



The danger of having shared values

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Amos Harel

Seven civilians killed in Hezbollah rocket barrages on northern Israel

Source: IDF had let four victims, Thai workers, enter a closed military zone on border

Adi Hashmonai and Gal Gabai

Rockets fired from Lebanon on Thursday killed seven civilians in northern Israel and wounded several more. An Israeli and four Thai nationals were killed in the first incident, which took place in Metula along the Israel-Lebanon border. A mother and her son were killed in the second incident, which occurred just east of Haifa.

Regarding the deadly incident in Metula, a member of the local security squad told Haaretz that the army had permitted the workers to enter the area, despite it being a closed military zone.

The Israeli victim was later identified as 46-year-old Omer Weinstein, a resident of Kibbutz Dafna. Weinstein was married to Hadas Weinstein of Marom, and was the father of four. He was one of three children born to Moshe and Einya. Weinstein, and was part of an old farming family in Metula. He studied agronomy at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and worked on the family farm.

Weinstein and his father had been interviewed by Israeli radio station 103FM in April about the plight of Metula's farmers and residents during the war. "We are waiting and trusting the system to find a solution ... but we don't see the horizon," Weinstein said.

"We would have been happy if the solution had come earlier, and I really hope we won't tell you that it was a mistake to trust the system,"



First responders carrying the shrouded body of Mina Hasson, who was killed by rocket fire near Kiryat Ata, just east of Haifa, on Thursday. Ahmad Gharabli/AFP

Weinstein said at the time.

In principle, the IDF notifies agricultural workers near the border fence daily whether they can work in fields in the area. Military sources confirmed that

such permission was given for the grove where the fatalities occurred.

The Thai government has approached Israel several times over the past year, demanding that Thai agricultural

workers be kept away from the northern border; however, no action has been taken.

The Population and Immigration Authority stated that foreign agricultural workers are the responsibility

of their employers. "Nonetheless, to ensure worker safety, the authority issues guidelines for employers and their employees to follow IDF and Home Front Command instructions."

Kav LaOved, an Israeli workers' rights NGO, said, "Even in communities fully evacuated of residents, foreign agricultural workers

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Middle East in a waiting mode

Despite the continued fighting in Lebanon and the Gaza Strip, and notwithstanding the resumption of the intensive efforts to reach agreements on both fronts, the Middle East this week is in a waiting mode for dramatic developments in other arenas.

One concerns the exchange of blows between Israel and Iran. Tehran is threatening to respond soon to the attack by the Israel Air Force last Saturday (which itself was a response to the Iranian attack of October 1). The second development is, of course, the United States presidential election. The results there, and the transition period between the Biden administration and the next administration, will also have far-reaching effects for this region.

Like an echo of the American media, the players in the political and defense arenas in Israel are also talking about a tight race, and about a gut feeling that at the last moment, a slight advantage might emerge in favor of the Republican candidate, Donald Trump. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu isn't bothering to conceal the fact that he's invested in a Trump victory. A Trump win will indeed reshuffle the cards in the Middle East, and throughout the entire international system. A victory by Democratic candidate Kamala Harris will cause chaos of a different sort.

Trump is already preparing the ground to contest the result if he loses – perhaps violently. The U.S. could be plunged into a whirlpool that will recall the events of January 6, 2021, with the assault on the Capitol Building in Washington. It's possible

that in the months ahead, the administration's attention will have an inward focus, leaving less time and energy to deal with the Middle East crisis.

Netanyahu will also have worries in the event of a relatively calm transfer of power between President Joe Biden and Harris. The outgoing president publicly preserved Netanyahu's dignity and granted Israel historic support during the most difficult period of its history, and did so despite the many times that the prime minister breached his trust and broke promises he made. But the transition period could be when Biden

Siege isn't a war crime

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will settle accounts. There's already a possible date for this. The United Nations Security Council is scheduled to hold a meeting about the war in about two weeks. Will Biden be in a position to veto a resolution calling for sanctions on Israel if Israel doesn't agree to accept a cease-fire agreement under terms that are hard for it to swallow?

Recent surveys show that Israel is the only country where a majority of citizens are hoping that Trump wins the U.S. election. That's certainly not the sentiment in Ukraine and Western European countries, which are apprehensive that Trump will abandon the Ukrainians to the Russians. Like the feeling among Democrats in

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Soldiers on a mission in Gaza in July. David Buchar

Weapons cuts lead to more soldiers killed by IEDs

Yaniv Kubovich

The army has seen an increase over the past month in the number of attacks in which soldiers in the Gaza Strip are killed by explosive devices, rather than by anti-tank missiles and firefights with Hamas operatives. Commanders and combat troops serving in the Strip believe that this increase is

connected with the Israel Defense Forces' tightening supplies of armaments, which it therefore is using more sparingly.

They say the incidents result from more sparing use of armaments in the air force and in artillery support to soldiers on the ground. This month alone, 17 soldiers were killed in Gaza, of whom 11 were killed by explosive

devices placed inside buildings. Five of the soldiers were killed in Jabalya three around the Netzarim corridor and three more in the Rafah area.

Until recently, before troops would enter a Hamas building, the air force would attack the surrounding area to detonate explosives by shaking the structure and killing any terrorists waiting

inside. The IDF confirms it is managing a tight munitions supply, partly due to embargoes imposed by weapons-supplying countries and the prioritization of ground operations in Lebanon. Until now, the IDF has firmly maintained that these munitions challenges do not affect the air and artillery support provided to troops targeting enemy infrastructure.

Senior commanders report that, as a result, the IDF has had to develop alternative solutions to mitigate risks to soldiers' lives. For example, the IDF Southern Command has begun using decommissioned armored personnel carriers (APCs) rigged with explosives to locate and destroy hidden devices before troops enter buildings. However, soldiers

in Gaza say such solutions are often ineffective. One commander whose troops had been fighting in Jabalya until recently claims that exploding APCs are not as effective as aerial bombardments, since they often fail to detonate explosive devices on high floors, in interior rooms and in stairwells.

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Says he must be in constant motion to evade attacks

PM set to defer his testimony, citing danger to his life

Gidi Weitz

Benjamin Netanyahu began this week to prepare the ground for delaying his testimony in his ongoing graft and corruption trial, which was scheduled to begin in a month and a day.

On Sunday evening Broadcasting Corporation reporter Michael Shemesh aired quotes from a private conversation, in which the prime minister warned of a drone attack on the Knesset and complained that the sessions there are being held as usual. That morning the cabinet meeting was moved from Netanyahu's office to the fourth-floor basement in a Jerusalem building, for security reasons. This can be seen

as another sign of Israel's integration in the region, where leaders fearing assassination go to ground and take radical precautions to prevent being found by the enemy.

Already in the last election campaign, Netanyahu traveled around the country in a reinforced bus, for fear of a sniper's ambush. In the days of the protest against the regime coup, he and his lackeys repeatedly accused the law enforcement system and the Shin Bet of leniency toward the "rampant incitement" against him. Launching the drone from Lebanon to his Caesarea house turned the fear into real dread. Now, he says, he must be in constant

movement to evade those who want to kill him.

Haaretz has learned that as part of the effort to ensure Netanyahu's safety, the relevant officials are examining legislation or a cabinet decision banning the release of his location (and the location of other senior officials), and perhaps also to impose criminal sanctions on media outlets or people who do so. Recently the Shin Bet was even asked for an opinion on this extreme move, following the harsh criticism against the chief censor every time the prime minister's location was reported.

So far Netanyahu hasn't asked the court for a further delay of his court appearance, but there are no signs

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'I've known my brother for 20 years. I don't know the person who will return from Gaza'

Bar Peleg

Every time he is interviewed, Yotam, the brother of Nimrod Cohen, who was kidnapped from a malfunctioning tank near the border with Gaza, makes sure to address his brother directly: "Our job, as the family, is to fight. Your job is to survive."

For months now, Yotam and his family have been doing just that. "We are fighting windmills, the government, and the cabinet – fighting the media again and again for coverage, trying to reinvent the wheel so they will remember him," Yotam says.

In recent weeks, the Hostages and Missing Families Forum relocated its headquarters to Begin Road, outside the entrance to the Israeli army's military base in Tel Aviv. Yotam's father,



Yotam Cohen, the brother of Nimrod Cohen, who is a hostage in Gaza. Tomer Appelbaum

Yehuda Cohen, along with other families, planted their stake there and defined the

borders of their struggle. Like his father, Yotam is critical of the government,

but believes that because the hostages hail from all segments of Israeli society, the

protests must be inclusive. "The demonstrations are seen as left-leaning – even the leaders are perceived that way," Yotam says.

"But if people feel comfortable attending a rally and singing – then that's what should happen. Whether it's a protest with people stomping their feet or singing and praying – the goal is the same: to bring the hostages home."

However, Yotam admits that since Israel's ground incursion into Lebanon began – alongside rising tensions with Iran and restrictions on gatherings – the protests have lost momentum. "Each time, there's another card they pull out to quiet the protests and the calls for a [hostage release] deal."

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The danger of shared values

Analysis Yossi Vertter

With the announcement of the results of the U.S. presidential election, a new chapter will open in the October 7 war. The American election had been hanging in the air all along, hovering over the bloody campaign we got into. In a certain sense, it was clear to everyone that until the winner was named, the Middle Eastern entanglement at which we are at the center will not begin to be resolved – no hostage release, no end to the war in Gaza or agreement with Lebanon.

The man whom Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his supporters want in the White House is well known. Over the course of the past year, Netanyahu acted both openly and in the background to undermine the Democrats' chances and give a boost to Donald Trump. But as the Americans say: Be careful what you wish for. It is clear that Netanyahu doesn't want Kamala Harris, but it's not as if he and Trump will strike up a new bromance and everything will be coming up roses.

The prime minister will certainly not get carte blanche to conduct the war as he chooses. The Republican candidate wants to see the war end. He has conveyed this message to Netanyahu more than once in recent months. His interest in stabilizing the Middle East is not only a function of his isolationism. It is also connected with his bank accounts and those of his associates, who have a great interest in strengthening Saudi Arabia and the other Gulf countries.

A week after the October 7 massacre, Trump was quoted as saying in private that Netanyahu had to step down. In public, Trump had a lot to say back then about how disappointed he has been with the Israeli prime minister. This hasn't changed.

Trump holds a grudge against Netanyahu. He despises him and is convinced that for himself personally (which is the only thing that matters to Trump), the man represents more harm than good. He also does not like being manipulated and lied to. It probably reminds him too much of himself.

The common denominators between the "orange" and "purple," as they are called in certain circles, have only intensified since both were expelled by more dangerous, vengeful and destructive to their countries' respective elites. The Republicans' current election slogan also reminds us of something: "Trump will fix it."

Donald Trump despises Netanyahu. He does not like being manipulated and lied to. It probably reminds him too much of himself.

This distortion in American public opinion corresponds directly with the greatest gaslighting in our history: Netanyahu's claims to be saving us (and the entire world) from the failures he is directly responsible for. Trump wants to take on the establishment that is still licking its wounds from his first term and "fix it," that is, to destroy what remains.

The bottom line for both of them is their criminal trials. And for both, the most important part of their plan to escape judgment is to seize power and keep it no matter what.

Despite the tension between them and Trump's

problematic character – the only thing that can be counted on with him is his unpredictability – Netanyahu is convinced that the war effort will change dramatically if Trump returns to the White House. There will be no more delays in arms shipments, no pressure over humanitarian aid, no sympathy for the civilian tragedy in Gaza or Lebanon. Seemingly, a diplomatic paradise.

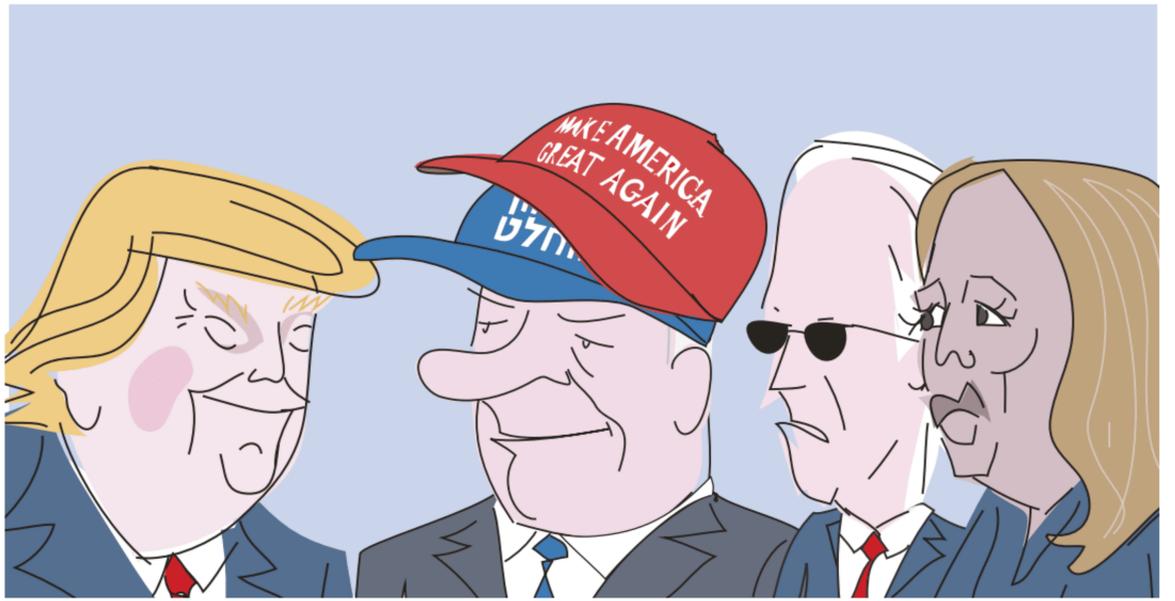
In practice, Trump wants the war to end on his watch. Perhaps the main thing is the hostage crisis. As everyone knows, Trump copied Ronald Reagan's 1980 campaign slogan "Make America great again." The election occurred under the cloud of the American hostage crisis, those held captive by the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini for more than 400 days. President Jimmy Carter tried everything from diplomatic pressure to a failed rescue attempt to liberate them. In the end, America paid a heavy price for their freedom when the victory picture was given to Reagan: The hostages were released the day the new president took the oath of office. That is the same humiliation Trump wants to give Joe Biden as a parting gift.

But there is an equally important aspect to Trump's election, which was easy for us to forget over the past year amid the thunder of war: the role of the United States in the battle for democracy in Israel.

Publicly and behind the scenes, the Biden administration acted to discourage the Netanyahu government's judicial coup. The president's main talking point of the annus horribilis of 2023 was America's and Israel's "shared values."

If the Orange Menace is re-elected, we may have to declare the fall of a critical outpost in the battle for our democracy. Biden's shared values were with the State of Israel, not with Netanyahu.

Trump's shared values are the reverse. His values are the same as Netanyahu's,



Amos Biderman

and the opposite of those who are fighting for Israel's democratic future. If Trump is elected, the governmental coup (which, as we saw this week, is alive and kicking) will be renewed with full vigor and a dangerous sponsor in the Oval Office.

The non-defense portfolio

During Defense Minister Yoav Gallant's speech at the governmental memorial ceremony at Har Herzl this week, the prime minister's wife looked at him with unabashed hatred. At a certain point, she could no longer restrain herself and whispered to her husband something that caused him to smile. It was the only smile at the event.

It would be interesting to learn what brought it on. Perhaps it was Gallant's brave words, not the kind usually uttered by generals: "Not every goal can be achieved only by military action. Force is not the be-all and end-all. When we act to fulfill our moral and ethical duty to return the hostages to their homes, we will need to make painful compromises."

As someone who set a goal for himself of saying everything that Netanyahu didn't want to hear: "This

is our responsibility. This is my responsibility as the minister of defense throughout the whole year of the war. As for the significant achievements, so also for the failures, for the heavy prices costs..." In the world of the Netanyahu's, these words are contradictory, treacherous, subversive to the leader most high.

No wonder that over the next day or two, the background briefings began to emanate from the Prime Minister's Office about an impending dismissal. This is the third or fourth time around. Someday it will happen, and Gallant's bureau knows it.

The desire for revenge in the prime minister and his wife burns bright. Gallant, for his part, does not even try to assuage it. On the contrary, he is the only minister in Likud with courage, integrity and backbone, even though he has the most to lose.

This week, Netanyahu lost his one important excuse for firing the defense minister, namely Gallant's stubborn opposition to the Haredi draft-evasion law. The law for now has been dropped. So how will Netanyahu explain his decision when the time comes? "Distrust" obviously, maybe "subverting the prime minister."

And what is he waiting for? For the U.S. presidential election. If Trump wins, the hourglass for Gallant will empty out quickly. He has supporters in the Biden administration, mainly the Pentagon. From their point of view, Gallant is the only address – the only minister who doesn't lie to them, who treats them with respect and fairness, as partners.

The candidate to replace him is Foreign Minister Israel Katz. The previous choice, Gideon Sa'ar, is no more. What happened since the day that we were notified of an imminent press conference where Netanyahu would fire Gallant and appoint Sa'ar? Experience says it has to do with the family. Sara, Yair. The hornet's nest between Caesarea and Miami. Perhaps the old suspicions about Sa'ar reared their head.

Katz is trustworthy, obedient. There are fond memories of dinners shared by the two couples, Bibi and Sara, Srulik and Ronit. Apparently, this is true. But Katz – unlike Gallant, whose career in Likud has effectively ended – is a very ambitious man. A former colleague of his told me years ago that he behaves as if every moment that Netanyahu remains prime minister comes at his expense.

That burning desire, which seems to have been extinguished in the darkness of the non-existent Foreign Ministry, and in the many humiliations Netanyahu has subjected him to over the years (so that Katz will be reminded who he is), may be revived if he is put at the head of Israel's defense empire. Despite his powerful position, Netanyahu is damaged goods. Debacle and failure is written all over him. His criminal trial will resume at some point. His testimony from the state investigation committee probing the submarine affair is devastating. His office also has serious troubles.

Katz can sit quietly like a good boy, but he hasn't for a moment lost sight of his ultimate goal – the PMO. The day that Netanyahu stumbles or is tripped up by an external event, Katz will muster the courage he gathered years ago and be the first to pounce. Gallant, on the other hand, is not a political threat, apart from the credit he has received from the public for the conduct of the war.

Katz has embarrassed himself in his diplomatic role, and Netanyahu would be happy to see him do so from the 14th floor in the Kirya. But at the same time, the calculated and cunning

Katz will quietly work on accumulating renewed political power.

Netanyahu's desire to show Gallant the door is also related to fundamental questions: his close relationship with IDF Chief of Staff Herzl Halevi and the Shin Bet director Ronen Bar. It's a triple axis that Netanyahu doesn't like. All three take the same position regarding the hostages, for example. This is in contrast to Mossad head David Barnea, who is seen as friendly enough and not opposed to Netanyahu.

When the latter decided to focus the negotiations on the Qatar channel, it came against the recommendation of the defense establishment, which now sees Egypt as the main address. Bar was there last week, and met with Egypt's new intelligence minister. And that's where the idea of a "small deal" arose. Netanyahu sent Barnea to Qatar, demanding that any meeting on renewing talks be held there. The defense establishment sees this as just another attempt to scuttle any deal. Brig. Gen. Oren Seter, deputy to Gen. (res.) Nitza Alon, who heads the negotiation team, is fed up and resigned this week. "When there are real negotiations, I'd love to come back," he said.

Gaza aid deliveries dropped to lowest level of 2024 in October

Bar Peleg

The amount of humanitarian aid entering the Gaza Strip in October was the lowest of any month this year, according to data from Israel's Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories. The data from COGAT, which oversees shipments into Gaza, measures the amount of aid through October 28.

Last week, the Israeli government acknowledged to the High Court of Justice that the number of trucks delivering aid began to drop on October 2, the eve of the Rosh Hashanah holiday. Besides the Jewish holidays in October, the drop was attributed to intelligence about possible terrorist attacks surrounding the first anniversary of Hamas' October 7 attack and "various operational needs" stemming from Israeli operations in the Jabalya refugee camp north of Gaza City. However, COGAT officials say the main cause of the decline was a reduction in international aid and not any limitation imposed by Israel.

They also say that hundreds of trucks loaded with equipment have been waiting at the Gaza side of the Kerem Shalom border



Humanitarian aid in Rafah in December.

Fatima Shabir/AP

crossing and are not being collected for distribution. They added that several border crossings were closed during the Jewish holidays based on the assessment that there were sufficient stockpiles of aid in northern Gaza that arrived before October.

COGAT data compiled by the Tamzur-Politography research group shows that between the beginning of October and nearly the end of the month, 26,399 tons of assistance entered Gaza, compared to 87,445 tons in September, almost all of which entered by land. By comparison, the monthly average figure this year has been 95,513.

The assistance in Octo-

ber included 19,855 tons of food, 3,810 tons of equipment for the construction of shelters, 1,244 tons of fuel, 635 tons of medical equipment, 260 tons of water and several dozen tons of general equipment. The drop was reflected in every category of assistance other than fuel, the amount of which increased somewhat from September.

A total of 859 truckloads of food entered Gaza in October, compared to a monthly average of 3,591 truckloads so far this year. During each of the months of July, August and September, the private sector provided more than 50,000 tons of aid, a figure that dropped to just 2,160 tons in October.

Progressive NGO is first U.S. Zionist group to call for halt in offensive aid to Israel

Etan Nechin

Partners for Progressive Israel (PPI), a U.S.-based Jewish-led Zionist progressive organization, has become the first American Zionist group to urge the United States to suspend its supply of offensive military munitions to Israel.

"For the wellbeing of all civilians in the region, and to swiftly and efficaciously ensure an end to this war, as well as to take the next steps towards stability and self-determination for Israelis and Palestinians – including an end to the Occupation – we ask this administration to suspend the sale to Israel of Joint Direct Attack Munitions (JDAMS) and 120mm tank rounds for use in Gaza," a soon-to-be published letter addressed to President Biden drafted by Partners

for Progressive Israel and obtained by Haaretz reads.

Along with halting the arms, PPI is calling on the U.S. administration to redirect its investments in Israel toward peacebuilding. "In this time of great pain, moving aid towards an investment in peace-making and diplomatic support alongside defensive military aid would be a powerful step towards the future that everyone in the region deserves," the statement says.

As the American affiliate of the World Union of Meretz, an umbrella group for organizations in Jewish communities linked to the Meretz party, PPI is "dedicated to the achievement of a durable and just peace between the State of Israel and its neighbors, which includes an end to Israel's occupation based on a two-state solution."

Rabbi Margo Hughes-Robinson, Executive Director of PPI, affirmed the organization's commitment to Israel's security and a future Palestinian state. She condemned Hamas's actions on October 7 as gross violations of international law and human dignity. She criticized the war's humanitarian toll, lack of progress in returning hostages, and Prime Minister Netanyahu's policies, which have led to civilian suffering and eroded both national and international support. "We stand in support of the hundreds of thousands of Israelis who continue to demonstrate for an end to this war, and a return of both the living hostages... and the bodies of those who have been killed," she said.

"We understand our policy shift as echoing the call from our Israeli and Palestinian counterparts to take action," Robinson Hughes-Robinson told Haaretz. This appeal is supported by Israeli peace activists like Maoz Inon and Yonatan Zeigen, along with Palestinian activists like Co-Director of Combatants for Peace Rana Salman. Zeigen, son of peace activist Vivian Silver who was murdered on October 7, said, "The status quo leading up to October 7 was actively enabled by the United States, and it has been sponsoring the war ever since. If Israel wants to continue to exist, if Palestine wants to progress from a refugee nation to a nation state, and if America wants to assert its global influence successfully, then this paradigm has to change." Salman said, "There

are Palestinians and Israelis dedicated to achieving peace and justice, striving to find a shared path forward. However, we are being overshadowed and underfunded by those who prioritize the flow of weapons and support of continuous war."

On the timing of the statement, just six days before the U.S. elections, Hughes-Robinson told Haaretz: "While Prime Minister Netanyahu has attempted to tie developments in the war and Israel's military strategy to the U.S. election (and his preferred outcome and candidate), we feel that the urgency of this moment requires immediate action from the current administration, to whom we've addressed our letter. The ongoing humanitarian crisis in Gaza and the suffering of the hostages demands that we do not wait."

New division to go to Jordanian border to protect communities

Yaniv Kubovich

The Israel Defense Forces announced on Wednesday that it is establishing a new army division to be deployed along the border with Jordan. It will defend the country's eastern border, particularly communities near the border as well as Route 90, which runs the length of the border from Israel's north, through the Jordan Valley in the West Bank and south to Eilat.

Defense Minister Yoav Gallant and IDF Chief of State Herzl Halevi approved the creation of the division, which will report to the IDF's Central Command, will be tasked with dealing with the threat of terrorist attacks and weapon smuggling

and will maintain cooperation with the Jordan army, IDF sources said.

Halevi said the division is being established due to "the urgent need to establish additional frameworks in the regular army and the reserves to ease the burden on reservists."

"It's a necessary decision in light of the expected challenges and in accordance with force building [plans] of the IDF," he said. "Strengthening border defense in general and on the eastern border in particular was designated before the war as a goal, and now it is getting added emphasis."

About two weeks ago, two terrorists infiltrated over the border from Jordan into Israel and opened

fire at Moshav Neot Hakikar south of the Dead Sea. Two soldiers were wounded, one lightly and the other moderately.

In September, three border crossing staffers were killed in a shooting attack at the Allenby crossing from Jordan, The assailant, a Jordanian citizen by the name of Maher al-Jazi, entered by truck and shot at the three at close range before being shot to death himself by security guards. The three, who were critically wounded, were pronounced dead a short time later.

Every year in recent years, authorities have apprehended dozens of foreign nationals crossing into Israel via Jordan, motly labor migrants or asylum seekers.

Air strike targets militants in W. Bank, two reportedly killed

Bar Peleg and Jack Khoury

Two Palestinian gunmen were killed overnight on Thursday in an Israeli air strike in the Nur al-Shams refugee camp in the West Bank, according to the Palestinian Health Ministry.

The IDF reported that the aircraft targeted the gunmen, Ahmed Issam Fahmawi and Abdul Aziz Abu Saman, after they opened fire at military forces operating in the camp. According to the army, security forces have been operating in the area since nighttime against "terrorist infrastructure."

The operation in Nur Shams began hours after a

joint IDF and Shin Bet unit operating in the nearby city of Tul Karm killed a key Hamas operative allegedly "involved in planning imminent attacks." Throughout the night, Palestinians reported exchanges of fire between armed militants and Israeli forces in the city.

The Shin Bet, IDF, and police stated that the operative killed in Tul Karm, Husam Malah, "led Hamas' terror infrastructure in the city." The statement added that Malah had collaborated with two other operatives – Islam Odeh, killed in an exchange of fire with security forces in Tul Karm on Saturday, and Zahi Oufi, who was killed in an airstrike last month.

Brain strain

Yoana Gonen

1. With what plant is Kamala Harris' name associated?
2. If Donald Trump wins the election, he will be the oldest person to be inaugurated U.S. president. Who was the youngest?
3. Who is the only person to be elected U.S. vice president twice and president twice?
4. What place is named for the father and the grandson of U.S. President Dwight Eisenhower?
5. What is the only country in the world that has no mosquitos?
6. On October 31 of what year did the Catho-

- lic Church vindicate Galileo and admit he was right about Earth revolving around the sun?
7. In 1651, war erupted between Holland and the Isles of Scilly in England. When was the peace treaty signed?
8. By what name is the compound Fe2O3 better known?
9. UNRWA is the United Nations refugee agency – but what does UNRWA refer to?
10. In the TV series "Veep," what event interrupts the reporting on the funeral of former president Selina Meyers' in 2045?

Answers on page 6

Two mensches in the White House? Emhoff stumps for Harris in Georgia

Netanel Slyomovics

SANDY SPRINGS, Georgia – Doug Emhoff isn't a rock star. Nor is he a great orator. The lawyer from Los Angeles who celebrated his 60th birthday this month probably wouldn't turn a head on any street in the United States. But at a meeting with Democratic volunteers in a well-to-do Atlanta suburb, he was greeted with the thunderous applause worthy of someone who might make history.

"Kamala has spent her entire life getting ready for this moment. You heard Michelle Obama the other day," Emhoff said at the meeting in Sandy Springs, Georgia. He argued that his famous wife, Kamala Harris, is held to a different standard: "Parsing every little thing she says for perfection when the other guy is literally praising Adolf Hitler and threatening American citizens."

"That's what's at stake here, folks. She is ready to be president. She's ready to be commander in chief. She's already a world leader. And next week she will be elected to be the president of the United States."

Georgia is home to about 100,000 Jews, 1.3 percent of the state's population. This figure is dwarfed by the 1 million or so in California and the 1.7 million in New York, but this coming Tuesday, Georgia's Jews could be one of the nation's most important communities. In a state where Joe Biden beat Donald Trump by only 11,000 votes in 2020, the Jewish vote is more significant than in New York and California combined.

Emhoff, who could become the first Jewish resident of the White House, came to the town of Sandy Springs to speak with hundreds of local volunteers, many of them Jewish. The meeting took place at a brewery, and Emhoff spoke standing in a bar there. The wall behind him included a "Jewish voters for Har-

ris Walz" sign, and sure enough, Emhoff devoted most of his speech to his wife's link to Georgia's Jews.

"If you haven't heard the story, the mezuzah at the front door [of the vice president's residence] came from Atlanta. ... This mezuzah came from a temple right here in Georgia. ... Martin Luther King Jr. also preached at that temple."

