

Bring them home

Tamir Adar, age 38, kidnapped from Nahal Oz

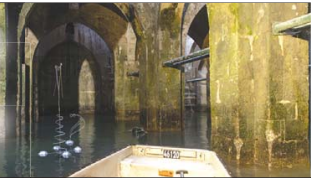
At ease

Two weeks of being Jewish in Hong Kong
Page 11



Art roundup

Kibbutz anxiety and bullet-riddled paintings
Page 16



IDF masses forces in southern Gaza as fighting rages

Tensions with Hezbollah in North remain high • Military names three more fallen soldiers

IDF reservist Aviad Frija arrested for killing Yuval Castleman

• By YONAH JEREMY BOB and JOANIE MARGULIES

IDF reservist Sgt. (res.) Aviad Frija, who shot dead Israeli civilian Yuval Doron Castleman – who himself had killed two Hamas terrorists in Jerusalem before raising his hands to plead for his life – was arrested overnight on Monday.

Frija had been allowed to walk free since the incident on Thursday, and it is still unclear whether he will be prosecuted and under what charges, as he claims he believed Castleman was a terrorist who still posed a threat.

However, evidence on the scene and documentation of the event is very much against him.

To date, public statements from top defense officials have not condemned him to anywhere near the same degree as the “Hebron Shooter,” Elor Azaria, after he shot and killed a neutralized Palestinian who was lying on the ground in 2015.

During the incident on Thursday, four people were killed and four others were wounded in a shooting attack at the entrance to

See RESERVIST, Page 7



SMOKE RISES during Israeli airstrikes on the Gaza Strip, as seen from Israel's side of the border, yesterday. (Chaim Goldberg/Flash90)

US: We expect IDF not to attack ‘no-strike zones’ in south Gaza

• By TOVAH LAZAROFF

Israel is expected to refrain from attacking the “no-strike” zones it created for Palestinian civilians in southern Gaza, US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan told reporters as the IDF battered that area of the enclave from the air and sea.

“In those [safe] zones, we do expect Israel to follow

through without striking,” he said.

The dilemma regarding the Gaza war, he said, is “How do you, on the one hand, allow a sovereign nation like Israel to go after terror targets, while on the other hand, have them do so in a way that minimizes harm to civilians? That is really where the rubber hits the road in all of this. “Fundamentally, we have

laid [out] our expectations that in the areas [where] Israel has asked people to go, that it ensures the security and safety of civilians, and that it does so in the conduct of its military operations and... in the facilitation of humanitarian assistance getting to them,” he said.

Sullivan spoke four days after the Gaza war resumed following a week-long pause

that ended on December 1. Hamas has asserted that close to 16,000 Palestinians have been killed in war violence since hostilities began on October 7, after the terror group infiltrated southern Israel killing over 1,200 people and seizing 240 hostages.

United Nations Secretary-General Antonio

See ATTACK, Page 7

• By YONAH JEREMY BOB, TZVI JOFFRE and Jerusalem Post Staff

Dozens of IDF tanks moved into southern Gaza on Monday evening and were observed near Khan Yunis, with air strikes against that same southern area as well as on Deir al-Balah and Rafah.

According to videos, and foreign and Palestinian reports, Israel trudged further into the south of the enclave.

Three more IDF soldiers died in Gaza battles on Sunday, the military announced on Monday and confirmed the death of a man taken from the Supernova music festival on October 7.

Armored personnel carriers and bulldozers were observed in the area as well, although IDF Chief Spokesman Brig.-Gen. Daniel Hagari referred only to IDF developments in the north. Sources in the military said they are intentionally avoiding giving the location of forces in the south until the invasion has moved to a later stage.

Although the IDF started to disclose its positions and achievements around a week and a half into the invasion of northern Gaza, the military had also kept a lid on the specifics for the first 10 days or so. However, a number of top defense officials said they believe that Hamas's high command is in Khan Yunis and other parts of south Gaza.

A senior security official shared insights on the escalated efforts to locate Yahya Sinwar, the leader of Hamas, revealing that “there is a significant intelligence effort underway to track down



Analysis: Jarring voices of internal political division rise again, Page 2

Gazans struggle to reach Khan Yunis safe zones under intense bombing, Page 2

Sinwar,” emphasizing his misjudgment of the IDF's strength and his shock at recent military actions in Al-Shifa Hospital.

