

Qatar, U.S. push Israel to clarify PM's comments

Hamas leaders say chances slim for hostage deal following PM's statement

Jonathan Lis and Jack Khoury

The United States and the other mediators attach "crucial importance" to the summit meeting in Qatar on Wednesday after Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu issued his "red lines" for completing a deal, foreign sources knowledgeable about the negotiations told Haaretz on Monday.

Negotiators are waiting to hear from Mossad chief David Barnea how flexible Israel will be in regard to each

of the issues still subject to dispute and whether Israel has practical suggestions to square the circle and advance the negotiations after Netanyahu's announcement.

One source said Netanyahu's message on Sunday has already complicated any progress of reaching a deal with Hamas.

The Hamas leadership overseas has told the heads of the Gaza-based factions that chances of reaching a hostage-cease-fire deal are now slim, after Netanyahu's statement.

The main points of contention remain Hamas' demand for a complete cessation of hostilities and the end of the war, which Palestinian prisoners will be released and whether Israel will have a veto power over certain prisoners, and finally Gaza reconstruction and preventing armed men entering northern Gaza.

Israeli sources said on Monday that a mutually agreed plan could still be reached but the price would be the collapse of the governing coalition. "The problem at the moment isn't the ability to reach an agreed upon plan. For Netanyahu, the problem is that he won't have a government if he pursues a deal. It's a political decision he will have to make," said one source.

Either way, Israel undertook a series of meetings to advance the deal. On Monday, Ronen Bar, the head of the Shin Bet security service, left for Cairo for talks; on Wednesday, the summit is due to take place in Qatar; and another working team may go to Doha before the end of the week to discuss advancing the plan.

An Israeli source said that the next three weeks will see a lot of meetings, mainly on the level of work

Amos Harel

Retiring officer reveals truth gov't hid

The farewell speech given on Monday by Maj. Gen. Yehuda Fuchs, the outgoing head of the army's Central Command, provided an internal glimpse into the events there throughout these nine months of war. Fuchs didn't hide behind obfuscations, but rather described his feelings of guilt – as part of the Israel Defense Forces high command and as the former head of the

Gaza Division at the end of the previous decade – in the face of the army's resounding failure in preventing October 7 massacre.

There was no attempt at covering up his feelings and experiences of persecution from extremist settlers, who have long marked him as an independent officer who refused to bow down

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Fireworks go off over Paris' Republique Plaza, after forecasts for the second round of legislative elections began coming in Sunday evening.

Christophe Ena/AP

France rejects Le Pen's far right. But can Macron govern without the far left?

Sefy Hendler

PARIS – Many people in France will wake up on Monday morning with the feeling that the worst thing of all, the country's first right-wing nationalist govern-

ment in roughly 80 years, didn't happen.

That is thanks to what the French call the "republican dam" (barrage républicain). And on Sunday, even in the

face of the very powerful wave predicted by pollsters and pundits, it didn't collapse.

What the "dam" means is a joint effort by all the other political parties to block Marine Le Pen's far right at any cost. And in fact, based on exit polls, the National

Rally – the shiny new incarnation of the old National Front led by Jean-Marie Le Pen – didn't manage to win a majority in the National Assembly.

The younger Le Pen, according to the exit polls, was halted at 150 seats and maybe even less, far below

the absolute majority (289 seats) that some polls were still predicting a week ago.

The other side of this surprise was the victory by the New Popular Front, a coalition of leftist parties, which finished first in the voting

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PM aiding fundamentalists in bid for war, settlements

Anshel Pfeffer

Over the last nine months, you may have understood from reading this newspaper that Israel is undergoing the most tragic period in its history, with heavy casualties, 120 hostages still in Gaza and tens of thousands of civilians forced to leave

their homes on the borders around Gaza and the north. And you wouldn't be wrong.

But not all Israelis feel the same way.

There are Israelis like National Missions Minister Orit Strock, who feel like "we're living in a miraculous

time." Strock was speaking to a group of settlers in Givat Hanan, an outpost in the South Hebron Hills, and was referring to the ease with which she and her fellow far-right ministers can now authorize and fund more settlement building in the area due to a combination of their control of key government roles and the focus on events elsewhere (the wars

in Gaza and the northern border). This has enabled not just new construction, but the displacement of local rural Palestinian communities.

Last week, Strock's Religious Zionism party boss, Bezalel Smotrich, spoke with concern on how he wouldn't be surprised if Hamas chief Yahya Sinwar responds positively to the hostage deal and tries to

save himself.

Smotrich opposes the growing consensus in the defense establishment in favor of a cease-fire agreement. Two weeks earlier, at a Jerusalem Day event in the capital, he called not only for continuing the war in Gaza "with all strength," but embarking on a wider war in Lebanon against Hezbollah. He did nothing to hide his

excitement at the prospect.

Meanwhile, he's using his powers both as finance minister and as minister in the Defense Ministry to try to fulfill his "decisive plan," published back in 2017, to topple the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank. He hopes to provoke a Palestinian uprising, which

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Netanyahu, left, with Ben-Gvir. Noam Maskowitz / Knesset Spokesperson

Hamas attacked 7 Gazans in Israel October 7. Their fates are unknown



Hamas terrorists next to the Gazans' car on Oct. 7.

Clause 27 of the Copyright Law

est intersections on that day.

An army investigation concluded that five of the seven were murdered, as was the Israeli driver, according to an army source. The other two apparently returned to the Gaza Strip with the terrorists, he added.

Thirty-three people, including 10 members of the security forces, didn't leave that intersection alive, according to research by Yuval Harpaz and Sagi Or, who mapped the massacre. The battle lasted around three hours, and at the end, the bodies of nine terrorists were found. Last month, another body was found that hasn't yet been identified, but the army thinks it is probably a 10th terrorist.

But the seven laborers weren't included in the original count, or in a later one. It's as if they were never there.

Without the video and other information uncovered later, one might reasonably believe that they weren't. After all, they didn't wind up in the Shin Bet security service's interrogation rooms after the massacre, and according to security sources, they weren't involved in clashes with police or soldiers. Yet

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Poll: Gantz keeps his lead
Opposition bloc poised for majority if elections held now

Revealed by satellite photos
Iran expanding missile production, sources say



Planet Labs PBC / Reuters

haaretz.com

Finnish system also used by U.S. Marines, Ukraine

Shin Bet bought anti-drone system from abroad for PM's security

Oded Yaron

The Shin Bet purchased a Finnish-made anti-drone defense system to protect Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, according to a report in the Helsingin Sanomat newspaper. It claims that the Israeli Defense Ministry, on behalf of the Prime Minister's Office, ordered the Airforce system produced by Finnish company Sensofusion. The information was accessed in response to a freedom-of-information request from the Finnish Defense Ministry.

The Airforce system uses radio frequency sensors to identify the location of a drone and its operator, and can electronically intercept it – either bringing it down or taking control of the drone itself. The system is equipped with a continually updating database of the main commercially-made drones, and provides 10 square kilometers of coverage. It can also be combined with other radar and optic sensor systems to identify drones that may have eluded the system's passive sensors.

The system was approved for use by a leading techno-

logical agency of the U.S. Defense Department and has been sold to the Marine Corps. It was also part of an American Federal Aviation Administration project to protect airports from drones, and is being actively used in Ukraine against the invading Russian forces.

According to the Finnish paper, the export license to Israel was only issued in January of this year, but the system has been in use in Israel for several years. It was featured in a Channel 12 report on the police preparations for the 2019 Eurovision Song Contest held in Israel, though was unnamed in the segment. The Airforce interface was, however, visible on the screens in the police control room featured in the segment. Sensofusion CEO Tuomas Rasila declined to confirm the sales to Israel. In a conversation with Haaretz that he began with a Hebrew greeting of "Erev Tov" (Rasila is studying Hebrew with a tutor in Helsinki), Rasila said, "In the beginning, we built drones. We believed that in the future it would be very easy to develop AI-based anti-tank drones at a cost of less than \$2,000 apiece." With the cur-

rent intensive use of drones in Ukraine, their prediction seems to have been spot on, but at the time, no one believed it was possible, so the company decided to move to the defensive side.

Many Israeli companies are developing similar systems, such as Elbit's Red Sky air defense system, which was recently reported to have been installed on the roof of the Swedish parliament. So why did Israel decide to purchase a Finnish system? "It's blue-and-white (the colors of the Finnish flag)," Rasila chuckled in Hebrew with a smile.

The Prime Minister's Office, the Shin Bet and the Israel Police declined to answer questions from Haaretz on whether the purchases were made via a tender and whether Israeli solutions were also considered. A 2021 State Comptroller report on the country's preparedness for drone threats provides the answer.

"In 2017, the Shin Bet wrote an operational request for a response to the drone threat... and conducted a systems test in which nine companies (seven Israeli

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Bar Peleg

A gray van stands under the overpass, an unmoving figure in the driver's seat. The passenger door is half-open, but no one is getting in or out.

All around, the terror is at its height, the video shows. Here there was an execution, there a body was thrown out of a black car on the road. The video, around 90 seconds long, is from the

morning of October 7.

But the gray van isn't the focus, and the people inside it seem to have remained in the background ever since. Their fate has been unknown for months.

There are more questions than answers about what happened to them. We know the car's owner is Sammi Elgargawi, 52, a professional van driver from the Bedouin village of Wadi al-Na'am in the Western Negev. That

morning, he was transporting seven Gazans, all from Beit Lahia.

The Gazans had permits to enter Israel, where they worked in fields in the south, and were en route to work when the sirens sounded and the rocket launches and the shooting began. When it was last seen moving, the van was heading east toward Rahat. But it never made it through the Sha'ar Hanegev Junction, one of the bloodi-

Commander in West Bank slams settler heads over violence

Yaniv Kubovich

The outgoing head of the IDF Central Command said Monday that ultranationalist violence against Palestinians in the West Bank was rising and local political and religious leaders are not acting to stop it.

Maj. Gen. Yehuda Fuchs was speaking at the handover ceremony in which Maj. Gen. Avi Bluth accepted



Fuchs at the handover ceremony, Monday.

Olivier Fitoussi

control of the command. "To my great distress, in recent months and just this week ultranationalist criminal activity has raised its head, under the cover of the war and the lust for revenge, terrorizing Palestinian civilians who posed no threat. Unfortunately, the local leadership and most of the religious leadership ... is deterred and cannot find the strength to act on the Jewish values they teach their children.

Fuchs said he did all he could to protect both Israelis and Palestinians, treating seriously "every stone or bottle thrown." Each and every fallen person seared me. We investigated, we learned and we drew conclusions. I was not always successful. Sometimes, I failed. I will carry the bloody cost with me forever."

Fuchs added that "the ability of the Central Command to carry out its tasks, to protect Israel and resi-

"Even if the perpetrators are a minority, those who are silent and fail to exclude them bring criticism upon" all settlers. "To me, this is not Judaism. At least, not the Judaism I was raised on. This is not the Torah's way. This is an adoption of the ways of the enemy, following his laws. It was my duty to act. And here too, unfortunately, I was not always successful."

dents of the sector also depends on a strong, functioning Palestinian Authority with effective security agencies enforcing law and order. This is the premise of the command chief, and it is based on cabinet resolutions. Despite the many challenges, intentional subversion of the security situation in the area at this time jeopardizes Israel's security.

Continuing, he said: Concern for the welfare of working, productive Palestinian civilians ... is not only the legal responsibility of the head of command, and not only a moral value, it also serves Israel's security interests."

Addressing Herzl Halevi, Fuchs said he was "deeply ashamed" about verbal attacks on the IDF chief of staff. "This is a method, and there are those who adopted it here, too: terrible things are being said, followed by a weak apology or strengthening and embracing IDF forces, until the next ferocious, irresponsible attack."

He pointed out that "spreading fear among Israelis in light of the events of October 7 is a dangerous mistake. Israeli society and Palestinian society are intertwined in this sector, traveling on the same roads, living one next to the other. Despite the huge challenge of this period, we must find the right way to maintain life through it and to ensure a life-loving population."

Coalition advances bill allowing Israel's Antiquities Authority to operate in W. Bank



People climbing up Mount Ebal in the northern West Bank.

Hadas Parush

Noa Shpigel and Nir Hasson

The Ministerial Legislative Committee on Sunday approved a bill granting the Israel Antiquities Authority the right to operate in the West Bank.

The bill is sponsored for a preliminary reading in the Knesset by Likud lawmaker Amit Halevi. Currently, the Antiquities Law does not extend to the West Bank, and responsibility for archaeological sites there is held by the Civil Administration's archeology staff officer.

The explanatory note accompanying the legislation states that "it is indisputable

that these areas are steeped in Jewish history, and in any case these findings have no historical or other connection to the Palestinian Authority. Therefore, any discussion about the political status of the Judea and Samaria regions has no bearing on Israel's responsibility for the archaeological findings belonging to its people, hence this bill."

The note goes on to explain that the Civil Administration "does not have the knowledge or means to deal as needed with the extent of archaeological findings in these areas, which can be seen in the conditions of antiquities in Judea and

Samaria today. Entire sites have been damaged by the looting of antiquities for economic or nationalist purposes, and this is of course a cultural crime that Israel must not add to the agenda."

The note concludes, "It is proposed to state that the powers of the Antiquities Authority will also include the territories of Judea and Samaria, and that the removal of antiquities from these areas is the same as their removal from Israel."

In recent years, rightist groups have been exerting pressure to allow the Antiquities Authority to operate in the West Bank. Two years ago, the inspectors of

its Robbery Prevention Unit began operating in the West Bank after receiving special certification from the Civil Administration.

Eli Askozido, the Antiquities Authority director general, denied at the time that it would operate in the West Bank. "It is true that there is a campaign around this, but we will not take responsibility for Judea and Samaria. We weren't asked, and we don't want to. On the contrary, we want to strengthen the [role of] archeology staff officer," he told Haaretz.

Last week, as part of a series of "punitive measures" against the PA, the security

cabinet approved a measure undercutting its powers with regard to the archeological sites in its territory. Under the cabinet decision, the Civil Administration was granted enforcement powers with regard to damage to antiquities in areas B, which according to the Oslo Accords is under civilian control of the PA.

The West Bank is home to about 6,000 declared archeological sites, which means that virtually every village has one subject to supervision. The result of last week's decision is that the Civil Administration, which is under the control of Bezalel Smotrich in his role as minister in the Defense Ministry, can block development and even order buildings razed on the grounds that they are on an archeological site.

Askozido said on Sunday the bill approved by the ministerial committee was, in fact, a private member's bill whose implementation was not feasible and that he opposed it. "The State of Israel is not built for this, and it will never happen," he said.

The Emek Shaveh NGO issued a statement opposing the proposed law. "The expansion of archaeological activity in the occupied territories demonstrates the government intends to advance annexation by any means," it said. "The expansion of the activity also poses a fundamental obstacle to impartial archaeological-scientific activity, when it takes place as part of a mechanism of repression and under the auspices of military power."