"So it's got a connection to the civil rights movement. It's got a connection to the Jewish people here. That mezuzah has to leave the residence when we move out on January 20th – once we move to the White House. This is how much Kamala supports me and us Jews."

Though most of his speech was devoted to his wife, her campaign and the historic precedent the couple might set, Emhoff also took care to emphasize the rise in antisemitism in the United States over the past year. Conversations with about a dozen participants at the event, Jews and non-Jews alike, made clear that Emhoff was preaching to the converted, as it were.

In the Trump era, and after Hamas' attack on Israel 13 months ago, Jews' anxiety is surging. Susan Moskowitz, 65, recalls a moment less than a year ago that she will never forget. She was driving her car and an extraordinarily truck went by.

"On top of it, on a barber chair, where a person would sit, there was a menorah, a Hanukkah menorah," she says. "It was supposed to be an electric chair with a Jewish symbol on it. He was just driving around town trying to scare people."

Moskowitz insists that she doesn't scare easily, but this incident shook her. "It was vicious. I immediately started shaking and crying. It's hard to explain, but it was definitely supposed to be that. I always say, 'Jews, Jews know.' You know it when you see it."

For people like Moskowitz, the fear has a basis in run-ins with crude antisemitism. But others who have had better luck agree that the mood has changed for the worse. The glorious history of the American Jewish community has never lacked instances of antisemitism.

A surge of volunteers

"I think that this election is an election between a schmuck and a mensch," says Brian Wertheim, 73, a lawyer. Born in New York, Wertheim studied at Atlanta's Emory University, where he met his wife, and settled in Georgia. He's a Democrat but stresses that he always respected the Republican presidential candidate and even voted for Ronald Reagan in 1980.

"I think there are many who are good, decent people," he says. "And Donald Trump is the worst person I've ever seen to be in the White House or come close to running for the White House. Trump can call us a garbage can. I think he's completely wrong."

Wertheim, a father of two and a grandfather of nine, is an ardent supporter of Israel. He is proud to tell Haaretz that he has visited the country more than 20 times; after all, one of his children and three of his grandchildren live in Modi'in halfway between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem.

So he's astonished whenever Jews express support for Trump, who as president defended the neo-Nazis who in 2017 confronted demon-

strators in Charlottesville, Virginia. "Never in my lifetime did I imagine seeing Nazis marching and saying 'Jews will not replace us, Jews will not replace us,'" Wertheim says.

Kate, a 35-year-old educator who lives in Atlanta and requested that her last name not be used, backs Harris mainly because of the vice president's support for women's rights, including restoring the right to an abortion. She says both sides of the political debate are scaring her.

In a state where Biden beat Trump by 11,000 votes, the Jewish electorate is more significant than in New York and California combined.

"It has been really frightening and appalling that we have members of Congress from the far left who I think excuse terrorism and extremist groups such as Hamas and have referred to them as freedom fighters. ... And then you have a candidate like Donald Trump, who recently said that if he loses this election, it will be because of the Jews," she says.

"That is such an old trope. And considering that we are 2 percent of the population, it's really alarming that he would use that to try to either shame



Second Gentleman Doug Emhoff speaking at an event in Sandy Springs, Georgia, this week.

Netanel Slyomovics

Jews or make us a target." Kate gives voice to the anxiety that liberal American Jews are experiencing: Which is scarier, a Trump victory or a Trump loss? As Moskowitz puts it, "I'm not a pessimist, but it's going to be a shit show. I think there's going to be some violence, only it's going to be even worse because they've had time to really plan it out."

"As a Jew, it's scary because there are crazy people out there and they could open fire on synagogues or anyplace."

One person at the Emhoff event told me that Jews' fears are being expressed in the unusually high number of people volunteering for the campaign.

Moskowitz agrees. "I'm so concerned that this is the first time in my life I've been involved in politics," she says. "I'm knocking on doors. That's how concerned I am."

Yet fears about Trump returning to the White House aren't limited to Jews or concerns about antisemitism. Judy Port, who decided at age 67 to become a political activist, was also at the brewery.

"See how he treats women," she says about Trump. "I don't like the way he tells lies. Even when he knows something is not correct, he continues to mislead people."

For William Bailey, 56, this is also his first campaign. He isn't Jewish, but his stepfather was, as are many of his friends. When he talks about Trump, he notes antisemitism as part of a broader problem.

"For me it's not necessarily Trump, it's his supporters that are the power behind it. And I think that they really hate what America stands for," he says.

"And I think they want to change America and make it more MAGA, more like Russia. You know, every election seems like it's the most important, but I really think this one is the most important."

When the topic moves on to Israel, the comparison between Trump and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu comes up in every conversation. "There are a lot of similarities; both men, I believe, are narcissists who only look out for themselves," Kate says.

"And I think there are a lot of parallels with Trump and Netanyahu, obviously. They'll do anything to stay in power, and they don't understand and don't represent the values of their country. My impression is that Netanyahu is putting himself ahead of Israel."

For Jewish Democrats in Georgia, the worries felt by many Israelis about a Harris victory are nearly incomprehensible. Kate, for one, considers Harris and Emhoff "clear-eyed leaders who understand the issues facing our community. I know she's a woman, but to me she's a mensch."

Alongside the anxiety, there is plenty of hope in the air. Emhoff's chance to make Jewish history is invigorating many Jewish Georgians. Moskowitz just can't wait to see another Passover seder at the White House, like Barack Obama used to hold. This of course comes on top of Em-

hoff's opportunity to make history as the first "first gentleman."

Trump's supporters mock Emhoff's masculinity and joke that he will break the glass floor, an outlook not appreciated at the event at the brewery. "That's stupid," Wertheim says. "That is beyond stupid. Whether you're in Israel, the United States, Africa, Asia, you should stand by your woman and support her."

Leo Frank's ghost

At the start of the 20th century, Atlanta was a magnet for Jews. After all, in the 18th century, Jews were among the first to settle in the British colony named after King George II. The Jewish community flourished; Georgia's first physician was Jewish.

Synagogues, businesses and vibrant communities were already part of the landscape in the first years of European settlement there. About 150 years later, Atlanta was home to the largest Jewish community in the South.

Everything changed in 1913, when a 13-year-old girl who worked in a pencil factory was found dead. The manager of the plant, Leo Frank, was the son of Jewish immigrants from Germany. Frank had taken advantage of a business opportunity and moved to Atlanta from New York. He married the daughter of a wealthy Jewish family.

Only Frank and one of his workers were in the factory at the time of the murder. Even though all the evidence pointed to the other man, Frank was the one accused.

In the local press, he was called "the Jew pervert" and his trial became a media circus that fascinated the country. The proceedings were covered in newspapers throughout America. While the New York press called for Frank's release, southern papers agreed that he was the murderer. As the daily *The Jeffersonian* put it: When are the northern Jews going to let up in their insane attempt to bulldoze the state of Georgia?

The jury found Frank guilty and the judge sentenced him to death by hanging. Church bells rang throughout Atlanta and celebrations broke out in the streets. When the governor commuted the sentence to life in prison, the local elite took matters in their own hands.

On August 17, 1915, Frank was dragged out of jail with the consent of the jailers and in the presence of the cream of Atlanta society. He would be hanged from a tree, in accordance with the time-honored tradition.

More than 100 years later, the story of Leo Frank was largely forgotten. Moskowitz notes that Frank is "semi-famous" and mentions the 1998 Broadway musical "Parade" about Frank's trial and lynching. The play won a Tony Award.

Esther Levine, 84, recalls that on the day Frank was lynched, her grandfather stopped working as an itinerant peddler in the area. "The day of Leo Frank's death was the same day my grandfather opened his store," she says. "And it was only as I got older

and read more that we made the correlation. My father never talked about it."

Levine admits she's not familiar with all the details, but she believes that the Leo Frank story reflects a phenomenon that has never disappeared. "I always felt that if you scratch beneath the surface, you'll find antisemitism. And here you have Trump giving permission to bullies and antisemites and people 'anti' a lot of other things."

Indeed, on August 17, far-right commentator Candace Owens tweeted to her millions of followers: "Today marks 109 years since a 13 year old Catholic little girl named Mary Phagan was ruthlessly raped and murdered by a wealthy, power peophile named Leo Frank—President of the local B'nai B'rith chapter. Christians,

let's make her story viral."

Still, Levine remains optimistic. Smiling, she talks about the good life she has had in Georgia. From 1986 until the pandemic, she worked in public relations, getting a chance to host and accompany great writers visiting Atlanta.

She went to the Emhoff event because she believes that Harris and her husband are the future, not Trump. Levine points to the slogan on her T-shirt, "Make America Kvell Again," and says that her daughter designed it for the 2022 campaign. "It's in Yiddish," she says proudly.

I don't speak Yiddish. What does it mean?

"Well, neither do I. But there are words in Yiddish that you have to know."

I know kvetch.

"Kvell is the opposite of that."

Cabinet okays 2025 state budget impacted by war

Rachel Fink

The cabinet on Thursday approved a 2025 state budget that calls for deep spending cuts and tax hikes to cover the ballooning cost of the war. Opposition to the spending plan came from many ministers, first and foremost National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir.

"The budget we have submitted is a very complex one – complex for the ministers, complex for the citizens of the State of Israel. You will see that the costs are spread equally – no one should feel that their world has been destroyed," Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich told ministers at the meeting.

Smotrich unveiled at a Tuesday press conference the outlines of the budget, which calls for a steep 40 billion shekels (\$10.7 billion) in tax increases and spending cuts to close a projected gap between revenues and expenditures and reduce the deficit to 4 percent of gross domestic product.

The need for an austerity budget comes as the war enters its 13th month and has expanded to conflicts with Lebanon's Hezbollah and tit-for-tat attacks between Israel and Iran. The fighting has depressed economic activity, with the Finance Ministry lowering its forecast for economic growth this year for a second time this year to just 0.4 percent.

Meanwhile, the 12-month trailing budget deficit has swelled to 8.5 percent of GDP, well over the 6.6 percent target. That has led to Israel's credit rating being downgraded this year, a move that will increase the government's borrowing costs.

Smotrich's budget calls for a 5 percent across-the-board spending cut across all government ministries. Several ministries, however, will face additional reductions – the budget for the Educa-

tion Ministry and for higher education will be cut by 500 million shekels in 2025, the Transportation Ministry's development budget will be cut by 705 million shekels over 2025-2028 and Health Ministry will spending will be reduced by 275 million shekels annually.

The treasury plan also includes freezes on government allowances, including those for the elderly, the disabled, bereaved families and Holocaust survivors. The minimum wage and public sector salaries will be frozen.

Asked about the harm the freezes would impose on the most vulnerable segments of the population, Smotrich said the ministry was prepared to set aside additional funds for those hardest hit.

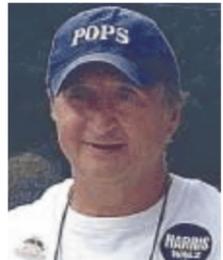
On the revenue side, taxes will effectively go higher in 2025 because the budget calls for freezing adjustments to income tax brackets, hiking the value-added tax by one percentage point to 18 percent and taxing undistributed dividends ("trapped profits"). Other taxes may have to be increased if the cabinet doesn't support enough spending cuts or the proposed tax measures.

Addressing the most controversial aspect of the budget, namely whether benefits will continue to be granted to Haredim who refuse to be drafted into the army, Smotrich waffled, saying there were "societal implications" involved. He refused to say whether he supported financial sanctions on those who do not enlist.

Netanyahu is trying to square Haredi demands that either the government find a way to exempt them from conscription after the High Court of Justice disallowed their traditional exemption. Failing that, they are pushing to fast track legislation that would restore the daycare subsidies for the children draft dodgers.



Esther Levine, left, and Brian Wertheim.



Netanel Slyomovics

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Three Israelis charged with spying on behalf of Iran in exchange for money

Josh Breiner

The State Prosecutor's Office filed indictments on Thursday against three Israelis accused of working on behalf of Iran in exchange for payment.

One indictment, which was filed in the Central District Court in Lod, accuses a couple from the city of collecting information for two Iranian agents over three years.

A second indictment, filed in the Tel Aviv District Court, accuses a resident of the Tel Aviv suburb of Bnei Brak of conducting surveillance of an Israeli nuclear scientist at the direction of Iranian agents who were seeking to assassinate him.

The Lod couple, Rafael and Lala Goliev, who are in their 30s, are charged with aiding the enemy during wartime, an offense that carries a maximum sentence of life in prison or even death. (The death penalty has only been carried out once in Israel's history, against Nazi war criminal Adolph Eichmann.) The couple is also charged with providing information to the enemy with the intent to harm state security.

According to the indictment, the Golievs photographed dozens of sites in Israel, including the Mossad intelligence agency headquarters, military bases, strategic Israel Electric Corporation facilities and the graves of some of those

killed in last year's October 7 Hamas attack on Israel.

Rafael Goliev is also charged with tracking the whereabouts of the wife of an academic from the Tel Aviv-based National Institute for Security Studies and taking pictures of her home and car. The indictment states that the Iranians planned to assassinate her. Goliev allegedly received \$600 for every day on which he worked for Iran and is accused of trying to recruit others to work on Iran's behalf.

According to the indictment, Goliev was asked to find an apartment in Tel Aviv from which it would be possible to observe the intelligence base at Gilot, and for which the couple allegedly received about \$26,000.

The Shin Bet security service and the police say the pair were recruited by a 56-year-old man of Azerbaijani background by the name of Elshan Agayev, who allegedly worked with the Iranians to recruit immigrants to Israel who were originally from the Caucasus region. The Golievs admitted to the allegations against them but claimed that they had no intention to harm Israel's state security.

A second indictment charges Bnei Brak resident Asher Binyamin Weiss with contact with a foreign agent, providing information to the enemy and obstruction of justice. Weiss is accused of conducting surveillance of a senior Is-



A sign in Tehran calling for Israel's destruction, this month.

Majid Asgarpour/Reuters

raeli nuclear scientist at the direction of Iranian agents who were seeking to assassinate him.

Weiss allegedly took pictures of the scientist's home and car and sent the photos to his Iranian contact. The Iranian agent allegedly sent them to a young East Jerusalem resident who was to kill the scientist. The young man and six others from East Jerusalem were indicted last week.

Weiss, who was allegedly paid by the Iranians in thousands of dollars worth of cryptocurrency, is also charged with committing other acts at the direction of the agent, including torching cars, throwing piping onto roads, spraying graffiti and hanging up hundreds of posters inciting civil disobedience.

In recent weeks, dozens of Israelis have been arrested on suspicion of work-

ing on behalf of Iranian intelligence. In addition to the East Jerusalem residents, the Shin Bet and Israel Police said they apprehended suspects from five spying rings.

About a week ago, it was reported that seven residents of Haifa and elsewhere in northern Israel who had immigrated from Azerbaijan were suspected of aiding the enemy during wartime by collecting sensi-

tive intelligence information for Iran.

The seven are suspected of carrying out between 600 and 700 intelligence-gathering missions over roughly a two-year period pertaining to senior Israeli figures and sensitive installations, including the Nevatim and Ramat David air force bases, the Kiryat defense headquarters in Tel Aviv and Iron Dome anti-missile batteries.

French court overturns ban on Israelis at trade show

Daniel Schmil

Israeli defense companies must be allowed to participate in the upcoming Euro-Naval expo in Paris, the Paris Commercial Court ruled on Wednesday.

The successful petition, filed by the Manufacturer's Association of Israel, Israel Shipyards and the Israel-France Chamber of Commerce and Industry, overrules a decision made by the French government and Euronaval organizers banning Israeli companies from participating. The court said banning Israeli companies violated the European Union's free market rules and the principle of equality.

Israel Shipyards said it would be ready for the exhibition's opening, which will take place this upcoming Monday, November 4, and other Israeli companies may also be able to participate despite the tight timetable. Israel Shipyards will exhibit three military ships for patrol and interception, including the Saar S-80 Reshef-class missile corvette – the export version of a multirole ship that will soon enter service in the Israeli Navy.

Euronaval is the largest exhibition in Europe for maritime defense equipment for navies and coast guards. On October 15, the exhibition announced that Israeli companies would

not be allowed to participate. They later softened the ban, saying Israeli companies could only display arms that aren't used in Israel's current war in Lebanon and the Gaza Strip. Now this condition has been rescinded.

Foreign Minister Yisrael Katz praised the court's decision to overturn the "unjust and undemocratic" ban on Israeli companies. In a post on X, he partly credited the achievement to "legal and diplomatic efforts of the Foreign Ministry," calling it "a critical win for justice and a clear message against attempts to weaken Israel in its fight against forces of evil."

Ron Tomer, the president of Israel's Manufacturers

Association, said that the court's decision "made it clear that commercial discrimination based on politics cannot be accepted in the international market. Israeli industry will continue to remain open to the business world and will continue to lead in innovation and in the development of advanced technologies."

However, Eitan Zucker, the CEO of Israel Shipyards, said the victory was not enough to lift the threat of boycott: "Despite the court's ruling, we need to remember that the French government has imposed, in practice, a defense embargo on Israel by trying to prevent the participation

of Israeli companies in the exhibition. This requires [Israeli] decision makers to understand that, as we have seen in other cases during the war, Israel cannot be dependent on other countries and it must rely on the high-level independent capabilities of the Israeli military industry," said Zucker.

Although Zucker may be advocating for his own company, he raises an important point: an embargo doesn't have to be officially declared. Even if the court ended up allowing Israeli companies to participate in this event, if potential buyers are reluctant to engage with Israeli firms, sales across Europe – and potentially beyond

– could suffer. Companies providing arms and defense equipment, closely tied to the ongoing conflict, will be the first to feel the impact, but the ramifications could affect a broader spectrum of Israeli industries.

In June, France barred Israeli companies from displaying defense systems at Eurosatory, a major military trade show near Paris, and went as far as prohibiting Israeli attendance altogether, saying that they could be representatives of Israeli defense firms. After legal intervention, the ban was reversed, but the delay prevented Israeli companies from showcasing products and reaching deals.

New Hezbollah chief's first speech:

Sucessor says he'll 'continue with Nasrallah's war plan'

Jack Khoury

The new secretary-general of Hezbollah, Naim Qassem, delivered a speech on Wednesday for the first time since being appointed as Hassan Nasrallah's successor. "I have taken on a role with very heavy responsibility," said Qassem. "I will continue the war plan set by Nasrallah with changes reflecting developments on the ground," he said, emphasizing that the group will continue to support the residents of Gaza and is prepared for a prolonged war.

In a pre-recorded speech broadcast on Lebanese television, Qassem stated that Hezbollah has managed to recover from the assassination of Nasrallah. "Regarding the beeper [attack], 4,000 people, men and women, many of them community activists, were attacked. It was painful and a severe blow," he described. "Then came the assassination of leader Nasrallah, but within 11 days, we managed to recover and fill the vacuum."

He noted that the organization is now in good operational shape. "Our capabilities are extensive, both on the battlefield and in preparedness for a long war. We don't expect the war to end tomorrow or the day after; all our preparations are based on a protracted conflict," he clarified. "We are causing pain to the enemy, and we attacked the [Israel



Naim Qassem delivering his speech. Reuters/TV/Al Manar TV/Reuters

Defense Forces'] Binyamina base, Haifa and Acre. We are able to continue fighting for an extended period, for months. More than 2 million Israelis are living in shelters, and according to Israeli media, 300,000 are in need of psychological care."

Qassem noted that "If Israel decides to stop the war, we will accept it under conditions suitable to us," but said that no such proposal has come up for discussion. He added that Hezbollah continues to work in coordination with the speaker of the Lebanese Parliament, Nabih Berri, who is responsible for negotiations with Israel.

Qassem claimed that Israel had planned to attack Lebanon regardless of the events of October 7. "Israel doesn't need a reason to attack Lebanon; we acted on October 8 to prevent the implementation of [Prime Minister Benjamin] Netanyahu's new Middle East plan, which the U.S. fully

supports," he said.

The secretary-general also claimed that his organization is not fighting on behalf of Iran, but waging its own battle. "We are not fighting on behalf of anyone in the region," he said, "we are paying the price, and we suffered casualties to achieve stability and freedom – including for the Palestinians." He stated that Iran supports Hezbollah and expects nothing in return.

Qassem also mentioned Netanyahu in his speech, saying, "Netanyahu is terrified of the drone that attacked his home; this time he was saved, maybe his time hasn't come yet. Diplomats contacted us asking how we dared to attack his home; we told them that Israel also hit our leader, and this time Netanyahu was spared. We don't know when he will die, but perhaps some Israeli will kill him, or perhaps he'll die during one of his speeches."

Int'l federation suspends Israel's main LGBTQ advocacy group

Linda Dayan

A major international LGBTQ federation has suspended the membership of the Agudah, Israel's leading LGBTQ advocacy organization, and revoked its bid to hold the federation's annual conference in Tel Aviv. "Even the possibility of voting on such a bid in their home country would have been at odds with the unequivocal solidarity for the Palestinian people," a statement from ILGA World, which is comprised of over 2,000 organizations from across the globe, read.

The decision came amid uproar from member groups over a bid to host the conference in Israel. Some 90 organizations filed an emergency proposal saying that "members were shocked to see the bid from Aguda to host the next ILGA World conference in Tel Aviv." It added, "Clearly, the existence of Arab, Iranian, Muslim, Palestinians, and many more nationals from countries opposing the Israeli colonizing policy and actions are not even taken into account, let alone their safety! This is another act of homo-nationalism to invisibilise [sic] the LGBTQIA+ community opposing the apartheid."

The proposal took issue with a speaker suggested in the Tel Aviv bid – Amir Ohana, Israel's first openly gay Knesset speaker, who is a member of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's right-wing Likud party. It said his inclusion was "nothing less than a direct endorsement and promotion

of the Israeli regime."

It continued, "Putting into vote the holding of the ILGA World conference in the capital of an apartheid state that has been engaged in an active occupation since 1948, with renewed justification since October 7th 2023 in the name of 'self-defense', and not seeing it as part of a larger politics of pink-washing is shameful and unacceptable."

The ILGA responded by saying it supported the emergency motion, and that "[t]he ILGA World Board is also reviewing the Aguda's compliance with our Constitution and has decided to suspend the organization from our membership to allow for that to happen."

The ILGA decision will not affect the Aguda's operations, activities or budgets, but it does represent a blow to Israeli civil society groups amid the Gaza war.

The Agudah responded with a statement saying, "We are deeply disappointed that ILGA has chosen to boycott those who work for LGBTQ+ rights and strive toward a more just society."

"For fifty years, the Aguda – The Association for LGBTQ+ Equality in Israel – has worked to support the LGBTQ+ community and uphold human rights for all, including supporting LGBTQ+ individuals in the Arab community and Palestinian asylum seekers persecuted for their sexual and gender identities," the statement continued.

"The Israeli LGBTQ+ identity embraces both service and contribution to the state

as citizens, while continuing to fight for the values of democracy and human rights in the society in which we live," it continued. "As a community, we should not bear responsibility for government policy, and we expect the international community to support liberal values rather than boycott them."

The Aguda considers itself apolitical and representative of the LGBTQ+ community across political lines. Despite this, it has taken a significant role in the protests against the Netanyahu government's judicial overhaul plan, as the anti-judiciary legislation threatens major consequences for LGBTQ+ rights.

The Aguda's activities include running IGY, the nation's LGBTQ+ youth group. It also provides resources for municipalities regarding the community and is involved in activism, legal aid, emotional support hotlines and more. It also runs Beit El-Meem, a shelter for LGBTQ+ Arabs, including asylum seekers from the Palestinian Territories who are under threat because of their sexual or gender identity.

The International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association started as a United Kingdom-based advocacy group in 1978. It has consultative status at the United Nations and represents six regions: Pan-Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean and Oceania. It hosts regional conferences and training programs, and also conducts research about state-sponsored homophobia and transphobia.

Kuwaiti influencer slammed over claim on Gazan women

Conservatives attack him for saying women are resorting to prostitution

Naghm Zbeedat

Kuwaiti media influencer Meshal Al-Nami sparked widespread backlash in the Arab world after posting a video online, in which he claimed that women in Gaza are resorting to prostitution in exchange for aid and necessities. Al-Nami's statements led to legal charges against him in Kuwait, where he is accused of bringing dishonor to Gazan women.

In a video posted over the weekend and watched almost two million times, Al-Nami asserts that an individual affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood told him that "the situation in Gaza is so dire that women are resorting to prostitution." The individual named a social media figure who recently visited Gaza as the source of the information.

As criticism emerged, Al-Nami emphasized that these statements are not his own. However, he did not reveal his source, who he quoted as saying: "He [the social media figure] asked the women, 'Why would you do that [prostitution]?' and one woman responded, 'We need to provide for our family and children.'"

Most of those responding to Al-Nami's claims on social media see them as an insult to the women of Gaza, who live in a deeply religious society. They have slammed him for "offending the women's honor." A few of the comments and response videos side with Al-Nami, saying he is not to blame for spreading the word about the dire situation in Gaza.

A statement signed by 17 Kuwaiti medical professionals who recently visited Gaza on a relief mission, refutes Al-Nami's allegations, describing how a medical team walked through the streets of Gaza, meeting women who displayed "chastity, dignity, and resilience" – and therefore it's not possible that prostitution exists in the enclave.

The statement also emphasized that "the state of Kuwait has been, is, and will remain a steadfast custodian of our central and pivotal issue: The issue of Palestine and Al-Aqsa Mosque."

"We could not imagine that even the most extreme elements of the Zionist entity would stoop to attacking the honor and dignity of Gaza's women as a cheap weapon in this battle," the statement reads, "the people of Gaza, led by their women who embody steadfastness and perseverance, will not be shaken by the lies of slanderers or the fabrications of deceivers."

The U.S. State Department 2024 Trafficking in Persons Report does not refer to the alleged phenomenon of Gazan women turning to prostitution in exchange for aid, but mentions that the ongoing war has made Palestinians who are trying to flee Gaza "vulnerable to human traffick-

ing... Egyptian authorities, independent brokers and fixers, and Hamas charged exorbitant fees for exit permits to leave through Rafah crossing, leaving these populations vulnerable to trafficking through debt bondage and other exploitative practices."

The report also mentions that sexual exploitation of Palestinian women and girls in Gaza, the West Bank and Israel is likely to be "severely under-reported" due to "stigma and cultural taboos."

Meanwhile, the Vice President of the Civil Conservative Party in Kuwait, Ahmad Al-Hamadi, has filed an official complaint against Al-Nami with the Kuwaiti Public Prosecutor for assault and abuse. He remarked, "This step is taken in solidarity with Gaza and its free people."

Kuwaiti writer Hamid Bu Yabes also filed a complaint against Al-Nami with the public prosecutor. Bu Yabes said his complaint is a response to an "unforgivable great sin, a cheap and ugly assault on the honor, reputation, and dignity of the virtuous, unsuspecting, and pious women of Gaza." In the last few days, others on social media have claimed to be initiating legal action against Al-Nami.

Adham Abu Selmiya, a Palestinian writer and activist, responded to Al-Nami's claims with a video of a Gazan woman urging the people of the Gaza Strip to hold onto their faith. Abu Selmiya wrote that "the women of Gaza have paid with their own pure blood" during the war, while Al-Nami is just a "lowly scum" who will be remembered as a "lesson in moral decline."

Tamer Qadih, a Palestinian activist, expressed on his X account, "How painful it is that amid the genocide, our honor has become the subject of discussion, debate, attack, defense, and revenge." He added: "I never imagined we would reach this level of injustice, depravity, and insult."

This is not the first instance the sensitive subject of women's sexuality in Gaza has become a topic causing consternation about the women's "honor" rather than a discussion on their safety and suffering.

In September, a Palestinian doctor from Gaza sparked controversy on social media after claiming that a tent in a displaced person's camp has been designated for marital relations between couples who are trying to get pregnant.

Israa Saleh, a doctor who specializes in sexual and reproductive health, explained on a popular podcast that "the long duration of the war has led people to find basic and simple ways to cope and accept their reality." Some commenters on social media said that Saleh's account was offensive and claimed that sexual activity is a "private issue, not a public health issue."



Gazan women at a refugee camp in Khan Yunis. The subjects have no connection to the article's content. Mohammed Salem/Reuters

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HAARETZ

A siege on an enemy isn't a war crime

Giora Eiland defends and explains his contentious 'generals' plan, which Haaretz deemed a call to commit war crimes in an editorial. He counters that a siege is an acceptable tactic in international law, and that he got the idea from the U.S. army

Opinion Giora Eiland

A Haaretz editorial (October 10) criticized me harshly and I was even accused of proposing a felonious plan to end the war. The headline was "Is Israel really implementing a plan of siege and starvation in Gaza?" (In Hebrew the headline was: "Conniving generals.") Well, I'm aware of my many vices, but conniving isn't one of them. I'll restrain myself from commenting on the personal aspect and try to clarify more important points.

The grave errors that have been made from the war's beginning until now: The first act to take when examining strategy is to define the narrative, that is, to explain the story. Eighteen years ago the Gaza Strip became de facto an independent state. It had all the markings of a state: clear borders, a stable central regime, an independent foreign policy and its own army. Internally, a process identical to the one that took place in Germany during the '30s of the 20th century developed in Gaza. The party that won the elections in 2006 – Hamas – succeeded in uniting and merging the party and all the institutions operating in the Strip and create a consolidated nation that united on the basis of support for their leaders and their ideology.

