

TUESDAY, JUNE 18, 2024 ■ 12 SIVAN, 5784



## Bring them home

Yoram Metzger, age 80, kidnapped from Kibbutz Nir Oz and killed in captivity. Body held by Hamas

## A global fight

The Diaspora must lead in fighting antisemitism  
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## Comedy in Jerusalem

American funnyman Modi provides a respite of laughter  
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## US warns Israel not to escalate Hezbollah tensions as envoy visits

• By TOVAH LAZAROFF

The United States warned Israel not to escalate the IDF-Hezbollah war as it sought diplomatic solutions to the violence on Israel's southern and northern borders.

"The message to Israel is, don't do anything in the North," US State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller said, as US President Joe Biden's special envoy Amos Hochstein visited Israel on Monday, with plans to head to Lebanon on Tuesday.

"We don't want to see escalation at all in the North. We've made that clear to the Government of Israel," Miller said.

He noted that Hezbollah attacks from southern Lebanon against Israel were "untenable," as was the situation of the Lebanese civilians living through the consequences of the cross-border violence.

"So, it is a situation that has to be resolved. But our preference is that it be resolved diplomatically and that has been Israel's preference, they have stated that publicly and privately," he said.

US National Security Communications Adviser John Kirby told reporters in Washington that the White House didn't want to see a second front in northern Israel.

"We are concerned about it," he said, adding that this is why Hochstein is in the region. "If we weren't concerned about it, we would not have sent Amos over there," he added.

Hochstein met with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, President Isaac Herzog, Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, and National Unity Party head Benny Gantz.

Gallant's office said that the defense minister had "provided a situational assessment of developments on Israel's northern border, emphasizing the daily attacks conducted by Hezbollah against Israel's communities and detailing the IDF's efforts to thwart Hezbollah terrorists and infrastructure."

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PEOPLE PROTEST during an anti-government rally calling for early elections in front of the Knesset, yesterday. (Menahem Kahana/AFP via Getty Images)

## 'Why raise a family here when hostages aren't brought home?'

Young relatives of hostages fear for Israel's future

• By EVE YOUNG

The State of Israel is not the kind of country in which it makes sense to have children and start a family as long as people are taken hostage and not brought home, said multiple family members of hostages held by Hamas.

They spoke Monday afternoon as thousands flocked to and gathered in Jerusalem to call on the government to do everything it could to bring the hostages home and condemn it for not doing enough.

The family members, who are part of "Hasamba," an organization of young family members of the Hostages and Missing Families Forum, spoke at a conference on impacting public opinion in wartime held jointly by the Hostage Family Forum and additional partners such as Sderot.

As young people, the members of Hasamba are facing "the question of if and where to start families," said Gil Dickmann, the cousin of hostage Carmel Gat. "We won't do this in a place where hostages are not brought home," he explained.

Hasamba was founded on the 200th day of captivity for those held hostage by Hamas. It was founded when Ella Ben Ami, daughter of hostage Ohad Ben Ami and Raz Ben Ami, who was released in the November deal, noticed that while the 100-day mark had brought many thousands of Israelis out to rallies for the hostages, the 200th day had not.

Ben Ami asked herself how

this could be, and organized a protest installation. At the installation, she looked around and realized that the people who were with her were all younger family members.

"I realized the adults were exhausted," she said, explaining that soon after the installation, those involved decided to form Hasamba. The oldest member of the group is 32.

Mor Korngold said he feels his parents are worn out and no longer able to cry out for his brother Tal Shoham, who is in Hamas captivity. It falls to him to do this now, in part through his work with the young organization.

The members of the organization feel that as young people fighting for the release of the hostages, they are fighting for the future of the country, and refuse to give up on the future.

"We understood that how we [fight for the hostages] will impact the future of the state," said Yarden Gonen, sister of hostage Romi Gonen.

One element of how the group is fighting for the hostages is by not attempting to become spokespeople or PR professionals, but simply by being themselves – people deeply impacted by the well-being of the hostages and the status of a hostage deal.

"I try to remind people that when discussing a deal, they are talking about human life," said Korngold. "I ask them to remember Naveh and Yahel," he said, naming his niece and nephew who

are growing up without their father, Tal.

While they are not PR professionals, many members of the organization have become the de-facto faces of the fight for the hostages. Gonen recently made waves in a media appearance that ended in the firing of political commentator Briahna Joy Gray from *The Hill*.

Gray was widely criticized online before being fired after her treatment of Gonen and appearing to roll her eyes after Gonen asked her to believe all women about experiencing sex offenses, in an interview earlier this month that went viral.

Gonen ended up on the show after seeing Gray in multiple interviews doubting the testimonies and evidence of women who had been sexually assaulted by Hamas. She asked to be interviewed by Gray so that she could confront her about believing women's testimonies, she recounted.

"I can't believe it blew up the way it did," Gonen commented on the incident and subsequent firing.

While Gonen said she isn't in favor of firing people, she is in favor of organizations setting limits. "I've never been spoken to [the way Gray spoke to me] in any other interview," she said.

"Karma is a b\*\*\*\*," she summed up.

Ben Ami closed the panel by calling on Israelis to wake up.

"Speak up and make a difference," she told the audience. "You have the power."

## Netanyahu disbands war cabinet in wake of Gantz's departure

• By ELIAV BREUER, TOVAH LAZAROFF and Jerusalem Post Staff

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu dissolved the war cabinet on Sunday in an attempt to defuse demands by the far Right members of his coalition to be included in what has been a small forum that has charted the direction of the Gaza war since October 7.

The war cabinet, which served as an alternative forum to the security cabinet, was created to satisfy the demands of National Unity party head Benny Gantz, who made it a requirement for entry into a national unity government that was formed at the start of the war.

"The cabinet was in the coalition agreement with Gantz at his request," Netanyahu reportedly told the security cabinet. "As soon as Gantz left – there was no need for a cabinet anymore," the prime minister explained.

Instead, the statutory security cabinet will convene at a higher frequency, and Netanyahu will also hold ad-hoc "security consultations" when necessary, a spokesperson for the Prime Minister's Office said.

The move is seen by most observers as Netanyahu's strategy of deflecting the demand by National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir (Otzma Yehudit) and Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich (the Religious Zionist Party) to be added to the war cabinet.

Both Ben-Gvir and Smotrich are members of the



PRIME MINISTER Benjamin Netanyahu keeps far-right ministers out of the war cabinet by abolishing it. (Tomer Appelbaum/Haaretz)

larger security cabinet, and the prime minister had previously refrained from bringing some sensitive information to the security cabinet out of fear of leaks. It remains to be seen how the new mechanism will operate in this regard.

Ben-Gvir's and Smotrich's hardline views on Palestinians and their desire to reoccupy Gaza for Jewish settlement make them highly controversial politicians in the international arena.

It was hoped that a war cabinet, which bypassed them, would give greater international legitimacy to Israel's decisions regarding the war, and that it would also signal an intention for moderation. Further, domestic concerns had already been raised even prior to the war about the presence of the two politicians in the security cabinet.

### ISRAEL AT WAR



**Knesset set to start debate on haredi draft bill, Page 4**

**Antisemites find common cause at failed Detroit rally, Page 5**

Smotrich and Ben-Gvir both criticized the war cabinet in recent months, arguing that it was not acting aggressively enough against Hamas in Gaza and against Hezbollah on Israel's northern border.

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## Implications of war cabinet closure

### ANALYSIS

• By ELIAV BREUER

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's decision to dissolve Israel's war cabinet raises several questions about the management of the war against Hamas from now on.

The war cabinet, which was also known as the "small cabinet," was authorized to make day-to-day decisions regarding the war while bringing broader policy decisions to the larger, statutory security cabinet.

In response to a query by *The Jerusalem Post*, a spokesperson for the Prime Minister's Office said that the security cabinet will now be convened at a higher frequency. In addition, Netanyahu will hold ad-hoc "security consultations" on specific matters when necessary.

The spokesperson did not answer a number of follow-up questions, including what the division of responsibilities will be between the security cabinet and these "consultations."

Furthermore, the spokesperson did not address the statutory status of these consultations, such as whether they will be transcribed in an official protocol like the now-defunct war cabinet did. They also did not specify who would participate in these consultations.

The deliberations will likely serve two purposes: The first will be to avoid having to convene the security cabinet over minor decisions, and the second will be to keep sensitive information away from the far

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### GALLANT AND THE FRENCH:

## Is pique the way to make policy?

### ANALYSIS

• By HERB KEINON

While the heart understands why Defense Minister Yoav Gallant slammed France in an unusual statement on Friday, the mind questions the wisdom of the move.

Or, as a quote attributed to Chinese philosopher Confucius says, "When anger rises, think of the consequences."

On Friday, Gallant took a page out of Foreign Minister Israel Katz's playbook

and forcefully, publicly, and undiplomatically slammed the French. Katz has been doing this for weeks to other countries like Spain, Norway, and Ireland whose ministers had made egregious comments regarding Israel and who have recognized a Palestinian state.

Gallant, however, took the tactic up a notch, saying that as a result of French hostility, the country has ruled itself out as an actor trying to defuse the situation in Lebanon.

"As we fight a just war, defending our people, France has adopted hostile policies against Israel," he said on Friday. "In doing so, France ignores the atrocities com-



YOAV GALLANT (Marc Israel Sellem/The Jerusalem Post)

mitted by Hamas against Israeli children, women, and men. Israel will not be a party to the trilateral framework

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## IDF says half of Hamas forces in Rafah decimated, 200 tunnel shafts destroyed

Military expects to gain full control of heaviest tunnel area in Gaza within weeks

• By YONAH JEREMY BOB

The IDF's Division 162 has defeated half of Hamas's battalions in Rafah, including killing at least 550 terrorists, as well as destroying around 200 tunnel shafts, and eliminating the terror group's last major rocket inventory, the army said on Monday.

Further, the IDF said that within a couple of weeks, it would likely be in control of all of Rafah and that the final battles with the remaining two Hamas battalions in parts of Tel al-Sultan and the eastern part of Shabura are

already underway.

In addition, the military said the tunnel network in Rafah, especially near the Philadelphia Corridor with Egypt, has been found to be even more complex than those found in Khan Yunis, Jabalya, and the military quarter of Gaza City.

The IDF says Division 162, commanded by Brig.-Gen. Itzik Cohen has already achieved operational control over 60-70% of all of Rafah with all of the 1.4 million or so civilians having long fled



IDF TROOPS operate in the Gaza Strip yesterday. (IDF)

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# What a BBC article reveals about Israel's challenges in Lebanon

## ANALYSIS

• By SETH J. FRANTZMAN

An article published by the BBC on Saturday can shed some light on the town of Alma al-Shaab – sometimes spelled “Aalma El Chaeb” – located across the border from the Israeli community of Hanita, which has been a frequent target of Hezbollah attacks.

Alma al-Shaab is a Christian village and shares a similar name with Ayta ash-Shaab, a different town located 17 km. to the east, which is a frequent target of IDF strikes due to Hezbollah's presence.

The article is titled “Why 800 people fled a sun-kissed Mediterranean village,” and is written by Ali Abbas Ahmadi. “Why, why us?” asks Milad Eid, a resident of the village. “An hour earlier, he was dousing a fire at a house that had been hit by an Israeli missile. While he was there, a bomb struck another one,” reads the article.

It sketches out a story of a town whose residents had to flee due to the conflict between Hezbollah and Israel. Since October 8, Hezbollah has launched thousands of rockets, missiles, and drones at Israel in support of Hamas after the attacks on October 7. This has plunged the poor people of the border villages of Lebanon into a war zone.

These are people who have no say in the fact Hezbollah uses their lands to hide weapons. Hezbollah has a massive arsenal of 150,000 rockets, it has missiles and drones and effectively functions as an army – an army large enough and similar enough to that of other established states.

However, it is also a terrorist group. The international community has long tolerated Hezbollah's illegal role in hijacking Lebanon, the same way it tolerated Hamas taking over Gaza. One conclusion could be that the international community recognizes



A CAR belonging to a press crew burns at the site where Reuters videojournalist Issam Abdallah was killed and six others were wounded last October, when missiles fired from the direction of Israel struck them, in Alma al-Shaab. (Thaier Al-Sudani/Reuters)

some sort of benefit to having these groups growing in power on Israel's borders. Instead of focusing on trying to curtail them, some see them as helpful proxies.

Yet these groups have brought destruction to Gaza and Lebanon. IDF Spokesman R-Adm. Daniel Hagari warned on Sunday, “Hezbollah's increasing aggression is bringing us to the brink of what could be a wider escalation – one that could have devastating consequences for Lebanon and the entire region... Israel must defend the people of Israel. We will fulfill that duty – at all costs.”

Israel, however, will face an uphill battle in Lebanon, not only because of Hezbollah but also because of global media coverage and the international community, which will oppose Israel launching any kind of larger war in the North. Meaning, that it is acceptable for Hezbollah to launch 4,000 rockets at Israel in eight months and force the

evacuation of thousands from their homes, but not to go to war over it.

According to the BBC report, around 800 people fled this small Christian town. “Nobody knows why they are attacking our houses,” Eid says. “It's not our war.”

Eid is correct; it is not his war. Hezbollah has hijacked this landscape; its actions in southern Lebanon have harmed Christian villages like Eid's, as well as many others belonging to various groups, such as Shi'ites, who live in southern Lebanon.

And yet any Israeli action in this area is likely to come in for global critique because the cards are stacked against Jerusalem. The BBC article, for instance, notes that the village's “closeness to the border has seen it heavily targeted by Israeli forces over the past nine months.” The reason why it was targeted is absent.

This approach mirrors the one used towards Hamas's presence in Gaza. Hamas's

presence in hospitals, schools, and tunnels under civilian homes is rarely critiqued or discussed the way it needs to be on the international stage.

Hezbollah and Hamas both exploit the civilian landscape, though southern Lebanon is different than Gaza because it is less urban and the towns are more spread out.

The BBC report says that by May 2024 the village had been “hit 188 times,” according to the Beirut Urban Lab, a research center. There is no context or reason given for these hits either. The IDF says it targets Hezbollah fighters and infrastructure and retaliates to attacks on army bases in the North. Still, some top Lebanese officials accused it of “implementing scorched earth tactics to make the whole area uninhabitable,” the article says.

This is how these stories are reported: There are the Israeli claims, followed by the claims of the anti-Israel voices, with no due diligence to find out

which is closer to the truth. The fact that Hezbollah has used these areas to attack is precisely why they are targeted.

The BBC report nearly gets at the truth. “The villagers the BBC spoke to were reluctant to discuss whether Hezbollah or other armed groups were using Alma al-Shaab to attack Israel. One hinted that locals had unsuccessfully tried to stop fighters from using their land.” The article says that 10 houses have been destroyed in the village – does this mean that Hezbollah sought to enter this Christian village and use it as cover? This would be an extreme violation of the rights of these people.

Where is the UN? Where are the other observers?

This report is symbolic in that it almost gets at the truth but refuses to fully uncover how Hezbollah has destroyed the lives of villages like this one. The illegal terrorist group has harmed these beautiful areas by using them in the war on Israel, a fact that the international community conveniently ignores. It doesn't send observers or investigate the claims and counter-claims.

Instead, what we end up with is claims that Israel is targeting civilian homes, with no deeper investigation as to why, or into Hezbollah's presence. Did it enter this area when civilians left, exploiting it? Or did it already use the village? Why is Hezbollah using this Christian village, if it is, and to what extent is it doing so?

We will likely never know the answers, because if and when a war comes, these areas will continue to be targeted. In the end, all the civilian homes that are damaged will go into one large list, without any reference to whether the homes were used by Hezbollah. This is how terrorist groups operate; they make sure that they exploit the civilian landscape to benefit from it. This is the uphill battle Israel faces.

## NORWAY WARNS:

# PA on verge of collapse as Israel seeks sanctions

• By TOVAH LAZAROFF

Norway warned that the Palestinian Authority was on the verge of financial collapse, as Israel's security cabinet sought to level additional economic sanctions against it.

“The situation is extremely dire. The Palestinian Authority, with whom we work closely, are warning us that they might be collapsing this summer,” Norwegian Foreign Minister Barth Eide told Reuters.

“If it collapses, you could end up having another Gaza, which would be terrible for everybody, including the people of Israel,” he added.

Norway chairs the international donor group to the Palestinians and is a backer of the Palestinian Authority. Eide spoke out as United Nations Relief and Works Agency Commissioner-General Philippe Lazzarini visited Oslo.

Norway pledged an additional \$10 million to UNRWA, the major provider of humanitarian services to the PA. Israel has urged countries not to support the organization, which it has accused of hiring employees with connections to Hamas and whose facilities have been used by the terror group. Israel has also charged that 12 UNRWA employees were involved in the Hamas-led invasion of Israel on October 7.

The funds for UNRWA, however, are transferred directly to UNRWA and are not designated for the Palestinian Authority, whose economy is suffering both due to the Gaza war and the financial penalties Israel has already leveled against it to offset its monthly payments to terrorists jailed by Israel.

Israel's security cabinet is expected to level further monetary sanctions against the PA for its support of terror and its initiatives against Israel on the international stage, including at the International Criminal

Court in The Hague. It is also weighing authorizing four new settlements, one for each of the four European countries that unilaterally recognized Palestinian statehood in the last two months. Those countries are Spain, Norway, Ireland, and Slovenia.

“This is a clear message that we are sending to the countries that cooperate with the plans to eliminate Israel,” Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich, who is also a minister in the Defense Ministry, said on Monday.

“Every country that cooperates with anti-Israeli activity and recognizes the Palestinian Authority as a country will know that it helps the Zionist enterprise and the strengthening of Jewish settlement in the country,” he said.

Smotrich said had submitted a proposal on economic sanctions and settlement authorization to the cabinet and expected it would be approved.

“The decision, which was brought in coordination with the prime minister, comes against the background of the Palestinian Authority's attempt to gain support in the world to act against the State of Israel in legal arenas and to bring about the recognition of a Palestinian state,” he said.

“For technical reasons, the proposal did not come up for a vote yesterday and I expect the prime minister, as agreed, to advance the proposals this week,” Smotrich stated.

The Prime Minister's Office said late Sunday after the security meeting that, “the defense minister and the attorney-general requested additional time to comment on several of the proposed clauses. The prime minister instructed that all of the proposals be submitted to a vote at the next security cabinet meeting.”

Reuters contributed to this report.

## ‘Jewish Israelis want all-out attack against Hezbollah’

• Jerusalem Post Staff

Sixty-two percent of Jewish Israelis support an attack on Hezbollah in Lebanon with “full force,” a Jewish People Policy Institute survey revealed, with 36% of these respondents supporting an immediate attack and 26% an attack only after the operation in Gaza.

Last week, Hezbollah launched its largest barrage of rockets and drones towards Israel since October, prompting senior Biden administration adviser Amos Hochstein to visit Israel on Monday to advance efforts to avoid further escalation along the border.

Some 57% of right-wing Israelis support an immediate offensive against Hezbollah. This perspective contrasts with the more balanced views of other political groups, who prefer a strategic approach following the conclusion of the Gaza campaign.

The survey indicated that over 80% of Jewish Israelis are “concerned” or “very concerned” about the state of social cohesion. This was compounded by the identification of several key tensions: a significant portion of the public specified “Right-Left” tension as a major factor eroding social unity, while Arab Israelis attach greater importance to “Jewish-Arab” tension, and the secular public emphasizes “religious-secular” tension.

Key among the survey's findings is the overall Israeli support for the peace plan set forth by US President Joe Biden – with 28% viewing the plan as positive, and a further 32% believing the plan, while problematic, to be the best possible roadmap. The vast majority of Israeli Arabs (70%) believed the plan to be good.

The preferred option for post-war administration in Gaza among Jewish Israelis is a civil administration by Palestinian elements and Arab states, with Israel responsible for security. Only 20% of Jewish Israelis favor full Israeli control (both civil and security), with this preference more pronounced among the political right (46%) and especially among Religious Zionist Party voters (57%).

Confidence in an Israeli victory remains low, with no significant change from May to June. The survey shows that 62% of right-wing Jewish Israelis report high confidence in a victory, compared to 30% of centrists and 16% of left-wing respondents. This indicates a strong correlation between political orientation and confidence levels.

The survey reflected a continued decline in trust towards the government and the IDF command echelon. Only 18% of Arab Israelis and 25% of Jewish Israelis expressed fairly or very high trust in the government. Among the political right, trust was slightly higher at 44%. Trust in Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu remained low, with only 43% of Likud voters having high trust, and 30% reporting “fairly high” trust.

Trust among Shas voters is similar, with slightly lower trust among United Torah Judaism voters. Among Religious Zionist Party voters, more than half express fairly or very high trust, though 45% report fairly low or low trust in Netanyahu. Trust in IDF commanders is low among the right wing, with 60% reporting fairly low or low trust.

With high tensions on the northern border, 57% of right-wing Israelis supported an immediate offensive against Hezbollah. This perspective contrasted with the more balanced views of other political groups, who preferred a strategic approach following the conclusion of the Gaza campaign.

Notably, the survey also found a significant rise in the sense of a shared fate between Israeli and Diaspora Jews. Compared with data from previous surveys, the percentage of Israeli Jews who “strongly agree” that all Jews have a “common future” has surged. If we add those who “somewhat agree” with that sentiment, we find that eight in ten Israeli Jews see a “common future” for Israeli and Diaspora Jews.

JPPI president Prof. Yedidia Stern noted, “The survey shows languishingly low trust in Israel's leadership, and a preference for bringing an end to the conflict sooner rather than later. This suggests that Israelis feel that prolonging the conflict is not likely to yield better results, and a deal that sees the hostages returned home remains the priority for most. With regard to ‘the day after’ in Gaza, Israeli support for regional involvement in managing Gaza reflects a much more positive outlook for cooperation with Israel's moderate Arab neighbors – even while understanding that a full-blown conflict with Hezbollah remains only a matter of time.”

Data collection was conducted using the index website's panel (601 respondents from the Jewish sector, via an online survey) and the Afkar company (202 respondents from the Arab sector).

## Hungary's EU presidency will improve bloc's ties with Israel – FM Katz

• By TOVAH LAZAROFF

Hungary's ascension to the European Union Council Presidency in July will improve relations between Israel and the 27-member bloc, Israel's Foreign Minister Israel Katz said during a visit to the Jewish state's strong ally in Europe.

“The period of the Hungarian Presidency is an unprecedented opportunity to improve Israel's position in the European Union” despite “the plots” that EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell “has tried to promote against us,” Katz said.

The EU Council Presidency held on a rotating six-month basis, was filled in the

last year first by Spain, then by Belgium – two countries sharply at odds with the Jewish state over the Gaza war and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Hungary takes up those reigns as calls have grown among EU member states to review the EU-Israel Association Agreement in light of the Gaza war with an eye to using it as a vehicle to influence the IDF's military campaign against Hamas in that enclave.

The agreement lays the framework for Israel-EU relations, whereby countries upset by the IDF's actions in Gaza have threatened to weaken these ties. Hungary is expected to push back against those efforts.

Hungary, according to Katz, plans to convene a meeting of the EU-Israel Association Council. Katz, in his meeting with Hungarian Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó on Monday, accepted an invitation for Israel to attend that meeting. This council last met two years ago.

Katz said that he also expected Hungary to help the EU stand strong against Iran.

“Hungary's leadership in the union can continue the sanctions against Iran and its attempts to arm itself with nuclear weapons. It is important that the union, alongside the US and other countries, stands up against Iran to prevent an all-out war,” he said.

## Hamas considers its small attacks as success

### ANALYSIS

• By SETH J. FRANTZMAN

The IDF is continuing to grind down Hamas in Rafah, with hundreds of terrorists killed in operations since early May. Two of the Hamas battalions in Gaza have been beaten, and two more are now suffering losses. Hamas fighters are fleeing to Mawasi, the humanitarian zone in Gaza. Hamas has lost a large number of the terrorists it had on October 7, possibly up to 17,000 fighters. However, the group continues to put on a mask of “this is fine.”

For months, the terrorist group has been saying that it transitioned to a new kind of war, splitting battalions into smaller units, small cells composed of three to five men. They pop up out of tunnels and grab AK-47s stashed in buildings, while others have access to mortars or 107 mm. rockets and RPGs. They are also booby-trapping buildings and targeting armored vehicles. Evidence of this comes from the killing of 12 soldiers in several days, including in a disaster that occurred to a Namer APC, killing eight troops in one instance.

Hamas sees the IDF's positions in the Netzarim Corridor and the Philadelphia route as targets of opportunity. For instance, according to pro-Iranian Al Mayadeen media, Hamas targeted soldiers in ambushes. What is noteworthy here is the reliance of Hamas and Al Mayadeen on Israeli media to confirm whether the attacks were actually successful,

as occurred on Sunday.

This reliance may indicate that Hamas is having a tougher time getting its messages out of Gaza, or perhaps even that pro-Hamas outlets don't always trust Hamas's bragging.

The terrorist groups in Gaza continue to work in tandem to target the IDF. For instance, Palestinian Islamic Jihad said it attacked an IDF patrol in a Rafah neighborhood, and that it has been carrying out attacks during Eid al-Adha.

The terrorist groups said they targeted the Netzarim Corridor and also the Sufa outpost, near Kibbutz Sufa, and launched mortars into several areas of Rafah, while a different terrorist unit, called the National Resistance Brigades, also known as Martyr Omar al-Qasim Forces of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, carried out an attack in Tel al-Sultan using mortars. Meanwhile, Hamas claimed it targeted a Namer APC using its al-Yassin 105 missiles, according to Al Mayadeen, referencing the Saturday attack.

Hamas portrays these attacks as complex and sophisticated. The question, then, is whether Hamas is actually able to carry out complex and sophisticated insurgent-style attacks. If it has indeed lost so many men and battalions, it is unclear how it is able to carry out these attacks with any coordination or regularity.

It is clear that Hamas is now leaning on other terror groups, such as PJ's al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades and the DFLP. However, it also

appears that Hamas has been able to recruit and that its strategy of sending its battalions to the ground and dispersing them is providing it the manpower it needs to keep fighting.

Not only that, Hamas and the other groups appear to increasingly try to coordinate attacks on the Netzarim Corridor. Now, Hamas has the depth in Gaza to do this because the IDF has not operated much in the central camps area. Additionally, the terror groups have reconstituted themselves in northern Gaza, and are doing the same in Khan Yunis and Mawasi.

Even if Hamas saw most of its 24 battalions shattered along with losses amounting to half and two-thirds of its October 7 manpower, the group has clearly not been shocked into defeat. It has not fallen apart or seen areas of Gaza slip from its control. If Hamas is able to do this despite such high losses, it is either very resilient or it had a much deeper bench than was known.

It is likely that its continued existence is beholden to a combination of factors: Hamas had more members than estimated, it doesn't need all its battalions, it has recruited, it relies on other terror groups to make up for attrition, and those groups have thousands of members. Taken together, Hamas may have replaced a third or a half of its losses through a combination of factors. If that is indeed the case, then it could explain its ability to retain control and also continue to carry out daily attacks with increasing use of booby traps and other adaptive means.