CLARIFY

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teams, in an attempt to hammer out the details of the proposal made by U.S. President Joe Biden in May.

CIA chief William Burns will arrive in Doha on Tuesday and meet with Qatari Prime Minister Mohammed Al Thani, who acts as the "senior mediator," to prepare for the four-way summit.

"All the sides are waiting to hear what Barnea will be presenting following the Netanyahu declaration," a foreign source knowledgeable

about the talks told Haaretz. "There's still a chance to reach a plan acceptable to all sides, but Netanyahu's remarks certainly aren't helping to advance the talks. To the contrary, they have deepened the lack of trust between the parties and have complicated our ability to conduct negotiations."

The meetings held by the head of the Shin Bet and Israeli security delegation in Cairo were intended to deal with one aspect of the emerging accord, namely Hamas's demand that Israeli forces withdraw from the Rafah crossing and the Philadelphi corridor.

Israel is examining with



Gazans fleeing Gaza City, Sunday.

Dawoud Abu Alkas / Reuters

the Egyptians how to operate the Rafah crossing, reportedly by employing staff not identified with Hamas

or the Palestinian Authority, as well as how to ensure that the Philadelphi corridor is not used to smuggle arms

into Gaza. The two sides are looking into erecting an underground barrier and installing sensors to thwart the digging of tunnels and arms smuggling.

Hamas sources said that Netanyahu's statement reduced the chances of a deal. Speaking with Haaretz, one top faction official in Gaza said that "Netanyahu supports talks without a deadline in order to gain time ... Netanyahu's goal is to address [the U.S.] Congress while the war is still on and reach [the Knesset's] summer recess with a deal." He added that "anyone expecting a breakthrough is living in an illusion."

The official said neither

side would admit publicly that the negotiations had collapsed, but instead "will begin to bring up all kinds of proposals and details whose purpose is to buy time."

On Monday evening, Hamas said that Netanyahu was "putting hurdles" in front of the negotiations. The group called on mediators to intervene.

He said negotiators would discuss "what will happen in the Philadelphi corridor, what forces will be where, where will the army be deployed in Netzarim and where will the displaced return from, which prisoners [in a swap for hostages] will be vetoed and which prisoners will be

deported or sent to the Gaza Strip?"

"All of these are details that need to be discussed and can be regarded as negotiations, but in the meantime, the time passes very slowly," the official said.

At the same time, however, Hamas officials stressed that they were waiting for an official answer from Netanyahu and to see how similar it would be to the statement issued Sunday night.

Hamas is aware that the international pressure on Israel and Netanyahu, especially on the issue of the cease-fire, has eased. Officials note that many countries are now preoccupied with domestic issues, in-

cluding France, Great Britain and the United States, where elections have been or will be held.

A Hamas diplomatic official told Haaretz that Gaza did not factor large in the televised debate between U.S. President Joe Biden and his rival Donald Trump. "It took no more than two minutes," he said. "With all the noise and pressure, even the International Court [of Justice] wasn't able to bring a cease-fire."

"The last remaining issue is the hostages, and Hamas will not return them without achieving its goal of ending the war and an [Israeli] withdrawal," said the diplomatic source.

DRONE

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and two foreign) participated. The test summary noted that "none of the systems are fully ready or proven to provide a full response to the defined need... At the same time, there are a number of systems that have the potential for initial use for the [Shin Bet's] needs. The small-startup companies provide better answers than the large/defense industries."

The comptroller's report says that the head of the Shin Bet's outsourced projects department stated that "the drone threat is developing rapidly and it is therefore difficult to rely upon independent development due to its lengthy time frame... It is not always suitable to independently develop the response. The department's emphasis is on time to market, and thus the approach is to examine the on-the-shelf systems that will make operational capability attainable against a given threat."

Following the testing, the Shin Bet very quickly acquired "System D and System E anti-drone systems. System D, at a cost of 1.2 million shekels per unit, is Israeli-made and is being used in the Israel Police and the Shin Bet. System E is in use by the police and Shin Bet and approved for use by the American FAA."

In 2018, the Shin Bet acquired Airfence, which was not mentioned by name in the report, at a cost of 250,000 shekels per unit. In 2019, the police acquired the same system for the purpose of securing the Eurovision contest, at a cost of 310,000 shekels per unit. Today, a

new Airfence system costs around 640,000 shekels per unit.

In a comparison conducted by the comptroller with System A, which is being developed in Israel at the instruction of the Defense Ministry and in accordance with the demands of the Air Force's defense administration, there was an enormous cost differential, especially when the development costs were included. "Acquiring a product that was developed on the basis of the client's request and is optimally adapted for the user's needs can have numerous advantages. However, often the choice of such a product entails a lengthier development time and increased costs." Ultimately, despite the acquisition of these defense systems for the Eurovision contest in 2019, the comptroller's report found that Israel was not prepared for the threat posed by drones. The defense agencies failed in the distribution of the responsibilities assigned to them by the cabinet, and disputes over funding led to the halting of a project to develop anti-drone defense systems, the report's authors wrote.

The recent acquisition of the Airfence system for the prime minister's security is a result of security forces belatedly understanding the severity of the threat posed by drones. Specifically, there is a threat of inexpensive and agile FPV racer drones that have become one of the key weapons in the war in Ukraine, as their size and flexibility allow them to be operated with high accuracy from nearly any location.

"The FPV drones continue to pose a grave threat due to their speed and ma-

neuverability, which are very difficult for the existing sensor and interceptor systems to handle," says Dr. Liran Antebi, head of the Advanced Technologies and National Security program and a senior researcher at Tel Aviv University's Institute for National Security Studies.

"One of the most effective measures against them is the use of electronic warfare counter-measures," she explains. "But this often ends up disrupting your own systems." An official from the U.S. Marine Corps says that 40 percent of the drones that the IDF has downed since the start of the war belonged to Israel and not to the enemy. Israeli companies that presented similar systems at the Singapore Air Show tell Haaretz that their systems also mistakenly downed IDF drones.

"It's clear that the different organizations in the [Israeli] defense establishment are taking the drone threat seriously and trying to acquire technological solutions," Antebi adds, "but regulation and budgets don't always fit the whole range of the problem, with the central challenge being that the slow pace of change in a bureaucratic state doesn't necessarily keep up with the enemy's rapid pace of change."

While Israel is only now becoming aware of the big hole in its air defenses against Hezbollah's drones, in Ukraine, things have been developing at a tremendous pace. One of the most peculiar recent discoveries was the Russian "barn tank" covered with an armor of metal panels and netting that make it look like some kind of siege vehicle from the Middle Ages.

These additions all completely invalidate the tank's

original use, but have one purpose: to gain several more minutes of survival from the relentless Ukrainian drone attacks, to be able to carry troops who will dig in at the closest point of shelter and gain a few more dozen meters of the front. Videos show how these massive "turtles" are leading columns of tanks and armored carriers, accompanied by an extensive battery of electronic warfare systems to intercept attacks from the skies. But the large size of these systems makes them a target for drones, artillery and missiles too.

Airfence works by disrupting the wireless radio connection between the drone operator and the drone, but the constant arms race has already led to a new-old solution to prevent this kind of takeover - using FPV drones with a wire-guidance system (like the old Tow and Sagger anti-tank missiles).

Asked what they are doing against this threat, Sensofusion CEO Rasila answers very candidly, "Right now, nothing," and then laid out his philosophy. "When you're solving today's problem, you have to take into account what is currently being used in the field. I believe that in the future it won't become a hit, unlike, for example, the AI-based drones."

"Our goal is to supply a strong, efficient system that is immune to the vast majority of drones and especially against the inexpensive drones, because they are the most common. We don't have a silver bullet that can eliminate 100 percent of the targets, but we do have something that operates in defined and broad parameters, and of course we're constantly updating and improving it."

TRUTH

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to them, and therefore became a target for their slander and incitement. The best example of which occurred last October when right-wing extremists were demonstrating in front of his home, arguing that he was endangering them - some of them even threatened his family. The Southern Command head, Maj. Gen. Yaron Finkelman, experienced a completely different attitude from the residents of the Gaza border region, who had been the victims of a real atrocity.

Just as the IDF was about to enter the Gaza Strip for the first time, the members of Kibbutz Nir Oz, which the army had indeed abandoned - there is no kinder word, unfortunately - on the day of the massacre, sent Finkelman a letter of encouragement. Don't think now about what happened, they said, but focus on succeeding in the offensive and helping free the hostages.

Fuchs could only dream of a similar attitude on the part of the Israelis living in the West Bank. An echo of this could also be heard in his farewell speech: "I did everything I could to protect the residents of the state and the residents of the region," he said. "I took seriously every stone and bottle that was thrown, and I saw myself responsible for every person injured in body or soul. Sometimes I failed. I will carry the price of their blood with me forever."

He said the "great majority of settlers" are law-abiding citizens who "live

in the shadow of the threat of terror." But, he added, "unfortunately, in recent months, nationalist crime has reared its head under the cover of war and has led to revenge and sowed calamity and fear in Palestinian residents who do not pose any threat. To my dismay, the local leadership and the spiritual leadership for the most part did not see the threat as we did. It is intimidated and has not found the strength to come out openly and act in accordance with the values of Judaism."

'Unfortunately, nationalist crime has reared its head under the cover of war and has led to revenge and sowed calamity and fear in Palestinian residents who do not pose any threat,' Fuchs said.

He continued: "Even if the perpetrators are few in number, those who have remained silent have failed to isolate them and their actions from the majority. This isn't Judaism in my eyes - at least it's not the one I grew up with in my father's and mother's house."

It is hard to say these things - except when you remember that (then) Lt. Gen. Nitzan Alon said similar things a dozen years ago at the end of his term as commander of the Judea and Samaria Division. The situation has only gotten worse since then.

In contrast to the claims made against him, Fuchs implemented a policy of the use of extremely aggressive force against Palestinian terrorism during the Gaza war, which included hundreds of

arrest raids and dozens of brigade-level operations in the refugee camps and cities of the West Bank. He did so while making increasing use of attack drones for assassinations, a practice that was almost completely taboo until last summer.

Nevertheless, it should be said that in his speech, Fuchs emphasized the need not to harm Palestinian civilians in the West Bank and that it was in the State of Israel's national security interest in preserving the Palestinian Authority's status despite repeated demands by far-

right coalition parties to bring about its collapse. "Sowing fear among the citizens of the country in the shadow of the events of October 7 is a dangerous mistake," Fuchs warned. "The ability of the Central Command to fulfill its tasks, to protect the residents of Israel and the residents of the area under its command, depends on the existence of a functioning and strong PA, with effective security mechanisms that maintain law and order. This is the starting point for whoever is head of this command and is based on a cabinet decision."

About IDF Chief of Staff Herzl Halevi, with whom Fuch's relations over the past year have been strained, he said: "As a commander, but first and foremost as a citizen, I am ashamed and hurt

by the barbaric attacks you have been experiencing. It's a method that some have adopted here as well - terrible things are said and then comes a feeble apology until the next irresponsible attack."

What was only hinted at in the speech concerned the political drama playing out behind the scenes, namely the takeover by the settlers, through their representatives in the government, of the civil administration of the West Bank. Bezalel Smotrich, by virtue of his dual role as finance minister and minister in the Defense Ministry, the IDF and the Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories. He is now dictating Israeli policy in the West Bank.

This is manifested in the expansion of settlement areas and the legalization of illegal outposts, but also in Smotrich's calculated effort to financially strangle the PA in the hopes of bringing about its collapse. It is no wonder that another member of Smotrich's party, National Missions Minister Orit Strook, speaks of an "atmosphere of miracles" surrounding her following the war that broke out in Gaza. The extreme right recognizes a window of opportunity has opened for it under the auspices of the war and is acting accordingly.

Hagai Segal, the editor of the right-wing weekly Makor Rishon, wrote last Friday that Smotrich is "a public emissary who is seeking to take advantage of an once-in-a-lifetime political opportunity that he is convinced is in the best interests of the country."

Diaspora minister rallied behind Le Pen, enraging Israeli diplomats

Amir Tibon

After the far right's stinging loss in the French election, diplomatic officials in Israel and France are expressing criticism of Diaspora Affairs Minister Amichai Chikli's conduct during the French election campaign and his vocal support for the part of French nationalist leader Marine Le Pen.

An Israeli official who is involved in contacts between the two countries described Chikli's behavior as "a diplomatic bomb" and a number of other diplomats who spoke with Haaretz said Chikli hurt relations with France.

In recent weeks, ever since French President Emmanuel Macron called a snap election, Chikli was very outspoken in his support for Le Pen's party, which for the first time in its history sought a parliamentary majority.

In late June, Chikli shared a video of Le Pen's candidate for prime minister, Jordan Bardella, and a week ago, he said in an interview with Reshet Bet Radio that it would be excellent for Israel if Le Pen were elected president of France – even though this election in France was only for parliament and not for president.

Not only did Chikli make his personal preference for Le Pen known, in the same interview he also made a point of saying that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu agreed with his position on the subject and also wished to see the far-right politician come to power in France.

"I think it would be good for Israel – with 10 exclamation points. I believe that Netanyahu and I are of the same opinion," the minister said. Netanyahu did not in any way disavow Chikli's comments, which were published just six days before the second round of voting and were widely quoted in French media.

On Sunday, when it became clear that the alliance of left-wing parties led by Jean-Luc Mélenchon had come out on top, Chikli posted on X that he was "the French version of Jeremy Corbyn, an Israel-hater in heart and



Diaspora Affairs Minister Amichai Chikli

Yonatan Sindel/Flash90

son who refused to condemn the events of October 7 and to call Hamas a terrorist organization."

Chikli's interference in French internal politics began before Macron called the election. In late May, Chikli attended a conference of right-wing nationalist parties in Europe, a few days before the European Parliament elections in which Le Pen's party notched its best results ever. Chikli was photographed with the far-right French leader, praised her positions on the Israeli-Palestinian issue and asserted that she had distanced her party from its antisemitic heritage.

In the social media post in which he praised Le Pen, Chikli also criticized French President Emmanuel Macron. He wrote that Le Pen spoke at a rally in support of Israel after October 7 and that Macron "chose not to attend." Chikli neglected to mention that Macron met personally with the families of dual Israeli-French citizens who were killed in the Hamas attack and with the families of hostages being

held in Gaza.

Chikli's intervention on Le Pen's behalf did not go unnoticed by the French Foreign Ministry or the French Embassy in Israel, although both chose not to officially respond in an attempt to avoid further tensions in Israeli-French relations after several months of negative headlines connected with French criticism of the war in Gaza, the decision to ban Israeli companies from participating in the main armaments exhibition in Paris and Defense Minister Yoav Gallant's harsh response to this.

After the embarrassment that Chikli's conduct caused, Foreign Minister Israel Katz posted on X as election day began in France that "Israel does not intervene in elections in France and respects French democracy – just as we expect other countries to respect Israeli democracy." The post was published in English and French. The Foreign Ministry also issued a statement about the importance of Israel's relations with France, following Gallant's criticism of the country last month.