The only right way, therefore, to describe what happened on October 7, 2023 is this: The state of Gaza launched a murderous war against the state of Israel. Instead of understanding this reality, Israel's govern-

ment, the IDF and the media adopted the erroneous narrative that the Hamas terror organization may have committed a heinous act, but those crimes have nothing to do with Gaza's "innocent" population. This erroneous narrative led to a strategy that was based entirely, and still is, on one move: military pressure.

Leaning on military pressure alone is a grave mistake. Consider this example: what would have happened if the small state of Luxembourg carried out a similar act, that is, attacked Belgium by surprise, murdered 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and abducted 250 Belgians. It's likely to assume that before carrying out any military move, Belgium would have closed the passes between the two countries and imposed a siege on Luxembourg. Israel should have done exactly that. Had we done it, we could have returned all the hostages a long time ago, ended the war and even spared the deaths of thousands of Palestinian civilians. In such a scenario the Gazan government would have had no choice but to compromise.

A partial proof for that can be found in the way the only hostage deal so far was achieved. Israel received 10 hostages every day and released only three "small fry" prisoners for every hostage. The IDF wasn't required to make any retreat as a condition for the deal. How come? Simple: Until that deal, two supply trucks entered Gaza every day. Hamas demand-



Soldiers at Erez crossing gate after trucks passed through delivering humanitarian aid to Gaza, May.

Ohad Zwigenberg/AP

ed an increase in the number of trucks to 200. That was its most critical need, so it displayed greater willingness to compromise. The Israeli mistake was that we didn't make sure the supply amount would be reduced again to two trucks on the ninth day of the deal, the day Hamas broke it.

Hamas' advantage: Two conflicts are waged in the Gaza Strip, a military conflict and a political one. Militarily, the IDF achieved an impressive victory. From the civilian aspect, however, Hamas is winning. It is maintaining its political control

in the Strip for two reasons. First because Israel stopped every initiative for an alternative government; second because Hamas controls the most important aspect – the economy.

Hamas is the one distributing the supplies in Gaza, and as a result it gains three advantages. First, it is seen as a government that takes care of the citizens. Second, it gets rich from the supply, which it receives for nothing but sells for an exorbitant price. Third, with the considerable funds it accumulated, not only does it pay the people loyal to it,

but recruits more combatants to replace those who were killed.

So what is to be done? For months I've been arguing that the best move is to agree to end the war in Gaza in exchange for one condition – returning all the hostages in one go. But what is the right thing to do if this condition is not kept, whether because of us or because of the other side? My argument is that continuing the military acts as they have been carried out for a year will achieve no purpose. In six months' time we'll find ourselves in

the same situation exactly, only with more slain soldiers and no living hostages. We must therefore think of another strategy, one that can create real pressure on the other side. The only solution which can achieve that lies in taking territory. This step is intended for security needs only, and will be in effect until an agreement is reached. Honor and land are seen as the sole values that guide Arab leaders – that's why I proposed occupying the north of the Strip.

Haaretz's editorial carried the following words, out of appalling ignorance:

"Eiland's plan is a war crime and is opposed to UN Security Council Resolution 2334, which stipulates that land must not be seized by force, that is, in an act of war." I want to mention two things in this context. First, UN Resolution 2334 deals with robbing Palestinian land in the West Bank for Jewish settlements. This resolution has nothing to do with what I suggest. Second, it can be understood from the editorial that occupying territory in war is a forbidden move, and is even seen as a war crime. This argument

It is no coincidence that the United States demanded of Israel before the campaign in Rafah to move the maximum number of civilians to another area. That's what we did and the number of civilian casualties in that area was small.

I propose we carry out the exact same campaign in the north of the Strip. The territory must be occupied in two stages. In the first stage, the civilians must be evacuated, and in the second stage we must act against the terrorists who remain there. Since Israel already surrounds this territory, from the Netzarim corridor northward, since November 2023 the most effective and economic way (in terms of casualties) to occupy it is by laying a siege, not by assault. Siege is seen as an acceptable, approved military tactic by international law. While preparing the so-called "generals' plan," I copied from the official "guide" of the United States' army – the chapter dealing with siege.

To sum up: This is the plan to occupy the north of the Strip that I proposed to the IDF already 10 months ago. Had we carried it out in time, the war would have been over and all the hostages would have been in our hands. Had Hamas understood that not returning hostages means losing 35 percent of the Strip's territory, it would have compromised long ago. And no, there is no component in my proposal that is in violation of humanitarian international law.

Major General (ret.) Eiland was IDF operations chief and head of the National Security Council.

Had Hamas understood that not returning hostages means losing 35 percent of Gaza's territory, it would have compromised long ago.

is totally groundless. The most common and legitimate act in war is occupying territory. Thinking territory must not be occupied is tantamount to saying it's forbidden to cut vegetables while making salad.

Since it is allowed to conquer territory in war, the question is how this should be done. One possibility is to do it in territory where hundreds of thousands of civilians are present. The inevitable result will be a high number of innocent people killed. The other possibility is to act first to make sure there are no civilians there.

Will Arab Americans sink Harris' White House bid?

Analysis Ben Samuels

WASHINGTON – One of the most persistent storylines of the 2024 U.S. presidential election has been the Democratic nominees' failure to quell concerns from voters disillusioned by the Biden administration's policies toward the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

When U.S. President Joe Biden announced he was dropping out of the race in July, many of these frustrated voters – hundreds of thousands of whom reside in battleground states where their votes could very well swing the election – expressed optimism that new nominee Kamala Harris would adopt a more progressive track. She has accordingly taken pains to articulate her vision for a potential two-state solution with a cease-fire to the Gaza war being the first necessary step, hinting at potential changes should she be elected.

On the campaign trail, however, she has undoubtedly prioritized securing the support of moderates and portions of the electorate more traditionally sympathetic toward Israel over the Palestinians.

To the Harris campaign and many of its liberal surrogates, this should not be considered a binary issue and approaching it as such is among the core reasons the conflict has been so intractable.

However, her approach – and the rhetoric of her surrogates – during the campaign's home stretch has done nothing but stick a finger in the eye of her disillusioned base. And all this at a time where she needs to secure support from every corner she can find it.

One of her biggest own goals, in the eyes of these voters, was the Democratic National Convention's failure to afford time to a Palestinian American speaker. The Uncommitted National Movement provided the DNC and the Harris campaign with a list of speakers and prepared remarks, in an effort to indicate that it was not trying to antagonize or self-sabotage the party.

Months after this request

was ignored, the campaign has again declined to provide any of these speakers with a platform in hopes of securing their vote. Instead, Harris has prioritized the support of "moderates" like Liz Cheney – one of the Republican Party's most vocal foreign policy hawks for years before she found herself exiled from the GOP.

Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump has seized upon Harris' embrace of Cheney to illustrate why he deserves the support of the Arab American community. He has parlayed this into support from leading



Arab Americans protesting in Michigan.

Rebecca Cook/Reuters

Kamala Harris' approach during the campaign's home stretch has done nothing but stick a finger in the eye of her disillusioned base.

community members while also emphasizing the support of socially conservative Muslims, as Republican operatives funded by megadonors have attempted to further drive a wedge using bad-faith tactics and oversimplified arguments amid the backdrop of antisemitic tropes.

Even Harris' traditional Democratic allies, such as former U.S. President Bill

Clinton, have been overtly dismissive of these voters while trafficking in bizarre oversimplifications of their own.

"Hamas did not care about a homeland for the Palestinians. They wanted to kill Israelis and make Israel uninhabitable. I got news for them – they were there first before their faith existed. They were there in the time of King David in the southern-most tribes, had Judea and Samaria," he told a Michigan rally. "When I read people in Michigan are thinking about not voting because they're mad at the Biden administration for honoring its historic obligation to try to keep Israel from being destroyed, I think that's a mistake," he added.



Arab Americans protesting in Michigan.

Rebecca Cook/Reuters

Sen. Bernie Sanders, meanwhile, has attempted to directly engage with these voters, stressing that Trump would be far worse than Harris on this issue and there is potential to move her in the desired policy direction.

Harris' running mate, Tim Walz, directly addressed these voters in an interview with CBS earlier this week, saying: "There's one ticket here that is going to find the pathway to stabilization in the Middle East, but also one that is going to respect their human rights here."

While this may be true, the Harris campaign is heading into the weekend before the election leaving many of these voters on the table. Whether or not this serves as a validation of her strategy or a precursor to her defeat will be clear soon enough.

NORTH

Continued from page 1

are still housed and employed without adequate protection. Again, we see that employment in conflict zones, with Home Front Command approval, does not guarantee the safety of foreign workers." The Hotline for Refugees and Migrants added, "It is unacceptable that migrants are sent to work in areas defined as closed military zones, without any protective measures, while Israeli citizens are asked to evacuate."

In the later incident, 60-year-old Mina Hasson and her 30-year-old son, Karmi Raja, were killed after a rocket hit the area in which they were picking olives, just east of Haifa. A 70-year-old man was lightly wounded in the incident, as was a 21-year-old woman who was hit by shrapnel – most likely from an Iron Dome interceptor.

The Israeli army said that some 25 rockets were launched at northern Israel during that barrage, with some intercepted.

On Wednesday, two men were, respectively, seriously and moderately wounded by a rocket strike in an open

area, also near Metula. Rambam Hospital reported that the two, in their 30s and 40s, sustained shrapnel injuries.

Earlier this month, Nisan Meeram, a 42-year-old Thai foreign worker, was killed in Kibbutz Yiron in the Upper Galilee. In March, a foreign worker from India was killed by an antitank missile in an orchard in Margalioth.

Since the start of the war, 37 civilians have been killed by fire from Lebanon, including six foreign workers. Additionally, one civilian died in a car accident during an air raid siren, and an approximately 80-year-old woman was injured on her way to a shelter and later died.

Following the incident in which Meeram was killed, Interior Minister Moshe Arbel said, "It is illegal to employ foreign workers in evacuated communities." However, Population and Immigration Authority guidelines in place at the time of the incident permitted the employment of foreign workers in accordance with Home Front Command instructions. On that day, Home Front Command guidelines for Yiron allowed work in locations from which a protected area could be reached within the available warning time.

COHEN

Continued from page 1

In addition to the demonstrations, Yotam and his family also traveled to the U.S. as part of an independent family delegation, this time without support from the Hostages and Missing Families Forum or the government's hostages directorate.

While Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu addressed the UN in September, Yotam and his family held a series of meetings with key U.S. government officials, senators, and Jewish organizations.

"We want to shift the narrative in the U.S.," Yotam says, privately hoping that their meetings had an impact. "Do these meetings help convince people? Does anything come of them? I don't know. Some cry, some shed a tear, get emotional. I prefer that they hear us, not others. I believe it helps. And even if it doesn't, I'd

rather take action than sit at home."

Yotam, three years older than his brother Nimrod and twin sister Romi, also served as a tank crewman. He was on leave from the army when Nimrod was kidnapped. "He is no longer just my brother; he's long stopped being just private. My father told me recently, 'We've stopped being private people.'"

Yotam speaks with painful honesty, fearing that his brother will return changed. "The brother who went... that weekend will not be the same brother who comes back, if he comes back. It's terrifying to think about, but he won't be the same person."

"Nimrod was a quiet, introverted, compromising kid – always there for support, never the center of attention. I say this with a lump in my throat, but I don't know what kind of brother will return. I really don't. I've known my brother for 20 years, but I feel in my heart like I don't know him anymore. I don't know who Nimrod really is."

PM

Continued from page 1

that he is preparing for his testimony. Usually defendants devote weeks to reading thousands of protocol pages and to simulations, but not him. At least once his lawyers had to turn around and go back when a meeting was canceled at the last moment due to an unplanned development. This week one of the prime minister's men said, "The testimony cannot take place at the beginning of December, for two reasons – running the war doesn't enable him to prepare for his testimony, and regular attendance at the Jerusalem District Court at this time endangers his life and the lives of all those in the room."

"There are serious threats on Netanyahu, no doubt of that," a person familiar with the issue told Haaretz. "Everyone saw what happened to the window of the house in Caesarea. After the assassinations in Gaza, Lebanon and Iran, there's a special motivation to hurt senior Israelis."

However, the source said, "the prime minister has the protection of the Air Force and (Shin Bet), whose duty is to ensure he's in a safe space within a very short time after the alert. We don't want to live in a state in which the prime minister lives in a bunker 24/7 like Nasrallah and doesn't run things – including testify in his trial in a safe place."

Channel 13 journalist Avi Glickman reported on Wednesday that there is such a place: the basement in the Tel Aviv District Court, where the trial of Israeli mafia leader Yitzhak



Netanyahu in court for his criminal trial, July.

Oren Ben Haim

Abergil took place.

A request to postpone Netanyahu's testimony would strengthen the already obvious conclusion that a criminal defendant cannot serve as prime minister. Even without it, Netanyahu is constantly under suspicion that the criminal procedure against him is affecting the decisions he takes – from the coup to what seems like striving for an eternal war.

This week the High Court of Justice heard a petition from hostages' relatives who asserted that Netanyahu is the sole decider in the hostages matter, contrary to the law. The state, in a highly irregular move, did not respond in writing to the petition. "You have put the court in an awkward situation," acting court President Yitzhak Amit scolded the prosecution's representative, who was forced to admit: "We cannot argue today." Despite this, Amit insisted on holding the hearing.

Haaretz has learned that the reason for the farce is yet another collision between Netanyahu and Defense

Minister Yoav Gallant. The state's draft response to the court, which was based on the position of the Prime Minister's Office, alleged that he makes decisions together with other senior officials, headed by the defense minister. But Gallant, who was asked to comment on this version, didn't cooperate. He maintained that Netanyahu was the one who appointed the negotiating team and is instructing it directly, sometimes changing the mandate that had been decided on in the security discussions. Gallant said the prime minister did consult him on some of the decisions, but marginalized him and acted behind his back when it came to other decisions.

The October 7 massacre was supposed to cut short Netanyahu's political career. A year later he's bolstering his position and getting stronger in the polls. The war is continuing, the hostages are rotting in Gaza, the prime minister's testimony is in doubt and the trial, which a purposeful management would have brought to the home stretch by now, is very far from the finish line.

CUTS

Continued from page 1

Beyond munitions issues, the IDF notes the Oketz canine unit has lost many dogs used for explosives detection during the conflict. Some dogs were killed or wounded, while others became unfit for service due to operational strain. No replacements are currently available.

Additionally, soldiers from the Combat Engineering Corps with experience identifying high-risk buildings have been reassigned to fight

in southern Lebanon. The IDF also faces a shortage of D9 bulldozer operators, who play a crucial role in locating and clearing explosives ahead of troop entry. To compensate, the IDF has begun training new soldiers in these engineering roles.

In response, the IDF stated, "For over a year, army forces have been employing a variety of methods across all sectors to achieve combat goals, including airstrikes, ground maneuvers, and more. Combat techniques are chosen to maximize effectiveness and ensure completion. During ground maneuvers, IDF forces use techniques

including damaging enemy infrastructure, neutralizing explosives and observational means, and other operations to protect the safety of our forces – a basic, fundamental and clear operating principle in the IDF's operations."

Regarding the shortage of Oketz dogs, the IDF commented, "The deployment of unit dogs and handlers is a limited resource. The unit operates across all combat zones and is allocated according to operational needs. Since the onset of Operation Iron Swords, the unit has been undergoing expansion to meet mission requirements."

In Israel and across the region, it's a waiting game

Continued from page 1

the United States, the fear in Europe is that in a second-term Trump will cast off all restraint and play into the hands of Russia and China. Likewise, a Trump victory could reignite a rise of populist candidates espousing autocratic tendencies in Western countries.

Some observers are warning that we are on the brink of a new era that could spell the start of the collapse of the Western model of liberal democracy, which gained traction after World War II (and again after the collapse of the Soviet Union). In connection to this, a British expert recently quoted Ernest Hemingway from his novel "The Sun Also Rises," about how one goes bankrupt: "Two ways. Gradually, then suddenly."

Few if any of these thoughts are bothering Netanyahu, who is not such a great democrat himself. The prime minister looks like he's bent on exploiting the war to hinder the opposition and delay the legal proceedings against him. The latest example of this came this week. Netanyahu is utilizing the concrete threat manifested by Hezbollah, which launched a drone that shattered a window of his private residence in Caesarea, for multiple purposes. He's apparently going to try to leverage the incident to restrict demonstrations near his house. The incessant occupation with the danger posed by drones reflects a genuine apprehension in the family, but it has another clear, practical implication: Netanyahu is already citing it as an excuse to defer his court testimony, which is slated to begin December

2, by claiming that Hezbollah could target the district court building in Jerusalem.

Still, there are aspects of a second Trump term that should be of concern to Netanyahu too. On Wednesday, Trump issued a call for peace to be achieved in Lebanon, which was interpreted as an attempt to butter up voters of Arab origin in Michigan, a swing state. He didn't bother mentioning Hezbollah. Trump's running mate, JD Vance, this week spoke out against a future U.S. attack on Iran and made it clear, more or less, that in his view, the nuclear project is Israel's problem.

Candidates for high positions in foreign policy in a Republican administration noted that they prefer relationships with friendly countries that require "low maintenance." Even irrespective of the threat Trump poses to global security and democratic regimes, it's not going to be an easy ride for Israel.

Weakened, but still very dangerous

As for Iran, the updated assessment in Israel as of Thursday is that the regime in Tehran is determined to attack soon. The attack on Iran is perceived in Israel as a major operational success. It's not just a case of a marketing effort to allay the fears of the worried citizens. The air force apparently did serious damage to Iran's air defense systems, its early-detection capabilities and manufacturing sites of missiles and drones (Israel was very worried about Iran's rate of production). The attack will also disrupt the export of Iranian weapons to Russia. It was not only a demonstration of capabilities, thus threatening the

nuclear project, but a concrete degrading of Iran's potential to inflict damage.

Iran will recover in the future, as it has in the past. In the meantime, the next American president could find him or herself with an accelerated round of blows between Iran and Israel, even before entering the Oval Office. The Israel Defense Forces General Staff is positively noting the unusual position of weakness in which the Shi'ite axis finds itself in the Middle East. It's not only Iran itself: Its two primary proxies around Israel – Hezbollah and Hamas – were mauled and can't assist in its defense at this time.

The military is concerned about entering into a spiral of a war of assassinations against Iran.

A response by Hezbollah wasn't really taken into account before the Israeli attack last Saturday. That's quite astonishing, given that Iran built up the Lebanese organization as a successful means to deter Israel from attacking it over the course of more than two decades. Hezbollah is stubborn and bothersome, and is showing certain signs of recovery (as the intensifying drone attacks this week demonstrated), but it remains far from its previous might.

The THAAD interception systems provided by the United States are still in Israel, in order to strengthen the country's defensive deployment. But

the coordination with the United States is not only defensive. American generals were shown battle plans depicting the specific capture of villages in southern Lebanon, so that they would persuade their superiors in Washington of the need to support Israel's tactical moves. This, in a nutshell, is the American policy toward the Israeli operation in Lebanon: extensive aid in defense, support and legitimization for the offensive moves, but also an expectation of transparency and a certain level of restraint by Israel. This deal is easier and more understandable for the military than it is for the political arena. And it's working better in Lebanon than in the Gaza Strip.

The drone that was fired at Caesarea unhinged some cabinet ministers. In a security consultation, they demanded an appropriate Zionist response against Iran, beyond the attack last week, even though intelligence attributed the Caesarea operation to Hezbollah, not the regime in Tehran. Some ministers urged the assassination of Iran's prime minister (and were surprised to learn that there is no such position) or the prime minister of Lebanon (the army officers were obliged to explain that he's a Sunni, not a Shi'ite).

The IDF is concerned about entering into a spiral of a war of assassinations against Iran. That would be problematic in terms of international law and require an absurd level of security for every Israeli cabinet minister and VIP. Is that what they want, the army staff ask – not to be able to leave the house without a private Iron Dome? As it is, every week the Shin



Israeli soldiers on a mission in southern Lebanon on Monday.

Gil Elyahu

Bet security service is uncovering Iranian attempts to recruit Israelis to attack local security personnel or politicians.

On Thursday, the Biden administration launched a new blitz of visits by senior officials, in the hope of in negotiations on an agreement in Lebanon next week. The defense establishment is pleased with the draft agreement that was presented by the U.S. The clause of greatest interest to the officers relates to the agreement's enforcement by international forces (UNIFIL, now weak, is set to be upgraded) and also by preserving Israel's right to act against violations by Hezbollah (it's still difficult to see how this will happen in reality).

In recent weeks, Netanyahu has been talking a good deal about the need to close the Syria-Lebanon border to the movement of weapons and armed militants. That's

a substantive point, but in the army they're wondering whether this isn't just another excuse – like the halakhic ban on leaving the Philadelphia corridor in Gaza, the rock of our existence that suddenly cropped up in the sands of the Strip. There's been a lively discussion in Israel lately about the state of the Bashar Assad regime in Syria, and over the question of whether the Iranian failures will help drive a wedge between it and the Shi'ite axis. The Sunni states in the Gulf are also pondering this. The United Arab Emirates is offering to rebuild the international airport in Damascus, which has been frequently targeted by Israeli warplanes. Israel has told the UAE that it won't interfere with that project, but if the weapons smuggling from there is renewed, it won't hesitate to bomb it again.

In the meantime, Naim Qassem – Hassan Nasrallah's successor as secre-

tary general of Hezbollah – has been thrust willfully to center stage. On Wednesday, he delivered a speech whose broadcast was cut off midway, by what looked like a cyberattack. Defense Minister Yoav Gallant was quick to write on X that "the appointment is temporary, the countdown has begun."

Dr. Shimon Shapira, an expert on Hezbollah, tells Haaretz that Qassem's appointment to replace the commanders who were killed in Israeli attacks, like the series of high-level appointments in the terror organization's military arm, was made in close coordination with Iran. The 71-year-old Qassem, a chemistry teacher by profession, spent more than three decades in the shadow of Nasrallah as his bland deputy. He has no significant military experience, and his connection with the military commanders in Hezbollah was insubstantial.

Under Israel's military pressure, Shapira says, Hezbollah "has reverted to behaving as it did in the 1980s. The organization's political and military leadership has gone underground and is afraid for its life. Since mid-September the organization has stopped issuing announcements about its personnel who are killed, though previously it did so meticulously."

At the same time, Shapira suggests that we should not belittle the organization's power of resistance. Its fighters have retreated to the second line of villages in southern Lebanon, which are more distant from the border, and some have withdrawn to north of the Litani River – but no white flag has been raised. "They still have considerable military capability. If no agreement is reached that will satisfy them and the Iranians, they will go on fighting," Shapira maintains.

Haaretz publisher clarifies remarks, gov't threatens to sanction newspaper

At the Haaretz conference in London, Amos Schocken stated, among other things, that Israel is carrying out a second Nakba. In response, several ministers and government offices announced measures against Haaretz and expressed intentions to propose new restrictions on freedom of speech

Ido David Cohen

Communications Minister Shlomo Karhi has launched a renewed campaign urging a government boycott of Haaretz following remarks made by Haaretz publisher Amos Schocken at a conference in London on Sunday.

In his speech at the conference, co-organized by Haaretz, Schocken stated, "The Netanyahu government doesn't care about imposing a cruel apartheid regime on the Palestinian population. It dismisses the costs of both sides for defending the settlements while fighting the Palestinian freedom fighters, that Israel calls terrorists."

Following the publication of the speech, Minister Karhi sought to revive an initiative he had first pushed a year ago – to end government advertising in the newspaper and cancel all subscriptions for state employees, including those in the IDF, police, prison service, government ministries, and state-owned companies.

In his English-language speech, which was aired on



Amos Schocken speaking at the Haaretz conference in London this week.

Amber Pollack

Wednesday on Channel 14 and subsequently circulated in Israeli media, Schocken further remarked, "In a sense, what is taking place now in the occupied territories and in parts of Gaza is a second Nakba ... A Palestinian state must be established and the only way to achieve this, I think, is to apply sanctions against Israel, against

the leaders who oppose it and against the settlers."

On Wednesday, Schocken clarified his remarks. "Given the reactions to my labeling Palestinians who commit acts of terror as freedom fighters, I have reconsidered my words. Many freedom fighters around the world and throughout history, possibly even those who fought

for Israel's establishment, committed terrible acts of terrorism, harming innocent people to achieve their goals.

"I should have said: Freedom fighters, who also resort to terror tactics – which must be combated. The use of terror is not legitimate."

"As for Hamas, they are not freedom fighters as their ideology essentially states, 'It's all ours, others should leave.' I have stated, though not in the conference speech but in an article, that the organizers and perpetrators of the October 7 attacks should be severely punished.

Schocken added, "There are Palestinian freedom fighters who do not use terrorism. Mahmoud Abbas, upon assuming his role as head of the Palestinian Authority, declared his decision to renounce terror and pursue only a diplomatic path. Perhaps for this reason, Netanyahu avoided establishing a relationship with him and chose Hamas instead.

"In my speech, I reiterated what I have written in several articles during the war: Israel's long-term victory will be achieved through the release of all hostages and the es-

tablishment of a Palestinian state, ending both apartheid and terrorism.

"My speech in London concluded with this: Zionism is still a justified idea for the Jewish people, but the conduct of successive Israeli governments have distorted its meaning beyond recognition. Israel needs to be put back on to the right path."

Channel 14's broadcast omitted the first part of Schocken's statement: "If we want to ensure Israel's survival and security, and also to help the normalization of the lives of the Palestinian, our neighbors, [a Palestinian state must be established]."

In a proposal Karhi's office submitted on Thursday, the minister requested that "the government shall not enter into new contracts with Haaretz, including individual subscriptions for state employees, nor renew any existing contracts; all current agreements with Haaretz, including personal subscriptions, will be canceled as legally feasible. The Government Advertising Bureau shall direct Haaretz to cease all advertisements, including statutory notices, regardless

of payment status, and seek refunds for any existing payments. No further ads shall be placed in the publication."

Karhi's current proposal is identical to the one submitted to Cabinet Secretary Yossi Fuchs on November 23, 2023. At the time, Karhi accused Haaretz of "defeatist, false propaganda" during wartime.

The proposal also stipulates that "the government, its ministries, employees, and all state-funded entities, shall not be in contact in any way with Haaretz, including through subscriptions."

His proposal noted, "Since the beginning of the war, numerous complaints have accused Haaretz of adopting a harmful stance, undermining the war's objectives and weakening both our military efforts and social resilience. Some publications may even cross the criminal threshold defined in sections of the penal code, reserved exclusively for wartime. Although the criminality of its publications is being examined by the relevant authorities, it should be noted that Haaretz is generously funded by the Israeli public through government-

purchased advertisements and subscriptions."

The proposal was submitted without a legal opinion from the attorney general, who is expected to oppose it.

On Thursday, Interior Ministry Director-General Ronen Peretz instructed his office's media and communications department to immediately halt all advertisements and collaborations with Haaretz, either directly or through the Government Advertising Bureau.

Peretz wrote, "These remarks provoke revulsion and reflect a severe detachment from core values, especially at a time when Israel is engaged in a just war following Hamas' deadly October 7 attack. Given the seriousness of these remarks... we cannot and do not intend to remain silent in the face of harm to IDF soldiers and the state's efforts to protect its citizens."

Similarly, the mayor of Neshar, a city in northern Israel, wrote on X, "I have instructed the city spokesperson and treasurer to stop any advertisements in Haaretz or any publication associated with it. Only a consumer boycott, using public funds, will

be effective."

Attorney Michael Sfarid told Haaretz that the government-led actions are illegal. "Advertising budgets belong to the public; Karhi and [Interior Minister] Moshe Arbel cannot distribute them as they please. These are brazen attempts to deny budgets to Haaretz for ideological reasons, and they aren't even trying to hide the illegality. This is a blatant example of discrimination based on political views and the politicization of public resources to silence a political camp and delegitimize leftist discourse. Mr. Schocken's remarks are familiar in left-wing discourse."

Sfarid, representing the organizations Zulat, the Movement for Fair Regulation, and the Democratic Bloc in their call for a criminal investigation into Channel 14 for incitement to genocide and war crimes against Palestinians, added, "For some reason, Channel 14 isn't on Israel's sanctions list, despite broadcasting criminal statements that Israel has pledged to investigate and address before the International Court of Justice in The Hague."

In response to Schocken's remarks, Justice Minister Yariv Levin sent a letter on Thursday to Attorney General Gali Baharav-Miara, requesting legislation to limit freedom of speech.

"I ask that you urgently provide me with a draft law stipulating that actions by Israeli citizens to promote or encourage international sanctions on Israel, its leaders, security forces, and citizens shall constitute a criminal offense punishable by ten years in prison," he wrote.

Levin added, "I further request that such an offense during wartime be considered an aggravating circumstance, allowing for the penalty to be doubled." Levin also wrote that "Calls for sanctions against Israel ... constitute a severe breach of the fundamental duty of loyalty of a citizen toward their country. Such actions promote a course intended to deprive Israel of its right to self-defense."

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

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

Difficulty: Easy

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

Difficulty: Medium

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

Difficulty: Hard

Solutions on Sunday

BRAIN STRAIN answers

- The lotos – which is what "kamala" means in Sanskrit.
- Theodore Roosevelt, who was 42 in 1901 when he was sworn in.
- Richard Nixon, who served two terms as Dwight Eisenhower's vice president and was twice elected president.
- Camp David – both his father and his grandson bore the name.
- Iceland. (Antarctica also has no mosquitoes, but is not a country.)
- In 1992.
- In 1986; hence the name The Three Hundred and Thirty Five Years' War (and it's not clear whether it was ever officially declared).
- Rust.
- The United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, which operated 1943 to 1948, dealt with World War II refugees.
- The death of actor Tom Hanks at the age of 88.