# Haredi-IDF train wreck hurtles toward chaos

ANALYSIS

• By YONAH JEREMY BOB

A train wreck is when everything falls apart in the messiest way possible. What do you get when the train wreck manages to chug along, mess dragging all around? That would be the attempts to resolve the IDF-haredim issue. The ultra-Orthodox are the only consistent player in this drama. They oppose integration into the army. Here and then, some of their leaders, especially from the Shas side of Arye Deri, will flash possibilities of compromise if the pressure drops and there is more dialogue, but really their position has barely changed even after October 7. Remarkably, UTJ faction head Yitzhak Goldknopf on Sunday spoke at a celebration of Bnei Brak's 100 years just as 12 soldiers were laid to rest and made a number of statements showing how disconnected he feels the two realities are. He did this while strangely protesting that he was only speaking to express solidarity with the soldiers, but there was no sense of a readiness to compromise. The weakest player in this performance has been the High Court of Justice. For around seven years in a narrow sense, and for decades in a wider sense, it has stuck its head in the sand and ignored the obvious inequality of avoiding drafting haredim, hoping (in vain) that the political class would eventually resolve the issue. In late March, the High Court finally suspended one-third of some of the government-sponsored funds for the around 1,750 haredi yeshivot. But this did not impact the vast majority of the over 60,000 haredim in play for IDF or national service, only a portion of the recent draft class. It also did not impact significant non-government funds that the haredi institutions raised. Though some haredi advocates present the reduction in funds as being a life and death issue, if it truly were, they would have cut a new compromise deal by now for increasing draft numbers, even if not as high as some parties want. Just two weeks ago, the High Court held a follow-up hearing to see if the government had progressed on the issue. The government did not even fake having progressed and merely spoke about the potential of some kind of a future resolution. And yet a shift has come over the court. A distinct aspect of the June hearing was that three of the most conservative voices – Justices Noam Sohlberg, Alex Stein, and Yael Wilner – were among the roughest and most aggressive critics of the government. Sohlberg was furious that the IDF has offered as a minimum initial measure to take in 3,000 haredim out of over 60,000 eligible draftees over the course of the 2024 recruitment class, and that the government even refused this. Incidentally, their strong stance is probably also part of a shift of the country's religious-Zionist public from tolerating the haredi exemption as a curious annoyance of political allies, to being ready to campaign for haredim to do more now that so many fallen soldiers are religious Zionists. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has shape-shifted on this issue more times than one can count, though following the basic principle of wanting to appear as if he is pressing the haredim to change, while in practice making sure to gum up the works of any progress so as to mollify the haredim. National Unity party leader Benny Gantz has shape-shifted as well. Although Gantz has talked passionately about the need for more haredi service in the IDF due to October 7, Netanyahu's move offered as a solution the exact bill that Gantz proposed in 2022 as defense minister, did expose how much Gantz has altered course. In 2022, he was ready to endorse haredi national service with very little of a real influx into the IDF. Defense Minister Yoav Gallant entertained giving the haredim their desired exemption as recently as mid-2023, as long as those who served in the IDF would get an increase in wages and benefits. Now he too is demanding much higher haredi numbers joining the IDF. The IDF is now saying it needs huge volumes of haredim, but in the past and even in some legal statements, it continues to acknowledge that it has limits in how many haredim it can absorb at once – with 3,000 being the current number. As of August, the High Court can take away even more haredi funds if the issue is unresolved. The court may even issue a new ruling creating more pressure any day now. On the other hand, the court may let Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee Chairman Yuli Edelstein have a month or so to thread the needle of reaching a compromise. But one way or another the issue is coming to another climax in the next month or two. Whether the government will fall, manage to stay aloft while continuing to drag out the issue, or whether a compromise will miraculously be reached, remains up in the air. Yet, short of an unexpected grand compromise, the ongoing dragged-out train wreck will continue to tear apart aspects of the Israeli political and social landscape.



MASSES GATHER in Tel Aviv last month calling on the government to conscript haredim. (Avshalom Sassoni/Maariv)

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Second year - impressive  
Third year in a row -  
that's professionalism!

Mercantile was ranked No. 1 in the Ministry of Economy's Friendliness Index  
three years in a row!



\*According to the Ministry of Economy and Industry's publication of the Friendliness Index for small and medium-sized businesses for the year 2023

## Defense exports for 2023 hit record \$13.1 billion

Israeli defense exports rose to a record \$13.1 billion in 2023, a government report said on Monday, citing hundreds of contracts signed at various defense firms. Some 36% of exports came from missile, rocket, and air defense systems, followed by radar and electronic warfare, weapon stations, and launchers at 11% each, with crewed aircraft and avionics at 9%, the Defense Ministry said. Defense exports, which totaled \$12.5b. in 2022, have doubled over the past five years. The ministry said defense exports had become a central priority as part of an effort to strengthen security-strategic relations worldwide, enter new markets, remove bureaucratic barriers, and reduce regulation. "While our industries are primarily focused on providing the defense establishment with the capabilities to support our troops and defend our citizens... they are also continuing to pursue areas of cooperation and exports to international partners," said Defense Minister Yoav Gallant. (Reuters)

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# Knesset set to begin debate on haredi draft bill

*Likud MKs oppose bill that would give religious parties control over rabbinical appointments*

• By ELIAV BREUER

The Knesset will begin on Tuesday to prepare controversial legislation aimed at regulating the issue of the haredi (ultra-Orthodox) exemption from IDF service.

The bill will be prepared in the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee (FADC), chaired by Likud MK Yuli Edelstein.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, representatives of the haredi parties, the Finance Ministry, and the defense establishment attempted earlier this year to form the text of a government-sponsored bill that would both meet IDF's need for manpower and be acceptable to the haredim.

The negotiations failed, and instead of having the Knesset begin legislation from scratch, Netanyahu opted instead to adopt a bill that passed its first reading in 2022, during the Bennett-Lapid tenure.

The attorney-general and members of Knesset from the coalition and opposition criticized the move, as the 2022 bill is not relevant to the needs of the IDF after the outbreak of war following the

October 7 Hamas massacre.

However, members of the coalition who opposed the bill decided to support the measure to bring it to the Knesset, arguing that this was technical and that they would not support the bill's second and third reading if it was not modified in the FADC. Likud members who opposed the bill included MKs Tally Gotliv, Dan Illouz, and Moshe Saada.

The measure passed last week with all of the coalition voting in favor, save for Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, who voted against it.

The legal basis for the haredi exemption expired on July 1, 2023, and the debates in the FADC are set to begin as the High Court of Justice is preparing a ruling on whether the state must begin recruiting haredim in large numbers, given that the exemption violated the notion of equality. The court will also rule on whether the state will be able to continue providing funding to yeshivot for military-age students.

Opposition leader MK Yair Lapid accused in a press conference ahead of his Yesh Atid party's weekly meeting on Monday that by aiming



YESH ATID chairman and opposition head Yair Lapid speaks at a faction meeting yesterday in the Knesset. (Marc Israel Sellem/The Jerusalem Post)

to continue exempting thousands of haredim from IDF service, the government was "undermining national security."

Earlier, Lapid held a meeting with the party's members in the FADC to chart their strategy during the debates. The opposition leader said in the press conference that an appropriate version of the bill

must pass by the time the Knesset goes on recess at the end of July.

"I call on the members of Knesset from the coalition, those who still care about Israel's security and its values, to come to the committee, work with us, we will pass a real, effective recruitment bill so that our fighters will know that the Israeli Knesset stands

behind them," Lapid said.

Newly voted chairman of the Labor Party, Yair Golan, said in a press conference ahead of his party's weekly meeting that the "failure of a government chose in the midst of a war to critically harm national security."

MKs Saada and Gotliv made headlines again on Monday after they announced that

they would vote against a second controversial bill, known as the "Rabbi's Bill," which was scheduled for a Tuesday morning debate and vote in the Knesset Constitution Committee.

The bill proposal is to give the Chief Rabbinate and Religious Services Ministry greater control over appointments of government-paid municipal and neighborhood rabbis, instead of the current system where the cities themselves have the power to appoint their rabbis. The bill is widely viewed as an attempt by the coalition's Orthodox parties, especially the haredi Shas party, to appoint its own members to the position, as well as gain influence over issues of religion, even in secular areas.

The bill is at the very beginning of its legislative process, and Tuesday's vote is to send it to the plenum for its first reading out of three. The coalition first attempted to advance the bill in 2023 but ceased due to the outbreak of the war. It attempted again in March but was blocked by the National Unity and United Right parties, who were then part of the coalition.

Along with sharp criticism

from the opposition, coalition MKs Saada, Gotliv, Illouz, and Diaspora Affairs Minister Amichai Chikli voiced their opposition to the bill, but out of them only Saada and Gotliv are members of the constitution committee.

The coalition enjoys a 9-7 advantage in the committee, and therefore a "no" vote from Saada and Gotliv means it will not pass. Ben-Gvir has also voiced opposition to the bill in the past, and the representative of his party in the committee, MK Yitzhak Kreuzer, may oppose the bill as well.

Due to the opposition from within the coalition, it was not clear by press time whether or not the vote would actually be held. The opposition also launched a filibuster in the plenum that was expected to run late into the night, with the hope that this would lead to a cancellation of the constitution committee debate, which is scheduled for 9 a.m.

Committee chair MK Simcha Rothman defended the bill on Monday, arguing that the decision to promote it was made by the leaders of the coalition, and accused the rebel MKs of opposing it for political gain.

## Iran's acting FM seeks to form anti-Israel alliance

• By SETH J. FRANTZMAN

Iran's acting Foreign Minister Ali Bagheri Kani is seeking an alliance with other Islamic countries to "exert pressure" on Israel, the Iranian state media IRNA reported yesterday. The report is part of a larger series of moves by the foreign minister and also the Iranian Foreign Ministry against Israel.

"Bagheri Kani spoke with his Afghan counterpart, Amir Khan Muttaqi, on the phone on Sunday, with the two discussing relations between Iran and Afghanistan as well as the situation in war-ravaged Gaza," the report said.

Afghanistan is not that important in terms of any role it might have against Israel. But Iran is trying to do more than just rope in the Taliban to its crusade against Israel. "The Iranian diplomat called for joint action by Islamic countries, particularly within the framework of the Islamic Cooperation Organization, in order to increase pressure on the Zionist regime to end its crimes against the people of Gaza," IRNA said.

Meanwhile, on Sunday Iran's For-



IRAN'S ACTING FOREIGN MINISTER Ali Bagheri Kani holds a news conference in Baghdad last Thursday. (Thaier Al-Sudani/Reuters)

eign Ministry spokesperson Nasser Kanaani "said that the Islamic Republic will continue to play a constructive role in establishing sustainable security in the region. At the same time, the country will act decisively in defending its security and national interests," a separate

report noted. Kanaani was responding to comments from the G7. The G7 is concerned about Iran's close ties with Russia and the transfer of military technology between these two states. It is also concerned about Iran's nuclear program. "The Iranian spokesman

reiterated that the Islamic Republic's nuclear program is only meant for peaceful purposes," the IRNA claimed.

Iran's Foreign Ministry slammed the US, UK, France, and Germany in regard to countries putting pressure on its nuclear program. "Some countries, under political motivations and through leveling false and unproven allegations, are trying to continue with their ineffective and failed policy to impose and maintain sanctions against the Iranian nation. Therefore, we advise the Group of Seven to learn from past experiences and stay away from destructive policies," the ministry said.

The acting Iranian foreign minister also met with Igor Khovae, a special representative for the Russian Foreign Minister. The Iranians called for more cooperation with Russia, especially in the Caucasus.

The overall trend is clear. Iran's acting foreign minister is taking up where his predecessor left off. He is not skipping a beat in terms of trying to work closely with Iran's friends, such as Russia, in search of isolating Israel.

## REP. NANCY MACE TO 'POST':

### Gaza aid pier is a 'logistical nightmare'

• By HANNAH SARISOHN  
Jerusalem Post Correspondent

NEW YORK – The US House of Representatives passed an amendment on Friday as part of the Fiscal Year 2025 National Defense Authorization Act, which would prohibit the use of Pentagon funds for constructing or maintaining the humanitarian pier in Gaza.

South Carolina Rep. Nancy Mace, who proposed the amendment, told *The Jerusalem Post* on Saturday, "From a purely cost-based analysis, investing in a pier off the coast of Gaza is an inefficient use of our defense budget. If you think about the cost, \$320 million, versus the 7,000 metric tons of food that's been delivered, it's like \$20,000 per pound of food and it's completely inefficient."

She added that if the aid were given to the people who needed it there would be a case to be made.

Mace spoke with the *Post* on Saturday morning after the NDAA passed through the House and awaits its vote in the Senate.

According to a US official on Friday, the US military began preparing to temporarily remove the humanitarian pier because of anticipated sea conditions. Friday's removal came less than a week after the pier was reestablished after a previous weather condition caused significant damages.

Aid began arriving via the US-built pier on May 17, and the UN said it transported 137 trucks of aid to warehouses, some 900 metric tons before the US announced on May 28 that it had suspended operations

so repairs could be made.

The United Nations said on Friday it had still not resumed transportation of aid from the pier to UN World Food Programme warehouses.

"There has to be a better way, another way, and it can't just be the US. Other countries need to assist and it doesn't seem like that's happening," Mace said. "It's clearly not working, and we knew that it wouldn't work. We wasted these resources, and I don't want any more resources spent on the pier."

"Either take it down or find another way," she added.

According to Mace, Israel needs to "do whatever they need to do" to ensure Hamas is "wiped off the face of the map."

The US should be fully supportive of Israel, Mace said, as it's disgusting to see Hamas use civilians and children to protect themselves.

Mace said the US should also wholeheartedly support Israel in defending itself against Hezbollah or any other Iranian proxy.

Mace criticized Biden for "speaking out of both sides of his mouth" and for trying to "take credit for work [Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu] is doing."

According to Mace, countries around the world should learn from the operations Israel has conducted in Rafah in a short period.

"[Israel] should be given all the power, all the ammunition that they need to take out Hamas and Hezbollah, no matter the cost," she added.

Mace added that she is supportive of Netanyahu's invitation to address Congress and that she only wishes it were sooner.

## Quebec man, suspected of uttering antisemitic remarks, held for making gun at home

• By MICHAEL STARR

A Quebec man who allegedly made antisemitic online comments was arrested for illegally producing a homemade firearm, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and B'nai Brith Canada announced on Friday.

Pascal Tribout, 37, was arrested on Thursday and a 3D-printed firearm and several 3D printers were seized. The suspect allegedly possessed and shared data that could be used to manufacture 3D printable weapons.

In addition to charges of weapon trafficking, prohibited firearm possession, prohibited device possession, possession and distribution of instructions for manufacturing 3D printed firearms, the Saint-Joseph-du-Lac resi-

dent was also charged with the willful promotion of hatred for allegedly making "hateful comments against the Jewish community in a public forum on the social network, Telegram."

B'nai Brith Canada said on social media on Friday that it provided the RCMP with crucial information about Tribout's alleged "hate-motivated conduct" that culminated in the operation. The Jewish organization clarified that Tribout was notorious for inciting violence against the Canadian Jewish community.

"This landmark arrest underscores the critical importance of vigilance and proactive action in combating hate and violence," said B'nai Brith. "Take back our streets! Take back our cities! Protect Canadian values!"

## Philippine crew attacked by Houthis vow to sail again

• By NEIL JEROME MORALES  
and JAY ERENO

MANILA (Reuters) – The Philippine crew of a vessel attacked by Yemen's Houthi militants was repatriated to the Philippines from Bahrain on Monday, with the ship's captain vowing to return to the seas after the crew had recovered from the experience.

The Iranian-backed Houthis claimed responsibility for a missile strike on the Liberia-flagged, Greek-owned, coal carrier *Tutor* near the Yemeni port of Hodeidah last Wednesday. The ship's crew of 22 was from the Philippines.

One person is still missing in the currently flooded engine room.

"We first need to rest because of the trauma," the *Tutor*'s Captain Christian Domarique told a press conference at Manila airport. "We will recover for a few months before returning."

Houthi attacks have struck three vessels crewed by Filipino seafarers since last year, killing two sailors, and with 17 still being held captive, government data showed.

A tearful Domarique thanked God, his company, and government agencies for assisting him and his fellow seafarers to get back to the Philippines and the government has pledged financial and psychological assistance.

"The captain has good working years ahead of him, so with the crew that is relatively young, they will still have more seafaring years," Hans Leo Caddac, the Philippines' migrant workers minister, told a press conference.

The vessel's owner pledged to continue the search for the missing sailor alongside a salvaging operation to tow the stranded ship, Caddac said. The ship was still adrift in the Red Sea on Friday.

## Australia's national war memorial defaced with pro-Palestinian slogans

• By MICHAEL STARR

The Australian War Memorial in Canberra was vandalized with pro-Palestinian slogans on Friday before dawn, according to Australian Capital Territory Policing and the Returned and Services League of Australia.

Canberra police said that closed-circuit television images showed that a masked man in a black sweater and khaki pants had allegedly spray-painted three areas at the memorial with graffiti.

ACT Policing was seeking

the public's assistance to identify the man who was suspected of committing the criminal act and resulting damage.

"Police are very disappointed this morning to see a national institution, which holds a special significance to many, being vandalized," acting inspector Lisa Broomhall said in a police statement. "We would like to remind the community that while peaceful protest is part of a healthy democracy, criminal acts will not be tolerated."

RSL Australia, which advocates for medical services and

other needs on behalf of Australian service people, condemned the vandalism in a Friday statement and called for the perpetrators to be apprehended so that they may face the full force of the law.

"The vandal did not even have the courage to be identified and the painting of the slogans on the memorial is appalling," the RSL National President Greg Melick said. "People are entitled to protest, but the defilement of a memorial to those who served, suffered, and died in the service of the Australian nation and to

protect the freedoms and way of life of all Australians is disgusting and is to be deplored."

Melick also said that many Australians are likely appalled by the action. Further, not only does it not advance the anti-Israel activist's cause, but results in a significant loss in support for said cause, he noted.

"The brave Australians who have served and died serving our country in wars, conflicts, and peacekeeping operations over the past century or more had nothing to do with the current con-

flict in Gaza or the situation confronting Palestinians, and to use our national war memorial as a platform to protest is contemptible," Melick pressed. "The desecration of the Australian War Memorial does nothing to enhance the cause of those suffering in the Middle East and it offended not only veterans and service personnel, but all fair-minded and freedom-loving Australians."

The Australian Jewish Association on Friday accused anti-Israel activists of hating Australia.



AUSTRALIAN POLICE are asking for the public's assistance in identifying this man who, on Friday, defaced the country's national war memorial with pro-Palestinian catchphrases. (Australian Capital Territory Policing)



A SUPPORTER of Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump holds a sign at an event held by the national conservative political movement, Turning Point, in Detroit on Sunday. Notorious anti-Israel activists were barred from attending the event. (Rebecca Cook/Reuters)

## Antisemites find common cause at failed Detroit rally

• By MICHAEL STARR

Antisemites and anti-Israel activists rallied in Detroit to protest against a conservative political convention on Sunday.

They also attempted to hold a conference of their own over the weekend with former Ku Klux Klan leader David Duke and white nationalist Nick Fuentes in attendance.

Fuentes and mixed martial artist Jake Shields were denied access to Turning Point Action's the People's Convention (TPUSA) on Friday when they attempted to attend, Shields told social media content creator Nicolas "Sneako" Kenn De Balinzhazy on his Rumble stream the same day. Shields claimed that TPUSA security gave no reason for the expulsion from the event, suggesting that it was because Fuentes was an anti-Israel activist.

"Should I pull up to TPUSA this year?" Fuentes asked followers on social media, before updating shortly after, "I got kicked out."

Fuentes was set to hold his own event – the America First Political Action Conference (AFPAC) – on Saturday, but said on Saturday on X, "We finished setting up our stage and then the venue called the cops to kick us out 24 hours before the

event."

Danish physician and anti-Israel influencer Anastasia Maria Loupis, who said on X on Friday that it was great to be "with the f\*\*k Israel movement in Detroit," responded to the cancellation by proclaiming on social media, "Nick was right. America is Israel-occupied territory. America is a banana republic. Jews have no power."

Anti-Israel commentator Sulaiman Ahmed said that the AFPAC was canceled a second time at another venue, which saw a scuffle with security. Loupis did post a video of a flashpoint between AFPAC attendees and a guard. A security guard told the group to leave and when they started to film him, he told them to cease doing so, calling them "sluts" and "whores" in the process, and started dancing while presenting them with his two middle fingers. When De Balinzhazy flipped off the guard's hat, the security man proceeded to perform a flying punch on the streamer. Ahmed later showed in a video that De Balinzhazy received a chipped tooth as a result.

Shields said that Fuentes being escorted out of TPUSA and the cancellation of AFPAC twice showed how "feared and banned he is from society."

Fuentes returned to TPU-

SA's convention, according to Shields, giving an impromptu speech as a Muslim-American supporter shouted, "Down with Israel."

"Jesus Christ is the king of the United States of America," said Fuentes, who went on to critique former US president Donald Trump for his relationship with philanthropist Miriam Adelson.

"I will never vote for Joe Biden. But I cannot pledge to support Donald Trump until he becomes America first again," said Fuentes. "We only voted for Donald Trump because we didn't want any more wars in the Middle East, and we don't want a war with Iran now. I will not vote for Donald Trump until he can give a commitment that we will not go to war with Iran."

Fuentes alleged that Israel, "through war, through revolution, through subterfuge, is destabilizing the Middle East to carve out a path for 'greater Israel.' It's always been their plan. And right now in order to accomplish that they are committing a genocide against the Palestinians in Gaza."

Loupis said on social media that alt-Right activists, who often call themselves Groyper, had made a significant showing in Detroit in support of Fuentes.

## Biden vs Trump: Where they stand on Israel, Palestinians, Middle East

• By TRACY WILKINSON

WASHINGTON – The Israel-Hamas war has thrust Israel and Palestinians back on the front-burner of US policy, and abruptly injected some long-standing divisive issues into the 2024 presidential race.

Both President Joe Biden and former president Donald Trump express baseline support for Israel, but they diverge significantly on a two-state solution, settlements and other key questions. Here's a comparison of their positions and track records:

### ISRAEL

Biden has generally continued what had for decades been a bipartisan approach to Israel: strong support but always with varying degrees of inclusion and assistance for the Palestinians. Biden has used US power on occasion to attempt to influence Israeli behavior, such as in its conduct of the current war or in resisting controversial changes to Israel's judiciary, which many saw as undemocratic.

He has not gone as far as president Barack Obama, for example, who insisted Israel freeze construction of settlements in areas claimed by the Palestinians.

But when push comes to shove, Biden has sided with Israel, declining to significantly hold back military aid and vetoing United Nations measures opposed by Israel, including a recent one to formally recognize a Palestinian state.

Even so, Biden – like most past US leaders – has sought to maintain some balance and support for Palestinians and to present the United States as a potential mediator in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

By contrast, Trump was the first US chief executive who gave near-absolute, unconditional support to Israel, handing the government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu everything it asked for and then some.

Trump moved the US Embassy from Tel Aviv to the disputed capital of Jerusalem, the first major country to do so. He endorsed Israeli control of the Golan Heights, a contested fertile plateau that Israel seized from Syria in the 1967 Middle East war. He did so without concessions from Israel.

Trump was so popular among right-wing Israelis that Netanyahu used him as he campaigned for reelection, adorning cities across Israel with huge posters of the two men together. A Jewish settlement in the West Bank named itself after Trump.

Trump's one-sided approach won him praise from some pro-Israel advocates, but critics say he also sacrificed valuable US leverage in negotiating broader peace in the region.

### ISRAEL-HAMAS WAR

Biden voiced US support for Israel and its right to self-defense after the October 7 Hamas attack that left nearly 1,200 Israelis and others dead.

"The United States stands with the people of Israel in the face of these terrorist assaults – [US support] is rock solid and unwavering," Biden said in his State of the Union address this year. "There is no other path that guarantees Israel's security and democracy. There is no other path that guarantees ... that Palestinians can live in peace [with] dignity."

"Israel has the right to defend itself and its people, full stop."

"Hamas should give us a map of the safe zones we can stay in because if we knew there were hostages in the neighborhood, we would have looked for another place," Mustafa Muhammad, 36, told the paper. Muhammad fled Gaza City to Nuseirat early in the war.

These fears were not without basis. Israel's rescue operation resulted in Gazan civilian casualties. The IDF said it was less than a hundred, but Gaza's Hamas-run Health Ministry placed estimates in the 200s.

Nevertheless, residents spoke fondly of the Aljamals.

"Dr. Ahmad was the one who circumcised my three boys," resident Ali Bkhit told the WSJ.

"When I dealt with him, he was a nice character; his smile never left his face."



US PRESIDENT Joe Biden takes part in a conversation with former president Barack Obama during a star-studded campaign fundraiser at the Peacock Theater in Los Angeles on Saturday. (Kevin Lamarque/Reuters)



FORMER PRESIDENT Donald Trump gives the keynote address at Turning Point Action's 'The People's Convention' on Saturday in Detroit. He will debate Biden on June 27 in Atlanta. (Bill Pugliano/Getty Images)

Biden, nevertheless, has advised the Israeli government to show more restraint in its attacks on Palestinians in Gaza to minimize civilian casualties and to rein in vigilante violence against Palestinians in the West Bank.

With mounting international condemnation over an Israeli military response that has left more than 36,000 Palestinians dead, critics say that the Biden administration hasn't done enough to restrain Israel. The president recently stepped up pressure for an immediate ceasefire and unveiled a plan that would free hostages and bring about a final end to the war.

By contrast, Trump hasn't expressed concern for Palestinian casualties. He has urged Israel to "get the job done" to destroy Hamas. "You have to finish up your war," Trump told the right-wing newspaper *Israel Hayom* in late March. "You gotta get it done."

Trump accused Biden of "abandoning" Israel when the administration briefly suspended the shipment of 2,000-pound bombs to Israel as Israel threatened to move into the southern Gaza city of Rafah.

Trump criticized Israel for "losing the PR battle" by allowing images of the war in Gaza to be disseminated. He did not explain how Israel could prevent that.

### PALESTINIAN STATEHOOD

Biden supports an independent Palestinian state alongside Israel, an idea that remains dominant in the international community's position toward the region.

"As we look to the future, the only real solution to the situation is a two-state solution over time," Biden said in his State of the Union address this year. "There is no other path that guarantees Israel's security and democracy. There is no other path that guarantees ... that Palestinians can live in peace [with] dignity."

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"Even after their return, the [kidnapped] are being abandoned," he posed.

Committee chairperson

### SETTLEMENTS

The Biden administration has revived long-standing US policy that the Jewish settlements Israel erects in the West Bank are an impediment to peace. Most of the world goes a step further, saying they are illegal. Still, Israel continues to build them, despite protests from the State Department.

The administration in December did take the unusual measure of sanctioning a small number of Israeli settlers deemed responsible for deadly attacks on Palestinians in the West Bank. Settlers have seized Palestinian land, destroyed their olive tree orchards and burned their homes.

Trump took no steps as president to rein in settlements, and his administration moved to legitimize them.

Trump's secretary of state Michael R. Pompeo said in 2019 that contrary to decades of US policy, the Jewish settlements built in the West Bank and other territory claimed by the Palestinians were "not inconsistent with international law."

Democratic and Republican administrations had until then considered settlements at the minimum "unhelpful" to a peaceful resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and in some cases illegal.

On this issue, the Biden administration reversed Trump's policy, returning to the traditional – if vague – US description settlements as problematic and unhelpful, while declining to explicitly call them illegal.

### APPROACH TO ARAB NATIONS

Biden has formed an alliance with several Arab countries to confront the Gaza war and to negotiate with Hamas.

He is also seeking to build on efforts by Trump to establish a coalition of Arab states that recognize Israel as a way to promote better regional integration.

But Biden is resisting some of the demands the countries have in order to recognize Israel. The biggest prize is regional superpower Saudi Arabia, which is conditioning its agreement on help with a nuclear power program and establishment of a NATO-like mutual-defense security pact.

From his first days in office, Trump aggressively courted Saudi Arabia's wealthy leaders, making a trip to the desert kingdom the first of his administration. (Usually presidents make the first trip to an established ally.)

To foster closer ties with Saudi Arabia, Trump showed a willingness to overlook the human rights record of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, including the 2018 government-ordered murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi.

Trump's crowning achievement was the so-called Abraham Accords, wherein two Gulf states, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain, for the first time recognized Israel and opened diplomatic ties.

It was a breakthrough seen as the beginning of a possible new regional diplomatic order. Saudi Arabia did not join the detente but clearly endorsed it, allowing the UAE and Bahrain to act. That left Riyadh as the dangling carrot, which the Biden administration now pursues, and which Trump, if elected, would like make a priority.

