

# IDF calls on all Gaza City residents to evacuate south to Deir al-Balah

Jack Khoury

The army called on all residents of Gaza City to evacuate south to the Deir al-Balah area on Wednesday, through Arabic-language leaflets it distributed. Residents were informed that they could leave the city safely toward the south through designated crossings.

This week, the Israel Defense Forces announced that troops are operating in several locations in Gaza City, including outside the Shujaiyeh neighborhood in its eastern part, where the army has been active for over a week.

The army said on Wednesday that a soldier from its elite Maglan commando unit was killed during fighting in central Gaza. He was named as Sgt. 1st Class (res.) Tal Lahat, 21, from Kfar Sava (see story, Page 2).

This is the first time since October that all residents of Gaza City have been asked to evacuate. In recent days, Gaza City residents have reported that the IDF has expanded its operations and increased air and ground strikes in the city, similar to operations at the beginning of the war.

Residents told Haaretz that the intensified combat has forced tens of thousands of people to flee their homes and public spaces like schools and campuses that served as places of refuge in recent months.

The Red Crescent announced the closing of all its stations and clinics in the city because of IDF operations. Residents say that unlike at the start of the war, now there is nowhere to flee to because the rest of the Gaza Strip is crowded and in ruins.

"Then, we had somewhere to flee, mostly to the center of the Gaza Strip and also to the south, and people could find shelter in all kinds of places, including



Soldiers at the funeral on Wednesday of Sgt. First Class (res.) Tal Lahat, 21, who was killed in combat in central Gaza on Tuesday. See story, Page 2.

Hai Ron

in schools and public buildings in the city," a Gaza City resident said. "But now, everything is destroyed from the north to the south, and if there is still someplace that is relatively quiet, it's completely packed with people in tents like sardines."

People in Gaza City are saying that the strikes are concentrated in several southern, western and eastern neighborhoods and in the city center and Old City.

In the past day, pictures and videos have been uploaded from Gaza showing thousands of people walking in the streets with no clear destination. Videos show some people fleeing on foot and some in vehicles or horse- or donkey-drawn carts.

Those in the city say that many families who have nowhere to flee are staying in the streets, and some have even decided to go back

home, despite the risk of their neighborhood becoming a center of fighting.

Residents say that the strikes began before dawn on Monday and lasted throughout the day without stopping, as happened three months ago at the start of the operation to take retake control of Al-Shifa Hospital.

Over the past two days, the IDF Spokesperson's Unit has been issuing warnings in Arabic to residents

in several neighborhoods to evacuate, defining the areas as combat zones and advising people to go to the coastal area in the city's west. Many families went to the Al-Yarmouk football stadium to seek shelter.

Hamas has been accusing Israel of deliberately worsening the humanitarian conditions to increase pressure on Hamas and the Palestinian public.

On Wednesday, Defense

Minister Yoav Gallant said in the Knesset that "the achievements of IDF soldiers are many. We killed or wounded 60 percent of the Hamas terrorists."

He added, "We dismantled 25 battalions or the vast majority of them. We returned half of the hostages and we are determined to return the rest."

Gallant made the comments in response to a query submitted by Religious Zionism lawmaker Ohad

## Army draft will omit mainstream yeshiva students at first

Aaron Rabinowitz

With the expiry of the law exempting yeshiva students from the draft, the IDF is preparing these days for a large-scale draft of men from the ultra-Orthodox community. The defense establishment made a commitment at the High Court of Justice and at the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee to draft 4,800 Haredi men a year. In order to meet this target, senior IDF commanders will have to take far-reaching steps to build trust among leaders of Haredi society, as well as opening up diverse roles for the new inductees.

Haaretz has learned that the IDF does not intend to draft mainstream yeshiva students, at least for awhile. In the coming week, thousands of draft notices will go out to young men who are registered at the National Insurance Institute as be-

ing employed, even though they are also registered as yeshiva students. Furthermore, the IDF is tracking religious seminaries that are intended for youths who drop out of regular ones, and they too will receive draft notices. "The idea is to draft ultra-Orthodox men without

## Couple killed in Golan named

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touching the hard nucleus of the yeshiva world, with the understanding that we must not sever links with the Haredi public and its leadership," said a knowledgeable source.

At this stage, there is a dispute between Haredi leaders and the IDF's Manpower Directorate regarding the

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Amos Harel and Yaniv Kubovich

## A modest goal

There is a big gap between the army's immediate needs, as presented to political leaders amid the severe erosion in manpower due to the prolonged war in Gaza and with Hezbollah, and the pace at which the IDF plans to recruit young ultra-Orthodox men. The General Staff described the need to create additional brigades of conscript soldiers, given the losses sustained since the October 7 massacre. This includes 681 fatalities and over 4,100 hospitalized wounded men, with a few thousand additional soldiers suffering from post-traumatic responses to the war. The drafting of Haredi men, following the collapse of the law enabling their exemption and demands by the High Court of Justice to finally resolve this crisis,

is expected to proceed at a slower pace.

Ever since the judges handed down their ruling several weeks ago, many estimates have been floated regarding the scope of call-up notices the army will send to young Haredi men. However, the goal has already been laid out in discussions between the defense minister, the chief of staff and senior members of the IDF's Manpower Directorate. It is very modest. The IDF wishes to draft a further 3,000 soldiers between this July and next July, in addition to the 1,800 it had already planned on drafting (based on a very lenient definition of who is a Haredi). A similar number is planned for the following cohort of draftees. In other

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## United States:

# Iran using pro-Gaza protesters in U.S.; Russian campaign exposed

Omer Benjakob

American sources announced on Tuesday that Iran and Russia are behind two influence campaigns targeting the American public.

Director of National Intelligence Avril Haines has announced that "Iranian government actors have sought to opportunistically

campaigns are a threat to the democratic process and upcoming presidential and Congressional elections.

In testimony to Congress in May, Haines said, "Iran is becoming increasingly aggressive in their foreign influence efforts, seeking to stoke discord and undermine confidence in our democratic institutions."

interacting with or receiving support from a foreign government."

Haaretz revealed that, since the start of the Gaza War, Iran has intensified its psychological warfare against Israel, and parties on Iran's behalf have threatened defense personnel, journalists and legislators, and harassed relatives of hostages held in Gaza.

Following a number of revelations on the matter, the Shin Bet security service, which is responsible for dealing with foreign influence against Israeli citizens, confirmed that Iran is behind the different campaigns. This was the first time that Israel directly attributed social media influence activity to Iran. In June, Haaretz reported that Israel is also conducting an influence campaign in the United States, targeting, among others, African American legislators.

In 2016, when Donald Trump was elected president, in part thanks to a supportive disinformation campaign, the West has been dealing with the issue of foreign influence. The Kremlin involvement in numerous campaigns in the UK, France, Germany and other Western countries has helped turn the technical-technological issue into a national security threat that requires a broad response.

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A pro-Palestinian protest in Washington. Aashish Kipshayev via Reuters

take advantage of ongoing protests regarding the war in Gaza," using the influence and disinformation playbook. Haines is directly subordinate to the White House, responsible for the president's relations with the intelligence community.

"We have observed actors tied to Iran's government posing as activists online, seeking to encourage protests, and even providing financial support to protesters," Haines said, adding that these foreign influence

The claims against Iran resemble its operations against Israel. In the past two years, a number of cases have been revealed in which Iran or parties on its behalf have used social media in Israel, tried to penetrate protest movements and used innocent protest activists as unwitting agents.

Haines says that the United States has also identified unwitting Americans "who are being targeted by this Iranian campaign may not be aware that they are

## HAARETZ Online now

### First-rate saboteur

How PM has systematically foiled hostage talks

### Israel hasn't won Gaza war

Its other wars weren't so successful either



Ohad Zwigenberg/Reuters

haaretz.com

# After Le Pen's defeat, fears of far-left antisemitism rise in France

Shirli Sitbon

PARIS - Days after the French legislative elections, and the far right's failure to clinch a majority of seats in parliament, France's Jewish community appears torn.

One camp is intensely relieved that Marine Le Pen's National Rally failed to get the majority many were predicting. The other camp, on the opposite side of the political spectrum, believed in the far right's call for a radical change and are now concerned that Jean-Luc Melenchon's leftist alliance is likely to form a minority government.

The National Rally has a history of antisemitic and xenophobic statements and proposed measures that would have targeted the Jewish community, but some prefer that threat to France Unbowed, the biggest party in the left-wing alliance, which has been accused of contributing to the spread of antisemitism since October 7.

Responses from French Jews streamed into various social media groups following the election results. Some blamed France's winner-take-all system and the electoral alliance against the National Rally for Le Pen's third place, despite the high tally of votes her party received. In other groups, the messages focused on the urgency of leaving the country, perhaps for Israel.

"Jews who backed Le Pen know that there are antisemites in the National Rally, but



Members of the pro-Israel collective Nous Vivrons demonstrating in Paris, Tuesday. Yara Nardi/Reuters

they wanted radical change to stop our downfall and to neutralize the most imminent threat. In recent years, Jews have been physically attacked, sometimes killed, by radical Muslims. If the left comes to power we cannot stay," Patrick H., who lives in the Paris area and is part of a small anti-racist, pro-Israel group called MICRA, told Haaretz.

Last week, he sent his contacts a statement from a Jewish association which has had communication with Marine Le Pen in the past and which claims to have taken part in a meeting last week between Le Pen and several Jewish community officials. Patrick H. said he wants to

remain anonymous because Jews who voice "controversial positions" can be identified and harassed. "They see your name, identify you, spread your picture and your address, and then they target you."

Like a significant number of Jews, according to recent polling, he said there is no future for Jews in France.

A survey published in April by the IFOP Group shows that 57 percent of the Jews polled (against 19 percent of the general population) would consider leaving France if a France Unbowed candidate won the next presidential election, while 30 percent said they would leave if a National

Rally candidate wins. "France has betrayed us," Patrick H. said. "Since the year 2000, there have been so many antisemitic murders and attacks and instead of fighting the root causes, governments did not defend us. We do not want wreaths and memorials! Why do you think 80 percent of Jews who used to live in Seine-Saint-Denis, north of Paris, have abandoned their homes there, moved to Israel or to safer areas? It's too dangerous."

Patrick H. said he never liked the National Rally and that he is deeply opposed to racism and antisemitism. "No one should generalize.

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# Military finds serious flaws in troops' conduct during Be'eri battles on October 7

Yaniv Kubovich

The army's investigation into the fighting at Kibbutz Be'eri on October 7 has uncovered serious flaws in the way the troops conducted the fight, senior officials who have seen the report said.

The report will be made public on Thursday.

Among other problems, fighters from the elite Shaldag unit abandoned the fight at the kibbutz to fight in other areas without this having been ordered by the senior command, the officials said. In addition, other forces that reached the area refrained from entering the kibbutz to fight even though the terrorists were inside slaughtering the residents.

The sources said the in-depth inquiry included testimony from dozens of witnesses – civilians, members of the security forces and others who took part in the fighting at Be'eri.

The inquiry also found that different groups of soldiers inside the kibbutz had no contact with each other, making it impossible to manage them as a coherent whole. In addition,

there was no prioritization of which targets inside the kibbutz troops should focus on first, and this hindered the pace of their advance.

The inquiry dealt at length with the army's conduct in the incident in which 13 hostages were killed at Pessi Cohen's home in Be'eri, including the decision by the commander of the 99th Division, Barak Hiram, to shell the house. But the Israel Defense Forces is still refusing to answer the question of what happened to the 40 terrorists it said were inside the house when it was shelled and whether they were killed.

Sources familiar with the findings said the inquiry's conclusions about Hiram's conduct are likely to be harshly criticized by kibbutz members and the families of the slain hostages. They also predicted that even though Maj. Gen. (res.) Mickey Edelstein and his team found problems with Hiram's decision-making after months of investigating the issue, IDF Chief of Staff Herzl Halevi may not see the findings as severe enough to justify



A burned-out home in Be'eri.

Eliyahu Hershkovitz

punishing him. They said Halevi will likely accord great weight to the fact that officers had to make

their decisions under fire. The IDF spokesperson asked the public to refrain from spreading news and

rumors about the investigation, before the official investigation is released in the coming days. It

will be first presented to the Be'eri community and the bereaved families, the spokesperson said.

## Soldier from Kfar Sava killed in central Gaza combat

Ofer Aderet

The military has released the name of a soldier killed Tuesday in fighting in the central Gaza Strip.

The soldier has been named as Sgt. 1st Class (res.) Tal Lahat, 21, from Kfar Sava, a member of the army's elite Maglan commando unit. He is survived by his parents, Ran and Ronit, and his brother, Yonatan.

Lahat studied at the Gordon School, the Shazar Middle School and the Rabin High School in his hometown. On October 7, he participated in the battles at Kibbutz Nahal Oz. The Kfar Sava Municipality said that he was "a smiling and sociable young man who fought bravely and fiercely for the defense of the homeland."

Tal's parents said that he was a football coach and loved cinema and literature. "Cinema was his big dream," his mother said. His father added that "even in Gaza he found time to read books about film. Already when he was 17 he



Tal Lahat

was determined that that's what he was going to do."

"He was a family-loving man, he made plans and dreams, and he was certain that he would do them because he knew nothing could stop him," his mother, Ronit, told Reshet B radio. She added that Tal said that "his main meaning in fighting in Gaza was to free the hostages. This is something that kept him going."

On Wednesday, the military announced that two soldiers were severely wounded by an explosive device in central Gaza combat.

## Outpost violence suspects freed as police drop ball

Josh Breiner and Bar Peleg

Five settlers arrested last week for allegedly throwing stones during the eviction from buildings in the Oz Zion B outpost were released Wednesday without being questioned or facing restricting conditions.

A defense establishment source familiar with the incident said the reason the settlers were let go without questioning or restrictions was because Border Police officers did not file a com-

plaint or fill out reports on the case. Another defense source said that three settlers were released at the scene and the other two were brought to the Binyamin Police Station, where they were later released.

One settler, arrested after pepper spraying a member of the defense forces, was brought to court for a hearing to extend his remand, but was released with restrictive conditions and forbidden to go near the outpost.

The conduct of Judea and Samaria District Border

Police officers has angered senior defense officials. "Small-mindedness, they're passing the responsibility onto someone else. Bottom line, no lawbreaker is indicted," said one official.

Another source, who participated in the removal of the outpost, added, "They [the Border Police officers] always work like that. The settlers are acting under the cover of the Border Police. There are zero arrests in a great many cases."

The police claim that settlers involved in the incident

will be charged with less serious offenses of assaulting a police officer, and were therefore released at the scene at the decision of the investigating officer.

On Thursday, stones were again thrown at Border Police officers at the outpost. Earlier that day, MK Limor Son Har-Melech (Otzma Yehudit) visited the site and distributed pizza to the remaining settlers there.