An Israeli diplomatic source said Chikli is operating completely independently in his ties with far-right parties in Europe, and there are times when Foreign Ministry professionals are not even aware of the meetings he is holding or the statements he is putting out on the subject.

"He associates with parties that we are cautious about our relations with them and is more or less conducting his own personal foreign policy," the source said. France is just one example. Chikli also met with similar parties in Spain, Britain and other countries. In some cases, said the diplomatic official, "There were professional diplomats who told him – We advise you not to have this meeting. But he didn't hear an explicit no, 'don't meet.'"

Chikli said in an interview with army radio on Monday morning over his support for Le Pen that "I am interested in who stood with the Jewish people against antisemitism and who chose not to come, and Macron threw the Jewish community under the bus. I

stand behind this statement."

He went on to say, listing Hungary's Fidesz, Spain's Vox and Portugal's Chega, that "These are parties that I am very proud to say I have an excellent relationship with the people leading them. What they all have in common is a lot of love for the State of Israel. We have common beliefs: a nation-state; we believe in conservative values."

Pushing back against his voiced support of Le Pen, he said, "I did not gamble on Le Pen. I am also not mourning; we are in a marathon. I am interested in improving relations with those who share common values with us. Those who believe Islamic immigration is problematic and that radical Islam is very dangerous, primarily to the Jewish community, are dangerous to the future of these countries as nation-states."

Rogue envoy to Europe's antisemitic far right

Analysis David Issacharoff

It was very telling when an Israeli minister remarked Monday on the loss of Marine Le Pen's far-right party in the French election: "I'm not eulogizing her just yet; we are in it for the long run."

Who is "we"?

It is unclear on whose behalf Diaspora Affairs Minister Amichai Chikli is speaking. He can't possibly represent the public, considering his own government has yet to officially endorse far-right parties such as Le Pen's.

Israel employs a policy of strategic ambiguity in relation to Europe's far right, flirting with it when convenient and distancing itself when necessary. Israel's foreign policy, known to be jealously guarded within Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office, has only openly embraced Hungary's illiberal premier Viktor Orbán.

Leading up to the French legislative elections, Chikli offered a stream of loud endorsements of Le Pen's National Rally party, declaring it "excellent for Israel." He was also "thrilled at the prospect of establishing a productive dialogue" with the party. Even Foreign Minister Israel Katz, whose authority mostly extends to posting cringeworthy and often deeply weird AI images on X, had to state that "Israel does not intervene in elections in France."

It was also reported Monday that Israeli diplomats say the Diaspora affairs minister operates independently, with officials usually unaware of his far-right rendezvous. One described his French contacts as "a diplomatic bomb," while others contended that Chikli was jeopardizing Israel's relations with France.

When discussing Europe's extremist parties on Israel's Army Radio, he proudly mentioned his "excellent relationships" with leaders of parties like National Rally and Spain's Vox. He asserted that "they all have a great love for Israel," praising their "shared commitment to conservative values."

Officials in Israel's Foreign Ministry said that Chikli has hurt relations with France, and one said he is operating completely independently in his growing ties with far-right parties in Europe.



Marine Le Pen

Guglielmo Mangiapane / Reuters

Vox is known for having Holocaust deniers and neo-Nazis within its ranks.

Speaking again in the plural, Chikli said "we" aim to improve relations with those "who believe Islamic immigration [in Europe] is problematic and

that radical Islam is very dangerous, primarily to the Jewish community."

At least now, even if with racist overtones, he seems to be commenting on an issue in proximity to his very inconspicuous ministerial portfolio.

But it is beyond absurd, and extremely dangerous, for Israel's Diaspora affairs minister – and its global antisemitism czar to boot – to claim that Jews in Europe are threatened only by Muslims and not by the neo-Nazi milieu of his far-right friends.

Many Israelis feel betrayed by their government for its failures to ensure their safety before, during and after October 7. Diaspora Jews now know how they feel. An Israeli minister is betraying both their safety as individuals and communities, while subverting the liberal democracy fundamental to their values and security.

Maybe Chikli does speak for Israel's government after all.

A clear thread links two conferences he attended this year: In January, Israel's far-right confab demanded the resettlement of Gaza and the expulsion of its Palestinian residents. In May, Spain's Vox hosted a gathering of Europe's far right, where Chikli featured as a keynote speaker.

Both in Israel and abroad, these far-right allies perceive Muslims as the root cause of their problems, which they claim threatens their "national identity," simply because they struggle to face their own domestic responsibilities. Clearly, both groups, within Israel and beyond, just want to get Muslims out of sight, stoking fear and blending it with grievance. On this, Europe's far right has more to learn from Israel than the other way around.

FRANCE

Continued from page 1

and will have the largest number of representatives in parliament – not far below 200. And in the middle, President Emmanuel Macron's centrist party was saved from drowning and was revived from near-death to become a significant political player.

What went wrong for Le Pen? How did France reject her and her protégé in the week of campaigning between the first and second round of the election?

Le Pen seemingly did everything right. First, she stepped aside and made way for a young prime ministerial candidate made of plastic, Jordan Bardella. Their campaign strove to be vague and confined to slogans insofar as possible. But Bardella may have been too young and too shallow to significantly expand the party's

electorate.

Moreover, the National Front's parliamentary candidates ranged from the ridiculous to the racist. And the French, even if belatedly, realized this. The bottom line is that Le Pen ultimately generates too much opposition, even when she hides behind a straw candidate.

The flip side was the establishment of a broad left front, the New Popular Front, which united sworn enemies on the left and succeeded beyond expectations. With 180 seats according to the exit polls, the left will be the largest force in parliament. The bet paid off, despite the severe stomach pains suffered by the moderate socialist left, which loathes Jean-Luc Mélenchon, the leader of the far left.

It's still not clear whether this coalition will succeed in preserving itself as a united front beyond the four weeks of the campaign. A look at the numbers shows that within the bloc, the far left's repre-

sentation actually shrunk, whereas the Greens and the Socialists – that is, the center-left – regained many of their former seats in parliament. This may prove excellent news for the French and reinforce the trend of movement away from the fringes and toward the center.

The third piece of the French puzzle is Macron's centrist party. Defying the hostile public opinion that emerged after the president's reckless decision to dissolve the parliament at an inopportune timing, his bloc actually performed well enough and will be the second largest in the National Assembly, with about 160 seats, according to projections. This happened mainly thanks to tactical collaboration, most of them with the left, over 200 seats.

While the president will retain a significant block in parliament, he needs allies to govern. Is Macron's center-left coalition government the only way out of the crisis? This may require a split of the left front, which

the bloc's voters will not like and yet this is what France may need – a center-left government rather than a presidential puppet government.

If such a government is formed, then it should be noted that the first to call for it publicly were the leaders of the Jewish community of France, the CRIF. In a brave message to the media before the second round, its line was "neither one nor the other" (in French, "ni ni") – we are not for Le Pen, nor for the extreme left of Mélenchon wrapped in a kaffiyeh and hatred of Zionism.

The leaders of the French Jewish community understood that the only solution for the republic was a return to shared values of brotherhood and equality, not xenophobia. One that always starts with another, and very quickly reaches the Jew. Will Macron succeed in creating a "neither one nor the other" government? Along with the Olympics, this will be France's real challenge this summer.

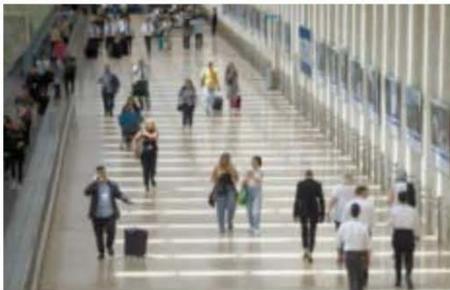
Number of tourists visiting Israel down by 76% in first half of 2024

Hadar Kane

The war in Gaza and the escalation with Hezbollah in the north has led to a sharp drop in the number of tourists visiting the country in the first six months of 2024.

According to the Central Bureau of Statistics, just over 500,000 tourists arrived in Israel between January and June of this year. This is a 76 percent drop compared to the same period last year, when just over 2 million tourists visited Israel.

Around 97,000 travelers – roughly one-fifth of tourists who arrived in Israel within the first six months of the year, did so in June. Last June, just over 355,000 tourists arrived in Israel.



Ben-Gurion Airport in 2023.

Motti Milrod

Israelis were less affected by the war in Gaza, with the number travelling outside the country only slightly reduced. The Central Bureau of Statistics numbers show that

4.5 million Israelis left the country during the first half of 2023, while in the same period this year, 3 million Israelis travelled abroad, a 33 percent drop year over. In June

of this year, over 750,000 Israelis left the country, while in June of last year over 970,000 Israelis travelled to destinations outside of Israel.

Last week the IAA, the Israel Airport Authority, released its projections for the busy summer months. According to the agency, 3.7 million travelers are expected to pass through Ben-Gurion Airport between July and August – a 32 percent drop in comparison to the 5.5 million passengers in the same period last year.

The IAA projects that 1.8 million passengers will fly in July, while 1.9 million will do so in August. Last year, those figures stood at 2.6 million and 2.9 million, respectively.

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Liberal democracy came out victorious in Europe. Now they're watching the U.S.

Analysis **Alon Pinkas**

The leaders of three close allies with distinctly disparate political fortunes will meet in Washington on Tuesday to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the establishment of the NATO military alliance.

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer will arrive five days after winning the U.K. general election, while French President Emmanuel Macron will arrive two days after the second round of voting for the French parliament when he managed to stem the far-right tide. Their host, U.S. President Joe Biden, will be there 12 days after a disastrous televised presidential debate and 120 days before an election in which it is unclear whether he will actually be the Democratic candidate.

Despite the differences, the three are bound by NATO and represent the most potent defense of liberal democracy – even if Biden eventually decides not to run on November 5.

How many times in the last 10 years have we heard or, better yet, read an article or book containing one of the following dire eulogies: “Democracy is dying.” “Democracy is under assault.” “Democracy is threatened by populist right-wing parties.” “Democracy is frail, fragile and cannot defend itself adequately.” “Democracy is barely a hundred-year phenomenon, it may have passed its apex and usefulness.” “Fascist authoritarianism is rising.”

This has been the single-most recurring theme of political writing in the democratic world over the past few years. It produced a vast body of scholarly and popular literature about the eventual – and possibly inevitable – demise of democracy, “backsliding democracies,” the “illiberal democratic” model, and so on.

To prove their point, many observers detected a wave of populist, authoritarian, anti-immigration, anti-liberal right-wing parties gaining power all over the globe, hastening the dissolution of democracies. Since the far right is predicated on prejudices, bigotry, hatreds, fears, social immobility, economic

inequality, tribal identity politics, regional grievances, anti-elitism, anti-expertise and xenophobia, and since the internet opened up the world to like-minded individuals in faraway places and linked their issues – and given that none of those issues have been sufficiently addressed or remedied (nor could they be) – extremist parties have performed well in many places.

But have they actually surged to power in such a way that poses a clear and present danger to democracy? Not yet.

The elections in Britain and France illustrate a divergence of interpretations. According to one, although the political contexts were different, both countries proved resilient to far-right political forces. If you add Brazil, Poland and Spain, we may be looking at a countertrend of democracies and electorates pushing back against the antidemocratic forces threatening their liberties and freedoms.

This was evident in France, Brazil and Poland. But it doesn't quell the hysteria among the commentariat, where democracies die and dictators are born every few months.

The flip side is equally cogent: There has been no fundamental change and democracy is still under broad, persistent attack. Look at Israel, which has veered off the cliff into undemocratic, right-wing religious messianism. Or the United States, where the specter of an antidemocratic Donald Trump win in November is estimated at 50 percent.

In France, an unexpected political dynamic occurred in Sunday's second round of voting for the National Assembly. The French republican wall (or dam) prevailed, though it also produced political uncertainty.

The left formed an ad-hoc coalition and, with Macron's centrist bloc, removed candidates from three-way races. This allowed the non-right-wing electorate to vote tactically, choosing someone they may not have voted for prior to the ominous threat of Ma-



French President Emmanuel Macron, left, and British Prime Minister Keir Starmer. *Mohammed Badra / Pool/Reuters, Liam Mcburney/AP*

rine Le Pen's far-right party winning enough seats to force Macron into power-sharing by appointing an extremist prime minister.

The temporary left-wing coalition won 182 seats, Macron's bloc 168 and the far-right National Rally 143 – all far short of the 289 (out of 577 seats) required for a majority.

It is critical to remember, though, that while Le Pen did not win, she also did not lose. This is the xenophobic far right's best showing ever.

When the disappointed Le Pen said that “the seeds of victory have been sown and the tide is rising,” referring to the 2027 presidential election, she should not be gloatingly dismissed. Unlike in Britain three days earlier, where the turnout was the lowest in over 20 years, the turnout in France for the second round was high: 63 percent, the highest since 1981.

Britain presents a diametrically opposite development. Unlike the French elections, the U.K.'s produced a decisive, unequivocal result and winner: A resounding win for the Labour Party with 412 seats (out of 650), after 14 years and five Conservative prime ministers who can only be characterized by their cluelessness and ineptitude,

and lack of vision for Britain.

It was an “electoral Armageddon,” The Guardian exclaimed of the 174-seat majority – a result bettering Clement Attlee's 145-seat Labour majority in Britain's first postwar election (in 1945). It was even better than Margaret Thatcher's 144-seat Conservative majority in 1983, and inflicted on the Tories their worst showing since 1906. In fact, it was the party's worst overall defeat since its founding in 1834.

What followed, in the best expression of British political culture and tradition, was a quick, courteous and civilized transition of power. Within a day, Starmer was installed in 10 Downing Street as prime minister, forming his cabinet within 48 hours.

The relevant point in the broad scheme of “democracies under attack,” and their vulnerabilities and ordeals, is not just the result and the comity with which the election process transpired. It was also the fact that Britain is an isle of stability, pun definitely intended.

There was fascism in Britain in the 1930s and '40s. There was the extremist National Front in the mid-'70s (although the far-right party never won a seat in the House

of Commons) and there is no small amount of racism in Britain. But far-right hate has a far more marginal political impact compared to other countries in Europe and the United States.

Even when far-right parties succeeded in France, Italy, the Netherlands, Austria, Germany, Poland and Hungary, Britain was spared the demagoguery and vitriol of right-wing populism, or vehement anti-immigration and xenophobic rhetoric. It also did not experience an ongoing assault on democracy, or a political party actively undermining governing institutions and dismantling checks and balances.

Nigel Farage's far-right Reform U.K. party did win 14 percent of the popular vote (just over 4 million votes) on Thursday, which is just below the 16 percent garnered in last month's European Parliament elections by Alternative for Germany – the party that has been causing consternation throughout Europe in every election in recent years because of Germany's history.

Commentators were quick to note that because of the British “first past the post” electoral system, Farage's 14 percent only translated

to five seats in Parliament. However, if Britain had used any proportional representation voting system, it would have produced political fragmentation not dissimilar to France, Germany or Israel.