(Los Angeles Times/TNS)

## WSJ: Prominent Gaza family held three hostages

• Jerusalem Post Staff

Dr. Ahmad – a general practitioner, imam, and member of a prominent family in Gaza – secretly held three Israeli hostages captive in his home for six months, the *Wall Street Journal* reported on Monday.

Every day, Aljamal returned home from work to his son, daughter-in-law, grandchildren, and captives Almog Meir Jan, Andrey Kozlov, and Shlomi Ziv.

According to the report, citing residents, it was an open secret within the Nuseirat camp that Aljamal's family was associated with Hamas. Aljamal's brother, Abdelrahman Aljamal, is a Hamas lawyer in Gaza. Nevertheless, the report stated that most did not know of the three hostages being held in a dark room in the family's house.

The IDF reported that the son, Abdullah Aljamal, 37, was a journalist for the Palestinian news site The Palestine Chronicle. Fatma, his wife, was a phlebotomist at a local clinic.

The hostages later said they could hear conversations between the two and the rest of the family as they carried on their normal lives. An earlier WSJ report stated that the three hostages lived in a dark room upstairs in the apartment for

six months while the family lived downstairs.

Abdullah had previously served as a spokesperson for the Hamas government and, according to the *Journal*, was vocally supportive of the October 7 attack.

The building in which the Aljamal family lived was destroyed by an IAF-targeted strike after the rescue of the hostages earlier this month.

The rescue operation, which received significant coverage due to its complex and intricate planning and execution, resulted in the return of the three men as well as Noa Argamani, who was kept separately nearby by another family with Hamas ties, the Abu Nars.

Aljamal, his son, and his daughter-in-law were killed in the operation, according to local reports cited by the WSJ, however, the children survived.

The Abu Nar family was also reportedly killed, and their building was destroyed.

The IDF did not directly comment on the killing of family members or destruction of buildings, but in a statement, they said they acted to "eliminate terrorists" and "destroy terrorist infrastructure."

According to the report, many locals have paid a visit to the house, surprised by the discovery of the captive Israelis

right underneath their noses. The paper said secrets such as this are hard to keep within such a close-knit community and in a tightly packed area.

The report also said that residents were unhappy that Hamas put civilians in danger by housing the hostages in a densely populated area next to a market.

The *Journal* reported that locals wished Hamas kept the hostages in tunnels, away from civilians.

"Hamas should give us a map of the safe zones we can stay in because if we knew there were hostages in the neighborhood, we would have looked for another place," Mustafa Muhammad, 36, told the paper. Muhammad fled Gaza City to Nuseirat early in the war.

These fears were not without basis. Israel's rescue operation resulted in Gazan civilian casualties. The IDF said it was less than a hundred, but Gaza's Hamas-run Health Ministry placed estimates in the 200s.

Nevertheless, residents spoke fondly of the Aljamals.

"Dr. Ahmad was the one who circumcised my three boys," resident Ali Bkhit told the WSJ.

"When I dealt with him, he was a nice character; his smile never left his face."

• By AVIHAI CHIIM

Prof. Hagai Levine, chair of the Israeli Association of Public Health Physicians, said at the beginning of a state control committee meeting on Monday that there is no rehabilitation plan in place to treat freed hostage Noa Argamani.

Argamani, the woman whose image was the very representation of the fight to bring the hostages back home, was res-

cued from the Gaza Strip a little over a week ago in a complex operation coordinated between the Israeli Counterterrorism Unit, the IDF, and the Shin Bet.

"I visited Noa Argamani last night and I was amazed to discover that there is no rehabilitation plan for her," Levine said.

"Even after their return, the [kidnapped] are being abandoned," he posed.

Committee chairperson

MK Mickey Levy (Yesh Atid) responded, "These are serious accusations. I will urgently contact the Health Minister (Uriel Buso [Shas]) to find out why no such plan is in place."

Argamani was kidnapped from the Nova music festival on October 7 by Hamas terrorists alongside her boyfriend, Avinatan Or. The video capturing their kidnapping, in which Noa is seen screaming in fear, became one of the

symbols of the war.

She was rescued last week together with now-former hostages Almog Meir Jan, Shlomi Ziv, and Andrey Kozlov.

Shortly thereafter she was released from Sourasky Medical Center in Tel Aviv after undergoing a series of tests as well as medical and psychological evaluations.

Her mother, Liora, is hospitalized at the same medical facility.

## Health expert: No rehab plan prepared for returned hostage Noa Argamani

## NEWS IN BRIEF

## Police seize drugs bound for Jordan

Customs inspectors and Israel Police intercepted 19.7 kg. of drugs that were being smuggled from Israel to Jordan. The drugs were reportedly worth hundreds of thousands of shekels. The police arrested two suspects.

• Jerusalem Post Staff

## Five infected with West Nile fever

Five people were admitted to Ichilov Hospital in Tel Aviv over the past two weeks after contracting West Nile fever. All are aged 60 and above. Three are in serious condition.

• Itay Gal

## Ben-Gvir blasts A-G, police chief

National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir (Otzma Yehudit) criticized Attorney-General Gali Baharav-Miara and police chief Kobi Shabtai on Monday in a sharply-worded accusatory letter. The letter comes ahead of a High Court of Justice hearing planned for Tuesday, which will debate amendments to a law proposed by Ben-Gvir to expand the authority of the National Security Ministry over the police body as a whole. Ben-Gvir said Baharav-Miara had obtained Shabtai's response to the High Court already three weeks ago, but did not present it or ask for his response. He also attacked Shabtai, claiming he is "shut down and lost the drive to work." In March, the A-G ordered the cancellation of the law.

• Shlomi Heller



## HOLIDAY RIDE

Palestinian youths take horse rides at a park in east Jerusalem as they celebrate the second day of Eid al-Adha yesterday.

(Hazem Bader/AFP via Getty Images)

## NEW REICHMAN UNIVERSITY STUDY:

## Gut bacteria type may predict PTSD development in kids

• By JUDY SIEGEL-ITZKOVICH

The contents of bacteria in the stomach can determine whether a person will develop post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) from infancy to late adolescence in humans, according to a new study out of Reichman University in Herzliya.

The microbial profile was found to be one of the factors involved in developing PTSD and it outlines the characteristics linked with resilience, following exposure to trauma.

"These findings can serve as a basis for developing microbiome-focused treatments," the authors wrote.

The study integrated the efforts of three laboratories: The Center for Developmental Social Neuroscience at Reichman University; the Koren Lab headed by Prof. Omry Koren at the Azrieli Faculty of Medicine in Safed, which focuses on microbiome research in animal models; and the Applied Mathematics Laboratory, led by Prof. Yoram Louzoun at the Brain Research Center at Bar Ilan University.

It was led by Dr. Karen Yirmiya, a postdoctoral fellow at the Center for Developmental Social Neuroscience, in collaboration with Dr. Orna Zagoory-Sharon of Reichman University and Dr. Sonda Turjeman and Oshrit Vignanski of Bar-Ilan University in Ramat Gan.

The new research demonstrated for the first time that the gut microbiome can determine the gut's bacteria profile and so can assist it in predicting the likelihood of developing PTSD, said Reichman Prof. Ruth Feldman, director of the Center for Developmental Social Neuroscience and the Simms-Mann chair on the developing brain at the Baruch

Ichver School of Psychology.

This study is the first to successfully link the specific characteristics of the microbiome and the development of verses to the consolidation of resilience. The study involved cross-species validation in germ-free animal models.

Stool samples were collected from participants in their late stages of adolescence (16 to 17 years old), along with samples from their mothers. The study included comparing participants who were exposed to chronic trauma, linked to growing up in Sderot and the Gaza Envelope, to a matched control group of mother-child pairs who were not exposed to war-related trauma. Notably, this study was conducted before October 7 occurred.

The findings revealed that a lower diversity of gut bacteria, a factor reflecting the resilience of the microbiome system, distinguished children with PTSD from those who remained resilient, even though both groups were exposed to the same traumatic events throughout their lives.

Moreover, children diagnosed with PTSD in early childhood and who displayed lower microbial diversity exhibited a chronic post-traumatic profile. In contrast, toddlers with PTSD from the same region who had a high level of bacterial diversity recovered from PTSD in late childhood.

Among the war-exposed group, some children were diagnosed with PTSD, while others who experienced the same traumatic events showed resilience and did not receive a psychiatric diagnosis at any stage of their development.

Feldman and her team observed infants born and raised in the town of Sderot and communities of the Gaza Envelope who had been

exposed to repeated and unpredictable war-related incidents for two decades, to understand how exposure to continuous trauma throughout development shaped an individual's brain and biology. Clinicians diagnosed pediatric PTSD at various periods – from early childhood to late adolescence.

Feldman explained: "Another new and intriguing finding of the study is that the adolescents diagnosed with PTSD didn't show microbial synchrony with their mothers, in contrast to the microbial synchrony observed between mothers and children who were not exposed to trauma, or between resilient children and their mothers."

Mother-child microbial synchrony is the natural state, because the infant receives its microbiome from the mother when passing through the birth canal and the mother and since the child lives in the same environment. The lack of microbial synchrony between adolescents with PTSD and their mothers reflects the sense of existential loneliness experienced by PTSD sufferers – an experience that permeates even to the bacteria that they carry in their bodies that should provide them with a layer of health, resilience, and protection, and adjust them to the ecology in which they live.

Another unique aspect of this study in the field of microbiome and mental illness is its validation through animal models. Germ-free mice who were implanted with fecal samples from children with PTSD demonstrated anxious behavior (for example, in the Y-Maze test) in juxtaposition to mice who were implanted with the feces of resilient children who exhibited normative behavior, the team concluded.



A TRAIN in Haifa zooms past a modern-looking residential building in August. Housing prices have increased in the district by 7% since the war began, the writer explains. (Moshe Shai/Flash90)

## Interest rates fail to cap house prices

• By ARIK MIROVSKY

The war has created an economic precedent in Israel with high interest rates failing to deter homebuyers and halt housing price rises. Housing prices, as of Sunday, have jumped 4.5% since the outbreak of the war, last October.

Apartment prices in the first quarter of 2024 rose at an annualized rate of 12%. There is clearly a connection between this alarming development and the outbreak of the war. In the eight months preceding this increase (from March to November 2023), housing prices fell by about 2.5%. A month after the war, they began a renewed takeoff, which brought the market back to 2021-2022 levels, when housing prices rose at a double-digit percentage annually.

Why has this been happening? Housing prices in the Israeli real estate market began falling in 2023, mainly due to high interest rates, not because of any new policy introduced by the government.

On the contrary. The government continues to implement the long outdated policy introduced by then minister of finance Moshe Kahlon nine years ago. This mainly involves apartment lotteries for young couples, distancing investors

from the market through higher taxation, and increasing land planning and marketing quotas.

This policy failed during the Kahlon period and has done so time and again under his successors at the Finance and Construction and Housing Ministries of. But this does not prevent the current government from persisting with these policies. What moderated housing prices was the Bank of Israel's interest rate hikes in 2022-23.

## BUYERS DESPERATION

What has changed since the start of the war is the insights considered in the thinking of budding homebuyers.

The first insight is that it is better to buy an apartment now, regardless of the interest rate because in the future, the economic situation will get worse.

The second insight is the fear that the supply of apartments will decrease due to the severe crisis in the building industry and the lack of construction workers, thus pushing up prices.

The second insight is the fear that the supply of apartments will decrease due to the severe crisis in the building industry and lack of construction workers, thus pushing up prices.

The third insight is that there

is no housing policy on the horizon, and there is no suggestion that the government's approach to the matter will change, and thereby, prices will continue to rise.

True housing prices fell by 2.3% in 2023 after soaring over the previous two years. But the public never really believed that last year's falls could be sustained and anyway did not trust the government. Intuitively expecting prices to rise again, people took matters into their own hands and bought apartments.

As if to justify these public perceptions, the government announced at the beginning of this month additional housing lotteries for young couples. The Israel Land Authority (ILA) director general has talked about increases in land marketing, and the planning administration keeps reporting new plans for housing.

All these steps are continuing at the moment "on automatic," although it is obvious that they are not amounting to anything.

## HAIFA LEADS PRICE RISE

So where exactly has housing become more expensive since the start of the war?

In the Haifa district, housing prices have increased by 7% since October, represent-

ing a higher average price of about NIS 110,000; Haifa is followed by the Tel Aviv district, which, after suffering substantial declines last year, has been revived since the start of the war. The price of an apartment in Tel Aviv has risen by 5.3% during the war, up NIS 160,000 on average; The northern district has also recorded a large increase during this period of 5% or about NIS 70,000 on the average apartment price.

The evacuated and bombed-out areas of the North constitute only a small part of this large district, which also includes cities such as Afula, Tiberias, Acre, and Migdal Ha'emek. Despite the situation, the market in this region is very active in terms of price rises, if less so in terms of the number of deals.

In the central district, there has been an average price increase of 4.3% in apartment prices, which translates to NIS 110,000.

In the relatively calm South these days, prices have risen by 3.8%, which is about NIS 55,000, while in Jerusalem, prices have only risen by 0.6% since the start of the war, worth NIS 16,000 on the price of the average apartment. (Globes/TNS)

## 'Gaps in language development widening among young children'

• By JUDY SIEGEL-ITZKOVICH

When toddlers who grow up in disadvantaged homes reach the age of two or three, they have already fallen behind their peers from age of birth to age two who come from privileged homes, in linguistic skills.

The serious lag in language development can be blamed on the lack of high-level, early childhood care and the decline of early childhood clinics in communities that are at a low socioeconomic level.

Instead of keeping these clinics in state hands, the Health and Treasury Ministries are privatizing them to save money,

which brings about a lack of uniformity in these facilities around the country.

These sad conclusions were reached by researchers at the Taub Center for Social Policy Studies in Jerusalem – an independent, non-partisan socioeconomic research institute that supplies decision-makers and the public with research and findings on some of the most critical issues facing Israel in the areas of education, health, and welfare to advance the well-being of all Israelis.

The relationship between youngsters' socioeconomic backgrounds and developmental indicators in their families

has not been studied in-depth before in a broad and representative Israeli sample, the authors explained. This is surprising because of Israel's high fertility rate among mothers in poor areas and the high poverty rates among young children.

The study was based on the Health Ministry's Family Care Centers' database, which contains information regarding about 70% of children born in Israel between 2014 and 2022.

Highlighting the gaps in language skills among children from different socioeconomic backgrounds, the study discovered that there is a positive relationship between maternal

education (the level of education that the person raising the child has) and early childhood language development.

The most worrisome conclusion was that these gaps widened with age and have increased in recent years and that this can affect the disadvantaged child's life, academic achievements, and long-term life course outcomes for decades to come. The data presents a growing trend over time (from 2016 to 2022) in the percentage of children with delayed language-milestone attainment.

This suggests that with each passing year, the percentage of children delayed in reaching

language milestones increases across all age groups.

THIS STUDY builds on an in-depth literature review recently published by the Taub Center entitled, The Roots of Disparity: Exploring Socioeconomic Influences on Early Childhood Development.

Authored by Taub Center senior researcher Dr. Sarit Silverman, the review examined the effects of one's socioeconomic background on various domains of early childhood development.

In light of the study's findings and the literature review, the researchers suggested several

steps to promote policies aimed at early detection of language development delays and reduce socioeconomic disparities.

Maternal education is linked to dlanguage-milestone attainment – the higher the mother's education level was, the higher the percentage of children who achieved language milestones on time.

The trend of growth over time was sharper and more pronounced among children of mothers with a primary and secondary education compared to those with a post-secondary and academic education. This finding indicates widening gaps between socioeconomic

strata in Israel.

Dr. Yair Sadaka, director of the Health Ministry's Child Development Institute in Beer-sheba and a researcher at the KI Institute and Ben Gurion University, commented: "The study's findings align with the international literature, highlighting a notable rise in language and developmental disabilities in recent years."

"Importantly, the study suggests that these challenges can be explained, at least in part, in the delays in achieving developmental milestones, and are not solely attributable to increased social awareness of developmental disabilities."

# US slaps additional sanctions on individuals, groups involved in Houthi arms procurements

• By HANNAH SARISOHN  
Jerusalem Post Correspondent

NEW YORK – The US Department of the Treasury announced new sanctions on Monday, directed against individuals and entities involved with the Houthis' weapons procurement network, National Security Communications Advisor John Kirby

said during a news conference at the White House.

"We're going to continue to target this network to degrade the Houthis' ability to replenish its munitions, and we will continue to target threats to international commerce when necessary," Kirby said, such as Sunday night when US forces struck a UAV which posed direct

threats to ships in the area.

While Kirby said that Houthi attacks no longer grabbed headlines like they used to, they're still having an impact, and the Biden administration wants to have an impact on the group's capabilities.

"Their actions are truly reckless beyond the pale. They talk a mighty good game, but their actions speak a hell of a

lot louder," Kirby said. "They don't care a whit about Palestinians in Gaza. This isn't some principled stand they're taking, it's terrorism – as I said. Pure and simple. And it has to stop."

Within the past few days, Kirby added, Houthi forces attacked a Greek-owned-and-operated bulk cargo carrier merchant

vessel bearing a Liberian flag, killing a Filipino crew member, as well as wounding a Sri Lankan crew member on a Polish-operated vessel.

"That, too, has nothing whatsoever to do with the conflict in Gaza," Kirby stated. "They weren't delivering arms to Israel, they weren't taking sides in the Middle East. They were just manning their posts

aboard a ship, trying to earn their paycheck and keep global commerce moving."

According to a statement from the US State Department, Monday's sanctions included three individuals and six entities who facilitated weapons procurement for the Houthis and one vessel owned by one of these entities as being blocked property.

"The Houthis' attacks against unarmed commercial vessels continue to inhibit navigation in a vital waterway," the department warned. "The United States is committed to using the tools at our disposal to hinder the flow of military-grade materials into Yemen that enable the Houthis to conduct these terrorist attacks."

## WAR

Continued from Page 1

Both have advocated for a full-scale invasion into Southern Lebanon, which would include capturing territory.

A member of Smotrich's party and a member of Ben-Gvir's party even announced on Monday that on Tuesday they will convene the Knesset caucus regarding the topic of a Jewish resettlement of Gaza. Netanyahu has publicly stated that this was not Israel's policy.

In addition, one of Israel's arguments concerning the accusation of genocide brought by South Africa in the International Court of Justice was that public statements by members of Smotrich and Ben-Gvir's parties, among others, were not indicative of Israeli policy or tactics, since policy is set by the war cabinet alone.

The war cabinet had included Gantz and fellow National Unity Minister Gadi Eisenkot, as well as Netanyahu, Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, and Strategic Affairs Minister Ron Dermer. Shas chairman MK Aryeh Deri was an observer at the war cabinet meetings as well.

It's expected, however, that Netanyahu will continue to make decisions in consultation with Gallant, Dermer, and Deri simply without the formal framework of the war cabinet.

Tensions, however, have been high between Gallant and Netanyahu.

During the government plenum's weekly cabinet meeting on Sunday, Netanyahu said that "in order to reach the goal of eliminating the capabilities of Hamas, [I] made decisions that were not always acceptable to the military echelon."

"We have a country with an army and not an army with a country," the prime minister said.

## CABINET

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Right Ministers Itamar Ben-Gvir and Bezalel Smotrich.

Ben-Gvir and Smotrich, who are both members of the security cabinet but were not appointed to the war cabinet, repeatedly criticized the latter since its founding for policies that they believed were not aggressive enough. In addition, many leaks emerged from the security cabinet during the months of the war, with Ben-Gvir believed to be the source of many of these.

This led the prime minister to avoid including them in certain decisions or revealing specific information. For example, according to Ben-Gvir, Netanyahu refused to show him a draft of Israel's latest proposal for a ceasefire and hostage deal with Hamas.

Still, according to MKs Benny Gantz and Gadi Eisenkot of the National Unity Party, who, until recently, were members of the war cabinet, the presence of Ben-Gvir's and Smotrich's threats to leave the government over what they deemed were unacceptable concessions to Hamas, was felt tangibly in the room. Gantz and Eisenkot said that at one point, Netanyahu limited the mandate given to Israel's negotiating team without updating them due to pressure from Smotrich.

Both Ben-Gvir and Smotrich demanded to be part of the war cabinet once Gantz and Eisenkot left the government last week. However, instead of conceding to their requests, Netanyahu opted to dissolve the war cabinet completely. Nevertheless, it is clear that Ben-Gvir and Smotrich will now enjoy even more influence over security decisions given that the security cabinet will convene more frequently.

In interviews with foreign media in recent months, Netanyahu repeatedly distanced himself from incendiary comments made by Ben-Gvir and Smotrich and mem-



THOUSANDS OF PROTESTERS take part in a protest against Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government near the Knesset and government offices in Jerusalem last night. (Ilan Rosenberg/Reuters)

bers of their parties, such as calling for a "voluntary emigration" of Gaza's population or building Israeli settlements in the Gaza Strip.

Indeed, the prime minister repeatedly argued that all ministers were free to voice their opinions as they saw fit but that the decisions and policies were decided on only in the war cabinet. With the war cabinet now gone, the prime minister will likely find it more difficult to make this argument.

Perhaps more significantly, Israel made the same argument in the cases made against it in both the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court at the Hague. Because according to Israeli representatives, statements made by Ben-Gvir, Smotrich, and others were not indicative of official policy, since formal Israeli policies were decided upon within Israel's war cabinet.

With the war cabinet gone, remarks by Ben-Gvir and Smotrich could carry more weight and may very possibly negatively affect the ongoing cases against Israel.

## HALF

Continued from Page 1

to al-Muwasi on the coast, central Gaza, and Khan Yunis.

IDF sources also said they believed they had killed much more than 550 terrorists, but that this number represented actual bodies seen, versus Hamas forces who entered a structure that was then bombed but without finding a body.

One of the hardest battles was fought over the "NPK" area, which is slightly north of the middle of the Philadelphia Corridor and was the headquarters of Hamas's Rafah brigade commander.

However, the IDF now has full control there.

The IDF's invasion of Rafah started on May 6, and by May 20, it had control of around 30-40% of Rafah, including the Philadelphia Corridor.

As of May 20, the IDF had said it had killed around 130 Hamas terrorists.

But given that at some point Hamas had 4,000 to 8,000 terrorists in Rafah, it is pretty clear that the vast majority fled with the mass of civilians who left the area. There are some still fighting and some in hiding, waiting for some later point to carry out guerrilla warfare-style attacks.

Since May 20, IDF progress has been slower, but steady, including the need for extensive time to explore the tunnel networks.

To date, the army has identified

25 large tunnels that, at the very least, go to the border with Egypt.

Strangely, the IDF, while implying that it was likely that many of them went into Egypt, would not yet confirm a single one crossing the border.

It was unclear if the hesitance to confirm was purely a question of inspections and time or if the politics of avoiding embarrassing the Egyptians was part of the calculation.

With Egyptian approval, the IDF is hoping to build underground obstacles and sensors on the Philadelphia Corridor to prevent the future re-digging of cross-border smuggling tunnels.

The cross-border smuggling tunnels have been key to Hamas's armament capabilities, including receiving weapons from Iran.

The IDF also said that the houses and tunnels in Rafah had new kinds of defenses and booby-traps, with some houses having video surveillance in each room of the given house to facilitate ambushes.

IDF sources suggested that Rafah Hamas brigade commander Mohammad Shabana had not necessarily been killed despite mixed reports about that issue over the last month.

From the start of the war until now, Division 162 has suffered 3,800 wounded and 180 killed, with 23 fallen in the Rafah battles.

In the North, an unusual quiet still reigned through the mid-afternoon after a quiet Sunday, but where the week before had been the most violent in months between Hezbollah and the IDF.

That said, early Monday the IDF said it had shot down a suspicious object flying toward Acre from Lebanon.

Also earlier Monday, there were Saudi media reports of another Hezbollah operative being killed, but the IDF did not confirm this for several hours and Hezbollah had not yet responded if this had occurred – given that it usually responds with barrages of rockets. However, around 6 p.m., the IDF confirmed it had eliminated key Hezbollah operative Muhammad Mustafa Ayoub, from the Rocket and Missile Department of the Nasser Unit.

Over the past few months, Ayoub, the IDF said, was involved in promoting terror attacks from southern Lebanon against Israeli civilians and communities.

A statement said that his "elimination is part of the IDF and Israeli security forces' activity to impede Hezbollah's military build-up in terms of weaponry and its stockpiling of weapons designated for use in terror attacks."

The IDF added that IAF fighter jets had struck Hezbollah terror infrastructure and a military structure in the area of Meiss El Jabal in southern Lebanon earlier Monday.

It was unclear at press time whether and when Hezbollah might respond to the killing of Ayoub.

## WARNS

Continued from Page 1

Herzog's office said that the two "discussed the relentless attacks and rocket fire from Hezbollah, instigated by Iran, towards Israel's northern towns and cities, and the urgent need to restore security to the northern border and allow residents to return safely to their homes."

In Hungary, Foreign Minister Israel Katz said that everyone wants a "diplomatic solution" to Lebanon, "but Hezbollah is breaking the rules."

He stressed that it was important to secure the border with Lebanon in order to ensure that the scores of thousands of Israelis forced to flee their homes on October 7 would be able to return home.

If diplomacy is not possible, he said, then "we knew how to face threats and win wars – if we are destined to fight, we will fight and militarily defeat Hezbollah."

Miller said that the "situation had escalated in the past week, with Hezbollah strikes against civilian targets."

He referenced the US's belief that a Gaza ceasefire is necessary for a diplomatic solution on the northern border to be successful.

"A ceasefire in Gaza makes a resolution in the North much easier, given the ceasefire [in Gaza] still remains elusive," Miller said.

He and Kirby spoke as the US sought to close a three-phase hostage and ceasefire deal that President Joe Biden unveiled on May 31 to secure the release of the remaining 120 hostages held by Hamas in Gaza.

The Biden administration has continued to speak with the mediators for that deal – Qatar and Egypt – Kirby explained.

"We still believe this is a very live process," he said.

## MAKE

Continued from Page 1

proposed by France."

French President Emmanuel Macron had suggested such a framework a day earlier to de-escalate the situation in the North.

Undoubtedly and justifiably,

Gallant's anger toward the French rose following a decision they made last week to bar Israeli companies from taking part in Eurosatory, an important arms showcase in Paris, and also their support of the International Criminal Court after its prosecutors recommended last month that arrest warrants for war crimes be issued against both Gallant and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Still, the picture with France – while bleak – is not all black. France did have a role in helping Israel knock out of the air more than 300 missiles and rockets that Iran fired at the country two months ago, and it stood strongly with Israel in the immediate aftermath of October 7.

By ruling out any French mediatory role in Lebanon, might Gallant not be working against Israel's interest to move Hezbollah north of Israel's borders, preferably beyond the Litani River? Might this not close off a potential diplomatic path to de-escalation?

As the North is increasingly in flames, and as Hamas, Hezbollah, and Iran all seem satisfied with a war of attrition there, keeping tens of thousands of Israelis from returning to their homes, Israel is weighing the dilemma of its next moves in Lebanon.

Notably, US envoy Amos Hochstein arrived in Israel on Monday to further try and promote some kind of diplomatic solution to prevent this mini-war from turning into a full-fledged one.

In a rare English statement late Sunday night reflecting the urgency of the matter, IDF spokesman R-Adm. Daniel Hagari said, "Hezbollah's increasing aggression is bringing us to the brink of what could be a wider escalation, one that could have devastating consequences for Lebanon and the entire region."

Hagari added that "one way or another, we will ensure the safe and secure return of Israelis to their homes in northern Israel. That is not up for negotiations."

Although Hagari said "one way or another," the number of "ways" to do this is limited.