At a recent discussion, with participation of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and IDF Chief of Staff

Herzl Halevi, the Shin Bet security service presented an intelligence report, which states that acts of terror coming out of the Oz Zion outpost could turn the West Bank from a secondary front in the war into the main front.

At the end of the meeting, the prime minister approved the eviction. A security source said that there have been several serious Jewish terror incidents in the area recently, including arson in the West Bank Palestinian village of Burin that spread to the Givat As-

saf outpost, among others. "Regrettably, there is no police in the West Bank, so that's how they will understand that those who engage in terrorism will be evicted," he said.

Commenting on the removal of the outpost, the police said, "Border Police forces carried out the removal at the decision of the IDF and Civil Administration. During the removal, the police faced violent resistance, stonethrowing, burning vehicles and tires, and the throwing of Molotov cocktails.

## HAREDIM

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extent of influence rabbis will have on the identities of the young men receiving draft notices. Haredi leaders are preparing to call for non-cooperation with the IDF and for not showing up after the first call, something now done by the extremist Jerusalem faction (Peleg Yerushalmi), whose young men have refused to show up following a first draft call since 2013. This move is expected even though behind closed doors Haredi leaders from all factions, other than the extremist ones, fully admit that young men who aren't studying should be drafted. "The biggest Haredi leaders had sharp words for those who don't study," a person attending these meetings told Haaretz. "But they are still hesitant at saying this out loud." Rabbi Dov Lando, a leading Haredi rabbi, assailed the decision to send out draft notices, saying that a country mobilizing yeshiva students has no right to exist. Other extremist rabbis are also calling for yeshiva students to resist being drafted.

Given the new situation, the IDF is now setting up a Haredi brigade as part of its ground forces. It is expected to consist of 3,000 soldiers in combat roles, two thirds of them as conscripts and one third as older (over 24) reservists. Haaretz has learned that the upcoming draft cycle will include two companies of 120 men each. There will be four such cycles this year, at the end of which the brigade will consist of only 1,000 soldiers. Thus, the brigade will reach its full complement only in three years.

Charged with setting up this brigade is Col. Avinoam Emunah. It's unclear if he will actually command it. With the aim of maintaining the brigade's Haredi character, an external nonprofit group including Haredi rabbis will monitor its doings and the maintaining of conditions the IDF committed to upholding. Accompanying this brigade from the Haredi side is Rabbi David Leibel, president of the Achvat To-



Haredim outside Jerusalem's draft office.

Noam Revkin Fenton

rah nonprofit network of yeshivas for married men.

Unlike in the Netzah Yehuda Haredi battalion, rabbis from this nonprofit organization will have the authority to enforce their demands. Furthermore, for the first time in IDF history, all the rules pertaining to the new brigade will be entered into the General Staff's rulebook, which will prevent a commander on the ground from exceeding these rules. "Currently, commanders on the ground or senior officers at the Manpower Directorate decide what to do," says someone familiar with the workings of the army. "In the new set-up, rules will be defined as if they were laws, with any changes requiring the approval of the IDF's chief of staff."

The ones expected to be affected by the new Haredi brigade are soldiers in the Netzah Yehuda brigade, where it's understood that the more applicants there are for the new brigade, the demand for joining the older one will wane. "Behind the scenes there are people at Netzah Yehuda who are trying to foil this plan," says a source who deals with enlisting Haredi men. "I hope that senior IDF officers don't fall into this trap."

### Alarmed by numbers

One of the main anchors the IDF plans to rely on while drafting the ultra-Orthodox is the selection process for the Kodkok program, which enlists Haredi men into the famed intelligence Unit 8200. Two weeks ago, the second cycle of the program was drafted, with 250 new inductees.

Fifty will serve as software inspectors, with the other 200 serving as programmers, 20 of them in a cyber unit. One of them is a student at a very prestigious yeshiva and is the son of a senior Haredi figure. The previous cycle included only 80 Haredi draftees. "At 8200 they were a bit alarmed by the numbers," says a source. "They thought they would receive 120 to 130 people. One should understand that these Haredi men come at the expense of secular soldiers, since there is a cap on the number of positions."

Several changes were made to the plan following criticism. Among these was raising the entry age from 21 to 24, up to 27. The present cycle had to do a shortened basic training course lasting two weeks, in contrast to previous cycles in which draftees did no basic training.

This is a very popular program, since it enables entry into the elite high-tech world. Service does not require a uniform and is done not on an army base. Registration for the third cycle is now open, with 1,500 people already registered. The army will approach unsuccessful applicants and offer them alternative programs now being prepared. These include jobs in Shin Bet, Mossad, Military Intelligence and the Air Force. These jobs will also be accompanied by the new nonprofit group which will ensure that conscripts get a "protective envelope" which ensures that they emerge as ultra-Orthodox as they were going in. These programs will come in addition to existing ones at the air force and military intelligence.

The idea behind these programs is to give them significant roles. "If they tell their friends in synagogue that they can't share information, with glowing eyes, this will induce a societal change. Change won't happen if they serve in insignificant roles," says a knowledgeable source.

The drafting of ultra-Orthodox will be possible in the coming years as long as the numbers are around 4,800 a year, since these come from a potential pool of 100,000 conscripts. As the pool dwindles, younger ages will remain, but these will prove harder to deal with. The hope is that changes taking place in the Haredi world, such as the opening of pre-military and high-school yeshivas, will enable the widening of the circle of draftees. The current conscription will assist in bringing about changes. Ten new yeshivas like these are expected to open this year, yielding an expected 600 new Haredi draftees a year.

The changes in the Haredi world relate not just to yeshivas. 15 Haredi schools for younger pupils are expected to join the national Haredi school network this year, with the impact to be felt in a few more years.

## IRAN

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The field even has its own term, Foreign Information Manipulations and Interference (FIMI).

Against this backdrop, on Tuesday, the U.S. Department of Justice announced that it successfully blocked a sophisticated Russian influence campaign operating through the official RT News Network to distribute disinformation in several

## IDF

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Tal regarding Israeli electricity being provided to Gaza. The defense minister said that "the international legitimacy that demands humani-

### Hezbollah's Nasrallah:

## Lebanon fighting will halt once there is a truce in Gaza Strip

Jack Khoury

Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah said on Wednesday that "We are achieving the objectives of our campaign – to wear down the enemy security-wise, morally, economically and socially."

According to Nasrallah, who made a speech from his bunker, this is "to pressure Israel into agreeing to a cease-fire." He added, "the equation is clear – if they want quiet in the north, there must be a cease-fire in Gaza."

Regarding the negotiations for a deal between Israel and Hamas, Nasrallah said: "We did not ask Hamas to coordinate with us, and we clarified in all meetings with Hamas representatives that whatever is acceptable to them will be acceptable to us."

"If there is a cease-fire agreement in Gaza, our front

will also cease without any discussion or negotiations," Nasrallah added.

Nasrallah stated that "it is clear to all international actors pressuring Israel that there will be no cease-fire in the north without ending the war in Gaza." He emphasized that his organization has damaged many of Israel's intelligence infrastructures and has worn down the Israel Defense Forces to the extent that "it forced the army and the political system in Israel to deal with the issue of drafting the ultra-Orthodox and the political crisis."

He stressed that "this is Israel's most unsuccessful campaign in Gaza because the war objectives have not been achieved – neither regarding the hostages nor regarding the military decision and the end of Hamas' control over the strip."

countries, including the U.S., Poland, Germany, the Netherlands, Spain, Ukraine and Israel. The campaign used mass-influence Meliorator software, which can open believable mass fake accounts (avatars), which apply them in coordination.

This kind of influence software was first revealed last year in a Haaretz and TheMarker investigative report. Since then, the field as developed, and, according to the U.S. Department of Justice, the Russian software uses "covert artificial intelligence (AI) enhanced software pack-

age to create fictitious online personas representing a number of nationalities to post content on X."

According to the Department of Justice, the software, developed by RT graduates and Russian intelligence via a private company, was only identified on X (formerly Twitter), but the "developers intended to expand its functionality to other social media platforms." The Russians sought to use the avatars to distribute disinformation and influence public opinion in the target countries to promote the Kremlin's interests.

tarian conditions is a basic condition in order to enable the operation of the army."

He explained, "The cabinet made a decision that humanitarian operations should be advanced in an effort to enable the continuation of the war. As part of that, I approved, along with the prime minister, that electricity be

connected to the desalination plant to allow for water."

Gallant confronted Likud lawmaker Moshe Saada in the Knesset after he criticized the defense minister and the army's top brass. Gallant told Saada, "these people you're talking about, while you were sitting in air-conditioned offices, they've risked

## GOAL

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words, 9,600 men will be inducted in two annual cohorts, constituting one third of the Haredi men turning 18 over that period. In order to attain these numbers, the army will send more call-up notices (possibly several thousand more per year), based on the assumption that only some of these men will actually be drafted. In any case, this is far fewer than the 63,000 Haredi men who are now at the relevant conscription age ranging from 18 to 26.

This is a very restricted interpretation of the High Court ruling, which jurists and retired generals saw as legitimizing the sending of draft notices to all Haredi men of suitable age. Senior defense establishment members, including hundreds of veterans of the IDF, the Shin Bet and Mossad, view the plan shaping up as laughable compared to the army's actual needs. The General Staff says, in contrast, that they have received legal briefs from state prosecutors and the Military Advocate General's office, which conform to the move now shaping up.

The army's planned drive will be directed at a specific population – mainly ultra-Orthodox men who are registered in yeshivas but who in fact are not really engaged in studies, and are employed unofficially without paying taxes. Most of these people are relatively young. In conversations held in recent months between senior IDF officers and Haredi rabbis, some rabbis recognized that a change was necessary, and that men not really studying at a yeshiva are the ones who should be drafted. For some of these rabbis, it is important to retain 30 percent of young Haredi men as authentic students, with a compromise possible regarding the others, as long as the army promises that anyone enlisting as a Haredi man will receive all the conditions required for maintaining his faith.

The gradual softening in the position of some of these rabbis is explained by two major trends: the impact of the war and the emergence of the IDF's needs on one hand, and the risk that the state will have to stop funding yeshivas in which pupils dodge the draft, based on the court's ruling. On the other hand, there are rabbis and Haredi functionaries who have vowed to fight the entire move, using any means they can. In the IDF, opinions are divided regarding the chances of success, with

great concerns that the army will be dragged deep into the political arena, having to deal with a refusal to serve and with massive draft dodging by young Haredi men.

The IDF program envisions, as a first stage, the building of three new infantry battalions based on new Haredi conscripts. These battalions will have a joint command, but will not constitute a brigade acting together in the field. It may be posted to specific sectors securing a particular border, thereby releasing many reserve battalions from duty each year. The process will be gradual and very slow. Right now, there is talk of drafting two new companies in November.

In order to maintain the religious aspect of their service, a yeshiva will be operated in sectors managed by these Haredi soldiers. Maintaining religious rules in these units will be stricter than in the Netzah Yehuda battalion (the Haredi Nahal battalion), in which many combatants are people who left the religious world or who became less Orthodox even before joining the army. The IDF plans on most of the draftees being relatively young so that they can be incorporated into combat roles or as combat supporters.

### Feeling burnout

Nine months into the war, the army is preparing for further changes in personnel policy to increase the number of combat soldiers and meet the growing workload. Initial data from the March and the upcoming August enlistment cohorts suggest a rise in the motivation of both male and female recruits for combat service, at the expense of demand for combat assignments once considered slightly less demanding, such as the air defense system and the Combat Intelligence Collection Corps. The IDF has asked the political leadership to move faster to extend again the period of mandatory service for men to 36 months, after approving the move.

Military officials are concerned about the effects of combat on the career army, among both noncommissioned officers and young officers. There is a decrease, partly due to the war, in the willingness of officers to re-up for the first time and the second time in the course of service. A significant number of officers in the middle ranks complain about burnout, difficult conditions of service, work overload and unsatisfactory wages.

The General Staff will continue to count on the reserve forces for the duration of the fighting and the tense period that is anticipated at the borders in the next several years, even if the war ends. The growing need for reserve units was made clear around the extensive ground operation in Gaza. Since the war began, about 50,000 women were recruited into the reserves – a record number, triple that seen during Operation Protective Edge in the Strip a decade ago.

their lives day and night."

While Gallant answered questions from Knesset members, Saada called out, "The spirit of feebleness that you allow, is that the spirit of your commander?" Gallant replied, "Don't call them feeble and don't call them cowardly, you're doing the IDF an injustice."

# Protesters, led by hostage families, begin march that will end Saturday in Jerusalem

Bar Peleg and Noa Shpigel

Dozens of protesters began marching on Wednesday from outside the Defense Ministry headquarters in Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, led by family members of hostages held in the Gaza Strip.

In a statement, the group called the public to join the march, which is expected to last four days and end on Saturday outside the Prime Minister's Office in Jerusalem.

Einav Zangauker, whose son Matan is held hostage in Gaza, said: "This morning a report was published that details how time and time again there were deals on the table and [Prime Minister Benjamin] Netanyahu torpedoed them again and again."

"We are now at the moment of truth for the deal. Netanyahu ... don't dare break our hearts again!" Zangauker implored.

Arnon Bar-David, chairman of the Histadrut labor federation, announced that he has allocated resources to support the march and appointed a team to accompany it while providing operational assistance. Bar-



Protesters ahead of their march from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, on Wednesday.

Rami Shilush

David called on the prime minister "to do everything possible to bring our sons and daughters home" and urged the public "to unite behind the families of the hostages, to express sup-

port for the struggle, and to join the march."

He added that "Operation Iron Swords [the current Gaza war] can have only one victory image - our brothers and sisters whom

we have managed to bring home. Like every parent in Israel, Einav Zangauker's struggle is also my struggle. Only when I see her hugging her son will I know that the State of Israel has

returned to itself."

Families of the hostages protested outside the Knesset in Jerusalem on Wednesday and locked themselves inside cages. They called on Knesset

members to join them. "Enter the cages and feel how the hostages feel. They can't take it anymore, they are dying. There is a deal on the table. We call on the prime minister to reach a deal as quickly as possible," said Mor Korngold, whose brother Tal Shoham is a hostage, while in a cage with Yesh Atid lawmaker Boaz Toporovsky.

Danny Elgarat, brother of hostage Itzik Elgarat, was denied entry to the Knesset on Wednesday, following his forcible removal from a committee meeting on Monday.

According to Elgarat, he arrived at the Knesset "with an invitation from [Labor lawmaker] Naama Lazimi, and they decided not to honor her invitation. Someone called the Knesset officer, who came and said that it's too soon after Monday's incident and we're still traumatized, and they are still traumatized. I told him I came to calm things down."