WEEKEND

David Stavrou

OSLO – Yael Nilsen has lived in Norway for years, but a year ago, on October 7, she was glued to television broadcasts from her native Israel. So, it was only recently that she discovered how the events of that day were presented to viewers of Norwegian media.

That was when she came across a recording of the main evening news show of NRK, the Norwegian public broadcaster, from October 7. “I watched it,” Nilsen relates. “The top headline [on the NRK website] that evening was: ‘Strong reactions to Hamas’ attacks on Israel; main goal is liberation of Palestinian prisoners, says Hamas spokesman.’” The Israelis who were abducted and killed by Palestinians were mentioned in passing, she notes.

That was the line followed by many of the country’s media outlets, both public and commercial. A week after the massacres of Simhat Torah, the official representative of the Palestinian Authority in Oslo (who became an ambassador when Norway officially recognized a Palestinian state in May), said that she wasn’t familiar with videos showing people being murdered in their homes. “That is Israeli propaganda, intended to get [the country] a free pass from the international community to attack as it wants,” she told a Christian newspaper in an interview that then was picked up by posters on social media.

The Norwegian government, for its part, saw to it that King Harald V, the country’s official head of state, did not express condolences to Israel after October 7, because, according to the foreign ministry, it’s a “political conflict.” Contrary to the other countries of Europe, Norway does not categorize Hamas as a terrorist organization; many in the country view it as a legitimate political player. In an interview with TheMarker, Haaretz’s business newspaper, Norway’s foreign minister noted that his country maintains relations with both that group and Hezbollah.

Pro-Palestinian demonstrations and rising anti-Israeli sentiment have been widespread during the past year worldwide. But in Norway things appear to have gone somewhat further. Hamas’ narrative took hold in broad circles in the country, extending far beyond the radical left and pro-Palestinian activists. What sprang from an anti-Israeli point of departure quickly snowballed in a way that was out of proportion with what other Jewish communities in Europe experienced. Criticism of Israel swiftly took the form of hatred on the street and on social media, and was also directed at Jews in general. Members of the Jewish community say they feel this trend effectively enjoys an institutional tailwind.

Norway’s Jews started to report instances of harassment and threats. Graffiti and artworks likening Israel to Nazi Germany cropped up in the public space across the country. A wall drawing in the city of Bergen depicted Anne Frank in a keffiyeh, and openly antisemitic messages soon followed: From the inscription “All Jews out” spray-painted on walls, to an ominous message (in English) in an Oslo Metro station – “Hitler started it. We finis[h]ed it” – accompanied by a swastika.

Norway’s tiny Jewish community is badly rattled by what it’s experiencing as a lethal blow to its feelings of belonging and security. A visit to Oslo, and conversations with Jews living elsewhere in Norway as well, reveal that the tiny community, which numbers only 1,500, truly feels threatened. Some of those interviewed asked not to have their names published. “The community is isolated because the government is not looking after it and is not condemning the violence it’s experiencing,” a source who’s involved in the Jewish community tells Haaretz, adding, “The government is effectively affirming the discourse of hatred.”

The case of A., a Jewish Norwegian woman, illustrates how far things have gone. One of A.’s daughters lives in Israel and serves as an officer in the Israel Defense Forces. At the end of last year, someone found an online video of her daughter, in uniform and speaking Norwegian, and re-posted it on Instagram. Overnight, the life of both daughter and mother became hell.

“Immediately, all [our] social media accounts were flooded with messages,

Enemies of the people

Jewish communities worldwide are reeling from a year of hostility from neighbors. But probably nothing matches what the tiny community in Norway has endured



After October 7, graffiti and artworks likening Israel to Nazi Germany began cropping up across Norway, including in this Oslo train station.

MIFF Continued on page 14

curses, hatred and threats,” A. relates. “An influencer and model of Muslim origin posted the video and added the name of my workplace along with pictures of me and my daughter.” The threats did not come solely from Palestinians. The account information associated with those who sent the messages, and the messages themselves, suggested that many were not of Muslim or Arab origin.

“Waiting for you to land in Norway, then I’ll show you what I and my friends from Hamas will do to you,” someone wrote. And there was also: “She’s a dirty genocide supporter. I hope she sinks into

The Norwegian government saw to it that King Harald V, the country’s official head of state, did not express condolences to Israel on October 7, because, according to the foreign ministry, it’s a ‘political conflict.’

the sand stained with the blood of Gaza and returns to Norway without arms or legs.” As well as a third reading, “Zionist whore, I hope you get a bullet from Hamas.”

There was even an initiative to have the authorities place her daughter on trial, like Europeans who fought for ISIS. Separate from that, the Norwegian branch of Save the Children issued a demand that every returning Norwegian who has been in wartime Gaza Strip be questioned by the authorities, in keeping with Norway’s “international commitment to prevent genocide.”

What did you do?

A.: “I went to the police. In the end, they decided it wasn’t criminal and closed the case. I was given an emergency-call button for a certain period, and suggested that I move to different accommodations. To this day I live ‘underground.’ Still, now everyone knows where I work, and everyone knows my daughter is in the Israeli army. Besides, my daughter lost all her friends in Norway and can’t come to visit for fear of her life. I am Norwegian, I love my country, but I am very disappointed. No one can protect me.”

Did you encounter that attitude before October 7, or is it completely new?

“Even if it’s worse now, it’s not new. My children have had to account for everything Israel has done since they were in first grade.”

She adds that one of her children was forbidden by a teacher in her school to talk about a family vacation in Israel, so as to avoid “offending other children,” and in other instances, teachers told her children that it’s alright to be Jewish, but not to talk about Israel.

Others in the Jewish community put forward similar accounts. Rami, for example, has lived in Norway since 2007. Russian-born, he immigrated to Israel in the 1990s and then moved to Norway in the wake of his wife. The couple’s daughter and two sons were born in Norway; the family lives not far from Oslo. “Until not long ago, we didn’t hide the fact that we are Jews,” he says, “but lately we feel the antisemitism, via our children.”

The children don’t speak Hebrew, he notes, and have never lived in Israel. Nevertheless, his 5-year-old daughter said that children from her kindergarten asked her why she was murdering Palestinian children. “My 13-year-old son is suffering even more,” Rami adds. “Children say he’s a Jew and harass him. Some of them called out ‘Heil Hitler’ at him.”

History plays an important role here. The Jews, who are today have the status of an official minority in Norway, began to arrive only in the mid-19th century. Until then, Jews were forbidden by law from stepping foot in the country. Immigration, mostly from Eastern Europe, led to the establishment of Jewish communities in Oslo and Trondheim. They suffered a great deal in World War II, when the country was ruled by the fascist Quisling regime, which collaborated with the Nazis. A third of Norway’s 2,100 Jews were murdered. They included more than 500 members of the community who were seized by police officers, soldiers and Norwegian volunteers and expelled via ship, then transported by train to Auschwitz. Others perished in camps in Norway and Germany. The survivors were those who fled to Sweden and Britain.

One of the most painful aspects of the situation for the Jewish community is the feeling they have that even the persecution they endured eight decades ago is now being turned against them. Prof. Torrel Burke, a historian from MF University of Theology, Religion and Soci-

ety, in Oslo, recalls last year’s memorial ceremony for Kristallnacht, held in the capital.

“Norway’s Jews felt that the event had been hijacked from them,” he relates. “A Norwegian anti-racism organization turned the event into a pro-Palestinian one.” Instead of dealing with Nazism, the Holocaust and antisemitism, the event focused on a discussion of the Middle East and political radicalization. The organization of the event was coopted by left-wing groups who were part of the anti-Israeli wave of protests – Israeli flags and Jewish symbols were banned from the ceremony. The Jewish community therefore decided not to participate in the event and held one event of its own, in a synagogue.

Activist Knutsen: ‘If the Jewish community disappears from Norway... it would be one sad episode among many in Jewish history, but a catastrophe for Norway. That’s why I’m so concerned – not necessarily as a Jew, but as a Norwegian patriot.’

There’s also anger among community members with the Norwegian Center for Holocaust and Minority Studies. Established at the state’s initiative with funds belonging to Jews who were murdered in the Holocaust, the center’s mission is to map and battle antisemitism in the country. However, in a letter sent recently to the institution, Norwegian Holocaust survivors and their descendants accused it of failing in its duty, maintaining that instead of fighting antisemitism it was positioning itself as a “critic of Israel’s policies and military tactics.” Moreover, the center is manifesting “bias in its choice of experts, supporting a narrative that is negative toward Israel as a Jewish state.”

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Pro-Israel and pro-Palestinian demonstrators face off last month in Oslo. Pål Holden

WEEKEND

'A world turned upside-down'

The country has changed. So has Dan Halutz, former air force commander and IDF chief of staff. The man who famously said that he felt only 'a slight bump on the plane' when dropping a bomb now has to be physically dragged away at protests in Caesarea. And when he sees images of children in Gaza, he thinks of his own grandchildren

Hilo Glazer

"The phrase 'When the cannons roar, the muses are silent' is no longer valid," Dan Halutz declared at the October 6 demonstration in Caesarea, then adding, "The muses must shout out." It's precisely these words, a variation on a stale catchphrase, that reflect the depth of the change the former Israel Defense Forces chief of staff has undergone over the years.

The difference between then and now is apparent across the entire field of vision of the retired fighter pilot. The person who, on the eve of the disengagement from the Gaza Strip and part of the West Bank, also declared that "What's sauce for [the settlements of] Ganim and Kadim is sauce for Tel Aviv," today views the settlement enterprise as "an amoeba that's spreading," adding, "We are making a historic mistake in allowing the rampage of building new settlements."

The same person who once stated "Calling for refusal to serve is crossing a red line" signed an open letter in July 2023, along with other former IDF brass and security officials, backing 160 air force pilots' refusal to report for reserve duty in protest of the government's so-called judicial reforms. The chief of staff during the evacuation in 2005 of the Katif bloc of settlements in Gaza, who displayed zero tolerance for ostensible manifestations of anarchy, is today blocking roads and urging civil disobedience.

Driving with him in his Volvo to Caesarea, I ask Halutz whether his ongoing participation in demonstrations – from the period of the Balfour Street protests outside the prime minister's residence in Jerusalem in 2020-2021, via rallies against the regime coup and including protests in the past year calling for an early election and a hostage deal – mean that he identifies with the people around him and has adopted some of their views. "I don't need physical proximity [with such people] in order to feel an identification with certain values," he replies, and adds, simply, "I have changed my views."

From a headline-making interview Halutz gave in 2002, what still reverberates is his comment after the targeted assassination of a high-ranking Hamas official, Salah Shehadeh, by means of a one-ton bomb dropped on a residential building that killed 14 civilians, including children. Asked what he felt when taking part in such missions, the then-commander of the Israel Air Force said, "I feel a slight bump on the plane after dropping a bomb – but it passes in a second." Since then the expression "a slight bump on the plane" has entered the lexicon as a metaphor for Israeli indifference when it comes to harming innocent noncombatants.

If there's one thing that remains unchanged in Halutz more than two decades later, it's his style. His rather cold tone, which can send a shiver down the listener's spine and has given him an image of haughtiness, is still there. Even during an incident in September, when police officers had to remove Halutz forcefully as he lay on the road leading to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's home in Caesarea, he had a thin smile on his lips as he was dragged across the asphalt. It's evident since then that he is still in some pain, but Halutz brushes it off as usual. "They twisted my ankle a little, but what's that compared to a disintegrating country?"

The feeling that things are deteriorating has driven Halutz to demonstrate somewhere nearly every Saturday evening, and also to give this interview. The man who, after the Shehadeh assassination, boasted that he "sleeps very well at night" admits that today his sleep is restless and his nights are rife with anxiety. "I am very worried about the possibility that one of my grandchildren will choose not to live here," says Israel's 18th IDF chief of staff, father of three and grandfather of seven, who is the same age as the state.

As we met for the first of three recent conversations at his home in Tel Aviv's upscale Tzahala neighborhood, reports start to come in about the possibility of a missile attack by Iran. Halutz declares that he has no inten-

tion of entering the safe room. "If I am fated to be hit by an Iranian missile, I'll sit here proudly in my armchair," he says. But a few weeks later – before Israel retaliated against the attack that did indeed take place on October 1 – he sounded a bit more cautious.

Is a raid on the nuclear facilities feasible?

"It's clear that we can't ignore the attack, but we mustn't let ourselves be temporarily blinded by such a situation. Iran is not Yemen – and also not Lebanon, Syria or Gaza. It's a vast entity, possessing multiple means, including air-defense capabilities. There could be a price for an attack like that. What worries me is the values the government is projecting when it comes to the issue of the hostages. What would we do, heaven forbid, if we had hostages in Iran? Would the same standards and insane conduct lead to us simply forgetting them, too?"

Halutz, who served in the Israel Defense Forces for 40 years and took part in five wars, is first and foremost remembered as the chief of staff during the Second Lebanon War. He resigned shortly after it ended and before the Winograd Committee released the findings of its inquest,

'What energizes me is the knowledge that the day will come, and it's not far off, when Netanyahu will no longer be prime minister. That change alone will make possible the launching of a process of rehabilitation and rebuilding. That is my hope.'

which held him responsible for the failed management of the 2006 war. Since then, the war has been reframed in a less critical way that underscores its achievements as well – above all, creation of Israeli deterrence vis-à-vis Hezbollah, which ushered in a long period of quiet on the northern border.

In Halutz's view, the war created optimal conditions for dismantling Hezbollah, which were not exploited. "At the end of that war there were no tunnels, there was no Radwan Force, and Hezbollah did not have such huge quantities of antitank missiles," he notes. "All of that was built up afterward. For years we did nothing. All the tunnels the IDF Spokesperson has recently revealed [to the public] were created 10 and 15 years ago. During that period we should have demonstrated our strength and preserved our image as a strong regional power."

For years we've been told that Hezbollah has the ability to paralyze Israel completely, that an attack by the organization could kill thousands and leave heaps of rubble. The north is now subject to nonstop missile fire and there are tragic casualties. But still, there's a vast gap between the forecasts and the actual situation.

"First of all, I never made such forecasts. Second, the overestimation of Hezbollah and the underestimation of Hamas is precisely the trap we

fell into. Let's also remember that we have been acting against Hezbollah in Lebanon for over a year. During that time, Northern Command has operated there systematically.

"But let's not get confused," Halutz adds. "In another minute a rocket could hit a high-rise in Tel Aviv and cause enormous damage, but so far, the damage has been small in relation to the amount of explosives they've launched at us, thanks to a combination of active defense and proper civilian conduct."

Still, the scenario of thousands killed and the country being crippled has been the prevailing forecast for a decade and a half at least.

"That's not the first threat that 'Mr. Threats' has cultivated. Witness the nuclear panic [i.e., concerning Iran] that he has carefully intensified. Because, we know, the best way to rope people in is to frighten them, to tell them that hell on earth is looming. So he went on talking and talking – and suddenly the gates of hell opened on us from the least expected place. When you develop a certain worldview over a decade, it trickles down to the bottom of the well, and in the end everyone toes the line accordingly."

This would not be the only time Halutz would refer to Netanyahu without mentioning his name. Among his other epithets are "the tyrant-in-the-making" and "the man who has torn Israel apart."

His interaction with Netanyahu over the years has been relatively limited. In 2008, a year before Netanyahu returned to the premiership, they had a meeting that left its mark on the ex-Israel Air Force chief. "He invited me in order to try to get me to join Likud. He smoked a cigar, drank a glass of whiskey and offered me one. We had a riveting discussion about politics and various lofty state-related matters. I didn't give him a positive reply, obviously."

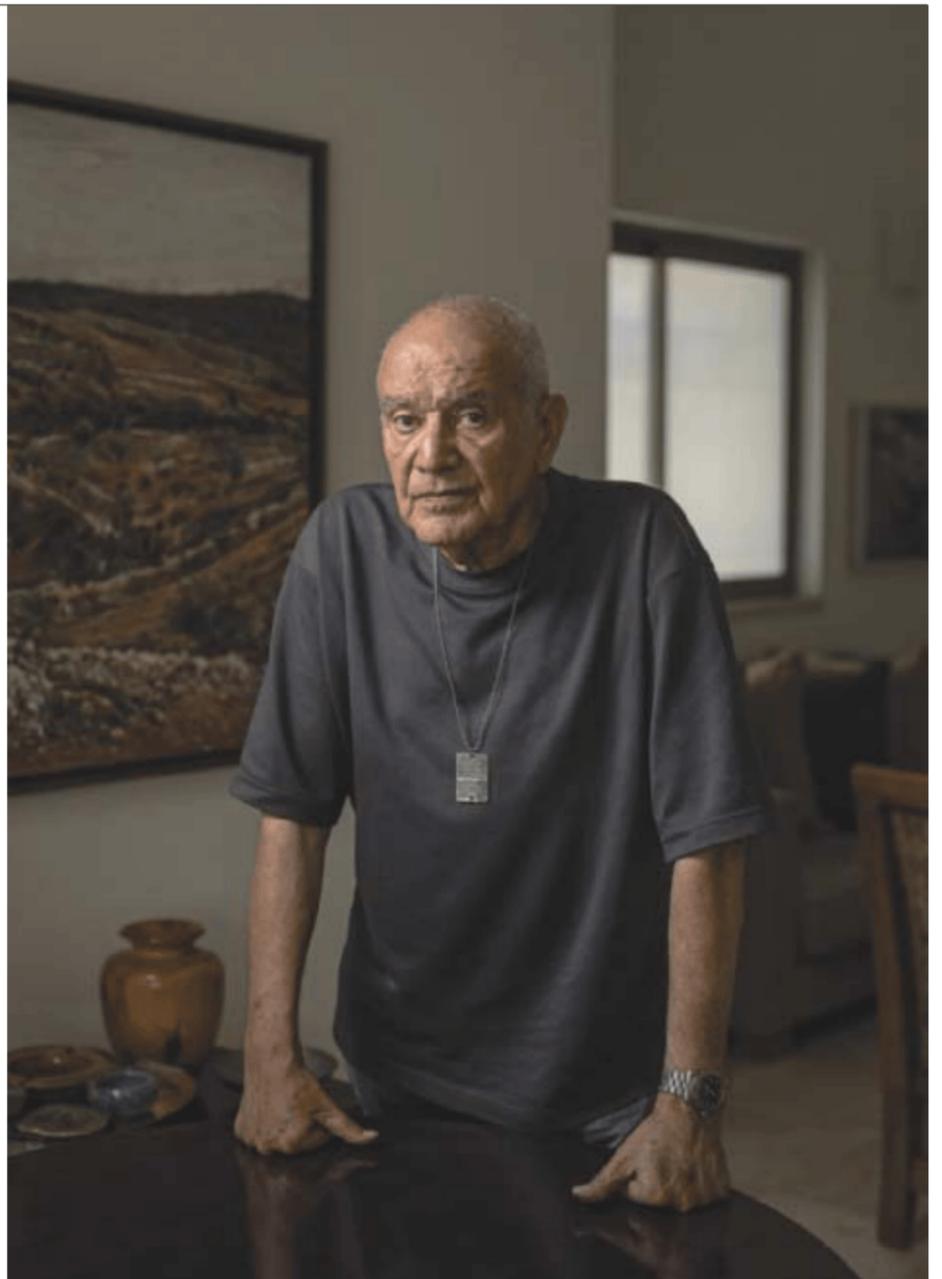
Halutz's impression was that his interlocutor was enlightened and knowledgeable, but that's of no consequence now. "Netanyahu represents a messianic, extremist, racist, fascist government, and with a government like that Israel cannot exist over time. Well, maybe it will exist, but it will be more like another Arab state in the Middle East. Nothing can help with a La Familia like this [a reference to an organization of racist Jerusalem soccer fans] that has a state. The wreckers don't understand that without the present elites Israel has no hope of existence. Will the Smotrich types [i.e., those supporting ultra-nationalist Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich] be able to carry Agudat Yisrael and Shas [ultra-Orthodox parties] on their backs? How, exactly?"

And will the elites be able to go on carrying Haredi society on their backs?

"It's not only a matter of economic capability. It's above all a moral question. The fact is that a growing segment of the population is not sharing the burden of Israel's security and Israel's economy. All they do is drink from the well. We, the productive and serving community, keep filling it up, and they keep emptying it. It's cyclical."

Sometimes there's a feeling that the decay has already seeped into all the systems and that the situation is irreversible.

"Everything can be corrected, even if the correction is painful and is ac-



Halutz. "We must do what we haven't done so far, which is to find the correct address in the Hamas leadership and put an offer on the table that they can't refuse. That means stopping the war completely and leaving Gaza. Period." Hadas Parush

companied by mass demonstrations by the settler-right. It's a function of how determined those who succeed him will be. A change in the order of priorities in every sphere will be essential. If we don't believe that is possible, we're all wasting our time."

In other words, the correction will need to be done by force?

"The word 'force' isn't relevant. Every sensible person understands that we can't go on like this. Otherwise we are sentencing ourselves to perdition as a society."

So, what change is needed in the order of priorities?

"First and foremost, we must decide what the defensible borders are that we are prepared to die for. Second, we must make the nonproductive sector productive. Third, we must change the education system dramatically, so that it will not be based on [the dictates of different] communities but will be truly state-oriented."

What makes you believe this is possible?

"What energizes me is the knowledge that the day will come, and it's not far off, when Netanyahu will no longer be prime minister. That change alone will make possible the launching of a process of rehabilitation and rebuilding. That is my hope. If I thought there were no prospect of this, thoughts would arise that I don't want to contemplate now."

Emigration?

"If the election is held in 2026, Netanyahu wins and the composition of the next government will be similar – with Itamar Ben-Gvir, Bezalel Smotrich, Yitzchak Goldknopf, Moshe Gafni and the rest of the groupies – I will accept the result submissively. What I will do with that result is already a different question. And I am not only talking about myself. A broad public will have to make a personal decision about whether they want to stay here and be a subject in a dictatorship."

"Some Israelis, by the way, are already making their way out. This week I spoke with two mothers who are upset that their children have left. One of them, who's in high-tech, moved to Holland; the other is a lawyer, and she moved to Canada. I don't have data, but it's pretty clear. We all feel the murmur in our heart when we learn that a friend, a neighbor or the med-school graduate we know has left the country."

It sounds like those thoughts are already foremost in your mind.

"No. I'm not of that age, and it's not something that's on the agenda of my nuclear family. But my children tell me about no few of their friends who are leaving."

Still, if one of your children were to choose to emigrate, what would you say to them?

"That somewhere I messed up when raising them. But when there's another election, we'll see. A decision like that has to be made rationally, not emotionally. Not as a protest, but as a result of concluding that it's impossible to go on like this. Until you've exhausted the possibilities of influencing a situation, you mustn't make a move that will not allow you to influence it."

Dan Halutz's father came to Israel from Iran, his mother from Iraq. He grew up in Moshav Hagar, in the center of the country, enlisted in 1966 and after completing his training as a pilot was assigned to the 201st Squadron (aka "The One"). In the 1973 Yom Kippur War he participated in dozens of sorties, including the attack on the headquarters of the Syrian General Staff in Damascus. He left and rejoined the IDF twice in the following years, finally returning to the career army.

'It's not Israel's Arabs who are our problem, but some of Israel's Jews, who are abusing the population they live among in Judea and Samaria, who chop down Palestinian olive trees, who live by Smotrich's vision, which Netanyahu has effectively adopted.'

He served as commander of the Hatzor air base and the head of the air division at IAF headquarters before being appointed commander in chief of the force in 2000.

In 2004, he was named deputy IDF chief of staff, and a year later succeeded Moshe Ya'alon in that top post (Ya'alon's tour of duty was not extended to an extra, fourth, year, as is customary). Halutz was the first chief of staff with an IAF background; not surprisingly, he saw the air arm as a dominant element in the IDF's force building. "When I took over, Arik Sharon told me, 'Turn them into blues,'" Halutz recalls, referring to the color of the IAF uniform. "He spoke then about what he saw as the unwieldiness of the ground forces."

Halutz often says that the most significant figure in his youth was his paternal grandmother. "She admired Menachem Begin, and used to say, 'Never turn your back to Arabs.'" His

father fought in the pre-state Revisionist Irgun underground, and later identified with the Greater Israel movement. As furious demonstrations were held against Sharon following the massacre in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps in Beirut, in September 1982, Halutz, then a reservist, took part in demonstrations in support of the then-defense minister. He and his friends printed thousands of copies of the Palestinian Covenant and distributed it to left-wing protesters, "in order to confront them with the ideology of the Palestinians, who sought Israel's annihilation." During one of his breaks from the career army he volunteered at Likud election headquarters.

"Over the years, little by little, I changed direction," he says, though he can't recall a specific formative event. "It's been a process. In my military roles, the more I discovered the limitations of power, the clearer it became that we cannot assume responsibility for millions of Palestinians." Throughout the interview, Halutz mentions the fact that while some people now label him a "traitorous leftist," he rejects being categorized as left or right.

"The division today is liberal democrats against fascist racists," he says. "It's an all-or-nothing battle. I don't see anything in between. This is not a struggle against Bibi, but for Israel's image 20 and 50 years down the road. Because it's not Israel's Arabs who are our problem, definitely not, but some of Israel's Jews, who with coarseness, with cruelty, are abusing the population they live among in Judea and Samaria. The anti-Israeliness is that of those who are burning [the West Bank village of] Hawara, who are chopping down the Palestinians' olive trees, who live by Smotrich's vision, which Netanyahu has effectively adopted."

Sounds like the views of a classic leftist.

"No. I haven't become a fanatic who supports Peace Now, which calls for sweeping concessions [to the Palestinians], certainly not until we know there is someone to concede to. But when women from [the Israeli Bedouin city of] Rahat are beaten and their car is torched because they accidentally strayed into a settler outpost, or when settlers burn down a home and kill a child – that is an intolerable price."

Which are you paying because of what?

"Because of politics gone mad. Reading Smotrich's plans fills me with dread. He expects the IDF to implement his ideology, which is expulsion of all Palestinians possible while the rest become vassals under this deranged Jewish supremacy. Maybe the time has come to put forward an opposite proposal – to tell them [Smotrich's supporters]: 'You want Judea and Samaria, and we want to separate from the Pal-



As a young pilot. Today his sleep is restless and his nights are rife with anxiety.

estonians, right? Take Palestinian citizenship and live under them. You'll pay the price of your being there."

You talk about Smotrich and about Jewish terror in the territories as though they exist in a vacuum. It's a process that has gone on for many years.

"True – their plan is long term and it wasn't born yesterday. The keg of dynamite has been smoldering for many years. But the disengagement drew a line in the sand. If Arik Sharon were alive, I'm certain we would be in a completely different place with respect to Judea and Samaria."

Back when he was chief of staff, Halutz relates, he sounded out human rights activists who were warning about the injustice of the occupation. "I

'The face of the army is the face of the country. The same people who curse the families of the hostages and throw eggs at them also serve in the army. Some of them at least. And they're not "wild weeds." We even have generals like that.'

invited women from Machsom Watch [anti-occupation NGO] to my office. I told them one main thing: If you have allegations, direct them to me, not at the corporal manning the checkpoint. Speak to the commanders, they are the ones who issue the orders. It was a fascinating conversation. My position was that it's important that they keep up their protest, which is also my protest."

These days, Halutz has a clear-cut opinion about IDF activity at West Bank checkpoints. "There is no reason on earth for soldiers to do policing tasks in Judea and Samaria. Those tasks need to be done by the police."

Because of the damaging effect? "Yes. Because it's ruinous in two ways. Once, because it comes at the expense of preparation for the real missions the army needs to execute; secondly, it really is degrading. It's a slippery slope, and the question is how far down you're willing to go on it. The friction between civilian and soldier causes a hardness of heart. The commanders become cruder about the situation, resort to force in places where it's not always needed, and it gradually penetrates the IDF's DNA."

In the past you said, "I see nothing in the world that's comparable to the morality of the IDF's soldiers." And today? "We have a moral army. I don't like the comparisons about whether it's the 'most' [moral] in the world or less than that."

When you see the images of soldiers celebrating the destruction in the Gaza Strip, the vandalization of mosques and looting homes, what do you feel? "Disgust. When a soldier hoists an Israeli flag on the Gaza seashore, that's fine. When he accompanies that by saying 'Settlement will be built on this site' while he's still in uniform – that is very bad. I also didn't like seeing the fact that they're suddenly setting up synagogues there, or what the rabbi of the Nahal Brigade said [Amichai Friedman declared that, "The whole land is ours – including Gaza and Lebanon"]. I thought he should have been thrown out of the IDF then and there."

"One cannot ignore the fact that the military is undergoing radicalization. I am ready to accept that some of this occurs in a situation of war. But looters? Give them the boot. The story of the abuse [of Palestinian prisoners] at the Sde Teiman camp, if it turns out to be true, is also unacceptable. God forbid we should end up there."

Did you see such phenomena when you were in uniform? "Not as chief of staff and certainly not in the air force, which doesn't encounter such situations. But we also didn't engage in that sort of combat. In the end, the face of the army is the face of the country. The same people who curse the families of the hostages and throw eggs at them also serve in the army. Some of them at least. And they're not 'wild weeds.' We even have generals like that. When you go easy on some of the wild weeds, you find yourself having to deal with a whole field of them."

You say these are new phenomena, but there were plenty of hints about the current wave of extremism during your tenure as chief of staff. The settlers' violence at Amona [during evacuation of the illegal outpost, in 2006], for example. During the disengagement there were young people who called you "Nazi chief of staff."

