shared this month how the tragic events of October 7 had brought about a new level of urgency and introspection within the movement. She recounted

the professionally facilitated workshops and story-sharing sessions implemented to help students navigate the heart-breaking time.

"This approach is certainly more complicated than it would be to simply throw out anyone who isn't 100% aligned with our movement on all things. It means everyone is uncomfortable at least some of the time," she admitted. The goal, however, has been to foster a sense of community and teach students the importance of maintaining relationships through difficult conversations.

RABBI HAIM O. RECHNITZER of Temple Israel in Marion, Ohio, has an approach that contrasts sharply with the stark observations of Waxman. On May 4, 2024, Reznitzer delivered a sermon in which he described how the growing anti-Zionist sentiment among progressive Jews is a symptom of a deeper problem.

"Declarations such as 'I am an anti-Zionist Jew'... signify a moral failure precisely where perceived ethical actions are taken," he argued. According to Reznitzer, the progressive Jewish education system had neglected to instill a comprehensive understanding of Jewish religious and cultural diversity.

Instead, it fostered a simplistic worldview that failed to grasp the historical and emotional complexities of Zionism and Jewish identity. "We deconstructed our canonic texts," he noted, "but practicing a critique of the tradition has not translated into critical self-examination."

Reznitzer's critique highlights the need for a more



PHILOSOPHY STUDENT Skyler Sieradzky, 21 (left), holds an Israeli flag as pro-Palestinian protesters stage a sit-in on the urban campus of George Washington University in Washington, DC in April. (Maria Danilova/AFP)

nuanced understanding of Jewish identity, one that acknowledged the diverse experiences and histories that shaped it. He lamented that the commitment to universal values within progressive Judaism often came at the expense of particularistic expressions of Jewish identity.

"The simplified division between indigenous people and colonizers somehow undermines or bluntly ignores the fact that the Jews have returned to their motherland, out of which they were violently expelled and barred by gentle rulers from resettling for over two millennia," he pointed out, emphasizing the historical connection of Jews to the Land of Israel.

RABBI BENJAMIN DAVID of Reform Congregation Keneseth Israel echoed this call for deeper introspection. On May 3, 2024, David drew on the symbolism of the tent, a recurrent motif in Jewish tradition, to describe the communal and personal spaces where Jews sought solace and understanding.

"The tent is a Jewish symbol of all of it... a place of community, a place of family, a place of remembrance," he reflected. David was troubled by the rise of anti-Israel protests, which he viewed as an erosion of the very spaces that should foster unity and reflection. "We have watched protests spread across this great nation... with calls for intifada and an end to Israel outright," he lamented.

For him, the tent represented not just physical shelter, but a symbolic space where Jews could grapple with their identities and values in safety and solidarity.

David's reflections on the tent underscored the importance of maintaining communal spaces where difficult conversations could occur. He emphasized the need for empathy and understanding, even in profound disagreements.

"Here, in our Tent of Meeting, we feel safe in this frenzied world. Here we can let our shoulders down and breathe a bit easier; the weight of worry is lifted a bit; the stress of the

impossible world out there is put on hold for a minute," he explained, drawing a parallel between the biblical tent and modern Jewish communal spaces.

RABBI ELLIOT J. COSGROVE, Ph.D. of the Park Avenue Synagogue, a member of the Conservative Movement, offered a perspective grounded in moral clarity. In the wake of the October 7 attacks, he found his convictions about Israel's right to self-defense only strengthened.

"Give me back the hostages, and then we can talk," he asserted, emphasizing the necessity of addressing immediate threats to Israeli lives.

Cosgrove was acutely aware of the shifting global opinion against Israel but remained steadfast in his support. "I stand by Israel's right to self-determination and self-defense," he declared. For him, engaging with those who held different views was crucial to bridging divides and reaffirming shared humanity. "A well-placed question will challenge... and build dialogue and trust," he advised, underscoring the importance of respectful, thoughtful engagement even in the face of profound disagreements.

ASHIRA BOXMAN, a fourth-year rabbinical student at Hebrew Union College in New York, delivered a powerful sermon reflecting the Jewish community's unity and diversity. In February, she invoked the image of thousands of Israelites standing together at the foot of Mount Sinai, emphasizing the sacred purpose and unity among the diverse tribes of Israel.

This unity, she noted, was mirrored in the massive gathering at the march for Israel on November 14, 2023. "Being surrounded by close

to 200,000 Jewish people coming from all four corners of the earth and from every political and religious spectrum shook me to my core," she said, describing the profound emotional impact of witnessing such solidarity.

Boxman highlighted the unique strength of unity without uniformity, urging the community to reflect on why it often takes tragedy to unite people.