Fragmentation is arguably the most conspicuous feature in contemporary European politics, with center-right parties losing their raison d'être and venturing toward the far right, while the hard left is increasingly detached from traditional liberal parties. This impedes ad hoc legislative coalitions and enhances divisions, making governability substantially more difficult.

The United States has no issue regarding parliamentary fragmentation. It does, however, have major political, societal, geographical and cultural fragmentation fault lines.

That is why there is little political advice that either Macron or, especially, Starmer can offer Biden this week. But in the context of the NATO summit and the alliance's uncertain future in the event of a Trump triumph, there is one thing they will likely say to him: “You or whoever runs better win, otherwise what we've just achieved will be futile.”

French politician and Netanyahu confidant loses parliament seat

Habib has been close to PM for years and was involved in Israel-France relations

Amir Tibon

On Sunday, Meyer Habib, a French politician with close ties to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and other top Likud figures, lost his seat in the French parliament that he had held for 11 years. Habib is considered a Netanyahu confidant for years, and was involved in various aspects of Israel's relations with France during Netanyahu's tenure as prime minister. Netanyahu, Defense Minister Yoav Gallant and Knesset Speaker Amir Ohana, all appeared in campaign videos for Habib, an unusual level of involvement by Israeli government figures in another country's election campaign.

Habib lost to Caroline Yadan, who is affiliated with French President Emmanuel Macron's party. She ran against him to represent France's eighth district – comprised of French citizens living abroad, a category that includes tens of thousands of French voters in Israel. Yadan is considered to be pro-Israel, but is not involved in Israeli internal politics, is not close to Netanyahu, and unlike Habib, did not come out against the French government's stance on the war in Gaza.

Habib connected Netanyahu with French businessman Arnaud Mimran, who claimed in 2016 to have illegally given Netanyahu one million euros. Mimran, a criminal serving time for

his part in the “sting of the century,” met Netanyahu through Habib and officially donated 40,000 euros to his election campaign. After Mimran claimed his illegal funding for Netanyahu, Habib said he regretted having introduced the two.

A 2021 Radio France investigative report by Frédéric Métézeau and Emmanuelle Elbaz-Phelps portrayed Habib as the “MP who whispers in Netanyahu's ear” and revealed the fact that Habib invested in various Israeli companies without reporting this to the French authorities, as required of MPs. Gérard Araud, the former French Ambassador to Israel and the U.S., called Habib's election defeat “excellent news.” The report also uncovered the efforts made by Habib and people from Netanyahu's bureau to ensure that the MP would appear in a picture of Netanyahu, Macron and their wives during the French president's visit to Jerusalem in 2020. His presence there was not something to be expected, since Habib is not a very senior French lawmaker, and it was not clear what he would be doing there in a meeting between the two national leaders.

In the video that Netanyahu posted for Habib's campaign last month, the prime minister said that Habib “is doing something very important, not only for the Jewish people, but for humanity versus barbarism.”



Meyer Habib *Abdul Saboor / Reuters*

AIDING

Continued from page 1

would force Israel to enter all of the areas currently controlled by the PA.

For most Israelis, the war that began on October 7, and the next day on the border with Lebanon, is still focused on destroying Hamas' military capabilities, returning the hostages and ensuring that civilians can return home. But for a not-insignificant minority bolstered by the presence of its representatives in positions of power, this is a heavenly opportunity to achieve so much more.

For them, this is a war that in Gaza will roll back the Disengagement of 2005 and allow the rebuilding of Jewish settlements there. In the West Bank, it will enable the settlers to eliminate what little Palestinian autonomy was achieved since 1993 by the Oslo Accords and the establishment of the PA.

And then there is a new swath of land of biblical promise opening up in southern Lebanon – or as it was called in an online conference a couple of weeks ago, “northern Galilee.”

This is not government policy. In fact, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has repeatedly denied that Israel has any plans to rebuild settlements in Gaza. It certainly isn't something the security chiefs, fearful of escalation on all fronts and anxious to reach a cease-fire, are looking for. They want a deal that ensures the release of the hostages and gives the stretched Israel Defense Forces an opportunity to recuperate and focus on what it fears could be the biggest test: a war in Lebanon.

However, as a Haaretz Hebrew investigation published last week has shown, there are plenty of IDF soldiers and

officers who are actively playing a part in it.

According to footage obtained by the newspaper, the IDF currently controls 26 percent of the territory in the Gaza Strip. And while the army claims that this is all for tactical purposes, in many locations soldiers have put up signs and sprayed graffiti heralding the “return,” promising that “settlement will bring security.”

Synagogues have been opened in the ostensibly temporary bases and mezzuzahs attached to doorframes. In some cases, Torah scrolls

Many soldiers and officers are opposed to these ceremonies, but they won't interfere. Some see it as good for morale-building. Others don't want to create discord in the ranks. “I don't think there's anything serious going on. We've already moved out of some of the places where they put up mezzuzahs and no one said anything,” said one senior officer.

But the network of far-right media organizations and social media accounts breathlessly reporting on these events view things differently. Veteran West Bank

period that is great for the people of Israel.”

One senior reserve officer put it somewhat differently: “We're trying to plan how to get Israel out of the worst predicament it's been in on all fronts, but we have so many younger troops who are convinced something wonderful is happening.”

Israel is fighting two wars – the official one and a fundamentalist-messianic one. Both wars are ostensibly against the same enemy, but they are also a war between two Israelis.

The generals are still convinced theirs is the real war and believe that at some point, a cease-fire will be reached and the IDF will gradually withdraw from most if not all of Gaza. The soldiers who danced with Torah scrolls at the bases on Gaza shore will be happy to go home. Nothing will come of the settlers' designs.

But the generals have made so many wrong calls since the eve of this war.

Israelis on the center-left who are aware of and opposed to the fundamentalist war hope a local protest movement coupled with international pressure, the threat of sanctions and International Criminal Court arrest warrants will deter those war aims.

But the protests so far are nowhere near the scale of those that took place last year against the government's plans to weaken the judiciary. And most of the opposition parties in the Knesset won't join in. Many Israelis who are not fundamentalists either don't realize the extent to which these two wars are increasingly contradictory or are afraid to challenge the illusion of wartime unity. Or both.

International sanctions won't hurt the fundamentalists. They don't travel abroad and would gladly see Israel

isolated from an antisemitic world if it meant they could do as they see fit in the West Bank and Gaza. Anyway, they believe Donald Trump will soon be back in charge in America, so why worry?

In the middle are those who are not prepared to align themselves with either camp. They don't feel Israel is living in a miraculous rapture and keenly feel its losses. But they want to be comforted by the illusion that we are all in this together and that, as the government slogan puts it, “together we will win.”

As the surveys show, they are not totally fooled by the government. They won't vote for Netanyahu and his partners in the next election. But meanwhile, the fundamentalists are starting to create facts on the ground. Just as the settlers proved in the past, they don't need to have the support of a majority of Israelis – just as long as most Israelis and their governments don't stop them from building their reality.

There are those who fully understand the two wars being fought. Especially one person: Benjamin Netanyahu. He understands that his governing coalition is dependent on those fighting a fundamentalist war and he needs to keep them happy or they will bring down his government. But to limit the scale of the protest, to continue working with the security establishment and the Biden administration, he also needs to keep up an appearance of fighting the other war.

That's why Netanyahu on the one hand agrees to send delegations to Doha and Cairo for talks on a possible cease-fire and hostage-release agreement, while putting out briefings that are aimed at hampering those talks. While Israel stumbles between the two wars it is waging, he is focused on his own personal war for political survival.

3 Columbia University officials lose posts over antisemitic texts

The Associated Press

NEW YORK – Columbia University said Monday that it has removed three administrators from their positions and will keep them on leave indefinitely after finding that text messages they exchanged during a campus discussion about Jewish life “disturbingly touched on ancient antisemitic tropes.”

In a letter to the Columbia community, university president Minouche Shafik and provost Angela Olinto said the administrators have been permanently removed from their positions at the university's undergraduate Columbia College. The college's dean, who previously apologized for his part in the text exchanges, will remain in that role.

The university will also launch a “vigorous” antisemitism and antidiscrimination training program for faculty and staff in the fall, as well as related training for students, Shafik said.

The administrators, whom the university did not identify by name, were first put on leave last month after a conservative news outlet published images of what it said were text messages they exchanged while attending the May 31 panel discussion “Jewish Life on Campus: Past, Present and Future.”

The House Committee on Education and the Workforce published some of the messages last week.

“This incident revealed behavior and sentiments that were not only unprofessional, but also, disturbingly touched on ancient antisemitic tropes,” Shafik wrote. “Whether intended as such or not, these sentiments are unacceptable

and deeply upsetting.” Shafik said the text messages conveyed a “lack of seriousness about the concerns and the experiences of members of our Jewish community that is antithetical” to the university's values and standards.

Olinto wrote that the administrators' conduct was “wrong and contrary to the mission and values of our institution. It revealed, at best, an ignorance of the history of antisemitism.”

The news outlet, the Washington Free Beacon, published examples on June 12 and 21 of what it said were some of the text exchanges.

Among them was a message suggesting that a panelist could have used recent campus protests as a fundraising opportunity and another that appeared critical of a campus rabbi's essay about antisemitism.

The antisemitism panel was held a month after university leaders called in police to clear pro-Palestinian protesters out of an occupied administration building and dismantle a tent encampment that had threatened to disrupt graduation ceremonies.

The police action came

amid deep divisions on campus as to whether some of the protests against Israel's military campaign in Gaza have been antisemitic.

Columbia College Dean Josef Sorett, whose text messages were among those published by the Free Beacon, will continue to lead the college after apologizing and committing to working to fix damage caused by the text exchanges, Olinto said. He and his administration will be expected to “deliver concrete change in combating antisemitism and discrimination and creating a fully inclusive environment,” Olinto wrote.

“While not intended as such, some of the text messages exchanged may call to mind antisemitic tropes,” Sorett said in a letter Monday to the Columbia College community. “Any language that demeans members of our community, or divides us from one another, is simply unacceptable.”

“I am deeply sorry that this happened in a community that I lead – and, that I was part of any of the exchanges, and I pledge to spearhead the change we need to ensure this never happens again,” Sorett continued.

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Coup returns to law committee

The government coup has long permeated every corner: the failure to appoint a Supreme Court president, the undermining of the attorney general's status, the efforts to take control of the Civil Service Commission, the politicization of the police, the takeover of the media, the curbs on academic freedom and on freedom of expression generally and more.

But the bill that will be introduced Tuesday to the Knesset Constitution, Law and Justice Committee, cooked up by its chair, Simcha Rothman, is already the return of the coup through the front door, unmasked. Under the proposal, the selection of the judicial ombudsman – which today is done by the Judicial Appointments Committee, in consultation with the justice minister and the Supreme Court president – will be completely politicized, elected by the Knesset.

The situation today, in which the position stands vacant, is improper. But the reason for this is the justice minister's stubborn refusal to follow the custom of filling it with a retired Supreme Court justice to the position, hence the impasse with the acting Supreme Court president. There are good reasons to appoint a retired justice: Only a justice is familiar with the work of the entire system from up close, including the Supreme Court, and therefore can handle complaints about judges in an ethical and professional manner.

Transferring the authority to select the ombudsman from the Judicial Appointments Committee, in which political and professional forces are balanced, to a fully political body, is precisely the organizing principle of the governmental coup: the seizure of a nonpartisan institution by the political majority, in the hope of appointing a person who will attack the judiciary, persecute it and curb its independence and the critical principle of judicial autonomy.

The bill does contain safeguards in the form of requiring a special majority of 70 MKs, in a secret ballot, to preclude claims of a one-sided political appointment by the current governing coalition. But we must remember that in the future the law could lead to one-sided political appointments by a broad coalition. Even now, there's no knowing what means will be used to obtain the required majority, and the bill may undergo additional changes to prevent a situation in which the required 70 Knesset votes cannot be found.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu recently said, "In a democracy, the gatekeepers are the public and the voters," meaning there is no reason for professional gatekeepers. The democratically elected majority can do whatever it wants. This is a dangerous statement that exposes the goal of the government coup. This bill must be stopped, and for that to happen the public must wake up and physically prevent the coup's return, once more.



Amos Biderman | amosh@haaretz.co.il

B. Michael

The prosecution as regime defender

Who would have believed it? The State Prosecutor's Office is suddenly interested in the irresponsible remarks of various politicians who have proposed a spectacular range of lawless and heinous actions against Gaza, its inhabitants, the Palestinian people and its communities. Suddenly it's examining whether their remarks constitute "incitement"?

Among the candidates for review: Bibi, who called to "eradicate the seed of Amalek"; Gallant, who advocated starvation; Katz, who said the entire population of Gaza should leave; and a few nonentities – Kroizer, Vaturi and Amichai Eliyahu – Knesset members and perhaps cabinet ministers as well? Who knows.

Israel, woe to those who hear this, commits dozens, perhaps hundreds, of war crimes every day. Every settlement, every piece of expropriated land, every gang of pogromists, every discriminatory law, every apartheid gesture, not to mention the absolute liberty to kill Arabs "because I felt threatened," "because he had a knife in his possession," "because he behaved suspiciously." Any one of these is a war crime. But

the State Prosecutor's Office didn't really take the trouble, and the police didn't investigate, and the Shin Bet security service stopped sticking its nose in. The Mossad was never a part of this. We have sinned, we have not sinned – who cares? And now, a surprise. The State Prosecutor's Office has woken up from its long occupation coma and begun

to the west. Perhaps out of a fairly unconcealed hope that most of them will end up in the netherworld or in the seventh heaven, in accordance with the dictates of the bombs that fall on them.

So what happened all of a sudden? Why the sudden alarm in the State Prosecutor's Office? Regrettably, it's not because of pangs of conscience, contrition or a mi-

A few words of explanation: The only way to help our saintly politicians to escape the legal clutches of the antisemites in The Hague is to argue that they were already investigated in Israel, by our magnificent legal system, and therefore there is no justification (or right) for trying them again in the courts of Israel-hating gentiles or, God forbid, for issuing arrest warrants against them. Especially when the wife of one of the main suspects does not permit him to sleep anywhere but at home.

That is the secret: The State Prosecutor's Office has become the regime's defense counsel. A process that is characteristic of failing states. We would do well to expand and perfect the method, and to begin already to issue summonses to everyone who is likely to find themselves in the courts of the goyim over their role in the commission of war crimes.

I propose the following uniform wording: "We hereby confirm that the bearer has been investigated thoroughly by our office and has been found to be an absolute saint and innocent of any crime. Respectfully yours, the State Prosecutor's Office of the persecuted Jewish state."

The only way to help our saintly politicians to escape the antisemites in The Hague is to argue that they were already investigated in Israel and found innocent.

to blink its eyes. Suddenly, it is examining. Suddenly, the state prosecutor is investigating discreetly, and who knows, maybe a police officer or two will even be found who can be asked to answer a few polite questions.