"In the army there were in fact some buds of extremism – people who refused to follow orders [when evacuating settlers during the disengagement] – and they were dealt with individually. There were indications, but no penetration of the military establishment per se. After the disengagement, I requested that financing be stopped for the heads of hesder yeshivas [where religious studies are combined with reduced military service] who encouraged such things. I tried to fight it. I think it's not right for the state to pay

for those who are subverting it. But that idea was rejected, out of political considerations."

Is it your impression that the present chief of staff, Herzl Halevi, understands the gravity of the situation? "In certain senses he is turning a blind eye. He understands the seriousness of the problem, but it's not convenient for him to occupy himself with it at present."

Do you think he should resign? "At a certain time, yes, together with the entire army hierarchy who bear responsibility for October 7. Unequivocally."

Won't that just benefit Netanyahu? "We have to stop panicking. You know, they won't appoint a major as chief of staff. If they parachute an alien into the army, the whole military establishment will rise up – not by staging a coup, but by leaving. That will be the answer and also the start of the [process of] correction."

* * *

Halutz has in general become more sharply critical since he left the army, and not only when speaking of what he calls the "hallucinatory side of the settlers." When he attends the Saturday evening protests, it is primarily to serve as an amplifier for the desperate call for the return of the hostages. But he took a different line during the negotiations for the return of the abducted soldier Gilad Shalit (who was freed in 2011 by Hamas, in exchange for over 1,000 prisoners, after five years in captivity). At the time, he maintained that "if it weren't for all the vociferous protests and the battles in the media, it's very possible that Shalit would have been released" under easier terms. His reasoning: "Every morning Hamas people listen to the news from Israel and know the intensity of the pressure here, and partly on that basis set the price for freeing him" – a common argument heard today among opponents of a hostage deal.

"The difference is 1 versus 101," Halutz says. "The numerical gap has a dramatic significance. If those 101 [in Gaza, at present] don't come back, Israel will not go back to being the country it was. Their abduction is a wound felt by the whole public. We also need to remember that Shalit was a soldier, not a civilian. That is a huge difference."

Is there anything you regret from your many years in the IDF? "I would cleanse the army of all external political influence, regardless of where it comes from on the map."

I thought you would say you regretted appointing Miri Regev as IDF spokesperson, which paved the way for her political career.

"Not all my decisions in life have been correct."

What about some deeper soul-searching? What do you know today about Israeli reality that you didn't know from your office in the Kirya (defense establishment's headquarters) in Tel Aviv?

"I wasn't aware of the depth of the social rift in Israel. I wasn't familiar with the depth of the hatred in a certain camp – hatred that seals the brain and the heart. Ultimately, you won't find anyone in the liberal-democratic camp who is willing to sacrifice hostages. You will find them only in the messianic, delusional, extremist camp."

You're saying the rift is also related to social status, to class? "It's everything together. You have the religious side, and the social side of beleaguered Mizrahim, who are passing it [their feelings of discrimination] on. Discrimination by inheritance. They can be as rich as Croesus and still be discriminated against, because their grandfather was sent to a transit camp and Tchaikovsky's grandfather wasn't."

"People talk about an elitist air force," Halutz continues. "In the last 20 years the commanders of the IAF have been Eitan Ben Elyahu, who can't be suspected of being Polish-born [he was born in Israel to an Iranian father]; Herzl Bodinger, whose mother is from India; myself; Eliezer Shked, whose mother is Egyptian; Amir Eshel, whose father is Iraqi; Ido Nehushtan, who's Bulgarian; and Amikam Norkin, who's from the Subbotniks [a Russian movement of converts to Judaism] – so he's the only exception. What's the answer? They all became 'Ashkenazim' when they served in the air force."

* * *

As the demonstration starts in Caesaria, Amit Pollak, the Hadera chief of police, takes Halutz and Moshe Ya'alon aside for an improvised briefing on the lawn. The tone is seemingly friendly and Pollak even confesses his admiration for the two generals, but in fact this is a warning. "Let's not get into unpleasant situations where we'll have to remove you from the road," they are told by Pollak, who has already been questioned by the Justice Ministry's unit for the investigation of police officers on suspicion of using violence against demonstrators in Caesaria.

Halutz reminds Pollak that "people here are walking around with a lot of pain"; he, too, he adds, would prefer not to replay the events of two weeks earlier when he was dragged across the asphalt. "There's no need to drag us. We'll lie down on the road, you'll remove us and we'll come back."

The two former IDF chiefs have obviously grown closer – quite surpris-



Halutz at a demonstration last month in Caesaria. "I lie down on the road not for myself, but out of a feeling that I can't leave this world if I don't do everything to ensure that there will be a 'follow-up generation' that is born, lives and dies here."

Yair Gil



The aftermath of the Shehadeh assassination in July 2002. "Not every terrorist is worth having 10 civilians killed for him, or two civilians or one civilian. But some are. Unequivocally."

Adel Hana/AP

ingly, considering the many years of strained relations between them. In his autobiography, which he published after retiring from the army, Halutz wrote of his predecessor that "this man is the embodiment of hypocrisy and unfairness." Ya'alon, he added, "who spoke of the need to wear high boots in the Kirya as defense against the snakes and the scorpions there, was the most venomous snake of all."

But he and Ya'alon turned over a new leaf long ago. "Bogey [Ya'alon's nickname] has good qualities that are being put into practice," Halutz says, adding, "At my advanced age, I am trying to reduce the number of those who hate me, and to close ranks." He also sees former prime minister (and former IDF chief) Ehud Barak, whom he assailed fiercely in the past, as a key ally. "My esteem for Barak today overrides the relatively insignificant things I thought he did wrong before," he says.

Halutz's criticism of people in the liberal camp is aimed today at leaders of the opposition in the Knesset. In his speech at the Caesaria rally he called on them to get their act together, otherwise "we will create an alternative." I ask him if he sees any effective politicians among the opposition parties. "Those who seem to be conducting themselves properly are the MKs affiliated with the Labor Party and Yair Golan" – a former deputy chief of staff and former MK, who was elected head of Labor and merged that party with Meretz to form the Democrats.

Will you vote for him? "I will vote for whoever has the best chance to provide an alternative leadership. No one is ineligible in this regard."

You have spent a lot of time with two other former IDF chiefs who are now MKs – Benny Gantz and Gadi Eisenkot. Is either of them competent enough to

be prime minister?

"Gadi more than Benny. He is more inspirational."

* * *

Let's go back to the night between July 11 and 12, 2006, the operation that was intended to strike at the leaders of Hamas. You are chief of staff. Who was in the crosshairs?

"All of them. The whole hierarchy. [Mohammed] Deif and his gang."

What went wrong? "The bomb. The explosion was on the wrong floor because the bomb they used was too small, partly as a result of the lessons from the Shehadeh case. Contrary to the recommendation to use greater force, more firepower, a heavier bomb."

Whose recommendation? "Mine, ours."

Which wasn't accepted because of the political decision makers?

"They asked us to conduct an analysis and determine the minimum [firepower] that we could use. In the end they went for something in between. Second, in terms of intelligence, we assumed they [the targets] were on a higher floor than they actually were. It turned out that they were in the basement. But the bomb didn't penetrate. They got up a bit stunned, maybe with slight wounds, and disappeared."

In other words, we were too moral and therefore we failed?

"Yes, you can also translate it into those terms. We were too cautious. Not because we knew there were innocent people in the building at that moment. The gathering was for them [Hamas] and for them alone, but the building was in a civilian area. And as everyone knows, when munitions are ramped up, the collateral damage is greater."

Does the failure torment you?

"Very, very much. When we got up in the morning and did a debriefing, we understood what a huge mistake we'd made by acceding to something we should not have agreed to."

Efforts were also made to assassinate Hassan Nasrallah when you were chief of staff.

"Twice. We didn't use 80 tons [of explosions, as used on the night of September 27] – significantly less – but we didn't know exactly where he was, only a ballpark estimate."

Does Nasrallah's assassination constitute a sort of "victory photo"?

"No, but it's a very important factor when it comes to undermining Hezbollah's deployment. There are those who say: We took out [Hezbollah founder Abbas al-]Musawi and got Nasrallah in his place, and things only got worse. Ditto the assassinations of [Hamas leaders Sheikh Ahmed] Yassin, [Abdel Aziz al-]Rantissi and Shehadeh – all of them during my tour of duty – and seemingly we just made our situation worse. Still, the principle of the lawn mower that slices off the heads managing these organizations is very important. In the end it affects their operative ability."

And the killing of Yahya Sinwar? "My victory photo, and Israel's, will be when the hostages will return and Netanyahu will go. Sinwar had become a nonentity, a symbolic figure who in the end had little influence on Hamas' ability to function, because it was already critically wounded. For some people it was an issue of pure revenge: 'Bring me his head' – like in the mafia. Sinwar's elimination was called for, that's clear. The question is how that affects the hostages. We must do what we haven't done so far, which is to find the correct address in the Hamas leadership and put an offer on the table there that they can't refuse. That means stopping the war completely and leaving Gaza. Period."

After the war broke out you said we should strive for a deal of "everyone in return for everyone" – all the hostages imprisoned in Israeli jails. That was quite an exceptional concept at the time.

"It's still the right concept. After all, the discussion about which type of terrorists will be released has already been held. Decisions were made; they only need to be validated again. And again let's acknowledge the truth: Instead of continuing to provide for and feed those prisoners, we would be better off getting rid of them. And if we need to strike at them again, we will strike at them again."

IAF bombs caused the death of at least three hostages.

"Unequivocally. That accusation should be directed at the prime minister of Israel, who didn't take advantage of an opportunity to strike subsequent deals."

And what about the part played by the air force? "The IAF is an operational player. It's like an M-16 in the hands of a soldier."

Pilots are not a blind herd. We see that they are people of independent thought and critical judgment. There's also quite a bit of evidence of that, ranging from the letter of those refusing to participate in aerial attacks on West Bank civilians in 2003, to the decision to stop volunteering for the reserves in the shadow of the regime coup in 2023. After a year of crushing operational activity, there is no doubt in the air force over whether we aren't using too much force?

"There is, there is, but [the use of force] hasn't yet crossed the threshold of illegitimacy."

What are you hearing? "I also ask myself whether 40,000 people killed – of them, a maximum of 20,000 terrorists – is a number that justifies what we are doing in Gaza. Recently I watched a film about Gazan children

on a foreign channel, and all I saw were the images of my grandchildren. That made me ask myself questions: What is going on there? And what are we doing about it? On the other hand, I can't allow myself to be too fastidious. War has a price. Cruelty is an inseparable part of it. First and foremost, I am an Israeli patriot. When I'm faced with the choice of 'me or him,' I will always choose 'me.'"

Is it your impression, on the basis of your conversations with air force colleagues, that their belief in the rightness of their path remains absolute?

"It hasn't cracked. We have to look for a moment at the starting point [October 7], which led to all the justification. The sweeping fury it sparked – and I am not using the word 'revenge' – did away with the cracks that might have been created in normal times. And rightly so."

It's been more than a year since October 7. The scale of the killing is overwhelming. In the Shehadeh assassination 14 civilians were killed and it caused a major shock, in Israel and overseas. In today's terms it would be minor collateral damage.

"Harm done to innocent people is an integral part of every war in urban areas, whether as a result of mistakes or because of population density. The numbers are already a different matter. That's where the principle of proportionality comes into play. We can talk about it."

Go ahead. "If out of 40,000 killed in Gaza, 20,000 were terrorists and 20,000 were civilians – in my eyes, that is proportional. We do not know the exact figures. Not every terrorist is worth having 10 civilians killed for him, or two civilians or one civilian. But some are. Unequivocally."

"War has a price. Cruelty is an inseparable part of it. First and foremost, I am an Israeli patriot. When I'm faced with the choice of 'me or him,' I will always choose 'me.'"

So according to your thinking, in the present war the principle of proportionality is being preserved?

"The question is whether you want to be an angel in paradise, or someone existing in the brutal world we live in. That question must be examined in relation to precedents: what the Americans did in Afghanistan and Iraq, what the Russians did in Chechnya and in Georgia. The numbers alone don't tell the whole story."

The 1,500 killed in Lebanon in three days tell a great deal.

"It's justified. I would do the same. Again, when you're fighting for your life it's one discussion, when you do it as part of routine, it's a different discussion. And we are fighting for our life this year."

Some 200 people were killed together with Ahmed Andor, Hamas' northern Gaza brigade commander. Without thinking, orders are issued to bring buildings down on their occupants. Are you comfortable with that?

"No, I do not have a comfortable feeling. But you have to go along with that 'without thinking' notion sometimes, difficult as it is. I give credit to the process of legal consultation that precedes every action on that scale. Things are not done haphazardly."

Continued on page 13

WEEKEND

‘I’m not afraid of soldiers’

Abdallah Hawash threw stones at a convoy of armored Israeli army vehicles as they sped past him in the West Bank city of Nablus. A soldier in the last jeep fired a single bullet at his chest, killing the 11-year-old boy

The Twilight Zone
Gideon Levy
and Alex Levac

It's a Tiananmen-like image. A convoy of armored Israel Defense Forces jeeps is moving rapidly along the main road, which is deserted. A child hides behind some garbage bins and occasionally throws a small stone at one of the passing vehicles, which continue on their way undisturbed. As the last jeep goes by, the boy throws one last stone, which most likely didn't even hit its armored flank, and in the next breath he is seen collapsing on the ground on his back. The occupants of a passing private car gather up the 11-year-old – whose life, it emerges, was snuffed out by a bullet from a vehicle that didn't even stop – and rush him to a hospital.

Such is the fate of a boy who dares to throw a stone at a vehicle of the occupation.

On June 5, 1989, in Beijing's Tiananmen Square, an anonymous student stood alone opposite a convoy of tanks that were on their way to suppress a popular uprising against the regime. The student, whose fate is unknown, became a worldwide hero. The little stone thrower in the West Bank was probably motivated by a similar desire to display resistance – and sentenced to summary execution by the army. In Israel, of course, he is not considered a hero or even a victim, only a terrorist.

Abdallah Hawash was a student in sixth grade when he died. The passengers in the military jeep went on their way, probably not even knowing or caring that a boy had been killed. The incident took place on Tuesday, October 22, on one of the main streets of Nablus.

Fatayer is a quiet, middle-class neighborhood perched on the slope of Jabal at-Tur – Mount Gerizim – in the southern part of Nablus. A steep staircase leads up to the apartment building in which the Hawash family lives. Posters with handwritten Arabic instructions explain how to get to the home of the little victim. In the photo on some of the memorial posters Abdallah is seen holding a plastic machine gun, in others he's not. He's younger in the picture with the weapon.

Lining the living room wall are signs bearing condolence messages for the family from children of the preschool Abdallah once attended and from his current classmates. Less than a week had gone by since Abdallah's death when we visited. The smell of food and an infant's cries fill the room. Five-month-old Saef is carried in on his mother's arms.

The head of the household, Jamal,



Photos of Abdallah Hawash above his bed, next to the picture of a shahid whom he admired. His mother says the boy had been glued to screens, following the events in Gaza.

38, owns a small furniture factory on the outskirts of Nablus; his wife, Sajud, 36, is a homemaker. Until last week the couple had five children: Nidal, 12; Abdallah; Huda, the only daughter, 5; Umar, 2; and baby Saef. Abdallah, whose nickname at home was “Abud,” was killed by IDF soldiers. He had attended the venerable Ghazaleh school, named after Shadia Abu Ghazaleh, a political activist who died in Nablus while preparing a bomb in 1968.

On one occasion, when his father had a toothache, Abud told him he wanted to be a dentist when he grew up; once when he accompanied Jamal to his furniture factory, he said he would be a carpenter. Sajud, an impressive and refined woman, has more to say about her son than her quiet and pensive – and perhaps also dazed – husband. Abud was different from her other children, she says, adding, “He was always trying to discover new things, to touch and investigate. If a toy broke, he would try to fix it. He was small but full of

energy.” The mother's eyes are dry, but her right leg bounces incessantly as she talks about her son.

In the past year, Abud had been glued to screens, following the events in the Gaza Strip. Sajud said the images of children his age being killed there affected him profoundly; sometimes they brought tears to his eyes. He changed during the war. Like many of the children in Nablus, he also admired the local heroes, the shahids – martyrs – who were killed by Israel in refugee camps and in the city itself.

Above all, Abud revered Ibrahim Nabulsi, the legendary hero of Nablus and a social media star, who was killed by Israel in 2022 at the age of 18; he had been a member of the Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigades. Abud liked to imitate and dress like Nabulsi. He wore a pendant bearing his hero's picture. The photograph of another shahid hangs above his bed. His mother says she made sure he didn't leave the house when the army raided the city. To their misfortune, he was

already in the street during the last raid in his life.

Last Tuesday, Abdallah awoke along with rest of his family at 5:30 a.m., the usual wake-up time. Before going to school his mother told him that his paternal grandparents would be coming for the afternoon meal. When he got home, around 2 o'clock, he asked where they were. He was told that Grandma Huda was visiting neighbors, who are also relatives; Grandpa Nidal would be arriving later, when Dad came home from the carpentry shop. Borrowing his mother's phone, Abdallah called his grandmother. Where are you, I'm waiting for you, he asked. Grandma Huda, 55, suggested that he join her at the neighbors' and he hurried off.

Later he called his mother to ask whether he could invite his cousin, 12-year-old Hamza, whom he was visiting, to eat with them at home a bit later on. Sajud, who was preparing *mansaf* (a dish with meat, rice and yogurt) agreed; they invited Hamza's mother as well. Abud returned with

Hamza and they played on the floor. After the meal, Abud asked his mother for money for candy. She gave him 2 shekels (about 50 cents), which he spent at the grocery store. He then got permission to go out and play with his friends not far from home, on condition that he'd come back in half an hour. Abud set out on his bike. Hamza stayed to play with his older cousin, Nidal.

After hearing where Abud had gone, the brother and cousin went out to find him and bring him home, as Sajud asked. By now it was almost 5 o'clock. Suddenly she heard people outside talking about the army being back in the city. That's routine here, of course, but she began to panic. Her sister-in-law, Hiba, who had also been at the meal, went out but unable to track them down; Sajud suggested she try the main street.

Near the mosque, passersby told Hiba that the army had already left. But then she heard that a child had been wounded by gunfire and had been taken to nearby Rafidia Hospi-

tal. After learning that it was Abdallah, she hurried to the hospital in a shared taxi.

By now the news that Abud had been wounded had reached his home; Sajud passed out when she heard. Her mother-in-law revived her and tried to calm her down. Sajud's brother called and told her not worry: The boy had only fallen on some glass and had some cuts. Sajud's mother-in-law grabbed the phone and asked what had really happened – just as Nidal and Hamza entered, sobbing. Nidal tearfully explained that he'd heard that Abud had been shot: He and Hamza had last seen him while they were hiding from the troops near a vegetable shop. Abud rode past on his bike and Nidal tried to stop him, but his younger brother said, “I'm not afraid of the soldiers, I'm going to throw stones at them.”

In the meantime, Jamal, still at work, heard about the incident and rushed to the hospital where he saw the physicians trying to save his son's life – in vain. When he saw the child's face he knew the end was near, he recalls. Immediately he called home. In shock, Sajud made her way to Rafidia

In shock, Sajud rushed to Rafidia where she grasped the horror and began to scream until she was removed from the room. Six days later, she says, calmly, “My son was innocent. Now he's a shahid.”

where she grasped the horror and began to scream and weep until she was removed from the room. Six days later, she says to us, calmly, “My son was innocent. Now he's a shahid. He was killed unjustly.”

What is known from the investigation conducted by Salma a-Deb'i, a field researcher for the Israeli human rights organization B'Tselem – who, along with her colleague, Abd al-Karim Sa'adi, accompanied us this week to the house of mourning – is that Abdallah was shot by a soldier in the armored vehicle from a distance of some 20 meters. Probably out the back window. The horrific incident was captured on video taken by eyewitnesses: A boy throws a few small stones, a convoy speeds past and the boy is hurled backward as he throws a stone at the last vehicle. None of the jeeps stops. The street is empty, no one is gathering there.

The IDF Spokesperson's Unit this week responded to Haaretz's query: “In the wake of the incident, an investigation was launched by the Military Police Criminal Investigation Division. Immediately after the event, a debriefing was conducted in the unit, as a result of which the soldier in question was suspended by his commanders from all operational activity until a decision is made in his case.”

Abud's schoolbag now lies on his bed, next to the pillow. Next to the photo on the wall of the admired shahid, pictures of Abud have now been added.

The monster we created

Israel's original sin is not occupation or dispossession of the Palestinians, but shunning them

Ofri Ilany

On the TV screen the body of Yahya Sinwar appears, for the umpteenth time. I'm reading Mary Shelley's “Frankenstein.” In my previous readings of the novel, the relevant context was the interplay between humans and the technology they have created. That's also the usual reading. But this time a different context comes to mind. I think about the Palestinians and us, of all things.

The scientist Victor Frankenstein brought the terrifying creature into being with the use of body parts he assembled, and mysteriously infused it with life. The creature turned against him and started to pursue him, murdering members of his family and people close to him. But it was not murderous from birth. It assaulted Frankenstein and human beings as such because the scientist who brought it into the world turned his back on it and abandoned it in disgust after creating it. “I was benevolent; my soul glowed with love and humanity; but am I not alone, miserably alone? You, my creator, abhor me,” the creature admonishes Dr. Frankenstein.

Think about it. The Palestinians are the creature we brought into being. That's certainly not the way they depict the origins of the conflict; they see themselves as a deeply rooted, ancient people, and the Zionists as co-

lonialist interlopers from Europe who ravaged their world.

The Zionists, too, do not see things in the light I suggest. They see the Palestinians' hatred of us as a permanent element stemming from religious extremism or atavistic emotions. But history shows that the Palestinian national movement, and the modern Palestinian identity, were shaped as a mirror image of the Zionist movement – a kind of doppelgänger or shadow. Palestinian identity is founded almost entirely on the struggle against Zionism and Israel.

In the dominant narrative of pro-Palestinian intellectuals, Israel is the active element that determines on its own the course of history; the Palestinians merely react. Israel created Ahmed Yassin's Hamas in Gaza during the 1980s, then cultivated the movement. They also say that Israel controls the Palestinian Authority, and has turned it into a security contractor. If Israel controls the Palestinians' two leading political movements, then it's Israel that created the Palestinian entity in its present form. *Voilà*: Frankenstein.

Taking the metaphor a bit further (and, like every metaphor, this one too has its limitations), we can grasp the conflict in a manner different from the conventional. If Israel has an original sin, it is not the dispossession of the Palestinians or the occupation – they are only developments that occurred after relations started to go sour: Israel's original sin is actually turning its back on the Palestinians, shunning

them. Not entering into contact, but breaking off contact. Or, more bluntly: The original sin is lack of love.

“I started from my sleep with horror,” Victor Frankenstein relates. “A cold dew covered my forehead, my teeth chattered, and every limb became convulsed; when, by the dim and yellow light of the moon, as it forced its way through the window-shutters, I beheld the wretch – the miserable monster whom I had created.”

If Israel controls the Palestinians' two leading political movements, then it's Israel that created the Palestinian entity in its present form. *Voilà*: Frankenstein.

That is the moment at which the scientist turns against the creature. What was the moment at which the Israelis turned their back on the Palestinians? When did they start to despise them? It happened, obviously, at an early stage of the conflict, perhaps during the disturbances of 1929 or even 1921, or earlier.

But we don't necessarily have to search for the historical roots. In our

relations with the Palestinians, the motif of turning away is recurrent, each time anew. Repeatedly, a sentiment of separation, disengagement, expulsion arises in Israel. Behind these words lies dehumanization, and the Palestinian response is horrific: murder of children, dismemberment of bodies, terror.

Illusion of disengagement

What will happen in the end? At the conclusion of Shelley's novel, after the horrors and the bodies have piled up, Victor Frankenstein embarks on a journey to the ends of the earth in order to dispose of the creature he has brought into being. “I confess that it [revenge] is the devouring and only passion of my soul,” he declares. “My rage is unspeakable, when I reflect that the murderer, whom I have turned loose upon society, still exists.”

In its present condition, Israeli identity is similar to the condition of Victor Frankenstein in the final part of the story. Under the leadership of Benjamin Netanyahu and Itamar Ben-Gvir, Israel has become enslaved to the passion for revenge. Although Israeli identity contained benign and enlightened elements of curiosity and humanity, during the past year, it shed them all and mustered all its resources to foist destruction on the creature of its own making. Yet, at the same time, it is convinced that it is doing battle against the forces of evil, vanquishing



Palestinians at the Qalandiyah checkpoint outside Jerusalem, 2022. “Am I not alone, miserably alone?” the creature admonishes Dr. Frankenstein. “You, my creator, abhor me.”

the devil. As Dr. Frankenstein asserts, “His soul is as hellish as his form, full of treachery and fiend-like malice.”

We Israelis fail to discern that in the eyes of a bystander, we have long since become a monster more awful and deranged than the creature we fashioned. The difference between creator and creature grows increasingly blurred; it's not by chance that the name Frankenstein is today associated with the terrifying monster, rather than with the scientist who created it.

What remains of the Israelis other than the war? What remains of Israeli creativity besides military industries and TV series like “Fauda”? Maybe we, too, the Israelis, are only a monster created by someone else.

It's late. More and more red X's

appear over the faces of “liquidated” Hamas leaders on the TV screen. Will relief ever descend on our relations with the Palestinians, or will the two peoples totally annihilate one another? We can hope for a moment that clear borders will be drawn. In the light of the mutual hatred, the mutually inflicted traumas, that may be the best we can hope for.

The Palestinians want us out of their lives, and the Israelis want the same thing. But in the relationship existing between Frankenstein and his creature, the possibility of disengagement is an illusion. In any event, we will both remain on this piece of territory, not disappearing anytime soon. It sounds childish to say this, but in the end, we will have to love the Palestinians, and they will have to love us.

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And who will replace UNRWA?

On Monday this week the Knesset passed by a huge majority two laws against UNRWA. The first stipulates the agency must stop all its activity in Israel's territory. The second forbids any state institution to maintain ties with it.

The meaning of the first law is that UNRWA, which has been operating in Jerusalem for 75 years, must stop all its activities in the city within 90 days. Most of the agency's activity is in the Shoafat refugee camp, and includes the operation of six schools, a clinic, a garbage collection service and a central headquarters that concentrate all the activity in the West Bank. The Jerusalem Municipality and the government, which have failed for decades to provide the residents of Shoafat with basic services, promise to find a place for all the students.

The second law is even more far-reaching. Within 90 days UNRWA, which provides about half of the humanitarian aid in Gaza, won't be able to do so anymore, because the IDF is forbidden to coordinate with it about bringing aid into the Strip. It will also be forced to cease its activity in the West Bank, where it operates 90 schools, 43 clinics and a hospital, because the law forbids Civil Administration officials from contacting its employees and forbids Israeli banks from providing it with services.

The laws were passed as punishment following Israel's claim that UNRWA employees took part in the October 7 massacre, or have expressed support for Hamas. The UN maintains that out of 30,000 UNRWA employees in Gaza and the West Bank, investigations were opened against only 66 (0.22 percent of) employees; 12 (out of 13,000) of them are from Gaza. Even if the allegations are true and even if UNRWA isn't clean of terrorist elements, the laws are reckless. In the year since the beginning of the war, Israel hasn't taken action to bring in another agency that can replace UNRWA, whose workers are almost the only ones standing between Gaza's 2 million residents and mass acute hunger.

In the 57 years of the occupation, Israel hasn't bothered to find an alternative to UNRWA in the refugee camps in the West Bank and Shoafat, and enjoyed the UN funding for education and health services provided to the Palestinian subjects of the Israeli military administration.

The laws are a blatant violation of international law and of Israel's international commitments, and invite additional pressure while it is dealing with the greatest security and diplomatic crisis in its history, and is forced to thwart accusations of genocide. On Wednesday Britain announced that it's considering imposing harsher sanctions on Israel following the legislation.

Benjamin Netanyahu is being dragged after the most extreme, populist politicians in the Knesset, and, shamefully, so is the opposition. They would do well to come to their senses, swallow their dignity and annul those harmful laws.



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Carolina Landsmann

Blind spot

The Biden administration's special envoy to Lebanon, Amos Hochstein, came to Israel again to advance a ceasefire agreement in Lebanon. During his visit, he met the man leading the talks on the Israeli side, minister Ron Dermer. What is clear to all, and yet repressed as an insignificant detail, is that Hochstein, who represents the United States, was born in Israel, while Dermer, who represents Israel, was born in the United States.

Nobody in Israel would make a big deal of the American mediator being Israeli and the Israeli mediator being American. The reason is that the Jews' two hats are transparent to everyone. We also choose not to see that the Israeli and the American Jew being seemingly on the same spectrum serves Israel, or at least that's what our subconscious believes and makes us not notice, and certainly not make a big deal of it. What's the problem? Hochstein was born in Israel but he's American, and Dermer was born in the United States but he's Israeli.

Anyone who wants to begin to understand what

the problem is should ask themselves if they'd remain as indifferent if the U.S. had sent Muslim Palestinian mediators to represent it in its efforts to reach an arrangement with Lebanon, not to mention in negotiations with the Palestinians. Try to imagine what a diplomatic volcano would erupt if, say, Democratic Sen. Rashida

Anyone who wants to begin to understand the problem should ask if they'd remain as indifferent if America had sent Muslim Palestinian mediators to represent its efforts to reach a deal with Lebanon.