Elgarat added, "People accused of supporting terrorism enter the Knesset, like Itamar Ben-Gvir. I've thwarted terrorism all my life. They made a mistake, and they are doubling down on it."



The march to Evyatar in 2023.

Moti Milrod

## State moving to strengthen Evyatar settlement outpost

Nir Hasson

The land on which the illegal settlement outpost of Evyatar was built has now been declared state land, enabling the outpost to someday become a settlement recognized by the state.

Two weeks ago, the security cabinet decided to legalize five illegal outposts, including Evyatar. This week, Israel's Civil Administration in the West Bank began taking practical steps to implement that decision, including by declaring 65 dunams (16 acres) of the outpost's land to be state land.

Palestinians who claim to own the land in question can now challenge that decision at the Supreme Court. If the court upholds the decision, the state can then approve a master plan for the outpost and legalize it.

Evyatar was established three years ago, and was subsequently evicted and rebuilt several times. According to senior army officers, the outpost has worsened the security situation in the area, with at least four Palestinians being killed in clashes that erupted after its establishment.

Nevertheless, right-wing ministers have embraced the outpost. And ever since he acquired a second job as a minister in the Defense

Ministry responsible for the Civil Administration, Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich has been pushing to advance its legalization.

Aside from Evyatar, the other outposts the security cabinet voted to legalize last week are Sde Ephraim, Givat Assaf, Heletz and Adorayim. Some of these outposts are located in the heart of areas with a dense Palestinian population.

Smotrich said the decision was a response to several countries' unilateral recognition of a Palestinian state. "For every country that unilaterally recognizes a Palestinian state, we'll build a new community. We will thereby get the delusional idea of establishing a Palestinian state that would endanger Israel's existence shelved," he told a meeting of his Religious Zionism party's Knesset members.

Last week, the Civil Administration also approved construction of another 900 homes in West Bank settlements, including some in isolated settlements. The previous week, it advanced plans for over 5,000 new homes in the settlements and declared 12,700 dunams in the Jordan Valley to be state land. That is the largest area to be declared state land since the Oslo Accords were signed in 1993.

## Bill mandating dismissal of university faculty who 'support terror' advances in Knesset vote

Shira Kadari-Ovadia

A bill requiring institutions of higher education to fire teaching staff who express "support for terror" won preliminary approval from the Knesset Wednesday in the first of four votes.

The proposal would allow the Council for Higher Education in Israel, which supervises the country's colleges and universities and is chaired by the education minister, to order an institution to fire a member of the teaching staff for political remarks.

The bill, which is sponsored by lawmakers from the opposition and the governing coalition, specifies that anyone dismissed under its provisions will be denied severance pay. In addition, state funding to the institution could be cut. The coordinating committee of Israel's faculty unions said it planned to declare a labor dispute, which will allow it to call a strike to protest the bill.

The current version of the bill makes no mention of "remarks against Israel as a Jewish and democratic state." An earlier version

sought to allow the Council for Higher Education to order the "immediate dismissal" of faculty members for statements that "reject Israel's existence as a Jewish and democratic state, incite to racism, violence or terror and/or support an armed struggle or an act of terrorism against Israel."

The Association of University Heads sent a request Wednesday morning to the Knesset legal adviser, Sagit Afik, asking her to take action to block the advance of what its members termed a "draconian and McCarthyite bill that is part of an

incitement campaign against faculty members, the advancement of which raises the danger of permitting violence against them."

The letter said that while there was no disputing the need to condemn incitement to terrorism, "the proposed mechanism is so crude and predatory that it will inevitably lead to a narrowing of a whole range of expressions that have nothing to do with 'incitement to terrorism.' Moreover, the decision to focus on higher education ... is part of a calculated campaign to weaken its institutions.

The bill began with a billboard campaign started by the chairman of the National Union of Israeli students, Elhanan Felheimer, with 500,000 shekels (over \$136,000) from the union's budget. It also sent a letter to the education minister and the chair of the Knesset education committee asking for their support.



Sagit Afik, the Knesset legal adviser.

Olivier Fitoussi

## FRANCE

Continued from page 1

There are many, many good people among French Muslims. But according to polls such as an IFOP survey published in January, 45 percent of French Muslims say they back the October 7 attacks because they are 'an act of resistance to occupation.' Fear is why some Jewish figures like Nazi hunter Serge Klarsfeld said they would back the National Rally if it faces France Unbowed. That's why some Jews voted for that party."

Two days before the election, fake news spread on X claiming that Jewish umbrella group CRIF had called to vote for the National Rally, triggering a flood of antisemitic comments, although the organization had repeatedly called to block both the far right and far left.

On Monday, CRIF and France's Jewish students' union urged political leaders not to form a majority with France Unbowed.

"LFI [France Unbowed] doesn't belong in a government! The National Rally has recognized its defeat. It's time for Jean-Luc Mélenchon to understand that, with or without the New Popular Front alliance, he does not have a majority either," tweeted CRIF.

Although the press and social media hashtags have focused on Jews who back Le Pen in an attempt to understand why they would vote for a party that is historically antisemitic and racist, there are many other French Jews who support other parties, including leftist ones.

But that is not easy. Mélenchon's way of talking and, in particular, his habit of minimizing antisemitism by claiming that it is only residual, when in fact antisemitic attacks have risen by 300 percent this year, has made many Jews uneasy. But several leftist Jewish groups are

determined to reclaim their place in France' left and insist that they won't tolerate antisemitism.

"Yesterday's results were a relief. The National Rally would have been a catastrophe. Few expected these election results," said Joshua Margulies from the Collectif Golem, which was created by left wing Jews in November, in reaction to the ideological turmoil in progressive circles after October 7.

"We are not associated with any specific party. Our approach in this campaign

what they think about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as Jews in the name of Judaism, telling Jews who talk about the issue that they are not legitimate [voices] because they have been primed and cannot be free thinkers."

In recent months, small Jewish groups like Tsedek and the anti-Zionist French Jewish Union for Peace (UJFP) took part in pro-Palestinian protests, often with the participation of France Unbowed. Tsedek activists often commented that, as Jews, it was important to

semitism back in the heart of the fight against racism in general."

Golem members have held political meetings and conferences and have given out pro-leftist flyers to Jews who sometimes present the opposite view.

"We tell them we understand them. When we meet our opponents, we do not belittle their experience; we explain our position."

"On the left, people often understand our position, but not always. We notice that today when people talk about antisemitism it's not to denounce the phenomenon itself, but more often to denounce the way it is being 'weaponized.'"

"Antisemitism is the marginalization of Jews. But years of propaganda from people like [French performer] Dieudonné have led many to see it as a weapon used by bigoted Jews to defend their extremist ideology and silence people who want to criticize Israel. Instead of seeing antisemitism as a source of pain, some see it as a weapon cynically used by Jewish hypocrites."

"This way of thinking is common now on the left. This being said, antisemitism is indeed being weaponized by the far right to attack the left. So our mission is to put things back in their correct order."

"The left has to do its *aggiornamento* [the phrase used to describe the reforms of the 1965 Second Vatican Council, including a repudiation of antisemitism and anti-Judaism]. Especially now that it has several France Unbowed MPs who have made troubling comments, saying, for example, that Hamas is defending Palestinian rights and that Israelis' struggles should be ignored because they are the occupiers. There is a mix-up of everything."

"And we have a lot of work to show that yes, occupation and injustice should be denounced, but that Jewish history and Israelis' struggles should not be brushed aside."



Marine Le Pen in Paris on Wednesday.

Bertrand Guay/AFP

was dual: We saw it as an emergency to fight the National Rally, an existential threat, because it is deeply racist and antisemitic. At the same time we wanted to stop sweeping leftist antisemitism under the rug.

"Antisemitism seems to always come second. Not as crucial as the Gaza emergency, not as important as people's economic struggles, not as urgent as the fight against the far right. We wanted to break this pattern. This was our campaign. Like walking on a tightrope, always saying that the National Rally is far more dangerous than France Unbowed and the left but still pointing to what needed to be fixed, the brutal attitude of the left towards the Jewish community," Margulies said.

"Minimizing October 7, using the word 'Zionist' all the time to denigrate Jewish voices, pushing Jews, just because they are Jewish, to say

point out their opposition to Israel's policies. They have been frequent speakers at anti-Israel student protests. Golem does not approve of this method.

"Today some people think we are anti-Zionists and others see us as right-wing Jews in disguise. We are neither," said Margulies. "We want to allow Jews to have a voice in the social movement without their Jewish identity being constantly brought up and all of those clichés. We don't need to parade our Jewish identity to defend the Palestinians. Otherwise, you become a tool for antisemites who say 'I'm not an antisemite, I have a Jew who agrees with me.'"

"It's important to back the Palestinian nation, criticize the bombing of Gaza, the occupation of the West Bank, but not by giving in to antisemitism. The idea is to put the fight against anti-

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# Parents of three named as pair killed in Tuesday's rocket attack on Golan Heights

Iron Dome not launched because they were in an open area; military attacks Syrian target that breached buffer zone; Gantz: Time to exact a price from enemies in Lebanon

Adi Hashmonai and Ofer Aderet

The two Israelis killed in the Golan Heights on Tuesday when a rocket from Lebanon hit their car have been named as Noa and Nir Baranes.

The couple, from Kibbutz Ortal, were killed while driving their car near the Nefah (Yitzhak) military base in the Golan Heights, leaving behind three children aged 18, 15 and 13.

The army said it identified about 40 rockets fired at the area, and Hezbollah has claimed responsibility for the barrage, saying it was fired in response to the alleged Israeli attack that killed Yasser Nemr Qarnabash, one of Hezbollah Secretary-General Hassan Nasrallah's former bodyguards in Syria.

The Baranes family moved to the Golan a decade ago. Nir managed the chicken farm in the kibbutz and served as CEO of Ortal Tourism, which operates the local hotel. Noa was the secretary of the kibbutz orchards, and conducted chocolate workshops.

"It has always been clear to us that we were looking for a home in a rural community, and you could say we are true people of the land," Nir said in a 2015 interview with a lifestyle website. "Despite the initial hesitation, we traveled as far as possible, all the way to Kibbutz Ortal. Here, we discovered much more than a home. We discovered a

family, community life, a cooperative kibbutz like in the old days, and a great deal of mutual support," he added.

Noa recounted, "During our first weekend stay on the kibbutz, I told myself I would never live here. It was freezing, with strong wind and thick fog, and we didn't know the northern Golan Heights at all. I told my husband that while we dreamed of the north, there's no need to be extreme. Luckily, I fell in love on our second visit, and today we don't look south. Ortal is in our hearts, and it's not a fling but true love."

Nir's cousin, Avri Baranes, eulogized the couple on Wednesday morning: "My dear cousin Nir and his wonderful wife Noa were killed last night by a direct hit. The heart cannot believe it, only a few months ago we were sitting shiva for his dear father, my beloved uncle Yehuda. People of the beautiful Land of Israel, kibbutz members by choice, people of endless creativity and action, parents without limits. So many shared childhood memories are running through my head in the past hours. ... My heart goes out to the wonderful children left without a father and mother. It's simply inconceivable."

A preliminary investigation conducted by the military found that the Iron Dome system did not launch an interceptor at the rocket that hit the Baranes' vehicle because the area is classi-



Nir and Noa Baranes

Courtesy of the family

fied as an open area. The IDF's interception policy during heavy barrages prioritizes intercepting rockets aimed at populated areas over those directed at open areas.

Earlier on Tuesday, Hezbollah published what it claimed to be photographs taken by a drone that crossed into Israel, showing IDF bases and military infrastructure in northern Israel. They include IDF posts in the Mount Hermon area, Iron Dome batteries, artil-

lery batteries and armored brigade bases. Israel's security system believes the images are authentic.

On Wednesday, the army announced it attacked Syrian army targets that breached the buffer zone between the countries' borders. Tanks and artillery carried out the strikes near Quneitra, close to the Israeli border, according to the army.

The structures erected in the Golan were a violation of the Agreement on Disengagement signed in 1974

between Israel and Syria, which concluded the Yom Kippur War.

Minister Benny Gantz said, "It is time to exact a price from military targets and infrastructure of the state of Lebanon, of which Hezbollah is a part."

Speaking at a conference at Reichman University, Gantz, a former member of the war cabinet, said, "The operational effort should have been shifted to the north in March, as we demanded. Implement a plan

to return hostages even at painful costs, and move the IDF north for a possible offensive."

Gantz accused Netanyahu of refusing to add to the war's objectives the return of northern residents to their homes by September 1. "Unfortunately, the prime minister hesitated and we are paying the price. And the price is heavy," he said.

With reporting from Bar Peleg, Yaniv Kubovich and Noa Shpigiel.

## Court orders Bedouin family to pay NIS 1m in eviction costs

Relatives said the state didn't let them evacuate their own homes

Nir Hasson

The Be'er Sheva Magistrate's Court ruled on Monday that four members of a Bedouin family evicted from their homes have to pay over 1 million shekels (\$273,000) in costs covering their eviction.

The structures belong to the al-Atiq family, which built them next to the southern Israeli city Rahat and were required to evacuate them in order to expand the city. The family negotiated with the state, but some relatives refused to the state's conditions.

The relatives claimed that the state didn't let them evacuate the homes themselves and that the lawsuit was meant to punish them for taking a position in the negotiations.

The talks began in 2006, and relatives said that they had moved to the area in the 1950s, after the Israeli army evicted them from another region. Some of the relatives accepted the conditions offered to them, and the state demolished six homes about five years ago.

The Israel Land Administration filed a lawsuit detailing the expenses of the eviction which included: 216 police officers at a cost of 343,000 shekels; 13 police vehicles, a van for transporting prisoners, a water can-

non, eight horses and two drones.

Judge Rachel Tiktin-Adulam accepted the authority's position, according to which the families were offered a number of alternatives, and that their demands didn't merit what they deserved from the state.

The judge stated in her ruling that the families who didn't reach agreement with the state would pay 1 million shekels and another 43,000 shekels for the evacuation, and another 60,000 shekels for court fees.

The relatives countered that the state ignored their rights during the negotiations, and that the sum allegedly required for the eviction is beyond reasonable, given that the forces that arrived weren't necessary.

The state prosecutor commented in wake of the ruling: "Filing lawsuits to repay demolition and evacuation costs is done by the Israel Land Authority and law enforcement as part of a comprehensive process of managing the phenomenon of illegal construction and infiltration of public lands."

The prosecutor noted this process includes economic measures, given "the great importance of implementing economic enforcement policies and generating effective deterrence."

## On warrants for PM and Gallant

## U.K. considers withdrawing ICC reservations

Amir Tibon

The new British government is mulling over withdrawing its reservations about arrest warrants for Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Defense Minister Yoav Gallant and IDF Chief of Staff Herzl Halevi at the International Criminal Court in The Hague, advanced by the previous U.K. administration.

