

# Israel strikes back at military targets in Iran

Jerusalem informed Washington of its attack ahead of time, officials confirmed • Several strong explosions were heard in Tehran and other areas, according to reports • Cabinet authorized the attack Friday night

Jonathan Lis, Jack Khoury, Ben Samuels, Yaniv Kubovich, Noa Spigel, Haaretz and Reuters

The Israeli army attacked a series of military targets across Iran overnight into Saturday, in response to Iran's missile attack on Israel earlier this month.

Media in Iran reported explosions in Tehran and the nearby city of Karaj, and according to The New York Times, there were also reports of explosions in Isfahan and Mashhad. IDF spokesperson Daniel Hagari said that missile production facilities, surface-to-air missile systems, and additional Iranian aerial capabilities – with the potential to limit Israel's sorties over Iran – were targeted.

The Iranian military claimed minimal damage was caused to several sites and that its air defense systems managed to thwart the Israeli attack. A senior U.S. official stated, "This should be the end of direct attacks between Israel and Iran."

Over 100 aircraft, including fighter jets and drones, took part in the two-phase attack, Israeli sources told The New York Times.

The first phase involved Israeli fighter jets targeting air defense systems in Syria and Iraq to prevent Tehran's allies from intercepting the aircraft. The jets then proceeded to Iran – more than 1,600 kilometers (1,000 miles) from Israel – and attacked Iran's air defense



Smoke as seen in Tehran during Israel's attack on Iran on Saturday.

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Amos Harel

## A show of long-range strike capability

The Israeli airstrike in Iran on Friday night had two aims: demonstrating capabilities and cutting off capabilities. Israel wanted to react, and in fact to settle an account, regarding the ballistic missile attack on its territory on October 1, in the hope that Iran would not choose to continue the tit-for-tat exchange of blows at this time. At the same time, Israel is preparing for a confrontation.

The air force demon-

strated its long-range attack capability, which in principle could also threaten the Iranian regime's most valuable asset, its nuclear program. And it also significantly targeted Iran's aerial defense capability, as preparation for the next attack, if needed.

Iran did not respond immediately to the Israeli attack with binding statements or with actions. Since it is a

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Yossi Melman

## Israel can afford to show restraint

Official spokesmen and media reports in Iran claimed that its forces managed to repel the Israeli attack, which they say caused only minor damage in several places. These messages, which are characteristic of a dictatorial, corrupt regime that twists the truth, can be used by Tehran as a ladder to step down from further escalation. But it is doubtful whether in the angry and toxic atmosphere,

fueled by national pride, desire for revenge, games of honor and misconceptions about mutual deterrence, Iran will bring an end to the exchange of blows.

The Israeli attack early Saturday morning came in three waves that lasted about three hours, and involved the participation of dozens of F-35, F-16 and F-15 warplanes along with

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# Eight soldiers killed in Lebanon and Gaza; two civilians killed in north

Yaniv Kubovich, Jonathan Lis, Jack Khoury, Bar Peleg, Adi Hashmonai and Eden Solomon

Five IDF reservists were killed in combat in Lebanon on Thursday evening, the army announced on Friday.

The soldiers were identified as Major (res.) Dan Maori, 43, from Beit Yitzhak-Sha'ar Hefer; Capt.

(res.) Alon Safrai, 28, from Jerusalem; Warrant Officer (res.) Omri Lotan, 47, from Bat Hefer; Warrant Officer (res.) Guy Idan, 51, from Kibbutz Shomrat; and Master Sgt. (res.) Tom Segal, 28, from Ein Ha'besor.

According to the IDF, the five soldiers, all from the 89th Battalion, were most likely killed by a mortar shell fired at them. Nine-

teen additional soldiers were wounded in the incident, including four who are hospitalized in serious condition.

The incident occurred late on Thursday as the soldiers were making their way toward a makeshift base in Lebanon used by the IDF. As they arrived, they were hit by a projectile – most likely a mortar. IDF helicopters evacuated the

wounded soldiers to various hospitals in Israel.

The army added that another soldier was seriously wounded in a separate incident that took place on Friday.

Warrant Officer (res.) Guy Idan is survived by his wife, Sharona, and two daughters, Libby and Avishag. Idan was the son of Yigal and Rachel, and the

cousin of Tsachi Idan, who was kidnapped from his home in Nahal Oz on October 7 and has been held in Gaza ever since.

Master Sgt. (res.) Tom Segal is survived by his parents, Smadar and Micha, and his brothers, Lior and Aviv.

Captain (res.) Alon Safrai was in his third year of medical school at Haifa's Technion – Israel Institute

of Technology.

Twenty-seven Israeli soldiers have been killed since the start of ground operations in Lebanon roughly three weeks ago. Since October 7 of last year, 762 names of fallen soldiers have been released, with over 5,000 soldiers wounded, including 758 seriously.

In the northern Gaza Strip on Friday, an officer

and two combat soldiers of the Armored Corps 196th Battalion were killed in combat, the IDF announced.

The three were identified as Captain Barak Israel Sagan, 22, from Petah Tikva, Sergeant Ido Ben Zvi, 21, from Shomrat and Sergeant Hillel Ovadia, 22, from Jerusalem.

The three were killed in Jabalya when their tank

was struck by an explosive device.

In the northern Israeli town of Majdal Krum, two people were killed and seven were wounded in a rocket barrage from Lebanon. Two of the wounded are in critical condition, emergency services report. The two victims were identified as

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## 'Singled out by Ben-Gvir'

# Police officer in charge of PM's corruption cases to quit force

Josh Breiner

The Israeli police officer in charge of criminal investigations against Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in two corruption cases has announced his resignation after National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir asked to assign him to a different role.

Ben-Gvir asked for Brig. Gen. Yoav Telem to be made the head of the police's task force to fight crime in the Arab community – a move that sources say was designed to make him a scapegoat for law enforcement's failure to address the problem. Violent crime in the Arab community has surged dramatically since Ben-Gvir assumed his cabinet post nearly two years ago.

Telem was in charge of investigations into two cases involving Netanyahu: the so-called submarine affair, centering on alleged bribery surrounding the purchase of naval vessels from the German company ThyssenKrupp, and the so-called Case 4000, in which Netanyahu allegedly offered favors in re-

turn for positive media coverage. He is set to leave the police force in a few months.

Police sources say it is unclear what powers are given to the role into which Telem was to be reassigned, both within the police and in working with cabinet ministries.

Telem, currently deputy head of the police's Investigations and Intelligence Branch, was a top candidate for leading that division or for heading Lahav 433, the unit that investigates major crimes and corruption. He has led several investigations into alleged corruption in the public sector.

Telem was widely seen as a thorn in Netanyahu's side over his involvement in the cases against him, according to a high-ranking police source. He gave court testimony in the two cases while serving as a senior officer in Lahav 433.

Last month, Ben-Gvir and Police Commissioner Daniel Levy – who was sworn in last August – demoted the officer in charge of combating crime in the Arab community from major general to brigadier general, and appointed Telem

to the post.

Police sources see Telem's reassignment as an attempt to tarnish his record, with the job's parameters being unclear and the chances of success seen as minimal. "Telem, who everyone knows should be a police major general, has been singled out by Ben-Gvir and the commissioner," says one source. "They tried to dump him into a position without any authority so they could blame him for their failures later."

Telem didn't attend the ceremony marking the appointment at the National Police Academy about a month ago, although Ben-Gvir announced his name and appointment.

"Wise, determined Yoav Telem," Ben-Gvir said, "we are giving you one of the most challenging positions in the police and pinning our hopes on you. We told ourselves that for this job, we had to place one of the most gifted [officers] and one who could resolutely and firmly, wisely and intelligently, succeed in it."

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Daylight saving time ended last night. At 2 A.M. the clocks moved back one hour to 1 A.M.

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# When does the price of Israel's 'total victory' become too high?

David Rosenberg

A report last week on the Ynet news site cited an army source who said the 10-second bombing run that killed Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah last month cost 25 million shekels (\$6.6 million), and that a second one that a few days later killed Hashem Safieddine, his likely successor, cost another 20 million.

From a purely economic point of view, the costs Nasrallah imposed on Israel – the lives lost, the destruction, the lost economic output and mental anguish – cannot be earned back by killing him. If there is any payback on the 25 million shekels the air force spent eliminating him, it will come if it hastens an end to the war and helps to bring Israel years of peace, stability and security in the future.

The reality, of course, is that no one looks at war from a purely economic perspective. It is safe to assume that nearly all Israelis would consider the money budgeted for the Hezbollah leader's demise well spent whatever the return on the investment turns out to be. Nasrallah



A forest fire near Hatzor as a result of a rocket that was fired from Lebanon.

Gil Elyahu

was a sworn enemy, and in war, the desire for revenge or summary justice trumps any kind of financial calculation.

And, there we have in a nutshell the dilemma Israel faces as the war that began on October 7, 2023 passes the one-year mark. There is a very big economic dimension to armed conflict (and in the case of the current war,

the longest and most expensive Israel has ever fought, an enormous one. But it gets lost in the day-to-day discussion of battlefield gains and losses and the powerful psychological elements involved.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's mantra of "total victory" and his desire to frame the fight as a "war of revival" play to the desire

for revenge and triumph. The trauma of October 7 makes his job easy. As much as this may be a war to restore Israel's deterrence, it is at least as much about revenge and justice. But it shouldn't be just that.

When Israel can declare victory and end the fighting

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# U.S. warns Iran against retaliation after Israeli strikes

Amir Tibon

The Biden administration has told Tehran through an intermediary that it should avoid responding to the Israeli strikes in Iran on Friday, and instead allow the U.S. to bring an end to the ongoing cycle of hostilities between the nations, a source told Haaretz.

The messages were relayed through a third-party country that maintains diplomatic relations with Iran, indicating that the U.S. would increase its efforts in the coming days to achieve an agreement to end the war in Gaza and Lebanon. An Iranian response to the strike, the message warned, would hinder the American diplomatic efforts in the region.

Since the start of the Israeli strikes in Iran on Friday night, the U.S. administration has been signaling that this move aligns with

President Biden's requests to Israel to target only military sites, rather than oil production facilities or Iran's nuclear program.

In the weeks before the strike, Biden provided Israel with a ballistic missile defense system, while also publicly opposing an Israeli strike that would harm Iran's oil industry, due to concerns that such an action would destabilize oil markets and increase global energy prices.

A senior administration official said Biden encouraged "Prime Minister [Netanyahu] to design a response that served to deter further attacks in Israel while reducing risk of further escalation."

The administration clarified that the U.S. did not participate in the Israeli strike, but it's warning to Iran included a message that an Iranian response against Israel might lead to direct U.S.

involvement in the conflict.

"Should Iran choose to respond, we are fully prepared to once again defend against any attack ... If Iran chooses to respond once again, we will be ready, and there will be consequences for Iran once again," a senior administration official said. "This should be the end of this direct exchange of fire between Israel and Iran."

In the days leading up to the IDF offensive, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken visited the Middle East in an effort to revive negotiations for a cease-fire in Gaza and the release of Israeli hostages held there.

The French government convened an international conference in Paris on the Lebanon war, aiming to build a consensus for ending it based on UN Security Council Resolution 1701. France also urged Iran not to respond.



Omri Lotan



Guy Idan



Alon Safrai



Tom Segal



Hassan Suad



Dan Maori



Hillel Ovadia



Ido Ben Zvi



Barak Israel Sagan



Arjun Manah

## SOLDIERS

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25-year-old Arjun Manah and 22-year-old Hassan Suad.

Manah and Suad were hit by shrapnel and succumbed to their wounds in the hospital. An 80-year-old man was severely wounded in the attack, a 75-year-old woman and 53-year-old man were moderately wounded, and four others were lightly wounded. Thirty-two Israelis have been killed due to Hezbollah rocket attacks since the war started.

On Friday morning, medical sources in the Gaza Strip said Israeli forces stormed Kamal Adwan Hospital, in Gaza's north. According to the sources, Israeli tanks arrived at around midnight the previous night and fired at the hospital. The military said its forces were operating inside the hospital in the wake of "intelligence information about the presence of terrorists and terror apparatuses in the area."

tuses in the area."

Israeli security forces killed a "Hamas operative" in Tul Karm in the West Bank. According to a joint statement by the IDF, police and Shin Bet, Aslam Odeh, 29, was a Hamas operative "who planned attacks and armed terrorists with the intent to carry out attacks."

"During the operation, the terrorist opened fire at the soldiers who ... fired back. Following the exchange of fire, the terrorist, Aslam Odeh, was eliminated. Weapons were found in his vehicle, including materials for assembling explosives," the statement read. The IDF has announced the expansion of the humanitarian zone in Al-Mawasi in the southern Gaza Strip, IDF Arabic Spokesperson Col. Avichay Adraee said in a post on X. The expanded humanitarian zone, the statement said, "includes field hospitals established since the outbreak of the war, tent areas, shelter supplies and provisions of food, water, medicine and medical equipment."

During the weekly dem-

onstrations on Saturday, thousands protested across the country for the release of hostages against the backdrop of a summit in Qatar scheduled for Sunday, aimed at renewing negotiations for a cease-fire deal.

The main rally is held at Hostage Square outside the Tel Aviv Museum, while an additional protest is occurring outside the Defense Ministry headquarters on Begin Road. Earlier on Saturday evening, relatives of hostages held a press conference where they called for an end to the war and an expansion of the mandate for the negotiating team sent to Qatar. Yifat Calderon, cousin of hostage Ofer Calderon, said in the statement: "We are concerned about a deterioration into regional escalation that would distance us from a deal and impose a death sentence on our loved ones in captivity."

According to her, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu does not intend to bring back the hostages, and the round of talks that will start in Qatar on Sunday is des-

igned to fail. "We are once again seeing foot-dragging... What is the point of sending a delegation without a full mandate to secure a deal?" she questioned.

Yehuda Cohen, father of soldier Nimrod Cohen, who is held in the Strip, stated, "The only way to bring back all the hostages is by stopping the war in Gaza." He says the defense establishment believes there are optimal conditions to secure a deal, emphasizing that "Hamas has been defeated militarily, and there is nothing to be done in Gaza. If we want the hostages home, we need a deal and an end to the Gaza war."

Moran Stella Yanai, who was released from Hamas captivity after 54 days, spoke at the Hostage Square rally and said, "If a deal had gone through earlier, many hostages could have been here with us. A lot of them aren't back because we chose to wait, and waiting caused more and more victims."

At the protest outside the defense establishment headquarters on Begin Road, the police confiscated a demon-

strator's sign that read "stop the massacre in Gaza," after a relative of a hostage asked him to leave the area. Police officers removed the demonstrator, who was wearing an anti-occupation T-shirt, to about 650ft away from where the rally is held. According to the police, he was removed because the families of hostages did not want him there.

Kumar Shrestha from Nepal's embassy in Israel spoke at Hostage Square as well, to note Nepalese hostage Bipin Joshi's 24th birthday. Protests took place in Jerusalem, Karmei Gat, and the Sha'ar HaNegev junction. In Caesarea, about 300 people are protesting against the government near the Prime Minister's residence, while Haifa will not see a protest for the fifth consecutive week due to Home Front Command restrictions.

In a message distributed by the Hostages and Missing Families Forum ahead of the demonstrations, the families called on leaders to grant the negotiating team a broad mandate ahead of the summit.

# Airstrike killed war journalists in Lebanon as they slept

The Associated Press

An early morning Israeli airstrike killed three journalists as they slept at a guesthouse in southeast Lebanon on Friday, one of the deadliest attacks on the media since hostilities broke out across the border a year ago.

It was a rare airstrike on an area that has been used by the media as a base for covering the war.