Tlaib was appointed United States' ambassador in Israel, and represented it in efforts for a peace negotiation with the Palestinians.

Anyone who tries to evade the issue and say the problem with Tlaib is not that she's a daughter of Palestinians but her biased views had better refresh their memory regarding the oh-so-not-biased views of the American ambassador under President Donald Trump, David Friedman, a known contributor to the

settlements who owns a house in Jerusalem's Talbiya neighborhood. If you google him, you'll most certainly see a photo of him beside a rendition of Jerusalem's Old City with the Third Temple instead of Al-Aqsa Mosque. What's the bit deal? Nu, he didn't notice, why are you making a big deal of it? Petty me.

This is an Israeli blind

spot, and it's not the only one. In fact, our blind areas have increasingly grown in the era of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who inflated and shrank threats according to his needs, and distorted our perception of reality no less than our self-image. The distortion is so bad that we've lost the ability to assess our true dimensions, as well as the true dimensions of our enemies.

We're moving between Auschwitz's striped pa-

jasmas and being the elite commando unit of Western civilization. Bottom line, it seems we're constantly surprised, whether it's about the power of the enemy we had thought weak or deterred, or regarding the weakness of the enemy we had thought almost omnipotent.

Israelis have totally lost all concept of their enemies' power. Hamas, an organization that Netanyahu thought was deterred, became an existential threat to Israel in the course of one day. Add to this the total loss of the ability to assess our power: No matter how much we strike the enemy, as far as we're concerned, it only grows while we are disappearing. And all this – miracle of miracles – without tainting our sense of omnipotence one iota.

Without a clear sense of our real power, without knowing whether Israel is a (main) branch of the Jewish people or a defined sovereign state, without agreed borders of the territory we're protecting, and with a total distortion of the magnitude of the threats against us, how can we even begin to climb out of the pit we've fallen into?

Dmitry Shumsky

Amit Segal remembers Rabin's assassination well

Last week, in the context of a discussion about the arrest of the seven Israeli citizens who gathered information for Iran about Israel Air Force bases, the Kirya Defense Ministry headquarters in Tel Aviv and the sites of the Iron Dome batteries, Channel 12's political commentator Amit Segal claimed that "Israel's social solidarity until now has been such that even if someone really hates the prime minister, no matter who he is, he won't assassinate him. It's not like the Iranian opposition."

In response to the raised eyebrows that greeted this statement – after all, as we know, a prime minister was murdered here by a citizen of Israel, which is characterized by social solidarity – Segal wrote on his X account: "You definitely have to be epically moronic, or alternatively, steeped in hatred, to take a 10-second item about an espionage affair in the Krayot [the Haifa suburbs], and to conclude from it that I've forgotten that [Prime Minister] Yitzhak Rabin was assassinated by Yigal Amir. The context, which was clear to any TV viewer with even half a brain, is that as opposed to Iran, with its many ethnic groups and communi-

ties, here, due to our social solidarity, nobody would assassinate a leader due to greed for money from the enemy."

With this response, Segal made a bad name for false naivete. It's not like anybody believes that he forgot the Rabin assassination when he asserted that nobody assassinates prime ministers in Israel. On the contrary, it was precisely with that "10-second item" that Segal, without blink-

Segal's goal is to instill a distorted view of Rabin's murder: The only ones responsible are Yigal Amir, the Shin Bet agent who aroused the provocation in Amir's surroundings, and the Shin Bet itself.

ing, denied the feasibility of assassinating a prime minister in Israel, which is the strongest evidence that not only does he remember the assassination well, but he's actually obsessively preoccupied with it – and determined not to miss an opportunity to distort its essence and its significance.

Take note, when Segal blurts out as self evident that the assassination of a prime minister due to hatred originating in Israeli society was impossible in

Israel until now, he means to say that Rabin's murder (which all of his viewers, even those with less than "half a brain," are familiar with) didn't happen on the backdrop of sociopolitical phenomena that were taking place in the country at the time, and instead involved specific social groups.

In fact, as Segal has already made clear in the past (in November 2022, in response to lawmaker Bezalet Smotrich, who claimed that

the Shin Bet security service had engaged in manipulative behavior to encourage Yigal Amir to murder Rabin), he believes that the essential and critical responsibility for the murder lies on the shoulders of "an agent provocateur from the heart of the right, who incited and encouraged violence," who was handled by the Shin Bet. And so, when he spoke about the social infeasibility of assassinating a prime minister in Israel, with a wink Segal alluded to Rabin's murder in

half a sentence.

The complete statement would have sounded more or less like this: "Israel's social solidarity until now was such that even if someone really hates the prime minister, he won't assassinate him. Rabin's murder didn't take place due to internal Israeli social causes, but as a result of incitement from the outside, originating in Shin Bet activity among the right wing."

It's fascinating to see that even in his response to the criticism of this distorted presentation of Rabin's assassination, Segal, once again by implication, made sure to convey exactly the same message, in the spirit of his statement in support of Smotrich in 2022: "I haven't forgotten that Yitzhak Rabin was murdered by Yigal Amir." Take note: "Yitzhak Rabin was murdered by Yigal Amir" isn't a simple statement of fact, it's a commentary on which the entire significance of Rabin's murder is based for Segal. According to this interpretation, Rabin was assassinated by a lone wolf named Yigal Amir, who murdered him due to incitement by a Shin Bet agent who was operating among the law-abiding, statesmanlike right.

That's a correct summary of Segal's propagandistic discourse regarding the presentation of Rabin's murder, which he disseminates in the media at the service of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and the racist and settlement-oriented right. His goal is to instill a distorted view of the murder in his audience, according to which the only ones responsible are Yigal Amir, Shin Bet agent Avishai Raviv, who aroused the provocation in Amir's surroundings that caused him to pull the trigger, and of course, even if indirectly, the Shin Bet itself.



Amit Segal | Ofer Hujayov

Those who are free of responsibility according to this narrative are Segal's unofficial boss from Caesarea, who, with his fanatic speeches at the time, made a substantial contribution to the wave of incitement that led to the assassination, and the messianic right from which Amir emerged – and of which Segal is an inte-

gral part.

Unlike Netanyahu's mouthpieces on Channel 14, Segal serves as the prime minister's envoy on the national broadcasting channel, and therefore his Bibi-ist messages have to be as refined and indirect as possible. That's the only way that they're likely to be received properly even by those who aren't among the boss' natural target audience. One of the effective means of doing so is to implant propagandistic statements in a context where they don't belong, which leads to incidental, and therefore particularly effective, brainwashing.

That's exactly what Segal did when he spoke about the unfeasibility of assassinating a prime minister in Israel, in a context not entirely relevant to this issue – the story of the Israelis who spied for Iran. And you really have to be epically moronic, or alternatively, steeped in hatred for Segal, to the point of presenting him as someone who doesn't know what he's saying, to think that he didn't plan this rhetorical step in advance.

So no, Segal, we aren't morons and we aren't overcome by hatred. You didn't forget Rabin's assassination, you "only" denied, incidentally, the real reasons for it.

Tomer Persico

What if it's a war crime?

The ongoing military operation in the northern Gaza Strip, which includes the third Israel Defense Forces invasion of the Jabalya refugee camp in the course of the war, purports to deal with Hamas terrorists who have regrouped in the area; it must be noted that the orders received by the IDF reflect this goal. But the campaign also seems to conceal a grave scenario: the expulsion of the residents of the northern Strip in order to prepare the ground for future settlements of Israeli Jews.

On October 21, as senior cabinet ministers and coalition lawmakers addressed a conference titled Preparing to Settle Gaza, journalist Amit Segal stated: "What is happening in northern Gaza is different from everything that we have seen before today. You can deny until tomorrow that the story is not the implementation of the 'generals' plan' – emptying the [northern] Strip, starving the terrorists, eliminating and capturing them – that's what I think is happening there, and in my opinion this is only the pilot or trailer."

Segal, who is known to be close to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, is referring to the plan proposed by Maj. Gen. (ret.) Giora Eiland, which calls for ordering the remaining Palestinians in the northern Strip to move to the south and placing anyone who remains under siege, including starving and killing them, on the assumption that they are Hamas terrorists. When the plan was published, 27 Knesset members and cabinet ministers signed a letter urging its adoption and Netanyahu said he would consider it. Now it seems that he has. It appears that the plan is being implemented and that what is currently happening is, according to Segal, only a "pilot or trailer" for things to come.

Yaniv Kubovich also reported (Haaretz, October 13) that field commanders told him, "the recent decision to launch operations in northern Gaza was taken without any in-depth discussion. They said it appeared that the operations were aimed principally at pressuring local residents, who were again told to evacuate the area for the coast as winter is approaching. It is possible that the operation is laying the groundwork for a decision by the government to put into effect [Eiland's] so-called surrender or starve plan."

Haaretz defense analyst Amos Harel noted: "To what the army portrays as an effort to cut out the Hamas infrastructure that has regrown in the camp, the far-right aims to add a darker side – driving the civil population out of it." (Haaretz, October 25) Also in a conversation with a former senior defense official, who is in contact with senior field commanders, it was made clear to me that what is happening in northern Gaza is an ethnic cleansing attempt. Testimonies from the northern Strip support this concern: The operation is focused not on finding and killing terrorists, but rather on the systematic destruction of buildings, including even hospitals (on October 18, the IDF bombed the Indonesian Hospital in Beit La-

hia and the Al Awda hospital in Jabalya), thereby forcing area residents to evacuate or die. In the process, the army distributes leaflets demanding the residents of a few neighborhoods to leave and even publishes video and photos of fleeing Palestinians.

Add to this the emerging discourse among politicians, and the conference where the finance and the national security minister, among others, spoke explicitly about settlement in the Strip, add the fact that the event and its message were not met with opposition from the prime minister, add in the composition of the inner cabinet, consider the proximity to the U.S. election and you will reach the conclusion that there is a reasonable suspicion that Israel is seeking to expel the Palestinians from the northern Gaza Strip to carry out a population transfer in order to settle Jews there.

In 1989, Amos Oz said if the idea of 'expulsion and exile of the Arabs' is ever raised, principled Israelis must make it clear that they will not permit this. IDF soldiers must know whether this day has arrived.

It must be made clear to the soldiers participating in the operation in the northern Strip: You may be complicit in an attempted mass expulsion of Palestinians not for defense purposes, but rather for ethnic cleansing. This means that you may be complicit in a war crime. The individual soldier at the bottom of the chain of command is not exposed to the overall context of the operation, but every soldier in the field has a duty to determine whether an attempt is being made to permanently expel the Palestinian residents from the northern Strip to the south.

In 1989, Amos Oz stated that if the idea of "expulsion and exile of the Arabs" is ever raised, principled Israelis must make it clear that they will not permit this: "We will not let you expel the Arabs even if we have to divide the state and the army, even if we have to lie under the wheels of the trucks." One year later, Yair Tzaban and Yossi Sarid wrote in Yedioth Ahronoth that "the day the transfer order, which is patently illegal, is given shall also be the day of refusal to obey an order." IDF soldiers must know whether this day has arrived. The government and the heads of the military must say, publicly and unequivocally, that there is no plan to expel the residents of northern Gaza, and they must provide minimal conditions to the area's residents so that they can continue living there now as well. It is forbidden under any circumstances to be complicit in war crimes and ethnic cleansing.

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Palestinians fleeing northern Gaza amid the IDF operation in Jabalya this month. | Dawoud Abu Alkas / Reuters

WEEKEND

A dangerous strategy

What caused the surge in violence of the drug cartels? In what ways do the cartels resemble terrorist organizations? Prof. Mauricio Meschoulam talks about a case in point: organized crime in Mexico

Fast Talk
Ayelett Shani

Please introduce yourself. I am a professor of international relations at Ibero-American University in Mexico City, and head of the Mexico Research Center for Peace. I am also Jewish, and even attended a Jewish school.

We're speaking because one of your research interests is organized crime in Mexico and the impact of the violence of the drug cartels on Mexican society. Can that violence be termed terrorism?

That's a complex question, with no clear answer. The question is actually about how organized crime and terrorist organizations are similar, and how they differ. Of course, there is a great difference in essence, in motivations. But there is a resemblance in the methods of operation: murder and assassinations for power. Acts of mass violence, in order to stir fear in the population.

Can the crime organizations in Mexico be said to have adopted methods of organized terror, or vice versa?

The influence is reciprocal. In recent years, I have focused on the connection between organized crime and terrorist organizations. What we're seeing is that they are drawing closer. There are terrorist organizations that engage in organized crime, and there are crime organizations that use the tactics of terrorist organizations. It's one thing to murder someone in a struggle for territory or money, and something else entirely to post [a clip of] the execution on social media in order to strike fear into people. The crime organizations in Mexico did that long before ISIS thought of it. One of the most interesting things, in my view, is that from a certain point, organized crime ceases to be an economic matter alone. It's no longer related to money. It has to do with power, it's related to territory.

And as such, effectively, the motivations of crime organizations and of many terrorist organizations are similar.

Yes. The cartels in Mexico are already so rich that it's impossible to talk about amounts anymore. What interests them now is power. Control. Accordingly, like terrorist organizations, they engage in sowing fear and imposing fear on the whole population.

Can you give an example?

For example, during the Independence Day celebrations in Mexico in 2008, a crime organization tossed grenades at people celebrating in the streets, and people were killed. It wasn't an act that was aimed at a competing crime organization, it was the use of civilians, of civilians' lives, for reasons of deterrence. Another time, grenades were thrown at an aquarium, which is an attraction for families with small children who go there to look at the fish. What message are you conveying when you blow up a place like that – which is the polar opposite of a military or strategic target? The message is that everyone needs to be afraid, everywhere, all the time. One case that really shook me was when crime organizations burned down a casino. They simply set fire to it when it was filled with people. That was a message not only to the casino's owner, but also to the government and to Mexican society. To show who was in control. That happened in Monterrey in 2011, the second-most important economic capital after Mexico City, not in some remote location.

Fifty-two people were killed in that event. It's insane.

For some reason we think of crime organizations as rational players, but the truth is, that is not always the case, really. When the escalation in violence is so intense, like in Mexico, the motivations cease to be rational. They start to carry out acts that draw the attention of the army and the police and the government to them, intentionally. When the army is on top of you, that might not be so good for business, but it's good for your reputation. From the viewpoint of the crime organizations, it's good when your rivals perceive of you as an organization that only the army can cope with.

You asked that we not compare Mexico and Israel, because they're not really similar, but there is a similarity in terms of the consequences. The citizens of Israel, like the citizens of Mexico, are constantly exposed to brutal violence. What effect does that consistent exposure have on society?

First of all, there is a rise in post-

traumatic stress disorder, and also in what I call infectious contagion of PTSD – in other words, a situation in which people experience PTSD symptoms even if they were not present at the event itself. It's enough to see the videos and photographs of the violence in order to display symptoms of that sort. We have conducted and published research in this sense.

Interesting. I've just heard about the research of [Tel Aviv University psychology professor] Michael Gilead. He and his associates examined the effect of viewing videos of the horrific events of October 7, and found that watching them was connected to an increase in post-traumatic symptoms.

I'm not surprised. A great deal of research is being done about the mediation of violent events: what you show, what you don't show, how you frame it. But what happens in the social media ecosystem? They let people just film and post content and reach everywhere with it. You have to understand that these organizations know how to use video. They devote a lot of thought to it, a lot of purpose, they're very sophisticated. They insert all sorts of symbols. They photograph themselves in military uniforms, with advanced weapons. I saw a video one of the cartels distributed in which they were filmed were using armored military vehicles, as if they were a real army.

'The most significant effect of the sowing of such fear, in my view, is that when a society is subjected to such high stress, people tend to want an authoritarian regime.'

That is exactly what they want to project: Who is in control of things. The effect is of course great distress felt by everyone who views this content and is exposed to it. You don't need to go as far as PTSD. People begin to change their behavior, their way they comport themselves. They don't go to busy places. They host people at home. That has an economic impact, of course, because [consumer] consumption declines; but the most significant effect of the sowing of such fear, in my view, is that when a society is subjected to such high stress, people tend to want an authoritarian regime.

They're willing to forgo basic rights in return for protection, or the promise of protection. That is also relevant to Israel, unfortunately, but the classic example is El Salvador and its current president, Nayib Bukele. Citizens did a simple prioritization: less freedom, fewer rights, in exchange for the right to leave the house and go to the park with the kids.

It's exactly that. And here too, in Mexico, after people saw how effectively Bukele's policies reduced crime, many maintained that we need to learn from him and do the same thing. But it's absolutely not the case. There is no resemblance between the crime problem in El Salvador and the crime problem in Mexico. Mexico is a far more complex country. Organized crime in Mexico doesn't consist of gangs, like in El Salvador.

They're vast organizations, which operate in dozens of the country's states, and even in dozens of other countries, and they have astounding economic power. You can't just "throw them into jail" and solve the problem, like Bukele did.

The cartels are what's known as "state players" – operating at the level of capital and power, they are in competition with the state.

True, and that's why many people are pushed to support dictatorial policy and methods, like the militarization of the police. A lot of people want a police force that's like an army, that uses the tactics of an army. They believe that only a strong hand will solve the problem, and when other solutions are proposed, like the dialogue that was done in Colombia, some people tend to reject them. They're unwilling. They say that we must not forget and forgive the cartels for what they are doing. Mexican society has been living in fear for so many years already. Research shows that this is one of the results of that fear.

Populist leaders all over the world know how to use fear for their purposes. Fear is the platform for the rise of populism.

We have multiple clear findings that support the idea that a society that lives in fear loses trust. It doesn't rely on the government. It doesn't rely on the judiciary. It doesn't rely on anyone. The people want the advent of the strongman, the populist leader who will wave his fist and promise them that he is going to solve this problem. What's interesting is that Bukele is a right-wing populist. In Mexico, the populist leader is actually from the left [referring to the outgoing president, Andrés Manuel López Obrador], and he declared that he intended to end the problems of organized crime from the root, to create a different atmosphere. But what he's doing, in practice, is simply to cast the responsibility for security on the army. [Following the October 1 inauguration of Claudia Sheinbaum, Prof. Meschoulam told Haaretz that Obrador's successor seems destined "to continue similar security policies, including strengthening the military in several areas."]

It's astonishing. Today the Mexican army is the strongest it's been for seven or eight decades. They control the airports, the train stations, the fuel. The National Guard, which used to be the Federal Police, a civilian force, has now come under the command of the armed forces.

How would you describe the current level of violence in Mexico?

Stable. After years of rising and falling – mostly rising – there is a certain stability at the higher end of the graph. There is still plenty of violence, and it's very much felt at the day-to-day level, more than in the past, but at least it's not on the rise, although this last month has been really tough with almost 2,000 homicides in the past 30 days.

Would you say it's under control?

No. Definitely not.

Do you feel the fear in your everyday life? Are there places you will avoid, precautionary measures you take?

Mexico City is something of an island in this sense. We live a normal life here, on the face of it. In other Mexican states, or even in the suburbs of Mexico City, it's a completely different situation. Unfathomable levels of violence, many cases of murder, of civilians and also in wars be-



Mauricio Meschoulam. "The cartels in Mexico are already so rich that... what interests them now is power. Control. So, like terrorist organizations, they engage in sowing fear and imposing fear on the whole population."

Diego Simon Sanchez

tween the organizations or within them. Small organizations are taking control of these regions. They are exploiting the fact that the slums lack infrastructure and a regular supply of water and electricity, and are trading not only in drugs but also in water. Their are even gangs that own the water supply.

Let's talk for a moment about the small organizations. That's a relatively new phenomenon in the long history of organized crime in Mexico. In your articles, you cite 2006 as the dramatic turning point.

There has always been organized crime in Mexico, especially in the drug trade, because of its physical location and the high demand for drugs in the United States, Canada and Europe. In the 1980s and 1990s there were several huge organizations in Mexico, and they were managed just like transnational corporations. The hierarchy was clear and their behavior was relatively rational. Of course there was violence, but not like now.

Mexico wasn't a full democracy then. There was only one party, one president, one system, and the heads of the crime organizations were somewhat lined up with the system. When they needed to negotiate something, they had a single address [in the head of state]. In effect, they created a situation of coexistence vis-à-vis the authorities, which accommodated the unavoidable phenomenon of organized crime. It was clear that as long as the demand for drugs was so high, organized crime could not be eliminated, or even reduced; but it was possible, in

large measure, to keep the situation under control and coexist with the cartels. Of course there was violence, of course there was awful governmental corruption, but things were under control. What happened when Mexico became democratic?

Crime also ceased to be centralized.

Yes. All the power was divided and redistributed. The local government is ruled by one party, the state government by another party, the president comes from a third party. The collateral damage is that the crime organizations discerned a vacuum and began to grow. They saw that the politicians no longer possessed much power, and they stopped responding to the authorities completely or feeling accountable to them about their behavior.

In 2006, Felipe Calderón was elected president, and he declared war on

'It's one thing to murder someone in a struggle for territory or money, and something else to post [a clip of] the execution on social media to strike fear into people. Mexican crime organizations in Mexico did that long before ISIS.'

organized crime in Mexico.

Calderón declared that he would eliminate the problem. He sent the army on joint operations with the police and other security forces against the crime organizations. Very quickly the situation lurched out of control. The organizations simply recruited masses of people. They had money to offer, and if that didn't work, they had weapons they could threaten people with. They grew at an insane rate. The government had a strategy: to eliminate the head of the organization. That strategy turned out to be not only ineffective, but also genuinely dangerous.

It prompted the organizations to divide, and the internal and external struggles increased and became more ferocious. You eliminate the head of an organization, and in his place you get four small organizations that are competing with one another. The violence against both the establishment and the citizenry escalated. It wasn't like that in the past. You have to understand that in the 1980s and 1990s, crime was regarded as a business, and the criminals were more like businesspeople. They wanted to find new markets. They didn't want violence because it didn't serve their

purposes.

Why? Because the government in any event allowed them to do more or less whatever they wanted?

I would even say that they wanted to move on from violence, in order to increase profits. But when the government sent the army and the police against them, something broke. The arrangement, if you could call it that, fell apart, and chaos set in. The goal of the struggle shifted from money to control, power and influence. Beginning in 2006, the number of civilian victims rose dramatically. More murders, more kidnappings, more protection money from businesses, meaning extortion. More and more citizens get drawn into these circles, and it's no longer just drugs. It's all kinds of types of illicit economies.

For example, they seize control of a certain road and collect money from anyone who wants to go through. In the end, Mexico moves from a situation of having six large organizations into about 200 organizations – small, large and intermediate. Also during these years, the drug market itself changes.

Because of fentanyl and the American demand for the opioid.

The synthetic drugs changed the equation. If beforehand, Mexico was a transit state for drugs, today it is a manufacturing state. It manufactures fentanyl and trades in it. The United States has a severe problem with fentanyl, and [presidential candidate Donald] Trump has already declared that he intends to fight it with all means. Mexico has a new president, and she has stated that she will not accept any measures that will be harmful to Mexican sovereignty. It will really be interesting to see what will happen if Trump is re-elected.

What about governmental corruption? For years the government worked with the crime organizations. Criminals insinuated themselves into the political arena, and vice versa: Politicians worked for the organizations.

You can't understand organized crime in Mexico without understanding the corruption. I think that the classic example is Genaro Garcia Luna. He was Mexico's secretary of public security. He was appointed to fight crime, he was at the highest state level, close to President Calderón. He's the man whom the president wanted to protect Mexican society, and he has now been handed a 38-year prison sentence in the United States for collaborating with the Sinaloa Cartel.

There are some experts who don't agree with how the trial was conducted, but the court hearings were harrowing. They revealed how organized crime penetrated the governmental pyramid, to the highest levels. The political arena in Mexico is very permeable at all levels – local, state and federal. At the local level, it's the crime organizations that dictate the terms. If someone wants to be elected a public official, even in a small city, he



The aftermath of a gunfight between the military and members of Sinaloa drug cartel, outside Culiacán, this past August 29.

Sinaloa Secretary of Security/AFP

must almost always be coordinated with the organizations. Otherwise they become very violent. During election periods in Mexico, new peaks are reached. Candidates are murdered left and right. This year's elections [which were at the federal, state and local levels] were simply a bloodbath.

That's what happens when organized crime is bigger than the state.

Indeed. In 2019 there was an operation to apprehend the son of El Chapo, one of the bosses of the Sinaloa Cartel. The security forces succeeded in capturing him, and the cartel responded with extreme violence. They went into the streets of the city of Culiacán [capital of Sinaloa state], burned cars and stores, shot in every direction, abducted people. For a few hours it looked and felt like the whole country was in their hands. Even people in Mexico City, which is very far from there, shut themselves up at home with their children, as though the violent events were happening next door.

That's the psychological power of violence. In the end, the federal government chose to negotiate and to release the man so as to stop the violence. It wasn't like that in the past. In the 1980s and 1990s, as we saw, the government, which was led by one party, possessed far more power, and the cartels were far weaker. The government's cooperation with crime was also different. It was traditional, as they say, bribery and things like that, not a case of the government being obedient to the rules of the organizations.

Just last month the organizations murdered the mayor of Chilpancingo, capital of Guerrero State [Alejandro Arcos, who was assassinated a week after taking office]. They decapitated him and mounted his head on a truck and his body outside it, so that people would understand what lay in store for those who chose not to obey, and play the game by their rules. The brutal images, and the story in general, were covered extensively in the media, and generated great panic throughout the country. We all felt that there was no government, no state, no one to protect us. The organizations got their message across.

But what can the state do when crime reaches these dimensions? They can't truly fight it. All the solutions are long-term, root-based ideas: reduce inequality, war on corruption and on poverty. It's not realistic.

True, but we have to start somewhere. A strategy is needed for the short, the intermediate and the long term. There's no doubt that it's very complicated, but there are tactics that have worked and tactics that have worked less well, and we can at least learn from that. For example, one lesson is that a policy of eliminating the head of the organization is wrong. A colleague of mine, a political scientist named Eduardo Guerrero, did extensive research on this subject, using big data of events of violence in Mexico. The conclusion is that it's far more effective to harm the intermediate levels and snap the chain of command, than to



A naval officer patrols the Gaviota Azul beach, in Cancun, this past March, when spring break brought many young visitors. Paola Chiomante/Reuters

eliminate the head.

I know that you're determined to avoid a comparison with Israel, but in this connection we simply have to do it. In the past half year, Israel has assassinated Ismail Haniyeh, Mohammed Deif, Hassan Nasrallah and Yahya Sinwar. What can we learn from the case of Mexico?

I studied terrorism, and I learned what happened to ISIS and to Al-Qaida after their leaders were killed. Lebanon is a drug state. It's a weakened country, without true state institutions, like many parts of Mexico. The structural weakness is immense. There's a vacuum. The vacuum will be filled. As long as the state's structural weakness isn't resolved, no problem will be resolved. Nasrallah was a relatively rational player. You didn't need to like him, but his behavior, all in all, was pre-

'If you look at Gaza now, you see a similar situation. There is no state. There are no state institutions.... Israel will have to fill the vacuum and remain there until something will happen. The chaos might generate more and more internecine wars.'

dictable. He worked according to equations of response and containment. The game had rules. Now it doesn't. It's impossible to know what will happen now. When there is no central government and there are no strong state institutions, every scenario is feasible: fragmenting of Hezbollah, internal wars and succession battles, infiltration of other organizations, perhaps even intervention of international forces.

So the lesson is that it's a mistake to create a vacuum when the conditions are so complex?

If you look at Gaza now, you see a similar situation. There is no state. There are no state institutions. Of course it's possible to degrade Hamas' capabilities, but if you don't have any sort of governmental power, any type of administration, Israel will have to fill the vacuum and remain there until something will happen. The chaos might generate more and more internecine wars.

What we learned in Mexico is one lesson: Since 2006, the situation only became more complicated. There is far more violence. So it's true that some of the veteran organizations don't completely exist anymore, certainly not in the previous format, but organized crime as a structural phenomenon has only become broader and more entrenched. We understood that eliminating the head of the organization doesn't solve the problem; it simply creates other problems.

Death's dominion

For a year we have been drowning in an endless cycle of death and killing and bereavement and funerals and air-raid sirens and shelling. Enough!



The funeral of Guy Idan last week. Lightning had struck twice on Kibbutz Shomrat. Gonzalo Fuentes/Reuters

Uri Misgav

Last Friday morning, the regional cemetery of Gush Misgav, in the Galilee. The memorial ceremony for Adam Agmon, who was killed just over a year ago, on October 7, in the desperate, heroic battle for Kibbutz Kissufim. Paratroopers in their trademark red berets mingle with local flower children. In his speech, Yahel, the brother, requests that those present keep asking about Adam and talking about Adam, so that something of him will remain alive.

His father, Oren, whom we interviewed in these pages two weeks ago, is more direct. "I order you: Live!" he commands the young people standing around the grave, his voice broken. I give him a hug and go to look for the grave of Itay Saadon, from the Armored Corps, Adam's classmate, who was killed in the Gaza Strip a few weeks after him. A year before the disaster, Itay's father, Eyal, and his sister, Mika, took part in a Beatles-themed tour that I led in England. They are present at the memorial ceremony, tearful, silent. I hug them, too.

I get into the car and drive to say a quick hello to my daughter at the boarding school on Kibbutz Harduf, where she looks after young children who were removed from their homes by the welfare services. The area is being targeted non-stop these days by Hezbollah. She says that since one recent, particularly traumatic night of nonstop air-raid sirens, the children have asked to sleep in the shelter every night. She's busy, we part with a hug. I ask her to take care of herself.