But they will only be asked about remarks. Only about words. Only about the vocal cords. Not, heaven forbid, about the deeds. Not about the tens of thousands who were killed, not about the millions of people who were displaced from their homes and hounded again and again, to the north and to the south, to the east and

raculous growing of a spine. Those worked beautifully and bravely as long as it was about Rothman's whims and Levin's caprices. In matters of war, territories, occupation, racism, apartheid and general brutality, the State Prosecutor's Office barely existed.

So what happened? It's very simple: The international courts happened. They too woke up. They began to investigate, they wrote opinions, they are considering arrest warrants, they no longer faint at the word "Holocaust." Gevalt.

Daniel J. Solomon

Le Pen's far-right rout is a reprieve for France and French Jews. For now

France, proving itself to be a fortress of good sense and moderation, held off the far-right populist wave in Sunday's election.

Charles de Gaulle and Michel Debré, the architects of the Fifth Republic, erected high barriers against the rise of extremes. Among these is the two-round election process, requiring candidates to receive at least half the vote in a run-off. If France had the same electoral system as Britain, the National Rally, or RN, having swept the first round, would now be running the country.

But during Sunday's second round, French voters rallied around what the French term a republican front which is composed of President Emmanuel Macron's centrist Ensemble and the left's The New Popular Front. This relegated the far right to third place.

For now, RN remains in the political wilderness. This comes as a relief both to French Jews and France writ large. Despite the RN's makeover, and pretensions of protecting the Jewish community against antisemitic violence, the party continues to count vicious antisemites among its ranks. Part of the reason for the party's under performance last night owes to this phenomenon.

The far right's campaign was on several occasions marred by outright bigoted behavior from its candidates. One defended herself from charges of antisemitism by declaring that she had a Jewish ophthalmologist. Another had proudly donned an SS cap in a picture posted to social media.

And still another had mused that "the gas had done justice to the victims of the Holocaust."

Party leaders Marine Le Pen and Jordan Bardella rushed to condemn such comments, and deprived the latter two aspirants of the RN's nomination. But the damage had been done: the far-right's old demons had not been entirely exorcised.

To be clear, France's far right, despite Sunday's setback, has not been defeated. The RN now has 150 parliamentarians, a record high in its four-decade history. This will fill the party's coffers with public cash (parties in France are financed in large measure by the state based on their number of seats).

The political climate will be promising to the RN's ascent. Neither the center nor left bloc can now form a majority in the National Assembly, France's parliament. France is destined for a sustained period of gridlock.

The parliament will likely not be functional enough to pass major legislation, the presidency will be held by a much-reviled lame-duck, and the concerns that propelled the RN to the position of the country's most popular party – the cost of living crisis and mass migration – may well only

grow more acute.

The relief felt by French Jews at the far right's reversal is tempered by their revulsion at the far left's gains. The New Popular Front consists of four left-wing parties: the Socialist party, the Greens, the Communist party, and France Unbowed, or LFI.

The relief felt by French Jews at the far right's reversal is tempered by their revulsion at the far left's gains in the election.

LFI has placed animus toward Israel that often veers into antisemitism at the center of its rhetoric and program. Melding the Third World activism of the Cold War hard-left and the strident anti-Zionism of a part of its Arab Muslim immigrant base, LFI depicts Israel as the devil incarnate.

David Giraud, an LFI parliamentarian, has accused the Jewish state of baking Palestinian children in ovens. Jean-Luc Mélenchon, the party's leader and pied piper of antisemitism, has promoted Rima

Hassan, a human rights attorney who has alleged Israel trains dogs to rape Palestinian women, to a visible role in the party.

On the night of the first round of the election last week, Hassan, whose security detail assaulted a teenager in the Paris metro because he was Jewish, appeared next to Mélenchon clad in a keffiyeh. Mélenchon's record of antisemitic bile is itself abundant. He has insinuated French Jews control France's electoral politics, charged marchers against antisemitism of supporting a "genocide" against Palestinians, and conflated being Jewish with being a reactionary.

LFI remains distasteful to much of the political class, including on the left, where many Socialists, Communists, and Greens have taken care to denounce Mélenchon's worst excesses. But the prospect of the umbrella NFP, and with it Mélenchon's LFI, leading a majority in parliament is alarming.

The party's inclusion in a governing coalition could normalize antisemitism and even translate into some of its policy positions being adopted. French Jews, whose interests have been sacrificed to the expedients of both the left and center, need to oppose the presence of LFI within a parliamentarianism.



Protesters demonstrating against antisemitism in Paris in June.

Yitzhak Brik

If we delay another deal

These are critical days before us. If Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu delays a deal with Hamas again, we will lose the hostages forever and be placed upon the precipice of a regional war that will exact heavy losses and destruction. It will be as if a nuclear bomb drops without the radioactive fallout.

We continue fighting in Gaza, raiding territory we had already conquered over and over again. Purposeless raids that exact a price in blood. The Israel Defense Forces succeeds in destroying buildings but has not been able to stop Hamas, which survives in its tunnel city and has been restored to its pre-war ranks with young men who replaced the dead.

The State of Israel cannot succeed in achieving even one of its war goals, because after cutting six divisions over the past 20 years it does not have the manpower to reoccupy the territories it has taken. Under the circumstances, Israel cannot defeat Hamas, and it is time to admit we lost. Continuing the fighting will not bring victory. On the contrary, Israel's defeat will be more painful.

Despite this, Israel's delusional political leadership is provoking U.S. President Joe Biden in the wake of his disastrous debate with Donald Trump at a time when Israel needs the U.S. help more than ever. Our leaders fail to understand what a disaster an attack on Lebanon would bring. After all, if the IDF doesn't have the power to defeat Hamas, it certainly can't defeat Hezbollah, which is armed with 150,000 rockets, missiles and drones.

A letter sent to me by a soldier in the combat engineering corps who served in the reserves for eight months, says a lot about the state of the army. Among other things, he wrote that he and his friends felt cheated in the Jabalya operation, where the bodies of seven hostages were retrieved.

"The plan was to enter the area and destroy all the infrastructure so Hamas couldn't return. In practice? We left without completing our mission," he wrote. "They come back

through the tunnels under the Netzarim corridor as if we weren't there at all. We don't get in their way at all."

He added: "You have spoken about the bluff over the number of Hamas dead. How could it be that 300 terrorists were killed in a maneuver, as the IDF reported, if we never saw any enemy with our own eyes, and neither did a paratrooper battalion who fought next to us? I asked a guard in the armored battalion, 'Could it be that the reported numbers of dead are from tank fire?' He said absolutely not. In short, I wonder if the IDF is lying here as well."

The soldier added that on October 7, the turnout for reserve duty in his battalion was impressive, but upon entering Gaza it dropped "significantly" to at least half. He said his friend told him the situation was similar in the tank corps. In September or October, he wrote, they'll probably be called up again. "What do they expect, that people will come?" he asked. And if so, "What kind of campaign in Lebanon are we even talking about now?"

The continued fighting in Gaza, which means continued fighting in the north, does not offer any solution. Rather, it comes at a growing cost to the IDF, the economy, Israel's international standing and national resilience. Sooner or later, it may also lead to a regional war, which will destroy the country.

All of this is happening because of the three adventure-seeking musketeers – Netanyahu, Defense Minister Yoav Gallant and Chief of Staff Herzl Halevi, and their acolytes in the government and army, for whom war is the only guarantee for their continued tenure. Their distorted considerations mean abandoning the hostages to their deaths and sending our fighters to die in vain. It is no less than a crime.

Let's end the war in Gaza immediately. It will force Hezbollah to end its attacks and enable the hostages to be freed in a deal. It will also enable the army to rebuild and prepare for a regional conflict. When the army is ready, it will be able to meet every challenge.

They were born in Algeria, and had to leave after France pulled out. I, too, may be forced out of a land that I am madly in love with."

These sentiments reflect French Jewry's despondency and herald a future that we should do our utmost to prevent.

French Jewry's emigration would represent an incalculable loss to both France and the Jewish world. French Jews, the second-largest community in the Diaspora, have created an invaluable religious, artistic, and intellectual heritage. One recalls, in the most impressionistic fashion, Emmanuel Levinas' musings on the Other, Romain Gary's novelistic treatment of multiculturalism, or Marc Chagall's paintings on the ceiling of the Palais Garnier. France's Jews, the first to be thrown into the adventure of modernity by the French Revolution, have much to teach us about the balance between universal and particular and the preservation of one's identity in a secular society.

Antisemitism became a major theme in these parliamentary elections, with many voters citing it as a reason to vote against LFI or the RN.

There is occasion for hope in this observation. French Jewry's emancipation announced the birth of modern France; French Jewry's disappearance would sound the latter's death knell. For now, enough Frenchmen have refused to accept such a funeral destiny.

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numbers do not account for immigrants who return to France or still live there part-time, many community members have wondered aloud about their future in the country.

Last week, the chief rabbi of Paris' Grande Synagogue, Moshe Sebbag, said he advises his compatriots to leave. "It is clear that there is no future for the Jews in France," he said. "I tell all young people to leave for Israel or a safer country."

"I fear that I will suffer the same fate as my grandparents," a French Jewish acquaintance told me re-

took place in the 1930s and during World War II – is not over and we might not even have reached its apogee.

This campaign has left scars on the French body politic, now more embittered and divided than ever, and on French Jewry, which fears for its very existence.

The specter of LFI or RN rule could still precipitate an exodus of French Jews. Since 2000, about 70,000 have immigrated to Israel, representing around 15 percent of the community's total population.

Despite the flawed nature of these statistics, the

Fate of Gazans attacked by Hamas in Israel Oct. 7

Continued from page 1

those sources said they also didn't return to Gaza.

One possible solution is that Hamas terrorists murdered them, perhaps because of the van's Israeli license plates. Or perhaps the terrorists spared them because they identified themselves as Gazans.

But one fact nobody disputes: That morning, Hashem Barawi, Saleh Abd al-Dib, Ismail Abu Rakba, Suhail Masri, Khoury al-Masri, Suliman Al-Atar and Zayed Ghanem entered that Volkswagen van.

The van stopped under an overpass a few dozen meters (yards) from the junction. Another video, apparently filmed the next day, shows the entire area – a Merkava tank on the road, cars with their doors open, shattered windows, bodies on the ground and inside the cars. "One of the terrorists' vehicles," the videographer says of the van, in which bodies are also visible.

In addition, Haaretz has obtained two frames from a video in the defense establishment's possession. They show a terrorist taking two people out of the van. Both are alive and standing on their own two feet. But what happened to them after that remains unknown.

The story that was told

The van's seven occupants were all related. Their family began working in southern Israel in the 1980s, specifically at Kibbutz Nir Am.

In late September and early October, 10 or 11 members of the family entered Israel legally. That morning, seven were in the van. The other three or four made it to Nir Am's banana groves before the massacre began. Those four were wounded by the terrorists who entered the kibbutz, but managed to flee and hide in the trees until they were rescued.



Clockwise from left: The overpass where the men were killed; Ofer Lieberman last week; and the morgue at Sde Teiman.

One of them is Nabil Barawi. While telling his story to an American journalist – the article was published in the Economist digital magazine 1843 on October 13, he mentioned that his brother Hashem, who was in the gray van, was missing. That appears to be the only mention in the media of the missing men.

Ofer Lieberman, Nir Am's director of agriculture, has known Hashem Barawi, the group's leader, for at least 30 years. "We were friends," he said. "When Qassam rockets fell on Nir Am, he would call to ask if I was okay."

But since the massacre, Lieberman views their relationship differently. He's convinced that some members of the group gave intelligence to Hamas. "Maybe Hamas threatened them. That's my assumption. And I assume neither Hashem nor anyone else would have told me that. But something

very big happened here, and things don't fit together."

Certainly, not all Gazans working in Israel spied for Hamas. The Shin Bet, after interrogating 3,000 of them, even concluded that none of those 3,000 had done so. But Lieberman's suspicions of his former employees have only intensified in recent months.

None of the van's seven passengers were known to the Shin Bet. If they were ever suspected of any crime, it was apparently only staying in Israel illegally (since they never returned to Gaza after entering Israel).

We know for sure that the driver, Elgargawi, died, though for unknown reasons, his body was returned to his family only 15 days later. That may make it more likely that the seven Gazans also died.

But if their bodies were ever found, the Israeli authorities don't know where they are. All the agencies

One photo shows their vehicle surrounded by terrorists, with dead bodies inside. Another shows terrorists pulling two men out of the vehicle alive.

involved in investigating the massacre – the police, the Shin Bet, several government ministries and army officers – said the IDF is the one that would have the bodies if they exist.

But a source in one ministry added an asterisk. During the early months of the war, he said, if unidentified bodies that were clearly Arab were found and no relatives contacted the po-



Eliyahu Hershkovitz

lice about them, they were taken to the Sde Teiman army base, where the bodies of some 1,500 Hamas terrorists are being held.

A soldier who served there and dealt directly with those bodies said they are kept in freezers and catalogued by number, not name. "The bodies were in bad shape," he said. "There was some disintegration, organs were missing. In some, the faces were visible; in others, they weren't."

The unidentified bodies

The assumption is that the vast majority of the unidentified bodies at the base are members of Hamas' elite Nukhba force or of Gazans who crossed the border in their wake to loot homes. These bodies were never sent to the Shura base, where victims of the massacre were taken for identifi-

cation, or to the Institute of Forensic Medicine.

Several sources said the van's passengers might have been taken for terrorists, or at least looters, because they carried Gazan IDs (even though most of the looters were at the kibbutzim, not in the vicinity of Sderot, as the intersection in question is). The second video, which shows the entire area, bolsters the assumption that whoever was there concluded that they were Gazans, and therefore terrorists.

To rule out the possibility that they were Israelis, DNA samples were taken from all the bodies and compared to samples provided by the families of the missing. But Hashem Barawi's son tried to locate his father's body during the early months of the war, before returning to Gaza, and even told the Australian journalist that he gave the police a DNA sample for

this purpose. And as far as is known, he was never told that his father had been identified. Haaretz tried to reach Barawi in Gaza, but to no avail.

"I provided the names of those I knew were in the van and asked what had happened to them," Lieberman said. "Where did they go, where are they, what happened to them?" But he also hasn't gotten any answers so far, and he has many questions.

"How did Sammi's body get returned but not theirs?" he continued. "Somebody should have known. They didn't have guns; you could see they were workers."

Haaretz contacted the Israel Defense Forces twice, in March and June, to ask whether it had the seven Gazans' bodies. The army needed time to check, but ultimately denied that it has them. In June, it even said it "wasn't familiar with the incident."

But last week, a development occurred. After another inquiry from Haaretz, the army checked again and said that five of the seven Gazans had been killed and their bodies were at Sde Teiman.

Which five? For now, we don't know. And what will happen to their bodies? That, the army said, is up to the government.

The IDF Spokesperson's office said, "On October 7, Hamas launched a murderous attack on Israel, during which terrorists killed anyone who crossed their path. The security and rescue services worked night and day to identify the victims and deal with them."