The 3 A.M. airstrike

turned the site — a series of chalets among trees that had been rented by media outlets covering the war — into rubble. Cars marked "PRESS" were overturned and covered in dust and debris, and at least one satellite dish for broadcasting was destroyed.

The Israeli army did not issue a warning before the strike, which it said targeted Hezbollah infrastructure. The military later said the strike was being reviewed.

Mohammad Farhat, a reporter for Lebanon's Al Jadeed TV in the south, said everyone rushed out in their sleeping clothes. "The first question we asked each other: 'Are you alive?'"

Killed were cameraman Ghassan Najjar and technician Mohammed Rida of Al-Mayadeen TV, and cameraman Wissam Qassim of Al-Manar TV. Both outlets are aligned with Hezbollah and Iran.

## IRAN

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systems. According to two sources, a second wave of planes attacked long-range missile production sites.

The sources added that Israel refrained from attacking oil and gas facilities.

At around 2:00 A.M., reports of explosions at various locations in Iran began to emerge and increased as the hours passed.

Simultaneously, Iran's Civil Aviation Organization announced a suspension of all flights until further notice, and Iraq also reported the closing of its airspace. Approximately four hours later, an IDF spokesperson announced that the operation had concluded, its goals achieved, and the Israeli aircraft had returned safely to base. Two Israeli sources told The New York Times that about 20 targets were hit overall.

Iranian media depicted the strike as limited in scope, and the Tasnim news agency reported that no compounds belonging to the Revolutionary Guard were hit. State media in Iran reported that Israel attacked military bases around Tehran and in the Ilam and Khuzestan provinces near the Iraqi border.

However, sources in Iran told The Times on Saturday that among the targets hit



Netanyahu, center left, and Gallant during the operation against Iran. Ariel Hermoni/Defense Ministry

were a facility reportedly used by Iran for nuclear testing, three Revolutionary Guard missile bases in the Tehran province, and an air defense system that protects large parts of the country. The sources did not disclose the extent of the damage to these sites.

Earlier, Mohammad Marandi, a commentator close to the Iranian regime, told Al Jazeera that Iran had expected a broader attack from Israel.

The Times noted that Marandi's downplaying of the Israeli attack might indicate that Tehran is uninterested in responding. Tasnim quoted sources in Iran saying that the regime "reserves the right to respond to any aggression," and there's no doubt that Israel will face a proportional response to any of its actions."

Sources in Israel and the U.S. reported that Israel

notified the U.S. in advance of the attack. President Joe Biden was updated on the details of the attack throughout the night, and according to U.S. officials, Vice President Kamala Harris was also informed.

A U.S. National Security Council spokesperson said earlier Saturday, "We understand that Israel is conducting targeted strikes against military targets in Iran as an exercise of self-defense and in response to Iran's ballistic missile attack against Israel on October 1."

A senior administration official said following Israel's attack, "This should be the end of the direct military exchange between Israel and Iran. ... As far as we're concerned, that should close out that exchange between Israel and Iran. The broader conflicts in the region, obviously, [are] much more complex."

The official clarified that

although the U.S. did not participate in the operation, it is prepared to assist Israel in self-defense if Iran retaliates.

IDF spokesperson Hagari said after the conclusion of the operation that there were no changes in the Home Front Command's instructions for the Israeli public, and emphasized to foreign media: "If the regime in Iran were to make the mistake of beginning a new round of escalation — we will be obligated to respond."

In recent days, security cabinet ministers were briefed on the main points of the planned attack, and on Friday night authorized Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defense Minister Yoav Gallant to order the attack.

Iranian news agency Sareen, linked to the Iranian Revolutionary Guard's Quds Force, reported the death of two Iranian army soldiers

who were wounded in Israel's strikes, and that the death toll from them has risen to four.

Israel designed its strikes to minimize casualties and keep impact to a level that would allow Iran to deny major damage and contain the situation, according to a report in The Washington Post, citing an anonymous source briefed on Israel's plans. According to Times report, Israel's retaliatory strike against Iran was carried out under the cover of darkness early Saturday morning. One of the sites targeted by Israel in its attack on Tehran Province was the S-300 air defense system at Imam Khomeini International Airport, The Times reported, citing two Iranian officials, including a member of the Revolutionary Guard.

The officials said that at least three Revolutionary Guard missile bases in Tehran Province were also struck. In a subsequent wave of strikes, Israeli drones targeted the Parchin military base on the outskirts of Tehran; one drone hit the base, while others were intercepted, the officials said.

Opposition leader Yair Lapid commended the Israel Air Force for its strikes in a post on X, but said the "decision not to attack strategic and economic targets in Iran was wrong."

"We could and should have exacted a much heavier price from Iran. Iran is the head of the axis of evil, and must pay a heavy price for its aggression," he added.

# IDF denies military burial to reserve airman who killed self

Tom Levinson

The family of Maj. (res.) Asaf Dagan, a combat navigator with emotional problems who died by suicide Wednesday, asked the Defense Ministry and Israel Defense Forces to hold a military funeral for him and recognize him as a fallen soldier, on the grounds that he had post-traumatic stress disorder that was caused by his military service.

IDF officials have refused because he was not on active reserve duty the day he died. The family is delaying his funeral, and in the meantime Dagan's body is being held at Haifa's Rambam Medical Center.

Dagan began his military service in 2005 as a combat soldier in the Paratroops Brigade. He completed officers' training, fought in the 2006 Second Lebanon War and went on to pilots' training and certification as a combat navigator. He served in the standing air force for over a decade, participating in many combat flights, and also led an Israel Air Force project in military intelligence Unit 8200. He left the career military in 2020. A few months after his discharge he began having emotional issues that are common among people with

PTSD. According to his family, these began as a result of difficult experiences during his service. Despite his problems Dagan remained in the reserves and participated in many combat flights.

Two years ago, Dagan was reassigned to reserve service in the IAF's underground command center in Tel Aviv, where he served

In such cases, the family can apply to the Defense Ministry to request that the service member be recognized as a fallen soldier, but the examination can take years. In addition, he would only be entitled to a military burial if he were given a 100-percent disability rating. The ministry rarely approves such requests.



Asaf Dagan with his mother. Courtesy

once a week; during the war he doubled his reserve-duty days. The last time he served was a few weeks before he killed himself.

Dagan, 38, was not under a reserve call-up order the day he died by suicide; as a result, the IDF does not recognize him as a fallen soldier and refuses to give him a military burial.

"Asaf gave his life to the state, literally," his sister Inbal said. "He suffered from a very serious mental injury, which led to his death. Not only did the state fail to save him, now the state is refusing to give him the honor he deserves — to be buried in a military funeral, in a military cemetery." The IDF declined to comment.

In June, the IDF reversed an earlier decision and recognized as a fallen soldier Eiliran Mizrahi, a combat engineer who did reserve duty in the Gaza Strip and died by suicide after receiving another call-up order. In a statement, the IDF said that after a consultation between the defense minister and the IDF chief of staff and an examination by the head of the IDF's personnel directorate, military representatives informed Mizrahi's family that he would be recognized as a fallen soldier and given a military burial. The army refused the family's request initially but later granted it after determining that a meeting among Mizrahi, his company commander and another soldier on the day of the suicide was a preparatory meeting for combat that was to take place within days, and not a social meeting as first described.

## HIGH

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is ultimately a military question. It is safe to say that the end will not come as an Instagram image of "total victory," with the enemy leaders surrendering in a formal ceremony and their fighters laying down their arms. Victory will come when Israel's political and military leaders feel enough has been done to remove the threats that the country faces for the foreseeable future.

In the case of Gaza, many in the army have reportedly said it should have already happened this summer, that there was little to gain by continuing to fight. In Lebanon, the IDF is talking about a ground incursion lasting several more weeks until He-

zbollah's military infrastructure has been destroyed. Vis-à-vis Iran, it's an open book.

The economic case for ending the war can't be taken in isolation, but the point at which costs began outweighing the benefits probably ended a while ago.

Direct war costs have, according to the Finance Ministry, had reached close to 105 billion shekels as of September 30, and they have ballooned since then with the assault on Lebanon and the heavier fighting in Gaza. Tens of thousands of reservists have been called up and ammunition is being expended at an immense rate.

Ynet quoted a Finance Ministry official as saying daily costs have jumped from 400 million shekels a day to more than 500 million. To get an idea of the cost to Israeli society from that kind of expenditure, note that the cost

of building Israel's newest hospital, the 300-bed Assuta Ashdod completed in 2017, cost about 1 billion shekels, or about two days of warfare.

### A daily dose of rockets

The government's budget deficit is growing quickly and by almost all accounts will exceed the already high level targeted for the year of 6.6 percent of gross domestic product. It's not clear where the funds will come from to cover the added costs. Israel's credit rating has been downgraded and foreign investors have been reducing their exposure to Israeli debt.

Those are the direct costs — but the cost to the economy is many times greater. As the war grinds on, the economy isn't adjusting to the situation but is losing vigor. After a brief rebound in the first quarter of 2024, growth de-

celerated to an annualized 0.3 percent in the second quarter, according to the Central Bureau of Statistics' latest estimate. The economy is actually smaller than it was at the start of the war.

The full-fledged war with Hezbollah that began a month ago, with its daily dose of rockets over much of the country, is going to impact the economy in the second half of the year much more severely than the war with Hamas did in the first half.

The idea that the economy will quickly bounce back after the war as it has in the past becomes less and less likely as the fighting drags on.

The high-tech sector, the pre-war engine of the economy, is struggling. Startups have recently been raising more capital than they did in the first months of the war, but the companies raising the big money are head-

quartered abroad, industry tracker Rise Israel says. The number of active investors is down about 30 percent. Tech employment has stagnated.

Across the entire economy, investment in machinery and equipment was down in the first half of the year, the statistics show. Chevron, the operating partner of Israel's Leviathan gas field, announced two weeks ago it was suspending work on a \$429 million project to expand output due to the "security situation." It was just after the second Iranian missile barrage.

The endless war and constant rocket attacks can't help but give businesses second thoughts about putting money into new plants and equipment.

The war's weight on the economy won't end when the rockets stop. It will take years to repay the costs of the fighting, and the Middle

East will remain a more dangerous place for Israel in the years to come, meaning Israel will continue to carry a heavy defense burden.

Before October 7, Israel was spending so much on defense that in 2022 it had the world's 15th-largest military budget, outstripping the countries many times its size in terms of population and economy.

In 2024 and in the years ahead the burden will grow. The Nagel committee, which is examining Israel's future defense needs, reportedly believes the tab will reach as much as an extra 300 billion shekels over the next decade.

That spells higher taxes, less money for schools, hospitals and roads, and longer stints of army service.

The economic situation is unlikely to be as gruesome as it was in the years after the 1973 Yom Kippur War. The

# Israel expected to pass laws targeting UNRWA despite lack of replacement

Noa Shpigel and Jonathan Lis

The Knesset is expected to pass legislation this week restricting the activity of the United Nations Relief and Works Administration, the UN agency that assists Palestinian refugees. Israel has not pursued any alternative solution for the services provided by UNRWA in Gaza and East Jerusalem, and the bills have been criticized by Western and Arab countries.

The two bills would terminate UNRWA's activity in Israel and revoke exemptions given to the organization. They are expected to be brought to a final vote when the Knesset's winter session begins on Monday.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has the ability to block the legislation, but has not yet taken any steps to prevent its passage. One source says Netanyahu and his cabinet ministers are "caught in a trap," as "Netanyahu led the campaign against UNRWA but knows all too well that these are problematic bills that could get Israel in trouble with the international community."

The source adds that "no one sitting around the cabinet table wants to take up the gauntlet and be painted by the Israeli public, especially on the right, as a defender of UNRWA." The source further says the bills are private members' bills and not government-sponsored ones and "seek to challenge the government, with the belief that Netanyahu can't afford to publicly come out and defend UNRWA at this time."

Another source says the bills are unnecessary. "The achievements they are supposed to obtain by weakening UNRWA can be obtained in other ways, too," said the source, adding that Israel's official position toward UNRWA "is already not friendly, but rather extremely firm." The source says the bills are "very extreme" and "will likely place substantial international pressure on Israel."

The source further says, "The world is now paying at-



United Nations vehicles in Gaza last week escorting a destroyed truck that was reportedly used by UNRWA.

Eyad Baba / AFP

attention to the humanitarian crisis in Gaza. [U.S. President Joe] Biden is talking about it. [Vice President Kamala] Harris is talking about it. European leaders are bringing the topic up repeatedly... It would be appropriate to withdraw these bills, or at the very least to wait for another time that is better for Israel, like after the entry of aid into Gaza grows significantly and satisfies the international community."

The first bill seeks to fully halt UNRWA's operations in Israel, which would mean an end to its work in East Jerusalem. UNRWA currently operates in the Shoafat refugee camp, providing its residents with cleaning, education, health and other services. It was submitted by Likud lawmaker Boaz Bismuth and other lawmakers after being merged with a bill submitted by New Hope-United Right lawmaker, Sharren Haskel.

Around two weeks ago, the Israel Land Authority announced the expropriation of the UNRWA compound in Jerusalem, so a res-

idential neighborhood can be built, a move ordered by Housing Minister Yitzchak Goldknopf.

The cabinet decided in June that the Jerusalem Affairs Ministry should prepare to terminate UNRWA's operations in the city and draw up a plan for alternative ways to provide the services given by UNRWA in East Jerusalem. In response to a query about the decision, the ministry said it was considering "all the services provided by UNRWA in East Jerusalem" and was cooperating with the health and education ministries, as well as the municipalities, to find alternatives.

The second bill is aimed at revoking exemptions given to UNRWA, including tax exemptions and diplomatic status and immunity. It would also ban any government agency or other entity carrying out public functions from having any contact with UNRWA or anyone representing it.

It is the result of three bills being merged, submitted by Yesh Atid's Ron Katz, Likud's Dan Illouz and Israel

Beiteinu's Yulia Malinovsky, along with other lawmakers. The section based on Malinovsky's bill, which sought to declare UNRWA a terrorist organization, was significantly softened in the face of legal obstacles.

At a Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee meeting in July, which took place before the bills had their first Knesset vote, a Justice Ministry representative, Itai Apter, said there were "very serious legal problems in the bills." Subsequently, a section was added to the legislation stating, "Notwithstanding what is set forth in this law, the provisions of the law do not infringe on commitments of the State of Israel in conventions that it has ratified."

Adam Wolfson, a representative of the National Security Council, noted that the Ministerial Committee for Legislation backed the bills on the condition that the legislation "doesn't infringe on the State of Israel's international commitments and doesn't infringe on the humanitarian aid transferred to the Gaza Strip.

steps against UNRWA. They include Germany, the U.K., France, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

Meanwhile, the military and government have prevented UNRWA from carrying out its role of distributing humanitarian aid in Gaza, despite its unique logistics capabilities for that mission. As part of the effort, Israel has given the UN the names of more than 100 UNRWA employees who are allegedly also Hamas operatives. Israel claims that many of them participated in the October 7 attack. Netanyahu said in March that he was determined to completely replace UNRWA in Gaza without reducing humanitarian aid for civilians.

Since the start of the war over a year ago, Israel has stopped issuing visas for humanitarian aid organizations. According to data from the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, the Knesset Subcommittee on Judea and Samaria Affairs, chaired by Religious Zionism lawmaker Tzvi Succot, has held at least five meetings on the subject, with Succot personally urging the deportation of any human rights activist found in the West Bank.