One way is through a military campaign, and the other is via diplomacy and getting Lebanon to comply with UN Security Council resolution 1701 that put an end to the Second Lebanon War in 2006 and stipulated that the Lebanese army, and not Hezbollah, controls the area south of the Litani – a resolution honored only in its breach.

Iran's firing of drones and missiles at Israel in April has made the decision of whether to go to

war with Hezbollah even weightier since Jerusalem must now consider whether Iran would become involved if Israel attacked its proxy.

If, in the past, Israel was concerned about whether Hezbollah would strike Israel if it attacked Iran and its nuclear installations, now the concern is whether Iran will attack Israel if the Jewish state strikes out at Hezbollah.

The military option, therefore, is one of the ways to push Hezbollah back from the border, but it is one full of enormous risk – not only because of the possibility that Iran could enter the fray but also because even without Iran's direct involvement, Hezbollah's ability to inflict damage with its arsenal of an estimated 150,000 missiles is enormous.

The other way, in Hagari's parlance, to ensure a return of Israeli citizens to their homes is through diplomacy, and it is precisely here that France may be able to play a constructive role.

While France's influence on Lebanese internal politics should not be overstated, it does still exist to some degree because of the country's long-standing historical, cultural, economic, and political ties – France left a strong imprint on the country as a result of its being the mandatory power that governed the country from 1920 to 1943.

Over the years it has provided a great deal of political, economic, and military support to Lebanon, including in propping up state institutions and in building the Lebanese army.

To the surprise of some, France has backed Sleiman Frangieh, Hezbollah's candidate in the never-ending effort to get a president agreed upon by the Lebanese parliament, a job that has been vacant now for nearly two years.

Others, however, were less surprised by this development, given that Macron has played footsie in the past with Hezbollah. In 2021, *Newsweek* reported that France was one of the external actors that went along with Hezbollah taking up key positions in the Lebanese government, instead of an "independent" and "technocratic" government being set up to steer the country out of its myriad problems.

"Macron always viewed Hezbollah as his primary interlocutor in Lebanon," according to the magazine. "After the explosion at the Beirut port in August 2020, Macron visited Lebanon and met with Hezbollah officials. According to the French press, Macron offered to partner with Hezbollah in Lebanon: 'I want to work with you to change Lebanon,' he reportedly told a Hezbollah member of parliament in Beirut."

France, therefore, may have a bit of sway over Hezbollah.

On Thursday at the G7 summit in Italy, Macron announced that Israel, the US, and France have agreed in principle to set up a trilateral group to work together to push forward a road map that France proposed earlier this year to reduce the tension along the border.

"With the United States, we agreed on the principle of a trilateral (contact group) – Israel, the United States, and France – to advance on the road map that we proposed, and we will do the same with the Lebanese authorities," Macron told reporters.

It is that framework that Gallant rejected on Friday.

Again, while Gallant's anger at the French is understandable – both because of its ban on Israeli participation in the weapons exhibit but even more so because Paris supported the ICC after its prosecutor said he and Netanyahu should be arrested – the question is whether possible French assistance in finding a diplomatic solution to the fighting in the North should be summarily dismissed?

In other words, is pique or anger the best way to formulate policy? •

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## Weather



	Wednesday
Kiryat Shmona	36/23
Tiberias	39/24
Haifa	27/21
Netanya	30/23
Ariel	29/19
Tel Aviv	31/23
Jerusalem	36/21
Ashkelon	30/23
Dead Sea	40/28
Beersheba	36/21
Mitzpe Ramon	33/19
Eilat	43/27

### North America Weather Today



# Bellingham the difference in England's hard-fought opening triumph over Serbia



### ANALYSIS

• By LORI EWING

Midfielder Jude Bellingham proved to be the difference as England started its quest for a first European Championship title with an unconvincing 1-0 victory over battling Serbia.

Gareth Southgate's men can take some comfort from opening their campaign with a victory and a clean sheet, especially with Denmark and Slovenia drawing 1-1 earlier on Sunday, as the English sit atop Group C ahead of Thursday's game against the Danes.

But they struggled on a night that belonged to Bellingham, who has been pegged as the player to lead England out of the dark years of disappointment and lived up the billing, rushing in to score with a powerful header in the 13th minute.

Bellingham, who became the first European player to make an appearance at three major international tournaments before turning 21, looked nothing like a 20-year-old and delighted the England fans who serenaded him with 'The Beatles' 'Hey Jude!'

On the heels of a spectacular debut season with Real Madrid, Bellingham roamed all over the Arena AufSchalke pitch, making tackles and demanding the ball. His 56 touches in the first half were the highest in an England team that took the game to Serbia.

Bellingham deflected any praise coming his way though.

"Jude Bellingham is made up of amazing people, really," he said. "It's not just me



ENGLAND'S JUDE BELLINGHAM celebrates after scoring the lone goal in Sunday's 1-0 win over Serbia in the teams' Euro 2024 Group C opener in Gelsenkirchen. (Wolfgang Rattay/Reuters)

who turns up and enjoys it like I do and just plays football, it's because I have such a great support network. My family, my friends, my teammates. Playing football is the easiest part."

Defender Marc Guehi, alongside John Stones on defense, was another plus. With 11 caps before the game, he looked calm and composed at centre back, a position that has caused much concern with the absence of veteran Harry Maguire due to injury.

Southgate pulled Guehi in for a hug and a few congratulatory words after the final whistle with the Crystal Palace player playing an important part in England keeping Serbia out.

But there were plenty of concerns in a second half that conjured memories of previous England disappointments – including the penalty shootout loss to Italy in the 2020 Euro final, and the 2018 World Cup semifinal defeat by Croatia.

The Three Lions' first-half composure disappeared altogether after the break as they allowed Serbia to creep back into the game, and goalkeeper Jordan Pickford was

forced into action, making one terrific leaping save in the dying minutes.

"It's always hard to get off to a good start in a major tournament," Guehi said. "The most important thing was to get the win and we did that. We need to focus now, improve and on to the next."

While the ball went through Bukayo Saka and Kyle Walker on the right – at least in the first 45 minutes – the left side of Phil Foden and Kieran Trippier was pretty stagnant.

Trippier, who is usually a right-back, was played out of position and Foden was not in the more central midfield spot he thrived in during the second half of his Manchester City season.

Southgate put a positive spin on the narrow victory though.

"We had to suffer a bit which I think is really good for us," he said. "Second half we didn't keep it as well as I would have liked but to get the win is very important." (Reuters)

**On TV: 2024 European Championship Group Stage:** Turkey vs Georgia (live on Channel 11 and Sport 1 at 7 p.m.); Portugal vs Czech Republic (live on Sport 1 at 10 p.m.).

## Romania stuns Ukraine with 1st Euro W in 24 years

MUNICH (Reuters) – Romania turned in a high-octane performance to win its first European Championship match in 24 years with an emphatic 3-0 victory over Ukraine in their Group E opener on Monday.

Before the match, Romania coach Edward Iordanescu said his players would fight for every meter on the pitch and they did just that, flying into tackles and racing all over to defend in waves as their boisterous supporters roared them on.

"We've had golden generations with big performances but this generation represents the soul," Iordanescu said. "This team has put the biggest effort into everything. As big a heart as this team, nobody has ever had. This generation is limitless."

Stunning long-range strikes in each half, one from captain and man-of-the-match Nicolae Stanciu and the other from midfielder Razvan Marin, shocked Serhiy Rebrov's Ukraine, which had dominated the opening 20 minutes.

Stanciu's cannon shot into the top right hand corner gave Ukraine goalkeeper Andriy Lunin little chance. The Real Madrid 'keeper should have done better on the second, however, which slipped underneath him as he dived.

"I'm really disappointed with our performance," Ukraine captain Taras Stepanenko said. "Today we were not the team we always were. Romania deserved this win and we have to keep going."

In Monday's other matches, Belgium looked to redeem itself after a brutal showing at the 2022 World Cup in its opener against Slovakia, while France took on Austria in the day's third game as French manager Didier Deschamps attempts to become the first person to win the World Cup and Euros as both a player and coach.

## Braves ace Max Fried mulls dominance, uncertainty



### SPOTLIGHT

• By GABE LACQUES

On a recent afternoon, Max Fried ducked out of the heat and bounded purposefully into the Atlanta Braves clubhouse, his workout complete. He paused at his locker just long enough to kick off his spikes, swiveled and took a seat at a table in the center of the room.

And stared furtively at a chessboard.

The pregame routine allowed enough time to complete a match and feed the left-hander's recent chess jones. He got into it this winter, studied instructional videos and plays with friendly adversaries when he gets the chance, befitting a guy who admits that "if you put a board game in front of me, I'm more than likely excited to play it."

Fried was raised on classics like Monopoly and Clue, fueling constant competition in Jonathan and Carrie Fried's Los Angeles household. Like any good millennial, Fried, 30, now gravitates toward Catan.

"It's a fun game, a strategy game," he says of the island settlement competition. "It's always fun when you gotta devise a plan of attack, and then figure out how to change it when things don't go your way. Always being OK with changing what's going on."

It is an appropriate diversion for one of the game's great left-handed pitchers.

In an era when most starting pitchers need a 96 mph fastball to gain entry to the big leagues, Fried commands a slightly slower lane, leaning on a beguiling six-pitch mix to keep hitters off balance.

In a season in which the Braves were expected to win a seventh consecutive division title – a run that neatly coincides with Fried's ascension to ace – the club is instead mired in an extended funk and perhaps hopelessly



ONLY TWO Jewish pitchers have won the Cy Young award – Sandy Koufax 1963, '65, '66 and Steve Stone (1980). Atlanta Braves starter Max Fried is aiming to become the third. (Reuters)

behind the Philadelphia Phillies in the NL East.

And for a dude with a youthful appearance and a pliable 6-foot-4, 190-pound frame, Fried must suddenly confront the approach of middle age of his career – with a World Series star turn behind him and free agency looming this winter, Fried has some fascinating things in both the front and rearview mirrors.

"I still feel like I'm 23," says Fried of his age when he made his major league debut in August 2017. "It's a weird concept to sit here and say I'm 30, with parts of eight different years in the big leagues. It's a little strange, because I still feel like in my core, I'm a young guy who's still learning and trying to constantly master his craft. And feel like I still have so much more to give."

"It's a little weird to be at that point where you can look back, because you've had some experience. But also for me, I feel like I have so much more to look forward to, that it's kind of a weird in between."

After a four-year run that included a 52-20 record, 3.06 ERA (142 adjusted), fifth- and second-place Cy Young Award finishes and his World Series heroics, Fried was sidelined for most of the 2023 season. A forearm strain and hamstring injury limited him to just 14 starts and 77 2/3 innings.

He still posted a 2.55 ERA, but the Braves were again KO'd from the NL Division Series in Philadelphia. Healthy again this year, Fried got bombed in his first two starts.

He's been virtually untouchable since.

Fried has a 2.20 ERA in his last 11 starts, including a 92-pitch shutout against Miami on April 22 and a career-high 13 strikeouts against Boston at Fenway Park on June 5.

The method to the magic is that six-pitch mix – a half-dozen offerings that are legitimate, none for show, and all able to be called upon when the situation demands it.

This year, he's throwing his cutter a bit more often, a different look than his 94-mph fastball. Yet his putaway pitch remains his curveball, a beguiling, big-breaking monster that comes in around 76 mph.

Good luck squaring it up: Fried's 3.20 ERA and 1.06 WHIP are nice enough, but more telling is the 97th percentile in which his average opponent exit velocity (84.8 mph) and ground-ball rate (61%) rank.

"Hitting is all about timing," says Fried. "And if you can disrupt timing, you're going to give yourself the best chance as a pitcher."

And on a night-to-night basis, the mix – which also includes a changeup, slider and cutter – is a mystery for the hitter.

"If you watch Max in the dug-out between innings," says catcher Sean Murphy, "he's constantly letting you know – 'I've got this working, I don't have this working. This feels bad, this feels good.' That can change throughout the game."

"Max can pitch with a bunch

of different styles. He can play north-south, he can play east-west, he can adjust and develop a game plan for the next inning based on what he felt the previous inning."

Murphy says Fried's game prep is so vigorous that he can trust the lefty's conviction, knowing "it comes from a place of knowledge." That part of his game has probably developed the most in his five full seasons in Atlanta.

"It's just the consistency and Max's dedication to the game and what he does – just a consummate pro," says manager Brian Snitker, whose first full year as manager came in Fried's 2017 debut season. "And when he's throwing the ball really well, he's one of the best in the business."

"It's been neat that I've been on this ride the whole time and seen his growth and maturity and the pitcher he's become."

The next stop on the ride is unknown. Fried is perhaps the most prominent player Atlanta has failed to secure on a long-term contract, and he can be a free agent after the season.

Fried says he "hasn't even begun to think about anything in that realm," what with the 35-30 Braves trying to get right and secure a wild card spot well within their grasp.

Still, the club eyes a bigger picture. Rookies Spencer Schwellenbach and Hurston Waldrep have arrived, with an eye toward giving the current big three of Fried, Chris Sale and Reynaldo Lopez extra rest.

If ace Spencer Strider is lost to Tommy John surgery, perhaps a staff with more bullets come October will reap a more positive result.

As for Fried, it is all about maintaining equilibrium, about mixing pitches and inducing harmless contact and taking what hitters leave for him. The chess game continues.

"Baseball's a really funny game," he said the other night, after the Orioles beat him.

"When you're riding the highs, it'll humble you. And when you're riding down low, it's going to be able to lift you up."

(USA Today/TNS)

## DeChambeau wins US Open as McIlroy's major misery continues

### GOLF

Bryson DeChambeau came out on top in a dramatic final round, back nine battle with Rory McIlroy to win the US Open by one shot on Sunday as the Northern Irishman's major misery continued at Pinehurst resort in North Carolina.

Poised to end a decade long major drought, McIlroy collapsed at the finish with bogey's on three of his final four holes, including a heart-breaker at the 18th where he missed from inside four feet.

At the same time, playing in the final pair, DeChambeau sent his tee shot into the rough but held his nerve with a brilliant up and down to save par for a final round one-over 71.

That was good enough to earn the LIV Golf standard bearer a heart-stopping victory with a six-under 274 winning total.

"Oh, man, I didn't want to finish second again," said DeChambeau, runner-up at last month's PGA Championship. "PGA really stung."

"As much as it is heartbreaking for some people, it was heartbreak for me at the PGA. I really wanted this one."

"When I turned the corner and saw I was a couple back, I said, nope, I'm not going to let that happen."

"I was a little lucky. Rory didn't make a couple putts that he could have coming in. I had an amazing up-and-down on the last."

"I don't know what else to say. It's a dream come true." McIlroy had a final round 69 to finish alone in second one ahead of Americans Patrick Cantlay (70) and Tony Finau (67).

It was the second career major win for DeChambeau,



BRYSON DECHAMBEAU celebrates after his par putt on the 18th green to win the US Open at Pinehurst on Sunday. (Jim Dedmon/USA Today Sports)

his first coming at the 2020 US Open.

The 30-year-old American started the day at the top of the leaderboard three clear of the chasing pack that included McIlroy but trailed the world number three by two with five holes to play.

"Ultimately on 13, I knew I had to make birdie there to give myself a chance because Rory was going on a heater," said DeChambeau, who collected his last birdie of the day at 13. "[McIlroy] slipped up a couple on the way coming in, and I just kept staying the course."

DeChambeau had looked headed for another second place until McIlroy's sudden collapse.

McIlroy had used a red hot putter to snatch the lead, but with the finish line in sight, suddenly went cold on the greens missing from 30 inches at the 16th and from inside four-feet at 18 leaving

the Northern Irishman shell-shocked as he walked off the course and quickly into his car putting the disaster in his rearview mirror.

The US Open thriller showcased golf's best providing fans something they have been regularly denied since the sport split into two camps with the PGA Tour on one side and Saudi-backed rebel circuit LIV Golf on the other.

The final round on a tricky Pinehurst No. 2 layout featured two of the game's more intriguing personalities with McIlroy, long one of golf's most popular players and the big-hitting DeChambeau one of the most entertaining.

Along with the silver trophy, a record \$4.3 million winner's purse golf bragging rights were also on the line with a LIV golfer again claiming a major title.

"I hope this can bridge the gap between a divided game," said DeChambeau. "All I want to do is entertain and do my best for the game of golf, execute and provide some awesome entertainment for the fans."

"From at least what I can tell, that's what the fans want, and they deserve that."

"Let bygones be bygones and go figure it out." (Reuters)

# COMMENT & FEATURES

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## THE JERUSALEM POST

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## Sanction this

I ran. Cuba. North Korea. Russia. Syria. Tzav 9? Among this veritable “who’s who” of picture-perfect travel destinations currently under US sanctions is an Israeli entity known as Tzav 9 (Order 9).

The administration of US President Joe Biden imposed sanctions on Friday on this obscure group of activists for attacking humanitarian aid convoys destined for Palestinian civilians in Gaza, in the latest round of penalties against Israelis accused by Washington of undermining efforts toward peace and stability.

Tzav 9 says the aid should be stopped because it ends up in the hands of Hamas – a view shared by a majority of Israelis. There have been multiple accusations, both from watchdog groups and Gazan civilians themselves of how Hamas has repeatedly stolen international aid destined for its civilians. This is the same Hamas who brought war to the Gazan people on October 7.

The group defended itself in a statement, saying, “The effort to prevent a rightful democratic nonviolent protest in order to keep supplying Hamas with aid during the war goes against any American and liberal values.”

“Much of the aid transferred to Gaza falls directly into the hands of the terrorist organization Hamas, which massacred, murdered, and raped hundreds of women, elderly, and children (including American citizens), rather than going to the Gazan civilians.”

Tzav 9 has not been alone in its actions, either. Over the months, hostages’ relatives have also appeared at the border crossings into Gaza in attempts to block humanitarian aid from entering the Strip in an attempt to protest against the failure to secure the release of their loved ones and the lack of aid reaching them.

The Biden administration, however, never decided to sanction the hostages’ families.

While clearly not at the top of the sanction heap in terms of quantity or importance, the sanctioning of Israeli groups that are in effect protesting any help given to Hamas while Israelis remain in captivity shows the detachment from reality in this part of the world that the Biden administration exists in.

The US has taken action against Jewish groups and individuals involved in “violence and human rights abuses” in the region before, but it is relatively rare. The recent sanctions on Tzav 9 are not unprecedented but still notable.

They join those West Bank Jews who last year were banned from entering the US and assets were frozen because of altercations with local Palestinians. The new sanctions bar members of Tzav 9 from financial transactions with American entities and restrict their travel to the US. Any assets they have in the US will be frozen. The State Department also called on the Israeli government to ensure the safety of humanitarian convoys transiting through Israel and the West Bank en route to Gaza.

However, targeting a group like Tzav 9, specifically for obstructing humanitarian aid to Gaza, is particularly notable because it highlights the US government’s concern over actions that exacerbate humanitarian crises.

Nobody should be higher up on the US’s list of groups exacerbating humanitarian crises right now than Hamas or Hezbollah. Certainly not Tzav 9.

The announcement by the State Department of the financial restrictions labels Tzav 9 a “violent extremist” group, and last month, after two aid trucks were attacked in Israel en route to Gaza, US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan told reporters in Washington: “It is a total outrage that there are people who are attacking and looting these convoys.”

“We are looking at the tools that we have to respond to this,” Sullivan said. “We are also raising our concerns at the highest level of the Israeli government and it’s something that we make no bones about – this is completely and utterly unacceptable behavior.”

Well, Mr. Sullivan. After nearly nine months of war – nine months of innocent Israeli citizens being held hostage in the apartments of Gazan civilians, nine months of Hamas continuing to prevent any ceasefire deal from being signed despite Israel’s willingness to compromise, nine months of Israel’s North suffering daily bombardment from Hezbollah terrorists – we have here a different definition of what is “completely and utterly unacceptable behavior.”

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A BOAT cruises on the Seine River as part of a rehearsal for the 2024 Summer Olympics opening ceremony, in Paris. The writer asks: ‘At what point do we decide to boycott those who boycott us?’ (Benoit Tessier/Reuters)

## Israelis need not apply

*Unless it helps their narrative*

• By LAURA JAMPOLE

At what point do we say “enough” and boycott those who boycott us? When do we stop begging to be invited to the ball?

In approximately one month, Israel is slated to send its representatives to Paris to compete in the 2024 Olympics. The Olympics is where good sportsmanship is supposed to foster brotherhood and supersede politics and conflict; however, unlike every other country, Israel will have to spend NIS 5 million (\$1.37 million) to secure the safety of the Israeli delegation because their lives are in danger.

This is in no way a criticism of the athletes who have spent years – sometimes decades – working to become the best in their fields. It is a wonderful point of pride to see athletes compete wearing the Star of David. They

have earned those places.

It is heartbreaking to think of all their work and dedication, hopes and dreams, and suggest they can’t, or shouldn’t, see things through to the end. The athletes and their families have spent countless hours and untold amounts of money to achieve the nearly impossible. They should be commended and be able to compete in this prestigious competition, in peace, as equals.

But considering recent, as well as more distant events, perhaps it is time to reevaluate how we chose to interact with other countries and on the global stage. Maybe it’s time to reevaluate sending our delegates to a country that has made it clear that Israelis are not welcome and where their lives are in danger simply for being Israeli.

Less than three weeks ago, the organizers of Eurosatory 2024 and the French Defense Ministry banned Israeli

companies from participating in this major European trade show for the defense and security industries. Every one of the 74 Israeli participating companies spent countless hours over years, and millions of shekels, in preparation for this global expo, only to be told less than three weeks before it was to open that their presence was no longer welcome.

To add insult to injury, only days ago, the expo organizers went even further, banning Israelis from even attending this event due to France’s concern that “any [Israeli] individual or legal entity could act as an intermediary for Israeli companies.”

France already has had a long and questionable history with Israel. Both organizers would realize financial gain, not loss, from visiting Israeli delegates, support teams, and supporters. Despite that, both organizers are either tacitly

or explicitly saying: “Israelis need not apply.”

There are questions that beg to be asked: What good will come from a few (very few) opportunities for a few moments of glory on a podium, in the shadow of where we are now in time and history? To prove we are here? We are here. No outside validation is necessary.

What is the point of supporting the farce of the Olympics – “build a better world through sport” – if millions of shekels are needed to protect our athletes while under their banner?

Instead, perhaps the Olympic Committee of Israel should choose to stand in solidarity with their fellow countrymen who have been banned from attending what they see as their Olympics, and pull out.

*The writer is a journalist who has worked for news organizations in Israel and abroad.*

## Combating antisemitism

*The Diaspora must take the lead*

• By TOVA HERZL

These are tough weeks for me, a child of Hungarian Holocaust survivors, as we mark 80 years since half a million of us were murdered in seven weeks. Two linked phenomena serve as background to this anniversary – the Israel-Hamas war, and antisemitism at levels not seen since those times.

Sadly, antisemitism is permanent, like a chronic illness that erupts periodically. Israel, which should lead the effort to combat it, is currently unable: it faces many difficulties, and most of its government seems either unable or unwilling to look beyond local political considerations.

This means that by default, the Diaspora must take a leading role in combating antisemitism. While certain structures and individuals are taking action, I worry that some responses to emergent antisemitism resemble a deer caught in the headlights and frozen with shock.

What can be done? Here, in no particular order, a distressed Israeli shares some thoughts.

First, do we know what is out there, beyond the headlines? Is it completely dark? Israel did not win the political-musical Eurovision Song Contest, as embattled Ukraine did two years ago. But it did well enough to disprove that “all Europeans are Israel-hating antisemites.”

It should be possible to lean on such positive or even on neutral sentiments to build coalitions.

Antisemitism is arguably the oldest known national prejudice, but it is not the only one.



FOREIGN MINISTER Israel Katz addresses the Knesset, last month. His reaction to Spain’s recognition of Palestine included an absurd reference to the Inquisition, the writer says. (Yonatan Sindel/Flash90)

Joining with other groups (Roma? Asian immigrants?) who also suffer from discrimination may help address our sense of isolation while also improving the surrounding discourse.

In this context, it must be emphasized: all ethnic generalizations are unacceptable. Whoever says that “Arabs are...,” “Muslims think...,” or “French usually...” cannot complain if specific qualities are attributed to Jews.

Maybe advocates should be recruited among influential individuals who have previously shown interest or support. They could be active academics, retired politicians, church leaders, artists. Some might decline to lead a campaign against antisemitism at this

complicated time, others may agree.

Such partnerships could be taken to a higher and more systematic level. For example, arranging academic seminars on antisemitism, ideally with press coverage. They should target the large, uniformed center, rather than avowed antisemites or “liberal” useful idiots who support Hamas; there is no point in trying to convince them.

A local forum to combat antisemitism with a defined agenda, like engaging with educational systems, could be set up. Collaboration with similar groups elsewhere – regional, national, international – might expand targets, say to legislation. Naturally, strong communities would reach out to weak-

er ones and help them answer their specific needs.

Despite being a critic of Israel’s government, it pains me to hear my leaders lambasted by foreigners. But we must understand that some criticism of Israel is legitimate, and that automatically attributing all to antisemitism, rather than responding to the substance, is both wrong and unhelpful.

Thus, when the United States government decided to sanction settlers for violence against Palestinians, our finance minister responded that “Biden is cooperating with antisemitic lies.” Israel’s foreign minister recently took this approach to the point of absurdity: his reaction to Spain’s recognition of Palestine recalled the Inquisition and forced conversions of

Jews, no less.

Finally, experience taught me to spell out basics, which seem obvious to me, but may not be so to others.

I was Israel’s first ambassador to the Baltic countries after the collapse of the Soviet Union, when they began to face their ugly pasts. Many in Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia, including senior officials, would state that collaboration with the Nazis had been terribly wrong, but their countries had suffered during the first communist occupation (1940-1941), many Jews had been communists, so their actions when Nazis took over were natural.

I adopted a self-righteous “I will not dignify justifying genocide with a response!” but soon realized that they had no idea why I was indignant.

So, I explained. One example: There had been more local Poles than Jews among communist leaders, yet no one shot entire Polish populations into pits. I wrote and spoke, privately and publicly. Soon, that obviously antisemitic statement disappeared from the discourse, at least in my presence.

I believe that drawing effectively on available resources – intellectual, organizational, financial, among others – to counter antisemitism will re-energize Diaspora communities. Given our partnership, this will also provide encouragement and support to Israel at its fragile time of need.

*The writer was Israel’s first ambassador to the Baltic states after the disintegration of the Soviet Union, ambassador to South Africa, and congressional liaison officer at the embassy in Washington. She is a graduate of Israel’s National Defense College.*

# UK's Labour pledges to recognize Palestine

• By NEVILLE TELLER

Britain is in the throes of a general election. The nation goes to the polls on July 4. All the indications are that the Labour Party will sweep the board with a resounding win, and that its leader, Sir Keir Starmer, will be the United Kingdom's next prime minister.

On June 13, the party published the manifesto on which it is fighting the election. Amid a plethora of domestic and international policy commitments, the manifesto turns briefly to the Middle East. "Palestinian statehood," it declares, "is the inalienable right of the Palestinian people. It is not in the gift of any neighbor" [in other words, Israel], "and is also essential to the long-term security of Israel."

The manifesto commits a future Labour government to recognizing a Palestinian state "as a contribution to a renewed peace process which results in a two-state solution, with a safe and secure Israel alongside a viable and sovereign Palestinian state."

Appalled by the Hamas attack of October 7, Starmer stood shoulder-to-shoulder with UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, US President Joe Biden, and most Western political leaders, in proclaiming Israel's right to defend itself. However, his stance was not acceptable to two entities he faces on his own political terrain. One is the powerful hard-Left element within his party which, since taking over as leader from Jeremy Corbyn, he has managed to disempower and partially subdue. The other is the strong Muslim presence in some Labour-held constituencies.