In her sermon, she questioned the timing of this unity, asking, "Why did it take a massacre of Jews, the deadliest day since the Holocaust, for Jews to bring this many Jews together? And why hasn't it happened sooner?" She found wisdom in the Torah portion of Parashat Mishpatim, contemplating how the story might have unfolded differently if Moses had included Aaron and his sons at the summit of Mount Sinai. This inclusion, she suggested, could have led to a stronger, more united community.

Boxman critiqued the Reform movement's focus on *tikkun olam*, or repairing the world, at the expense of other critical Jewish values such as *ahavat Yisrael*, the love for fellow Jews. "We have forgotten that *ahavat Yisrael*, the love of our people, Israel, is inextricable from *tikkun olam*," she asserted, emphasizing the need to balance universal obligations with particularistic ones.

She called for a renewed appreciation of the diverse ways Jews practice Judaism, encouraging leaders to engage with different perspectives respectfully. "We must begin by modeling appreciation for the diverse ways Jews practice Judaism. When we are confident in who we are and what we believe, we do not need to fear or shy away from those who perform ritual and wor-

ship differently," she stated.

Her sermon concluded with a heartfelt prayer for strength, kindness and understanding, urging the community to embrace differences and work together towards a common purpose. "May we find strength to embrace difference, kindness to transcend judgment, and understanding to replace assumptions," she prayed.

FORMER MK TEHLA FRIEDMAN wrote a beautiful post earlier this week on Facebook about this issue. She shared that she was at a picturesque site in New York state with Jewish participants from the US, Europe, and Israel who had gathered for a social leadership seminar sponsored by the Schusterman Foundation. The discussions focused on the impact of October 7 on their lives, evoking strong emotions and reflections. Despite the lack of fear in the streets of New York, she explained that the sense of upheaval was palpable among the group.

Friedman wrote that this moment of crisis also presents an opportunity for renewed connection. The realization that "we are one is becoming more evident as Jewish-American individualism shows cracks and the arrogance of Israeli self-reliance wanes. Despite the existential uncertainty, the sense of collective identity is strengthening. This is a moment that reminds us of the strategic importance of unity," she said.

"There is a very frightening moment here of existential uncertainty and a foggy future for Jews, but also of opportunity for renewed connection," one participant noted, capturing the essence of the seminar's discussions.

Let's hope some of us internalize and implement some of these insights - we need it.

The Hague's moral haze



MY WORD
• By LIAT COLLINS

A lawfare bombshell can make a powerful and shocking impact. That was clear from the decision announced by International Criminal Court Chief Prosecutor Karim Khan on May 20. In an abominable act of moral equivalence, Khan arrested that he would seek arrest warrants for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defense Minister Yoav Gallant on charges of crimes against humanity, along with warrants for Hamas leaders Yahya Sinwar, Ismail Haniyeh, and Mohammed Deif - the arch-terrorists behind the October 7 invasion and mega-atrocity.

Adding insult to a very real injury, Khan ignored standard procedures - as well as evidence - and made his initial declaration during an interview on CNN. Perhaps it was fitting that the international prosecutor should first turn to the media. If you're going to hold a show trial, put on a show.

With so much attention on Khan for issuing the first-ever warrants of arrest for a leader of a Western, democratic state, another abomination slipped under the radar. News of the death of Iranian president Ebrahim Raisi in a helicopter crash on Sunday met with a telling reception. The United Nations Security Council and the International Atomic Energy Agency each held a minute's silence for the late president.

The minute's silence should have given the members of the international community pause for thought - what had he done to earn his nickname "The Butcher of Tehran"? The moment's silence would have been better employed to

remember Mahsa (Jina) Amini, killed by the Iranian regime for not wearing her hijab correctly.

When UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres extended "sincere condolences to the people and government of Iran," Iranian dissidents who had fled the regime and those bravely fighting for their rights at home - women's rights, LGBTQ rights, minority rights - did not join in.

To add to the UN farce, the Security Council only last week - seven months after the horrors of October 7 - finally held a discussion on the fate of the more than 100 hostages but failed to make any declaration or resolution. That might ruin the Palestinian narrative, that they are the victims, not the perpetrators, of October 7. The more than 1,200 Israeli victims - those of all ages burned to death, beheaded, mutilated, raped, or abducted - are not of concern to the UN.

How safe do you feel knowing that the IAEA, the body entrusted with overseeing nuclear capabilities, officially mourns the president of a state on the threshold of a nuclear breakout, when his country calls to wipe Israel off the face of the Earth, and which just last month launched a barrage of hundreds of missiles and killer drones on the Jewish state?

Keep in mind that Iran is also the main sponsor of Hamas, Hezbollah, and other terrorist organizations - including the Houthis, who threaten international shipping and launch attacks on "moderate" Arab states. Iranian weapons are employed by Russia against Ukrainians.