The Labour government, which came to power late last week, has not yet taken a final decision on the matter, and it is expected to come up for discussion during the new Foreign Secretary David Lammy's first visit to Israel next week.

The previous Conservative government under Prime Minister Rishi Sunak filed the reservation to the applications for arrest warrants by ICC Prosecutor Karim Khan against Netanyahu and defense officials, which was strongly welcomed by Israel's top leaders.

However, earlier this week, The Guardian, on the basis of government sources, reported that it would withdraw the reservations and take no further measures that would delay the legal proceedings.

A British diplomatic source told Haaretz that no

final decision has been taken, but the option was under consideration. Foreign Secretary Lammy has not mentioned the subject, but, after taking up the post, said that the new government would seek a "balanced position" on the Israeli-Palestinian issue, and called for an immediate cease-fire that would include the release of the Israeli hostages.

Lammy criticized the previous Conservative government for not presenting a balanced line, saying that the new government's task would be to contribute in any way to achieving a cease-fire and release of the hostages in Gaza.

During the election campaign, Lammy expressed support for recognizing a Palestinian state, a step that several European countries have taken in recent weeks, but which the U.K. has refrained from over the years because of the position that such a state should only be established at the end of direct negotiations.

The new government is considering how to act on this subject, but, according to reports in the British media, it will not immediately declare recognition without first coordinating its steps with the American administration.

## New airline on the way: AirHaifa to receive first plane in late July

Hadar Kane and TheMarker

AirHaifa, a new Israeli airline, announced on Tuesday that it will receive its first plane at Haifa's international airport at the end of July.

AirHaifa will become the fourth Israeli airline, along with El Al, Israir and Arkia.

The first aircraft in the company's fleet will be an ATR 72-600 model with 72 seats. It will arrive from Toulouse-Blagnac Airport in France.

AirHaifa was established by Israeli entrepreneurs, including Nir Zuk, founder of the multinational cybersecurity company Palo Alto Networks, Gonen Ussishkin, former CEO of El Al, and other El Al executives. AirHaifa began the process of obtaining an operational license from the Civil Aviation Authority in September, and is now in the final stages of the process.

It has already granted a commercial operating license from Transportation Minister Miri Regev. Only

after completing the licensing process, which is expected during September, will it start selling tickets and operating commercial flights from Haifa.

The new plane will be delivered to the company's management in Toulouse from the French-Italian manufacturer ATR, which is jointly owned by the Airbus conglomerate and the Leonardo group. In the following months, AirHaifa will receive two additional aircraft of this model, according to the company.

AirHaifa intends to operate regular flights with high frequency, year-round, from the international airport in Haifa to Eilat and to a variety of destinations in the Mediterranean basin and the surrounding area.

The company markets itself as a low-cost company and claims it will offer "affordable and competitive prices", which it has yet to reveal.

The airport in Haifa has a runway suitable for airplanes with 70 seats and turboprop engines. The airport

terminal has infrastructure for operating international and domestic flights, an area where a duty-free shop and a cafeteria will be, and a free parking lot.

The company said: "The launch of AirHaifa, especially in light of the challenging period of fighting in the north, is an important and highly significant step for the region. The company's activities will contribute to strengthening the local economy and creating new jobs. AirHaifa will provide air connectivity to the region and will make it easier for the residents of the north to travel abroad, and is expected to further contribute to the tourism development of Haifa and the north."

CEO Gonen Ussishkin added: "We are awaiting completion of the company's licensing process and upon its completion and receipt of the required licenses from the Civil Aviation Authority, we will announce the date for the launch of the company's activities and begin selling tickets."



Friends and relatives welcoming Almog Meir Jan, 22, center, after his rescue from Gaza, in Or Yehuda this week.

Ohad Zwigenberg/AP

## Rescued hostage sues U.S. nonprofit that employed his captor

Rachel Fink

One of the hostages rescued by the army last month has filed a lawsuit against a U.S. non-profit that employed the Hamas operative who reportedly held him captive, according to Fox News Digital.

Almog Meir Jan was held captive for 246 days in Gaza before he was freed along with three other hostages in a daring rescue mission by the Israel Defense Forces.

Jan and two other hostages, Andrey Kozlov and Shlomi Ziv, were held in the home of Abdallah Aljamal, a regular contributor to the Palestine Chronicle, a pro-Palestinian news outlet, and spokesman for the Hamas-run Labor Ministry. According to the IDF, Aljamal and his family were killed during the operation.

Jan filed the lawsuit in Seattle federal court on Tuesday against People Media Project, a non-profit organization based in Olympia, Washington, that runs the Palestine Chronicle. As stated in court filings, Aljamal began writing for the website in May 2019.

His author page on the site shows dozens of his articles under the bio, "Abdallah Aljamal is a Gaza-based journalist. He is a contributor for The Palestine Chronicle from the Gaza Strip." Records indicate that the wording of his bio changed from "correspondent" to "contributor" shortly after details of the rescue mission were made

public. Aljamal's last piece for the website was published on June 7, just one day before Jan and the other hostages were freed by the army.

The suit alleges that two of the named defendants – editor-in-chief of the Palestine Chronicle Ramzy Baroud and People Media Project governor John Harvey – "knowingly and willfully procured and disseminated Hamas propaganda to the Palestine Chronicle's readers in the United States," citing reports alleging "at least six Palestine Chronicle writers and contributors have been affiliated with Iranian propaganda outlets."

"Under the leadership of Defendants Baroud and Harvey, Defendant Palestine Chronicle employed Hamas Operative Aljamal and offered him its U.S. platform to write and disseminate Hamas propaganda, ultimately subsidized, through its status as a tax-exempt charitable organization, by U.S. taxpayers," the court filing reads. "Following the Hamas terror attacks of October 7, while Hamas Operative Aljamal imprisoned Plaintiff, Defendants permitted Hamas Operative Aljamal to use their platform to whitewash Hamas's crimes and attract international support for its terrorist cause."

"By providing this platform to Hamas Operative Aljamal and compensating Hamas Operative Aljamal for his propaganda, Defendants aided, abetted, and

materially supported both Hamas Operative Aljamal and Hamas itself in their acts of terrorism, including kidnapping and holding the Plaintiff hostage for 246 days, in violation of international law," the suit continued.

Jan is represented by the National Jewish Advocacy Center, a legal and public policy group that has previously brought lawsuits on behalf of October 7 victims alleging that certain organizations aided Hamas in committing its atrocities. "We filed this lawsuit against Palestine Chronicle and its directors because they knowingly supported a Hamas operative who held our client as a hostage in his home. We look forward to seeking justice from the federal court for our client," NJAC CEO, Mark Goldfeder, who previously served as former U.S. President Donald Trump's private counsel, told Fox News Digital.

Fellow counsel Jason Torchinsky added, "Palestine Chronicle needs to be held accountable for its support of the Hamas operative who held our client hostage in Gaza. We filed this suit to seek relief for our client and to help expose the network of Hamas-linked PR fronts operating within the United States."

Neither the Palestine Chronicle nor People Media Project has responded to multiple requests for comment.

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Inside Friday's edition



Britain's Foreign Secretary David Lammy.

Justin Tallis/AFP

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## The folly of the assassinations

The price of the IDF's targeted killing was paid this time by Noa and Nir Baranes of Kibbutz Ortal in the northern Golan Heights. The married couple was killed Tuesday when a rocket fired from Lebanon hit their car near the Nafah military base; they left behind three children, ages 18, 15 and 13.

Hezbollah said the strike was retaliation for the killing of Yasser Nembr Qaranbush, a former bodyguard of its leader, Hassan Nasrallah. Foreign media outlets attributed the killing, reportedly near a Syrian army post, to Israel.

Last Thursday, Maj. (res.) Itay Galea, 38, was killed by a missile fired by Hezbollah into the Golan Heights. The strike was in retaliation for the assassination of Mohammad Naameh Nasser, a senior commander in the organization.

In both cases, it was about "settling accounts" with Israel over targeted killings the IDF conducted. In both cases, the military decided on the assassinations while risking a Hezbollah response that was liable to result in Israeli deaths.

It's time we ask: Beyond the tactical achievement and the morale-raising value of killing senior figures (Qaranbush was not a senior official), do the assassinations promote the return of peace and security to Israel and contribute to the security of the residents of the Galilee panhandle and the Golan Heights? This, especially when organizations like Hezbollah appear capable of replacing their top commanders, often with more extreme figures? In addition, these killings provide fuel for the next escalation.

It seems that the assassination of senior Hezbollah members is no longer done out of the belief that it will change the strategic balance between Israel and the terrorist organization; rather, it has become a substitute for strategic accomplishments, meant as a sop to the demand in Israel to launch an all-out war in the north.

In addition to the issue of the strategic futility in the north, we must question the political wisdom of the assassinations, just as an opportunity has arisen to advance a hostage deal with Hamas and, in its wake, possibly the end of the war in Gaza and Lebanon. Military actions that encourage escalation in the north and south (Israel ordered residents of Gaza City to evacuate ahead of an attack) only hinder the diplomatic efforts toward the hostages' release.

The targeted attacks have done nothing yet to change the balance of threats in the Gaza Strip or the north. The deaths and damage they have caused point to futility and the absence of vision. The only way to return the hostages and give the residents of the north a chance to return to their homes is with a cease-fire in Gaza, and a genuine effort to reach a diplomatic arrangement in the north.



Amos Biderman | amosh@haaretz.co.il

Uri Misgav

## All is in vain, all is vanity

I wanted to write about the disgrace that is the Wing of Zion. After eight years and a billion shekels we have been informed this week that it's not within the capabilities of the Israeli Air Force One to fly the prime minister's full entourage to Washington. This piece of junk is a perfect monument to sum up the vanity and vainness of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's rule. But first, it's more pressing to write about Nir and Noa Baranes of Kibbutz Ortal. Their blood is crying out to us from the earth. And thus spake Diaspora Affairs Minister and strategist Amichai Chikli a few days ago: "Hezbollah is suffering from harsh blows and it's necessary to say this and not enter into a mood of gloom and doom. When there are achievements, it's necessary to bless them and note their importance, even though they are not yet sufficient. It's a war of attrition against them at the moment. Ultimately, whoever has more stamina, faith in the rightness of the path and willingness to pay prices is the one who wins in the end."

An example of prices: the Baranes couple, who were killed by a direct rocket strike on their car. The rocket was fired in response to the assassination in Damas-

cus of a former bodyguard of Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah. They were 46 years old at the time of their death. They left behind three children, a shattered family and a broken community. And with regard to that mood of doom and gloom we mustn't enter, I hope that at least during the shivah it's permissible to mourn Nir and Noa Baranes. Chikli is invited, if he can find the time. Next week he is flying again, this time to Argentina and Uruguay, for 11 days. This will be his eighth trip since the October 7 massacre. At its end, he will have completed a cumulative 43 days abroad. Here's an example of stamina and faith in the rightness of the path.

The Baranes couple, like Maj. (res.) Itay Galea, who was killed by a direct hit in the last round in the Golan Heights and left behind two orphans and a pregnant wife, are victims in vain, not only of Hezbollah but also of the government of Israel and its army. Every assassination from the air in which Israel takes pride brings about hundreds of rockets and drones in response. Sirens, hits, interceptions, fires. When Hezbollah stops firing, the Israeli army makes it clear that as far as it's concerned, "the incident is over." Until the next targeted assassination, and over and over again.

The inhabitants of the north and the soldiers there are the cannon fodder of the vanity, the stupidity and the futility that have taken over Israel. This is a country that's beating its head against the wall. A country that's screwed. The cult of Satan has taken over it. There's no longer any value here in people's lives, in their suffering, in their fate.

The hostages in Gaza are a nuisance. Their families and supporters are enemies of the people. The concern for their fate is something leftist. Soldiers are dying and being wounded in Gaza in vain, in neighborhoods where their comrades in arms were killed and wounded earlier. Everyone already realizes that Netanyahu is conniving, briefing, leaking and subverting a deal with all his might – and no one is standing up and overturning tables. An entire country knows that it's possible to stop the shooting and the killing in the south and in the north immediately and bring the living and the dead hostages home – but everything just continues as usual.

Of course, there's a camp that's interested in everything just continuing as it is. Its fundamentalist wing is even explicitly sanctifying a culture of martyrdom. I will never forget how the messianic, Bibi-ist right screamed

when three teenagers were kidnapped and killed in the West Bank in 2014, or when a soldier was shot and killed along the border fence in Gaza in 2021. Or when Yair Lapid, who was the prime minister at the time, came to an agreement to move two buoys and finalize the maritime border with Lebanon in 2022. But on their watch, the killing of 1,600 Israelis, the taking hostage of 240 and the evacuation of the Galilee and the Western Negev hasn't moved them in the least. On the contrary, they're living with the sense of a miracle, trembling, glowing, their eyes bright. On the pro-Netanyahu Channel 14 their spokespeople are choking with laughter, snorting, foaming at the mouth.

This will end in a refusal to serve. In effect, it already has taken hold in the reserves. Any time now it's going to also start in the standing army – at least among those communities where people aren't chomping at the bit to resettle Gaza or going around with an image of the Messiah on their epaulets. What began as a justified war in defense of the national home has degenerated into a war in defense of Netanyahu, and is liable to turn into a civil war. That man and his collaborators have made Israel an accursed place, where it's terrible to live and to die.

Gideon Levy

## Crushing and crying

Like everything in the Israeli military, generals can be divided into three groups. The largest is that of faceless individuals whose names, much less opinions, are unknown to most Israelis. They rise through the ranks, retire, go to work for a defense company and that's it. The other two are minority groups: the right-wingers, the settlers, the religious, the militants, the "moralists," the "leftists," the ones who "shoot and cry" and retire with a resounding rebuke. This is usually the worst and most hypocritical group, and it is the one to which the outgoing chief of the IDF Central Command, Maj. Gen. Yehuda Fuchs, belongs.

During his three-year assignment, Fuchs was built up into an enemy of the settlers, supposedly. The most cynical and extortionist group in Israeli society, which could teach the Haredim a thing or two about blackmail, knows its job: The settlers attack in order to terrorize. Anyone with any doubts about Fuchs' true attitude to the settlers would do well to listen to his retirement speech. In his eyes, the vast majority of them are law-abiding citizens. Nothing more needs to be said about Fuchs. Not a single settler abides by the law, certainly not international law – which, astonishingly enough, also applies to Israel – and most of them are proud of their rioters, who make Minister Orit Strock's "miracle" happen. Fuchs was a friend of the settlers, like all the Central Command chiefs from Rehavam Ze'evi (1968-72) to himself, all of them the submissive slaves of the "hilltop people."