"Because of the complexity of the disaster, a clear distinction was made between different referral facilities, and Palestinian bodies from that day were referred to the Sde Teiman base. Any decision on returning bodies from October 7 is the government's to make."

Eritrean killed in brawl in south TA

Bar Peleg

An Eritrean asylum seeker died after he was injured in a brawl among Eritrean migrants in south Tel Aviv on Sunday. He is the seventh Eritrean in Israel to be killed since riots between supporters and opponents of the Eritrean regime broke out in the city last September. In the latest incident, clubs, spikes and rocks were used, and another man was seriously injured. Police officers who arrived on the scene broke up the fight using riot-dispersal measures.

Last month, police resumed using administrative detention orders to arrest Eritrean asylum seekers due to increased clashes in connection with the country's Independence Day. The situation has been tense since September of last year, when more than 150 people were injured in politically motivated clashes.

Last month, the Jerusalem District Court ruled that desertion from the Eritrean Army could be grounds for obtaining asylum in Israel. In its ruling, the court overturned an Appeals Court ruling and granted asylum status to an Eritrean who deserted from the army and left his country.

Judge Oded Shalom wrote in his ruling there is "at least a reasonable" possibility that desertion or evasion of military service in Eritrea, combined with illegally departing the country, could lead to political persecution. "This risk does not derive from anyone's unique circumstances, but rather from the way in which the authorities in Eritrea act toward someone they consider a deserter," he wrote. Shalom thereby rejected the government's position that desertion and leaving the country are not sufficient grounds for requesting asylum.



CHANNEL KAN 11 (Y11/H11)

06.00 The Morning News 07.00 This Morning – with Arieh Golan 08.00 Kalman-Lieberman – Live Reshet Bet radio show 10.00 Today's Agenda – with Kerem Neuhack 12.00 Deciphering India – with journalist and author Anjan Sundaram 12.55 Rare Species – Nature series 13.10 Life According to Divi – with Divi Benedit 13.35 The Future is Here – Ben Shani follows Israeli inventions and researchers who will change the face of medicine 14.10 Cooking with Comedian Tom Yar 15.00 The World Today – World News 16.00 Pocket Games – Economic magazine 16.45 Five O'Clock – with Maya Rachlin 17.45 On the Other Hand – with Guy Zohar 17.55 Israel at War – with Ayala Hasson 19.50 The Evening News 21.20 UEFA Euro 2024 – Ahead of the Match 22.00 UEFA Euro 2024 – Spain vs. France 23.55 UEFA Euro 2024 – Match Summary 00.40 On the Other Hand – with Guy Zohar 00.50 Kupa Rashit – Israeli comedy series (s.3) 01.20 The Future is Here – Ben Shani follows Israeli inventions and researchers who will change the face of medicine 01.50 Spain vs. France

KESHET (Y12/H12)

06.00 News Flash 06.10 Today's Headlines 07.00 News Flash 07.05 The Morning Show – with Nir Raskin 09.30 News Flash 09.35 Special news broadcast – with Nesli Barda 11.00 Classic Arab Dishes with Nof Atama-Ismael 11.40 Sports Results 11.45 Dancing with the Stars – Live 13.00 Special news broadcast – with Arad Nir 15.00 Special news broadcast – with Ofer Hadad 16.55 Five O'Clock – with Rafi Reshet 17.55 Six O'Clock – with Oded Ben-Ami 19.00 Special news broadcast – with Gideon Oko 19.55 The News 21.30 A Love Larger Than Life – with Nesli Barda 22.50 Guy Pines 23.10 Lotto Drawing 23.13 Guy Pines (cont.) 23.40 Tonight – with Yair Sherki & Avri Galil 00.30 The 12th Floor – Real Estate magazine 01.00 Real Estate Secrets

RESHET (Y13/H13)

06.00 News Flash 06.05 The Fitness Show 06.17 The Morning Show – with Omer Yardeni & Rotem Yarden 09.30 News Flash 09.35 Starting the Day – with Yarden & Paz 10.00 News Flash 10.05 Starting the Day (cont.) 11.00 News Flash 11.05 Starting the Day (cont.) 12.00 News Flash 12.05 Stethoscope – Health magazine 13.00 News Flash 12.50 PapaChef – Chef Uri Navon prepares a family meal together with his daughter 13.00 News Flash 13.05 PapaChef (cont.) 13.15 The Tube – with Guy Lerer 13.50 Vort – Docu-reality (2 eps) 14.00 News Flash 14.05 Vort (cont.) 15.00 News Flash 15.05 Vort (cont.) 16.00 Showtime – Culture & Entertainment 16.55 Talk of the Day – with Lucy Aharish 18.00 Six O'Clock – with Almog Boker 18.55 Israel at War – with Raviv Drucker 19.55 The News 21.15 Vort – Docu-reality 22.40 The Tube – with Guy Lerer 23.10 The Day That Was – with Tal Beran 23.45 New Love – Dating reality

HOT 3 (H3)

07.05 Sisi (s.2) 08.00 The Good Fight (s.3) 08.55 Little Bird 09.50 Sisi (s.2) 10.45 A Million Little Things (s.3) 11.30 Love Me 12.20 Little Bird 13.10 Northern Exposure (s.4) 13.55 The Good Fight (s.3) 14.55 Days of Our Lives 15.35 The Young and the Restless 16.10 The Bold and the Beautiful (2 eps) 17.00 Days of Our Lives 17.40 The Young and the Restless 18.15 A Million Little Things (s.3) 18.55 Sisi (s.2) 19.55 Little Bird 20.45 The Lion Shadow 21.35 A Million Little Things (s.3) 22.20 Northern Wind 23.10 Northern Exposure (s.4) 23.55 The Long Shadow 00.45 The Good Fight (s.3) 01.40 Northern Wind 02.30 Northern Exposure (s.4)



"The Menu," HOT Cinema 1, 20.10.

20th Century Fox

HOT HBO (H4)

09.05 My Brilliant Friend (s.2) 10.05 Algiers Confidential 10.55 Ten Percent 11.45 The Thief, His Wife and the Canoe 12.35 Manhunt (s.2) 13.25 My Brilliant Friend (s.2) 14.30 Algiers Confidential 15.20 Ten Percent 16.10 The Thief, His Wife and the Canoe 17.00 Manhunt (s.2) 17.45 Algiers Confidential 18.35 Ten Percent 19.25 The Thief, His Wife and the Canoe 20.20 Manhunt (s.2) 21.10 My Brilliant Friend (s.2) 22.00 The Brigade 22.50 House of the Dragon (s.2) 23.45 Dear Vivi 00.30 Industry 01.20 The Brigade 02.05 Dear Vivi 02.50 Industry

HOT ZONE (H5)

06.30 S.W.A.T. (s.7) 07.15 FBI: Most Wanted (s.4) 07.55 Law & Order: Special Victims Unit (s.25) 08.35 FBI (s.5) 09.20 The Rookie (s.3) 10.00 Magnum P.I. (s.5) 10.45 Station 19 (s.3) 11.25 S.W.A.T. (s.7) 12.10 Law & Order: Special Victims Unit (s.25) 12.50 FBI: Most Wanted (s.4) 13.30 Chicago P.D. (s.7) 14.15 FBI (s.5) 14.55 The Rookie (s.3) 15.40 Station 19 (s.3) 16.20 Law & Order: Special Victims Unit (s.25) 17.05 Magnum P.I. (s.5) 17.45 FBI: Most Wanted (s.4) 18.25 FBI (s.5) 19.10 S.W.A.T. (s.7) 19.50 The Rookie (s.3) 20.35 Station 19 (s.3) 21.15 Law & Order: Special Victims Unit (s.25) 22.00 FBI (s.5) 22.40 Law & Order: Special Victims Unit (s.25) 23.20 FBI: Most Wanted (s.4) 00.05 The Rookie (s.3) 00.45 S.W.A.T. (s.7) 01.30 FBI (s.5) 02.10 Chicago P.D. (s.7)

HOT CHANNEL 8 (H8)

06.00 Sirius 06.45 The Avoidable War 07.50 Strangest Things (s.2) 08.40 Life in Color 09.25 Dean Martin: King of Cool 10.25 My Sister's Keeper 11.30 Sirius 12.20 Strangest Things (s.2) 13.10 Life in Color 13.55 Dean Martin: King of Cool 14.55 My Sister's Keeper 16.00 Sirius 16.45 Dean Martin: King of Cool 17.50 Life in Color 18.35 Sirius 19.20 My Sister's Keeper 20.25 Strangest Things (s.2) 22.10 Sirius 22.55 Planet Sex with Cara Delevingne (2 eps) 01.20 Sirius 02.05 Planet Sex with Cara Delevingne (2 eps)

YES DOCU (Y8)

08.25 How to Hire a Hitman 09.15 13 Days 10.05 Couples Therapy (s.4) 10.35 An Unorthodox Education 11.10 Level Playing Field 11.40 The Matchmaker 13.10 Nuclear Family 14.05 Icons Unearthed: Marvel 14.50 The Other Mrs. Jordan 15.40 13 Days 16.30 How to Hire a Hitman 17.20 Level Playing Field 17.50 The Crown Shyness 19.30 Nuclear Family 20.25 Icons Unearthed: Marvel 21.10 The Other Mrs. Jordan 22.10 13 Days 22.45 BS High 00.20 Couples Therapy (s.4) 00.50 Moulin Rouge: Yes We Can-Cant (2 eps) 01.50 13 Days 02.35 The Other Mrs. Jordan

HISTORY (Y44/H43)

06.35 The The Proof is Out There (s.3) 2 eps 07.00 Laugh or Cry 08.30 Pawn Stars Do America (s.2) 09.50 The Secret of Skinwalker Ranch (s.4) 10.30 The Unbelievable with Dan Akroyd 11.15 The Secret of Skinwalker Ranch (s.4) 11.55 Ancient Aliens 12.40 History's Greatest Heists 13.20 Pawn Stars Do America (s.2) 3 eps 16.05 The Secret of Skinwalker Ranch (s.4) 16.50 Pawn Stars Do America (s.2) 2 eps 18.10 History's Greatest Heists 18.55 The Unbelievable with Dan Akroyd 19.35 Ancient Aliens 20.20 Pawn Stars Do America (s.2) 3 eps 23.05 How Disney Built America 23.50 History's Greatest Heists 00.30 Ancient Aliens 01.15 The Secret of Skinwalker Ranch (s.4) 01.55 American Pickers

YES TV DRAMA (Y5)

06.00 Beauty Queen of Jerusalem 06.35 Becoming Elizabeth 07.40 Station 19 (s.3) 08.30 Nancy Drew (s.4) 09.20 The Resort 10.00 The Bold and the Beautiful 10.25 The Young and the Restless 11.05 Beauty Queen of Jerusalem 11.40 Becoming Elizabeth 12.40 Station 19 (s.4) 13.25 The Resort 14.05 Beauty Queen of Jerusalem 14.45 Nancy Drew (s.4) 15.35 The Resort 16.15 The Bold and the Beautiful 16.40 The Young and the Restless 17.15 Becoming Elizabeth 18.15 Station 19 (s.4) 19.00 The Traitors 19.55 The Bold and the Beautiful 20.20 The Young and the Restless 21.00 Maryland (2 eps) 22.40 Dr. Death 23.30 The Great (s.3) 00.15 Maryland (2 eps) 01.55 The Great (s.3)

YES TV ACTION (Y6)

06.05 In the Dark (s.4) 06.50 The Equalizer 07.30 Law & Order: Organized Crime (s.2) 2 eps 09.00 FBI: International (s.3) 09.40 FBI (s.4) 10.25 FBI: Most Wanted (s.4) 11.05 Chicago Fire (s.8) 2 eps 12.35 The Equalizer 13.20 Law & Order: Organized Crime (s.2) 2 eps 14.50 In the Dark (s.4) 2 eps 16.15 Chicago Fire (s.8) 2 eps 17.40 FBI: International (s.3) 18.25 FBI (s.4) 19.05 FBI: Most Wanted (s.5) 19.50 The Equalizer 20.30 Law & Order: Organized Crime (s.2) 2 eps 22.00 My Life Is Murder (s.5) 22.45 Allegiance 23.30 Your Honor 00.00 The Last of Us 01.00 Jett 01.55 Baptiste (s.2) 2 eps

YES TV COMEDY (Y7)

06.25 The Neighborhood (s.4) 2 eps 07.15 Young & Hungry (s.2) 07.40 Young & Hungry (s.3) 08.05 Growish (s.4) 2 eps 08.55 Parks and Recreations (s.5) 2 eps 09.45 The Neighborhood (s.4) 2 eps 10.35 Young & Hungry (s.2) 11.00 Young & Hungry (s.3) 11.25 Growish (s.4) 2 eps 12.15 Parks and Recreations (s.5) 2 eps 13.05 How I Met Your Mother (s.2) 2 eps 13.55 Young Sheldon (s.5) 2 eps 14.40 Friends (2 eps) 15.30 Schitt's Creek (s.2) 2 eps 16.20 Married with Children (s.2) 2 eps

eps) 17.10 How I Met Your Mother (s.5) 2 eps 18.00 Young Sheldon (s.5) 2 eps 18.45 Friends (2 eps) 19.35 Schitt's Creek (s.2) 2 eps 20.25 Married with Children (s.2) 2 eps 21.15 How I Met Your Mother (s.5) 2 eps 22.05 Young Sheldon (s.5) 2 eps 22.45 Friends (2 eps) 23.35 Married with Children (s.2) 2 eps 00.25 Entourage (s.5) 2 eps 01.30 The Neighborhood (s.4) 2 eps 02.20 Young & Hungry (s.2) 02.45 Young & Hungry (s.3)

EUROSPORT (Y61/H59)

08.00 Archery – World Cup in Turkey 09.00 Olympic Games – The best moments 09.30 Tour de France 2024 – Stage 3 10.30 Climbing Show 11.00 Car Racing – Porsche Supercup in Austria 12.00 Tour de France 2024 – Stage 3 13.45 Tour de France 2024 – Stage 4 14.45 Cycling 19.15 Climbing – World Cup 20.00 PowerLifting – Competition in Lithuania 21.00 Formula E from Portland, USA 22.00 Climbing – World Cup 23.00 Tour de France 2024 – Stage 4 01.00 Fencing – European Championship in Basel, Switzerland 02.30 Climbing – World Cup

MOVIE CHANNELS

HOT CINEMA 1 (H16)

07.55 The Client (USA, 1994). Drama. Dir: Joel Schumacher. With Susan Sarandon, Tommy Lee Jones, Mary-Louise Parker. 09.55 Pelé: Birth of a Legend (USA, 2016). Biographical. Dirs: Jeff Zimbalist, Michael Zimbalist. With Kevin de Paula, Leonardo Lima Carvalho, Seu Jorge. 11.40 Mission: Impossible (USA, 2022). Action based on the TV series. Dir: Brian De Palma. With Tom Cruise, Jon Voight, Emmanuelle Beart, Jean Reno. 13.30 Rocketman (UK/Canada/USA, 2019). Musical biography. Dir: Dexter Fletcher. With Taron Egerton, Jamie Bell, Richard Madden. 15.30 Munich (USA, 2005). Drama. Dir: Steven Spielberg. With Eric Bana, Daniel Craig. 18.15 War of the Worlds (USA, 2005). Action. Dir: Steven Spielberg. With Tom Cruise, Dakota Fanning. 20.10 The Menu (USA, 2022). Comedy thriller. Dir: Mark Mylod. With Ralph Fiennes, Anya Taylor-Joy, Nicholas Hoult. 22.00 In Her Shoes (USA, 2005). Comedy. Dir: Curtis Hanson. With Cameron Diaz, Toni Collette. 00.05 The Eagle (UK/USA, 2011). Adventure. Dir: Kevin Macdonald. With Channing Tatum, Jamie Bell, Donald Sutherland. 02.00 Vanilla Sky (USA, 2001). Drama. Dir: Cameron Crowe. With Tom Cruise, Penelope Cruz, Cameron Diaz.