The European Union also offered "its condolences" for

the death of Raisi and foreign minister Hussein Amir Abdollahian "in the tragic helicopter crash on Sunday."

THE DOUBLE standards and hypocrisy cry out to the heavens (where Raisi has no place). A dotted line connects the response of the international community to the death of the Iranian butcher and the pronouncement by Khan, a repugnant attempt at creating a false symmetry between Israel and Hamas, an acknowledged terrorist organization.

Khan, an Ahmadi Muslim, would do well to consult with members of that community in Israel, the only country in the Middle East where the sect has religious freedom and its own mosque. Actually, Khan would do well to review the facts before instructing the jury how to act.

Instead, he relied on Hamas figures and disinformation that even the UN has discredited. Hamas itself and the UN recently halved the numbers of women and children killed by Israel during the war in Gaza. The 7,797 children (under the age of 18) includes male teens who were likely combatants.

"This is not a genocide," as US President Joe Biden stated. It is the consequence of a war forced on Israel, and a low ratio of civilian casualties when compared to the numbers killed in warfare by Western armies and NATO. While Israel makes every effort to avoid civilian casualties, Hamas deliberately uses human shields.

As for the charges of systematically starving the Palestinians in Gaza, the data tells a different story. It is not Israel that is preventing aid from reaching Gazans but the Hamas regime.

A look at the figures on the site of COGAT, Israel's Coordination of Government Activi-

ties in the Territories, on May 20 showed that the on previous day alone (May 19), 422 aid trucks were transferred to the Gaza Strip via various Israeli aid routes including the Ashdod port, the Erez crossing, and JLOTS (the maritime and floating pier route); 45 pallets containing tens of thousands of packages of aid were air-dropped into Gaza; there are eight operational field hospitals; 26 bakeries are currently operational in Gaza, "providing close to five million bread loaves, rolls, and pita breads daily"; two tankers of fuel designated for the operation of essential infrastructure entered Gaza on May 19; and two out of three water pipelines from Israel to Gaza were fully operational.

It's not clear if any of the food and aid is reaching the hostages who are still alive. Israel last week retrieved the bodies of four Israelis from Gaza. The International Committee of the Red Cross has failed to see any of the captives being held by Hamas.

No wonder Israelis are skeptical about the value of international bodies professing to protect Western values.

As journalist Melanie Phillips put it: "Doubtless under enormous pressure from both the UN and his former chums in Britain's radical barrister sets, Khan's preposterous move is part of the agenda for Israel's destruction through a pincer movement of genocidal terror, brainwashed street insurrection, and 'human rights' lawfare. The beneficiary will be Hamas; the victims will be Israel, the rule of law, and civilization itself."

In a world that hasn't yet fully internalized the threat of global jihad, reactions were mixed. Germany and the UK condemned the ICC prosecutor's false symmetry between



HAMAS SUPPORTERS protest at the headquarters of the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague, Netherlands, soon after the Gaza war was launched in October, last year. (Piroschka van de Wouw/Reuters)

Israel and Hamas, while the French Foreign Ministry supported the court in The Hague. I noticed, by the way, the lack of campus protests and rallies over the deadly events in the pro-independence struggle in the French colony of New Caledonia.

It's no wonder that after the initial shock of Khan's announcement, Israelis reacted with derision. Khan, in fact, can take credit for one success. In the extremely divided political system, opposition and coalition parliamentarians were united in their condemnation of the ICC. Even opposition leader Yair Lapid called combining arrest warrants for Netanyahu and Gallant with those of the Hamas terrorist leaders "unforgivable." Israel will "not accept a comparison to Hamas," he said.

President Isaac Herzog stated

on X: "The announcement of the prosecutor at the ICC is beyond outrageous, and shows the extent to which the international judicial system is in danger of collapsing. Taken in bad faith, this one-sided move represents a unilateral political step that emboldens terrorists around the world and violates all the basic rules of the court according to the principle of complementarity and other legal norms."

In a White House statement, Biden also used the word "outrageous" to describe Khan's decision, adding: "And let me be clear: Whatever this prosecutor might imply, there is no equivalence - none - between Israel and Hamas. We will always stand with Israel against threats to its security."

But Biden is guilty of giving out dangerous double messages to US friends and foes,

one minute declaring unwavering support for Israel as its democratic ally, and the next withholding arms; claiming support to bring the hostages home, and then limiting the means available to Israel to apply pressure on Hamas; wanting an end to the war, but drawing it out by endless supplies of aid and fuel to the Hamas regime.

Earlier this month, following the US threats to restrict arms deliveries if the IDF continued with an offensive in Rafah, still a Hamas stronghold, Netanyahu pledged that Israel if necessary would stand alone and "fight with our fingernails." There are evidently those now who want to extract those fingernails.

Khan wanted to leave his mark. And he has. It's a dark, bloody bruise. A stain on history. *