At the local organic-vegetable store I'm introduced to the cordial owner. He's originally from Kibbutz Nirim, which abuts the Gaza border. On Black Saturday he rushed down there, unarmed, and set out into the fields. Suddenly he encountered a terrorist and looked him in the eyes. After a short conversation the terrorist let him go on his way. Turns out that small miracles also occurred within the great darkness.

A friend calls to tell me that the night

before, on Thursday, lightning had struck twice on Kibbutz Shomrat. Two of its members had been killed in Lebanon within hours of each other. He thinks it would be a good idea for me to go there. At the entrance police officers are already directing traffic. The funeral for Guy Idan is just getting underway, at midday, next to the kibbutz social club and dining hall. It was decided to hold it here and not in the nearby cemetery, because there is no protected space near the graves. Lately the kibbutz and its neighboring communities have been under frequent fire from Lebanon.

Silently I draw closer to the sounds of weeping and heartrending crying. One of Guy's two daughters, whose legs seem to fail her, is being helped by a relative. The other daughter embraces the large coffin that is draped with the flag. Guy was 51 at the time of his death. Redheaded down to his very soul, the kibbutz's veteran security chief insisted on entering Lebanon within the framework of his reservist volunteering. The harrowing salute of gunshots end the ceremony. My contact person says that the officers of the army's casualties unit arrived at the Idan home on the kibbutz at 3 A.M. "An odd time to inform people, don't you think?" he says. Guy's cousin Tsachi Idan, 49, was taken hostage by Hamas terrorists from his home on Kibbutz Nahal Oz on October 7 and is still in Gaza.

When drafting the announcement that Guy had been killed soon after hearing the news, a few kibbutzniks approached Amir Ben Zvi for help. Earlier that night, Amir had celebrated his 50th birthday with family and friends. After they finished the announcement, he went home to sleep for a few hours ahead of the rough day that awaited him. But at 6 A.M. he was awakened again. This time the officers from the casualties unit had showed up at his door. His son, 21-year-old son Ido had been killed in Gaza when an explosive device was detonated on his tank. The family lives right across from the social club. Ido's funeral was held after Shabbat.

An amazing kid, people say when describing Ido Ben Zvi. Later I will read a little more about him on the news sites,

just before his smiling image is lost among the flurry of new headlines about Netanyahu's memorial ceremonies and all his tricks and shticks. In high school Ido chose a social leadership track, he did a year of volunteer service working with Bedouin youth at Nitzana, on the Egyptian border, as my own son did.

The crowd at Guy's funeral is stunned into muteness. I spot MK Gilad Kariv, from Labor. The guy is everywhere. We know each other from army service, way back. A hug. I ask my contact person whether an official representative of the government has shown up. "Benny Gantz," he replies drily. Gantz has not been in the government for some time, but he really is here, towering over people, wearing sunglasses. Still, despite everything, he deserves credit. At least he's not a coward, and he has a heart.

I drive back home to Jaffa in silence. I try to console myself by playing songs of Arik and Shalom and Yehudit and Shlomo, but there is no consolation. A friend texts me. "A really tough blow," he writes. Turns out that during the incident in which Guy Idan was killed, a good friend of his, Omri Lotan - originally from Kibbutz Mevo Hama, before he became a resident of Bat Hefer - was also killed. Forty-seven at his death. Married, father of three. My friend sends a photo of Omri in a reservist uniform. His face is familiar. Lotan, a man of joy and food and Hebrew music, was a well-known figure among the fans of the Hapoel Tel Aviv soccer team. His family asks people to come to his funeral, on Sunday, wearing the team's trademark red shirt and scarf.

I also agree to do that, recalling that after October 7, I dressed the same way because of the same request at the funeral of the Kutz family. A father, mother and three children murdered together in the family's safe room on Kibbutz Kfar Azza. A year has passed and nothing has changed. At the entrance to the community of Bat Hefer, I stare in astonishment through the car windows at the vast crowd streaming to the funeral from every direction, brandishing Israeli flags and Hapoel banners.

The fences are draped everywhere

with yellow ribbons and signs calling for the return of the hostages. A group of yellow metal chairs adorn the traffic circle just outside Bat Hefer, as in countless places around the country, lest the hostages be forgotten. They're rusting. Past the entry gate, next to the wooden sign bearing the community's name, another large, permanent sign has been erected: "Home, home / Time to return / From the hills / From foreign fields / Home!!"

We proceed on foot to the cemetery, with the Hapoel scarves and banners. As if we're on the way to a game. Hundreds of cars are already in the parking lots, along the shoulders of the access road. Lotan was a convivial fellow. Thousands have come to part from him. I take a spot next to Shavit Elimelech, the legendary goalkeeper of Hapoel back in the club's beautiful, happy days of yore. Tearful hugs.

Omri's wife, now widow, conducts the ceremony with a high hand, in his spirit. She says this is the only conceivable way to do it, because Omri would have laughed the whole thing off. The program includes songs that he loved: "When you, pale from sorrow, hide yourself in your silence, / let me talk to you." "They told him that the red shirt / isn't something special." And finally, out of nowhere, the iconic "Song for Peace": "Don't say the day will come / bring on that day."

Occasionally cheers for Hapoel are heard through the loudspeakers, and those assembled take three collective yoga breaths as, instead of chanting "ohmmmm," they are asked to say "Omri." It's lovely and it's strengthens one momentarily, but the eulogies of the children on the open grave of their fine and adored father shatters me and I fall apart. Former basketball star Shimon Amsalem, one of the heroes of my youth, is weeping bitterly nearby.

For a year we have been drowning in an endless cycle of death and killing and bereavement and funerals and air-raid sirens and shelling and war and tears. Hearing parents eulogizing their children and children eulogizing their parents. Without a future, without hope, without a dream.

We can't take it anymore.

WORLD

Continued from page 9

There's a feeling that people are no longer tormented by the killing of hundreds of civilians. That there is no public discussion of the subject.

"Slogans are not a modus operandi. You're not sitting there; don't talk about something you don't know about. There's no public discussion? Please, let Haaretz conduct it. The public is in a completely different place. They want the threat to be lifted first of all, to know that Hezbollah has been vanquished and Hamas, eliminated. Their feeling is that it's a matter of, to be or not to be. And the wisdom of the masses is also a position that needs to be taken into account. It's not something to be belittled. In this case it stems from an instinct for survival."

I see the public furor that sprang up after the Shehadeh killing as a sign of a healthy and more skeptical society. Today there are no conditions for such a discussion to be held.

"The public discussion took place in

the wake of just one thing: the words 'a slight bump on the plane,' which I said in an interview to Haaretz. I gave the interview because I couldn't sit idly by in the face of the attack on the pilots who carried out the operation. Their cars were spray-painted with vicious graffiti. 'Those murderers' were condemned - and, by the way, they are all Meretz voters, more or less. As a commander I had to protect my pilots. So I said 'a slight bump on the plane,' and that triggered what it triggered. Too bad I didn't ask for royalties on that slogan."

You don't regret saying it?
"Absolutely not. It was a sort of technical comment that accurately expressed the pilot's feeling when he releases a bomb from his aircraft. It was given a moral interpretation in order to show how much insensitivity pilots ostensibly have - that they drop munitions and that's all they feel. The attack on me came from a very specific political camp. Okay, I know how to cope with these things. I didn't want the young pilots to have to do so in my place."

The comment took on a life of its own. It became a symbol for the intolerable lightness with which Israel harms innocent civilians.

"It did not become any such symbol. It has nothing to do with humanity. Sensitivity to human life and to casualties caused as part of collateral damage have accompanied me in all my military tasks."

Even so, the words came to express the loss of morality and of compassion.

"In whose eyes? [The poet] Natan Zach, who called me a 'Nazi'? Dana Olmert [daughter of then-Prime Minister Ehud Olmert], who demonstrated in front of my home? Fine, it's their right."

You are saying that I'm attributing far-reaching meaning to that com-

'Ultimately, you won't find anyone in the liberal-democratic camp who is willing to sacrifice hostages. You will find them only in the messianic, delusional, extremist camp.'

ment?
"Definitely. Haaretz attributed disproportionate weight to it."

Back to Caesarea. The moderator of the event introduces "the man who sits on the asphalt," and Halutz takes the stage to speak to the furious drumming of the Pink Front protest group. The person whose appointment as deputy chief of staff spurred left-wingers to petition the High Court of Justice, whom some branded a "war criminal," is today embraced by that milieu and delivers a fairly clear, anti-war message. "To end the war in Gaza, which actually ended some time ago, to leave the Strip, not to get bogged down in Lebanon," he urges.

But Halutz isn't speaking in terms of "sobering up." As he sees it, he is continuing to navigate according to the same moral compass. It's reality that has gone into a tailspin and lurched off-course. "I always rejected anarchism, and I do today as well. The question is who the anarchist is here: the person who is trying to turn us into a dictatorship, or the one who opposes that.



A protest against the detention of reservists accused of assaulting a Palestinian prisoner at the Sde Teiman camp. "If that story is true, it's unacceptable." Avishag Shaar-Yashuv

There's no symmetry. I lie down on the road not for myself, but out of a feeling that I cannot leave this world if I don't do everything possible to ensure that there will be a 'follow-up generation' that is born, lives and dies here. Some people are making every effort

to prevent that from happening. The messianics, the racists, the fascists, the homophobes, the misogynists and all those other types of people who have labeled me an anarchist-traitor and themselves as state-oriented patriots. A world turned upside-down."

WEEKEND

ENEMIES

Continued from page 7

To which the center's director, Prof. Jan Heiret, stated in response to a query from Haaretz, "Since October 7, we have observed a disturbing increase in antisemitic attitudes and incidents in Norway. This deeply concerns us. The center works daily to fulfill our mandate, which is to conduct research and disseminate knowledge about the Holocaust, antisemitism, genocide and related human-rights violations, as well as the conditions of minorities in Norway."

"We were promised certain things as Jews and as citizens of Norway who have a specific history," says Leif Knutsen, a Jewish-Norwegian activist and professional media monitor. "All of this collapsed within hours on October 7." Knutsen talks about the disparity between the expectations from Norwegian society – with its democratic and liberal values – and the situation as it is being experienced by the country's Jews in practice.

There were in fact portents, he notes, including threats, disturbances and antisemitic remarks in periods of earlier Israeli military operations in the Gaza Strip and Lebanon. "Despite these events, there was still a sense of safety," Knutsen points out. "But on October 7 we realized that the social contract we had as a minority in Norway would not be honored. This is a harsh reality because we are barely holding on as it is. The community's institutions are run by volunteers, it's hard to fill all the roles, the pressure is immense, and the task of maintaining all the institutions is really hard," even in normal times.

There are indications of a community in trauma, Knutsen believes, as Jews cope with extremely hostile media, intolerable remarks, provocations and harassment.

"After October 7," he continues, "I conducted a survey among Norwegian Jews and received responses from about 150 people. Half the respondents said they were considering leaving the country, and more than 90 percent said the Norwegian authorities don't understand what antisemitism is."

"If the Jewish community disappears from Norway, it would be a tragedy," says Knutsen. "It would be just one sad episode among many in Jewish history, but it would be a catastrophe for Norway. This is why I am mostly concerned – not necessarily as a Jew, but as a Norwegian patriot," he concludes.

Prof. Brekke concurs. "Something broke on October 7. Norwegian Jews today feel vulnerable and betrayed by society. They are constantly told what they should think about the [Palestinian] conflict. If they do not condemn Israel, they are told they are 'Jews in the

wrong way.' There are public figures and politicians who support Hamas, and far-right extremists and neo-Nazis who supported the October 7 massacre. It's not surprising, then, that the country's Jews are questioning their place in Norwegian society."

The sources of Norwegian hostility toward Israel go back to the late 1960s and early 1970s, Brekke explains. "After World War II and Israel's establishment, Norway's clear stance was opposition to antisemitism and support for the young Jewish state," he says. "However, pro-Palestinian attitudes began to gain momentum after the Six-Day War, and pro-Palestinian leftist movements, including Marxist and Maoist groups, tried to push the more moderate social-democratic left in that direction. Although similar trends occurred in other countries, there are unique elements in Norway that led to the entire Norwegian left adopting this stance."

'Norway's Jews felt that the Kristallnacht event had been hijacked from them,' says Burke. 'A Norwegian anti-racism organization turned the event into a pro-Palestinian one.' Instead of dealing with Nazism, the Holocaust and antisemitism, the event focused on a discussion of the Middle East and political radicalization.

"From the late 1970s, for 20 years, Norway sent over 20,000 soldiers to serve in UNIFIL (United Nations peacekeeping forces), in Lebanon. As a result, that generation had a feeling that Norway possessed special knowledge of the region. I see this as Norwegian arrogance. You can also add Norway's involvement in the Oslo Accords. When the accords collapsed, the anti-Zionist movement simply spiraled out of control."

The most distinctive factor in Norway, says Brekke, is the impact of trade unions on the shaping of the country's foreign policy. "More than one million Norwegians, about a fifth of the population, are members of unions. In recent decades, these unions have cultivated a grassroots culture that is strongly anti-Israel and anti-Zionist. This movement is deeply tied to the [ruling] Norwegian Labor Party, both organizationally and ideologically, which gives the unions considerable influence over Norway's

foreign policy." This anti-Zionism, Brekke argues, has turned into a type of antisemitism.

According to Dr. Cathrine Thorleifsson, from the social anthropology department of the University of Oslo, a genuine problem exists in Norway when it comes to understanding the new antisemitism, which is Israel-related. Norway's Jews, explains Thorleifsson – who has lived in Israel and speaks Hebrew – are in a vulnerable position and encounter antisemitism in various milieus: conventional media, social media and the public space. In the course of her research into the life of Norway's Jews in the 21st century, Thorleifsson has uncovered much prejudicial thinking about the community and about Israel. In one survey she conducted, half the respondents expressed the belief that Israel's attitude toward treatment of the Palestinians is no better than the way the Jews were treated in the Holocaust.

In Thorleifsson's view, the country's political discourse plays a crucial role in this regard. "Norway is a small country," she observes, "and its political discourse is still evolving. There is conformity, a lack of diverse voices expressing different experiences, and insufficient democratic tools to protect minorities." Norwegian politics espouses "a very pro-Palestinian attitude," she adds. "In certain activist circles, Hamas' attack is considered legitimate resistance, and the word 'terrorism' is not used where it should be. Norwegian conformity hides the antisemitism linked to Israel, as well as the misinformation and political violence that fuel it."

Israeli-born Ilan Sharoni, who lives in Stavanger, a city in the country's southwest, has been in the country since 1988. "I live here, my children and grandchildren live here, and I am very worried," he says. The chief culprit is the media, he avers. "Day after day on television, for decades now. Whoever doesn't condemn Israel is condemned as a supporter of genocide. Everything just blew up after October 7. The anti-Israeli approach, which was always part of domestic politics, has now become fatal."

To which Yaniv, a resident of Oslo who works and teaches in the field of art, adds, "When I speak to people who discover that I am from Israel, they stop talking or even choke. Afterward, they sometimes return to apologize." Yet, he says he has heard on more than one occasion the view that Israel is a criminal country that should not exist.

Ahead of the events marking the first anniversary of October 7, security around Jewish institutions in the country was beefed up by authorities. Pro-Palestinian demonstrations were held opposite the community memorial assemblies in Oslo and Bergen. In Oslo, models of Hamas' Qassam rockets, painted green, white and red, were raised. In a demonstration held in Bergen under the slogan "A Year since the



A corrupted Israeli flag flying in Oslo early during the war last year.

Ronen Bahar

Al-Aqsa Flood" (as Hamas called the attack on Israel), demonstrators burned Israeli flags. The police asked participants in rallies of support for Israel not to go home in groups because it would be "difficult to protect them."

Many in the Jewish community understand where the criticism of Israel is coming from. But even so, on March 8 this year, International Women's Day, a group of Jews, women and men, hoped they would be able to demonstrate in solidarity with women around the world in a large event that was set to take place in Oslo.

Yael Nilsen, the longtime Norway resident who has taken part in the international effort for the return of the Gaza hostages, contacted the organizers and asked to join the event. Together with her friends, she requested that the acts of rape that were perpetrated on October 7 and the condition of the abducted Israelis be brought to public awareness.

"Those issues are barely discussed in the Norwegian media," says Nilsen. "We thought that by joining the large-scale event of International Women's Day, we would be able to introduce the subject of the sexual violence and the awful condition of the abducted Israelis into the Norwegian discourse."

Initially, it didn't look like there would be a problem. One of the slogans that had been decided on for the demonstration dealt with the weaponizing of rape, so there was compatibility between the content of the demonstration and the goals of Nilsen's group. "And the fact is that when I contacted the organizers, they said that the program was already

set, but that we would be able to join the group that would march under the slogan 'Fighting rape as a weapon.' To be certain, I made sure that the organizers knew that we would be carrying photographs of the abducted women, and I also asked them to confirm that the security arrangements would ensure that we would be safe with our Jewish symbols. Everything looked to be in order."

The group consisted of 40 to 50 people, most of them local Jews, Israelis and a few supporters. Nilsen made sure that no one would be carrying an Israeli flag and that everyone was clear about the message. "It was important for us to focus on the sexual violence, so we dispensed with Israeli flags. But to identify the women as Israelis, we had a blue-and-white banner with the inscription '#MeToo Unless you're a Jew,' together with graphics of a Star of David made out of women's undergarments and a triangle of blood, which was also used internationally in similar demonstrations."

The group knew they might encounter hostility. "Our symbols often generate hatred and aggression in Norway," Nilsen notes. "There is a large Muslim community here, and during that period there were demonstrations against Israel every day. Some of them crossed the thin line between anti-Israel views and antisemitism. So we were worried, but we got confirmation from the organizers, and because we didn't represent Israel, and the demonstration was supposed to deal with something that all of Norway could agree on – opposition to the use of violence against women as a

weapon – we hoped for the best."

The hostile reaction manifested almost immediately. Initially, the group was refused entry to the event and had to prove that they had the organizers' authorization to participate. "One of the organizers went on shouting and cursing, and then took one of our signs and threw it on the ground," Nilsen recalls. "After the police made sure he couldn't get close to us, more and more organizers told us that our message conflicted with the messages of the event."

"They looked at us with hatred and disgust, and started to shout that we were Zionists and fascists. Then the crowd joined in with slogans and rhythmic chanting that we were already used to, like 'Murderers,' 'No to Zionists in our streets' and 'From the river to the sea, Palestine shall be free.'"

They avoided getting into a direct confrontation, Nilsen relates, "and we instructed our group not to scatter and not to respond. But when the atmosphere heated up, some of the other demonstrators – Norwegian men and women of my age – approached the members of the group very closely, and whispered into their ear things like 'child murderer' and *skadedyr* ['parasites' in Norwegian]."

"I've had anti-Israeli calls shouted at me in the past," Nilsen continues. "But this time it was very different. The hatred came from people I thought we shared basic values with. The feeling was that we were being canceled as human beings. We weren't women and men – we were the embodiment of evil."

Lichen Shmuel, 38, lives in Tzur Yitzhak, and Daniela Shmuel, 52, lives in Ashkelon; flying to Paphos, Cyprus

We interrupted you in the middle of a very lively girls' conversation.

Daniela: She's my husband's niece. Lichen [her name is pronounced "Li-Chen" in Hebrew, meaning "pleasant"]: We also have something in common: She had cancer and now I have cancer, so we're going to a place called the Secret Forest. It's a place for holistic treatment of trauma and serious diseases. People who go through all kinds of crises in life and need a moment to get away from it all – this is a place that fulfills that need. Healing for the psyche. We were always close, and now, as I was about to go off on this journey, she asked me who I was going with. I told her I was going alone, and she said, "Not alone, I'm coming with you."

First of all, good health and a speedy recovery.

Lichen: Amen, thank you. Can I ask about the cancer?

Lichen: Yes, of course. What kind is it?

Lichen: Breast. I discovered it two months ago. A lump suddenly appeared. What's the first thing you thought?

Lichen: What do I need this for? Exactly like that. And I am getting the whole deal, too. Partial mastectomy, chemotherapy, after that there will be radiation treatment, rehabilitative surgery. The entire package.

Does it affect the way you perceive your femininity?

Lichen: Yes, obviously. Unequivocally. First of all, I believe that my hair is my beauty.

Your hair really is very beautiful.

Daniela: See?

Lichen: Shaving it off is a real bummer. I want to make a wig out of my hair so I'll feel a little... But that costs a ton of money. And I'm also insecure about what I'm wearing. I wear tight-fitting clothes, and now suddenly I need clothes that are a little baggier so people won't notice and won't see what I see.

That's something, because when we first began to talk to you now, you said exactly that this is the happiest period in your life, no?

Lichen: Wow, wow, I have so many stories.

Daniela: At the same time she received this cruel news, she undertook a

Departures | Arrivals



change in her life that brought her to a good place.

Lichen: I got divorced, and I'm in a better place.

You got divorced before you found out about the cancer?

Lichen: Yes. And I said, Hey, how am I going to do this alone now? But I understood that it was all with good timing. It had to happen when I was alone.

Is it hard to tell people?

Lichen: The moment you say "I have breast cancer" people look, you know.

Wow, they look at your breasts?

Lichen: Yes, and I work with a lot of men. "It looks fine," they say. In a friendly way, yes? Not in a harassing way. Women react the same way.

Daniela, what did you say to her when she told you?

Daniela: That everything's okay, that this is going to pass and that it's something she can handle.

Lichen has you with her. But what would you say to someone who doesn't have an aunt who went through something like that?

Daniela: First of all, try to stay optimistic. It's important to stay happy, to do things you like and to neutralize background noise. Stress and nerves have a big influence. So simply make sure that you love yourself, exactly like that. Let

people say you're an egoist, whatever they want. First of all, love yourself and do only what is good for you. That's the place where healing and recovery start from.

Lichen: And do medical screening. The health maintenance organizations do testing for early signs. People are afraid to do it, afraid to contend with the thought.

Why?

Daniela: Look, when they tell you it's cancer, you straight off see death. There are also people who keep their distance, like it's infectious. By the way, take note, who says "cancer"? Who? Only people who have cancer. All the rest call it "the disease." People avoid saying it, as though if they say it, they will get sick. Everyone who has cancer says "cancer," and we say it in the most straightforward way. Like you say "Good morning."

Decisions that are made during the disease hold up afterward?

Daniela: In most cases, yes. I filtered out the background noise. I choose my family first of all. They have proved themselves all along the way.

Lichen, are there decisions you're making now that you want us to document so you'll have a reminder?

Lichen: To love myself. That's it.

Shir Reuven, Photos by Tomer Appelbaum



Avishag Weinstein, 26, lives in Jerusalem; arriving from Thessaloniki

Is that a yoga mat or is it for camping?

For camping. I was on Samothrace, which is the place for camping. It's full of nature, an island surrounded by the sea with plenty of sources of water, with huge, ancient trees that even a few people with their arms out can't encircle. Something in the island itself attracts special people.

What are "special people"?

I won't say hippies, but there are hippies and also lots of nakedness, you know, nudists, which is also very nice.

Is that something you've done in Israel, too?

In Israel it's hard to find nudist spots that aren't... Sorry to generalize, but that aren't packed with older men who leer. It's not really a situation in which whoever wants it – women, older people, kids – can all be nudists. For that to happen there has to be a certain atmosphere that

everyone accepts. So in Israel I didn't find many places. It probably has to do with the fact that this is Israel, a Jewish state, where religion plays a little more of a starring role.

How did you get into nudism?

I guess from my hippy mother. I remember that she took us to Sinai and to all kinds of camping spots by the sea, and I remember nudity from a young age.

How did she explain it to you?

I don't remember her explaining it, or maybe she did and I don't remember. But back then it actually turned me off. Later I grew up and started going to all kinds of more open festivals. I got to a place where there's a lot of people together and all of them naked, if they want.

Would your mother agree with your categorization of her as a hippy?

She's a bit of a retired hippy.

What do you like about nudism?

At first the feeling is of being exposed, like something isn't right. But then, after you get used to it, it's so powerful and energizing. In a region where there's sun and fresh water, it's absolutely like the body is drinking in from the outside what's happening. I felt strong and healthy, it doesn't matter if you've been eating

bourikas all day. It creates a different atmosphere, when it's with people who are close to you. Wearing clothes afterward is strange.

Isn't it stranger with people who are close?

It's funny to think about it, but with most of the people who are close to me I haven't been in the nude. But it did happen to me once with a guy who's a friend, and that was actually...

Embarrassing?

At first. It starts with embarrassment, but then it opens up another layer. At first I really freaked out, but this was a friend who had a lot of experience with nudity; it was on a nudist ranch in Portugal. So the moment I saw he felt very comfortable, I relaxed. We were also three girls and one guy, he was in the minority, so that helped the situation.

Does nudity do something for the way we perceive the body?

Yes, because everyone says there is nothing to hide. And there isn't anything to hide. Do you see this cellulitis? So I had something here, and here I have a bit of a scar, and a birthmark. Now you're wearing a shirt and pants, and in the nude you're with your organs and your body, and the eye gets used to it. And you get used to feeling comfortable in the nude and in your body.

We're in the years after MeToo, the boundaries between men and women have become clearer. Does that also affect a scene like that, where there's an absence of boundaries?

As a woman, I can say that when I saw so many penises in front of me, circumcised and not circumcised, I think it made me a little asexual.

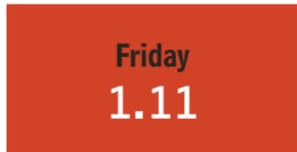
In general in life?

No, only at festivals, thank God. What arouses sexuality in me is mysteriousness. So clothes are more mysterious than an ass. Seeing everyone naked doesn't do it for me. Actually, everyone seemed to me to be a little like kids, like we're all playing some game. I think that the more you do it, you're like, "Okay, cock; okay, tit; okay, ass. Okay, another cock." What helped me was to surround myself with people that I felt comfortable with. I wouldn't start doing it by myself.

Is there anything you'd like to add?

That I wholeheartedly wish for the return of the hostages to their homes and families, and in general I hope that things will be quieter and more pleasant here for everyone.