In a separate discussion, it was claimed that the elimination of Sinwar could significantly alter the dynamics of hostage releases. The source noted that “a large intelligence operation is focused on Sinwar's whereabouts.”

Palestinian telecom company Paltel said that telecommunication services were cut off in the Gaza Strip after the service was repaired.

Early Monday morning, the IDF announced the names of three soldiers who fell in combat in the Strip on Sunday, identifying them as Sgt.-Maj. (res.) Neruya Shaer, 36, from Yavne; Sgt.-1st Class (res.) Ben Zussman, 22, from Jerusalem; and Sgt. Binyamin Yehoshua Needham, 19, from Zichron Ya'akov.

Yonatan Samerano, taken

See IDF, Page 7

Israel probes possible advance knowledge of October 7 attack

• By STEVEN SCHEER

Authorities are investigating claims by US researchers that some investors may have known in advance of a Hamas plan to attack Israel on October 7 and used that information to profit from Israeli securities.

Research by law professors Robert Jackson Jr. from New York University and Joshua Mitts of Columbia University found significant short-selling of shares leading up to the attacks, which triggered a war now nearly two months old.

“Days before the attack, traders appeared to anticipate the events to come,” they wrote, citing short interest in the MSCI Israel Exchange Traded Fund (ETF) that “suddenly, and significantly, spiked” on October 2, based on data from the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority (FINRA).

“And just before the attack, short selling of Israeli securities on the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange (TASE) increased dramatically,” they wrote in their 66-page report.

In response, the TASE referred Reuters to the Israel

Securities Authority, which said: “The matter is known to the authority and is under investigation by all the relevant parties.”

A spokeswoman for the securities regulator did not elaborate, and Israeli police did not immediately comment.

The researchers said that prior to October 7, short-selling – where investors sell shares with the expectation that the share price will fall, allowing them to buy it back at a lower price for a profit – “exceeded the short-selling that occurred during numerous other periods of crisis.”

That includes the recession following the financial crisis in 2008, the 2014 Israel-Gaza War, and the COVID-19 pandemic.

They wrote that for Leumi, Israel's largest bank, 4.43 million new shares that were sold short over the September 14 to October 5 period yielded profits of 3.2 billion shekels (\$862 million) on that additional short-selling.

“Although we see no aggregate increase in shorting of Israeli companies on US exchanges, we do identify a sharp and unusual increase, just before the attacks, in trading in risky short-dated options on these companies expiring just after the

Herzog: Antisemitism has reared its ugly head during the war

• Jerusalem Post Staff

In his introduction at the start of *The Jerusalem Post's* virtual conference The Second Front, President Isaac Herzog called for all who have “goodwill” to cry out “Never again,” repeating the message used to decry the atrocities of the Holocaust and to demand that the Jewish people never again be subjected to such horror.



“The massacres of October 7 have brought memories of some of the darkest moments of history right into our present,” he said, referring to the Holocaust.

“The scope and horror of the atrocities are painfully familiar to our people, but the speed at which denial began to spread and Jewish suffering was dismissed exposed another painful truth: Antisemitism does not belong to some other time and place; it is right here.”

Herzog pointed out how “in the wake of the massacre, many found ways to rationalize, contextualize, or even excuse themselves. This has always been the way about antisemitism. The reasoning

may shift, but the bottom line is the same: the blame is always on the Jews. Corrupt ideologies often begin with the Jews [as targets], but rarely end with the Jews.”

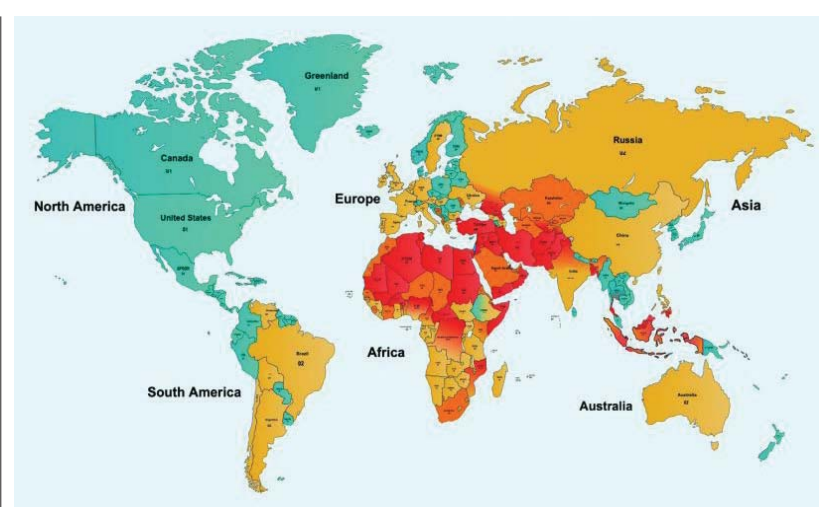
He proceeded to thank US President Joe Biden for “laying out a clear national strategy to combat antisemitism well before the start of the war; actually, the first of its kind.”