But the head of the Central Command is first of all the subjugator of the Palestinian population. Fuchs' term in the West Bank was among the cruelest for the Palestinians. That's how it usually is with the enlightened generals. Fuchs leaves behind a West Bank in ruins – bleeding, crushed, jobless, threatening to explode, obstructed and poor as it hasn't been since the second intifada. No principled officer could be responsible for such cruelty – even if Ben Caspit, an authentic representative of the militaristic and ultranationalist center that he believes to be enlightened, writes on

X: "Fuchs is a principled officer of values, an Israeli patriot, who did not run from difficult questions. ... Thank you, Yehuda."

What's there to thank him for? For turning the West Bank into ruins? For the fact that under his command, 539 Palestinians, 131 of them children, were killed in nine months? It's nice that the settlers demonstrated against him – the Palestinians cannot – but look at what he leaves behind, the officer with morals in the eyes of Caspit and his ilk. Fuchs introduced into the West Bank the armed drones that kill more people, and restored the checkpoints in a way that almost makes you miss the intifada.

Caspit apparently doesn't know about this, or care. But Fuchs knows exactly what he did to Palestinian society. It's impossible to plan anything in the West Bank today. Now it's open, any minute there will be a roadblock – abuse for the sake of abuse. Look at the behavior of the soldiers at the checkpoints.

Did you punish anyone, general? Huge traffic jams simply because the soldiers feel like it, every day, everywhere. Fuchs should see what his soldiers left behind in the refugee camps of Tul Karm and Jenin: destruction of near-Gazan proportions. Let him try to drive to Tul Karm on a road that no longer exists. The "enemy of the settlers" permitted the establishment of the criminal outpost of Evyatar, for which eight Palestinians paid with their lives. His soldiers killed them for no reason. Fuchs let Daniella Weiss erect this scourge, as he allowed the creation of dozens of wildcat outposts in the past several weeks, all of them violent.

You can't wail over the violent settlers when Fuchs was supposed to stop them. Did he see how his soldiers behaved in the pogroms in Hawara and other spots? What will the principled officer say to this?

Fuchs will be succeeded by Maj. Gen. Avi Bluth, a settler who grew from the poisoned soil of Neveh Tzuf and the pre-military yeshiva in Eli. It's not hard to guess his views. For the Palestinians, for humanity, for the law and for justice it will change nothing. The enlightened Fuchs, like the right-wing Bluth, will never see the Palestinians as human beings.

Gisela Dachs

## Inspired by France, will Germany also build a firewall against the far right?

The cordon sanitaire, or "Republican front," against the far right in France worked. The question now is: Could it work in Germany and other countries?

Its price seemed reasonable: building an alliance with one's political adversaries in order to defeat a common, bigger enemy. National Rally's president, Jordan Bardella, called it an "alliance of shame" depriving the French of what he said would have been, under his party, a "politics of progress."

For now at least, a government headed by a far-right prime minister for the first time since World War II has been thwarted. Although it drastically increased its number of seats, National Rally fell far short of expectations. The odds of Marine Le Pen, the party's leader, of becoming president in 2027 remain still intact.

The question of how to confront a swelling far right will therefore continue to be a huge challenge in liberal democracies in Europe and beyond. France is a few years ahead of its neighbor across the Rhine in terms of far right forces taking root within society. But similar dynamics can be expected in Germany, if the far right Alternative for Germany, the AfD, wins in

one or more of the three scheduled state elections in the formerly communist east in September. According to the latest polls, it is the strongest party in Saxony, Thuringia, and Brandenburg, projected to win up to 30 percent of the vote. In Saxony, the AfD swept 40 percent at the European Parliament elections in June.

Referring to the possible cooperation of his party with the new left-wing populist Alliance Sahra Wagenknecht, or BSW, Norbert Röttgen, veteran lawmaker of the center and largest German party, the Christian Democratic Union of Germany, or CDU, said this "certainly won't rescue the country." But he said such a "tactical reaction might be inevitable" to keep AfD out of power.

Although it performed worse than expected during the European Parliament elections with 15.9 percent of the total German vote, do not be deceived: support for the AfD is on the rise. Since 2023, polling shows the AfD nationwide as the second most popular party after the CDU – putting it ahead of the three parties that currently make up the government.

Nationwide, AfD membership grew by 60 percent since January 2023. That's a major leap. The German

domestic intelligence agency just classified the Junge Alternative, the youth organization of the AfD, a "certified right wing extremist movement." The AfD itself is "under observation." A German high court ruled recently it "pursues goals against the human dignity of certain groups and against democracy."

**In Germany, publicly supporting the AfD is a badge of shame, and the party is ostracized in the federal parliament. But its popularity is on the rise.**

Much younger than its French counterpart, the AfD started out in 2013, focused against immigration during the refugee crisis of 2015 when more than a million Muslim migrants came to Germany from Syria. By 2020 it was also making its voice known for its opposition to the government's Corona policy, which they thought was overly restrictive.

In France, National Rally has long become a party that people are no longer ashamed to publicly support. The far right is still more taboo in Germany and AfD voters remain more re-

luctant to admit their affiliation, seen as something of a badge of shame given the country's Nazi past.

As part of what has been widely described in France as a strategy to "de-diabolize" National Rally, Marine Le Pen distanced her party from its German counterpart. Last May, she threw out all nine members of the AfD from the European Par-

liamentary group called "Identity and Democracy", after Maximilian Krah, an AfD member of it, argued not all members of the Waffen SS should be judged as criminals. "It is time to make a break", she said, calling the AfD a "movement that is not led and is obviously under the influence of radical groups."

Le Pen has become a model for Alice Weidel, co-chairwoman of the AfD, who also is trying to make her party appear more respectable. At a recent party convention, she vowed to work to "tear down the unspeakable so-called firewalls" that other

parties have set up against working with AfD. To date, the AfD, which entered the federal parliament in 2017, has been ostracized by all the other parties. So on a national level, it has been kept as far as possible from exerting influence. Even the rules of procedure were changed by lawmakers so that the AfD member Alexander Gauland (who said that Hitler and the Nazis are no more than "bird shit" in more than 1,000 years of successful German history) would not be even allowed for one hour to take on a symbolic role of transferring power to the incoming president of parliament as the oldest member of the Bundestag.

As recently as last week, the AfD failed then again to get one of its deputies elected as one of the vice-presidents of the federal parliament. It is the only fact that has never held this true role.

However, while every contact with the AfD is oppositional on a national level, relations becomes increasingly blurred on a regional level, especially in the former communist East. It will be in the "East, where the sun of our government participation will rise," said party co-chairmen Tino Chrupalla at a party congress last month.

The test case will be in state parliaments where



Protestors demonstrating against the party congress of the far-right AfD party in Essen, in June. Volker Harmann/APF

the differences between the CDU and the AfD are smaller. There are quite a few topics (against a green lifestyle, migration, and "wokeness") that some Christian Democrats in those areas share with some AfD members.

So far regional shunning of AfD has failed. In 2020, a new prime minister from the liberal party FDP was elected in Thuringia with the votes of the AfD. His victory, depending on the support of parliamentarians from the far right, led to a nation-wide scandal. He was forced to step down a few days later.

And on a municipal level, upholding this anti-far right wall might be nearly impossible. The AfD is in many communities the strongest or second strongest force.

Without their representatives, you can't even repair a pothole. Schnaudertal, a small town in Saxony-Anhalt, made headlines last June, when the AfD received 45.2 percent of the votes in

rise of the far right depends also on its political narrative, whether in France or in Germany. "It offers an easy-to-understand narrative of what is wrong and how we could return to what we had before," he says.

This promise, as illusory as it is, will remain and attract voters. To fight back, stonewalling through alliances against it alone will not be enough.

Adopting some of the agenda AfD promotes, as another way of shutting it out, has also not worked so far. The conservative parties in the former East who have tried this, continue to be perceived as the old guard, out of touch with what people are looking for from their leaders.

In France there is no equivalent to the new populist left party BSW in Germany, whose party could wind up as a door opener for future participation of the AfD in state government. Although placed on opposite sides of the political spectrum, the two parties have, in many respects, a similar outlook – anti-Western, anti-immigration and most important anti-old-elite, exploiting the same resentments.

The collapse of the Berlin Wall in 1989 ushered the hopes of a new era of democracy and freedom for Europe. The question now is, will Germany uphold a different wall to protect that democracy?

Gisela Dachs is a professor at the European Forum and the Center for German Studies at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, a journalist, and former correspondent and editor at the German weekly Die Zeit.

# Did veggie hunter-gatherers in Morocco have a choice?

## Heavy plant consumption at Taforal from 15,000 to 13,000 years ago happened at a time of mounting scarcity of game

Ruth Schuster

Eat your vegetables, parents admonish the kids. They may or may not set an example. In places of plenty, eating your veg is a matter of choice, and we tend to assume the choice is "no." Given their druthers and leaving morality aside, most people would probably subsist on chops and chips. But now we know about "nutrition" and know that consuming plant matter is crucial to our well-being.

But that's recent knowledge. Hence, it was surprising to learn that 15,000 years ago, thousands of years before farming would emerge, hunter-gatherers in Taforal, Morocco, were gathering a great deal, according to a report based on isotopic analysis published in April in *Nature Ecology & Evolution*.

"Our results unequivocally demonstrate a substantial plant-based component in the diets of these hunter-gatherers. This distinct dietary pattern challenges the prevailing notion of high reliance on animal proteins among pre-agricultural human groups," writes Zineb Moubtahij of the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology in Leipzig, Germany, with colleagues.

That it does. It also challenges the experience of Big Food, which didn't make billions hawking lentil burgers. Separate work has amply demonstrated the hominin, and later the human, appetite for meat and fat – and grease while about it.

But we did always eat some plants: we had to. Moreover, the archaeological record of diet has to be biased because prehistoric consumption of plants doesn't leave bones for archaeologists to find, constraining the investigation. Also, analysis of fossil feces in Spain has demonstrated that Neanderthals, for instance, did consume plants as well: roots, berries and nuts.

But still, one may think that people eat animals when they can and plants when they must. Now we have the new isotopic analysis demonstrating heavy reliance on plants among members of the Iberomaurusian culture in prehistoric North Africa 15,000 to 13,000 years ago (thousands of years before farming arose there or anywhere).

"A progressive intensification of plant consumption is believed to have begun long before domestication in the Neolithic," the authors write, citing specific examples in prehistoric Israel such as at Ohalo by the Sea of Galilee in northern Israel 23,000 years ago, where evidence of grain consumption and possibly cultivation, though short of domestication, has been found.

The process of shifting from meat to grain and legumes, and possibly cultivating some wild grain, intensified with the Natufians – the hunter-gatherer culture in Israel and the Near East area from about 15,000 to 11,500 years ago. They have some genetic relationship with the Iberomaurusians in Morocco, they write.

The Iberomaurusian culture of hunter-gatherers lived in North Africa, emerging as early as 25,000 years ago at Tamar Hat and persisting for thousands of years, possibly into the Holocene 11,000 years ago.

At Taforal specifically, separate work has identified possible signs of sedentarism and possible basket-weaving using reeds (marvelous but not unique: the earliest baskets known to date were found in Spain and Israel from about 10,000 years ago).

**Moubtahij: 'While we cannot definitively state the dietary habits of earlier populations in the region, our research suggests a significant reliance on wild plants among Later Stone Age hunter-gatherers at Taforal.'**

No, the hunter-gatherers of Taforal didn't build stone homes like the Natufians in Israel, who were hunter-gatherers but were among the earlier cultures to abandon the nomadic life, it appears. The archaeologists base their assumption of sedentarism in prehistoric Morocco chiefly

on the existence of large Iberomaurusian cemeteries, of which one is at Taforal itself, as well as frequently reused shelters.

The Taforal cemetery, the team notes as an aside, is one of the biggest prehistoric burial grounds in North Africa in terms of the number of bodies: adults, teenagers and infants, who were dated to 15,077 to 13,892 years ago. Note the time was one of extreme climate change, characterized by retreating glaciers in the far north (not in Africa) and rapid warming (in Africa too).

But before we get dew-eyed about the mores of the Iberomaurusians in prehistoric Morocco as they transitioned away from hunted wild animals and toward gathering plants, we have to ask: Did they have a choice?

**A man's gotta eat**

The Neolithic Revolution, followed by the advent of agriculture, happened at different times in different places. In the Near East, farming began about 10,000 years ago and spread from there to Europe. Some evidence in Israel shows early stabs at plant cultivation – for instance, at Ohalo by the Sea of Galilee 23,000 years ago – but that falls short of subsistence farming.

In North Africa and Morocco, agriculture is believed to have arisen about 7,400 years ago – one theory being that the know-how was brought by early farmers hailing from Iberia. However, separate analysis of human remains at



The cave site at Taforal, in Morocco.

Nicolas Perrault III

Taforal from about 15,000 years ago and 7,000 years ago found consistency, suggesting continuity from the Late Stone Age to the Neolithic. That argues against the theory of early farmers from Iberia moving in with their kicky new technology (and mixing with the locals): Iberian ancestry would only reach the Maghreb around 5,000 years ago.

It seems that when the hunter-gatherers of Taforal began to learn to grow food and husband domestic animals, it was knowledge seeping from neighboring areas, as opposed to the technology being brought by immigrants. That would only be later; and the new paper presents a pre-Neolithic population in North Africa who didn't grow crops yet relied heavily on plants for subsistence, according to isotopic analysis of teeth and bones by Moubtahij and the team.

Also supporting the theory of heavy plant consumption, the people of prehistoric Taforal had terrible teeth, a separate paper showed in 2014, reporting: "We infer that increased reliance on wild plants rich in fermentable carbohydrates caused an early shift toward a disease-associated oral microbiota."

The team also notes previous work that detected meat consumption by the Taforal hunter-gatherers. But the technique used would have favored detection of that while missing plant consumption, which is hard to nail down in the archaeological record, the team explains.

Why would they transit away from meat in favor of plants? Plausibly because they didn't have a choice. There were probably multiple drivers, but a key one may have been depletion and extinction of large animals. After the advent

of We and our Wondrous Weapons, by the Late Stone Age in what would become Israel and Morocco, there weren't that many large animals left to hunt.

**From steak to snail**

In Israel, elephants – a favorite food among the hominin set – had gone extinct 400,000 years ago. The aurochs is known to have hung on at least until 60,000 years ago. Some deer and gazelles survive to this very day, but are considered to be "small game." Africa, on the other hand, didn't have its megafauna wiped out, but animals did become scarcer.

"You raise an important point about the potential scarcity of wild fauna during the Later Stone Age period," Moubtahij agreed by email. "Our research indeed suggests that the hunter-gatherers (associated with the Iberomaru-

sian culture) from Taforal incorporated a significant amount of wild plants into their diet, likely as a means to supplement their food sources, especially during periods of seasonal shortage of animal game."