Television



CHANNEL KAN 11 (Y11/H11)

06.00 Through the Music - Yoav Kutner interviews Danny Sanderson **06.30** This Morning - with Ran Bin-yamini **08.00** Current affairs with Moria Kor & Professor Yuval Ebashan **09.00** Friday Coffee - with Kere Uzan & Yigal Adika **10.00** News Flash **10.05** Mediterranean Basin **12.00** Storytelling Festival **12.50** The Voice of the Queue - This week's Torah portion **13.05** Repentance & OTD - One-on-one discussion **13.40** Zehu Zei - Satire **14.15** One Song - A television adaptation of successful Israeli songs **14.50** The Chase - Game Show (s.8) **15.50** Whatever You Say - Satire (s.4) **16.20** A Rendezvous with Roni Kuban - Roni Kuban interviews Oren Smadja **17.00** Cultural Agent - with Kobi Meidan **18.00** Sharon Wezler & Uri Levy - Weekly current affairs **19.50** Friday Night News **22.00** An Evening with Shai Stern **23.00** Kupa Rashit - Israeli comedy series (2 eps) **23.25** News Flash **23.30** Kupa Rashit (cont.) **23.50** Who Is It? - Sketch show **00.15** The Piano Festival - Yoni Roeh **01.25** Deciphering India - Journalist and author Anjan Sundaram travels across India (3 eps)

KESHET (Y12/H12)

06.00 News Flash **06.10** Friday Morning - with Galit & Yoav **07.00** News Flash **07.05** Friday Morning (cont.) **10.00** News Flash **10.05** Almost Shabbat - Entertainment **11.10** The Weekly Lesson - with Sivan Rahav Meir **11.45** Feeling Beautiful - Lifestyle **12.00** News Flash **12.05** Feeling Beautiful (cont.) **12.30** Intimate Talk - Rafi Reshef interviews **13.00** News Flash **13.05** Intimate Talk (cont.) **13.20** Cooking with Chef Omer Miller **13.55** News Flash **14.00** Galit & Ilanit **16.00** Friday with Haim & Ma'ayan **18.00** Ofira & Levinson **19.55** Friday Night News **22.00** Stand-up with Rotem Abuhav **23.00** Life is Hard - Israeli comedy series **23.30** MasterChef: Dream Team - Reality

RESHET (Y13/H13)

06.00 Friday Morning with Eli Rachin **10.00** News Flash **10.05** Welcoming Friday - with Kobi Mahat & Chen Zander **11.00** News Flash **11.05** Welcoming Friday (cont.) **12.00** News Flash **12.05** Stethoscope - Health magazine **12.50** The Legal Parade - Law magazine **13.00** News Flash **13.05** The Legal Parade (cont.) **13.35** Beauty Blender - Lifestyle **14.00** News Flash **14.05** Friday with Motty Reif **16.00** Game of Chefs - Reality **16.55** The Magazine - with Noga Nir Neeman **17.00** News Flash **17.05** The Magazine (cont.) **17.55** Friday Evening - with Arik Weiss **19.55** Friday Night News **21.30** DORT Drop the Million - Game Show **22.30** NevuS - Israeli comedy series (s.2, 2 eps) **23.25** Game of Chefs - Reality (2 eps)

HOT 3 (H3)

08.25 The Girls on the Bus **09.10** Joan **10.00** The Young and the Restless (s.4) **12.35** The Bold and the Beautiful (s.4) **14.10** Days of Our Lives (s.6) **16.50** A Place to Call Home (s.3, 5 eps) **21.25** Matlock **22.10** The Zweiflers **23.05** Joan **23.50** The Girls on the Bus **00.40** Matlock **01.25** The Zweiflers **02.25** Joan

HOT HBO (H4)

09.15 Last Week Tonight with John Oliver (s.11) **10.00** Real Time with Bill Maher (s.22) **11.00** It's Florida, Man **11.25** Nightstepher **12.15** My Brilliant Friend (s.4) **13.10** Somebody Somewhere (s.3) **13.40** Paris Has Fallen **14.25** Mad Men (s.5) **18.25** My Brilliant Friend (s.4) **19.20** Somebody Somewhere (s.3) **19.50** The Franchise **20.20** Nightstepher **21.10** The Penguin **22.00** Paris Has Fallen **22.50** Hotel Cocaine **23.40** The Penguin **00.35** Tulsa King **01.10** Mad Men (5 eps)

HOT ZONE (H5)

07.10 Blue Bloods (s.12, 5 eps) **10.45** Law & Order (s.23, 3 eps) **12.50** S.W.A.T. (s.7, 3 eps) **15.00** Chicago Fire (s.10, 5 eps) **18.25** Chicago Fire (s.12, 2 eps) **19.50** NCIS (s.21, 5 eps) **23.25** FBI: Most Wanted (s.5, 3 eps) **01.30** CSI: Vegas (s.3, 5 eps)

HOT CHANNEL 8 (H8)

06.00 Marry Me However **07.05** Neznin **08.00** The Titan Disaster **08.50** Breath of Fire **09.55** Marry Me However **11.00** Neznin **11.55** The Titan Disaster **12.45** Breath of Fire **13.50** Marry Me However **14.55** Neznin **15.50** Costa Concordia: Why She Sank (2 pts.) **17.25** Caught in Motion (3 eps) **20.00** The Avoidable War **21.05** Gospel of Wealth (3 eps) **23.50** Costa Concordia: Why She Sank (2 pts.) **01.30** Caught in Motion (3 eps)

YES DOCU (Y8)

07.40 Daniel **08.50** Kingdom of Dreams **09.40** History of the Siltcom **10.25** Shaq **11.10** A Disturbance in the Force **12.40** The Jinx (s.2, 2 eps) **14.35** The Gullspang Miracle **16.25** Obsessed with Light **17.20** Ali's 18.55 Fashion Reimagined **20.35** Searching for Sugar Man **22.00** Breaking Dad: Britain's Unlikeliest Drug Dealer **23.00** I Am Not a Monster: The Lois Riess Murders **00.30** Sin Eater: The Crimes of Anthony Pellicano **01.25** Breaking Dad: Britain's Unlikeliest Drug Dealer **02.25** I Am Not a Monster: The Lois Riess Murders

HISTORY (Y44/H43)

08.00 The UnXplained (s.3, 4 eps) **10.45** The Secret of Skinwalker Ranch (s.4, 5 eps) **14.20** Storage Wars (s.2) **15.05** Pawn Stars Do America (s.2) **16.25** Pawn Stars **17.05** The Icons That Built America **17.45** The Food That Built America (s.5) **18.30** The Toys That Built the World (s.3, 5 eps) **22.10** Ancient Aliens (4 eps) **00.55** Alone (s.11, 6 eps)

YES TV DRAMA (Y5)

06.00 The Way Home **06.40** A Million Little Things (s.5) **07.25** The Bold and the Beautiful (s.4) **09.20** The Young and the Restless (s.4) **12.10** Grey's Anatomy (s.2) **12.55** The Golden Bachelorette **14.00** My Brilliant Friend (s.4) **14.55** Sullivan's Crossing (s.2) **15.40** Paper Dolls **16.25** Spencer Sisters **17.15** Ride **18.05** Accused **18.55** Grey's Anatomy (s.2) **19.40** The Golden Bachelorette **20.45** Accused (s.2) **21.30** Joan **22.15** A Very Royal Scandal **23.20** The Green Veil **23.55** In Treatment **00.25** Yellowjackets (s.2) **01.20** Rupa's Drag Race: All Stars **01.50** Rupa's Drag Race: All Stars Untrucked (s.9)

YES TV ACTION (Y6)

06.00 The Orville (s.7) **07.25** S.W.A.T. (s.7, 2 eps) **08.55** Special Ops: Lioness (2 eps) **10.25** After the Flood **11.15** The Control Room **12.10** 9-1-1 (s.8) **12.55** Trigger Point (s.2) **13.45** Fire Country (s.3) **14.35** The Orville (s.7) **16.00** Survivor (2 eps) **18.20** NCIS: Los Angeles (s.9, 2 eps) **19.45** After the Flood **20.30** S.W.A.T. (s.7, 2 eps) **22.00** Your Honor (s.2) **23.50** Without Sin **23.40** Perry Mason **00.35** From (s.3) **01.30** The Penguin **02.30** Your Honor (s.2)

YES TV COMEDY (Y7)

06.00 Hot in Cleveland (s.6) **06.25** Young & Hungry (s.2, 2 eps) **07.15** The Buzagols (s.3, 2 eps) **08.10** How I Met Your Mother (s.2, 2 eps) **09.00** Knuckles (2 eps) **10.00** Young & Hungry (s.2, 2 eps) **10.50** The Buzagols (s.3, 2 eps) **11.50** How I Met Your Mother (s.2, 2 eps) **12.40** Parks and Recreations (s.4, 2 eps) **13.30** The Nanny (s.4, 2 eps) **14.20** Friends (s.7, 2 eps) **15.10** How I Met Your Mother (s.2, 2 eps) **16.00** Hot in Cleveland (s.6, 2 eps) **16.50** Parks and Recreations (s.4, 2 eps) **17.40** The Nanny (s.4, 2 eps) **18.30** Friends (s.7, 2 eps) **19.20** The Franchise **22.00** What We Do in the Shadows (s.6, 3 eps) **23.15** Dave (s.3, 2 eps) **00.20** Saturday Night Live **01.30** The Franchise **02.00** What We Do in the Shadows (s.6, 3 eps)



"DogMan," Yes Movies Action, 22.00.

Briarcliff Entertainment/Luc Besson Productions/Yes

EUROSPORT (Y61/H59)

08.00 Cycling - Track World Championship **09.30** Snooker - Northern Ireland Open **11.30** Alpine Skiing - World Cup in Austria **13.00** Snooker - Northern Ireland Open **13.45** Snooker - Northern Ireland Open: Quarterfinals **20.00** Alpine Skiing - World Cup in Austria **20.45** Snooker - Northern Ireland Open: Quarterfinals **00.00** Trail Running - World Series **02.30** Snooker - Northern Ireland Open: Quarterfinals

MOVIE CHANNELS

HOT CINEMA 1 (H16)

07.50 Ferrari (USA/UK/Italy/Saudi Arabia, 2023). Biography drama. Dir: Michael Mann. With Adam Driver, Shailene Woodley, Giuseppe Fiennes. **09.55** Wanted (USA/Germany, 2008). Action. Dir: Timur Bekmambetov. With Angelina Jolie, James McAvoy, Morgan Freeman. **11.45** The Lake House (USA, 2006). Romantic drama. Dir: Alejandro Agresti. With Keanu Reeves, Sandra Bullock. **13.25** Olympus Has Fallen (USA, 2013). Action thriller. Dir: Antoine Fuqua. With Gerard Butler, Aaron Eckhart, Morgan Freeman. **15.25** Good Will Hunting (USA, 1997). Drama. Dir: Gus Van Sant. With Robin Williams, Matt Damon, Ben Affleck, Minnie Driver. **17.30** Man of Tai Chi (USA/China/Hong Kong, 2013). Action drama. Dir: Keanu Reeves. With Tiger Hu Chen, Keanu Reeves, Karen Mok. **19.15** Any Given Sunday (USA, 1999). Sports drama. Dir: Oliver Stone. With Al Pacino, Cameron Diaz, Dennis Quaid, James Woods, Jamie Foxx, LL Cool J. **21.00** Basic Instinct (USA, 1992). Thriller. Dir: Paul Verhoeven. With Michael Douglas, Sharon Stone. **00.05** Cold Pursuit (USA, 2019). Action comedy. Dir: Hans Petter Moland. With Liam Neeson, Laura Dern, Michael Richardson. **02.10** The Counselor (USA/UK, 2013). Crime thriller. Dir: Ridley Scott. With Michael Fassbender, Penelope Cruz, Cameron Diaz.

HOT CINEMA 2 (H17)

06.35 The Expendables 2 (USA, 2012). Action adventure thriller. Dir: Simon West. With Sylvester Stallone, Jean-Claude Van Damme. **08.15** Rules of Engagement (USA/Canada/UK/Germany, 2000). Thriller. Dir: William Friedkin. With Tommy Lee Jones, Samuel L. Jackson, Guy Pearce, Ben Kingsley. **10.15** I.T. (Ireland/France/UK, 2016). Crime mystery. Dir: John Moore. With Pierce Brosnan, Karen Moskow, Jason Barry. **11.50** Enemy at the Gates (USA/Germany/UK/Ireland, 2001). WWII suspense drama. Dir: Jean-Jacques Annaud. With Joseph Fiennes, Jude Law, Rachel Weisz, Bob Hoskins, Ed Harris. **14.00** One Ranger (USA, 2023). Action thriller. Dir: Jesse V. Johnson. With Thomas Jane, Dean Cain, Dominique Tipper. **15.35** Meg 2: The Trench (USA/China, 2023). Action. Dir: Ben Wheatley. With Jason Statham, Jing Wu, Shuya Sophia Cha. **17.25** The Flash (USA/Canada/Australia, 2023). Action adventure. Dir: Andy Muschietti. With Ezra Miller, Michael Keaton, Sasha Calle. **19.45** Executive Decision (USA, 1996). Action. Dir: Stuart Baird. With Kurt Russell, Steven Seagal, Halle Berry. **22.00** The Dive (Germany/Belgium/UK, 2023). Drama thriller. Dir: Maximilian Erlenwein. With Louisa Krause, Sophie Lowe, Stella Ullrich. **23.30** Without Remorse (USA/Germany, 2021). Action. Dir: Stefano Sollima. With Michael B. Jordan, Jodie Turner-Smith, Jamie Bell. **01.15** Survivor (USA/UK, 2015). Action. Dir: James McTeigue. With Milla Jovovich Pierce Brosnan, Dylan McDermott.

HOT CINEMA 3 (H18)

07.00 Rat Race (Canada/USA, 2001). Comedy. Dir: Jerry Zucker. With John Cleese, Rowan Atkinson, Cuba Gooding Jr., Whoopi Goldberg. **08.50** Meet the Fockers (USA, 2004). Comedy. Dir: Jay Roach. With Robert De Niro, Ben Stiller, Dustin Hoffman, Barbra Streisand. **10.45** Going in Style (USA, 2017). Comedy. Dir: Zach Braff. With Michael Caine, Morgan Freeman, Matt Dillon. **12.20** The War with Grandpa (USA, 2020). Comedy. Dir: Tim Hill. With Robert De Niro, Uma Thurman, Rob Riggle. **14.00** My Big Fat Greek Wedding 3 (USA, 2023). Romantic comedy. Directed by and starring Nia Vardalos. With John Corbett, Louis Mandylor. **15.35** Jerry and Marge Go Large (USA, 2022). Biography comedy. Dir: David Frankel. With Bryan Cranston, Annette Bening, Rainn Wilson. **17.10** The Switch (USA, 2010). Romantic comedy. Dir: Josh Gordon, Will Speck. With Jennifer Aniston, Jason Bateman. **18.50** Date Night (USA, 2010). Comedy. Dir: Shawn Levy. With Steve Carell, Tina Fey. **20.20** Bridget Jones's Diary (UK/France, 2001). Romantic comedy. Dir: Sharon Maguire. With Renee Zellweger, Colin Firth, Hugh Grant. **22.00** Bridget Jones: Edge of Reason (USA, 2004). Romantic comedy. Dir: Beeban Kidron. With Renee Zellweger, Colin Firth, Hugh Grant. **23.45** Bridget Jones's Baby (Ireland/UK/France/USA, 2016). Romantic comedy. Dir: Sharon Maguire. With Renee Zellweger, Gemma Jones, Jim Broadbent. **01.50** Keeping Up with the Joneses (USA, 2016). Action comedy. Dir: Greg Mottola. With Gal Gadot, Zach Galifianakis, Isla Fisher.

HOT CINEMA 4 (H19)

07.35 Downton Abbey (UK/USA, 2018). Drama. Dir: Michael Engler. With Stephen Campbell Moore, Michael Fox, Lesley Nicol. **09.35** A Officer and a Spy (France/Italy, 2019). Historical drama. Dir: Robert Polanski. With Jean Dujardin, Louis Garrel, Emmanuelle Seigner. **11.45** Alice, Darling (Canada/UK, 2022). Romantic drama thriller. Dir: Mary Nighy. With Anna Kendrick, Kaniehtiio, Charlie Carrick. **13.15** Other Peoples' Children (France, 2022). Drama. Dir: Rebecca Zlotowski. With Virginie Efira, Roschdy Zem. **15.00** Burr (USA, 2015). Comedy. Dir: John Wells. With Bradley Cooper, Sienna Miller, Daniel Bruhl. **16.40** Boiling Point (UK, 2021). Drama thriller. Dir: Philip Barantini. With Stephen Graham, Winette Robinson, Alicia Featham. **18.20** Emperor (Japan/USA, 2012). History drama. Dir: Peter Webber. With Matthew Fox, Colin Moy, Tommy Lee Jones. **20.05** Black Tide Fleuve noir (France/Belgium, 2018). Crime. Dir: Erick Zonca. With Vincent Cassel, Romain Duris, Sandrine Kiberlain. **22.00** Very Good Girls (USA, 2014). Romantic drama. Dir: Naomi Foner. With Dakota Fanning, Elizabeth Olsen, Sterling Jones. **23.30** Michael Clayton (USA, 2007). Crime. Dir: Tony Gilroy. With George Clooney, Michael O'Keefe. **01.30** Adam (USA, 2020). Biography drama. Dir: Michael Uppendahl. With Aaron Paul, Lena Olin, Tom Berenger.

HOT CINEMA 5 (H20)

06.35 Spoiler Alert (USA, 2022). Comedy drama. Dir: Michael Showalter. With Jim Parsons, Ben Aldridge, Josh Pais. **08.45** Race (Canada/Germany/France, 2016). Biography. Dir: Stephen Hopkins. With Stephan James, Jason Sudeikis, Eli Goree. **11.00** Lion (UK/Australia/USA, 2016). Biography. Dir: Garth Davis. With Dev Patel, Nicole Kidman, Rooney Mara. **13.00** A Dog Year (USA, 2009). Comedy. Dir: George Luvo. With Jeff Bridges, Lauren Ambrose. **14.20** Shanghai Calling (USA/China, 2012). Comedy. Dir: Daniel Hsia. With Le Gong, Daniel Henney. **16.05** The Christmas Setup (USA/Canada, 2020). Romantic drama. Dir: Pat Mills. With Ben Lewis, Blake Lee, Fran Drescher. **17.35** East Side Sushi (USA, 2014). Drama. Dir: Anthony Lucero. With Diana Elizabeth Torres, Yutaka Takeuchi, Rodrigo Duarte Clark. **19.25** Steve Jobs (UK/USA, 2015). Biography. Dir: Danny Boyle. With Michael Fassbender, Kate Winslet, Seth Rogen. **21.30** Challengers (USA/Italy, 2024). Drama. Dir: Luca Guadagnino. With Mike Faist, Josh O'Connor, Zendaya. **23.40** Wimbledon (UK/France, 2004). Comedy. Dir: Richard Loncraine. With Kirsten Dunst, Paul Bettany. **01.20** The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry (UK/USA, 2023). Drama. Dir: Hettie Macdonald. With Jim Broadbent, Penelope Wilton, Earl Cave.

YES MOVIES ACTION (Y2)

06.15 Supercell (USA, 2023). Action. Dir: Herbert James Winterstern. With Skeet Ulrich, Alec Baldwin, Anne Heche, Daniel Diemer. **08.00** Out of the Furnace (USA/UK, 2013). Crime thriller. Dir: Scott Cooper. With Christian Bale, Casey Affleck, Zoe Saldana. **09.55** Hart's War (USA, 2002). Drama. Dir: Gregory Hoblit. With Bruce Willis, Colin Farrell. **12.00** Transformers: Rise of the Beasts (USA, 2023). Action. Dir: Steven Caple Jr. With Anthony Ramos, Dominique Fishback, Luna Lauren Velez. **14.05** Prizefighter: The Life of Jim Belcher (UK/USA/Malta, 2022). Biography. Dir: Daniel Graham. With Matt Hookings, Ray Winstone, Eussell Cruz. **15.55** Creed III (USA, 2023). Sport drama. Directed by and starring Michael B. Jordan. With Tessa Thompson, Jonathan Majors. **17.50** Aquaman (USA/Australia, 2018). Action. Dir: James Wan. With Jason Momoa, Amber Heard, Willem Dafoe. **20.15** Alex Cross (USA, 2012). Action. Dir: Rob Cohen. With Tyler Perry, Matthew Fox, Rachel Nichols. **22.00** DogMan (France/USA, 2023). Action. Dir: Luc Besson. With Caleb Landry Jones, Jojo T. Gibbs, Christopher Denham. **23.55** Anna (France/USA/Canada/Russia, 2019). Action thriller. Dir: Luc Besson. With Sasha Luss, Helen Mirren, Luke Evans. **01.55** Sin City: A Dame to Kill For (USA, 2014). Crime. Dirs: Frank Miller, Robert Rodriguez. With Mickey Rourke, Jessica Alba, Josh Brolin.

YES MOVIES COMEDY (Y3)

06.35 The Rewrite (USA, 2014). Romantic comedy. Dir: Marc Lawrence. With Marisa Tomei, Hugh Grant. **08.25** The Wedding Date (USA, 2005). Comedy. Dir: Clare Kilner. With Debra Messing, Dermot Mulroney. **09.55** I Could Never Be Your Woman (USA, 2007). Comedy. Dir: Amy Heckerling. With Michelle Pfeiffer, Paul Rudd, Tracey Ullman. **11.30** Sam & Kate (USA, 2022). Romantic comedy. Dir: Darren Le Gallo. With Jake Hoffman, Schuyler Fisk, Dustin Hoffman, Sissy Spacek. **13.20** Juliet, Naked (USA/UK, 2018). Drama comedy. Dir: Jesse Peretz. With Chris O'Dowd, Rose Byrne, Kitty O'Riennie. **15.00** Save the Wedding (USA, 2021). Romantic comedy. Dir: Jake Helweg. With Kasey Laddell, Travis Burns, Chloe Wick. **16.30** The Prince & Me (USA/Czech Republic, 2004). Comedy. Dir: Martha Coolidge. With Julia Stiles, Luke Mably. **18.20** View from the Top (USA, 2003). Romantic comedy. Dir: Bruno Barreto. With Gwyneth Paltrow, Christina Applegate. **19.50** Plus One (USA, 2019). Romantic comedy. Dirs: Jeff Chan, Andrew Rhymer. With Maya Erskine, Jack Quaid, Ed Begley Jr. **21.30** Friends with Benefits (USA, 2011). Romantic comedy. Dir: Will Gluck. With Justin Timberlake, Mila Kunis. **23.20** How to Please a Woman (Australia, 2022). Drama. Dir: Renee Webster. With Sally Phillips, Hayley McElhinney, Caroline Brazier. **01.05** Kill Me Three Times (USA, 2014). Action comedy. Dir: Kriv Stenders. With Simon Pegg, Teresa Palmer.



CHANNEL KAN 11 (Y11/H11)

06.00 Now and on Other Days - A nostalgic journey into Israel's past **06.55** Storytelling Festival **07.45** The Winning Story - Documentary on Maestro Gil Shohat **08.45** Why Is That? - with Prof. Dan Arieli **09.30** The Future is Here - Ben Shani follows Israeli inventions and researchers who will change the face of medicine **10.00** The Weekly Report **12.00** An Evening with Shai Stern **13.00** Sofa Stories - Celebrities share experiences from their personal lives **13.45** Cultural Agent - with Kobi Meidan **14.45** Pardon the Question - Questions we always wanted to ask, but we did not dare to **15.20** Hot in Cleveland - A behind the scenes look on Israeli journalism **16.20** Zehu Zei - Satire **17.00** Five O'Clock News **17.55** Israel at War - with Ayala Hasson **18.00** The Weekly Report **12.00** An Evening with Shai Stern **13.00** Sofa Stories - Celebrities share experiences from their personal lives **13.45** Cultural Agent - with Kobi Meidan **14.45** Pardon the Question - 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Children in Gaza, 1956. All photos by Moshe Levin.

Moshe Marlin Levin Archive, Meitar Collection, The Pritzker Family National Photography Collection, The National Library of Israel.



People and donkeys on a street.



Entrance to the Gaza Strip. The sign reads: "Restricted access. Violators will be prosecuted."



A busy street.

What the Gaza Strip looked like in 1956

Moshe Levin's color photographs depict life in Gaza under the brief Israeli occupation

Ofer Aderet

Among thousands of photos from the Gaza Strip kept in the Visual History Archive of the National Library of Israel, 20 pictures taken by Moshe Levin in 1956 do stand out. Rather than documenting war and human suffering they depict everyday life, with bustling streets, peddlers offering their wares, and smiling children. In addition, the unique aspect of the collection is the fact that it's in color.

Levin was born in 1921 in the United States, served in the U.S. Army during World War II and immigrated to Israel in 1947. He worked as a journalist for major media outlets. In 1948 he documented the siege of Jerusalem. In 1956 his photos provided visual evidence of

the new life in Gaza after Israel captured it from Egypt during the Sinai campaign. "Here and there an organized convoy is heard. The road to Gaza is open. One may hear sounds of joy coming somewhere from Kibbutz Nahal Oz. The tanks have entered the city," reported Haaretz. "A stench typical of Arab cities greeted them on the outskirts. Rows of low-rise mud houses are empty. Here and there an Arab passes by in haste, pulling up the edges of his long robe. He looks frightened."

At the end of that month the Gaza municipality was reestablished, after being subordinate to the Israeli military occupation authorities. Haaretz then quoted the new mayor, Rushdi Shawa, who said: "We call on you to cooperate so that the merchant may calm down and return to his merchandise, the farmer

may return to his agriculture and the laborer to his work."

Later the daily Davar reported: "Life in the city is very noisy. The streets are filled with people, most of the shops are open. There's lively commerce in the markets. The residents faces look happier and it seems that they have come to accept the occupation. In the refugee camps Israeli citizens get a tumultuous reception and are immediately surrounded by masses of children and adults. The refugees look very good. The camps are impeccably clean. The elderly refugees ask about their friends in Israel," the newspaper wrote.

Levin's photos provided visual evidence of the new life in Gaza. The Israeli occupation ended due to international pressure after four months and was renewed during the Six-Day War in 1967.



Street peddlers.

'My ego, my billions': When Donald Trump thanked Haaretz

Ofer Aderet

Thirty years ago, a missive from a distant land showed up on the Letters to the Editor desk at Haaretz. The sender signed the letter with his name and location: Donald Trump, New York. Trump was known as a businessman, billionaire and real estate mogul, but had not yet chalked up the next two outstanding career achievements: his reality show "The Apprentice" and the presidency of the United States.

What got the goat of the current Republican candidate for the presidency back in 1994? Back then, Haaretz Magazine had published a Hebrew translation of an extensive report by Craig Horowitz in New York Magazine entitled "Donald Trump's Near-Death Experience" under the headline "Trumpolina."

"The glittering symbol of the '80s, businessman Donald Trump, is rising again from the abyss into which he had sunk with debts of about \$8 billion," read the intro to the story. The reason for the publication of the story was a real estate deal with Chinese businesspeople that had recently been completed. "Last month," it was explained, "he succeeded in astonishing his competitors when he gained possession of the residential Riverside South project, the biggest deal in the history of New York real estate."

What was so irritating in the magazine article that prompted Trump to compose and mail a letter (at that time email was not widely used in Israel) to a newspaper 9,000 miles away? Unfortunately, that letter never appeared in translation for the benefit of readers of the English Edition, which was founded only three years later, and the original letter proved



Trump in New York in 1985.

Marty Lederhandler/AP

untraceable. Hence, all quotes from Trump's letter are good-faith back translations from the Hebrew article, and we hope they will not engender any lawsuits. Here then, is the gist of what he wrote: "I have been informed that your respected newspaper has acquired the rights to a New York Magazine article about Riverside South and has published it. I will be grateful to you if you make it clear to your readers that even though I have no

complaints about the author, I deny totally the lying version of the two brokers in the deal." The rest of the letter delivers barbed criticism, in typical Trumpian language, of the two brokers involved in the deal, both of them women. Trump accused them of having leaked insider knowledge about the deal to the magazine – and especially about what had happened behind the scenes. He termed the revelation of the deal as (in back-translation from Hebrew) "impertinent and scandalous." He said they had acted "hysterically and irresponsibly," and had pestered him night and day, pleading that he sign some sort of contract, and that they had been "terrible mudnicks." (Whether or not he actually wrote that Yiddish word is lost to history, but he might well have, as one needn't have been Jewish to use that word in New York). He noted that they had violated the nondisclosure pro-

vision of their contract and that he had decided to sue them for breach of contract, which would enable him to save millions of dollars in the realtors' fees they were owed. He ended the letter with words of thanks to the editor and to the newspaper for making the clarification.

This week, 30 years later, an attempt to locate that lawsuit came up empty-handed. However, on the internet there is the record of a suit that the two brokers filed against Trump on the grounds that he had not paid the brokerage fees. In response he mentioned neither the article in New York Magazine nor its appearance in Haaretz but rather claimed that the deal had not yet been completed. Eventually, in an interview with another newspaper, one of the brokers said that despite the dispute, they had received the money and worked things out with the man who would later be-



"Trumpolina" as it appeared in Haaretz in 1994.

come the 45th president of the United States. In the article that so annoyed Trump, he was in fact depicted in a complimentary way. Horowitz noted that Trump's comeback and rise from the abyss is "a story of pluck, serendipity, skillful negotiating and a recognition on the part of the banks that allowing him to continue in business was, in the long run, their best strategy." Trump depicted himself to Horowitz as someone who knows the difference between a business management school and the reality. Horowitz quotes Trump as saying: "I am hotter now than I ever was before... The way you know that, is that everybody wants to be my partner... I was beat up in business and in my personal life," he admits with regard to his financial collapse and his divorce. "But you learn that you're either the toughest, meanest piece of shit in the world or you just crawl into a corner, put your fin-

ger in your mouth and say, 'I want to go home.' You never know until you're under pressure how you're gonna react. Guys that I thought were tough were *nothin'*." And he went on to say that from the point of view of his ego, that was very important to him.

The "ego" motif recurs in articles about Trump in the Haaretz archive over the years. "Pinpricks in Trump's Ego" was the headline of a 1990 report (in Hebrew) by Haaretz correspondent Shlomo Shamir in New York.

"Trump, a living symbol of a successful man, the Muammar Ghadhafi of the business world, has become the king as naked as the day that he was born.

The man who was so insulted when his wealth was estimated at only \$1.5 billion has no cash, and all sides are smelling blood."

But Trump recovered, as evidenced by the deal with China, and his comments about that were even printed on the pages of Haaretz. In an opinion piece entitled "What My Ego Wants, My Ego Gets," published in The New York Times in September 1995 and subsequently translated for Haaretz, he wrote that he had been "quite angry" that his purchase of the Plaza Hotel had been driven by his ego. "But after I thought about it," he acknowledged, "I realized it was 100 percent true – ego did play a large role in the Plaza purchase and is, in fact, a significant factor in all of my deals."

Later, he provided a quick lesson in economics: "Anyone doing deals must have the basic prerequisites of intelligence, instinct and savvy, but in my case I willingly add 'ego.' The prestige of an ego-driven deal amounts to money. Many

people do not see this immediately, but the smart people do."

Understood? If not quite, then Trump expands the thought: "I have many friends who go into transactions that are not ego-driven. The deals are usually not very exciting, have no glamour, flair or style and, when it is time to sell, seldom attract a wide range of buyers. Often these friends ask me how am I able to get financing for my deals when they have to fight so hard to secure it for theirs. The so-called ego deal, if properly conceived and carried out, not only attracts tenants at higher rents and potential buyers at higher prices, but can be much easier to finance than a nondescript and unexciting transaction."

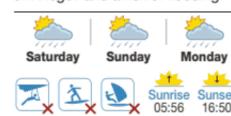
To clarify even further,

Trump illustrates the point: "I now have an option to buy a building known as 40 Wall Street. It is 70 stories tall and was, for a short time, the tallest building in the world. It is also considered one of New York's most beautiful structures... Were it not for this building's special history, location and importance, however, I would have no interest in proceeding with the purchase. ... I am not saying that 'ego deals' work for everyone and, in fact, they cannot. But for me it has been a great way to do business, not just in buying but also in building 'ego' properties. Trump Tower, for instance, was built largely to satisfy my so-called oversized ego and yet, with some of the highest-priced condo sales ever made, it has succeeded beyond any measure."

Weather

Chance of rain

Friday will be partly cloudy with a slight rise in temperatures. There may be localized rain, mainly in the east and south. Saturday will see the same, with rain from the north to the northern Negev and a risk of flooding.



Shabbat Times

Jerusalem	16:09	17:26
Tel Aviv	16:31	17:28
Haifa	16:19	17:26
Be'er Sheva	16:32	17:29