Herzog then expressed gratitude to US Special Envoy for Monitoring and Combating Antisemitism Deborah Lipstadt for “the clear voice of advocacy and reason she's offered in these troubled times.”

His thanks reached beyond the US to world leaders, saying that those who are “doing everything in their power to fight the familiar poison of antisemitism on their soil” must be commended.

He highlighted the *Post's* central role in the fight for Israel's place in the world and in combating antisemitism – such as at the Second Front conference, saying that “*The Jerusalem Post* has been a critical source of reliable information and connection for millions and millions of viewers worldwide in this time of war,” he said. “It remains, quite simply, the website and the paper of the Jewish people.”

More coverage of the Second Front conference on Pages 4 and 5.



A MAP showing the threat to travelers. Green marks the safest areas, orange, the riskiest. (NSO)

NSC raises threat level for traveling Israelis in 80 countries

• By TOVAH LAZAROFF

The threat level has been raised in 80 countries for Israelis as a result of the Israel-Hamas war, according to a new list published by the National Security Council.

“Since the beginning of the war, we have identified increased efforts by Iran and its proxies, including Hamas and Global Jihad factions, to harm Israeli and Jewish targets around the world,” the NSC said in a statement.

“At the same time, there is a constant and significant rise in incitement, attempted attacks, and manifestations of antisemitism in many countries,” it explained.

“We can't say ‘don't go’; what we can say is that Israelis should weigh where they go,” an NSC official said.

There is an unprecedented level of potential violence from terrorist attempts or rising antisemitism and those who travel must take that into account, the official stated.

Over 80% of the new threat warnings reflected an initial surge of danger in Level 1 countries – where “basic precautionary measures” are advised – to Level 2 countries – where travelers are to take “increased precautionary measures.”

The UK and Australia were on that list, as were 17 countries on the European

continent such as Germany, France, Sweden, and the Netherlands.

Countries where a more serious threat existed such as South Africa, Eritrea, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkmenistan were raised to a Level 3 threat, which recommends consideration of essential travel only.

Travel to Middle Eastern countries should be postponed, as should journeying to areas bordering Iran and several other Muslim countries in Asia, the NSC further stated.

It warned that Israelis should “stay away from

See LEVEL, Page 7



Gazans struggle to reach Khan Yunis safe zones

• By ARAFAT BARBAKH
and MOHAMMED SALEM

GAZA (Reuters) – The IDF posted a map on social media platform X on Monday with around a quarter of Khan Yunis marked off in yellow as territory that must be evacuated at once before intense Israeli air strikes hit the south of the Gaza Strip. Three arrows pointed South and West, telling people to head towards the Mediterranean coast and towards Rafah, a major town near the Egyptian border.

But the head of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), Thomas White, suggested that people in Rafah were themselves being forced to flee. “People are pleading for advice on where to find safety. We have nothing to tell them,” he said on X.

One of the Israeli hostages who was recently released reported that he had been kept captive at the home of an UNRWA teacher.

Israel launched its assault to wipe out Hamas after the terrorist organization killed 1,200 people in southern Israel on October 7 in a cross-border massacre through residential border towns. The terrorists also seized 240 hostages on the deadliest single day in Israel's 75-year history.

Bombing at one site in Rafah overnight had torn a crater the size of a basketball court out of the earth.

“We were asleep and safe,” said Salah al-Arja, owner of one of the houses destroyed at the site. “They tell you it is a safe area, but there is no safe area in all of the Gaza Strip.”

Israel has proved that Hamas puts civilians in danger by operating from civilian areas, including in tunnels that can only be destroyed by large bombs. Israel has found about 800 tunnel shafts since the beginning of the ground invasion, including under Al-Shifa Hospital.