"This is Michael," Succot wrote in an announcement about an activist who had been deported. "An anarchist who arrived to stir unrest in Judea and Samaria and calls for boycotting the State of Israel... As of today, about 12 anarchists have been deported from the country since the start of the committee's discussions. And thank you to the police's Judea and Samaria District, the Legal Forum for the Land of Israel and the Population and Immigration Authority. We will continue to act to cleanse the country of the anarchists who are harming it."

Several European and Arab countries have also expressed concern about Israel's steps and planned

## AG must join calls to dismiss Ben-Gvir

Attorney General Gali Baharav-Miara has been left with no other choice. She will soon have to tell Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that she will not defend him in petitions filed with the High Court of Justice calling for the dismissal of National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir – and that she will join the petitioners herself.

Each day he stays in his position is a danger to what remains of Israel's democracy, even more than eliminating the reasonableness standard as a judicial tool, more than a law that precludes declaring the prime minister unfit for office and more than the appointment of serial lawbreaker Arye Dery as a cabinet minister. A political police force is one of the typical markers of a dictatorship in the making, and Israel is already on the brink of such a situation.

Last month, Haaretz revealed that the Justice Ministry is collecting examples of Ben-Gvir breaking the law on his way to turning the police into an executive arm of his Otzma Yehudit party – and of the prime minister and his wife. It was the first evidence that the attorney general intended to present Netanyahu with a legal basis for the extreme unreasonableness inherent in leaving Ben-Gvir in office. This week, Ben-Gvir provided further proof of the urgent need to remove him with the hasty dismissal of the police's legal adviser, Brig. Gen. Elazar Kahana.

Kahana is stuck in Ben-Gvir's craw. He found that Tel Aviv District Commander Ami Eshed's dismissal violated procedures and vehemently opposed the promotion of Superintendent Meir Suissa, who used stun grenades on demonstrators against the attempted judicial overhaul last year.

The dismissal and promotion were strategic moves aimed at sending a message to the entire organization:

officers providing Ben-Gvir with arrested and beaten demonstrators would get a promotion, while anyone perceived as showing a light hand would be forced out of the police. Ben-Gvir wants a henchman willing to legitimize every foul act and not interfere with the minister's takeover of the police. Meanwhile, a precedent has been set: Ben-Gvir against Kahana.

The person who actually went through with the dismissal, Commissioner Daniel Levy, is nothing more than a puppet. In his few weeks in office, he has shown that he is not only political but also not particularly smart. This is apparent in the repulsive homophobic statements reported by Channel 12, his pointing an accusatory finger at the Shin Bet security service at the scene of a terror attack in Hadera and his stunning statement that "apparently, this is our fate at this time." Levy has also called on the heads of crime organizations to "return to the straight and narrow," which is unlikely to have prompted much soul-searching.

Levy got his promotion because he fulfilled the role set for him by the minister: making the lives of demonstrators in Caesarea miserable through beatings and detentions. He is just the cradle. To try and save the police and the form of government that rules Israel, the hand rocking the cradle must be removed immediately. This is what a democracy on the defense is supposed to do when a lethal autoimmune disease attacks it.

This hot potato will soon land on the doorstep of the Supreme Court, in another historic test afforded to it by this nightmarish government. Given the court's current incomplete composition and its conservative and cowardly nature, it's possible that the battle is already lost.

## Mossad chief headed to Qatar for renewed talks on hostage deal

Jonathan Lis

Mossad chief David Barnea is scheduled to fly to Qatar Sunday for a summit aimed at restarting negotiations on a hostage and cease-fire deal in Gaza.

This is the first significant step toward a deal since the October 16 killing of Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar.

Also slated to participate are CIA Director William Burns and Qatari Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani.

The parties are expected to examine the possibility of advancing a new outline for the deal that was formulated in recent weeks in talks between Israel and the mediating countries.

A foreign diplomat said the meeting will allow the parties to understand whether Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and the current Hamas leadership are finally ready for a deal and specifically, "Will Netanyahu agree to show greater flexibility following Israel's achievements in the fighting and what conditions will enable the deal."

Israeli sources claimed over the weekend that the "Biden outline," on which



Mossad chief David Barnea.

Olivier Fitoussi

the talks had been based until now, became irrelevant after Sinwar's killing, the start of the operation in the north and the intelligence that has recently accumulated about the dire physical condition of the hostages, that makes their release an urgent necessity.

Along with the latest outline, the details of which have not been disclosed, Israel and the mediating countries are expected to review several proposals presented in recent weeks to rescue the stalled negotiations. One is the Israeli initiative to grant "immu-

nity" to thousands of senior Hamas officials who will agree to leave Gaza for a third country through a safe passage.

In Israel, the idea of exile is seen as an effective means of ending Hamas rule in the Strip and establishing an alternative leadership that will allow the withdrawal of the IDF, but senior officials in the organization have already expressed opposition to it.

Another proposal that will be examined is Egypt's suggestion of a limited "jumpstart deal" between Israel and Hamas, meant

to prove both parties' commitment and ability to "deliver the goods." Under the proposal, which was presented to Shin Bet security service chief Ronen Bar in Egypt last week, Hamas will release up to five hostages in exchange for an Israeli cease-fire of a few weeks.

However, sources involved in the talks say the proposal is unlikely to advance, for reasons that include the stated opposition of the Hamas leadership as well as that of Israeli cabinet members Itamar Ben-Gvir and Bezalel Smotrich.

In any event, it's not yet certain whether Egypt's new intelligence chief, Hassan Mahmoud Rashad, will attend the summit. Barnea traveled to Egypt on Thursday to meet with Rashad ahead of the meeting on Sunday.

The Prime Minister's Office said at the time that Netanyahu "welcomes Egypt's readiness to advance a deal for the release of the hostages" and that pursuant to the meetings in Cairo, he had instructed the Mossad director "to leave for Doha and advance a series of initiatives that are on the agenda."

## OFFICER

Continued from page 1

Now, with Telem's resignation, there is no officer in charge of tackling crime in the Arab community. Since the beginning of the year, 193 people in the Arab community have been violently killed, with the annual number of such deaths having doubled under Ben-Gvir

relative to previous years. Telem is held in high esteem as an investigator, especially in public corruption cases. He was involved in the so-called Holyland Case against then-Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and later led various investigations into public officials, including current Tourism Minister Haim Katz, former Minister Yaakov Litzman and former Bar Association head Efi Nave.

After the police's use of

the Pegasus spyware tool was discovered, Telem endorsed its use to the media, maintaining that it had been used according to regulations. However, in his court testimony in one of the Netanyahu cases, he admitted that the tool had been used illegally in some cases.

Telem's departure marks the latest of a string of resignations by police officials involved in Netanyahu's corruption cases and who were passed over for pro-

motion. Brig. Gen. Eran Kamin, who investigated allegations that Netanyahu had improperly received exorbitant gifts from tycoons and who he benefited the Yedioth Ahronoth newspaper to get favorable coverage, resigned in 2022. Brig. Gen. Coresh Baroor, who oversaw those cases, resigned last month. Chief Superintendent Tzachi Harkin, an investigator in the favors-for-coverage, also resigned.

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# Al Jazeera rejects IDF claims that six staff tied to Hamas

## Army says it has proof that several network reporters belong to military wing of Hamas

Sheren Falah Saab

Al Jazeera has rejected the Israeli military's claim that it has intelligence and documents proving that six of the Arab media outlet's reporters in the Gaza Strip belong to the military wings of Hamas and Islamic Jihad. "Al Jazeera Media Network vehemently condemns the recent unfounded allegations made by Israeli occupation forces against its journalists operating in northern Gaza," Al Jazeera said in a social media post. The reporters were named as Anas al-Sharif, Alaa Salama, Hossam Shabat, Ashraf Saraj, Ismail Abu Omar and Talal al-Aruki.

The military announced on Wednesday on its official website in Hebrew: "Documents that include personnel tables, lists of terrorist training courses, phone directories and salary documents for these terrorists prove unequivocally that they serve as Hamas terror operatives in the Gaza Strip." The military added in the announcement that journalist Ismail Abu Omar had been attacked and wounded by the military in Gaza several months ago. "The documents confirm once again his terrorist activity, which the Al Jazeera network has tried to dismiss."

On Thursday, Avichay Adrae, the military's Arabic-language spokesman, posted on his X account documents he said indicated close cooperation between Hamas and the Qatari media network. "In one of the documents from 2022, Hamas admits that it sent precise instructions to Al Jazeera on how to cover a failed rocket launch by Palestinian Islamic Jihad in Jabalya that killed several civilians, and that it shouldn't describe the incident as a massacre," he wrote. "Hamas instructed Al Jazeera to limit displays of photos from the incident and not to allow studio

guests to criticize Hamas." Adrae also posted a document from 2023 that he said showed Hamas had decided to establish an "Al Jazeera hotline – a secure line that would allow the organization to secretly communicate with the network in emergency situations."

Al Jazeera rejected the allegations in an extended article it published on its English-language news website under the headline "Al Jazeera decries 'unfounded' Israeli claims about its Gaza journalists." The article said the network was "warn[ing] Israel against using allegations as a justification for targeting Al Jazeera journalists."

The article quoted a statement from the network saying, "Al Jazeera categorically rejects the Israeli occupation forces' portrayal of our journalists as terrorists and denounces their use of fabricated evidence. The Network views these fabricated accusations as a blatant attempt to silence the few remaining journalists in the region, thereby obscuring the harsh realities of the war from audiences worldwide."

Al Jazeera said it viewed the accusations as part of a wider pattern of hostility toward the network stemming from an unwavering commitment to broadcast the unvarnished truth about the situation in Gaza and elsewhere. The article mentioned the Israeli raid and immediate closure of Al Jazeera's offices in Ramallah last month.

The Committee to Protect Journalists nonprofit organization issued a statement on Wednesday condemning the military's accusations. "The Committee to Protect Journalists says Israel has a history of smearing Palestinian journalists with unproven claims, including in July, when Israel killed Al Jazeera correspondent Ismail al-Ghoul and later released documents claiming to prove al-Ghoul had

received a Hamas military ranking when he was just 10 years old," it said.

Journalist Hossam Shabat, one of the six accused by Israel, posted a response on his X account that has been viewed 1.3 million times. "Israel's army has released fabricated dossiers framing us, the last remaining journalists in North Gaza reporting on Israel's extermination and ethnic-cleansing campaign, as 'terrorists,' he wrote. "This blatant and belligerent attempt to transform us, the last witnesses in the north, into killable targets is an assassination threat and obvious attempt to preemptively justify our murder."

Shabat added: "This public threat was made without any evidence and is part of a systematic propaganda campaign to justify the unjustifiable as Israel continues to target civilians in Gaza, including doctors, aid workers, children and us journalists."

"We call on our colleagues and media institutions around the world to show their solidarity with us," he continued. "Despite these dangerous and untrue threats made against us, we remain committed to our profession and will continue to report the facts on the ground as the genocide regrettably continues unabated."

According to Al Jazeera, three of its employees have been killed over the past year. Cameraman Rami al-Reftee was killed along with al-Ghoul in a July airstrike on the Shati refugee camp west of Gaza City. Al Jazeera said that the two were wearing bulletproof vests marking them as members of the press and had identifying markers on their vehicle when they were attacked. In December, an Israeli strike in Khan Yunis in southern Gaza killed Al Jazeera correspondent Samer Abu Daqqa and wounded Wael Al-Dahdouh, the head of Al Jazeera's bureau in Gaza.



An anti-Israel billboard covering the facade of a building in Tehran on Saturday.

Atta Kenare/AFP

## AFFORD

Continued from page 1

mid-air refueling and intelligence aircraft. According to reports in Iran, Israeli drones also participated in the attack. It can be assumed that Israeli planes and drones have flown over Iran in the past for the purpose of intelligence gathering – something Israel has never admitted.

Saturday's attack has historic significance. This is the first time that Israel has attacked targets in Iran from the air in several locations, including near the capital of Tehran. (In April, following Iran's first missile and drone attack, Israel responded, as reported, by firing several missiles that hit the radar of an S-300 air defense battery near the city of Isfahan.)

That action paved the way for an Israeli air attack by alleviating the fear that such an attack could end in the downing of Israeli planes and even the death or capture of pilots.

That did not happen and Israel once again proved, beyond any doubt, its aerial and intelligence superiority, which far surpasses that of Iran.

The attack was designed to achieve several goals, some military and some psychological. Israel once again showed Iran's leaders and military commanders that

Israeli intelligence knows a lot about most of the country's bases, headquarters, air defense systems and missile depots, as well as its command and control centers. Despite empty boasts, Iran's leaders and much of the Iranian public know the truth in this regard. They know that most of their secret military and nuclear sites have been exposed, infiltrated and hacked, making them almost like an open book to Israeli and American intelligence, which have been collaborating exceptionally and devising plans against the Islamic regime for years.

The selected targets were not surprising, with the possible exception of one. It was quite clear that in the first wave Israel would attack Iran's air defense systems stationed in Syria, Iraq and Iran itself, which comprise mainly Russian-made S-300 systems. That action reduced the risk of Israeli planes being downed.

For the last decade, Russia has rejected Iran's requests to receive the more advanced S-400 systems. However, recently, in the wake of closer strategic cooperation between the two countries, against the backdrop of the war in Ukraine, it was reported that Russia had finally agreed to supply Iran with the S-400 batteries as well. There was even a report about two and a half months ago that the shipment of the first battery had

arrived in Tehran on a Russian civilian transport plane. But this is not confirmed by any official source. And in any case, even if one battery did arrive, it will still take time for Iran to deploy it and for its crews to be trained to operate it.

The targets in the second and third waves of Israel's attack were production centers, warehouses and underground bunkers where long-range ballistic missiles and drones were stored. The IDF spokesman said that the hits were precise. It is possible to conclude that these targets were destroyed or severely damaged, resulting in the further reduction of Iran's arsenal of ballistic missiles and drones and impairing its ability to inflict damage if and when it decides to respond.

Despite the damage inflicted, this was a limited strike on some 20 targets. Israel did not attack oil installations, other economic infrastructures or symbols of government. Israel also refrained from striking the well-known nuclear sites, such as the uranium enrichment facilities – with one notable exception. Citing Revolutionary Guards sources, The New York Times reported that the secret Parchin base was also hit.

Located 30 kilometers southeast of Tehran, Parchin was constructed under the Shah and subsequently expanded and upgraded into an important military base.

It has chemical laboratories, a storage area for sensitive explosives and a tunnel to test missile engines. In 2004, allegations surfaced that Parchin was also linked to Iran's efforts to weaponize its nuclear program. It was reported that Iran was conducting secret experiments involving "high-explosive shaped charges with an inert core of depleted uranium" to test the characteristics of implosion-type nuclear weapons.

In November 2011, the UN International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) revealed that information from member states (most probably the Mossad and the CIA) indicated the construction of "a large explosives containment vessel or chamber at the Parchin military complex in 2000 to conduct high explosive and hydrodynamic experiments related to the development of nuclear weapons." Iran denied the allegations but refused to allow IAEA inspectors to visit the site. It also paved over the area with asphalt, leading to allegations that it was "sanitizing" the area before another round of IAEA inspections. Since Iran has always denied that Parchin is also used for nuclear experiments, it believed that its nuclear facilities were immune from Israeli attack.

The restraint shown by Israel in its attack came in response to the requests and even demands of the United States, which warned that too potent an attack could

increase the danger of a regional war, which would also lead to Iranian attacks on its neighbors – Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states.

This teaches us that despite his increased self-confidence, his messianic tendencies and occasionally his words of defiance towards Washington – which is led by the most pro-Israel administration ever – Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is very well aware of the limitations of Israel's power and its dependence on the United States.

The Israel public is now once again being placed in the uncomfortable position of waiting to see if Iran will respond and how. The past few months indicate that Iran will not quietly brush over what happened on Saturday. The big question is whether it will suffice with launching a few dozen missiles, once again at military targets.