HOT CINEMA 2 (H17)

07.55 Revolt (USA, 2017). Sci-fi action. Dir: Joe Miale. With Lee Pace, Bérénice Marlohe, Jason Flemyng. 09.25 I.T. (Ireland/France/UK, 2016). Crime mystery. Dir: John Moore. With Pierce Brosnan, Karen Moskow, Jason Barry. 11.00 Empire State (USA, 2013). Crime thriller. Dir: Dito Montiel. With Liam Hemsworth, Michael Angarano. 12.35 Disturbia (USA, 2007). Thriller. Dir: D.J. Caruso. With Shia LaBeouf, David Morse. 14.20 Van Helsing (USA, 2004). Horror. Dir: Stephen Sommers. With Hugh Jackman, Kate Beckinsale. 16.30 Detective Knight: Rogue (USA, 2022). Action thriller. Dir: Edward Drake. With Bruce Willis, Jimmy Jean-Louis, Lochlyn Munro. 18.15 Enemy of the State (USA, 1998). Action thriller. Dir: Tony Scott. With Will Smith, Jon Voight, Gene Hackman. 20.25 Belly of the Beast (Canada/Hong Kong/UK, 2003). Action. Dir: Siu-Tung Ching. With Steven Seagal, Byron Mann. 22.00 Last Man Down (Sweden/UK, 2021). Sci-fi action. Dir: Fausi Njire. With Daniel Aisla, Olga Kent. 23.25 Animal Kingdom (Australia, 2010). Drama. Dir: David Michod. With James Frecheville, Guy Pearce. 01.20 The Counselor (USA/UK, 2013). Crime thriller. Dir: Ridley Scott. With Michael Fassbender, Penelope Cruz, Cameron Diaz.

HOT CINEMA 3 (H18)

08.25 The Bucket List (USA, 2007). Adventure. Dir: Rob Reiner. With Jack Nicholson, Morgan Freeman. 10.00 Ghosts of Girlfriends Past (USA, 2009). Comedy. Dir: Mark Waters. With Matthew McConaughey, Jennifer Garner, Michael Douglas. 11.40 CHIPS (USA, 2017). Action comedy. Dir: Dax Shepard. With Michael Peña, Dax Shepard, Vincent D'Onofrio. 13.20 The Heartbreak Kid (USA, 2007). Comedy. Dir: Bobby and Peter Farrelly. With Ben Stiller, Malin Akerman. 15.15 Prince & Me II: The Royal Wedding (USA, 2006). Romantic comedy. Dir: Catherine Cyran. With Luke Mably, Clemency Burton-Hill. 16.55 Beverly Hills Cop (USA, 1984). Action comedy. Dir: Martin Brest. With Eddie Murphy, Judge Reinhold, John Ashton. 18.40 Mr. Bean's Holiday (UK/France/Germany, 2007). Comedy. Dir: Steve Bendelack. With Rowan Atkinson, Steve Pemberton. 20.10 Skiptrace (China/Hong Kong/USA, 2016). Action comedy. Dir: Renny Harlin. With Jackie Chan, Johnny Knoxville, Bingbing Fan. 22.00 A Lot Like Love (USA, 2005). Romantic comedy. Dir: Nigel Cole. With Amanda Peet, Ashton Kutcher. 23.45 The School of Rock (USA/Germany, 2003). Comedy. Dir: Richard Linklater. With Joan Cusack, Jack Black. 01.35 Ted 2 (USA, 2015). Comedy. Dir: Seth MacFarlane. With Mark Wahlberg, Amanda Seyfried.

HOT CINEMA 4 (H19)

08.25 Taking Chance (USA, 2009). Drama. Dir: Ross Katz. With Kevin Bacon, Tom Aldredge. 11.25 Four Good Days (Canada/USA, 2020). Drama. Dir: Rodrigo Garcia. With Mila Kunis, Carla Gallo Glenn Close. 13.25 Nowhere Special (Italy/Romania/UK, 2020). Drama. Dir: Umberto Pasolini. With James Norton, Daniel Lamont, Carol Moore. 15.30 Real Women Have Curves (USA, 2002). Comedy drama. Dir: Patricia Cardoso. With America Ferrera, Lupe Ontiveros. 14.25 Call Jane (USA, 2022). Drama. Dir: Phyllis Nagy. With Elizabeth Banks, Sigourney Weaver, Chris Messina. 16.30 Per tutta la vita (Italy, 2021). Romantic comedy. Dir: Paolo Costella. With Ambra Angiolini, Luca Bizzari. 18.10 Bank of Dave (UK, 2023). Biography comedy. Dir: Chris Foggini. With Joel Fry, Phoebe Dymov, Rory Kineer. 19.55 Beautiful Boy (USA, 2018). Biography drama. Dir: Felix Van Groeningen. With Steve Carell, Timothee Chalamet. 22.00 Winters Bone (USA, 2010). Drama. Dir: Debra Granik. With Jennifer Lawrence, John Hawkes. 23.40 The Bling Ring (USA/UK/France, 2013). Drama. Dir: Sofia Coppola. With Emma Watson, Taissa Farmiga, Leslie Mann. 01.10 Stella: A Life (Germany/Austria/UK/Switzerland, 2023). War drama. Dir: Kilian Riedhof. With Paula Beer, Bekim Minaj.

YES MOVIES COMEDY (Y3)

07.30 Olympic Dreams (South Korea/USA, 2019). Romantic comedy. Dir: Jeremy Teicher. With Nick Kroll, Alexi Pappas. 08.50 Maybe It's You (USA, 2023). Comedy. Dir: Cmeron Fay. With Molly McCook, Brett Dier, Veronica St. Clair. 10.25 A Friendly Tale (France/Belgium, 2020). Comedy. Dir: Daniel Cohen. With Benicé Bejo, Vincent Cassel. 12.10 Men in Black II (USA, 2020). Action. Dir: Barry Sonnenfeld. With Will Smith, Tommy Lee Jones. 13.40 Attack the Block (UK/France, 2011). Comedy. Dir: Joe Cornish. With John Boyega, Jodie Whittaker. 15.10 Hear Me Out. On set fait pour s'entendre (France, 2021). Romantic comedy. Directed by and starring Pascal Elbe. With Sandrine Kiberlain, Valerie Donzelli. 16.45 Puppy Love (USA, 2023). Comedy. Dirs: Nick Fabiano, Richard Alan Reid. With Lucy Hale, Peter Stass, Kristen Guehler. 18.35 Juliet, Naked (USA/UK, 2018). Drama comedy. Dir: Jesse Peretz. With Chris O'Dowd, Rose Byrne, Kitty O'Brien.

YES MOVIES DRAMA (Y1)

07.10 Armageddon Time (USA/Brazil, 2022). Drama. Adventure drama. Dir: James Gray. With Anne Hathaway, Jeremy Strong, Anthony Hopkins, Banks Repeta. 09.05 A Very Corgi Christmas (Canada, 2019). Romantic drama. Dir: Andrew Cymek. With Kelly Kruger, Kevin McGarry, David Fair. 10.35 Harry & Meghan: Escaping the Palace (USA, 2020). Drama. Dir: Menhaj Huda. With Keegan Connor Tracy, Laura Mitchell, Melanie Nicholls-King. 12.05 Songbird (USA, 2020). Sci-fi action. Dir: Adam Mason. With K.J. Apa, Sofia Carson, Craig Robinson. 13.35 On the Come Up (USA, 2022). Musical comedy drama. Directed by and starring Sanaa Lathan. With Janelle Monáe, Noa Dior Rucker. 15.35 The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society (USA/UK/France, 2018). Romantic drama. Dir: Mike Newell. With Jessica Brown Findlay, Tom Courtenay, Michiel Huisman.

17.40 No Reservations (USA, 2007). Comedy. Dir: Scott Hicks. With Catherine Zeta-Jones, Aaron Eckhart. 19.25 A Call to Spy (USA/Hungary, 2019). Biography crime drama. Dir: Lydia Dean Pilcher. With Sarah Megan Thomas, Stana Katic, Radhika Apte. 21.30 The Forgiven (UK/USA/Canada, 2021). Drama. Dir: John Michael McDonagh. With Jessica Chastain, Ralph Fiennes, Abbey Lee. 23.25 Human Capital (USA, 2019). Drama. Dir: Marc Meyers. With Live Schreiber, Marisa Tomei, Peter Sarsgaard. 01.05 Out of the Blue (USA, 2022). Crime drama. Dir: Neil LaBute. With Diane Kruger, Hank Azaria, Ray Nicholson.

YES MOVIES ACTION (Y2)

07.50 The Last Witch Hunter (USA/China/Canada, 2015). Fantasy. Dir: Breck Eisner. With Vin Diesel, Rose Leslie, Elijah Wood. 09.35 Star Trek Beyond (USA, 2016). Sci-fi. Dir: Justin Lin. With Chris Pine, Zachary Quinto, Karl Urban. 11.40 The Last Samurai (USA/Japan, 2003). Drama. Dir: Edward Zwick. With Tom Cruise, Ken Watanabe, Billy Connolly. 14.10 Machine Gun Preacher (USA, 2011). Action. Dir: Marc Forster. With Gerard Butler, Michelle Monaghan. 16.20 Batman Begins (UK/USA, 2005). Action. Dir: Christopher Nolan. With Christian Bale, Michael Caine. 18.40 Escape Plan: The Extractors (USA, 2019). Action. Dir: John Herzfeld. With Sylvester Stallone, Dave Bautista, 50 Cent. 20.20 Mindcage (USA, 2022). Action. Dir: Mauro Borrelli. With Elisha Bascomb, Alba Borrrelli, Neb Chupin. 22.00 American Murderer (UK/USA, 2023). Crime thriller. Dir: Matthew Gentile. With Tom Pelphrey, Ryan Phillippe, Id

Josh Breiner

After a year and a half, the sight of mounted police galloping along the streets of Tel Aviv has become commonplace. Officers enter crowds of protesters, their horses trampling people and their huge bodies endangering people by shoving them off the road or sidewalk. There are serious injuries. Beyond the use of the sizable, intimidating horses, mounted officers are increasingly going further and whipping protesters with batons or reins.

"It's a familiar scenario," says Ila Metzger, the daughter-in-law of hostage Yoram Metzger, whose death in captivity was recently announced. "The horses shove people into walls. Sometimes they hurt [protesters] on the sidewalk." Metzger regularly attends protests in Tel Aviv in support of a hostage deal. Weeks have passed since a police horse crushed her foot, and she is still in pain.

"It's a terrific tool for the police so they can violently shove protesters, but it's very dangerous," she says. "We've already been designated as anarchists, so I guess it's okay to use horses to hurt us." Indeed, Metzger is just one of dozens of protesters hurt by the police's use of horses.

Ofri Eitan, 44, from Tel Aviv, was injured at a protest last summer when a mounted policeman collided with him. He was taken to the hospital, and his leg was put in a cast. "We were on the Ayalon [Highway, regularly blocked by demonstrators], and the police began to surround us with Border Police and mounted officers to make us leave the area," he says. "They shoved us toward the off-ramp ... and the mounted police just suddenly galloped at us. I found myself, flag in hand, caught between a horse that was just coming right toward me [and] hitting me. When it turned around, it crushed my foot. It's been a year, and I'm still in pain."

The police haven't been discouraged from using mounted units to disperse protesters, despite the many injuries and the suffering experts say it causes to the horses. Instead, sources say that last September, precisely because of criticism on the matter, the police issued new and more lax operating procedures for mounted police. They also added an entirely new section allowing mounted police to use reins to strike protesters.

Until the revision, procedures allowed mounted police to use retractable batons to hit protesters. They are now also allowed to use "the remainder of the reins,"



A mounted officer raises his fist at a demonstrator in Tel Aviv in July 2023.

Tomer Appelbaum

Vague wording gives mounted police discretion to whip protesters

Horse patrols have injured dozens in the past 18 months. A new rule lets officers use their reins in the face of a 'threat to public or personal safety'

as the police document refers to the long leather reins, to strike them. "The remainder of the rein are the most readily available means of self-defense for a mounted policeman because he grips it all time," state the regulations. "Therefore, the mounted policeman may use it when he senses danger to his or the public's safety." The protocol does not define "public safety," leaving it up to the individual officer to decide whether one of the scenarios for using it is occurring.

One scenario the regulations now permit under "self-defense" is when "a mounted policeman or the horse is attacked by 'cold' arms, such as an iron or wood rod, flag, sign made of rigid material, megaphone, stone or knife," or if they are attacked "with fists, kicks or shoving of the horse." The other scenario is a mounted officer's fear of losing control of the horse.

Under the new protocol, officers can use batons for "controlled" blows to the shoulders, shoulder blades and arms until "the threat is lifted." Use of batons or reins against the head should be avoided "as much as possible." The procedure also lowers the obligation of a mounted police officer to report unusual incidents.

The document with the new regulations begins by stating that it is available for review pursuant to the Freedom of Information Law and was issued in September 2023. In fact, the protocol was only uploaded onto the police website in May 2024 without further announcement. The police say the reason for the discrepancy is a "technical malfunction." The police possess dozens of horses spread among four units in the Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Northern, and Southern districts. Before now, these horses were mainly used in searches for missing persons. The new regulations prioritize the dispersal of demonstrations, however.

The option of flicking a protester with the horse's reins appears to have been inserted for good reason. In May, mounted officer Shai Peretz was indicted after he allegedly whipped protesters. He belongs to the Tel Aviv District mounted police unit, which has been highly active in facing protesters in Tel Aviv since as far back as the beginning of the demonstrations against the judicial overhaul.

Peretz has been accused of assaulting protester Yael Reuveni during a protest in April as she was walking on the Ayalon Highway in compliance with a police order to clear the area. According to the indictment, Peretz rode toward Reuveni, who raised her arm to stop him and defend herself against the horse. When he failed to stop, she raised her sign to block the horse. The horse backed away, and Reuveni and those with her continued onward.