As many as 80% of Gaza's 2.3 million people have fled their homes in the Israeli bombing campaign that has reduced much of the crowd-



A BOY STANDS at the site of a house destroyed in an Israeli strike in Khan Yunis, in the southern Gaza Strip yesterday. (Ibraheem Abu Mustafa/Reuters)

ed coastal strip to a desolate wasteland.

Israeli forces largely captured the northern half of Gaza in November, and since a week-long truce collapsed on Friday after Hamas failed to keep its side of the bargain, they have swiftly pushed deep into the southern half.

Tanks have driven into Gaza from the border fence and cut off the main north-south route, residents say. The Israeli military said the central road out of Khan Yunis to the North “constitutes a battlefield” and is now cut off.

The commander of Israel's armored corps, Brig-Gen. Hisham Ibrahim, told Army Radio that the military had almost achieved its goals in northern Gaza.

“We are beginning to expand the ground maneuver to other parts of the Strip, with one goal – to topple the Hamas terrorist group,” he said.

The military released footage of troops patrolling in tanks and on foot, in fields and in badly damaged urban areas, and firing weapons, without specifying the location in Gaza.

Israel says its evacuation orders are aimed at protecting



PALESTINIANS FLEE from Khan Yunis to Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip yesterday, after the IDF called on people to leave certain areas in the city, providing maps pointing to safe zones. (Mahmud Hams/AFP via Getty Images)

civilians from harm and calls on international organizations to help encourage Gazans to move to the areas labeled safe on Israeli maps.

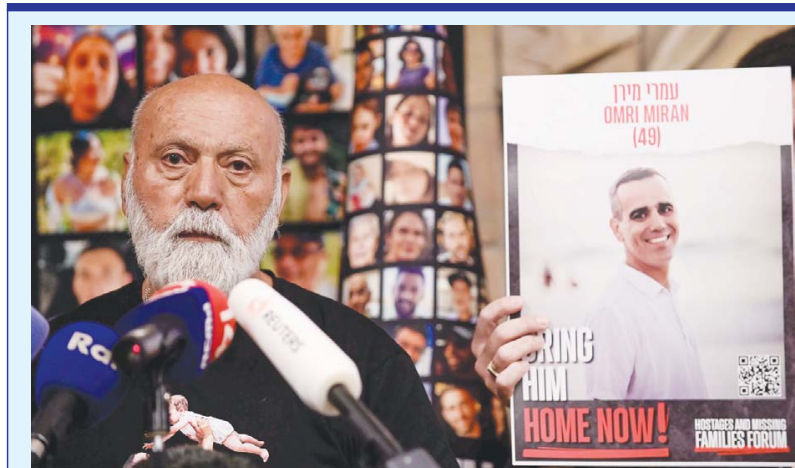
The United Nations said the areas in the South that Israel ordered evacuated in the three days since the end of the ceasefire – implemented for the release of hostages in exchange for Palestinian security prisoners – had housed over 350,000 people before the war.

In Khan Yunis, many of those

taking flight on Monday were already displaced from other areas. Abu Mohammed told Reuters it was now the third time he had been forced to flee since abandoning his home in Gaza City in the north.

Israel's closest ally, the United States, has called on it to do more to safeguard civilians in the southern part of Gaza than in last month's campaign in the North.

Jerusalem Post Staff contributed to this report.



RELATIVES OF Israelis held hostage by Hamas terrorists in Gaza since the October 7 massacre hold a press conference in Tel Aviv yesterday. (Tomer Neuberger/Flash90)

War cabinet set to meet Gaza hostage families today

• By JOANIE MARGULIES

The families of the Gaza hostages will meet with Israel's war cabinet on Tuesday at noon after protesting that they asked to meet with the members of the cabinet earlier but received a minimal response from the coalition.

The Prime Minister's Office responded: “A meeting with the families of the abductees and the War Cabinet was scheduled yesterday for Wednesday.” In light of the families' request, it was moved up later on Monday.

Family members of children held captive in Gaza by Hamas terrorists told media outlets about their return and how they were adjusting to life after being held against their will.

Chen Avigdor, whose 12-year-old daughter Noam was kidnapped along with her mother and uncle, shared that upon his daughter's release last week, she suffered severe separation anxiety from her father. “She was not comfortable with me even going outside to take out the garbage for a couple of minutes,” he said.