If this happens, it can be assumed that most of them will be intercepted thanks to the excellent air defense of the Arrow and David Sling systems, the air force's planes, along with the U.S. Thaad batteries deployed in Israel and the U.S. Air Force.

In such a scenario, I believe Israel can afford to hold back and not respond with a third round of attacks. Israel is strong, confident and aware of its superior capabilities. It can state that it is acting not out of weakness but out of strength, and declare that it prefers to concentrate on the original goals of the war in Gaza and Lebanon. Israel can declare a victory on all fronts and agree to a diplomatic arrangement. The prolonged war is taking an enormous toll in casualties – since October 7, 2023, more than 2,000 soldiers, members of the security forces and civilians have been killed or kidnapped. It is also hurting the economy and disrupting ordinary life.

But if Iran reacts strongly – the commander of the Revolutionary Guards threatened a few days ago that an Israeli attack on his country would lead to the launch of a thousand missiles – Israel will once again fall into the vicious circle of action-reaction and increase the danger of an all-out war with Iran. Furthermore, there is a growing fear in Israel, the U.S. and the Arab world that the repeated blows by Israel may lead Iran to conclude that it must assemble its own nuclear weapons to ensure the survival of the Islamic regime.

## ICC judge replaced, likely delaying decision on warrants

The Associated Press

The presiding judge of an International Criminal Court panel considering a request to issue arrest warrants for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, his defense minister and senior Hamas leaders has been replaced on medical grounds.

The court published a decision Friday granting a request by Romanian judge Iulia Motoc to be taken off the case "based on medical grounds and the need to safeguard the proper administration of justice."

The decision is likely to further delay a decision on the request by the court's chief prosecutor, Karim Khan.

The ruling did not elaborate or disclose further details, saying that "the personal medical situation of Judge Motoc is entitled to medical confidentiality."

Motoc was replaced by Beti Hohler, a Slovenian who was elected as a judge at the court last year after earlier serving as a trial lawyer in the court's prosecution office.

In his May request for warrants, Khan accused Netanyahu, Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, and three Hamas leaders – Yahya Sinwar, Mohammed Deif and Ismail Haniyeh – of war crimes and crimes against humanity in the Gaza Strip and Israel.

## STRIKE

Continued from page 1

totalitarian regime, it has no problem blurring the extent of the attack and selling lies to its citizens about the amount of the damage.

In April and at the beginning of October, the responses to Israeli moves against Iran were delayed, and they were preceded by a period of deliberations in the top echelons of the regime there.

The recent Israeli operation was meticulously coordinated with the United States in every detail. Israel did not expect that Iran would refrain entirely from responding to the attack but sought to prevent an automatic Iranian response, which it achieved. An Iranian reaction may yet come, likely limited given the circumstances, including the U.S.' support of Israel. Iran might attempt to enlist Hezbollah in a response, but Hezbollah's launching capabilities have also been severely damaged, as has become apparent recently, despite its continued daily fire on Israel. However, even if Tehran chooses not to respond militarily this time, it is not yet possible to see this as necessarily the end of the affair. Israel and Iran are sunk in a regional war, conducted intermittently and at varying intensity, in part due to the huge distance between the two countries.

Integrated into his conflict are the Iranian proxies, like Hezbollah and Hamas, alongside involvement of the major powers. Constantly in the background, there is a larger danger: that a direct conflict with Israel will push the regime to decide, finally, on a nuclear break-



A general view of Tehran after explosions were heard in the city on Saturday.

Atta Kenare/AFP

through – that is, production of an atomic bomb, after a decision-making process that has wavered for more than three decades.

Contrary to some of the earlier assessments in the foreign press, Israel did not attack oil production sites in Iran, but rather confined itself to hitting military targets. However, The New York Times has reported that a site was bombed at Parchin near Tehran, a secret military facility that in the past was reported to have been connected to the plans for producing Iranian nuclear weaponry. The reported strike on Parchin likely sends a strong message to the Iranians and appears to take advantage of the regime's frequent denials that it is part of the nuclear project.

Dozens of aircraft of different types participated in the Israeli attack. According to the reports, it was aimed at approximately 20 targets, which were attacked

in three separate waves. A considerable number of the targets that were attacked are connected to Iranian aerial defense systems, following an attack on an S-300 radar site near Isfahan in April, which was attributed to Israel. There have also been reports of attacks on anti-aircraft systems in Iraq and in Syria. The IDF aims to convey that it is capable of striking any point in the Middle East with great precision, regardless of distance, and that the Iranians will struggle to prevent this.

Iran's air defense system relies on purchases from Russia. These systems are costly, and there is currently a shortage due to the prolonged war between Russia and Ukraine, making it difficult for Moscow to quickly assist Tehran with new acquisitions. The IDF assessed last night that Iran's entire strategic surface-to-air missile array was damaged, along with detection systems in the western part

of Iran. However, it is hard to translate those signals directly onto the nuclear level. Israel has indeed developed an impressive long-range attack capability, but the demonstration of this capability is happening at a very late stage of the Iranian project.

The Iranians have sufficient alternative sites, relatively well-defended underground, to store their stocks of enriched uranium and other components of the program. The level of professional knowledge that has apparently accumulated there is sufficiently high that even bombardment of facilities or killing nuclear scientists would not interfere completely with the project.

It is important to the Americans to contain the conflict, especially when there is only a little over a week left before the U.S. presidential election. In the already tight race, the last thing the Democratic Party needs is a further worsening

of the Middle East crisis, which is also liable to develop into an energy crisis.

In Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's old fantasy, he succeeds in dragging the Americans with their tremendous military capabilities into attacking the Iranian nuclear sites themselves. Considering the nature of this most recent attack by Israel, it is hard to see that happening before the elections. After the elections, winter will begin, and bring with it weather conditions that will limit the attack possibilities. At the same time, the Biden administration will enter a "lame-duck" period, whether Vice President Kamala Harris wins the election or Republican candidate Donald Trump. This period might see moves against Netanyahu, with hostility from the Democratic side likely channeling toward the Palestinian front, where tensions between Biden and Netanyahu are very evident. Nonetheless, the administration will be less committed to supporting Israel than it is now, just before the election.

President Joe Biden said Saturday that he hopes the exchange of blows between Israel and Iran has ended. U.S. officials in Washington, speaking with journalists, expressed full support for Israel's right to self-defense and described the attack as precise, calculated, effective, and focused on military sites, with no risk to civilian lives. This, they noted, contrasts with the recent Iranian attack, which, while allegedly targeting military sites, intentionally launched ballistic missiles at densely populated areas in central Israel.

Israel's Air Force commander, Major General Tomer Bar, told pilots and navigators before the attack

that the preparations were conducted with the same meticulous planning process used for "first-circle" targets in Syria and Lebanon. While Bar can't solve the problem of the great distance to Iran or the lengthy flight times, the Air Force's extensive experience, intelligence support, and close coordination with the Americans enabled high precision and efficiency in the attack.

The Israeli attack also focused on another type of target: missile and drone production facilities. An arms race has been going on between Israel and Iran for many months now. The Iranian industry has gone into increased production mode, with the aim of inundating Israel's interception systems. This is one of the reasons for the American decision to reinforce Israel's anti-aircraft systems with the THAAD aerial defense system. Damaging the Iranians' means of production could slow down their productivity, and to some extent ease Israel's defense.

Criticism from the opposition, claiming that the attack was smaller and weaker than promised, is unconvincing. It's easy to outflank Netanyahu from the right; the question is where the next moves lead and whether Israel might

be overextending in a direct confrontation with Iran, possibly beyond its means.

The headlines about the attack in Iran have sidelined the terrible price we are paying in blood for the continuation of the war, without a victory and without a diplomatic arrangement on all the other fronts.

Within less than 48 hours, 15 Israelis have been killed – 10 Israeli reservists in two separate incidents in Lebanon, three soldiers doing their compulsory service in the Gaza Strip and two Arab Israeli citizens by rocket fire on a village in the Galilee.

The threat from Iran is indeed significant, but it is convenient for the Netanyahu government to direct the focus at what is happening there, in part to distract attention from the trap in which Israel is finding itself stuck in Lebanon and Gaza, despite the impressive achievements by the IDF and the other security organizations in recent months.

Without a comprehensive diplomatic move that will involve the Americans and include the urgent necessary compromise in the matter of bringing back the hostages, the war will continue for a very long time – and along with that, the prices we pay will soar.

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## Score is settled, time to stop

Israel attacked Iran early Saturday morning, paying back Tehran for its October 1 missile barrage against Israel. We must hope that Iran will take the same view and not treat the Israeli response as an attack that must be avenged, and so on and so forth into an all-out regional war.

With the settling of accounts with Iran, Israel can claim an "image of victory" on the Iranian front, to add to its "victory album" of photos from Gaza and the north. In Gaza, Israel killed most of the people who were responsible for the October 7 attack, including Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar, and dismantled most of the organization's military capabilities. Israel also killed most of Hezbollah's leaders, above all Hassan Nasrallah. Israel has more than enough "images of victory," but what are they worth if it persists in its refusal to declare victory and translate it into strategic achievements?

Israel must strive to end the war on all fronts and give the negotiating team a genuine mandate to reach a hostage deal in the talks that are supposed to resume on Sunday in Qatar, finally, after a two-month hiatus. If Israel continues to fight in the north and the south without a political goal, as it has fought until now, it will abandon the hostages for good and will have to become accustomed to the daily body count that has already become a macabre routine. In the past few days, 15 Israelis have been killed: 10 reservists in two separate incidents in southern Lebanon, three conscripts in the Gaza Strip and two civilians from rocket fire at a village in the Galilee.

Israel also cannot continue to drive Gaza even deeper into a humanitarian catastrophe. The death toll in the Strip, which now exceeds 40,000; the countless wounded, the orphans, the sick, the displaced, the famine, the diseases and the total destruction – all of this must stop. This war must end.

But from the government we hear other voices: hollow slogans from the mouth of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, alongside the imperialist ambitions of the Jewish supremacy movement, represented in the cabinet by Bezalel Smotrich, Itamar Ben-Gvir and company. They will never want to stop the war, only to continue conquering territory, establishing settlements and expelling the Palestinians. They want to celebrate Simhat Torah next year in Gaza's Gush Katif, the resettlement of which is, for them, a more important goal of the war than the return of the hostages.

We cannot agree to this. No additional Israelis should pay with their lives for the whims of the governing coalition, and the disaster in Gaza cannot be allowed to continue due to considerations of political survival. Now is the time for a hostage deal and an end to the war.



Eran Wolkowski | eranwol@haaretz.co.il

Gideon Levy

## A rare moment of reason and restraint

Here is some good news, for a change. Israel acted on Saturday with commendable rationality and restraint.

The decision to make do with a measured retaliation in Iran, with few casualties and little boasting, is the first judicious decision made by Israel this year. One must commend decision-makers in the government and army, and this too is something of a rarity. When the Sabbath is over – and this column is being written before that happens – the radical right will come out foaming at the mouth against the decision. Former defense establishment officials and their like-minded panelists already did so in TV studios on Saturday. Their bloodthirst was not fully satiated, which is further proof of the wisdom behind that decision.

And if anyone still needed proof that momentary reason had taken hold of Israel, one could, as usual, rely on opposition leader Yair Lapid. He foolishly rushed to condemn the decision; he wanted more blood. "The decision not to attack strategic and economic targets in Iran was wrong,"

determined the strategist, overtaking Netanyahu, and not for the first time, on the right. When it comes to war-mongering, Lapid proved once again that there is no difference between him and the extreme right, and that there is no opposition to the war in Israel. That's why we don't need him, we have Itamar Ben-Gvir.

If Israel doesn't wreck things and if Iran displays similar restraint, we were saved from another disaster on Saturday, possibly harsher than all the preceding ones. No war broke out between Iran and Israel. The incompetent U.S. administration managed, for the first time since the war erupted, to affect its course. Following a year in which the U.S. fulfilled all Israel's desires and needs, without any strings attached, a year in which Israel did not adhere to any advice, warnings or pleas by the Americans, Israel acceded to the superpower's request.

Contrary to all expectations and precedents, Netanyahu listened to U.S. President Joe Biden, who would have preferred it if Israel had not attacked at all, certainly not on the eve of the U.S. elec-

tions, but the administration can live with a limited attack. Perhaps it is thanks to the administration that a calamity was avoided.

All this sounds too good to be true. It's possible that by the time these words are published, the situation will be upended. I remember one instance in which Netanyahu deserved praise for wisely accepting a UN plan for solving the problem of asylum seekers who had come to Israel. By the time the sun rose he had reversed his decision, due to pressure by racists and xenophobes in his camp. One must hope that this time he will stand by his prudence, despite the criticism he'll be subjected to.

One may ask what yesterday's attack was intended for, other than the desire to placate, even partially, people seeking revenge for Iran's earlier attack. One could easily have lived without the retaliatory attack. But when the damage inflicted on Israel was so minimal, it's best not to ask this question. Israel showed Iran what it has long known, that Israel has total military superiority in the region, and the ball is

now in Iran's court. If there too reason wins, we've been saved from a disaster, at least for now.

Nothing was resolved on Saturday. The wars in Gaza and Lebanon are continuing full tilt, with no sign of abating. Iran is still a bitter enemy and so are its proxies. The solution for this will never be a military one. Blood continues to be shed on all sides, pointlessly, and with it the suffering and unimaginable terror of the hostages, their families, the evacuees in Israel as well as the three million evacuees in Gaza and Lebanon, moving back and forth with no present or future. The end to Gaza's suffering is not even on the horizon. There isn't a day there without dozens of fatalities, without war crimes committed by Israel, without dead or crippled children, terrified and orphaned.

But in the midst of all this despair, a faint glimmer of hope appeared on Saturday. Israel acted with reason and restraint. It's true, one can rely on it to return to its old ways, but in these black days, even a faint glimmer of hope is almost a formative event.

Yael Shinar

## A worthy cross

Last December, Haifa lost four heroic and beautiful boys, who were buried in military plots. As a city council member, I oversaw the funeral of Staff Sgt. David Bogdanovskiy, 19, who died fighting in Gaza. The funeral was conducted in Hebrew and Russian, and mainly in the grief-stricken language of bereaved families. The parents have just one daughter left.

David studied at the religious school in the Kfar Hasidim youth village near Haifa. He was Christian, and that didn't bother any of his friends or teachers. Nor did it bother the army, which had him swear on a New Testament when he finished his basic training. His family immigrated from Ukraine a decade ago under the Law of Return and settled in Haifa.

Since 2020, Jews and non-Jews have been buried together in military sections of cemeteries, just as they fought on the battlefield. The Defense Ministry and the military rabbinate found a solution consistent with Jewish law respecting everyone: burial together at different levels underground.

David's family added a black upright tombstone, which complements the flat gray tombstone with gold lettering typical of Israeli military graves. The black tombstone contains a cross, as is the norm among Christians in the former Soviet Union.

The cross happened to bother someone, who covered the monument with a black cloth and then contacted the Defense Ministry. The ministry replied that there is a problem with religious symbols. This is the same ministry that didn't approve "May God avenge his blood" on tombstones, but backtracked.

It's a good thing that it did, as it showed flexibility and consideration for the bereaved families. Now the chief military rabbi, who has attacked the LGBTQ community and made controversial remarks on a range of subjects, is saying that the cross could cause problems.

But a cross on a soldier's tombstone isn't the problem. The problem is the fact that the public surrendered to a violent minority that

discourages us from being proud Jews.

Jewish law has no problem with a cross over the grave of a Christian soldier. The dispute over burying Jews and non-Jews in military cemeteries has been resolved. It's better to find a way to be lenient than to ban something.