Amnon Keren: 'The deliberate contact between police on horseback and people at the protests is an unnatural situation for the horse that often inflames the mood.'

The indictment says that Peretz again rode toward Reuveni, his horse trotting on her foot, impeding her ability to walk. At that point, according to the indictment, Peretz repeatedly whipped her with his reins. The indictment further says that Reuveni unsuccessfully tried to use the sign to protect herself and that Peretz whipped her a third time, "wounding her in the

torso." In his interrogation by the Justice Ministry's unit for police misconduct, Peretz gave an unequivocal reason for deciding to whip the young, limping protester: "My life was in danger." His interrogation answers reveal that the police are highly concerned about losing control over horses, which could bolt and injure protesters. "I have control over the horse, but it's not absolute," he said. "Ultimately, it's an animal and it can behave unexpectedly. This thing miraculously ended without 600 kilograms [over half a ton] running into the crowd."

Peretz also claimed that Reuveni, a riding instructor who has worked with horses, "deliberately raised the sign in a way that would cause the horse to lose control and hit the horse in the face." Videos showed that he was using the horse against Reuveni, but his story remained unchanged. "I defended myself and my horse, who is my partner," he said. "The horse was becoming anxious from the blow [that he alleges Reuveni threw]. She knew the horses' weak points. An assault on the horse is an assault on me. It is helpless and it's my duty to protect it."

Regarding the whipping, his interrogator asked, "I examined the procedures and there is no mention of the reins. Where did that idea come from?"

Peretz acknowledged that protesters could get trampled by a horse. "I have no control over the horse, where he puts his hoof," he said. "I didn't trample [anyone] with prior intent. I am allowed to use the horse's body to disperse protesters. A disaster is always possible. Ultimately, it's an animal. We learn it, what bothers it and what frightens it, but it has a will and fears of its own. I felt my and [the horse's] lives were threatened. She tried to get the horse out of balance."

Since the indictment and the change in regulations, the whipping of protesters by mounted police has been almost routine. In February, a mounted policeman whipped a protester in the head, making him bleed in the face, while video showed the protester posed no threat of any kind. In private conversations, Police Commissioner Kobi Shabtai has said he was shocked by the footage.

The Alimut Israel website, which documents and collects reported police violence at demonstrations, captured Morris Cohen - a senior officer in the Tel Aviv District mounted police unit - whipping a protester who

appeared to pose no threat but was standing on the road when the police rode into the middle of a protest last month. The site's team has been documenting Cohen and his officers for months as they ride their horses onto sidewalks on which protesters are standing. One video shows a protester knocking down a protester and continuing onward. Others show mounted police dispersing protesters by charging into them.

Unit commander Superintendent Shalom Aharon was also interrogated. Aharon is one of the police officers with the most experience in the use of horses and dogs. His investigation was closed without an indictment, but the case indicates the degree to which the use of reins and batons is at the mounted policeman's discretion.

"If anyone even touches a horse and the mounted officer believes it's a danger or could make him lose control over the horse ... the protocol does not forbid using the reins," said Aharon in his interrogation. "It is done precisely and immediately when a mounted officer realizes that switching to a baton could result in having less control over the horse." He also said that Reuveni touching the horse's body with the sign that she was holding was a "provocation" done to make the officer lose control of their horses.

Regarding this subject, Aharon illustrated the real danger entailed in using horses. "Such an action [like touching a horse with a sign] could cause the mounted policeman to lose control and jeopardize both him and [the protester], because the horse will trample her," he said. "In certain cases, the horse could bolt into the protesters."

He told his interrogator, "You must understand, the horse is a prey animal, and all its bodily mechanisms are built not to confront danger but to flee from it. During such an event, a sign, sheet of paper, Styrofoam or rocket-propelled grenade are all the same thing to a horse. ... Despite our training and investment in bringing the horses to a condition in which they can handle rioting, there are cases on the ground in which the pressure of events causes the horse to become slightly more stressed."

Replaced like objects

The use of mounted police, including at demonstrations, is very common worldwide. Like in Israel, however, people around the world are calling for the practice to end to prevent harm to both protesters and horses. A 2014 Oxford University study found that when an officer rides a horse, a civilian feels more positive about them and that there is a sixfold increase in the chance of some kind of contact between a civilian and a mounted officer compared with one on foot. This is the case for patrol officers, however. There is controversy about the use of horses at demonstrations.

The Israel Police believe they are a highly effective tool. "The arrival of a horse at a riot reduces the violence on the part of the demonstrator, as he's up against a large horse, the officer's visibility is greater and the presence is a deterrent," says a police source, adding that so far, no one has sustained serious wounds from a horse. He says all police horses undergo training that includes exposing them to things like noise and thrown objects to get them used to being at riots, but that training can't prepare a horse for the real thing.

Besides the danger to protesters, another ethical issue is involved. While the Justice Ministry interrogations reflect concern for the horses' safety, the police have actually made the new regulations looser regarding animal rights. Before the latest change, the police were barred from using mounted units along with methods like stun grenades to avoid injuring horses. This prohibition has been removed.

"Horses are a very emotional animal and using them in demonstration, including the training process, is harmful," says lawyer Amnon Keren of the Environmental Justice and the Protection of Animal Rights Clinic. "The objective of the training is to suppress the horse's natural reaction to conditions of fear and distress. That is, the fact that the horses don't go wild doesn't mean they don't suffer. Using them in demonstrations should stop. That is not a place where horses should be."

Keren says the horses the police use in demonstrations which is why they are used. "But when we asked police for data about their replacement and the

monitoring of cases in which horses needed veterinary treatment, we were horrified to see that a great many horses are retired from service at an early age for behavioral and health reasons. They are replaced as if they were objects."

The encounter between horse and protester is not just harmful to both parties, says Keren. It also doesn't even accomplish the goal of lowering the level of violence and could actually escalate the situation, he says. "The deliberate contact between police on horseback and people at the protests is an unnatural situation for the horse. The use of horses often inflames the mood and inserts more tension into the event, and you can also see that when people get on the sidewalk or leave the scene. The mounted policemen continue to make contact or ride the horses onto the sidewalks. This is something that has become more common lately. The new procedures allow greater use of force by mounted policemen, which also increases harm to the horses."

Shalom Aharon: 'The horse is a prey animal, and its instinct is to flee from danger. At an event, a sign, sheet of paper or rocket-propelled grenade are all the same to it.'

Adi Carmeli, a lawyer for Shai Peretz, says, "The initial reading of the evidentiary materials indicates that the indictment does not precisely reflect the facts or the police orders. It seems that the handling of the case will help the court conclude that my client's actions are as far from criminal acts as east is from west."

The police said in response to a request for comment, "The Israeli Police, like many sophisticated police forces worldwide, uses mounted officers and horses in protests and public order disturbances. Mounted officers and horses have undergone appropriate training for the operations for which they are called.

"The change in procedures is part of the process of amending and revising all Israel Police procedures and is intended to establish clear rules for their application. The addition of using the remainder of the reins was established to delineate and focus the use and prevent incorrect use. We also recently integrated body cameras for all mounted police officers for the purpose of investigating and learning from incidents in which mounted police were used." The police did not respond to the claims about Morris Cohen, the officer who allegedly whipped a protester.



Protesters and mounted police in Tel Aviv, Feb.

Tomer Appelbaum



Ila Metzger at the June 1 protest in Tel Aviv.

Motti Milrood

sudoku

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The game board is divided into 81 squares, with nine horizontal rows and nine vertical columns. A few numbers already appear in some of the squares. The aim is to fill in numerals 1 to 9 in each of the empty squares, so that every row and column and every box (a group of nine squares outlined in boldface) contains all of the numerals 1 to 9. None of the numerals may recur in the same row, column or box.

3	8	2	6	1	5	7	4	9
9	5	4	2	3	7	8	1	6
6	7	1	8	4	9	3	2	5
7	6	9	3	8	2	1	5	4
2	1	5	9	7	4	6	8	3
4	3	8	1	5	6	2	9	7
5	4	3	7	2	8	9	6	1
1	2	6	4	9	3	5	7	8
8	9	7	5	6	1	4	3	2

Tips and a computerized version of Sudoku can be found at www.sudoku.com

4						8		6
5		2						
		4		7		2		
8	5	6				7	9	
		7					3	8
		6		1				
				9		3		
	2			4				
6	9		1					4

Difficulty: Hard



A protester fleeing from a mounted officer at a protest in Tel Aviv in May.

Tomer Appelbaum

Torched cars are grim reminder of October 7

Vehicles of Nova festival revelers were placed along highway to Caesarea, where the Netanyahu has a home, as a protest



Daniel Tchetchik

Cars from the Nova festival that were torched during the October 7 massacre were moved several days ago from southern Israel and to placed along the road to Caesarea, the coastal town where Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu resides.

Not long after the disaster, these burned-out cars, which belonged to festival-goers, became an iconic symbol of that day. Nine months later, on the side of the road, they have become a tool of protest whose purpose is to keep the horrors of October 7 fresh in the minds of the government and its leader, and the general public.

Photographing the cars, using a Hasselblad camera and 6x6 format film, was no easy task. I had to pull over onto the shoulder and find the right angle. Many of the passing drivers honked at me as I was working. Was it to encourage me or criticize me? Who knows.



'I started my cafe with nothing but an espresso machine and a table'

Osnat Nir

Lior Assal, tell me about your business. "I have a café located on the corner of a pedestrian street in Jaffa. For now it's open several hours a day. I like to partner with other small businesses, and people can buy other products there such as soaps created from some of the filter coffee dregs used here. The rest of the dregs are thrown into the composter. I also sell mugs made by an amazing potter from Jerusalem, and postcards by designers. I started from zero and am still growing. That's why I like working with small businesses and prefer them to large ones."

How did it all begin?

"I grew up in Jerusalem. I began working at a café that my mother used to take us to, above my school, from age 15. The owner had a passion for coffee and I saw how he'd make people happy in the morning, just by bringing them a cup of coffee. I was just a kid, but asked him to teach me how to make coffee. He said, 'Take a shirt and come to work on Sunday.' I loved the work and I became attached to the place, to the point that I continued even while serving in the army, on free weekends. "After the army I continued to travel, working at several jobs along the way. By age 25 or so I realized that I simply love preparing coffee and have to find a way to make a living from it. So I started working in a café in Tel Aviv."



Lior Assal in action at TFWC, 8 Pinhas Ben Yair Street, Jaffa.

Eyal Toueg

"During the coronavirus I found myself sitting at home on unpaid leave, like all the workers, and because I really wanted to do something in the coffee industry, I traveled to Colombia. I went to hundreds of farms and asked if I could work in exchange for board. Only a few agreed."

"I was scared when I went to Colombia and found myself working at a farm. I picked coffee, I was bitten by mosquitoes, I dried coffee beans and learned a lot about the agricultural aspect of the plant. After working for a month I went to Mexico, where I worked at another farm that does experiments and strange and interesting processing for coffee. I spent two

months in Mexico and two weeks at the farm, until I being evacuated because of mosquito bites. The experience at the farms greatly influenced the coffee that I make now."

"Back in Israel, I bought two coffee machines and started to host events with them in high-tech companies, and started a coffee stand at weddings. At one company we set up a permanent coffee stand, to which I supply the coffee to this day. But in June 2022, after several months, my back hurt from dragging the machines around and I decided to open a permanent venue but wanted a place to which I didn't have to commit myself too much and where I didn't have to deal with

the bureaucracy of opening a new business and paying rent regularly. I tried a restaurant that opens in the afternoon, and proposed using their space to sell coffee when they're closed. It took ages to persuade them but finally they let me be there every day until 4 P.M. I paid them rent and promised that there would be no trace of my presence when they opened up."

"About half a year later, after my mother died and the restaurant underwent renovations, after the shiva [the mourning period] I realized that I had to start a business by myself. Just then a store in Jaffa right next to the stand became available, and I jumped at the opportunity."

What changes did the business undergo?

"It began as a stand operating only on Fridays, serving in disposable cups. The place had no sink or chairs. I put my machine on a table and sold coffee. People sat on plastic milk crates, which are still there, as well as some chairs. Now it looks more like a café, at a great location on the avenue, but it's still not put together like an orderly café. It has a good ambience and a good product, something on which I won't compromise. You may be sitting on a street corner on a crate but the coffee will be excellent, and I have a loyal clientele with me since the days of the pop-up. There are people who don't need an orderly place to sit with a menu, and here they sit in improvised places and street benches like in wine bars in Europe. That's part of the concept and I have no desire to change the atmosphere to sitting around tables. That bores me. There's a street here that turns into a pedestrian mall every morning at 10, and it's closed to cars. Why not use that?"

How did your work on the farm influence your coffee?

"We were three people on the farm in Mexico we were three people - me, a chemist who's been working in the profession for 60 years and the owner. We slept together with the chickens and ran experiments day and night. That opened me to the world of specialty coffee, the third wave of coffee, which deals a lot with how the coffee grew, who takes care of it and how.

There's a lot of preoccupation with different species of coffee, as with wine, as opposed to the old world of Italian coffee, which deals mainly with mixtures and balancing flavors."

The café opened shortly before the war. How did war affect the business?

"It only transformed from a take-away kiosk on Fridays to a café in September. I was called up for reserve duty and only finished a few weeks ago. I didn't think I'd be gone so long. The café was closed for two months, during which I had to continue paying property tax and rent. But then customers started asking when the place would open and then something amazing happened - people started volunteering to run the place, some customers, some friends, some people I didn't know at all. They told me to tell them what to do and they'd operate the place. "They started a group of volunteers, which I managed remotely when the intensity of reserve duty lessened somewhat. At first I wasn't accessible at all and they would totally improvise. Volunteers showed up here every day from 7 A.M. until 2 P.M., created a fun atmosphere and refused to take a shekel from me."

How was it for you, as someone who's very sensitive to the coffee he serves, to let go and allow others to work in your business?

"I felt that I had nothing to lose. If that hadn't happened the place would have been closed permanently, because

I continued to pay a lot of expenses. I told myself that it's not a disaster if the product isn't as good, because the alternative is that I wouldn't have a business when I returned. To my intense surprise it succeeded. Industry professionals came here as well as people more expert than I am. I wish I had such workers. I'd visit home every so often, sit down to drink coffee and see others working in my café. I'm used to doing everything. My hands are like those of a laborer because I'm used to washing dishes, preparing coffee, bringing

things from the warehouse, throwing out the compost, doing the marketing and preparing the invoices for an accountant."

Did you receive assistance from the government?

"I'm a new business that's growing, so all I got is a very small grant that didn't really cover costs. On paper the business was closed for two months and I received compensation for one month. I don't entirely understand why. After that, the business was already operating thanks to the volunteers."

Weather

Hot for July

Tuesday will be hot for the season, primarily inland, and humid along the coast. Wednesday will be hot with sharav heat-wave conditions inland, and a high heat index throughout most of the country. The heatwave will continue on Thursday and Friday.