Separate research done at Tel Aviv University has demonstrated that the body mass of animals shank by 98 percent over the last 1.5 million years. Humans aren't to blame for all extinctions, but we certainly made a contribution. The Animalia available in season wasn't all it had been, but on the flip side of choice – the animals were by no means all gone. The people at Taforal also ate meat, mainly the Barbary sheep (*Ammotragus lervia*). They also ate gazelles, members of the horse and cow family and hartebeests, based on bone finds. And snails, it turns out.

Continued on page 7

## Thursday 11.7

CHANNEL KAN 11 (Y11/H11)

06.00 The Morning News 07.00 This Morning - with Arieh Golan 08.00 Akiva Novick & Rina Matliach 10.00 Roni Kuban & Omri Assenheim - Current affairs 12.00 Deciphering India - with journalist and author Anjan Sundaram 13.00 Life According to Dvir - with Dvir Benedek 13.25 The Future is Here - Ben Shani follows Israeli inventions and researchers who will change the face of medicine 14.00 The Food Ambassadors - with Chef Barak Yehzekeli 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 21.30 Carlos the Jackal - The story of one of the most dangerous terrorists who ever acted against Israel 22.25 The Hitchhikers - Yair Agmon travels all over the country and picks up a diverse mosaic of Israeli characters (s.7) 22.50 On the Other Hand - with Guy Zohar 23.00 News 23.30 Kupa Rashit - Israeli comedy series (s.3) 00.05 Moked 11 (Celebrity Call Center) - Celebrities tackle the everyday problems of people through phone calls

KESHEET

(Y12/H12)

06.00 News Flash 06.10 Today's Headlines 07.00 News Flash 07.05 The Morning Show - with Nelsi Barza 09.30 News Flash 09.35 Special news broadcast - with Yoav Limor 11.00 Cooking with the MasterChef Winners 11.30 Guy Pines 11.50 Dancing with the Stars - Reality (s.3) 13.00 Special news broadcast - with Almaz Mangisto 15.00 Special news broadcast - with Ofer Hadad 16.55 Five O'Clock - with Yaron Avraham 17.55 Six O'Clock - with Oded Ben Ami 19.00 Special news broadcast - with Keren Marciano 19.55 The News 21.30 Dancing with the Stars - Reality (s.3) 23.10 Lotto Drawing 23.15 Einav & Nadav 00.30 The 12th Floor - Real Estate magazine

RESHET

(Y13/H13)

06.00 News Flash 06.05 The Fitness Show 06.17 The Morning Show - with Omer Yardeni & Rotem Israel 09.30 News Flash 09.35 Starting the Day - with Elad & Yarden 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 The Legal Parade - Law magazine 12.4 Baking with Keren & Itzik Kadosh 13.00 News Flash 13.05 Baking with Keren & Itzik Kadosh (cont.) 13.10 Beauty Blender - Lifestyle 13.45 The Tube - with Guy Lerner 14.00 News Flash 14.05 The Tube (cont.) 14.20 Big Brother - Reality (s.4) 15.00 News Flash 15.05 Big Brother (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 Big Brother - Reality (s.4) 23.00 The Tube - with Guy Lerner 23.30 The Day That Was - with Tal Berman 00.00 New Love - Dating reality

HOT 3

(H3)

07.25 Far North 08.10 The Good Fight (s.3) 09.10 Love Me 10.00 Far North 10.50 A Million Little Things (s.3) 11.35 Love Me 12.20 Little Bird (s.3) 13.00 Northern Exposure (s.6) 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) 19.00 Far North 19.45 Little Bird 20.30 The Hostage 21.15 A Million Little Things (s.3) 22.00 Indal 22.40 Northern Exposure (s.6) 23.25 The Hostage 00.15 The Good Fight (s.3) 01.10 Indal 01.45 Northern Exposure (s.6)



"Blackbird," HOT Cinema 4, 11.45.

Parisa Taghizadeh

HOT HBO

(H4)

08.30 My Brilliant Friend (s.2) 09.30 Algiers Confidential 10.25 Ten Percent 11.20 The Thief, His Wife and the Canoe 12.05 Manhunt (s.2) 12.55 My Brilliant Friend (s.2) 13.55 Algiers Confidential 14.50 Ten Percent 15.45 The Thief, His Wife and the Canoe 16.35 My Brilliant Friend (s.2) 17.35 Munich Games 18.20 Ten Percent 19.15 The Thief, His Wife and the Canoe 20.00 Bad Behaviour 20.55 My Brilliant Friend (s.2) 22.00 Wreck (s.2) 22.40 Jerrod Carmichael Reality Show 23.15 Dear Vivi 00.05 Industry 00.55 Wreck (s.2) 01.50 Dear Vivi 02.35 Industry

HOT ZONE

(H5)

06.25 S.W.A.T. (s.7) 07.10 FBI: Most Wanted (s.4) 07.50 Law & Order: Special Victims Unit (s.25) 08.35 FBI (s.5) 09.15 The Rookie (s.3) 10.00 Law & Order (s.22) 10.40 Station 19 (s.3) 11.25 S.W.A.T. (s.7) 12.05 Law & Order: Special Victims Unit (s.25) 12.45 FBI: Most Wanted (s.4) 13.30 Chicago P.D. (s.7) 14.10 FBI (s.5) 14.55 The Rookie (s.3) 15.35 Station 19 (s.3) 16.20 Law & Order: Special Victims Unit (s.25) 17.00 Law & Order (s.22) 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) 20.30 Station 19 (s.3) 21.15 Law & Order: Special Victims Unit (s.25) 22.00 FBI (s.5) 22.40 Law & Order (s.23) 23.20 FBI: Most Wanted (s.4) 00.05 The Rookie (s.3) 00.50 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 06.50 The Avoidable War 07.55 Strangest Things (s.2) 08.45 The Round Number 09.50 Born to Be King 10.40 Air Force During Yom Kippur 11.50 Sirius 12.40 Strangest Things (s.2) 13.30 The Round Number 14.35 Born to Be King 15.25 Air Force During Yom Kippur 16.35 Sirius 17.20 Born to Be King 18.10 The Round Number 19.15 Air Force During Yom Kippur 20.25 Strangest Things (s.2) 21.15 Quad Gods 22.15 Sirius 23.00 Greatest Moments: Adele 00.35 Quad Gods 01.40 Sirius 02.30 Greatest Moments: Adele

YES DOCU

(Y8)

08.10 John McCain: For Whom the Bell Tolls 09.50 South to Black Power 11.20 Icons Unearthed: Marvel 12.05 Mr. Saturday Night 13.25 The Museum 14.40 The Longest Goodbye 16.10 No Accident 17.45 Cunningham 19.15 Icons Unearthed: Marvel 20.00 Citizen K 21.00 Dvar Hatviaa 21.35 Deadlocked: How America Shaped the Supreme Court 22.35 Dvar Hatviaa 23.10 A Case of a Lifetime (2 pts.) 00.50 Couples Therapy (s.4) 01.20 Deadlocked: How America Shaped the Supreme Court 02.20 Dvar Hatviaa

Recreations (s.5, 2 eps) 13.15 How I Met Your Mother (s.5, 2 eps) 14.05 Young Sheldon (s.6, 2 eps) 14.45 Friends (2 eps) 15.35 Schitt's Creek (s.2, 2 eps) 16.25 Married with Children (s.10, 2 eps) 17.15 How I Met Your Mother (s.5, 2 eps) 18.05 Young Sheldon (s.6, 2 eps) 18.45 Friends (2 eps) 19.35 Schitt's Creek (s.2, 2 eps) 20.25 Married with Children (s.10, 2 eps) 21.15 How I Met Your Mother (s.5, 2 eps) 22.05 Young Sheldon (s.6, 2 eps) 22.45 Friends (2 eps) 23.35 Married with Children (s.10, 2 eps) 00.25 Entourage (s.5, 2 eps) 01.25 The Neighborhood (s.5, 2 eps) 02.15 Young & Hungry (s.3, 2 eps)

EUROSPORT

(Y61/H59)

08.00 Climbing - World Cup 09.30 Tour de France 2024 - Stage 5 10.30 Golf TV Weekly 11.00 Climbing - World Cup 12.00 Tour de France 2024 - Stage 5 14.15 Tour de France 2024 - Stage 6 19.00 Mountain Bike - World Series 19.30 2024 World Snooker Championship Final: Kyren Wilson (England) vs. Jak Jones (Wales) 21.30 Fencing - European Championship in Basel, Switzerland 23.00 Tour de France 2024 - Stage 6 01.00 Olympic Games - The best moments 02.30 Fencing - European Championship in Basel, Switzerland

## MOVIE CHANNELS

HOT CINEMA 1

(H16)

07.40 Pelé: Birth of a Legend (USA, 2016). Biographical. Dirs: Jeff Zimbalist, Michael Zimbalist. With Kevin de Paula, Leonardo Lima Carvalho, Seu Jorge. 09.30 Horizon Line (Sweden/USA, 2020). Thriller. Dir: Mikael Marcimain. With Allison Williams, Alexander Dreymon, Keith David. 11.00 Dark Waters (USA, 2019). Biography drama. Dir: Tod Haynes. With Mark Ruffalo, Anne Hathaway, Tim Robbins. 13.05 In the Heart of the Sea (USA/Australia/Spain/UK/Canada, 2015). Biography. Dir: Ron Howard. With Chris Hemsworth, Cillian Murphy, Brendan Gleeson. 15.10 Beautiful Boy (USA, 2018). Biography drama. Dir: Felix Van Groeningen. With Steve Carell, Timothee Chalamet. 17.10 I.T. (Ireland/France/UK, 2016). Crime mystery. Dir: John Moore. With Pierce Brosnan, Karen Moskow, Jason Barry. 18.45 Whiplash (USA, 2014). Drama. Dir: Damien Chazelle. With Miles Teller, J.K. Simmons. 20.30 Red Eye (USA, 2005). Horror. Dir: Wes Craven. With Rachel McAdams, Gillian Murphy. 22.00 The Tender Bar (USA, 2021). Biography drama. Dir: George Clooney. With Ben Affleck, Tye Sheridan, Daniel Rianeri. 23.45 Silent Night (USA/Mexico, 2023). Action thriller. Dir: John Woo. With Joel Kinnaman, Kid Cudi, Harold Torres. 01.30 Lansky (USA, 2021). Biography drama. Dir: Eytan Rockaway. With Harvey Keitel, Sam Worthington, John Magaro.

HOT CINEMA 2

(H17)

07.55 The Marine (USA, 2006). Action. Dir: John Bonito. With John Cena, Robert Patrick. 09.25 The Forger (USA, 2014). Crime thriller. Dir: Philip Martin. With John Travolta, Christopher Plummer, Tye Sheridan. 11.00 Survivor (USA/UK, 2015). Action. Dir: James McTeigue. With Milla Jovovich, Pierce Brosnan, Dylan McDermott. 12.40 Ghost Rider: Spirit of Vengeance (USA/United Arab Emirates, 2011). Action fantasy. Dir: Mark Neveldine, Brian Taylor. With Nicolas Cage, Idris Elba. 14.15 Evidence (USA, 2013). Horror. Dir: Olatunde Omosanmi. With Caitlin Stasey, Radha Mitchell, Stephen Moyer. 15.50 American Sniper (USA, 2014). Biography. Dir: Clint Eastwood. With Bradley Cooper, Sienna Miller, Kyle Gallner. 18.00 Enemy at the Gates (USA/Germany/UK/Ireland, 2001). WWII drama. Dir: Jean-Jacques Annaud. With Joseph Fiennes, Jude Law, Rachel Weisz, Bob Hoskins, Ed Harris.

HOT CINEMA 3

(H18)

08.15 Prince & Me II: The Royal Wedding (USA, 2006). Romantic comedy. Dir: Catherine Cyran. With Luke Mably, Clemency Burton-Hill. 09.55 Baywatch (UK/China/USA, 2017). Action. Dir: Seth Gordon. With Zac Efron, Alexandra Daddario, Dwayne Johnson. 11.50 Mama Weed (France/Belgium, 2020). Comedy crime. Dir: Jean-Paul Salomé. With Isabelle Huppert, Yann Soubeyrou. 13.30 Knight and Day (USA, 2010). Action. Dir: James Mangold. With Tom Cruise, Cameron Diaz. 15.20 She's Funny That Way (Germany/USA, 2014). Comedy. Dir: Peter Bogdanovich. With Imogen Poots, Owen Wilson, Jennifer Aniston. 16.50 Shanghai Noon (USA/Hong Kong, 2000). Action. Dir: Tom Dey. With Jackie Chan, Owen Wilson, Lucy Liu. 18.40 Morning Glory (USA, 2010). Comedy. Dir: Roger Michell. With Rachel McAdams, Harrison Ford. 20.25 Bottoms (USA, 2023). Comedy. Dir: Emma Seligman. With Rachel Sennott, Ayo Edebiri, Ruby Cruz. 22.00 The Gull Trip (USA, 2012). Comedy. Dir: Anne Fletcher. With Barbara Streisand, Seth Rogen, Julienne Renee. 23.35 Sleeping with Other People (USA, 2015). Comedy. Dir: Leslie Headland. With Jason Sudeikis, Alison Brie, Jordan Carlos. 01.15 Beverly Hills Cop (USA, 1984). Action comedy. Dir: Martin Brest. With Eddie Murphy, Judge Reinhold, John Ashton.

HOT CINEMA 4

(H19)

07.00 Ordinary Love (UK, 2019). Romantic drama. Dirs: Lisa Barros D'Sa, Glenn Leyburn. With Lesley Manville, Liam Neeson, Esh Ayala. 08.30 Genius (UK/USA, 2016). Biography. Dir: Michael Grandage. With Colin Firth, Jude Law, Nicole Kidman. 10.15 Before I Go to Sleep (UK/USA/France/Sweden, 2014). Thriller. Dir: Rowan Joffe. With Nicole Kidman, Colin Firth, Mark Strong. 11.45 Blackbird (USA/UK, 2019). Drama. Dir: Roger Michell. With Susan Sarandon, Kate Winslet, Mia Wasikowska. 13.25 Penguin Bloom (Australia/USA, 2020). Biography drama. Dir: Glendyn Ivin. With Naomi Watts, Griffin Murray-Johnston, Andrew Lincoln. 15.00 Alice, Darling (Canada/UK, 2022). Romantic drama thriller. Dir: Mary Nighy. With Anna Kendrick, Kaniehtiio, Charlie Carrick. 16.30 Emperor (Japan/USA, 2012). History drama. Dir: Peter Webber. With Matthew Fox, Colin Moy, Tommy Lee Jones. 18.15 Rocketman (UK/Canada/USA, 2019). Musical biography. Dir: Dexter Fletcher. With Taron Egerton, Jamie Bell, Richard Madden. 20.15 Unforgettable (USA, 2017). Thriller. Dir: Denise Di Novi. With Rosario Dawson, Katherine Heigl, Geoff Stults. 22.00 The Client (USA, 1994). Drama. Dir: Joel Schumacher. With Susan Sarandon, Tommy Lee Jones, Mary-Louise Parker. 23.55 2 Hearts (USA, 2020). Romantic drama. Dir: Lance Hoel. With Jacob Elordi, Adan Canto, Tiera Skovbye. 01.40 Winters Bone (USA, 2010). Drama. Dir: Debra Granik. With Jennifer Lawrence, John Hawkes.