Labour's pro-Palestine component began to assert itself on October 7 itself, with scattered voices approving the Hamas attack. The collateral civilian deaths and casualties arising from the IDF campaign were enough for the party's support for Israel to begin to slide. For a few weeks, the official Labour line was to call for humanitarian pauses in the fighting, a position that was not anti-Israel enough for some, and



BRITAIN'S LABOUR PARTY leader Keir Starmer speaks at a campaign event, last week. All indications are that Labour will sweep the board with a resounding win, and that Starmer will be Britain's next prime minister, the writer notes. (Phil Noble/Reuters)

prompted Labour resignations in councils and from its parliamentary front bench. Finally, on February 24, Labour policy officially changed to a call for "an immediate humanitarian ceasefire."

Then came the first test of electoral opinion in the UK since October 7. On May 2, 2024, local elections took place across the country to select councilors, mayors, and other local government representatives. The results, no doubt to Starmer's dismay, indicated that Labour's position on the Israel-Hamas war had dented its support in Muslim areas.

The BBC analyzed 58 local council areas where more than 20% of the residents identify as

Muslim. It found that Labour's share of the vote had slipped by 21% in 2021, the last time most seats were contested.

Ali Milani, chair of Labour Muslim Network, said Labour's positioning on Gaza "is going to have a serious electoral consequence. If I was a Labour MP in Bradford or Birmingham or Leicester or parts of London or Manchester [strong Muslim areas], I would be seriously concerned."

This is the background to the recognition pledge contained in the Labour Party manifesto.

The composition of British society is changing fast. In 2011, some 2.7 million UK citizens identified as "Muslim," making up 4.9% of the total popula-

tion. By 2021, overall numbers of self-identifying Muslims had reached 3.9 million, forming some 6.5% of the UK total. That is a constituency that Labour clearly believes cannot be ignored electorally, especially those areas where Muslims congregate to form a majority of the local population.

By comparison, the total number of people self-identifying as Jews in the UK in 2021 was about 270,000, making up some 0.42% of the total population.

The stark figures do not, of course, tell the whole story as regards political clout. As in any society, British Jews punch well above their weight in the many and varied fields they engage

in, while all political and social organizations formally abhor antisemitism or any form of discrimination based on ethnic, racial, or religious grounds.

The main difficulty with statements about Middle East affairs from concerned, but uninvolved, parties is the lack of flesh on the bones of advice. For example, no one who has recognized Palestine as a sovereign state is able to define its borders, while advocates of the two-state solution when speaking of borders usually refer vaguely to the situation just prior to the Six Day War.

ON JUNE 5, 1967 the whole of the West Bank and east Jerusalem was controlled

by Jordan, while Gaza was part of Egypt's Sinai region. This position had remained unchanged since the Israeli, Jordanian, and Egyptian armies stopped fighting during the course of 1949. Then, for nigh on 20 years, Jordan and Egypt retained control of the land they had conquered after attacking Israel in 1948, yet neither separately nor together did they make any move to establish a Palestinian state.

In the Six Day War, Israel reconquered these areas, as well as a great deal more. Once in Israel's hands, the West Bank and Gaza somehow morphed into "occupied Palestinian land" (which no

one previously claimed them to be; indeed West Bank Arabs remained Jordanian citizens until 1988). The idea of an Arab Palestine has since become a political reality.

Labour's recognition pledge takes no account of the fact that the Palestinian leadership is currently divided between the Fatah-controlled Palestinian Authority (PA) and Hamas; that Palestinian opinion heavily favors Hamas; that the PA as a whole, as well as its leader, President Mahmoud Abbas, are regarded as corrupt and are deeply unpopular.

On the other hand, the argument that eventually recognizing a Palestinian state would somehow reward Hamas for its bloodthirsty attack of October 7 does not hold water. The two-state solution is the last thing Hamas desires. If it were ever established, it would represent a bitter blow to Hamas's fundamental purpose – to eliminate Israel altogether. As far as Hamas and its fundamentalist supporters are concerned, establishing two states would be like a red rag to a bull. The fight to eliminate Israel would continue unabated.

Unlike the recent moves by Ireland, Spain, Norway, and Slovenia which recognized the non-existent Palestinian state outright, the Labour commitment to recognizing a Palestinian state is nuanced. It will occur as part of a peace process and as such, echoes the position outlined in January by UK Foreign Secretary Lord David Cameron. Palestinian statehood should be part of a process, he declared, and recognition would come at what has been described as "an appropriate time in peace talks."

By adopting this more considered position, Starmer is certainly risking alienating both his left-wing and his Muslim constituency. It is a fine line he is treading.

The writer is the Middle East correspondent for Eurasia Review. His latest book is *Trump and the Holy Land: 2016-2020*. Follow him at: [www.a-mid-east-journal.blogspot.com](http://www.a-mid-east-journal.blogspot.com).

## Peeking into the minds of pro-Palestine rage promoters

• By YISRAEL MEDAD

One would hope that elements of the rhetoric emanating from pro-Palestine activists swarming the streets of New York, London, Berlin, and campuses across America and Europe would cause even objective observers to wonder whether Newspeak has become the lingua franca.

As George Orwell explained, Newspeak is a language that is characterized by complex thoughts being reduced to simple terms to produce simplistic meanings.

In a June 1946 essay, he expanded on that, noting that "when the general atmosphere is bad, language must suffer... if thought corrupts language, language can also corrupt thought."

A figure in his *Nineteen Eighty-Four* novel makes clear what will happen, so relevant to today: "literature of the past will have been destroyed... not merely changed into something different, but actually contradictory of what they used to be."

Those elements of revolutionary linguistics need to be recalled if one wishes an explanation of why the Brooklyn Museum and some of its directors have become targets of the packs of roaming militants. How could they possibly justify attacking cultural institutions or, as an example, "The Nova Music Festival Exhibition," one devoted to humanism, on Manhattan's Wall Street?

At the Within Our Lifetime website, I found a page titled, "Why We Protested Nova: Confronting Zionist Propaganda and the Manufacturing of Consent for Genocide." WOL is led by Nerdeen Kiswani, CUNY Law School graduate and, in 2022, its infamous commencement speaker, who announced the intention to "create networks and programs within the CUNY Jewish population to... unlearn Zionism so they may form their own Jewish identity." It is the prime mover of many of the pro-Palestine surges of rampage.

In answer to that self-posed question, WOL would want us to believe that "the Nova music festival was a



A DEMONSTRATION is held in London, earlier this month. Even to objective observers, some of the pro-Palestinian rhetoric heard across the US and Europe should cause them to wonder whether Newspeak has become the lingua franca, the writer maintains. (Chris J. Ratcliffe/Reuters)

rave next to a concentration camp," a camp called Gaza. Gaza has been enclosed by a wall "erected to isolate Gaza from the outside world in 2005." Moreover, "the Israeli Occupation Forces launches missiles into the strip regularly."

Kiswani belittles the suffering that was Nova and instead directs attention to "why is no one talking about the Israeli occupation forces gunning down their own people and burning down cars with the missile strikes? Or the fact that they killed many hostages in Gaza? The exhibit is pure propaganda."

She prevaricates, fabricates, and for her, the exhibition serves "only one purpose: to make this level of colonial violence acceptable to the US public." And to top this all off, in a June 12 post on X, she wrote, "Imagine there was a museum dedicated to the slave owner 'victims' of slave rebellions? Or nazi 'victims' of Jewish resistance? That's what the nova exhibit is. That's why cultural institutions must be confronted."

Most of us truly do not presume or even imagine that pro-Palestine propaganda totally inverts history and fact, invents comparisons, and

has no problem voicing hateful and spiteful speech. What is at work here is not just corrupting a narrative by falsifying events, but that the ultimate purpose is to gain allies. This is intersectionality at work.

Another master is Mehdi Hasan. On June 12, he tweeted: "Entire US political and media class: 'Israel doesn't target civilians!'" To that, he attached a screenshot of the *Jerusalem Post* story that quoted Israel Defense and Security Forum CEO Lt.-Col. (res.) Yaron Buskila discussing Israel's northern front. Buskila is not a general, nor is he on active or even reserve duty.

The forum is an NGO. But Hasan described him as an "Israeli general." Moreover, Buskila spoke of "civilian infrastructure," not humans. But who grasps what Hasan has done? He does this daily, sometimes on multiple occasions. Hasan uses a term "Insta-Genocide" because, perhaps, a simple "genocide" is not cool enough.

In another tweet also on June 12, Hasan sought to counter the words of America's UN Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield that Israel accepted the latest Biden ceasefire agreement, and wrote, "There is zero

public evidence that Israel has accepted this deal. The gaslighting continues. Insane to watch in real time, but it is relentless." I checked, but he did not seem to correct himself.

Hasan has piled up a good few entries at the CAMERA website. It notes that he employs three main tactics. The first is the straw man fallacy. The second is to make outlandish claims and then use false appeals to authority to obfuscate. And the last is to lie by omission. If one is propagandizing on behalf of the idea of an Arab Palestine, those tactics would seem to be the best methodology.

If challenged that the last thing an Arab state of Palestine would turn out to be is a heaven for progressives, for LGBT persons, atheists, and other staples of their normative radical liberal vision for society, that will be shrugged off. Palestine is permitted all consideration for its sins, as long as Zionism's settler "colonialism" is defeated.

Their preferred terminology is that taken for the experience of the Jews during their history. Terms like genocide; concentration camp; starvation; ghetto. Jewish identity is removed, only to be awarded to a population element that, for over 100 years, has systematically sought to kill and rape and plunder as many Jews as possible; a populace whose leaders flocked to Berlin during World War II, seeking Hitler's protection and seeking to assist, yes, the Holocaust.

The tools are false misleading comparisons; inverted narratives; ignoring uncomfortable issues; false data. IfNotNow has been running a campaign against AIPAC under the theme "the pro-war lobby" as if Hamas didn't initiate the hostilities. It will loudly proclaim the struggle for Palestine must be "by any means possible," echoing Frantz Fanon, but if questioned why cannot Israel then defend itself similarly, the questioner is denounced and dismissed.

They have taken away a freedom of which Orwell wrote: "The freedom to say that two plus two make four."

The writer is a researcher, analyst, and opinion commentator on political, cultural, and media issues.

# Serbia and Kosovo

## How do we get to mutual recognition?

• By ALON BEN-MEIR

US Ambassador to Kosovo Jeffrey Haver, recently stated that “The conclusion of this process [the dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia] must be recognition between the two countries because anything less than this does not fulfill the vision we have for a complete, free, prosperous and peaceful Europe.”

Both sides must make concessions to mitigate their differences and agree in advance that the purpose of the negotiating process, the “give-and-take,” will lead to mutual recognition.

The failure of past negotiations can be primarily attributed to two issues. The first is that, in its position as mediator, the European Union (EU), did not insist on the need for reciprocal measures – particularly on Serbia’s part – to advance the negotiating process. The second, that Serbian President Aleksandr Vucic has repeatedly stated he will not recognize Kosovo, irrespective of the changing circumstances.

What will it take to persuade Vucic to change his position, given his awareness of the irrevocability of Kosovo’s sovereignty? Vucic also knows that Serbia’s prospective membership in the EU, which he seeks, will be impossible without Serbia-Kosovo recognition.

Although refusing to recognize Kosovo clashes with Vucic’s interest in joining the EU, he chooses to stick to his principles due to an aggregate of circumstances, including the objection by Russian President Vladimir Putin, with whom Vucic wants to maintain strong ties; expectations of major concessions from Kosovo; a lack of concerted pressure from the EU; Vucic’s sense that he has the upper hand because Kosovo needs Serbia’s recognition more than the other way around; and a lack of urgency to join the EU.

The Franco-German plan “Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue: Agree-



US TROOPS from the Texas Army National Guard, part of NATO reinforcements, patrol the Kosovo-Serbia border in Leposavic, Kosovo, earlier this year. (Valdrin Xhemaj/Reuters)

ment on the path to normalization between Kosovo and Serbia,” presented on February 27, 2023, contains all the elements that, if implemented, would lead to mutual recognition. Although Vucic and Kosovo Prime Minister Albin Kurti agreed to adopt the plan, they refused to sign it.

The Germans and the French stated that both sides had committed to executing the plan and that their verbal commitment was presumably sufficient.

Neither side made any significant move to implement any of the plan’s provisions. Since then, not only has there been no progress in the dialogue between the countries, but the relationship has further deteriorated. In some ways, the EU leaned much heavier on Kurti than on Vucic, particularly on the fundamental issue

of the municipality association, to break the impasse.

Article 7 of the Franco-German plan called on “Both Parties [to] commit to establish specific arrangements and guarantees, in accordance with relevant Council of Europe instruments and by drawing on existing European experiences, to ensure an appropriate level of self-management for the Serbian community in Kosovo and ability for service provision in specific areas, including the possibility for financial support by Serbia and a direct communication channel for the Serbian community to the Government of Kosovo.”

Although the Association of Serb Municipalities was agreed upon by Kosovo more than a decade ago, and Kurti committed to it verbally, he subsequently reneged, fearing that

such a move was inconsistent with Kosovo’s constitution and would eventually cede the territory to Serbia.

Kurti’s objection to the Association plan further strained relations with Brussels and Washington because of the way he handled many issues of concern to the Serbian community in Kosovo, including license plates; tightening the government’s grip on Serbian-majority areas; introducing the euro to replace the Serbian dinar; his deployment of heavily armed special police to the North; installing Albanian mayors in the predominantly Serbian communities who won their elections that had less than 3.5% turnout; and other measures which often appear arbitrary and extremely counterproductive.

As a result, the EU imposed sanc-

tions, including banning some high-level meetings between EU and Kosovar officials, pausing EU projects, and curbing funding streams for Kosovo.

Now that the EU elections are over and a new mediator will soon be appointed to restart the dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade, I believe that he or she ought to start afresh. First, the sanctions on Kosovo should be lifted and a new negotiating strategy should be established, based on a reciprocal negotiating process between the two countries and providing incentives to the party that demonstrates genuine willingness to cooperate.

Article 2 of the German-French plan should be reintroduced as the basis for new dialogue and set the tone for the negotiation as articulated in the plan, which states: “Both Parties will be guided by the aims and principles laid down in the United Nations Charter, especially those of the sovereign equality of all States, respect for their independence, autonomy, and territorial integrity, the right of self-determination, the protection of human rights, and non-discrimination.”

The negotiation should commence with the Association of Serb Municipalities, which is the most critical issue. A resolution to this particular problem could pave the way for further progress on many other fronts and gradually over time advance the negotiating process toward mutual recognition. Serbia must reciprocate by not impeding Kosovo’s membership to any international organization of its choice as the association process progresses. Moreover, Serbia must agree to implement Article 1, which calls for both sides to “develop normal, good-neighborly relations with each other on the basis of equal rights.” Serbia can demonstrate that which, in any event, is necessary to reduce the tension with Kosovo and help create a conducive atmosphere for continued collaboration.

Another example is if Kosovo “[for-

malizes] the status of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Kosovo and afford[s] a strong level of protection to the Serbian religious and cultural heritage sites, in line with existing European models,” as called for in Article 7, Serbia should reciprocate by recognizing Kosovo’s “documents and national symbols, including passports, diplomas, license plates, and customs stamps,” per Article 1.

Cementing such collaboration is articulated in Article 9 of the plan, which calls on “Both Parties [to] take note of the EU’s and other donors’ commitment to establishing a special investment and financial support package for joint projects of the Parties in economic development, connectivity, green transition, and other key areas [emphasis added].”

“Joint projects” are particularly important as they create day-to-day encounters that further improve their neighborly relations.

Since the Franco-German plan requires both sides to take equal measures to advance mutual recognition and the process of integration into the EU, the EU mediators will need to create incentives for the party that demonstrates willingness, readiness, and ability to act on the plan that calls on both sides to take measures in many areas.

In the final analysis, since Kosovo wants to integrate into the EU as quickly as possible, it would be incumbent upon Kurti or his successor to fully cooperate with the EU and the US. In the past, Kurti has not demonstrated such cooperation and has ended up alienating the EU to the point of being sanctioned. This is a lesson he should bear in mind, especially at this juncture when a new EU mediator is appointed to facilitate mutuality of recognition between Serbia and Kosovo.

The writer is a retired professor of international relations, most recently at the Center for Global Affairs at NYU. He taught courses on international negotiation and Middle Eastern studies. [alonben-meir.com](mailto:alonben-meir.com)

# The roots of Islamic antisemitism

• By MICHAEL J SALAMON

Dr. Andrew Bostom, a retired professor of medicine at Brown University and a renowned critic of Islam, has published several works tracing the historical roots of antisemitism within Islam. According to Bostom, the antisemitism we are witnessing today is not a novel phenomenon and did not begin with the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948.

Historical records reveal that when the esteemed polymath and writer Abu Uthman Amr ibn Bahr al-Kinani al-Basri, known as al-Jahiz, died in 869, he left behind works that explored the political and religious undercurrents of his era. Al-Jahiz was commissioned by the bigoted Caliph al-Mutawakkil, notorious for his suppression of the brutal Mutazilite movement and his return to a more traditional, revelation-based Islam to compose an anti-Christian invective, motivated by the perceived threat from neighboring Christian territories.

While al-Mutawakkil himself did not perceive Jews as a threat, he noted that the Muslim masses harbored more animosity toward Jews than Christians.

In his work, al-Jahiz examined the reasons for this. He referenced Quranic verse 5:82, Muhammad’s interactions with the Jews of Medina, and the anti-Jewish themes in the Sira – the early biographies of Mohammed. Al-Jahiz considered verse 5:81, which suggests that Jews harbor the greatest hatred for Muslims, as a significant anti-Jewish motif. His contemporary, al-Muhasibi, who died in 857, corroborated this view, attributing this resentment to the Jews’ rejection of Mohammed’s religious message.

A review of other Quranic statements regarding Jews suggests that the primary antisemitic motif is found in verse 2:61 of the Quran and reiterated in verse 3:112. Both verses accuse Jews of killing prophets and defying Allah’s will, resulting in eternal condemnation.



IRAN’S SUPREME LEADER Ayatollah Ali Khamenei: The Iranian Shia belief is that Jews must be eliminated, converted, or made second-class citizens, and after the Jews, Christians will face the same fate, the writer asserts. (West Asia News Agency/Reuters)

Verse 2:61 states that “shame and misery” are “stamped upon them.” This condemnation is reinforced by verses such as 5:60, describing Jews’ transformation into apes and pigs, and verse 5:64, which accuses Jews of spreading war and corruption – a profound lie echoed in the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.

Palestinian Authority head Mahmoud Abbas cited this verse in a 2007 speech against Israeli Jews, illustrating the enduring power of Quranic statements.

Historicity can be deeply ingrained in a people’s collective consciousness. Fears of threats from racial or religious groups often originate from territorial claims, individual biases, imagined rejections, or even

delusional beliefs. While most scholars agree that the earliest roots of antisemitism are found in Catholic doctrine, there is also a long history of hatred toward Jews in the Islamic world, likely for similar reasons.

This explains the Iranian Shia belief. With its desire for an international caliphate as its highest goal, the Jews must be eliminated, converted, or become *dhimmi* (second-class citizens), and after the Jews, Christians will face the same fate. It appears that the Sunni belief in a caliphate is less aggressive and based more on a consensual approach to change.

It is therefore no surprise that Hamas chief Yahya Sinwar, an Iranian proxy leader recently stated in correspondence with

other Hamas leaders that the more Palestinians die, the greater Hamas’ ability to outlast Israel. Sinwar and his followers believe that they are waging a permissible terror campaign, justified by their view that their death cult is engaged in a religiously sanctioned battle, regardless of the casualties.

Similarly, condemning Israel for death rates that cannot be confirmed and Hamas’s use of civilians to hide behind and use for propaganda, as well as the very real possibility that United Nations workers are Hamas operatives are clear injunctions against those who support a ceasefire that Hamas continues to reject.

Unfortunately, media biases, including detestable attempts at equivalency, exacerbate this millennia-old hatred. Media is used by Hamas, Hezbollah, Iran, and even university professors funded by Qatar to spread this hatred.

Antisemitism is reflexively justified when leading media sources accept the death and injury claims of Hamas without verification or by falsely depicting the rescue of hostages as a hostage “release,” among other distortions. Similarly, social media is used by bots and Islamic fundamentalists to spread further hatred.

As some have noted, we are experiencing a level of antisemitism reminiscent of 1938, and the hatred is growing.

What Western countries cannot understand are the enduring roots of antisemitism within Islam, reinforced by historical, religious, and media narratives and perpetuated by the death cult that is the Islamic Republic of Iran and its proxies that pose a significant challenge to peace and coexistence in our time – and work on heightening antisemitism worldwide.

The writer, a PhD, is a fellow of the American Psychological Association and an APA Presidential Citation awardee recognized for his work in trauma, abuse, and resiliency. He is the director of ADC Psychological Services in Netanya and Hewlett, NY, and is on staff at Northwell, New Hyde Park, NY.



THE COP27 COALITION, a civil society group, holds a march during the COP27 climate summit, in Sharm el-Sheikh, in 2022. (Mohamed Abd El Ghany/Reuters)

# A wartime climate activist

• By NIKA BERDICHEVSKY

I was full of hope on the evening of this day – the day before the last climate march in Israel.

The following day was full of excitement and good energy. Since I became a climate activist, those are the moments that I came to love the most, when many people united for one cause.

But Hamas’s October 7 attacks on Israel affected the entire country, and suddenly peace seemed far removed.

Simultaneously, my fight against climate degradation seemed far removed as well. In today’s reality, I realized humanity has deeper fractures to fix.

Now, in the ninth month of the war, Israel’s face has changed, the uncertainty turned into the will to have our hostages returned; hope became the force that holds this country alive; and anger and disappointment are becoming the determination to create a better future in this land.

Being a climate activist means I fight climate change, I speak about it and raise awareness, and call to action. However, last October’s events caught me unprepared, as something urgent like fighting climate

change went down on the list of priorities. I discovered that no matter how urgent I thought climate change was, and is, more urgent things appeared. One of the hardest things, for me, was shutting down regional cooperation activity, leaving me isolated from climate activists in neighboring countries.

Since then, my climate advocacy activities have decreased. Cooperation between people in various countries is essential to address global issues; doing it alone is not the same. It does not have the same impact, there is not the same scale of work, and the same feeling is missing as well as people’s creative perspectives.

It is different. But how long will it last? How long will it take for us to overcome the hate and terror, and open a new page of/for peace and cooperation between people? Can we work together in the region?

The Middle East represents a region with abundant problems concerning climate change. Additionally, these circumstances open a new window of opportunities for creative solutions and cooperation between regions. For example, transferring desalinated water from the Mediterranean Sea to Lake Kinneret, rehabilitating the Jordan River basin this way,

bringing back the lost biodiversity, and more importantly, water to everyone.

That’s why it is important to remember that the climate crisis doesn’t hit one country, it hits a region in a particular way. We must be asking not only how Israel leads its climate adaptation and mitigation targets, but how all the countries of the eastern Mediterranean and Middle East can work together to face this collective challenge.

I’ve learned through my activism journey the importance of working together, and the synergy between people. All countries in the Middle East region influence each other and we cannot ignore the existence of one another.

Every challenge holds an opportunity, and the people who live in the Middle East should act actively toward regional cooperation that will unite us around a common inspiration, making this inspiration become our day-to-day reality one day.

The writer is a climate activist who represented Israel’s youth and future generations at COP27 in Sharm el-Sheikh. She is an alumna of the EcoPeace Youth Water Trustees program and continues to work for climate action regionally and globally.

# Putin to meet with Kim in North Korea today

• By GUY FAULCONBRIDGE and JOSH SMITH

MOSCOW/SEOUL (Reuters) – Russian President Vladimir Putin will visit North Korea on Tuesday and Wednesday, the Kremlin said, a rare trip that underscores Moscow's burgeoning partnership with the reclusive nuclear-armed state.

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un extended an invitation to Putin during a visit to Russia's Far East last September. Putin last visited Pyongyang in July 2000.

"At the invitation of the Chairman of State Affairs of the DPRK, Kim Jong Un, Vladimir Putin will pay a friendly state visit to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on June 18-19," the Kremlin said.

Putin will then visit Vietnam on June 19-20, the Kremlin said. Both visits had been expected, although the dates had not previously been announced.

Russia has gone out of its way to publicize the renaissance of its relationship with North Korea since the start of the war in Ukraine, sparking alarm among the United States and its allies in Europe and Asia.

Washington says North Korea has supplied weapons to Russia to help it fight in Ukraine, though Pyongyang has repeatedly denied this.

For Putin, who says Russia is locked in an existential battle with the West over Ukraine, courting Kim allows him to needle Washington and its Asian allies.

United Nations monitors concluded that at least one ballistic missile fired from Russia at a city in Ukraine in January was made in North Korea. Ukrainian officials say they have counted about 50 such missiles delivered to Russia by North Korea.

"The list of countries willing to welcome Putin is shorter than ever, but for

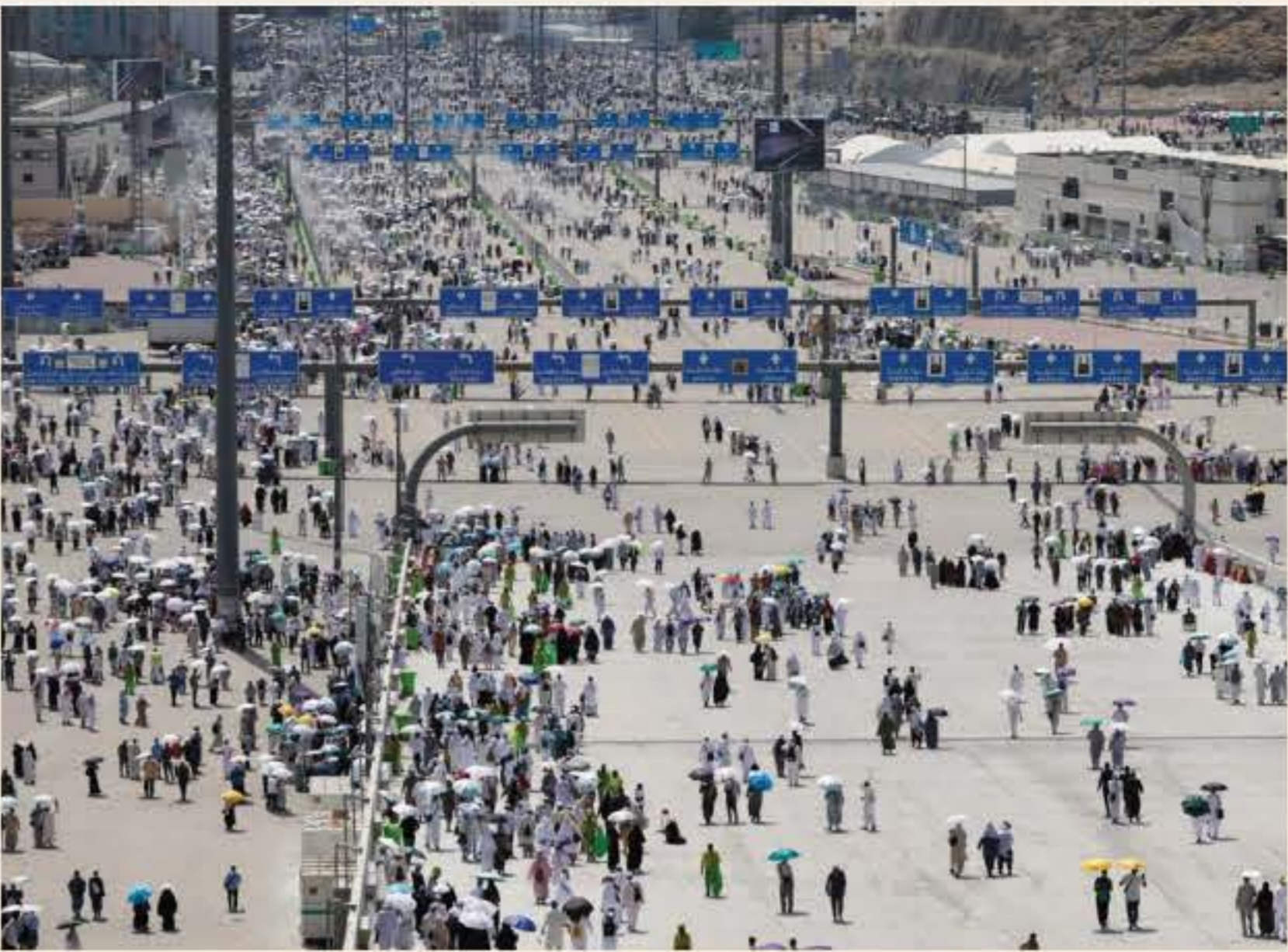
Kim Jong Un, this visit is a victory," said Leif-Eric Easley, a professor at Ewha University in Seoul.