He also divulged that despite waking up screaming many nights after her release, she remained relatively talkative about her experience. She did not share details in any specific order, he added, but was willing to talk about them.

“It was the rebirth of our family, being reunited,” Avigdor said about being brought back together.

In order to adjust back to a sense of normalcy, Avigdor told *The Jerusalem Post* about how his daughter and wife, Sharon, who also was held captive, had managed to decompress. “Especially in the first 48 hours when they were in the hospital, we played a lot of board and card games – something that we could all do together,” he said.

“Although [Noam] didn't get her iPhone

back, she has managed to stay entertained. Her best friend even managed to come to visit her in the hospital. Her peers have also been able to speak to her on FaceTime,” he said.

The Hostages and Missing Families Forum added that the psychological abuse inflicted on children and teens included being told that they would be held for at least a year – if they were ever allowed to leave.

Dr. Yael Mozer Glassberg of the Schneider Children's Medical Center for Israel also spoke out about the medical conditions of those held captive, particularly the children. “We are teaching our kids that there are no monsters, but there are,” she said.

“One family was given three showers in 54 days, while at least one child took no showers the whole time. They came back with skin rashes and other hygienic issues; they were covered in lice, both on the head and on their bodies,” she stated.

Mozer Glassberg added that survivors and released hostages discussed being separated from loved ones, couldn't speak beyond a whisper, and shared that the children were able to manage among themselves that the youngest children would eat before the older ones.

“On every return, it was incredibly quiet. It took days for there to be sound,” she said. “We noticed their eating habits, and nobody would rush for the food. We were worried they would be rushing for food, but that wasn't the case.”

Glassberg spoke of having to reassure recovering hostages that they had food available and that they did not need to ration food.

“We received most of the kids in Israel – 19 kids of the 26 that we received,” she said.

“We've really seen it all, and all we can do is hope and wish for the rest of them to return home.”

The jarring voices of internal division rise again

ANALYSIS

• By HERB KEINON

With hundreds of thousands of soldiers currently fighting a war against Hamas and Hezbollah, the last thing this country needs right now is a renewed “War of the Jews.”

With tens of thousands of soldiers risking their lives for each other and for everyone in the land, the last thing this country can afford at this time is to reignite the battles between the Left and the

Right, between Tel Aviv and the settlements, between the religious and the secular and the Haredim.

One can make a strong argument that it was the “War of the Jews” that raged here over Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu since the police began investigating him on corruption charges in December 2016 – and which reached a fever pitch over the judicial overhaul plan from January to October 7 – that convinced Israel's external enemies that

now was precisely the time to strike.

Why strike now? Because of all the divisions. Because of all the hateful rhetoric. Because one side regularly called the other side “traitors,” and the other side regularly called the first side “fascists.” Because of violence against anti-judicial reform protesters and because of physical violence at an outdoor Kol Nidre service. Because of threats to no longer serve in the army; because

of reports of massive “relocation,” because of talk of actually dividing the country into two: Israel and Judea.

All of that, and more, was Israel's lot before the Simhat Torah massacre made all the internal divisions seem ridiculously trivial by comparison. Hamas' barbaric orgy of murder, mutilation, rape, and kidnapping – as well as the frightening realization among Israelis that the country was not as secure as they once thought it was – made all the other disagreements seem inconsequential.

“First secure life,” the saying goes, “and then deal with the quality of that life.”

Israelis thought they had secured life, or at least their security.

Israel thought that after 75 years of independence, its physical security was pretty well ensured, and that now it could tackle all those long-simmering divisive internal questions about religion and state, about the separation of powers, and which branch of government has the upper hand, about who is a patriot and who is a traitor and who is a parasite, about who and which part of the population is leading the country to ruin, and who and which part of the population is leading it to prosperity.

Amid all that ear-piercing noise, amid all the screaming and yelling about all those issues, Hamas snuck in undetected and delivered a stinging blow.

That ringing blow also served as a wake-up call.

All of a sudden, all of the above – all that internal division – melted away, and the nation, in fact, the Jewish

people, came together in a way not seen for decades. This was the one ray of light in the very black night that descended on the land.

True, we have differences, but they amount to little in the face of those who want to butcher, rape, and plunder – caring not a whit whether their victims are settlers or Peace Now activists, religious or secular, followers of Netanyahu or Yair Lapid.