HOT CINEMA 5

(H20)

07.45 Songbird (USA, 2020). Sci-fi action. Dir: Adam Mason. With K.J. Apa, Sofia Carson, Craig Robinson. 09.15 A Family Man (Canada/USA, 2016). Drama. Dir: Mark Williams. With Alison Brie, Gerard Butler, Willem Dafoe.

20.10 Marauders (Canada/USA, 2016). Action. Dir: Steven C. Miller. With Bruce Willis, Christopher Meloni, Dave Bautista. 22.00 21 Bridges (USA, 2019). Action. Dir: Brian Kirk. With Chadwick Boseman, Sienna Miller, J.K. Simmons. 23.40 Cell (USA, 2016). Drama. Dir: Tod Williams. With John Cusack, Samuel L. Jackson, Isabelle Fuhrman. 01.20 Kandahar (USA/Saudi Arabia, 2023). Action. Dir: Roman Waugh. With Tom Rhys Harries, Farhad Bagheri, Gerard Butler.

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## Amir Tibon

Monday, April 8, was another difficult day, like most days since the war in Gaza broke out. A day before, Israel marked six months since the October 7 attack. Negotiations for a hostage deal had hit a dead end, and not for the first time; Hamas launched a barrage of rockets toward Israeli border communities; Hezbollah continued to target communities in the north; and the U.S. and Israel continued to argue publicly about the timing of the Israel Defense Forces' entry into Rafah.

That day, Lt. Col. (Res.) Peter Lerner, formerly the IDF spokesman for international media, was about to begin his sixth consecutive month in reserve duty. He was preparing for an interview on Australian television channel ABC's flagship program.

A week earlier, an Australian citizen who volunteered at the humanitarian aid organization World Central Kitchen was killed by IDF fire. In Australia, a country that is generally friendly toward Israel, public outrage spread following the event. Lerner was asked to stand in front of the cameras and present the findings of the IDF investigation into the tragic incident.

For several minutes, he did his best to explain how the IDF investigated the incident, to detail what measures had been taken against the officers found responsible for giving the order to shoot (two of whom were discharged from their reserve duty), and to express sorrow on behalf of the State of Israel.

The studio host, Sarah Ferguson, challenged and pressed him with questions, which did not surprise Lerner. During the long months of reserve duty, he'd grown accustomed to the critical stance of many journalists around the world toward Israel. But he was not ready for the concluding statement of the interview: "Lt. Col. Lerner, I'm not accepting your view that it's a mistake," Ferguson stated. "But thank you for joining us."

British-born Lerner, who immigrated to Israel as a child, served in the IDF for 25 years in positions related to the international arena. But despite his decades of experience, he was surprised by the senior presenter's unequivocal statement that she simply didn't believe him.

"I retired from the IDF Spokesperson's Unit in 2017, and I was the spokesman for the international media during Operation Protective Edge [the 2014 Gaza War]," Lerner told Haaretz last week in an interview, his first since he was discharged from reserve duty. "As a senior Israeli spokesperson working with international media, I encounter many challenges, but all these years I've always felt that in the end, there was basic trust in the IDF. I have never had a case where a journalist declares on air, 'I don't believe you.'" [The interview with Lerner was conducted in Hebrew, and quotes were later translated into English by the author].

Ferguson's comment received backlash from Australia's Jewish community. Dozens of letters of complaint were sent to



Peter Lerner in Tel Aviv. "Ministers in the government, instead of keeping their mouths shut, keep giving gifts to those working against us."

Tomer Appelbaum

## 'On int'l stage, Netanyahu and his government led Israel to defeat'

For eight months, he tried to convince the world of the legitimacy of IDF's actions in Gaza. Now Peter Lerner levels accusations at Israel's leadership

ABC, stating that her unusual remark contradicted the channel's commitment to delivering the news in a reliable, impartial and unbiased manner. Following an internal investigation, the channel released a short statement concluding that "the broadcast did not violate ABC's journalistic standards."

According to Lerner, this incident is an anecdote that reveals the larger story of the international community's loss of trust in Israel and the failure of the Israeli government to maintain widespread support for the war against Hamas. "Netanyahu promised an absolute victory over Hamas," he says. "But on the international stage, he and his government led us to defeat."

### No strategy

After his discharge from the IDF in 2017, Lerner became the director of the international division of the Histadrut labor federation, where he was responsible for relations between Israel's largest workers' organization and similar organizations around the world. But on the morning of October 7, when he awoke to sirens and echoes of explosions in the Tel Aviv area, he immediately understood that he wasn't about to continue doing his regular job in the coming months.

"I received full backing from my boss, [Histadrut Chairman] Arnon Bar-David, to join the IDF for

as long as they needed me, without restrictions. But I also didn't think it would last so long in practice, more than 230 days," he says.

During this period, he gave more than 750 interviews to media outlets all over the world, likely more than any other Israeli. "Out of those many hundreds of interviews, there were only two days when I had good news to tell," he says sadly. "Once with the release of the hostages Fernando Marman and Louis Har in February,



Avi Dichter Marc Israel Sellam

and a second time right before the end of my reserve duty, with the release of Noa Argamani, Shlomi Ziv, Almog Meir and Andrey Kozlov. Apart from these two cases, it was a matter of going on air every day, several times a day, to talk about difficult and painful things."

Lerner divides the war roughly into two main periods. In the early days, he says, Israel enjoyed considerable international support and clear legitimacy to fight

Hamas. "There's a sentence I repeated over and over again, and at that stage it was really true: Decent nations and decent peoples stand by us. There was a clear understanding that Hamas is an evil and dangerous organization, and Israel must act against it. There was an inflow of leaders from around the world who came to express solidarity, and there was an openness among journalists and editors to present the Israeli side extensively."

This good will, he says, dissipated within just a few weeks. "Part of it is an inevitable result of the ground incursion into Gaza and the price the war exacted on civilians on the other side," he says. "I can't complain about that because it's clearly my role: to deal in the international arena with the consequences of a just war that we are waging against a terrorist organization that operates within a civilian population. That's why I came forward."

But Lerner also attributes much of the shift in the international attitude toward the war to what he describes as the government's mismanagement, pointing to two main interconnected problems. "One problem is the fact that there is no political strategy for the war, even after nine months of fighting on two fronts," he says.

"It's not the army's role to formulate such a strategy, but as a spokesperson, I began to receive questions on this as early as October 10. What are your goals, what are you trying

to achieve, what is your plan for the future? And very quickly, I realized I didn't have answers to these questions, not because [the political echelon] hadn't decided yet, but because they simply weren't going to decide," he adds.

He compares his situation in interviews as the war dragged on and the government refused to set clear political goals, to "a soldier going on guard duty without any ammunition. I go up for interviews on the most influential and important channels in the world, and I don't have the arsenal I need to deal with the interviewers' questions. All I could say was that I was simply speaking on behalf of the military and that these questions are the government's responsibility. But the government also had no answers because, politically, it wasn't convenient."

If all this wasn't bad enough, Lerner also blames the political echelon for causing real damage to the war effort, through a long series of statements that undermined international support for Israel and diminished what he calls its "legitimacy space." Some of the examples he cites are worth lingering on because of the way they impacted Israel's standing abroad.

"A few days into the war, Hamas damaged nearly all the power lines connecting Gaza to Israel," he recalls. "They essentially plunged Gaza into darkness with their own hands. We had an opportunity there to come

and say - Hamas is harming the civilians of Gaza, and we, Israel, will try to fix that, but only if they stop firing. Instead, then-Energy Minister Yisrael Katz made populist statements about cutting off their electricity and not supplying them with fuel.

"Now, instead of the world understanding that Hamas is cutting Gaza off, the minister's remark rose to the top of the headlines, and suddenly the whole world was blaming us for harming the population," he says.

In the end, Israel repaired the power lines and reconnected Gaza. "Look at this terrible management - we were subjected to criticism, and in the end, we also made the repairs. There's no sense in that."

### Playing into Hamas' hands

Lerner describes government ministers as "a bunch of pyromaniacs who talk nonsense," and brings as an example Likud minister Avi Dichter comparing the evacuation of the Palestinian population from northern Gaza at the beginning of the war to the Palestinian Nakba of 1948.

"In every interview, we try to convey the message that the population needs to evacuate temporarily so that we can fight Hamas without harming civilians. And then he comes and says - no, this is a Nakba. Leave aside for a moment that I, and many other reservists, did not enlist to carry out a Nakba. That is

not our army. He, a minister in the government, doesn't even think for a second how this is perceived in the countries whose support we need during the war."

Another example Lerner cites is the statement by Heritage Minister Amichai Eliyahu about dropping an atomic bomb on Gaza. Lerner, normally a reserved man, becomes heated when he talks about this incident. "As an IDF spokesman, I see myself as representing the soldiers, the bereaved families, all the heroes who fell [in battle]. I try to speak on their behalf, and say in all the interviews that we are fighting a just war, a war for our security. Not a war of revenge. And then I get asked - but a minister in your government is talking about an atomic bomb. There is no good way to answer that."

Lerner also mentions a document circulated by lawmaker Gila Gamliel, who at the beginning of the war headed the Intelligence Ministry, with a plan for the transfer of hundreds of thousands of Gazans. "This is a document signed by a government minister, and it's admittedly a joke of a ministry, but in the world 'Intelligence Ministry' sounds like something important," he says. "It gets published, and I start to get questions about it - is this the goal of the war? Is it the official policy of the government? Is it reflected in the army's orders?"

In a functioning country, he adds, "there are only two options when such a document is published: Either it's brought to the government, or it's shelved and the minister who signed off on this embarrassment resigns. In Netanyahu's government, nothing was done. It just caused us international damage, and we moved on. No one was reprimanded or punished. And I was left there like the Dutch boy with his finger in the dike."

These statements, he says, directly aided Hamas, as well as influential international organizations who opposed the war from its first day and tried to portray it as a futile revenge war by Israel. "There is a huge gap between what the army does on the ground and how it is translated internationally - in media reports, in diplomatic discourse, in legal discussions," says Lerner.



Amichai Eliyahu Olivier Fitoussi

"We are fighting in a very tough, almost impossible arena. There is an entire network of 'journalists' in Gaza who simply spread Hamas messages worldwide. There are international organizations that publish partial, unreliable data, and these data reach the UN, the headlines, and eventually the Hague. But those are the conditions we must fight in. What I cannot fathom is how ministers in the government, instead of keeping their mouths shut,

keep giving gifts to those working against us."

He speaks with disdain about another phenomenon that occurred throughout the months of the war. "Israeli politicians who go for interviews on international channels, ostensibly to help with public diplomacy efforts, but in reality, their entire goal is to later paste in Hebrew subtitles and publish the interview for their audience here in Israel. They 'trick' their voters into thinking they are fighting for Israel in the [international TV] studios, but their messages are tailored only to the Israeli 'base,' and they in fact cause damage just to get likes."

**'In every interview, we try to convey that the population needs to evacuate temporarily so we can fight Hamas without harming civilians. And then [Avi Dichter] says - no, this is a Nakba.'**

Lerner speaks highly of those who were his commanders throughout most of his reserve service, namely IDF Spokesman Brig. Gen. Daniel Hagari, and Lt. Col. Richard Hecht, who was responsible for the international department in the Spokesperson's Unit. He recounts how, within 72 hours of Hamas' surprise attack, the Spokesperson's Unit organized tours for hundreds of journalists from around the world in the affected communities near the border, and brought them together with victims of the massacre. "People kept asking, show us evidence for everything you're telling us. So Richard took them to the border region and said - here's the evidence, you're walking within it. I think it worked, and it had a great impact on the coverage in the early stages of the war."

On the other hand, he has no similar praise for the conduct of the government. Even though it had as many as four ministries ostensibly responsible for Israel's international relations and mediating its messages to the world - the Foreign Ministry, the Strategic Affairs Ministry, the Diaspora Ministry, and at the beginning of the war also the Public Diplomacy Ministry - Lerner says that "in the end, with so many titles and positions, everyone sees the results, and they aren't good."

Lerner concludes with a quote by Netanyahu himself, from a 2016 discussion at the Knesset's State Audit Committee on public diplomacy during the 2014 Gaza War. "He said what is, in my opinion, an important sentence: the test in the field of hasbara [public diplomacy] is a very simple one - did the world tie your hands when you wanted to defend yourself. In the test that he himself set, Netanyahu failed miserably. The U.S. is canceling arms shipments, as does Britain; France forbids us from participating in a large arms exhibition; we delayed the [IDF's] entry into Rafah for months. This matter requires a state commission of inquiry, just like the failures of October 7."

## sudoku

© Puzzles by Pappocom

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.

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

Tips and a computerized version of Sudoku can be found at [www.sudoku.com](http://www.sudoku.com)

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

Difficulty: Medium

## CHOICE

Continued from page 6

Snails? Land snails were a popular foodstuff in prehistory around the Mediterranean according to work by David Lubell, published in 2004, and northern Morocco counts as part of the Mediterranean environs. Here in the Land of Holiness, at some point any gustatory passion for gastropods had to be contained, because snails are not kosher - because they don't have hooves, let alone split ones, and do not chew their cud, they rasp their food. DinOnline suggests that snails aren't kosher because they're rodents, and rodents are uniformly unkosher.

So snails. Truth is it's pretty easy to hunt them. Bend over, pick up. But how far will a snail take your stomach, and the zooarchaeological co-author Elaine Turner

showed that at Tavoralt, the unfortunate sheep was constantly the "dominant consumed species" during the Iberomaurusian period, Moubtahij says. Vegetarian, they were not.

Moreover, it seems the Barbary sheep population did not significantly shrink during the period that the cave was occupied, and it certainly didn't go extinct in that time because the hardy caprines still exist throughout North Africa.

Which means? "This suggests that implementing wild plants was likely to buffer seasonal decreases in the availability of faunal species," Moubtahij suggests. "While our study does not discount the consumption of meat entirely, as evidenced by the presence of butchered animals such as the Barbary sheep, it highlights the importance of wild plants in their overall diet," she adds.