A bereaved family wants the cross removed. I don't know which family this is, and I share in their sorrow, but the blood of their son isn't thicker than the blood of David, who isn't Jewish. The demand to cover the cross or disinter David is an injustice to someone who made the ultimate sacrifice to the country he loved.

## A Christian soldier who died defending Israel deserves a cross on his grave. His blood is just as thick as that of his Jewish comrades who died in battle.

During the war we've seen similar demands in similar cases, which ended in a show of flexibility and sensitivity. In Beit She'an in the north, 23-year-old Alina Plahiti, who was murdered at the Nova music festival and was in the process of converting to Judaism, was buried outside the cemetery fence.

In Beit She'an they demolished the fence and sufficed with plants. The acronym for "May God avenge his blood," which had been forbidden on military graves, was added at the request of the family of Capt. Israel Yudkin, who was killed in action in May.

During the world wars, Jews were buried in military cemeteries in the United States and elsewhere with a Star of David on their tombstone. Christian soldier David Bogdanovskiy fought for the Jewish people and the State of Israel, and he has a right to a cross that expresses his religious faith and was chosen by his family to decorate his grave.

Yael Shinar is a member of the Haifa City Council for the Green Party.

It's an axiom that a nation's defense strategy must rest on four legs – diplomacy and statesmanship, military (including intelligence), economy and society, and information (including public diplomacy). But over the last year, it has become clear that Israel is pinning all its hopes for security solely on one leg – the military. And the results have been commensurate with this single-minded focus. Its military achievements (both overt and covert), however impressive they may be, have been confined to operational gains.

We have scored great successes invading, killing and destroying our enemies to the extent needed, and perhaps even beyond it. But since those accomplishments haven't been accompanied by any effort on the diplomatic, socioeconomic and information fronts, Israel is faltering in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank and Lebanon, as well as against Iran and its proxies in Syria, Iraq and Yemen. The latest retaliation against Iran does not change this reality, with Iran retaining its highly advanced nuclear weapons threshold, and leveraging it. Israel hasn't been wise enough to translate the investment, sophistication, risk and sacrifice entailed in its military gains into a better, stable security situation.

The threat horizon looks more worrying than ever. We're facing a guerrilla war of indefinite duration in Gaza, a wave of terror in and from the West Bank, both an air and a ground war in Lebanon, direct military clashes with a nuclearizing Iran and growing friction with its proxies throughout the Middle East, and perhaps even beyond.

Israel's military power and intelligence prowess is suc-

## Defense strategy on one leg

cumbing to the toll exacted by the supreme effort invested in an entire year of constant fighting on multiple fronts. Meanwhile, one terror attack follows another. For every terrorist, let alone leader, we manage to kill, a successor thirsting for vengeance arises and manages to inspire others to follow him.

Deterrence, killing and destruction are at times absolutely necessary. But their benefits, if when real, are necessarily temporary and depend on a nonmilitary leg to complement them.

For now, Israeli society is bleeding, riven and scarred, while the fate of the hostages is gnawing away at our social contract. Most of the country's population depends on alerts from the Home Front Command, our air defense system and the Shin Bet to maintain any semblance of a normal life in light of the unending waves of rockets and missiles, cruise missiles and frequent terror attacks. Those hostages in Gaza who are still alive are enduring mortal suffering, and their numbers are dwindling. Only parts of society are still willing to enlist and/or continue serving in the military. Israel's economic situation is deteriorating and showing strains, while many businesses are moving their centers of activity abroad, either by choice or necessity.

The foundations of Israel's scientific, technological and commercial superiority are in real danger. The functioning of most government ministries has been pitiful and

Ariel Levite

is driven mainly by narrow, short-term political considerations. Trust in them – and, even more importantly, in our ability to forge a better future for this country and nation – is disappearing among wide segments of society. Many, too many, have already despaired of living in Israel or are considering migrating.

The world is closing in on us. Even our best friends are having trouble standing beside us or backing us up, at the very moment when, more than ever before, we need their support and assistance, material, political and moral, both to sustain the fight now and to recover afterward. Belief in the justness of our cause is being steadily eroded in the absence of any viable vision that could present a credible alternative to a perpetual multifront war.

The country's leadership, which in the past was wise enough to address all these issues, has consistently eschewed the opportunity to present Israelis or our partners elsewhere any credible vision for ending the fighting, any practical way to transform the fight and leverage its gains into a different, better, stable reality, or even to offer any strategy for surviving until then.

Nor are we seeing any realistic plan of action for coping with all of these challenges in the long run. Instead, myopia prevails, and we keep on hearing the mantra that we have to unite and support the leadership that is steering us into an escalating, never-ending war on multiple fronts.

But perhaps we're doing an injustice to the current government, and especially to the person who heads it, by implying that they have no strategic vision. Perhaps it does exist, but they simply haven't bothered to share it with us. Actions on the ground as well as statements here and there hint that this may indeed be the case, at least with regard to an ongoing occupation of Gaza and building some settlements there, annexing the West Bank and encouraging Palestinian migration from it (ultimately turning Jordan into Palestine), attacking Iran's nuclear facilities ourselves in the hopes that the United States will join in and finish the job once and for all, establishing a security zone in southern Lebanon and, above all, inciting our enemies' populations to rise up against their leaders in the hopes that regimes friendlier to Israel will emerge in their stead.

It seems clear that diplomatic agreements (starting with a hostage deal and continuing with forming an Arab-led governance scheme for Gaza, not to mention the West Bank) aren't part of the current government's agenda. Nor is a realistic plan to bolster our security, enhance social cohesion, and mobilize society toward renewal, revive the economy, improve Israel's international standing, strengthen Israel's relationship with the United States and more.

Given that we are a country whose future hinges on remaining a vibrant, modern society, our very survival as a

nation now depends on closing ranks behind a clear vision and a plan of action to implement it, led by a competent political leadership and professional staff capable of advancing this. For this reason, Israelis now have no choice.

They must demand that the government immediately lay out for all to see its strategy for bailing us out of the current predicament – not only regarding the three neglected legs of the country's defense strategy, but also on how to maintain its military and security superiority over time given the serious challenges it faces both from within and without. For instance, over the long run, it can't continue relying on a constantly shrinking segment of society to bear the military burden, now that it's more difficult and burdensome than in the past.

But we should not confine this demand solely to the current leadership. Everyone in the opposition who presumes to provide an alternative to this leadership must be expected to do likewise. They must present us with their alternative vision, a practical plan of action and an inspiring team to carry them out. It's vital to have a public debate about these contrasting visions now, then put them to the voters for a decision.

Political leaders who refuse to explain to us their vision and plan of action for realizing it should be forced to vacate their positions immediately. Living by the sword in place, are a surefire recipe for undermining the Zionist dream.

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Yair Assulin

## The real Israel

If we place the death of Col. Ehsan Daxa – the who-knows-what-number Druze community in this war – against the struggle of the government, supposedly Jewish and patriotic, on behalf of the draft evasion bill for those who are supposedly the most authentic representatives of Judaism at a time of war, when the reserve forces are being worn all the way down – it will make it clear how much the talk about Israel as a Jewish state is nothing but a great self-deception. This war is the war of the Israelis, of those who see Israel as their country, of those who want to tie their fate to the Israeli story, the Israeli journey.

The Israeli story is not the Jewish story. The understanding that these are different stories is critical at this moment, for those who hold the Jewish story close to their hearts, for those who hold the Israeli story dear and also for those who find both stories – with all the differences between them – crucial to their identity.

The Jewish story is necessarily much broader than the Israeli story, and is not limited to the territory, politics and sovereignty of Israel. But the Israeli story – the one that Colonel Daxa, along with quite a number of other non-Jews, sacrificed his life for – is the story being written here, in practice, every day, by those living

here, and on the battlefield, too. It is in no way just the story of the Jews.

It's important to understand this division, and to examine it bravely. The self-deception, which is trying to create full equivalency between a Jew and an Israeli, has made the Israeli state, which is made up of its Israeli citizens, into a Jewish state that pretends to represent those who have never set foot here, too. This is one of the heaviest foundation stones that make the Israeli story so difficult. This is the story that flows out from this place and out of a shared fate, the story that to a great extent has still not really been born – to grow out of the great rupture and the revolutionary times in which we are living.

If Israel saw itself as the nation of the Israelis, if its discourse were a civil discourse, maybe it would even be easier for the Haredim to enlist in the civil effort for the place where they live. They are not joining the army now mostly because the roots of their identity are defined by the negation of the historical movements from which the state emerged in the first place. That is why the deal in which the secular state bought the (limited) cooperation with Haredi Judaism at the price of exemption from the draft and more; a deal that enabled the country to "keep religion in its own hands,"

as David Ben-Gurion said – the deal that is the source of everything and to where everything returns.

Those who determined to have a Jewish state out of love and care for Judaism, are in fact weakening Judaism as an independent power shaping reality. Limiting the Jewish story – which was actually created in the desert, first of all flows from the story and values, and not out of territory and borders – deeply damages Judaism itself, which desperately needs an internal dialogue, independent and unbounded, that will bring back the moral and existential relevancy it always had.

At the same time, it's enough to hear the voices coming out of the Druze community, which is paying an incredible price in this war, to understand how fragile this double game is, which on one side is sending them into battle while also legislating laws such as the nation-state law and creating de facto classes of citizenship in society. It's doubtful it will hold on for much longer.

In spite of the discourse raised by the disaster of October 7, and in spite of the antisemitism all over the world, it is the time to act for the true founding of the State of Israel – the state of all Israelis, where Judaism is an important part of it not because of external definitions or laws, but simply because many of its citizens are Jews.

# Father of hostage won't rest until his son returns

## Ruby Chen, father of Israeli-American hostage Itay Chen, says this fight is over Israel's fundamental character

### Bar Peleg

For Ruby Chen, whose son Itay Chen is held hostage in Gaza, it's important to stress at the start of his conversation with Haaretz that "even though [in March of this year], we received the news of his death on October 7, we can't know what happened for sure - so we call ourselves the parents of Itay Chen, a hostage in Gaza.

"He is not deceased, because deceased means that it's over and he is buried here in the Land of Israel. That definition is important. The dead don't have time, either. There is a certain amount of time to find them and bring them for burial in Israel and avoid delaying the burial." Jewish religious law prohibits unnecessary delays in burying the dead.

"So when you introduce us, write that Itay Chen is captive in Gaza," Ruby says. "For us, the affair isn't over. We can't go on living without closure. I won't rest until this kid is back where he belongs."

Itay was kidnapped from a tank near Nahal Oz. Capt. Daniel Perez and Matan Angrest were taken hostage along with him during a battle in which Sgt. Tomer Leibovitz was killed as well. (His body was not taken to Gaza).

"On Saturday morning, we woke up to a serious situation," says Ruby, recalling the day of the Hamas attack. "We know he called



Ruby Chen, the father of Itay Chen, Monday.

Hadas Parush

his girlfriend. When we listened to the tank's black box, you hear everyone saying, 'I talked to mom' or to their parents. He was proud when he said, 'I talked to my girlfriend.' He told her there was chaos but that they were protected. That's how the conversation ended. Relatively speaking, fewer were abducted and killed in Nahal Oz because of their tank."

The military's official notice of his death was delivered to the Chen family in March, but his parents have

refused to sit shiva until his body been brought back to Israel for burial. As a member of the steering committee at the heart of the fight to return the hostages, Ruby is a leading figure in the Hostages and Missing Families Forum. He makes appearances on TV and at the regular weekly protests in Netanyahu, where the family lives. He also works with the U.S. government, as the entire family has American citizenship.

Ruby says he tries to find the balance between attend-

ing to his family, on the one hand, and serving as an unofficial "operations officer" in the hostage families' battle with the Israeli government on the other.

"On Friday, we spoke with Brett McGurk, so we got a little more information than other families get," Ruby says of the conversation with U.S. President Joe Biden's coordinator for the Middle East and North Africa. "After assessing the situation with the president, National Security

Adviser Jake Sullivan and

CIA chief William Burns, McGurk sounded the most determined to reach a deal that I've ever heard him.

"From the U.S. perspective, [Hamas leader Yahya] Sinwar was a big obstacle to any kind of deal, because his dream was starting to come true in the form of a regional war. But now he's gone. Now someone here has to deliver the goods, and that's the State of Israel and the government of Israel."

He adds that "if Israel doesn't agree to [the num-



Ruby and Hagit, right, the parents of Itay Chen.

Moti Milrod

### Ruby says he tries to find the balance between being with his family and serving as an unofficial 'operations officer' in the battle with the government.

ber of prisoners Hamas demands Israel release] and withdrawing from the Philadelphia route, it won't matter how determined the U.S. is. Sinwar's elimination should have been an instrument for doing something. The military did an excellent job, but what change did it make in the negotiation dynamics if, as a result, each side maintains its position and toughens it? In what way did it help free the hostages?"

"They released a very nice picture of Sinwar in his last

moments," he says. "Beyond the feeling of 'look, we got him' - which maybe helps [Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's] base feel good about itself - for the hostages, it's trouble. We've all been rattled by this. Someone will see it and do irrational things to the hostages. So, whom did it help? Me? My family? Absolutely not. It helped from a domestic political point of view and a poll that came out at the end of the week."

Itay is the Chen family's middle child. Ruby describes

him as successful in everything he tried to do - a determined kid who overcame a stutter, did breakdancing, sang and was active in wall-climbing. His family was sure Itay would be a competitor on the "Ninja Israel" obstacle course TV show.

"When Itay was 15, I saw that he was beating me in basketball even though I was giving everything I had," Ruby says. "It's a moment I won't forget. After that, every time he asked me to play again, I - like a lying dad who was afraid that he would kick my ass - would tell him I was busy."

Ruby says that the fight to release the hostages is about values and not about land. "It's a fight not only for the hostages but for the character of the country," he says.

"A new, dangerous and messianic Jewish movement has been created, and the question is being asked as to what we sanctify - the Land of Israel or the People of Israel?" he says. "Unfortunately, many people in politics and the government are sanctifying the Land of Israel. Our feeling now is that the situation has been normalized."

"An Israeli gets up in the morning, drinks coffee, watches TV, and says, 'Yes, there are hostages, but life goes on.' But we're still stuck in October 7 and we need to have the people with us. If everyone is with us, it might make the government understand that nothing is more important."