For the better part of two months, the nation realized this. The shrill voices that divided the country were silent for the better part of two months. For two months, the nation heard little, for instance, from David Amsalem and Dan Harel, from Tally Gotliv and Ehud Barak.

Now, however, some of those voices are being heard again, and their sound is anything but refreshing.

The Likud held its first Knesset faction meeting in months on Sunday, and Minister in the Justice Ministry Amsalem – in his political attack on rivals – sounded so yesterday, so pre-October 7.

“If the government falls, most of us will not be here, and the Likud will rise again maybe in another 20 years. The Left will rise, and there will be a Palestinian state. These are Bolsheviks who can't see what's in front of them and control all the affairs of the state.”

Here we go again, with the demonization of the Left.

“What are these demonstrations against Netanyahu with pictures of blood on his hands at a time when he has led the war since the first day? Someone is leading this campaign against the prime minister,

and outside there are protests. It is unbelievable,” he said.

The night before, Harel – a former deputy chief of staff who was vocal in the anti-judicial reform movement and is a caustic critic of Netanyahu – said in a Channel 12 interview that one of the reasons for the disaster of October 7 was that IDF troops were moved from the Gaza border area to the West Bank.

“The catastrophe was a fatal combination of the lack of preparedness of the army, no warning, and unbearable pressure from the government to move a good part of the troop force to Judea and Samaria,” he said.

“At the end of the day, when in Judea and Samaria you allow people to go to Joseph's tomb but need a brigade to protect the buses, or you send a battalion and a half to protect the sukkah of [Religious Zionist Party MK] Mr. [Zvi] Sukkot in Huwara – then you get to a situation where there were not enough forces. That was a horrible mistake.”

Here we go again, demonizing the settlers, and blaming them for the country's security problems.

On Sunday, Sukkot filed a NIS 100,000 libel suit against Harel for his comments. It should also be noted that at the time, and for months previous, Huwara and the West Bank experienced a dramatic uptick in terror – apparently part of Hamas's plan to divert attention from what they were planning along the Gaza border. Sukkot set up an “office” in Huwara in a sukkah on October 5 for two hours following yet another shooting attack there.

What both Amsalem and

Harel did with their comments was, once again, pit various segments of the population against each other. They are doing this at a time when those various segments of the population are fighting alongside each other, shoulder to shoulder, in Gaza, along the Lebanese border, and inside Judea and Samaria.

One hopes that those fighting alongside each other will reject and push back against words meant to sow discord.

Coincidentally, Amsalem and Harel's comments were made just a couple of days before the renewal of Netanyahu's corruption trials in Jerusalem District Court on Monday. The last hearing in this trial was on September 20, after which the court recessed for the Tishrei holidays – a recess extended because of the war.

It can be argued that opening the investigations into Netanyahu marked the beginning of this country's descent into unparalleled internal division, a descent fueled by both the pro-Netanyahu and anti-Netanyahu camps. It can also be argued that on October 7, the country woke up to the damage those divisions caused.

It will be telling to see how post-October 7 Israel handles the renewal of the Netanyahu trial, the instrument and symbol of all that pre-October 7 disunity. Will the trial further divide, as some politicians and political activists hope that it will further their interests, or will the masses – absorbed now with much more significant issues of life and death – push back against efforts to pit different segments of the nation against one another?

Tender No. 42220 For Provision of Consulting Services for the preparation and implementing a strategic plan for the smart/ digital ticketing system (“Tender”)

Israel Railways Ltd. (“ISR”), in accordance with its obligations under the Israeli Mandatory Tender Laws and its implementing regulations and the International Agreement on Government Procurement, wishes to obtain bids for Tender 42220- For Provision of Consulting Services for the preparation and implementing a strategic plan for the smart/ digital ticketing system (“Tender”)

- Tender Documents are available for review and download at ISR's website at the following address: <https://tender.rail.co.il/?page=generalauctions>
- Any Request for Clarifications should be addressed in writing only to Mr. Izik Adar, International Procurement Coordinator, no later than **January 15, 2024**, by E-mail: izika@rail.co.il. Bidders shall be responsible for verifying receipt by ISR of Requests for Clarification.
- All proposals must be submitted between **February 6st, 2024 to February 8nd, 2024 between 8:30 to 13:00** (Israel time) in one main envelope into Tender Box No. 8 at the following address: Israel Railways Ltd., Procurement & Contracting Division, Yoseftal 1, Lod, 7136801, Israel. ISR shall be entitled to postpone the deadline at its sole discretion.
- Tender Documents and notices regarding ISR tenders are also published on the internet at www.rail.co.il. In case of discrepancy between any of the following: the terms of the Tender published in this publication, any of the publications on the internet and the Tender Documents, the Tender Documents shall prevail.
- Bidders are advised to check for updates during the Tender process and before submitting proposals.