"Not only does the summit upgrade North Korea's status among countries standing against the US-led international order, it also helps bolster Kim's domestic legitimacy."

South Korea's vice foreign minister, Kim Hong-kyun, discussed Putin's planned visit to the north in an emergency phone call with US Deputy Secretary of State Kurt Campbell on Friday, Seoul's Foreign Ministry said.

The visit should not result in more military cooperation between Pyongyang and Moscow in violation of UN resolutions, the South Korean ministry said.

Russia says it will cooperate with North Korea and develop relations in the manner it chooses and that it will not be told what to do by any country, least of all the United States.



## FULFILLING A RITUAL

Muslim pilgrims walk on the second day of the Satan stoning ritual, during the annual Hajj pilgrimage, in Mina, Saudi Arabia, yesterday. (Mohammed Torokman/Reuters)

# Putin extends purge at Russian defense ministry, hands job to a relative

MOSCOW (Reuters) – Russian President Vladimir Putin sacked four deputy defense ministers on Monday and appointed a relative to fill one of the resulting vacancies.

The reshuffle marked the latest stage in a radical shakeout which Putin launched in May when he unexpectedly removed his longstanding defense minister Sergei Shoigu.

More than two years into the war in Ukraine, Putin has used the changes to signal that he wants to clear out wastage and corruption in the ministry and harness Russia's war economy more effectively to serve the needs of soldiers at the front.

In the latest changes, Putin sacked deputy defense ministers Nikolai Pankov, Ruslan Tsalikov, Tatiana Shevtsova and Pavel Popov, according to Kremlin decrees.

He appointed Anna Tsivileva, the daughter of his late cousin, as a deputy defense minister whose responsibilities will include improving social and housing support for military personnel. Her husband Sergei Tsivilev is Russia's energy minister.

Putin had previously appointed Tsivileva as head of a state fund to support participants of Russia's war effort in Ukraine.

Leonid Gornin, previously first deputy finance minister, will now serve as first deputy defense minister under Defence Minister Andrei Belousov, an economist with no military experience who was named last month to replace Shoigu.

Gornin's main tasks are "to increase the transparency of financial flows and ensure efficient spending of budget funds," the defense ministry said.

Also named as deputy defense ministers were Oleg Savelyev and Pavel Fradkov, the son of former Prime Minister Mikhail Fradkov. Fradkov will oversee the management of property, land and construction relating to the military.

Another former deputy defense minister, Timur Ivanov, was arrested on April 23 and accused of bribe-taking. Since then, four other top officials at the ministry and general staff have been arrested on the same charges in the biggest corruption scandal to hit the Russian government in years.

# New \$50 million Biden ad campaign targets Trump felony convictions

• By NANDITA BOSE

WASHINGTON (Reuters) – President Joe Biden's campaign will target Republican challenger Donald Trump's felony convictions as part of a \$50 million ad campaign ahead of the first presidential debate between both candidates on June 27.

The move, one of the largest advertising spends of the campaign so far, marks a notable shift in Biden's approach to Trump's conviction after the president's initial reluctance to weigh in on the issue, to avoid engaging with Trump's legal woes.

"Character Matters," a 30-second ad that says "this election is between a convicted criminal who's only out for himself, and a president who's fighting for your family," drawing a contrast between the two candidates, will run in all battleground states that have switched between Republicans and Democrats in recent elections, starting on Monday.

Trump was convicted by a New York jury on May 30 of 34 felony counts for falsifying business records.

"Crooked Joe Biden and the Democrats' weaponized the justice system against President Trump and this new ad once again proves the sham trial was always meant to be election interference, but Americans see

through it," Trump campaign spokesperson Karoline Leavitt wrote on the social media platform X.

Biden and Trump remain tied in national polls with less than five months to go before the election, while Trump has the edge in the battleground states that will decide it, polls conducted before the conviction show.

On economic issues like inflation, Trump scores higher with voters overall than Biden.

Biden's campaign and several Democrats were initially reluctant to emphasize Trump's conviction, taking a wait-and-see approach to advertising and new strategies. They wanted to see polls and voter feedback before reacting strongly.

Earlier this month, at a fundraiser with a small group of donors in Greenwich, Connecticut, Biden for the first time called Trump a "convicted felon" and said his predecessor poses a higher threat to the United States if he wins another term.

A Reuters/Ipsos poll conducted just after Trump's conviction found 10% of Republican voters said they are less likely to vote for Trump in November after his conviction, a significant number given the narrow margins that decide US presidential elections.

Trump also faces criminal charges in three other cases: a Georgia election interference case, a Florida documents case and a federal

election interference case. He is also appealing the results of his civil trials.

Biden's son, Hunter, was this month convicted by a jury for lying about his illegal drug use to buy a gun, making him the first child of a sitting US president to be convicted of a crime. Polls including one from Reuters/Ipsos shows a vast majority of voters say Hunter's conviction won't affect their vote in the Nov. 5 election.

The June 27 debate between Biden and Trump, billed as one of the most significant moments of this year's campaign calendar, is less than two weeks away, and both campaigns are preparing for the first showdown.

The debate will include two commercial breaks, no props and muted microphones except when recognized to speak, CNN, which will host the debate in Atlanta, said on Saturday.

The Biden campaign's fundraising in April lagged Trump's for the first time, after the former president ramped up his joint operation with the Republican National Committee and headlined high-dollar fundraisers.

Democrats still maintained an overall cash advantage over Trump and the Biden campaign continues to have a considerably larger war chest. On Saturday, Biden raised \$30 million at a star-studded fundraiser in Los Angeles.



## NOBLESSE OBLIGE

Britain's King Charles and Queen Camilla ride in a horse-drawn carriage at the Order Of The Garter Service at Windsor Castle yesterday. It was Charles's second public appearance in as many days after he took the salute at the Trooping the Colour ceremony in London on Saturday. The monarch had insisted on attending these two events as doctors have advised him to rest and limit his work schedule while he undergoes treatment for an undisclosed form of cancer. (Jonathan Buckmaster/Pool via Reuters)

# China accuses Philippine supply ship of hitting Chinese vessel

BEIJING (Reuters) – China and the Philippines traded accusations over a maritime collision in the South China Sea on Monday, the latest in an increasingly testy series of confrontations over the disputed waters.

Meanwhile, hours later, the United States said in a statement it had completed joint naval exercises in the Philippines' exclusive economic zone with its treaty ally as well as Japan and Canada.

China's Coast Guard said a Philippine supply ship "deliberately and dangerously" approached a Chinese ship resulting in a slight collision after it "illegally intruded" into waters near Second Thomas Shoal, a charge that Manila rejected as "deceptive and misleading."

Manila declined to comment directly on the incident, but lashed out at Beijing after a Chinese coast guard statement said the Philippine transport and replenishment ship ignored China's repeated solemn warnings.

"We will not dignify the deceptive and misleading claims of

the China Coast Guard (CCG)," said Xerxes Trinidad, chief of the Philippine armed forces' public affairs office, adding they would not discuss operational details of resupply missions.

"The continued aggressive actions of the CCG are escalating tensions in the region," Trinidad said. The Philippine military maintains that the main issue is the illegal presence and actions of Chinese vessels within the Philippines' exclusive economic zone.

China claims almost the entire South China Sea, a conduit for more than \$3 trillion of annual ship-borne commerce, including parts claimed by the Philippines, Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia and Brunei.

Philippine Coast Guard spokesperson Jay Tarriela said the agency was not in a position to provide any details on Monday's incident as it was not a coast guard operation.

Separately, the US Pacific Fleet said in a statement it had concluded a two-day joint maritime exercise with the militaries of Canada, Japan, and the Philip-

pines within Manila's 200-nautical mile EEZ in the South China Sea.

For months, China and the Philippines have traded barbs over dangerous maneuvers and collisions at the Second Thomas Shoal, an atoll in the Philippines' EEZ.

Several incidents have happened when the Philippines deploys resupply missions for its soldiers living aboard an aging warship in the EEZ.

China has warned the Philippines about intruding into its territorial waters and issued new rules, effective June 15, enforcing a 2021 law allowing its coast guard to use lethal force against foreign ships in waters it claims.

The new rules allow China's coast guard to detain suspected trespassers without trial for 60 days.

In response, the Philippine Coast Guard said separately on Monday it has ordered the deployment of two vessels to patrol and ensure the safety of Filipino fishermen at Scarborough Shoal – about 640 km. away from Second Thomas Shoal.

# South Africa's unity government now has five parties, ANC says

JOHANNESBURG (Reuters) – The African National Congress said on Monday that South Africa's new government has five parties in it so far, representing more than two-thirds of the seats in the National Assembly, and talks with other parties were ongoing.

Following last month's election, the ANC was forced to forge alliances with other political parties after failing to win a parliamentary majority for the first since the 1994

election that marked the end of apartheid.

ANC leader Cyril Ramaphosa was reelected as South Africa's president by parliament on Friday, as his party drew support from its largest rival, the white-led, pro-business Democratic Alliance, as well as two smaller parties – the socially conservative Inkatha Freedom Party and the right-wing Patriotic Alliance.

The ANC said on Monday that another smaller party, GOOD, had also signed up to

be part of the unity government pact.

This collective represents 273 seats in the National Assembly, or 68%, the ANC said in a statement.

South Africa's parliament has 400 seats. The ANC won 159 seats, the DA is the second-largest party with 87 seats, the IFP has 17 seats, PA has 9 seats and GOOD has a single seat.

The ANC said the unity government would ensure representation in government for

all participating parties and would make decisions by consensus.

Among its priorities, the unity government is set to focus on rapid, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, the promotion of fixed capital investment, job creation, land reform and infrastructure development, the ANC said.

"The president will exercise the prerogative to appoint the cabinet, in consultation with leaders of GNU (government of national unity) parties,

adhering to existing protocols on government decision-making and budgeting," the ANC said, adding it was still in discussions with more parties to join the government.

The Marxist Economic Freedom Fighters party, which has 39 seats, has said it will not be part of a government that includes the DA or the Freedom Front Plus – two parties that draw support from the white minority.

The uMkhonto we Sizwe party, led by former president

Jacob Zuma, is also not part of the unity government.

With 58 seats in the National Assembly, it has said it will join an alliance of smaller opposition parties in parliament called the "Progressive Caucus", which includes the EFF and the Center-Left United Democratic Movement.

This alliance will be the official opposition to the unity government.

"With populist parties choosing to reject the GNU, and the ANC's bigger part-

ners in the governing coalition center-leaning and favoring more liberal economic policies, we think the GNU opens the possibility for more growth-friendly structural reforms and prudent macroeconomic policy choices," HSBC economist David Faulkner said in a note.

"But the GNU could also face ideological divisions and exacerbate fractures within the ANC, factors that could make establishing a stable policy framework difficult."

# As Israeli tourism to Georgia has boomed, these Israelis have put down roots in Tbilisi

• By LARRY LUXNER/JTA

TBILISI, Georgia – In the ancient land of khachapuri cheese bread and famous qvevri wine fermented in earthenware vessels, Danny Licht now offers a rival ethnic delicacy: falafel.

Three years ago, the Swiss-Israeli entrepreneur moved here from Jerusalem with his Russian-born wife, Rita. In January, they opened Ashkara Falafel in the heart of Tbilisi's tourist district.

"We wanted to offer something fresh, tasty, and inexpensive – not a restaurant but real street food," said Licht, who charges 19 lari (about \$7) for a complete falafel meal with all the fixings.

Meanwhile, Rita, who has a doctorate in molecular genetics from the Weizmann Institute of Science in Rehovot, runs a contemporary art gallery housed in the same building as their residence.

"We don't have any family ties here, but we love the culture and we have a passion for art," she said. "Our dream was to open a gallery, and this is one of the places we could make it happen."

Danny and Rita Licht are among 200 or so Israelis for whom Georgia – a former Soviet republic about three hours' flying time from Tel Aviv – is a new promised land. Frustrated with Israel's high prices, toxic politics, and worsening security situation, they've decided to relocate permanently to this mountainous, landlocked country in the Caucasus.

They may have left behind one divided country for another. For the past two months, Georgia has experienced massive anti-government protests against a new law, modeled after one in Russia, that requires any organization receiving more than 20% of its funding from overseas to register as a "foreign agent."

Critics say the law is aimed at stifling dissent while moving the country closer to Moscow and away from the European Union. Polls show that 80% of Georgians want their country



RUSSIAN-BORN Ilana Slutsky, an architect who relocated to Georgia from Haifa, shows off a restored apartment in Tbilisi she now rents out on Airbnb to tourists. (Larry Luxner)

to join the EU, and protesters vow not to back down until the law – which they say smacks of Putin-like repression – is repealed.

It remains to be seen whether the new law or the backlash will have any effect on Israeli tourism, which has long been strong.

Last year, according to government statistics, 217,065 Israelis visited Georgia, making them the fourth-largest source of foreign tourism after Russia, Turkey, and Armenia. But Israelis stayed longer and spent an average 3,782 lari (about \$1,400) per visit – far more than any other group. It's not uncommon to hear Hebrew in the streets, and one of Tbilisi's top tourist attractions is the Museum of Georgian Jewish History, which chronicles 2,600 years of Jewish life in this country.

All told, Israeli investment in tourism, finance, agriculture, and healthcare already totals around \$500 million, said Itzik Moshe, founder of both Israeli House and the Israel-Georgia Chamber of Business.

"Georgia is a small country, but it's one of Israel's best friends in the world," said Moshe, who in 1990 became the first Israeli to represent the

Jewish Agency in the former Soviet Union. "We are two ancient peoples with difficult histories and the same fate. According to Georgian history, it was the Jews who helped prepare them to adopt Christianity."

Before Oct. 7, four or five airlines were offering nonstop flights between Tel Aviv and Tbilisi – sometimes two flights a day by the same airline. Even now, El Al and Israir still offer daily service on that route. And posters of Israelis kidnapped by Hamas and held captive in Gaza are plastered on billboards and the sides of buses in Tbilisi.

Despite the warm feelings, not everyone here loves Jews or Israel.

In November 2022, Pakistani agents affiliated with al-Qaeda and sent by Iran's Revolutionary Guards Quds Force attempted to assassinate Moshe on the street, in front of the Israeli flag over his office. Fortunately, the plot was discovered by local security officials, who arrested several suspects, including two Georgian-Iranian dual citizens.

Moshe, who remains closely guarded, said he expects a record 250,000 Israelis in Georgia in 2024. In November, his organization is planning a busi-



DANNY LICHT, a Swiss-Israeli newcomer to Georgia, stands in front of his Ashkara Falafel eatery along Lermontov Street in Tbilisi. (Larry Luxner)

ness conference in Tbilisi to mark 35 years of bilateral commercial ties.

Many Israelis have purchased time-shares in the Black Sea resort of Batumi, and the country is considered a prime destination for skiing and hiking as well as travel focused on food and wine.

Unique to Georgia is its ancient 33-letter alphabet, which is nearly 1,500 years old, as well as its hauntingly beautiful chant, the traditional music sung in the Georgian Orthodox Church for daily and weekly services in three-voiced polyphony without instruments.

"I haven't met even one Israeli tourist who doesn't want to come back here," said Moshe, estimating Georgia's native

Jewish population at 500 to 1,000. The Great Synagogue of Tbilisi serves the predominantly elderly community. In addition to those Israeli Jews who have moved to Georgia, there are also 1,500 Israeli Arabs – mainly Christians from Nazareth and elsewhere – studying medicine here.

Likewise, Israel is home to roughly 120,000 Jews from Georgia. Known in Hebrew as *Gruzimim*, they originally settled in Ashdod, Beersheba, Ashkelon, and Haifa, though they've since spread throughout the country – and a few have even returned.

Ilana Slutsky, a native of Orenburg in southern Russia, grew up in Haifa, and worked for years as an architect. The

company that employed her landed a contract with a cardiovascular center in Georgia, which required her to travel there from Israel every 10 days over a four-year period.

Eventually, Slutsky moved to Tbilisi, and a few years ago she opened her own interior design, real estate, and architectural consulting firm. Her Georgian husband, Tedo, is an artist, and she's currently in the process of restoring an apartment building from 1872.

The only time she felt unpleasant, she recalled, was seeing a recent Instagram post by Mutant Radio Tbilisi seeking donations for Palestinian children displaced by the war in Gaza.

"I feel sorry for all victims of war, but we know that this money will go directly to Hamas," said Slutsky, who understands the Georgian language as well as English, Hebrew, and her native Russian. "For me, it was disappointing, especially after what happened at the Nova music festival. To be honest, I was shocked."

DESPITE THE money they spend and the government's emulation of their native country, Russians aren't particularly welcome in Georgia, which seems awash in Ukrainian flags as a show of support for the fellow ex-Soviet republic.

That's a legacy of the Russo-Georgian War of 2008, which began when pro-Russian separatists in the breakaway republics of Abkhazia and South Ossetia attacked Georgia, violating a 1992 ceasefire agreement. The fighting ended 16 days later with Russia controlling a fifth of Georgian territory.

Anti-Russian obscenities cover a retaining wall across the street from Danny Licht's falafel shop, and some nightclubs now make customers sign statements of support for Ukraine before they can enter the premises.

"When the Russia-Ukraine war started, Georgia was 30% or 40% cheaper than today," Licht said. "But then apartment prices doubled and even tripled.

The market went crazy because so many Russians ran away and came here. They couldn't use their credit cards in Russia anymore. And last September there was a [military] mobilization. They didn't come because they were against the war, but because they didn't want to be killed."

Licht added: "About half a year ago, prices reached a peak, and now they're coming down. But 20% of this country is still occupied by Russia, and Georgians are very suspicious of them."

Yaron Shmerkin, 39, has lived in Georgia nearly two years. Originally from Luhansk – a city in eastern Ukraine that's been under Russian occupation for nearly a decade – he's married to Georgian fashion designer Anuk Yosebashvili. Back in 2017, the jewelry designer, who specializes in Judaica art, took a jeep trip with his wife and in-laws throughout the mountain republic, which is three times the size of Israel yet has less than half its population.

"After a week, I said, 'We're going to move here,'" he recalled. "We are very happy in Georgia."

So is Mikhail Gilichinski, 40, an Orthodox Jew and a native of the Russian city of Tula. He lived throughout Israel – Kibbutz Bar'am, Jerusalem, and Ramat Gan – before coming to Georgia five years ago with his Moscow-born wife, Miriam. Both had been here on vacation previously.

Neither Mikhail nor Miriam Gilichinski speak Georgian. They use English to communicate with locals because, he says, "I don't feel comfortable speaking Russian with them."

Nevertheless, Gilichinski has built a small hotel, which his wife runs as an Airbnb. Their children, 10 and seven, attend the local Chabad religious school.

"I'm a jewelry designer and can work from anywhere," he said. "We love Israel, but financially it's difficult. You have to work all the time, from morning to evening. That's why we came here."

## Thai royalists make risky bet in fresh showdown with Thaksin

• By PATRICIA TANAKASEMPIAT

Last August, former Thai leader Thaksin Shinawatra returned to his homeland after 15 years in exile following a deal with royalists who once ousted him in a coup. That marriage of convenience is now at risk of falling apart, potentially unleashing more political turmoil.

Members of Thaksin's ruling Pheu Thai Party aren't sure whether that deal still holds, according to people familiar with the situation, who asked not to be identified discussing sensitive matters. While they are optimistic the government will survive, they won't know for sure until courts decide on separate legal cases involving both Thaksin, who could be thrown in jail, and Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin, an ally who faces possible disqualification, the people said.

When that might happen is unclear. Thailand's Constitutional Court plans to meet again on Tuesday to consider more evidence on a petition filed by 40 senators seeking to remove Srettha, 62, over allegations of ethical violations. On the same day, Thaksin, 74, is set to be indicted in a royal defamation case. The proceedings in both cases could move quickly or still drag on for months.

If that wasn't complicated enough, the Constitutional Court is concurrently hearing a case on whether to disband the pro-democracy Move Forward Party over its pledge to amend Thailand's lèse-majesté law, which forbids criticism of King Maha Vajiralongkorn and other top royals. The party, which won the most seats in last year's election, is seen as the biggest threat to the royalist establishment, and kneecapping it risks triggering more street protests.

"It would be improper of me to discuss what's to come in the future," Srettha told reporters in Bangkok last week when asked



EXILED FORMER Thai prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra in Hong Kong in 2019. (Isaac Lawrence/AFP/Getty Images/TNS)

about the cases.

The uncertainty is rattling investors who once cheered the possibility that Thailand may finally see more political stability. Foreign funds have pulled more than \$3 billion from local markets this year, sending the nation's benchmark SET Index to a four-year low. It's now the worst performer of all global bourses tracked by Bloomberg in the past year.

Thaksin so far has little to show from joining hands with his former enemies. Dissatisfaction is growing with Srettha's government as it struggles to implement campaign pledges to hand out cash, help farmers deal with debt, and raise the minimum wage, all while targeting annual economic growth of 5%. It has also sought to strong-arm the central bank into cutting interest rates to spur the economy, which the World Bank forecasts will fail to expand at an annual pace greater than 3% through 2026.

Why this is all happening now – and just how much the legal cases



SHINAWATRA SITS next to his daughter Paetongtarn Shinawatra, as they leave a police hospital after being granted parole, in Bangkok, in February. (Athit Perawongmetha/Reuters)

are connected – is the subject of much speculation in Bangkok. Thaksin's opponents don't have a clear path to forming a stable government unless they stage yet another military coup, a scenario that can't be ruled out in a nation that has had about a dozen of them since ending absolute monarchy in 1932.

One theory is that the royalist establishment wants to rein in Thaksin, who has kept a high profile since he was freed from detention in February after King Vajiralongkorn commuted his eight-year jail sentence for corruption to just a year. Thaksin has been a constant presence on television, meeting with hordes of supporters, ministers, and officials. He also attempted to broker a peace agreement in Myanmar and met with Malaysian leader Anwar Ibrahim in a bid to resolve a long-standing insurgency in southern Thailand.

Although Thailand's conservatives may depend on Thaksin for now to counter Move Forward's rapid rise in popularity, his ambitions are increasingly breaking trust with the

establishment, according to Teerasak Siripant, managing director at BoweGroupAsia in Bangkok.

"Since Thaksin's return, there were expectations from the establishment about what he should or shouldn't do," Teerasak said. "They had expected him to be behind the scenes, but that's clearly not what's happening. We're seeing the same image that we have long had of him: he wants to be someone great in Thai society."

WHILE THAKSIN'S royal pardon was the clearest sign of a behind-the-scenes deal, the terms of any agreement remain a mystery. Not much has fundamentally changed since Pheu Thai joined forces with royalist military-backed parties last year: Both still need each other to form a government that doesn't include Move Forward, whose stronger-than-expected performance in last year's election represented a slap in the face to the royalists – and a challenge to Thaksin's electoral dominance.

Thaksin has strongly denied any wrongdoing, publicly blaming his lèse-majesté case on "the man in

the forest" – a nickname referring to former army chief Prawit Wongsuwan, 78, who served as deputy junta leader after a 2014 coup that ousted the government of Thaksin's sister, Yingluck Shinawatra. A party official deflected questions from reporters about Thaksin's comment regarding Prawit, who now leads the conservative Palang Pracharath Party in the ruling coalition and has long headed the military's Forest Preservation Foundation.

"The case is baseless – it's fruit from a toxic tree," Thaksin told reporters on June 8, in his first public comments about his legal troubles, which stem from remarks he made in 2015 in the wake of the military takeover. "It's an example that shows how charges are abused after a coup."

Thaksin's remarks can be interpreted in a number of ways, the people familiar said: Either he's confident the deal that brought him back to Thailand is still intact and he feels protected, or he's sending a warning shot to the establishment that he's ready to fight if they lock him up again, or that he's looking for a scapegoat and signaling he'll fall in line.

Thaksin similarly blamed Prawit for orchestrating the case against Srettha. The senators backing the petition came together on their shared frustrations over Thaksin, and some of them aim to pressure him into accepting a conservative leader, according to people familiar with the situation.

Although the petition was backed by a small fraction of the 250-member military-appointed Senate, it's now one of several moving parts that could bring down the government. The senators who initiated the petition are betting that Thaksin would still keep the coalition together and reluctantly back a conservative for prime minister, because he doesn't want to go to jail and still wants to bring his sister Yingluck, 56, back from exile.

But that is a big gamble. If Srettha is disqualified, only seven people are eligible to become prime minister, including Prawit. The two options from Thaksin's camp are his 37-year-old daughter, Paetongtarn Shinawatra, and 75-year-old Chaikasem Nitisiri. Both are believed to be long shots: it's unclear if Thaksin wants to expose one of his children to the messiness of Thai politics at the moment, while the latter has had serious health issues in recent years.

If it's not someone from Pheu Thai, Thaksin could pull the party out of the coalition and seek to link up with Move Forward. Although there is bad blood between the parties, and that scenario remains unlikely, together they would control a majority in the lower house of parliament.

In that case, they would likely lack 43-year-old Pita Limjaroenrat, an outcome the royalist establishment would want to avoid. That's why the Move Forward dissolution case is so important: If the party is disbanded, Pita wouldn't be able to stand as prime minister.

In a scenario in which Thaksin doesn't support the conservatives and can't form a government with Move Forward, it would likely lead to a fresh election. And given that antiestablishment parties won nearly 60% of seats in an election a year ago, that's a risky proposition for the military-backed conservatives.

By going after Thaksin, the royalist elites got themselves into a conundrum, according to Thitinan Pongsudhirak, a professor of political science at Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok. The most likely scenario, he added, is that they let Thaksin off in the end.