## Sunday 27.10

### CHANNEL KAN 11 (Y11/H11)

06.00 The Morning News 06.30 Mix of Israeli Music 07.00 This Morning - with Arieh Golan 08.00 Kalman-Lieberman - Live Reshet Bet radio show 10.00 Special news broadcast - with Itat Glick 11.00 The State Memorial Ceremony for the Martyrs of the Security Forces 12.00 Special news broadcast - with Itat Glick 13.00 Special news broadcast - with Keren Refaeli 14.00 The State Memorial Ceremony for the murdered civilians 15.00 Special news broadcast - with Keren Refaeli 16.00 Special news broadcast - with Maya Rachlin 18.00 Seven O'Clock - with Ayala Hasson 19.50 The Evening News 21.30 The Battle for Sderot Police Station 23.05 On the Other Hand - with Guy Zohar 23.20 News 23.50 Pardon the Question - Questions we always wanted to ask, but we did not dare to 00.15 Nobody's Soldiers - Documentary accompanying three families of the female observers from the Nahal Oz post, who were murdered in the October attack 01.10 Ben Shani unfolds extraordinary and inspiring stories from October 7 01.40 06.30 - Docu-film that brings, through the testimonies of survivors, miniature models and animation, the chain of events of Shabbat Shabbat in October

### KESHET (Y12/H12)

06.00 News Flash 06.10 Today's Headlines 07.00 News Flash 07.05 The Morning Show - with Nir Raskin 09.30 News Flash 09.35 Special news broadcast - with Nesli Barda 11.00 The State Memorial Ceremony for the Martyrs of the Security Forces 12.00 Special news broadcast 14.00 The State Memorial Ceremony for the murdered civilians 15.00 Today's Edition - with Ofer Hadad & Amalya Duek 16.55 Five O'Clock - with Rafi Reshet 17.55 Six O'Clock - with Oded Ben-Ami 19.00 The Early Edition - with Keren Marciano 19.55 The News 21.30 MasterChef: Dream Team - Reality 23.35 Tonight - with Yair Sherki & Avri Gilad

### RESHET (Y13/H13)

06.00 The Morning Show - with Omer Yardeni & Rotem Israel 10.00 News Flash 10.05 Starting the Day - with Eiad & Yarden 11.00 The State Memorial Ceremony for the Martyrs of the Security Forces 12.00 News Flash 12.05 Starting the Day (cont.) 13.00 Special news broadcast - with Chen Zandar & Tal Shorer 14.00 The State Memorial Ceremony for the murdered civilians 15.00 Special news broadcast - with Chen Zandar & Tal Shorer 16.00 Talk of the Day - with Lucy Aharish 17.55 Six O'Clock News 18.55 Israel at War - with Raviv Drucker 19.50 The News 21.15 Matriculation Exam: October 7th High School - The wonderful story of the twelfth grade at "Nopi Hashur" high school that fell apart after the events in October, and fought to stay together against all odds 22.45 One Year Since the War Began - with Lucy Aharish & Tsahi Halevi 23.30 The Day That Was - with Tal Beran 00.00 Following the shocking reality of seven social workers who were the first to take care of hundreds of people dealing with the war 00.50 One Year Since the War Began - broadcasted from Kibbutz Yad Mordechai 02.00 The Source - Investigative program

### HOT 3 (H3)

06.10 Personal documentaries from October 7 19.30 Connected (s.1, 2 eps) 20.30 Matlock 21.15 A Place to Call Home (s.3) 22.10 Mishmar Hagvul 22.55 Top Chef (s.21) 23.40 Matlock 00.30 Sisi (s.3) 01.20 Mishmar Hagvul 02.05 Top Chef (s.21)

### HOT HBO (H4)

No daytime broadcasts due to The National Memorial Day for the October 7 attack. 20.00 Curb Your Enthusiasm (2 eps) 20.55 Mad Men 21.40 It's Florida, Man 22.05 Nightsleeper 22.55 Paris Has Fallen 23.40 The Franchise 00.10 Bupkis 00.45 Sex and the City (s.4) 01.15 It's Florida, Man 01.40 Nightsleeper 02.25 Bupkis

### HOT ZONE (H5)

No daytime broadcasts due to The National Memorial Day for the October 7 attack. 20.00 Chicago Med (s.7) 20.40 FBI: Most Wanted (s.5) 21.20 Law & Order (s.23) 22.05 NCIS (s.21) 22.45 CSI: Vegas (s.3) 23.30 9-1-1 (s.3) 00.10 Chicago Med (s.7) 00.50 The Rookie (s.3) 01.35 NCIS (s.21) 02.20 NCIS: Los Angeles (s.13)

### HOT CHANNEL 8 (H8)

06.00 Indie City- Southern Border 06.40 Where Will You Go? 07.20 Sihat Nefesh - Psychoanalyst Yoram Yovell interviews Daniel Aloni 08.45 We Are Not Heroes 10.00 Shiur Moleket - On the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (6 eps) 13.20 Where Will You Go? 14.05 Shatters 14.35 Heart and Soul 2024 - Haim Yellin 15.20 Shatters 15.55 Heart and Soul 2024 - Hen Kugel 16.35 Four Mothers 17.55 Shatters 18.30 Heart and Soul 2024 - Shifra Buchris 19.20 We Are Not Heroes 20.35 Where Will You Go? 21.15 Gospel of Wealth 22.10 Lion's Roar 23.10 Shadow of Truth: Coastal Road 00.50 Gospel of Wealth 00.55 Lion's Roar 01.55 Shadow of Truth: Coastal Road

### YES DOCU (Y8)

08.45 Where Will You Go 09.25 Torn 10.40 Casualty Officer, Golani 11.55 Border Living 12.50 Where Will You Go 13.30 Alon, My Brother is a Hero 14.10 Animals 15.00 Paradise Shattered 16.05 Torn 17.20 Alon, My Brother is a Hero 18.00 Animals E.R. 18.50 Casualty Officer, Golani 20.05 Border Living 21.50 Paradise Shattered 22.05 Money Electric: The Bitcoin Mystery 23.50 The Raft 01.30 The Big Squeeze 02.35 My Old School

### HISTORY (Y44/H43)

07.25 Wingate Night 08.00 Poets of the Palmach Generation 09.00 Military History One-Off Programs - Division 8 09.45 Two from the Palmach: Raananah & Ada 10.00 Box for Life 11.00 The Children of Teheran 12.00 State Behind the Scenes 12.50 Dunkel's Last Film 13.40 The War after the War 15.10 Israel - A Home Movie 16.50 Born to Fly: Danny Shapiro 18.00 Screams Before Silence 18.55 Six Days in June (3 eps) 21.20 1973 War Diaries (2 pts.) 23.05 Screams Before Silence 00.05 02.77 01.35 Silence of the Sirens

### YES TV DRAMA (Y5)

06.00 Station 19 (s.6) 06.50 The Resort 07.30 So Help Me Todd (s.2) 08.20 Nancy Drew (s.4) 09.05 The Long Call 10.00 Station 19 (s.6) 10.50 The Resort 11.30 So Help Me Todd (s.2) 12.20 Nancy Drew (s.4) 13.10 The Long Call 14.00 The No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency (3 eps) 16.50 The Resort 17.25 Station 19 (s.6) 18.10 Red Dawn - Trust 18.45 Red Dawn - Fog 19.25 Red

Dawn - Sunrise 20.00 Red Dawn - Light 20.35 The Long Call 21.25 Spencer Sisters 22.05 Paper Dolls 22.50 Bloody Murray 23.25 Dr. Death 00.15 Spencer Sisters 01.00 Paper Dolls 01.45 Bloody Murray 02.20 Dr. Death

### YES TV ACTION (Y6)

06.00 Rookie Blue (s.4, 2 eps) 07.30 In the Dark (s.4) 08.15 NCIS: Los Angeles (s.7, 2 eps) 09.45 The Ark (s.2) 10.30 His Dark Materials (s.3) 11.30 Rookie Blue (s.4, 2 eps) 13.00 Chicago Fire (s.3) 13.45 NCIS: Los Angeles (s.7, 2 eps) 15.15 In the Dark (s.4, 2 eps) 16.45 Rookie Blue (s.4, 2 eps) 18.15 The Ark (s.2) 19.00 Chicago Fire (s.3, 2 eps) 20.30 S.W.A.T. (s.5, 2 eps) 22.00 Special Ops: Lioness (2 eps) 23.30 His Dark Materials (s.3) 00.30 Taagad (2 eps) 01.45 The Deuce (s.2)

### YES TV COMEDY (Y7)

No daytime broadcasts due to The National Memorial Day for the October 7 attack. 20.00 Hot in Cleveland (s.5, 2 eps) 20.50 Parks and Recreations (s.4, 2 eps) 21.40 The Nanny (s.4, 2 eps) 22.30 Friends (s.7, 2 eps) 23.20 Better Things (s.5, 2 eps) 00.35 Enlightened (2 eps) 01.40 Young & Hungry (s.2, 2 eps) 02.30 The Buzaglos (s.2, 2 eps)

### EUROSPORT (Y61/H59)

06.30 Snooker - Wuhan Open in China: Final 08.30 Cycling - Track World Championship 09.30 Olympic Games - The best moments 09.45 Marathon - Amsterdam Marathon 12.30 Trail Running - World Series 15.00 Snooker - Northern Ireland Open 19.00 Cycling - Track World Championship 20.00 Triathlon - T100 World Tour 21.00 Snooker - Northern Ireland Open 01.00 Cycling - Track World Championship 02.00 Snooker - Northern Ireland Open

## MOVIE CHANNELS

### HOT CINEMA 1 (H16)

07.55 Penguin Bloom (Australia/USA, 2020). Biography drama. Dir: Glendyn Ivin. With Naomi Watts, Griffin Murray-Johnston, Andrew Lincoln. 09.25 Fathers & Daughters (Italy/USA, 2015). Drama. Dir: Gabriele Muccino. With Russell Crowe, Amanda Seyfried, Aaron Paul. 11.15 Beaches (USA, 1988). Drama. Dir: Garry Marshall. With Bette Midler, Barbara Hershey. 13.15 Remember (Canada/South Africa/Mexico/Germany, 2015). Thriller. Dir: Atom Egoyan. With Christopher Plummer, Kim Roberts, Amanda Smith. 14.45 The Debt (USA, 2010). Thriller. Dir: John Madden. With Helen Mirren, Sam Worthington, Tom Wilkinson. 16.35 The Lucky Ones (USA, 2008). Drama. Dir: Neil Burger. With Tim Robbins, Rachel McAdams. 18.20 Brothers (USA, 2009). Drama. Dir: Jim Sheridan. With Jake Gyllenhaal, Natalie Portman, Tobey Maguire. 20.00 Argo (USA, 2012). Biography. Directed by and starring Ben Affleck. With Bryan Cranston, John Goodman. 22.00 Olympus Has Fallen (USA, 2013). Action thriller. Dir: Antoine Fuqua. With Gerard Butler, Aaron Eckhart, Morgan Freeman. 23.55 Jack the Giant Slayer (USA, 2013). Adventure. Dir: Bryan Singer. With Nicholas Hoult, Stanley Tucci, Ewan McGregor. 01.50 Wild Card (USA, 2015). Crime action. Dir: Simon West. With Jason Statham, Michael Angarano, Dominik Garcia-Lorido.

### HOT CINEMA 2 (H17)

06.20 A Officer and a Spy (France/Italy, 2019). Historical drama. Dir: Robert Polanski. With Jean Dujardin, Louis Garrel, Emmanuelle Seigner. 08.25 Taking Chance (USA, 2009). Drama. Dir: Ross Katz. With Kevin Bacon, Tom Aldredge. 09.40 The Eichmann Show (UK, 2015). Drama. Dir: Paul Andrew Williams. With Martin Freeman, Anthony LaPaglia, Rebecca Front. 11.10 Brothers (USA, 2009). Drama. Dir: Jim Sheridan. With Jake Gyllenhaal, Natalie Portman, Tobey Maguire. 12.50 Megan Leavey (USA, 2017). Biography. Dir: Gabriela Cowperthwaite. With Kate Mara, Ramon Rodriguez, Tom Felton. 14.45 Fathers & Daughters (Italy/USA, 2015). Drama. Dir: Gabriele Muccino. With Russell Crowe, Amanda Seyfried, Aaron Paul. 16.35 Winter's Bone (USA, 2010). Drama. Dir: Debra Granik. With Jennifer Lawrence, John Hawkes. 18.10 The Debt (USA, 2010). Thriller. Dir: John Madden. With Helen Mirren, Sam Worthington, Tom Wilkinson. 20.00 G.I. Joe: Retaliation (USA, 2013). Sci-fi action. Dir: Jon M. Chu. With Dwayne Johnson, Channing Tatum. 22.00 The Bad Lieutenant: Port of Call - New Orleans (USA, 2009). Crime. Dir: Werner Herzog. With Nicolas Cage, Eva Mendes, Val Kilmer. 23.55 Trauma Center (USA, 2019). Thriller. Dir: Matt Eskandari. With Nicky Whelan, Bruce Willis, Tito Ortiz. 01.35 Parker (USA, 2013). Crime. Dir: Taylor Hackford. With Jason Statham, Jennifer Lopez.

### HOT CINEMA 3 (H18)

06.25 Winter's Bone (USA, 2010). Drama. Dir: Debra Granik. With Jennifer Lawrence, John Hawkes. 08.00 The Lucky Ones (USA, 2008). Drama. Dir: Neil Burger. With Tim Robbins, Rachel McAdams. 09.50 A Officer and a Spy (France/Italy, 2019). Historical drama. Dir: Robert Polanski. With Jean Dujardin, Louis Garrel, Emmanuelle Seigner. 11.55 Six Minutes to Midnight (UK, 2020). War drama. Dir: Andy Goddard. With Nigel Lindsay, Judi Dench, Eddie Izzard. 13.30 Taking Chance (USA, 2009). Drama. Dir: Ross Katz. With Kevin Bacon, Tom Aldredge. 14.45 Thank You for Your Service (USA/India/Canada, 2017). Biography. Dir: Jason Hall. With Miles Teller, Beaujah Koale, Joe Cole. 16.30 Beaches (USA, 1988). Drama. Dir: Garry Marshall. With Bette Midler, Barbara Hershey. 18.25 Penguin Bloom (Australia/USA, 2020). Biography drama. Dir: Glendyn Ivin. With Naomi Watts, Griffin Murray-Johnston, Andrew Lincoln. 20.00 The Five-Year Engagement (USA, 2012). Romantic comedy. Dir: Nicholas Stoller. With Jason Segel, Emily Blunt, Chris Pratt. 22.00 Monster-in-Law (USA/Canada, 2005). Comedy. Dir: Robert Luketic. With Jennifer Lopez, Jane Fonda. 23.40 Price of Parenting (France, 2021). Comedy. Dir: Alex-

andra Leclère. With Josiane Balasko, Didier Bourdon. 01.15 Neighbors (USA, 2014). Comedy. Dir: Nicholas Stoller. With Seth Rogen, Rose Byrne, Zac Efron.

### HOT CINEMA 4 (H19)

06.10 The Eichmann Show (UK, 2015). Drama. Dir: Paul Andrew Williams. With Martin Freeman, Anthony LaPaglia, Rebecca Front. 07.45 Remember (Canada/South Africa/Mexico/Germany, 2015). Thriller. Dir: Atom Egoyan. With Christopher Plummer, Kim Roberts, Amanda Smith. 09.20 The Debt (USA, 2010). Thriller. Dir: John Madden. With Helen Mirren, Sam Worthington, Tom Wilkinson. 11.10 Penguin Bloom (Australia/USA, 2020). Biography drama. Dir: Glendyn Ivin. With Naomi Watts, Griffin Murray-Johnston, Andrew Lincoln. 12.45 Adela (USA, 2020). Biography drama. Dir: Michael Uppendahl. With Aaron Paul, Lena Olin, Tom Berenger. 14.20 Beaches (USA, 1988). Drama. Dir: Garry Marshall. With Bette Midler, Barbara Hershey. 16.20 Megan Leavey (USA, 2017). Biography. Dir: Gabriela Cowperthwaite. With Kate Mara, Ramon Rodriguez, Tom Felton. 18.10 Fathers & Daughters (Italy/USA, 2015). Drama. Dir: Gabriele Muccino. With Russell Crowe, Amanda Seyfried, Aaron Paul. 20.00 Downton Abbey (UK/USA, 2018). Drama. Dir: Michael Engler. With Stephen Campbell Moore, Michael Fox, Lesley Nicol. 22.40 Fatal Attraction (USA, 1987). Thriller. Dir: Adrian Lyne. With Michael Douglas, Glenn Close, Anne Archer. 23.55 Beautiful Disaster (USA, 2023). Romantic drama. Dir: Roger Kumble. With Dylan Sproule, Virginia Gardner, Austin North. 01.30 Equals (USA, 2015). Drama. Dir: Drake Doremus. With Nicholas Hoult, Kristen Stewart, Verneke Lopez.