"The Mediterranean region, where Tavoralt is located, offered a diverse

array of wild plant species, which were likely available in substantial quantities during the period spanning 15,000-13,000 [years before the present time],"

Natufians also ate plants and their sites feature giant stone mortars, some carved out of the bedrock, though what use they had is unclear. Some think for grinding grain; some point out that pounded meat is softer, while others think these may have served as drums to summon the tribe.

Another deduction is that the Iberomaurusians at Tavoralt weaned babies early, at about a year's age, possibly transitioning them to a plant diet. "The adoption of a starchy diet in Tavoralt may have facilitated early weaning, a pattern commonly associated with the transition to agriculture due to the availability of soft and digestible foods such as cereals," the team writes.

At the end of the day, like the Natufians, it seems the

people at Tavoralt experienced subsistence stress as the animals grew scarcer and began to rely increasingly on plant-based foodstuffs. The Natufians had giant mortars, but the Tavoraltians had grinding stones (not unlike ones found in Turkey from the same period).

One intriguing avenue for future inquiry could be what earlier communities at Tavoralt ate. So far, the evidence is all based on bones, of which plants have none. As for what they ate after farming began - did it change? This is under investigation.

"In summary, while we cannot definitively state the dietary habits of earlier populations in the region, our research suggests a significant reliance on wild plants among Later Stone Age hunter-gatherers at Tavoralt," Moubtahij sums up. Why? "Likely due to the availability of such resources and potential seasonal scarcity of wild fauna."

# GALLERY גלריה

## 'We're taking Zionism for granted, as if there is no other way'

Artist Netta Lieber Sheffer's Tel Aviv Museum exhibition examines why Israel got hung up on 'Together We Will Win'

Ofir Hovav

Looming outside the windows of artist Netta Lieber Sheffer's studio are huge residential high-rises. Floors upon floors of conch-like apartments piled on top of each other, their grayness mixing with the murky blue of the sky. If they weren't reined in by the domineering yellow tower cranes, they would surely go on to infinity.

Lieber Sheffer is indifferent to this urban vista. On her studio floor lie huge rolls of fabric, and its walls are covered by a new project she's working on – a collage of historical figures, Zionist symbols, Canaanite gods and artistic allusions, displayed alongside garbage bags, ceramic jugs, plastic bottles, plastic lawn chairs and disposable cups,

**'We get the car running really fast, without stopping to think or to look to the sides. We aren't looking for alternative paths, not signaling or refueling. We just charge forward. We can't stop.'**

all rising in flurry out of, of all places, the sewer. There are some familiar faces there: Theodore Herzl, Jacqueline Kahanoff and Alexander the Great – but they don't quite look themselves, not fully in their place.

Lieber Sheffer, 52, is the recipient of last year's Schiff Prize, awarded to Israeli artists who create realistic figurative art, which she'd won for her huge charcoal installations. She laughs at being defined as a realist painter. She does indeed paint real historical figures, as well as figures from her family album, but her works create a dense illusion of place and time.

"I'm not very classic within this classic genre of realistic painting," she says. "I do paint things as they are, seemingly, but I am a bit of a prodigal daughter in this. I use realism to create alienation to all kinds of things, to distance them and process them in a way that will allow us to see them

from off to the side."

Many of the charcoaled motifs displayed on Lieber Sheffer's studio walls, which she affectionately calls "remnants, a sort of city dump for history," have been with her on her journey for quite some time. Some of them appear in her current solo exhibition at the Tel Aviv Museum of Art, "Shattered Hopes & Roads Not Taken," curated by Anat Danon Sivan.

The sizeable museum space contains large-scale charcoal illustrations of a world map marked with alternative suggestions for realizing the vision of the Zionist state, alongside ghost ships sailing in empty space, filled with symbols, figures and alternative notions from the Zionist past that have been marginalized and ceased to exist.

One illustration, for instance, depicts Herzl's utopian vision of a Jewish state. Others include the Canaanite movement's idea of going back to "ancient Hebraism" while integrating with the region; the Bund party's vision of diaspora as ideology, according to which "every place we live in is our country"; and an examination of the links between Judaism, orientalism and Arabism.

In fact, in her works, Lieber Sheffer seeks to find out what would have happened if history had picked other paths of Jewish existence. "The motivation is not just talking about history, but primarily talking about what isn't," she says. "Talking about absence is often much more interesting than talking about [what is] present. Through what once was, we can point to voids in the present, to places where a vacuum had opened up."

"I tried to bring back to life things that existed partially. This, of course, raises all kinds of questions, such as what is realization, and what can be considered an event that happened? That is to say, if something happened for a short while, but was immediately destroyed – did it even take place? To what extent was it realized?"

### The city that never was

The question of absence is manifested in the exhibition also at the level of the artistic practice. Lieber Sheffer, who usually paints from observation, wanted to depict subjects for which there's no surviving docu-



Two of Netta Lieber Sheffer's works at the exhibition.

Avi Amsalem



Netta Lieber Sheffer, "Brit Shalom" (Peace Alliance), 2022.

Avi Amsalem

mentation. "Zionist history is really not rich in images," she says. "Our strength lies more in texts than in photographs or paintings, so I had to pull things back from oblivion. I also had to create some things [from scratch], because there were often large gaps between memory and visual memory. There were many things I wanted to paint, but couldn't find any reference to."

In the series Altneland, for example, Lieber Sheffer sought to paint Herzl's vision, as he expressed it in his 1902 novel of the same name. At the center of the boat is Herzl's desk, reconstructed by Lieber Sheffer from a historical photograph of Herzl and his mother. Behind him is a sort of symmetrical renaissance city, devoid of people, made up of iconic buildings that have been demolished over the years, such as Alliance professional school, Herzliya Gymnasium, Talitha Kumi Orphanage, the palace from Yarid Hamizrach, and May cinema – Haifa's first silent film cinema. Despite taking great care to depict these objects in detail, the city in the illustration "never existed, and could never exist," says Lieber Sheffer.

The series "Arab Jews" explores the possibility of removing the wedge Zion-

ism sought to drive between Jews and Arabs. Among the Arabic speaking Jewish figures depicted in it are Yosef Eliyahu Chelouche, Dr. Nissim Malul, Shimon Ballas, Albert Memmi, and one particularly conspicuous woman, sitting with her back to the viewer. This is Esther Moyal, born 1874 in Beirut. Despite her impressive biography – running a school for Muslim girls in Beirut, founding a newspaper devoted to Mizrahi women's rights, translating French plays into Arabic and publishing a book on Emile Zola – Lieber Sheffer couldn't find a single picture of her.

On one of Lieber Sheffer's studio walls hang early sketches she prepared for the project. Moyal's image appears in one of them, her eyes pointing at the viewer. "This image is on her Wikipedia page, but when I delved deeper, it turned out to be Jacqueline Kahanoff," says Lieber Sheffer. "I chose to paint her from the back because it seemed like the proper solution to having no idea what she looked like. At the same time, I was really hot for her and didn't want to give her up."

How did you cast the figures for the exhibition?

"I think that the primary criterion was for them to excite me. I needed to fall

in love with them and their story a little. After all, throughout history, there were quite a few people who opposed hegemonic Zionism. They needed to pique my interest – either by what they look like, or by what they say, or to have some special personality that would appeal to my heart. I didn't want to create caricatures of, like, 'inspiring women,' but to paint women who really did act for other women, who really did lead in some way.

"The second criterion was for them to fit in with the notion of a boat, that they add something of their own to its narrative. I put myself in front of an imaginary tribunal of historians telling me 'Why did you do that?' or 'Why didn't you pick that guy?' There are people who spend their entire lives researching these things, and here I come with my boats and say – this boat will represent Arab Jews. Like, where do I get off?"

That's a pretty megalomaniac idea, but so was Zionism.

"Yes. This exhibition was done with the will to loosen the earth, to make cracks in it. To try, through the past, to break through to options of light and speech. Not of solutions, but of thoughts. I once heard a lecture by Prof. Hillel Cohen, who



Netta Lieber Sheffer: "I'm not very classic within this classic genre of realistic painting."

Hadas Parush

said that history is kind of like a large pantry, where every historian picks for themselves whatever he or she needs for their ideological dish, so I tried to give presence to this pantry, to say, 'Ok, we went for this option, but there were other options.'

### Total blindness

The idea for the exhibition came together in Lieber Sheffer's mind during the pandemic, after she finished exhibiting several big projects, including "Half-tamed Demons," curated by Ravit Harari at Dana Gallery in Kibbutz Yad Mordechai, where she recreated Sigmund Freud's legendary clinic, moments before he escaped from Vienna to London in 1938 to avoid Nazi persecution. The clinic, created inside a gallery space with its own memories and baggage, was meticulously recreated in monochromatic colors. She then put together the exhibition "6 Extremities" at Jerusalem's Artists' House, curated by Shlomit Breuer, in which she filled the space with a torn-up, faulty map of the world.

"The things I initially painted were moments I wanted to revive from personal albums, and it then moved on and expanded to more global albums," says

Lieber Sheffer. "Shattered Hopes & Roads Not Taken" expresses a breach of the family album and a shrinking of the global album. It settled on nationalism and tagged Zionism as a victim.

"During one of my drives in my car, I got to thinking of this madness, this speed, this flow we're riding on in some kind of total blindness," Lieber Sheffer says. "We get the car running really fast, without stopping to think or to look to the sides. We aren't looking for alternative paths, not signaling or refueling. We just charge forward. We can't stop. We can't imagine getting off this highway. We may run into a wall soon, but we just can't step on the brakes."

"I thought that this road we drive on so crazily, may be Zionism. This thing, in its current form, is the only thing we know. We take it for granted, as if there isn't, nor has there ever been, another path. And then this fantasy started, of peeling off this cement road and thinking what dirt roads were there before the highway was so crudely paved? This was the moment when the framework for this exhibition became clear to me. I realized I was going to walk around the dirt roads from the mid-19th century until 1948."

Seems like we got pretty badly stuck in traffic since then.

"Yes, or alternatively, we keep driving in this crazy charge, and in a moment, we'll run into something that will force this ride to stop. We all speak one language: 'Together We Will Win,' 'From Holocaust to Revival,' or all manner of such slogans. In the best-case scenario, we may be speaking two languages,

this way or that – no middle shades, no middle ground, no layers. It may be like a demented person, who has forgotten the past and can only recount one story to himself, his exclusive life story. And then he repeats this story again and again and again. I wonder what happens to a society that forgets its own past, its layered past. What happens to a society that can only reproduce the same story all the time?

"I want, in a sense, to shake things up and bring [us] back to a place of rich memory. After all, there used to be many possibilities and opinions, many thinkers and thoughts, many wishes and many directions. Some were silenced by force; some were silenced for this or that reason – and in the end, it all came together to this one thing. But this place could have constructed itself on the basis of many stories. To me, it's crucial to see and realize that there is more than one way."

I guess you didn't realize that the exhibition will take place at this time, but it's very apropos to speak of alternatives now when we're in a kind of rephrasing of this place.

"It means that there may still be some trails – and we can overlook those, too, and I think we are overlooking them, with each passing day. October 7 was a terrible day, the worst thing we went through as a people, but since then each day has been worse than the one before, because the hostages aren't coming back, because we're losing our children, and because we're gradually losing any grasp on reality."

## Study finds area in the brain that regulates attention, and could lead to a treatment for attention disorders

Gid'on Lev

In the late 18th century, an unusual structure was discovered deep in the human brain – the claustrum (from 'cloistered' = enclosed), narrow, long and tall, like a drape. It was later found to be the brain area with the highest connectivity compared to its size and to be strongly connected with frontal areas of the brain that elicit control over behavior. Now, a new Israeli study found that the claustrum plays a role in regulating levels of wakefulness, attention and attentiveness. The study was headed by Prof. Ami Citri and Dr. Gal Atlan of the Edmond and Lily Safra Center for Brain Sciences at the Hebrew University, in cooperation with the research team headed by Prof. Yuval Nir at Tel Aviv University. Their findings were published recently in the journal Nature Communications.

The researchers documented neural activity in the claustrum of mice during sleep and while the



Image of the claustrum.

Zehava Cohen/Trends in Neuroscience

mice performed an attention-demanding task, and found a correlation between low activity and increased responsiveness. Thus, during sleep, when claustrum neurons are functioning on a low level, the mice tended

to wake up due to disturbances in their surroundings; When attempting to perform an attention-demanding task, lower activity in the claustrum was linked to over-wakefulness and impulsive behavior. On

the other hand, when claustrum activity was high, the mice slept a deeper sleep, even during environmental disturbances, and when performing an attention-demanding task they did not behave rashly, and

even became uninvolved in the task. When the researchers artificially increased neural activity in the claustrum, the mice tended to wake up less from sounds, and when performing a task, they acted in a better-regulated, less rash fashion.

Atlan said the findings indicate that neurons in the claustrum act as kind of "gatekeepers," affecting the probability that an environmental stimulus will cause a response. He added that the study also for the first time links the brain mechanism responsible for attention to the mechanism responsible for detachment from surroundings during sleep. Citri pointed out that the study's findings could facilitate the development of new approaches for diagnosing and treating a wide range of neurological and psychiatric disorders, in which patients could benefit from improved control over their response to their environment, for example, in ADHD. "It may be possible to assist in bringing together concrete interven-

tions to increase attention and self-control, or to rein in impulsive behaviors," he said.

Prof. Gilad Silberberg of Stockholm's Karolinska Institute, who was not involved in the study, said that "the findings contribute to our understanding of the physiological processes and mechanisms that shape our behavior." He added that the researchers have demonstrated that messages sent from the claustrum to a frontal brain area called the anterior cingulate cortex (ACC), are coordinated with the level of the mice's involvement in the performance of the tasks. "One example is sleep, in which deep sleep is coordinated with high activity of the claustrum." Silberberg adds that the authors also referred to two "personalities," or behavioral strategies in the mice they studied, and demonstrated that claustrum activity predicted the behavior of "exploratory" mice – these were usually more impulsive, unlike mice that were calmer and more goal-directed.

### Weather

#### Hot, but less so this weekend

Thursday will be hot and dry in the hills and the country's interior. The coastal plain will be hazy, with high potential for heat stress in most of the country. The risk of heat stress will continue on Friday in most of the country. Temperatures will drop on Saturday but will remain higher than the seasonal average. Sunday will be slightly cooler and partly cloudy, with possible drizzles in the north and center.



Air pollution index: 10.7/24  
 ● low ● medium ● high ● very high  
 Jerusalem Tel Aviv Haifa Krayot  
 Be'er Sheva Karmiel Afula Mod'in  
 pollution forecast for this morning:  
 medium