"They don't want Move Forward to be in government, but now they've got a Pheu Thai government that they are undermining directly," Thitinan said. "They want to teach Thaksin a lesson. But it depends on how he responds." (Bloomberg/TNS)

THE JERUSALEM POST

## DAILY BRAIN TEASERS



## ACROSS

1 Change back to zero  
6 Aid and \_\_\_\_  
10 Elton John's "Bennie and the \_\_\_\_"  
14 Playful furry swimmer  
15 Source of torment  
16 She loves, in Latin  
17 Fondly remembered moment  
20 Flesh and blood  
21 The whole nine yards  
22 Spirited person  
23 "Nothing Compares 2 U" singer Sinéad  
25 Mongrel  
26 Summer in Saint-Étienne  
27 Sense of self  
28 More miffed  
30 Netflix's "The Crown," for one  
34 Noshes  
38 "I'm well \_\_\_\_"  
39 North Pole worker  
40 Egyptian peninsula  
41 Internet phenomenon  
42 Pretend to be asleep  
44 Sci-fi robot

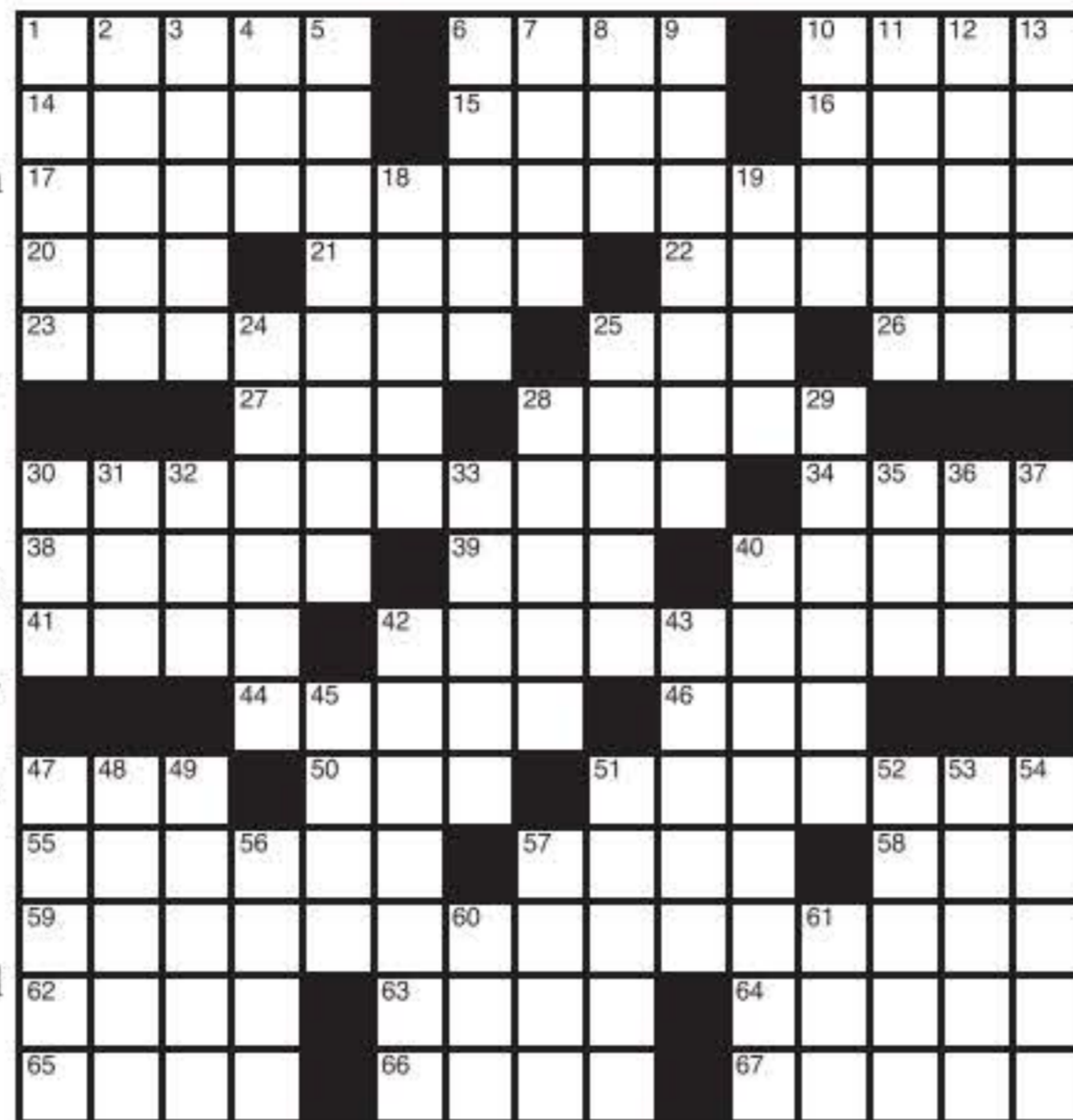
46 Reuben bread  
47 Aliens, briefly  
50 Winter hrs. in Boston  
51 Quiet place to get a loan  
55 Arouses, as curiosity  
57 Otherwise  
58 Volcano opening?  
59 Rice-filled appetizers with red shells, and a hint to the words that bookend  
60 17-, 30-, and 42-Across  
62 Hodgepodge  
63 PlayStation maker  
64 Unsophisticated  
65 Rx orders  
66 Whole bunch  
67 Agrees (with)

## DOWN

1 Young wallaby in a Nickelodeon animated series  
2 Moral standard  
3 Courtroom fig. with a keyboard  
4 Always, poetically  
5 Musical instrument named for its shape  
6 Really hate  
7 Legendary folk

singer Joan  
8 Wrap up  
9 Deep-fried Japanese dish  
10 Jazz sessions  
11 Overact  
12 Medium's medium  
13 Fashion sense  
18 Didn't ask for a card in black-jack  
19 Limerick's land  
24 Came close to  
25 Warm and cozy  
28 Waldorf

29 "Stranger Things" actor Paul  
30 Los Angeles footballer  
31 Need to pay  
32 Sweet tuber  
33 Kindled again  
35 FAQ entry  
36 Greek consonant that resembles a "T"  
37 \_\_\_\_ card: smartphone insert  
40 Protein-rich legumes  
42 Have in one's hands



43 Light refractor  
45 Snorkeling spot  
47 English derby town  
48 Sports championship  
49 Underwater ink squirter  
51 Fallingwater architect Frank

\_\_\_\_ Wright  
52 Steer clear of  
53 "Superman" actor Christopher  
54 Positive responses  
56 Sci-fi saucers  
57 Mediterranean volcano  
60 "What's up, \_\_\_\_?"  
61 \_\_\_\_ chi: martial art

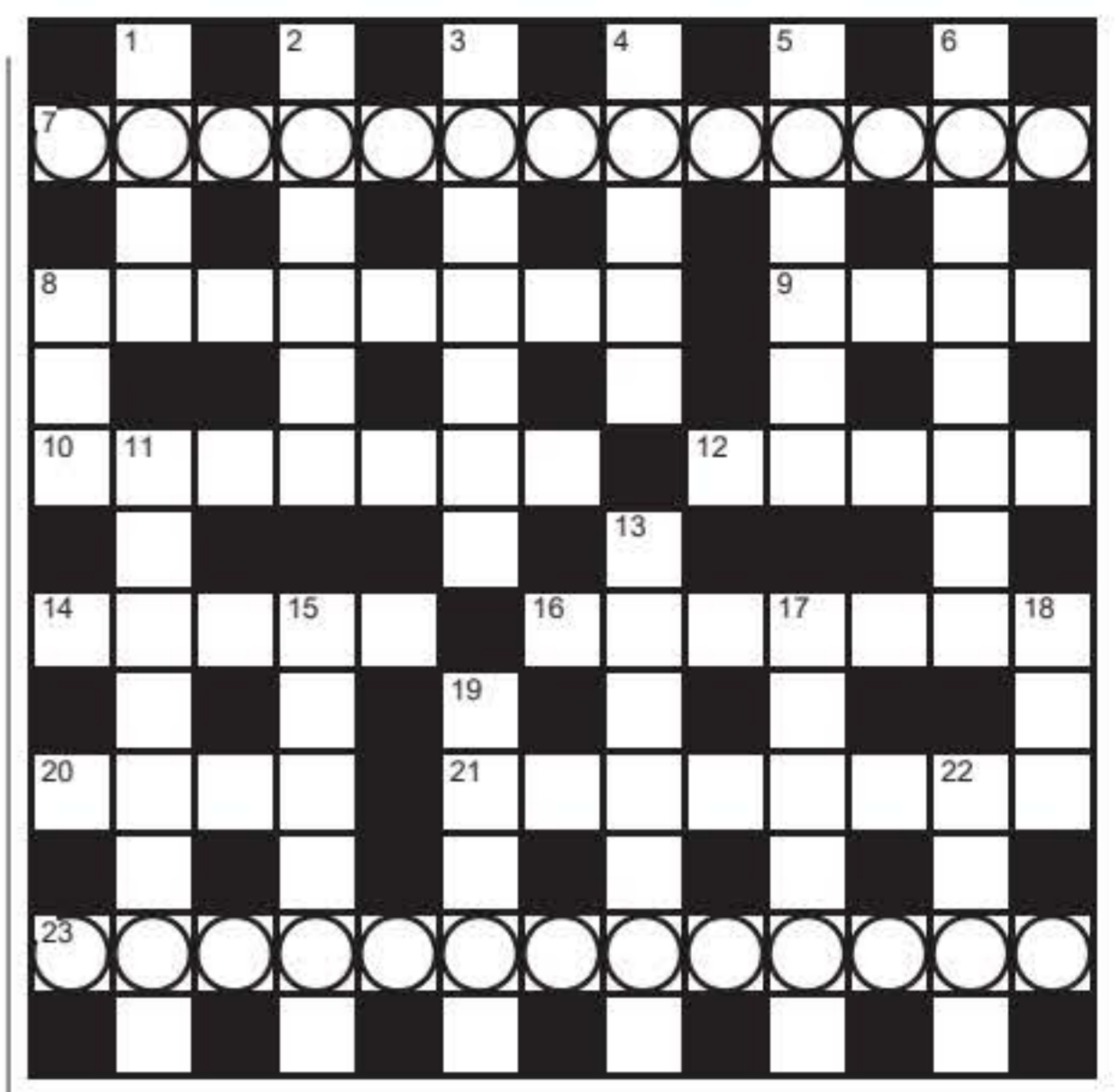
## QUICK CROSSWORD

## Across

7 'Pretty in Pink' star (5,8)  
8 Inlaid floors (RAP QUEST anagram) (8)  
9 Not at all bored (PART anagram) (4)  
10 Cheesy Welsh dish (ARBITER anagram) (7)  
12 Southern pie nut (5)  
14 Intelligent (5)  
16 Ballpark snacks (3,4)  
20 Make a design on glass (4)  
21 "When Will I Be Loved" singer Linda \_\_\_\_ (8)  
23 The \_\_\_\_ (1985 film with 7 ACROSS) (9,4)

## Down

1 Leonardo's "\_\_\_\_ Lisa" (4)  
2 Memorial tablet (6)  
3 "\_\_\_\_ and Old Lace" (play and movie) (7)  
4 Son of Seth (5)  
5 Avoid a pothole, perhaps (6)  
6 In a sudden, violent or noisy manner (BAG PLANS anagram) (4-4)  
8 \_\_\_\_ for the course (normal) (3)  
11 Sculptor's framework (A RUM TEAR anagram) (8)  
13 Coquettish manner (7)  
15 Nuke, maybe (THE EAR anagram) (6)



17 Cease to engage, break off (6)  
18 It comes before SUN (3)  
19 "Tomb Raider" heroine Lara \_\_\_\_ (5)  
22 Just what the doctor ordered (4)



## CRYPTIC SOLUTION



## 5x5

Insert the missing letters to complete ten words - five across the grid and five down.

5489

P	R	I	S	M
R	O	D	E	S
O	P	E	N	S
B	E	A	N	S
E	S	S	A	Y

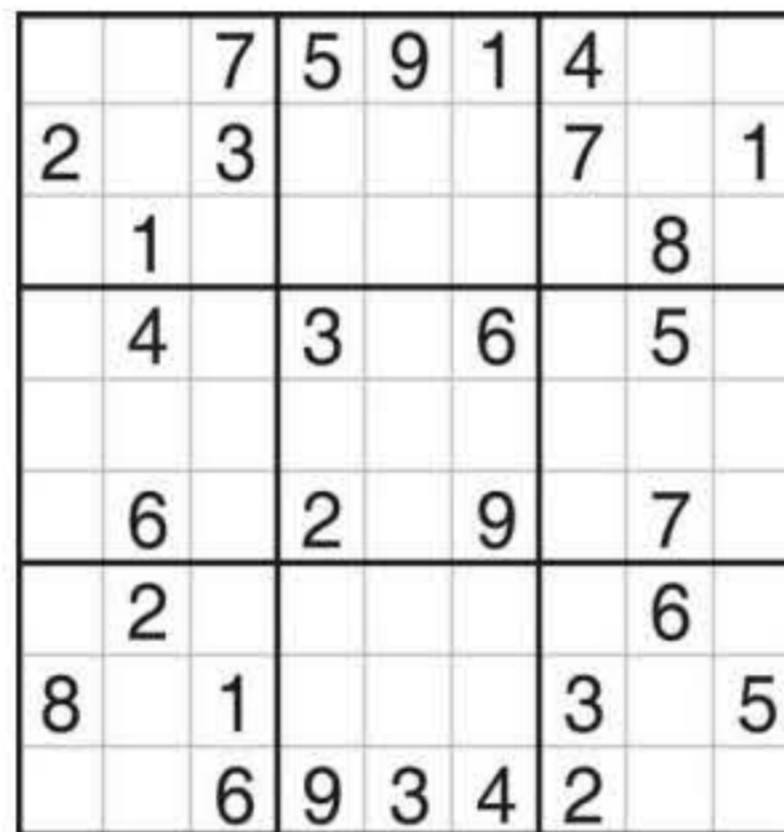
PREVIOUS SOLUTION  
(other combinations may occasionally be possible)



Reference: Concise Oxford 10th Edition

## su | do | ku

© Puzzles by Pappocom EASY



## WORD-BUILDER

5529



How many words of three or more letters, including plurals, can you make from the five letters, using each letter only once? No foreign words or words beginning with a capital are allowed. There's at least one five-letter word.

## TODAY'S GOALS:

Good - 10 Excellent - 14 Amazing - 19

SOLUTION 5528: for, fort, forts, fro, frost, of, orf, orfs, ors, rot, rots, soft, sort, sot, tor, tors.

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TELEVISION

PROGRAMS

KAN HD (Y/H11)

**06:00** Morning News - Israel at War  
**07:00** This Morning - with Arie Golan  
**08:00** Kalman Liberman  
**10:00** Daily Agenda - with Keren Neubach  
**12:00** Amazing Hotels: Life Beyond The Lobby 4  
**13:05** UEFA Euro 2024 - Austria-France  
**15:00** The World Today  
**16:00** Game of Pockets - with Liel Kyzer  
**16:45** The Five O’Clock Edition - with Maya Rac  
**18:05** Guy Zohar - Through the Looking Glass  
**18:20** UEFA Euro 2024 - Pre-Game Studio  
**19:00** UEFA Euro 2024 - Turkey-Georgia  
**20:55** The Evening News - with Michal Rabinovic  
**22:00** The Chase 8 - Episode 4  
**22:57** Guy Zohar - Through the Looking Glass  
**23:15** Night News - with Akiva Novick  
**23:55** UEFA Euro 2024 - Post-Game Studio

KESHET HD (Y/H12)

**06:00** News Flash  
**06:10** The Morning Headlines  
**07:00** News Flash  
**07:08** The Morning News with Niv Raskin  
**09:30** News Flash  
**09:35** Special Broadcast - Nesli Barda and Yoav  
**11:00** Time for the Results  
**11:20** Dancing with the Stars - huca hronia live  
**13:00** Special News Broadcast - Dean Fisher  
**05:00** Today’s edition - With Ofir Hadad  
**16:55** Five With Raffi Reshef  
**17:55** 6:00 P.M with...  
**19:00** Special News Broadcast - Keren Marciano  
**19:55** Main Edition  
**21:30** No One Leaves Palo Alto  
**22:50** Guy Pinnes  
**23:08** The Lottery  
**23:12** Guy Pinnes  
**23:30** Thirty to midnight  
**00:00** Thirty to midnight

RESHET HD (Y/H13)

**06:00** This Morning with Omer and Rotem - Prev  
**07:00** This Morning - Omer Yardeni & Rotem Isra  
**09:30** News Flash  
**09:35** Starting the Day - Yarden and Elad  
**10:00** News Flash  
**10:05** Starting the Day - Yarden and Elad  
**11:00** News Flash  
**11:05** Starting the Day - Yarden and Elad  
**12:00** News Flash  
**12:05** Stethoscope - Episode 196  
**13:00** News Flash  
**13:12** The Tube - Guy Lerer  
**13:45** Vort - Neshama  
**14:00** News Flash  
**14:05** Vort - Neshama  
**14:55** Vort - Gil and Liat’s Decision  
**15:00** News Flash  
**15:05** Vort - Gil and Liat’s Decision  
**16:00** Showtime  
**16:58** Today’s Talk - With Lucy Aharish  
**18:00** Almog at Six  
**18:59** War Zone - Raviv Drucker  
**19:55** The Main News Edition  
**21:15** To Be Announced  
**22:00** The Tube - Guy Lerer  
**23:20** The Past Day - With Tal Ben-ran  
**23:50** The Order of the Day: Real Estate

HOT CHANNEL 3 (H3)

**08:40** The Good Fight  
**09:32** Summer Love  
**10:08** Refaeliz 2  
**10:36** Sisi 2  
**11:26** A Million Little Things 2  
**12:09** Summer Love  
**12:43** Refaeliz 2  
**13:12** Northern Exposure 6  
**14:00** The Good Fight  
**14:53** Days of Our Lives  
**15:35** The Young and the Restless, Yr. 46  
**16:14** The Bold and The Beautiful (2 eps)  
**17:00** Days of Our Lives  
**17:40** The Young and the Restless, Yr. 46  
**18:18** A Million Little Things 2  
**19:00** Sisi 2  
**20:20** Refaeliz 2  
**20:20** Hotel Portofino 3  
**21:15** A Million Little Things 2  
**22:00** Refaeliz 2  
**22:33** Northern Exposure 6  
**23:22** Hotel Portofino 3  
**00:21** The Good Fight

HOT ISRAELI ENTERTAINMENT

**06:00** Renewal of Broadcasts at 08:00  
**08:00** Koka Ltd., Season 2  
**08:29** Nasrin the Legend  
**08:57** The Champ  
**09:37** Love Is just around the Corner  
**10:09** The Game of Life  
**10:58** Psych Talk  
**11:26** My Sister Jackie 2  
**11:52** Refaeliz 2  
**12:23** Nasrin the Legend  
**12:51** The Champ  
**13:27** Love Is just around the Corner  
**14:01** The Game of Life  
**14:46** The Sade Family  
**15:13** Desert Rose  
**15:37** Nasrin the Legend  
**16:05** Refaeliz 2  
**16:36** The Game of Life  
**17:13** Love Is just around the Corner  
**17:45** The Game of Life  
**18:32** Koka Ltd., Season 2  
**19:01** Refaeliz 2  
**19:31** Nasrin the Legend  
**20:01** The Champ  
**20:39** Love Is just around the Corner  
**21:11** The Game of Life  
**21:59** Desert Rose  
**22:22** Nasrin the Legend  
**22:54** Refaeliz 2  
**23:21** The Champ  
**00:00** Love Is just around the Corner  
**00:31** The Game of Life  
**01:20** Desert Rose  
**01:42** Psych Talk  
**02:10** Psych Talk  
**02:41** Koka Ltd., Season 2  
**03:10** The Sade Family  
**03:37** My Sister Jackie 2  
**04:00** Renewal of Broadcasts at 08:00

HOT HBO (H4)

**08:00** Renewal of Broadcasts at 11:00  
**11:00** Departure 2  
**11:45** Somebody Somewhere  
**12:11** Dough  
**12:56** Happily Married  
**13:43** Gentleman Jack 2  
**14:44** Departure 2  
**15:27** Somebody Somewhere  
**16:41** Happily Married

**17:25** Gentleman Jack 2  
**18:23** Somebody Somewhere  
**18:51** Dough  
**19:36** Happily Married 2  
**20:20** Gentleman Jack 2  
**21:19** Departure 3  
**22:00** The Brigade  
**22:51** House of the Dragon 2  
**23:51** Wreck  
**00:40** Looking

HOT ZONE (H5)

**07:15** The Rookie 3  
**07:58** Chicago PD 8  
**08:40** Chicago Fire 10  
**09:21** NCIS: Hawaii 2  
**10:03** Magnum PI 5  
**10:45** 9-1-1 S. 3  
**11:28** Chicago Med 7  
**12:10** Chicago PD 8  
**12:52** The Rookie 3  
**13:35** NCIS 20  
**14:17** Chicago Fire 10  
**14:58** NCIS: Hawaii 2  
**15:40** 9-1-1 S. 3  
**16:22** Chicago PD 8  
**17:05** Magnum PI 5  
**17:47** The Rookie 3  
**18:30** Chicago Fire 10  
**19:11** Chicago Med 7  
**19:53** NCIS: Hawaii 2  
**20:35** 9-1-1 S. 3  
**21:18** Chicago PD 8  
**22:00** S.W.A.T 7  
**22:42** Law & Order: SVU 25  
**23:24** The Rookie 3

YES TV DRAMA

**06:00** Shtisel 3  
**06:52** Funny Woman  
**07:40** Julia (Series 2023)  
**08:30** Nancy Drew 3  
**09:12** Belgravia: The Next Chapter  
**10:02** The Bold And The Beautiful 2020-2021  
**10:25** The Young And The Restless 49  
**11:05** Shtisel 3  
**12:02** Funny Woman  
**12:52** Julia (Series 2023)  
**13:42** Belgravia: The Next Chapter  
**14:32** Shtisel 3  
**15:29** Nancy Drew 3  
**16:15** The Bold And The Beautiful 2020-2021  
**16:40** The Young And The Restless 49  
**17:20** Funny Woman  
**18:10** Julia (Series 2023)  
**19:00** The Traitors  
**19:55** Bold And The Beautiful 2020-2021  
**20:20** The Young And The Restless 49  
**21:00** Hotel Portofino 3  
**21:55** Mary & George  
**22:55** Succession 4  
**00:49** The Traitors  
**01:44** We’re Here 4  
**02:50** Succession 3

YES TV ACTION

**06:00** In The Dark 3  
**06:45** Special Ops: Lioness  
**07:30** Law & Order: SvU 23  
**08:15** Law & Order: SvU 23  
**09:00** Fbi: International 3  
**09:45** F.B.I 6  
**10:30** Fbi: Most Wanted 5  
**11:15** Chicago Fire 7  
**12:00** Chicago Fire 7  
**12:45** Special Ops: Lioness  
**13:27** Law & Order: SvU 23  
**14:08** Law & Order: SvU 23  
**14:49** In The Dark 3  
**15:32** In The Dark 3  
**16:15** Chicago Fire 7  
**16:55** Chicago Fire 7  
**17:38** Fbi: International 3  
**18:21** F.B.I 6  
**19:05** Fbi: Most Wanted 5  
**19:49** Special Ops: Lioness  
**20:37** Law & Order: SvU 23  
**21:20** Law & Order: SvU 23  
**22:00** My Life Is Murder 4  
**22:45** Allegiance  
**23:30** House Of The Dragon  
**00:30** From 2  
**01:15** The Walking Dead 11  
**02:45** House Of The Dragon

YES TV COMEDY

**06:37** Home Economics 3  
**07:02** Home Economics 3  
**07:27** Night Court (2022)  
**07:52** Night Court (2022)  
**08:25** Baby Daddy 5  
**08:50** Baby Daddy 5  
**09:15** Parks And Recreations 4  
**09:40** Parks And Recreations 4  
**10:05** Home Economics 3  
**10:30** Home Economics 3  
**10:55** Night Court (2022)  
**11:20** Night Court (2022)  
**11:45** Baby Daddy 5  
**12:20** Baby Daddy 5  
**12:35** Parks And Recreations 4  
**13:00** Parks And Recreations 4  
**13:25** Family Guy 22  
**13:50** Frasier (2023)  
**14:20** Frasier (2023)  
**14:50** How I Met Your Mother 4  
**15:15** How I Met Your Mother 4  
**15:40** The Nanny 6  
**16:05** The Nanny 6  
**16:30** Married With Children 8  
**16:55** Married With Children 8  
**17:20** Family Guy 22  
**17:45** Frasier (2023)  
**18:15** Frasier (2023)  
**18:45** How I Met Your Mother 4  
**19:10** How I Met Your Mother 4  
**19:35** The Nanny 6  
**20:00** The Nanny 6  
**20:25** Married With Children 8  
**20:50** Married With Children 8  
**21:15** Frasier (2023)  
**21:44** Frasier (2023)  
**22:09** How I Met Your Mother 4  
**22:34** How I Met Your Mother 4  
**22:59** The Nanny 6  
**23:24** The Nanny 6  
**23:49** Married With Children 8  
**24:00** Married With Children 8  
**00:37** Married With Children 8  
**01:02** Entourage 3  
**01:32** Entourage 3

MIDDLE EAST TV (Y109/H150)

**11:00** Rawhide  
**12:00** Touched by an Angel  
**13:00** The 700 Club  
**14:00** The Spirit - Led Life  
**14:30** Pour it Out with Ben & Jodie Hughes  
**15:00** The Rifleman  
**15:30** The Rifleman  
**16:00** Gunsmoke  
**17:00** Rawhide  
**18:00** Flavors Of Israel  
**18:30** It’s Supernatural  
**19:00** The 700 Club  
**20:00** Touched by an Angel  
**21:00** One America News Network  
**22:00** It’s Supernatural  
**22:30** Anna Daily  
**23:00** Manna Fest with Perry Stone  
**23:30** Wonders Without Numbers with David Rives  
**00:00** ILTV Weekly Review  
**00:30** The Rifleman  
**01:00** The Rifleman

HISTORY (Y37/H43)

**06:00** Unexplained With William Shatner 3 - 17  
**06:42** History’s Greatest Mysteries 4 - 19  
**07:22** The Food That Built America 4 - 5  
**08:04** Kennedy - 3  
**08:49** The Curse Of Oak Island 11 - 8  
**09:31** The Food That Built America 4 - 5

**10:13** The Food That Built The World 5 - 5  
**10:55** Lost U-Boats Of Wwii - 2  
**11:37** Unexplained With William Shatner 3 - 17  
**12:19** History’s Greatest Mysteries 4 - 19  
**13:01** The Food That Built America 4 - 3  
**13:43** Kennedy - 1  
**14:28** The Curse Of Oak Island 11 - 1  
**15:54** The Iran-Israel War - 1  
**16:51** The Food That Built The World 5 - 5  
**17:33** The Proof Is Out There 4 - 14  
**18:15** History’s Greatest Mysteries 4 - 15  
**18:57** The Curse Of Oak Island 11 - 5  
**19:39** The Food That Built America 4 - 6  
**20:21** Kennedy - 4  
**21:04** The Curse Of Oak Island 11 - 10  
**21:46** The Secrets Of Skinwalker Ranch 4 - 14  
**22:30** The Secret Of Skinwalker Ranch 5 - 2  
**23:12** Lost U-Boats Of Wwii - 5  
**23:55** History’s Greatest Mysteries 4 - 21

**00:36** The Food That Built America 4 - 5  
**01:18** Kennedy - 3  
**02:03** The Curse Of Oak Island 11 - 9  
**22:42** Law & Order: SVU 25  
**23:24** The Rookie 3  
**03:27** The Food That Built The World 5 - 5  
**04:10** Lost U-Boats Of Wwii - 4  
**04:53** History’s Greatest Mysteries 4 - 20

CLASSICA HD

**06:19** Semi-finals: Schubert, Wolf et al.  
**06:40** Beethoven: Piano Sonata No. 21 (III)  
**07:00** Mozart: Piano Concerto No. 26  
**07:34** Britten:Young Persons Guide to Orchestra  
**07:55** Bach: Goldberg Variations (2008)  
**09:24** Semi-finals: Duparc, Schumann et al.  
**09:48** Documentary: Heitor Villa-Lobos  
**10:14** Mozart: Piano Concerto No. 14, KV 449  
**10:35** Classica Spotlight  
**11:00** Schumann: Violin Concerto and Symphony  
**12:22** Septets by Mozart and Beethoven  
**13:34** Modena - The Belcanto School  
**13:59** Bartok: Romanian Folk Dances  
**14:13** Bach: Partita for Violin No. 2  
**14:46** Classica Spotlight  
**15:05** Caresana, Ziani and Scarlatti  
**16:07** Tales of Two Cities: Leipzig-Damascus  
**17:45** Bruckner: Symphony No. 7 (2019)  
**18:49** Beethoven: Symphonies and Piano Concerto  
**20:29** Debussy: Sonata for Violin and Piano  
**20:43** Documentary: Heitor Villa-Lobos  
**21:10** Berg: Violin Concerto  
**21:39** Classica Spotlight  
**22:00** Historical and Fylerical Guide  
**22:56** Discovering Masterpieces  
**23:26** Semi-final II: Mozart and Bartok  
**00:02** Haydn: Symphony No. 94 (2001)  
**00:26** Mozart: Flute Concerto No. 2, K. 314  
**00:47** Classica Spotlight  
**01:00** Prokofiev: The Love for Three Oranges  
**02:58** Waldbuhne 2001: Spanish Night

YES DOCU (Y8)

**08:20** Od Sipur Echad Vedai - Makom A journey in Israeli children’s literature, which after re-invented the language, does the same thing to the environment in which it was created. Dir. Anat Zeltzer. Israel, 2017.  
**09:25** Esek Mishpachti: 1 Documentary. An emotional 3 episodes series that expose the conflicts in the Israel family bussines. Dir. Tzvika Binder. Israel, 2015. Part I.  
**10:20** Master Of Light After being incarcerated for ten years, George Anthony Morton, a classically trained African-American artist, returns to Kansas City, to paint the key figures of his turbulent past. Dir. Rosa Ruth Boesten. 2022.  
**11:45** House of Kardashians Ep.2 3-part mini-series. No other family defines our time or divides opinion like the Kardashians. Focusing on three members of the famous family - Kris, Kim and Kylie - this series confounds expectations about them. UK, 2023  
**12:35** History Of The Sitcom Ep.6 An eight-part CNN series that traces the development of the American situation comedy sitcom from the 1950s to the 21st century and examines how sitcoms reflect the changing face of American families. 2021.  
**13:20** Michel Gondry, Do It Yourself The colorful world of Michel Gondry, the Oscar-winning writer-director of “Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind”, is the subject of this documentary. Dir. Francois Nemeta. France. 2023  
**14:40** Navalny During months-long recovery Aleksey Navalny makes shocking discoveries about the attempt on his life in August 2020 and decides to return home. Dir. Daniel Rohrer. 2022.  
**16:15** The Secret Lives of 5 Years Old 4 - 3 The series that swept Israel returns in a new and charming season! The 5-year-old kindergarten children are intrigued by the entrance to the first grade and also dealing with problems that exist only in Israel.  
**16:50** Od Sipur Echad Vedai - Mishpacha A journey in Israeli children’s literature, which opens a wide gateway to the family’s golden chain. Literary and poetic communication between parents and their children. Dir. Anat Zeltzer. Israel, 2017.  
**18:00** Esek Mishpachti: 2 Documentary. An emotional 3 episodes series that expose the conflicts in the Israel family bussines. Dir. Tzvika Binder. Israel, 2015. Part 2.  
**18:50** The Hunt For Planet B Taking us behind the scenes with NASA’s high-stakes Webb Space Telescope, the documentary follows a pioneering group of scientists on their quest to find another Earth among the stars. Dir. Nathaniel Kahn, 2021.  
**20:20** House of Kardashians Ep.3 3-part mini-series. No other family defines our time or divides opinion like the Kardashians. Focusing on three members of the famous family - Kris, Kim and Kylie - this series confounds expectations about them. UK, 2023  
**21:15** History Of The Sitcom Ep.7 An eight-part CNN series that traces the development of the American situation comedy show from the

1950s to the 21st century and examines how sitcoms reflect the changing face of American families. 2021.  
**22:01** The Gullspang Miracle Two sisters buy an apartment - only to realize that the seller of the apartment looks identical to their other sister, who committed suicide some thirty years before. Dir. Maria Fredriksson. Sweden-Norway. 2023  
**23:50** Secrets Of Playboy Ep.5 The 10-part documentary series is set to explore the legacy of both Playboy and Hugh Hefner while peeling back the curtain to focus its lens on the behaviour behind the scenes. 2022.