### YES MOVIES DRAMA (Y1)

07.15 The Wife (UK/Sweden/USA, 2017). Drama. Dir: Bjorn Runge. With Glenn Close, Jonathan Pryce, Max Irons. 09.00 Save the Last Dance (USA, 2001). Romantic drama. Dir: Thomas Carter. With Julia Stiles, Sean Patrick Thomas, Kerry Washington. 10.50 The Time Traveler's Wife (USA, 2009). Drama. Dir: Robert Schwentke. With Rachel McAdams, Eric Bana. 12.40 Percy Vs Goliath (Canada, 2020). Biography drama. Dir: Clark Johnson. With Christopher Walken, Roberta Maxwell, Christina Ricci. 14.25 Meet Joe Black (USA, 1998). Drama. Dir: Martin Brest. With Anthony Hopkins, Brad Pitt, Claire Forlan. 17.25 Temple Grandin (USA, 2010). Biography. Dir: Mick Jackson. With Claire Danes, Catherine O'Hara. 19.15 Race (Canada/Germany/France, 2016). Biography. Dir: Stephen Hopkins. With Stephan James, Jason Sudeikis, Eli Goree. 21.30 The Best of Me (USA, 2014). Drama. Dir: Michael Hoffman. With James Marsden, Michelle Monaghan,

Luke Bracey. 23.25 Call Jane (USA, 2022). Drama. Dir: Phyllis Nagy. With Elizabeth Banks, Sigourney Weaver, Chris Messina. 01.30 The Iron Claw (UK/USA, 2023). Docudrama. Dr: Sean Durkin. With Zac Efron, Jeremy Allen White, Harris Dickinson.

### YES MOVIES ACTION (Y2)

06.05 Meg 2: The Trench (USA/China, 2023). Action. Dir: Ben Wheatley. With Jason Statham, Jing Wu, Shuya Sophia Cai. 08.00 Gods of Egypt (USA/Australia, 2016). Action. Dir: Alex Proyas. With Brenton Thwaites, Gerard Butler, Nikolaj Coster-Waldau. 10.05 Sherlock Holmes: A Game of Shadows (USA, 2011). Action. Dir: Guy Ritchie. With Robert Downey Jr., Jude Law. 12.15 Transcendence (UK/China/USA, 2014). Drama. Dir: Wally Pfister. With Johnny Depp, Rebecca Hall, Morgan Freeman, Kate Mara. 14.15 Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them (UK/USA, 2016). Adventure. Dir: David Yates. With Eddie Redmayne, Katherine Waterston, Alison Sudol. 16.30 Snow White and the Huntsman (USA, 2012). Fantasy drama. Dir: Rupert Sanders. With Kristen Stewart, Chris Hemsworth, Charize Theron. 18.40 Backtrace (USA, 2018). Action. Dir: Brian A. Miller. With Sylvester Stallone, Matthew Modine, Colin Egglesfield. 20.20 Hot Seat (USA, 2022). Action thriller. Dir: James Cullen Bressack. With Mel Gibson, Shannyn Doherty, Kevin Dillon. 22.00 The Grey (UK, 2011). Action. Dir: Joe Carnahan. With Liam Neeson, Dermot Mulrooney. 23.55 Fith (UK, 2013). Comedy. Dir: Jon S. Baird. With James McAvoy, Jamie Bell. 01.35 Black Lotus (USA/Netherlands, 2023). Action thriller. Dir: Todor Chapkanov. With Rico Verhoeven, Frank Grillo, Marie Dompnier, Rona-Lee Shimom.

### YES MOVIES COMEDY (Y3)

No daytime broadcasts due to The National Memorial Day for the October 7 attack. 20.00 Sabrina (USA, 1995). Romantic comedy. Dir: Sydney Pollack. With Harrison Ford, Julia Ormond, Greg Kinnear. 22.05 Sam & Kate (USA, 2022). Romantic comedy. Dir: Darren Le Gallo. With Jake Hoffman, Schuyler Fisk, Dustin Hoffman, Sissy Spacek. 23.55 Notting Hill (UK, 1999). Romantic comedy. Dir: Roger Michell. With Julia Roberts, Hugh Grant, Rhys Ifans. 02.00 Juliet, Naked (USA/UK, 2018). Drama comedy. Dir: Jesse Peretz. With Chris O'Dowd, Rose Byrne, Kitty O'Beirne.

News on the Hour: CNN (Y102/H205) | Sky News (Y103/H203) BBC (H204) | Fox News (Y105/H202)

## Solutions to Sudoku from Friday

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

Difficulty: Easy

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

Difficulty: Medium

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

Difficulty: Hard

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

Gur Megiddo

Israeli radio host and journalist Kalman Libeskind, a controversial figure known for his ties to the settler movement, argued recently in a column published in daily newspaper Maariv that the young families who have been leaving Israel over the past two years are "driving down the Zionist road in the wrong direction."

In his column, published for Rosh Hashanah, Libeskind tried to bring back to life Yitzhak Rabin's phrase calling those who leave Israel "nefolet shel nemushot" (something like "vestiges of insipid weaklings.") He tried to paint them as people fleeing the high cost of living, the war, and the pressure in Israel – and to shame them for it.

Libeskind refuses to recognize that behind the growing liberal exodus of the past two years, whose scope is still hard to estimate, lie not just considerations of creature comforts. In practice, many of those leaving are giving up their jobs and social status – what awaits is mostly language difficulties and adapting to a new environment. As someone who knows many families who left Israel, I can testify that some of them chose to leave principally because of the collapse of the old Israeli ethos, and are doing so with deep sorrow.

Ideas that were the basis for our life here, such as equal rights, freedom from religion, the freedoms of conscience, language, education, and culture – are losing their place in the public space. Israel is being taken over by views and policies based on Jewish supremacy, religious coercion and chauvinist loyalty tests. Libeskind's column is just another of the aforementioned loyalty tests.

### Shattered Israeli ethos

The lack of any ideological alternative to the view according to which "we will forever live by the sword" is definitely part of the discomfort, but the main thing is the madness, in literal terms, that has taken control of the political agenda. Israel has always had a messianic foundation: David Ben-Gurion compared the nascent State of Israel to the Hasmonean Kingdom. We all grew up on the zealous legend of Masada and the Declaration of Independence, which spoke of "the fulfillment of the dream of generations – the redemption of Israel."

Until not long ago, these passages were interpreted as paying lip service to tradition or as a fond historical remembrance, which had no real practical significance. No one could have imagined



Clockwise: Passengers getting their tickets at Ben-Gurion Airport; departure board, Ben Gurion Airport; right-wing conference advocating the settlement of the Gaza Strip, January 2024, Jerusalem.



Eyal Toueg; Olivier Fitoussi

# Shaming Israelis for fleeing their country ignores the reasons behind their leaving

A large number of those leaving Israel are doing so out of a realization that the ethos they grew up on is giving way to one based on Jewish supremacy and ruinous policies

that the solution to Israel's credit rating crisis would come from heaven. A rational person would have difficulty raising children in a place where religious beliefs play a role in macro-economic policy.

Likewise, in the no so distant past, the claim that learning Gemara will win us the war would have been dismissed as absurd. Nowadays, it is cited with increasing frequency on important platforms. Rationality is losing its place in Israel.

The mutual solidarity that was once part of the core of the Israeli ethos has also been destroyed. Throughout Israel's short history, we prided ourselves on the fact that our prisoners and wounded were never left behind. The Israeli government made sure to redeem even drug offenders. However, in the last year this principle was thrown to the wind, with the 101 hostages still held captive in Gaza sacrificed on the altar of total victory.

Astonishingly, the parents of hostages are attacked and insulted in the street. If only

a few bad apples were responsible for these incidents, it could be argued that Israeli society had remained faithful to its values. But those who are packing their bags know that the incitement begins at the edge of a private pool in Caesarea, or at government offices in Jerusalem, and passes through the television talk panels and on to the street.

### A generation wakes up late

Those packing their bags, in their 30s and 40s, grew up in a different country. Israeli society aspired to be part of the free world and to universal values, which became part of the identity of much of this generation. In 1992 the Basic Law: Human Dignity and Liberty was enacted. Subsequently, the Supreme Court anchored in its rulings the basic rights that other Western countries had established in their constitutions from their founding day. It developed and perfected the tools that allowed the court to ensure the government acted fairly.

The Libeskinds of this world want to destroy these tools in the name of conspiracy theories about the "deep state." And what did the High Court of Justice rule in upholding the reasonableness standard? That is, the principle that a traffic light will be installed where it is needed, and not where votes for the Likud Central

### While liberals focused on high-tech, the new zealots took over influential positions in the media, the Knesset, and the army, and changed our operating system.

Committee need to be won?

The Libeskinds ask why the High Court has the authority to set norms. This is a question worthy of discussion. However, they are not opposed to the constitutional principle, but the values behind it – namely subjecting the majority to the rules of the game. This is why young people from the minority are leaving: they fear living in a place

where the majority awards itself unlimited power.

There is a whole generation of liberals in Israel who have woken up late. They believed that some force of nature would bring about education and pragmatism, and governance would trump bigotry and ethnocentrism. This generation was late to realize what was

nonsense of optimization, monetization and scalability, the new zealots took over influential positions in the media, the Knesset, and the army, and changed our operating system. This is not to protest against the evolution of elites. In law, new segments of society deserve positions of power and influence. The disagreement is over their ideology, and it is such a deep disagreement that many prefer to raise their children far from the values that have taken hold here.

These extremists are so determined to win that they favor abandoning the strategic alliance with the United States and compensating for the loss of American defense assistance by canceling social services such as free education up to the age of 3, as recently suggested by Meir Rubinfeld, executive director of the Kohelet Policy Forum. They define Israel's pyramid of values with Judaism on top, followed far behind by democracy. According to this ideology, Judaism is largely defined as victim-

hood, trauma, the hatred of others toward Jews and our hatred of the enemy.

The enemies of Israel are cruel, no doubt about that. But many Israelis are not ready to let hatred and persecution define them. They do not want to educate for victimhood. They feel that the country no longer has room for their worldview, so they look for another place in which to raise their children.

### No preaching needed

The pathos with which Libeskind preaches to them about the return to Zion, the dream of generations and the Holocaust experience of his parents will not convince a single person to come back. Like him, some of those who leave also have relatives whose families survived the Holocaust, or even perished in it. But they derive opposite conclusions from it. It is precisely due to the trauma of the Holocaust that they regard race theory of any kind as an abomination. Out of this same trauma, they are deathly afraid of the mix-

ture of racist ideology and governmental power.

Among the yordim (emigrants, it makes no difference what you call them), there are not many who doubt the Jewish people's right to a national home. They don't need to be preached to. They would like to continue living here, and they would if they did not feel that the state was increasingly confining their living space. Israel is their family, their language, and culture. Most of them served in the army and some have lost friends. Despite this, they are no longer ready to raise children here.

Full of frustration, tens of thousands of Israelis have left the country in the past two years. They are our neighbors and friends. My acquaintances are good and law-abiding people. Some will miss Israel or fail in their new lives overseas and return; others may be satisfied with occasional visits to their homeland. For all of them, Israel does not feel like the home it used to be.

Libeskind is right some of the time. There is a point in criticizing articles that frame emigration as the result of high housing prices. You can also agree that the media has no business encouraging emigration. On the other hand, it is also not its job to shame emigrants.

Libeskind believes that the emigrants are going against the flow. But Israel's flow is in the direction of separatism, degeneration, nationalism, bigotry, and darkness.

## KETAMINE

Continued from page 1

In several European countries, too, it's still regarded as a dangerous narcotic.

In Israel, ketamine has been a controlled substance since 2018. However, in medical institutions, it has been in use as an anesthetic for over five decades and is considered very safe. In the last decade it has also been recognized as effective in treating drug-resistant depression.

"Even before the war, the mental health establishment was underperforming and PTSD treatments were lengthy, so the waiting lists are long. In the wake of the war, we see a big rise in the number of people requiring treatment, a trend that is likely to intensify," says Oren.

"Therefore, the establishment must think of new solutions and treatments that will facilitate shorter processes and access to more patients. Correct use of ketamine significantly shortens the process. This is a tool that could make a significant contribution. In light of the war, many people are suffering from PTSD and we must find ways to get to more people."

Oren has spent much of the last year doing reserve duty in a commando bri-



Dr. Sinai Oren, director of the new clinic at Shaare Zedek.

Shaare Zedek

gade's medical unit, where he serves as military doctor and psychiatrist. "The military quite often prescribes ketamine as treatment for pain, during evacuations of wounded soldiers from the battlefield. Though it is effective in treating pain, under influence of the drug consciousness and bodily perceptions are often altered.

"Many doctors are focused on the substance's efficient biological effect, and are not adequately aware of its experiential effect. Its effect on consciousness can be very

beneficial, and usually pleasant in the context of psychotherapy. But during the evacuation of a person who fears for their life, giving such medicine suddenly, with no prior explanation, could be a frightening experience. So, when I use ketamine as part of an acute treatment on the battlefield, I make sure to explain the effects to the wounded. During treatment in a clinic, this is of course an entirely different treatment environment."

As part of the setup to open the clinic, a three

day training workshop for training therapists in ketamine treatment took place, attended by experienced experts from Israel and abroad. Treatment in the clinic begins with a few psychotherapy sessions intended, in part, to get to know the patients and their suitability for the treatment, as well as to prepare them for it. Along the process, the level of ketamine use is determined. Sessions when ketamine is given to the patient are double sessions, lasting a couple of hours; the effect of the substance lasts about an hour.

### No miracle cure

Shaare Zedek has no psychiatric wards. However, even before the war, this Jerusalem hospital adopted a practice of opening a "mental ER" during multi-victim incidents, which operates next to the hospital's ER.

"During the war we treated hundreds of people, and we also regularly offer treatment for patients who have experienced trauma, whether soldiers, car crash victims or other cases," explains medical psychologist Yona Lurie, director of the hospital's psychological service. He says that opening the new clinic is part of the hospital's wish to develop and deepen PTSD treatment.

Lurie himself treated one patient with psychotherapy assisted by ketamine. "I was somewhat skeptical before, and I am still cautious. We are still in the early stages, and we need to learn when and for whom this is suitable, but there is significant potential for improvement here, at least for some patients. With the patient I did the process with, we have achieved impressive progress after a period when the treatment was jammed. Ketamine helped us make a lot of progress. But it is also important to stress that this is no miracle cure."

The clinic is taking its first steps: It still has no

permanent quarters in the hospital, and the number of patients is small. The plan is to expand in the near future, recruit more patients, and operate in two locations simultaneously: one at the hospital, mainly for patients in wards, and the other in a spacious clinic which is expected to open soon.

### Ketamine has been a controlled substance since 2018. In medical institutions, it's been used as an anesthetic for over five decades and is considered very safe.

Regarding the incorporation of psychedelic substances in the treatment of PTSD, most attention in recent years has been given to MDMA assisted treatment, in light of a series of clinical studies in the field. The findings of the multi-center studies on some 200 patients around the world, including Israel, raised great hope among mental caregivers. However, last August the FDA decided not to approve the treatment, determining that more studies are needed in

order to establish its merits. Hence, the treatment is only allowed as part of a study.

"Our model is essentially similar to the MDMA assisted model. These are two different substances with a different mechanism – MDMA produces a sense of interpersonal openness



Yona Lurie

Shaare Zedek

and a connection with the environment, so in that sense it is more suitable for assisting psychotherapy. Under the influence of ketamine, the patient is much more inward-focused, and most of the work with the patient will take place before or after the influence subsides, but the work model is similar," explain Oren. "It allows a person the space for observation and processing and also allows mental anguish, so its effect facilitates efficient treatment of mental dis-

truss."