ISRAEL RAILWAYS
ENJOY THE RIDE

Dutch court asked to order halt of F-35 parts to Israel

• By STEPHANIE van den BERG and TOBY STERLING

THE HAGUE (Reuters) – Human rights groups sought to block the Dutch government from exporting F-35 fighter jet parts to Israel, arguing in court yesterday that the exports could make the Netherlands complicit in possible war crimes.

The Netherlands houses one of several regional warehouses of US-owned F-35 parts which are then distributed to countries that request them, including Israel.

The human rights groups, which included Oxfam Novib, the Dutch affiliate of the international charity, Oxfam, argued Israel was using the planes to kill Gazan civilians. Preventing that was more important than the Netherlands fulfilling its commercial or political obligations to allied countries, they argued.

"The (Dutch) state must immediately stop its deliveries of F-35 parts to Israel," lawyer



AN F-35 fighter jet. (Ritzau Scanpix/Bo Amstrup via Reuters)

Liesbeth Zegveld said in a summary proceeding at The Hague District Court.

"That is its obligation under... Article 1 of the Geneva Conventions, it is its obligation under the Genocide Treaty to prevent genocide, and it is its obligation under export law."

Israel denies committing war crimes as it responds to Hamas's cross-border rampage on southern Israel on October 7, in which 1,200 Israelis were

massacred and around 240 were taken hostage.

According to Zegveld, Israel's response has been disproportionate. The Hamas backed Gazan Health Ministry claims that more than 15,000 people have been killed by Israeli strikes so far.

But lawyers for the Dutch state said that they have considered the risks of allowing exports to proceed, and weighed them along with other factors, including a poten-

tial wider Middle East conflict outbreak, and Israel's right to defend itself.

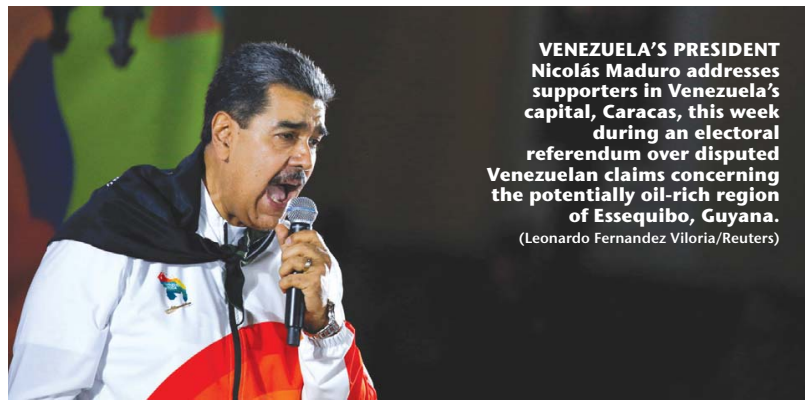
Another lawyer for the Dutch state, Reimer Veldhuis, said it was "legitimate" to question whether Israel's reaction to Hamas had gone too far.

"But an answer to that question cannot be easily given," he added. "The suffering of the people of Gaza is great, and the state does not minimize that. But the law that governs armed conflict is not a simple calculation."

He contended that it did not make sense for a Dutch court to try to pass judgment on the actions of the Israeli military from a distance, and barring all facts.

It was also in the Netherlands' broader security and political interest to follow through on obligations and continue the shipments – which could be routed from other warehouses, Veldhuis maintained.

A decision is expected back in two weeks.



VENEZUELA'S PRESIDENT Nicolás Maduro addresses supporters in Venezuela's capital, Caracas, this week during an electoral referendum over disputed Venezuelan claims concerning the potentially oil-rich region of Essequibo, Guyana. (Leonardo Fernandez Vilorio/Reuters)

Caracas inspired by Moscow, Tehran, Ankara

• By SETH J. FRANTZMAN

Venezuela is risking a new war in South America. The country, run by the authoritarian regime of Nicolás Maduro, pushed a referendum on Sunday calling for Caracas to launch a war against its neighbor Guyana and seize the region of Essequibo, essentially amounting to taking over much of the territory.