CHANNEL 8 (H8)

**06:02** Shadow of Truth: Coastal Road  
**06:45** Leibowitz: Faith, Country, Man  
**07:50** Psych Talk 5  
**08:15** Clint Eastwood: The Last Legend  
**09:10** Ice age: a Frozen World  
**10:00** Elizabeth: Our Queen  
**10:46** The Titan disaster  
**11:34** Shadow of Truth: Coastal Road  
**12:19** You at Home  
**13:09** Ice age: a Frozen World  
**13:59** Elizabeth: Our Queen  
**14:48** The Titan disaster  
**15:38** Shadow of Truth: Coastal Road  
**16:23** You at Home  
**17:15** Ice age: a Frozen World  
**18:05** Elizabeth: Our Queen  
**18:52** Shadow of Truth: Coastal Road  
**19:37** The Titan disaster  
**20:26** Ice age: a Frozen World  
**21:15** A Cure for Fear  
**22:10** Shadow of Truth: Coastal Road  
**22:50** Sex unlimited  
**23:40** A Cure for Fear  
**00:35** Shadow of Truth: Coastal Road  
**01:15** Sex unlimited  
**01:50** A Cure for Fear  
**02:00** Shadow of Truth: Coastal Road  
**03:40** Sex unlimited

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC (Y41/H46)

**06:12** Science of Stupid 5 - Episode 15  
**06:35** Ice Road Rescue 5 - 6. Gridlock Hazard  
**07:21** Filthy Riches - 2. Go Big or Go Home  
**08:05** Wicked Tuna 11 - 12. Lucky or Not  
**08:49** Air Crash Investigation 13 - 2. Niki Lau  
**09:35** Air Crash Investigation 13 - 3. Vanishin  
**10:21** Drain the Oceans 6 - 2. Secrets of the D  
**11:07** Ice Road Rescue 5 - 7. Moonlight Mayhem  
**11:53** Filthy Riches - 3. No Cuts, No Glory  
**12:39** Wicked Tuna 11 - 13. Make the Grade  
**13:22** Primal Survivor 5 - 1. Cloud Forest Hunt  
**14:08** Lawless Island 2 - 5. Dangerous Grounds  
**14:53** Lawless Island 2 - 6. Eyes of The Forest  
**15:39** Air Crash Investigation 13 - 4. Sideswipe  
**16:25** Air Crash Investigation 13 - 5. Death at  
**17:11** Car S.O.S. 8 - 2. Healey 3000  
**17:57** Science of Stupid 5 - Episode 14  
**18:22** Science of Stupid 5 - Episode 20  
**18:46** Drain the Oceans 6 - 2. Secrets of the D  
**19:32** Food Factory USA 2 - 17. Bubblegum, Hors  
**19:55** Food Factory USA 2 - 18. Applesauce & On  
**20:17** Out There With Jack Randall - 6. Wild Ca  
**21:03** Operation Arctic Cure  
**21:50** Erased: WW2’s Heroes of Color - 4. Battl  
**22:34** Hunting Hitler’s Bomb  
**23:22** Out There With Jack Randall - 6. Wild Ca  
**00:03** Europe from Above: Season 6 - 1. Iberia  
**00:49** Gordon Ramsay: Uncharted: Season 4 - 6.  
**01:33** The Hidden Holocaust

MEZZO FULL (H195)

**10:34** InterMezzo A selection of short musical clips and artmusic - enjoy a variety of genres from Jazz to Classical music.  
**11:00** Janacek: The Cunning Little Vixen Opera by Leos Janacek. Orchestre, Chorus and Atsler Lyrique of the Opera National de Paris led by Dennis Russell Davies. Elena Tsalagova (the vixen), Jukka Rasila (the gamekeeper). Paris, 2008.  
**12:41** Semyon Bychkov: Smolka, Rachmaninov Classical. Czech Philharmonic, Semyon Bychkov (conductor): Smolka (Agnus Dei), Janacek (Glagolitic Mass) & Rachmaninov (piano concerto no.1). With: Yuja Wang (piano), others. Rudolfinum, Prague, 2022.  
**14:15** InterMezzo A selection of short musical clips and artmusic - enjoy a variety of genres from Jazz to Classical music.  
**14:30** Hrusa, Trifonov: Scriabin, Suk Czech Philharmonic and Danil Trifonov (piano) led by Jakub Hrusa perform Alexander Scriabin’s Piano Concerto in F sharp minor, Op. 20, and Josef Suk’s Asrael, Op. 27. Rudolfinum, Prague, 2023.  
**16:20** Semyon Bychkov: Martinu, Dutilleux Semyon Bychkov conducts Czech Philharmonic Orchestra. Martinu: Double Concerto for two string orchestras. Dutilleux: Symphony No. 2. Recorded on 24 January 2020 at the Rudolfinum, Prague  
**17:50** InterMezzo A selection of short musical clips and artmusic - enjoy a variety of genres from Jazz to Classical music.  
**18:15** Pierre Henry: A Documentary Documentary on Pierre Henry, pioneer composer of concrete and electronic music.  
**19:08** Pierre-Laurent Aimard in Paris Pierre-Laurent Aimard (piano) performs works by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Jan Peterszon Sweenick, Andrei Volkonsky, Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, Ludwig van Beethoven, and George Benjamin. 2022.  
**20:20** Messiah: Quartet for the End of Time Renaud Capucon (Violin), Kian Soltani (Cello), Pascal Moragues (Clarinet), Helene Mercier (Piano) perform Olivier Messiaen’s Quartet for the End of Time. Aix-en-Provence, 2022.  
**21:30** Tokyo Ballet: Kaguyahime Dance. Tokyo Ballet performs “Kaguyahime”. Choreography by Jo Kanamori. Music by Claude Debussy. 2023.  
**23:30** Semyon Bychkov: Smolka, Rachmaninov Classical. Czech Philharmonic, Semyon Bychkov (conductor): Smolka (Agnus Dei), Janacek (Glagolitic Mass) & Rachmaninov (piano concerto no.1).

With: Yuja Wang (piano), others. Rudolfinum, Prague, 2022.  
**01:10** Mathieu Herzog: Dukas, Debussy, Cras Appassionato led by Mathieu Herzog performs Paul Dukas’s L’Apprenti sorcier, Jean Cras’s journal de bord, and Claude Debussy’s La mer and La Cathedrale Engoulve. Boulougne-Billancourt, 2023.  
**02:33** Britten: The Turn of the Screw Opera in two acts and prologue, by Britten. Orchestre de Chambre de la Monnaie, Ben Glassberg (conductor). With: Ed Lyon (Prologue), Sally Matthews (Governess). Theatre de la Monnaie, Brussels, 2021.  
**04:19** Giotto Solo by Carolyn Carlson and choreography: Carolyn Carlson. Pantheon, Paris, 2016.  
**04:28** Jo Stromgren: The Neighbour Dance. Jo Stromgren (choreography), Line Tormoen and Dimitri Jourde (dancers), Leif Ove Andnsen (piano). 2010.  
**04:49** John Eliot Gardiner: Vorisek, Janacek Classical. The Czech Philharmonic and John Eliot Gardiner (conductor) performing works by Vorisek, Janacek and Martinu. With: Ondrej Vrabec (conductor), Igor Ardejev (piano), Rudolfinum, Prague, 2020.

MOVIES

HOT CINEMA 1 (H16)

**06:40 Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy** Thriller. In the days of the Cold War, espionage veteran George Smiley is forced from retirement to uncover a Soviet agent within MI6. Cast: Gary Oldman, Colin Firth. Dir: Tomas Alfredson (UK, 2011).  
**08:10 Tar** Drama. Lydia Lar, widely considered one of the greatest living composer-conductors and the very first female director of a major German orchestra. Cast: Cate Blanchett. Dir: Todd Field (USA, 2022).  
**10:46 True Grit** Drama. A young girl hires a tough sheriff to track down her father’s murderer. With Jeff Bridges, Matt Damon. Dir.: Ethan and Joel Coen (2010)  
**12:37 Lara Croft Tomb Raider: Cradle of Life** Action. In the sequel to the hit film, adventurer Lara Croft sets out to save the world from an evil scientist. Cast: Angelina Jolie, Gerard Butler. Dir.: Jan De Bont (USA, 2003).  
**14:34 Jungle** A group of friends go a trek into the Bolivian jungle, searching for an Indian village, but soon discover a dark secret. Cast: Daniel Radcliffe, Yasmin Kassim. Dir.: Greg McLean (Australia, 2017).  
**16:29 The Beach** A man travels to Thailand and finds himself in possession of a strange map. It is rumored to lead to an isolated tropical paradise. With Leonardo DiCaprio, Daniel York (2000)  
**18:28 From Paris with Love** In Paris, an employee in the office of the US ambassador hooks up with an American spy trying to thwart a terrorist attack. With John Travolta, Jonathan Rhys Meyers (2010)  
**20:01 The Untouchables** Thriller. A group of idealistic federal agents are determined to bring Chicago crime boss Al Capone to justice. With Kevin Costner, Sean Connery. Dir: Brian De Palma (1987)  
**22:00 Oppenheimer** Drama. The story of American scientist J. Robert Oppenheimer and his role in the development of the atomic bomb. Cast: Cillian Murphy, Emily Blunt. Dir.: Christopher Nolan (USA, 2023)  
**00:55 Transcendence** Sci-Fi. A scientist’s drive for artificial intelligence takes on dangerous implications. Cast: Johnny Depp, Rebecca Hall. Dir.: Wally Pfister (USA, 2014).  
**02:53 Fast X** Action. Dom Toretto and his family are targeted by the vengeful son of drug kingpin Hernan Reyes. Cast: Vin Diesel, Jason Momoa. Dir.: Louis Leterrier (USA, 2023).

HOT CINEMA 2 (H17)

**07:22 Criminal** In a last-ditch effort to foil a diabolical plot, the memories, secrets and skills of a dead CIA agent are implanted into a death-row inmate in the hopes that he will complete the mission. With Kevin Costner (2016)  
**09:15 Twelve Strong** Action Film. The story of the first Special Forces team deployed to Afghanistan after 9-11. Cast: Chris Hemsworth, Michael Shannon. Dir.: Nicolai Fuglsig (USA, 2018).  
**11:24 Into the Storm** Fearless storm-chasers brave impossible odds in a quest to collect data on an unprecedented storm that unleashes multiple tornados on a small town. With Sarah Wayne Callies, Richard Armitage (2014)  
**12:54 Warcraft** Fantasy. The world of the or

# 'If Israel needs me, we already lost the war'

In Jerusalem show, American funnyman Modi provides a respite of laughter

## STAND-UP REVIEW

• By GIL HOFFMAN

Modi  
Jerusalem Theatre  
June 16

During Sukkot, when New York comedian Modi last came to Israel, the biggest problem that appeared to be facing the Jewish state was an internal rift over judicial reform that he rightly said was "not funny."

Ahead of that visit, Modi told *The Jerusalem Post* that "the job of a comedian is to lighten the national mood."

Unwittingly speaking prophetically, he added: "When they come to a show, people want to forget about their problems and *tsuris* [troubles]."

Immediately after his six shows across the country, Israel's *tsuris* got out of control. On October 7, he was woken up by sirens at the Setai Hotel in Jaffa. He later saw Bruno Mars and his crew get evacuated from the hotel.

Back for one show at the Jerusalem Theatre Sunday night, Modi told the crowd that he was relieved when Mars left because if the hotel had been hit by a rocket that killed the singer, no one would have cared about his own death.

That kind of dark humor was a perfect fit for the audience that packed the theater after more than eight months of war. Born Mordechi Rosenfeld in Tel Aviv, Modi understands the Israeli mentality, and he threw in plenty of Hebrew as



COMEDIAN MODI Rosenfeld in a file photo. (JTA)

he pontificated on the cultural differences between Israelis and the American Jews he lives

with nowadays in Manhattan. "You've kept your Jewish American accents!" he admir-

ingly told the crowd of immigrants to Israel.

At the climax of his routine, he mocked wealthy Diaspora Jewish ladies who come to Israel on solidarity missions wearing designer clothes and jewelry to barbecue for IDF soldiers. He mocked the response of confused soldiers who did not understand why the women came and didn't speak their language.

"You... here... eh?"

At one point, an audience member told Modi that they made aliyah to Israel in December.

"Perfect timing!" he declared, as the crowd laughed.

Modi remarked that at a certain point after making aliyah, it hits people: "Oh my God, we live in Israel."

He said he hears plenty of American Jews talk about making aliyah because "the Nazis are coming." But he said the truth is "the Nazis are already over here."

Modi moved with his family to the United States at age seven and was raised on Long Island. After studying to be a cantor and working as a Wall Street banker, he switched to a less lucrative career in stand-up comedy. Voted one of the top 10 comedians in New York City by *The Hollywood Reporter*, Modi is one of the comedy circuit's most sought-after performers.

Most of the events he headlines lately are fundraisers for Israel by Jewish organizations across North America. He said the event in Jerusalem was his first in a long time that was

not a fundraiser.

At one fundraiser in Vancouver, he even won an enormous shofar in a raffle. That, of course, gave him plenty of fodder for his routine. He tried to get the shofar through Canadian airport security.

When he told the security agents it was a ram's horn, they asked where the ram's other horn was.

Modi does his share of traveling. He warned the Israeli audience not to go to Europe, where "every once in a while, you see a woman not wearing a hijab."

While Modi concluded his show with "*Hatikva*" and expressed solidarity with Israel, he stopped short of volunteering to join the IDF.

"If Israel needs me, we've already lost the war," he said.



DANYA TAYMOR accepts the award for Best Direction of a Musical for 'The Outsiders' at the 77th Annual Tony Awards in New York City, Sunday night. (Brendan Mcdermid/Reuters)

## 'The Outsiders' and 'Stereophonic' win big at Tony Awards

• By KATHRYN LURIE

NEW YORK (Reuters) – *The Outsiders*, a musical based on S.E. Hinton's coming-of-age novel, snagged the coveted Tony Award for best musical Sunday, while a celebrated revival of a Stephen Sondheim classic and a tale of a 1970s rock band also won big.

The ceremony took place for the first time at New York City's Lincoln Center with Tony-nominated and Oscar-winning actress Ariana DeBose hosting for the third year in a row. This year, DeBose is also producing and she choreographed the sultry song-and-dance number that opened the show.

Danya Taymor won for direction of a musical adaptation of *The Outsiders*, upsetting favored *Merrily We Roll Along* director Maria Friedman.

Best revival of a musical award winner *Merrily We Roll Along* has been a favorite narrative of the season, delighting audiences and critics with the revived production of Sondheim's most famous flop, which closed after 52 previews and 16 performances in its first go-round on Broadway in 1981.

*Stereophonic* took the Tony Awards for best play and best direction for Daniel Aukin. David Adjmi's play about a '70s-era rock band making an album, featuring original songs by Will Butler, formerly of Arcade Fire, broke the record

for the most nominations for a play in Tonys history.

*Appropriate*, playwright Branden Jacobs-Jenkins's story about three adult siblings reuniting at their family home after the death of their father only to discover troubling family secrets, won best revival of a play.

Jonathan Groff won for best lead actor in a musical for *Merrily We Roll Along* while Maleah Joi Moon won best lead actress in a musical for her role in *Hell's Kitchen*.

Shaina Taub won best score and best book of a musical for *Suffs*, the story of the suffragette movement, featuring an all-woman cast.

*Succession* star Jeremy Strong won best lead actor in a play for his role in the Henrik Ibsen play *Enemy of the People*, and Daniel Radcliffe, best known for his starring role in the Harry Potter movie franchise, won best featured actor in a musical for *Merrily We Roll Along*.

Sarah Paulson won best lead actress in a play for *Appropriate* while Will Brill beat out two other actors in his production, *Stereophonic*, for best featured actor in a play.

Kecia Lewis, who made her Broadway debut 40 years ago in *Dreamgirls*, was nominated for the first time this season. She won the best featured actress award in a musical for her role as the piano-playing mentor in *Hell's Kitchen*.

## 'Ezra' tells it like it is about autism

• By HANNAH BROWN

Movies have come a long way in their depictions of people on the autism spectrum following *Rain Man* (1988), the first mainstream movie to deal with autism in any depth; and *Ezra*, the latest film to portray autism on-screen, which is currently playing in theaters around Israel, gives a nuanced, realistic, and heartrending look at a boy with autism and his family, which tells truths that *Rain Man* glossed over.

Directed by Tony Goldwyn and with a script by Tony Spiridakis, which is based on his own experiences raising a son on the spectrum, this moving and often funny film illustrates the quote by Dr. Stephen Shore, a music professor on the autism spectrum: "When you've met one individual with autism, you've met one individual with autism."

As the mother of an adult son on the autism spectrum, for years I have had to disabuse well-meaning strangers of the notion that my son is a genius like the character portrayed by Dustin Hoffman in *Rain Man*, which won Oscars in 1989 for Best Picture, Best Actor, Best Director, and Best Screenplay.

*Rain Man* was certainly entertaining, with great acting by Hoffman, and in retrospect much of it is accurate in its portrayal of the small subset – estimated at about 5% – of people on the autism spectrum who have savant abilities.

The problem that I and many parents of people on the spectrum have with the movie is that because it was so successful and so well done, it became the template for autism in the public consciousness. For years, people who only knew about autism from *Rain Man* would assume that my son had memorized every book in the library or could count cards in Vegas, the way Hoffman's character does in the movie. That was what they took from *Rain Man*, and the real challenges of daily life for people on the spectrum were lost on them.

But as *Ezra* shows very clearly, autism is a spectrum condition, and people who are on it often exhibit a very wide range of behaviors. The same person who can have great abilities in one area can



A SCENE from 'Ezra.'  
(United King Films)

face extreme challenges in others, and all of this can shift quickly.

You've never met a kid like Ezra (William A. Fitzgerald, a teen actor who is on the spectrum himself), because there is no other kid like Ezra. And there is no other father quite like Max (Bobby Cannavale), Ezra's dad, a stand-up comedian who makes jokes about having an autistic son as part of his self-deprecating act.

Ezra's parents have split up, and he lives with his mother, Jenna (Rose Byrne), a New Jersey real estate broker who makes caring for her son her top priority. Ezra also has a close relationship with his loving grandfather (Robert De Niro, who is the father of a son on the autism spectrum).

Cannavale is great at playing unhinged guys, and he's perfect for this part, which shows that parents of kids on the spectrum aren't only self-sacrificing Mother Teresa types or mean, cold people who can't accept having a special-needs child. Sometimes, like Max, they are loving parents who want to do the best for their kids but have problems of their own and occasionally make decisions impulsively for all the wrong reasons – meaning, they are like everyone else.

Ezra and Max share a common language of movie dialogue they have memorized, something that will resonate with many parents of children on the spectrum. When my son is apprehensive, for example, he will quote the line, "I'm not

worried, you shouldn't be worried," from *Toy Story*, to let me know that he actually is worried.

Ezra knows every word of *The Big Lebowski* and dozens, maybe hundreds of other movies, and is obviously incredibly intelligent. But he has little awareness of danger around him, and he gets in trouble at the school where he is mainstreamed after he leads the kids out of the classroom and into the street. Later, when he overhears Bruce (played by the director, Tony Goldwyn), his mother's boyfriend, complaining about Max, he can't understand that Bruce is joking when he says he can get a hit man to get rid of his father, and runs out into the street at night to warn Max, nearly getting run over.

This may sound unbelievably hair-raising, but for parents of children on the spectrum, it is absolutely relatable. A 2017 study from the Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health found that the average life expectancy for people on the spectrum is 36, due in large part to accidental deaths in childhood. Let that sink in for a minute.

The child welfare system takes custody of Ezra after the incident and tells Max and Jenna that he must go to a special-needs school and take an antipsychotic, a very heavy-duty drug that, in spite of all its downsides, can be enormously helpful for some people on the spectrum, allowing them to control the impulses that trigger violent

meltdowns.

Max sees the court's decision as a plot to destroy his son and to keep them apart. Reacting in an extreme way, he attacks the judge physically, and a restraining order is issued that keeps him away from his son.

Acting out of desperation, which reflects both his profound love for his son as well as his own deep-seated psychological problems, he kidnaps Ezra from his mother's house and takes him on a crazy road trip, first to see his old friend, a comic (Rainn Wilson), who now runs a camp in Michigan, and then to appear on *Jimmy Kimmel Live!* – a gig his manager (Whoopi Goldberg) has booked for him in spite of everything.

A ROAD trip is a great way to tell a story about someone on the autism spectrum, because by definition, a journey like this is full of surprises and takes everyone out of their comfort zones. It can be especially challenging for people on the spectrum, because most of them thrive on following routines, which can often be quite rigid.

In *Rain Man*, they hit the road because Raymond was afraid of flying, and it forced Raymond into all kinds of new experiences.

These autism road-trip movies share another common thread, perhaps the most important one of all: They all come when a family member is forced to make a difficult decision about the future of a person they love but can't always help.

As the trip in *Ezra* unfolds, and Ezra's grandfather joins them very briefly, Max is forced to confront some crucial truths about himself and his son. He comes to understand that part of the reason he so strenuously resists putting Ezra in a special-needs school is that he needs to think of Ezra as a kind of superhero – the superhero Ezra longs to be – who can overcome any obstacle. The movie *Ezra* is enormously successful at portraying the special needs, abilities, and talents of a very quirky father and son, and I hope will help viewers understand the quirky people in their own lives.

The writer is the author of the novel, *'If I Could Tell You'*, about four mothers whose children are diagnosed with autism.

## When Beethoven meets Hollywood

## CONCERT REVIEW

• By SARAH HERSHENSON

Duo Sonare  
Mishkan Hamusica,  
Ra'anana  
June 10

It's a rare occurrence for the music of Beethoven to meet the music of Hollywood in the same performance. The exception is when performed by Duo Sonare, the collaboration of pianist, composer, and arranger, Dr. Tal Zilber; and the virtuoso violinist, Yonatan Selai. Their goals are to share not only beautiful music but

also a program of divergent musical styles and how they resonate and enrich one another.

"Classical music is almost a 'religion' for us," said Selai. "Therefore, we would not compromise either on quality or complexity of the repertoire in our quest to make classical music accessible for all."

Zilber believes in brevity not only in his verbal explanations, with which he prefaced each of the short selections, but also in clarity in expressing his ideas. By doing so, Duo Sonare constructed a mindful and musically satisfying evening.

THE PROGRAM opened with the music of Bach, the 18th-cen-

tury composer, with the first movement of his Sonata No.1 to set the tone for the evening. Bach was a great improviser and influencer. Throughout the concert, Zilber pointed out how his music and techniques influenced later composers.

As an example, he explained how the underlying motive of the Beatles song "Eleanor Rigby," featured later on the program, is reminiscent of the fugal motive in Bach's famous Toccata and Fugue in D Minor.

"Suddenly, the audience knows how to connect, and classical [music] is more accessible," he explained. "Being open to classical as well as the music of today is important," he pointed out.

"It is also important to recognize and not discount music written for the movies, jazz, and popular genres as anything less worthy. They are part of our current musical experience and vocabulary and their place is vital."

The central selection of Duo Sonare's performance was Sonata No. 7 for violin and piano by Beethoven, and was marked with beauty, skill, and nuance by the two performers. In his short and clear preface.

Featured as an example of music spanning centuries was Praeludium and Allegro, a piece composed by the famous violinist Fritz Kreisler in 1905, who wrote it in the style of Pugnani, an 18th-century composer.

Selai brought a special connection to Ernest Bloch's piece "*Nigun*" for violin and piano. His expression of the Jewish soul, in this song without words, brought this piece to a dramatic and musically satisfying level.

Duo Sonare then offered the haunting music by John Williams from the movie *Schindler's List*. This was an opportunity to appreciate drama on another level as well as showcase Zilber's masterful, expressive arrangement, which left space for the improvisational skills of both artists.

"Here we have the opportunity to improvise, which makes for an exciting experience," posited violinist Selai.



DUO SONARE – Yonatan Selai and Dr. Tal Zilber. (Lara Ginzburg)

The evening closed with the music from *The Godfather*, followed by the fireworks of "Tango" by Argentine composer Astor Piazzolla.

This mysteriously named concert, *Beethoven Meets Hollywood*, turned out to be a most

enjoyable affair.

Duo Sonare will perform in Tel Aviv at the Bronfman Auditorium on June 18, and at the Rappaport Auditorium in Haifa, on June 25. Visit [duosonare.com/#value](https://duosonare.com/#value) for more information.\*