He says ketamine has some advantages over MDMA, beyond the fact that it is more accessible to the medical establishment. "It is much more familiar and safer. In addition, its effect lasts about an hour, unlike MDMA, whose effect lasts about eight hours during which, according to studies' protocols, the patient must be accompanied by two therapists. This makes using it both more expensive and less accessible in a public institution."

Setting up such a clinic is not a trivial thing for a public hospital, and Shaare Zedek stresses that this would not have been possible if not for the support of the Jerusalem Foundation. "In light of the current heavy challenges and deep pain over the events of October 7, we set ourselves a goal to provide long term solutions for traumatized patients," says attorney Imry Ben Ami, the foundation's general director.

"Thanks to an unprecedented emergency donation we raised for this, we have managed to devote resources to set up a special unit at Shaare Zedek hospital to treat PTSD patients with ketamine. Setting up this unit in Jerusalem stems from a deep understanding of the complexity of the situation and the burning need to provide an optimal solution in the most sensitive location."

## Ben Samuels

WASHINGTON – A U.S. president whose foreign policy was unwillingly defined by the Middle East. Tensions between a U.S. president and an Israeli prime minister over Lebanon military operations indiscriminately targeting civilians. A hostage crisis that ensnared a U.S. president initially trying to focus on different parts of the world.

International peacekeepers caught in the middle of the crossfire in Lebanon. U.S. military personnel and the American economy embroiled in the fallout of the crisis, potentially swinging a presidential election.

All of these points could be ripped from today's headlines, but they in fact are part of the foreign policy legacy of former U.S. President Ronald Reagan. Prior to Donald Trump's political ascendance, the 40th U.S. president – who served from 1981-1989 – was considered the standard-bearer for the Republican Party.

In his authoritative new biography "Reagan: His Life and Legend," Washington Post columnist Max Boot scrutinizes the many myths concerning Reagan's foreign policy and delves into the dueling pillars of his legacy: his policy on the Soviet Union compared to his record on the Middle East.

**'Reagan would call up Begin and say "Menachem, what I'm seeing is a holocaust. It has to stop." Begin got upset at this, saying, "I experienced a real Holocaust."'**

"There's kind of a myth that Reagan brought down the Evil Empire with his large defense budgets in his first term, his rhetoric, his support for anti-communist resistance movements like the Afghan mujahideen," Boot says. "I don't see much evidence of that to be the case."

According to Boot, Reagan's Soviet policy floundered during his first term, only to become extremely successful during his second term – largely because of Mikhail Gorbachev's ascendance. "Reagan does deserve a lot of credit," he says, "but for different reasons than what he's often credited for by his conservative admirers."

With the Middle East, however, Boot describes it as "a fiasco from beginning to end," which people tend to overlook thanks to the Reagan-Gorbachev relationship and the end of the Cold War.

"People forget Reagan's role in dragging America deeper into the Middle Eastern quagmire, and his consistently failed and unsuccessful policies which resulted in loss of American lives and loss of American standing

# What Harris and Trump can learn from Reagan's mistakes

Ronald Reagan's Middle East policy was a fiasco from beginning to end, says Washington Post columnist Max Boot, who wrote a new biography on the GOP legend. The next U.S. president would do well to study his mishandling of crises with Israel, Lebanon and Iran

and prestige in the region," he says. This "arguably continues to haunt the United States to this day."

In Boot's eyes, Reagan's Middle East efforts amount to a cautionary tale of what not to do.

"He made every mistake under the sun, in part because he didn't really understand the region at all," he says. To that end, Reagan's only visit to the Middle East occurred in the 1970s when he visited the Shah in pre-Islamist Iran – never visiting Israel or any other Arab ally during his presidency.

Further, his administration was paralyzed by infighting between U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz and Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger, who held diametrically opposed views on the Middle East.

"Shultz was advocating a more activist, forward-leaning counterterrorist strategy and Weinberger basically wanted to stay out," says Boot.

One of Reagan's first tests with this dynamic was posed by Israel's invasion of Lebanon in 1982, where he "drifted into this larger involvement in part because of his horror at what was happening."

It has echoes to the present day because "Americans, including Reagan, were watching images on television of the death and destruction wrought by Israeli bombs. And Reagan was getting upset by it," Boot says.

While Reagan was a supporter of Israel, his policy was often dictated by his "poor" relationship with its right-wing prime minister, Menachem Begin.

"He would call up Begin and say 'Menachem, what I'm seeing is a holocaust. It has to stop.' Begin got upset at this saying, 'You know, Mr. President, I experienced a real Holocaust.'"

Reagan would eventually force Israel to call off the two-month siege of Beirut in August 1982 as his envoys negotiated the deal to evacuate PLO fighters. As part of that deal, French and Italian troops went into Beirut as peacekeepers. "They overstayed their welcome with no peace to keep. They became sitting ducks at their headquarters," says Boot.

Soon after, on October 23, 1983, a suicide bomber sent by what is now known as Hezbollah targeted the U.S. Marine Barracks, killing 241 U.S. military personnel.

"It was the largest single loss of life for the Marine Corps since the Battle of Iwo Jima in World War II. It was



Then-U.S. President Ronald Reagan, center, with King Hussein of Jordan and President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt. AP

a catastrophe for the Reagan administration. He was traumatized by that, it was one of the worst days of his presidency when he got the news," says Boot, who notes that the president received word of the attack while golfing at Augusta National Golf Club, around the same time he was authorizing the invasion of Grenada.

"He was paralyzed in trying to figure out how to respond to this attack on U.S. forces, which was neither the first nor the last," Boot says, citing the two bombings of the U.S. Embassy in Beirut and kidnappings of numerous Americans. Shultz and Reagan's National Security Advisor Robert C. "Bud" McFarlane strongly advocated to bomb Lebanon's Bekaa Valley, where U.S. intelligence identified the Iranian Revolutionary Guards outpost where the Marine Barracks bombing was planned.

McFarlane subsequently claimed that Reagan had given an order to bomb the Iranian barracks with a U.S. carrier-based aircraft along with French carrier-based aircraft. He claimed that Weinberger disregarded this

presidential order, though Weinberger denied this.

"Reagan was torn between Shultz and McFarlane on one hand, who argued for hitting back, and Weinberger on the other, who didn't want to do anything because he didn't want to be drawn deeper into this Middle East quagmire. Reagan gave both factions the impression that he agreed with them, but ultimately never pushed the point," says Boot.

## A 'weak horse and paper tiger'

Reagan would withdraw the Marines in early 1984, months after vowing that they would not be driven out by the suicide bombing and months before the U.S. presidential election against Walter Mondale.

"He basically cleared the deck so that he wouldn't have to deal with more tragedies as he was running," Boot says, calling it "a withdrawal in the face of Iranian-orchestrated attacks."

McFarlane would later tell Boot that this encouraged Osama bin Laden and others to describe the U.S. as a "weak horse and paper tiger

that could be attacked with impunity."

This disaster, however, was only compounded in Reagan's second term with the Iran-Contra affair, which Boot says was caused by his fears for the fate of the hostages seized by Hezbollah's precursor in Beirut and effectively held by the Iranians.

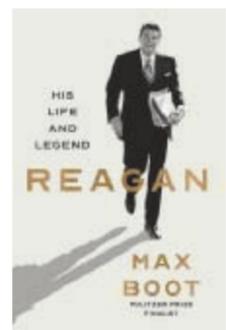
"He met with the hostage families and was deeply concerned about their fate and wanted to do something to get them out," says Boot. McFarlane concocted a scheme of selling weapons to Iran as a way to not only free the hostages, but to support a supposed moderate faction within Iran's government.

"McFarlane had these fantasies of a Nixon-to-China type move where he would reach a new understanding with Iran and transform them from foe to friend, and he thought supporting these moderates would be the opening wedge," says Boot. He adds that the Mossad and Israeli spy master and diplomat David Kimche encouraged the effort.

"Israel was intent on re-creating its relationship with Iran that had existed under

the Shah. Both Israel and the U.S. thought it made sense to try to reach out to these supposed moderates, even at the same time as the U.S. was also supporting Iraq and its war against Iran," he continues. "It was a convoluted mess."

McFarlane and a delegation including National Security Council staffer Oliver North and an Israeli operative went to Tehran with "a cake and a bunch of TOW missiles, which they gave to the Iranians hoping to create a diplomatic rapprochement and to get the hostages out,"



Liveright

says Boot. "Neither goal was ever met."

Iran would release several hostages, though it would take others realizing how valuable a commodity they were – all while Reagan was acting in contravention of his claims that he wouldn't negotiate with terrorists or act in violation of sanctions against Iran.

The biggest scandal, however, came as McFarlane's successor, John Poindexter, and North opted to funnel some of the profits received from the Iranian arms sales to Nicaragua's Contra resistance movement, despite Congress forbidding funding of the group.

"It could have gotten Reagan impeached, but he was ultimately saved for pretty much the same reason he drifted into the scandal: he was such a hands-off manager and claimed he had no idea," Boot says. "People could easily believe he didn't know what was going on."

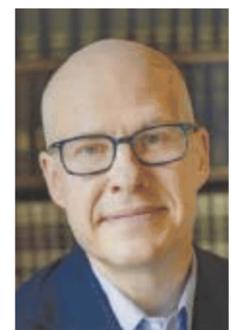
"That left U.S. policy with Iran a complete mess and gave them the impression they could easily manipulate the Americans and get rewarded for taking hostages. It was a fiasco from beginning to end," he sums up.

Reagan's legacy could not be more relevant for outgoing U.S. President Joe Biden and his potential successors in Vice President Kamala Harris and former U.S. President Donald Trump, all of whom are starting at a region on the precipice.

"The basic lesson is be careful of what you do with U.S. policy in the Middle East, because it has a long history of not working out," says Boot, noting how interventions can easily backfire or regional players (including Israel) can "run rings around a well-intentioned but clueless administration."

## 'Inconceivable in the 1980s'

While much of history has rhymed, one notable change



Max Boot

Cynthia Van Elk

between the 1980s and the present day is how much tougher the Reagan administration was on Israel than the Biden administration – and certainly tougher than Trump would be.

"Reagan was certainly not giving Israel a blank check, in its approach to Lebanon or anything else. It's striking how much tighter U.S.-Israel relations have become in the succeeding decades than they actually were in the 1980s. It was a good relationship, but it wasn't nearly as close. It certainly would have been inconceivable in the 1980s for the U.S. to be actively defending Israel with its own military forces as is happening now," says Boot.

Reagan notably threatened to withhold military assistance to Israel amid its offensive in Lebanon, a step many critics of the Gaza war have long pushed Biden to take. Boot believes there is a world where this could happen again, though it doesn't seem likely.

"Support for Israel has become such a deep-seeded political issue in the United States – even though it's becoming increasingly partisan," he says. "Back in the '80s, the U.S. was still trying to pursue a semi-balanced approach between Israel and the Arab states, even though the U.S. was clearly much closer to Israel."

While it is possible Harris would take a different approach toward Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government, her freedom to maneuver within the U.S. political system will likely be limited thanks to Republicans' anticipated gains in 2024 congressional elections. Trump and today's GOP, meanwhile, could not be more starkly different than the party crafted in Reagan's image for decades.

"Reagan was pro-free trade, pro-NATO, pro-alliances, pro a leading American role in the world and pro standing up to Russian aggression. I'm sure if Reagan was still alive, he would be horrified and puzzled," he says.

"Reagan also was a very strong, compassionate defender of NATO. He was part of the Greatest Generation, which had seen the consequences of American isolationism leading to World War II and wanted to avoid that mistake in the future. Now it seems like the Republican Party is drifting back to what it was before the attack on Pearl Harbor," Boot adds.

"The whole policy is worrisome, but also somewhat incoherent," he notes, because Israel seems to be the exception to the consensus GOP foreign policy that is becoming increasingly pro-Russian amid calls to cut off aid to Ukraine.

"It will be interesting to see how this isolationist tendency applies to Israel as Biden is using U.S. military forces to defend Israel from Iranian missile attacks," Boot says. "Is the more isolationist Trump administration going to be willing to do that, even at the risk of being drawn into war with Iran? It's very hard to know."

# Could ketamine offer hope to Nova survivors and soldiers with PTSD?

## Ido Efrati

A new clinic, recently opened at Jerusalem's Shaare Zedek Medical Center, began treating post-traumatic patients by using ketamine and psychotherapy. The clinic, opened last June, has already treated several patients, including Nova Music Festival survivors and soldiers who were diagnosed as suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. These days, the clinic is expanding its practice, receiving additional patients ahead of the opening of a dedicated compound.

Use of ketamine to treat mental disorders is nothing new: since the early 2000s, there have been studies about its effectiveness on psychiatric illnesses, mainly as a treatment for depression. In recent years, clinics using ketamine to treat depression have become commonplace in the United States and Canada.

However, in most ketamine clinics, treatment focuses on the substance and its pharmacological effect, that is: as medicine, and it is not incorporated



A memorial ceremony at Kibbutz Re'im for those killed at the Nova festival. Olivier Fitoussi

in psychotherapy as part of the healing process. In standard use, patients arrive to receive a ketamine transfusion at a designated time – and go on their way.

## Access to harsh memories

At the new Shaare Zedek clinic for treatment of Post

Traumatic Stress Disorder, the approach is different – the focus of the treatment is psychotherapy, accompanied by trauma experts, while ketamine is used as an aid, part of a formulated process, depending on the patients' condition.

Treatment takes place with hospital approval as an off-label regulated treat-

ment rather than within a research framework, which means it's not restricted by one rigid protocol. According to specialists at the clinic, this allows for flexibility and the optimal tailoring of ketamine use to each patient's needs.

The new clinic, opened with the support of The Jerusalem Foundation, is run

by Dr. Sinai Oren – psychiatrist and psychotherapist trained in treatment with psychedelic substances, and until recently head of the ketamine clinic for treatment of treatment-resistant depression at Mayanei HaYeshua Medical Center. "There are authoritative

**'This is a tool that could make a significant contribution. Many people are suffering from PTSD and we must find ways to get to more people.'**

studies about the treatment of drug-resistant depression by ketamine, as well as studies on treating Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, with the focus on the use of the substance by itself, rather than as part of psychotherapy," explains Oren. "The advantages of ketamine use for mental disorders has to do, to the best

of our understanding, with neuroplasticity – the level of flexibility and dynamism of brain cells and the links between them. This, it appears, more readily allows for change processes in emotional, thought and behavioral patterns which psychotherapy aims for, and, in turn, expedites recovery.

"In addition, use of ketamine in some psychotherapy sessions allows the patient better observation and access to harsh memories and content, in a way that facilitates effective, deep processing in a shorter timeframe, similar to the MDMA treatment model that has been studied in several centers in Israel in recent years."

## From the battlefield to the clinic

Ketamine was first synthesized in the early 1960s, in an attempt to find a replacement for the anesthetic drug Phencyclidine. It works by blocking signals from NMDA receptors, found in the cerebral cortex and the hippocampus, that play an important role in memory and other cogni-

tive functions. During the Vietnam War, it was tested on American soldiers, who reported an out-of-body experience – which later added to its popular-

ity as a psychedelic hallucinogenic. In the 1990s, the American FDA included it in its controlled substances list.

See KETAMINE, Page 7

## Weather

### Unseasonably hot

Continued hot and dry conditions Sunday, with stiff northerly winds along the coast in the afternoon. Unchanged Monday. Tuesday will be slightly cooler but still hot and dry, temperatures will drop slightly again Wednesday.