While some media outlets have portrayed this as a "long-running dispute," the reality is that the current drive to war by Caracas is not part of a long dispute, but is an invention of Venezuela's leaders.

Venezuela has been a near-dictatorship for years and has joined a number of anti-Western countries, such as Russia, Iran, and Turkey, in pushing a global agenda that challenges the United States and Western-led world order.

The goal of the current referendum is to lean into the global trend toward war and conflict. Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Turkey's invasion of Afrin, recent conflicts in the Caucasus, and Hamas's attack on Israel did not happen in a vacuum.

Now, Venezuela is risking spreading that trend to South America. It is also joining with

China's bellicose behavior in the South China Sea to try to upset norms that relate to international shipping and the importance of borders.

There has been an alarming increase in global incidents that seek to redraw established borders or norms. The Iran-backed Houthi attacks on shipping in the Red Sea are one example; another is China slamming the US, claiming that an American ship "illegally" entered the South China Sea.

So what's next for Venezuela? The goal of the vote was to give Caracas the right to attack its neighbor. That attack would be difficult because the area Venezuela wants to invade is a dense jungle. But the country on South America's northern coast is also making claims to energy resources in the jungle, as well as offshore.

This means that the referendum has major ramifications, one of which is that it could lead to conflict with Brazil, setting in motion a major war the likes of which South America has not seen since the Paraguayan war of the 19th century.

On the other hand, it will likely set in motion smaller tensions and give Venezuela a "right" to continue to threaten its neighbor, similar to how Russia managed to move

into Ukraine: bit by bit. It first annexed Crimea and set up separatist republics in eastern Ukraine, and then it invaded and annexed more areas – and this over the course of years. Venezuela is following the Russian model.

It is also taking a cue from Ankara in its invasion of Afrin in 2018. Turkey invaded this Kurdish area of Syria and pushed the Kurdish minority out, occupying Afrin today.

CNN noted that "Sunday's largely symbolic referendum asked voters if they agreed with creating a Venezuelan state in the Essequibo region, providing its population with Venezuelan citizenship and 'incorporating that state into the map of Venezuelan territory.'"

"In a news conference announcing preliminary results from the first tranche of counted votes, the Venezuelan National Electoral Council said voters chose 'yes' more than 95% of the time on each of five questions on the ballot."

The goal of Venezuela is also to prevent international rulings that would show that the area it claims is in fact part of Guyana. It remains to be seen whether the international community, which is dealing with war in the Middle East and Ukraine, will respond.

Iran slams US, seeks release of frozen \$6 billion from Qatar

ANALYSIS

• By SETH J. FRANTZMAN

Iran's foreign ministry slammed the United States in a series of statements on Monday. Ministry spokesperson Nasser Kanaani claimed that the US is now a party to the war in Gaza – because it has supplied Israel with munitions.

Iran also claims that the US is holding the UN Security Council hostage to prevent wider condemnation of Israel's war against Hamas.

Iran backs Hamas and has held meetings with Hamas leadership since October 7; it also backs militias in Iraq and Syria in their attacks on US forces. Iran has backed the Houthis in Yemen to increase attacks on ships. Its posture condemns the US and exploits the current conflict in the region, seeking to escalate the conflict beyond Gaza.

Iran thus seeks to benefit from the war, while also using it to try to achieve more influence in the Middle East by portray-

ing itself as being against Israel and the US. For instance, it has worked closely with Turkey to condemn Israel.

Now, the Iran Foreign Ministry is focused on \$6 billion in frozen funds that it is trying to get released from Qatar, part of a deal that took place in August.

Back in October, the US and Qatar agreed to block Iran's access to the funds. The US House of Representatives has sought to block the transfer as well, which Iran has said is a deal it cannot "renege" on, and

is closely following this measure in Congress.

Iran's foreign ministry also said that the US is obligated to make sure Tehran can get its money, even as it spreads chaos and war all over the region.

"We took the necessary guarantees and we do not act based on trust with America, which has shown that it is not reliable. The American government must fulfill its obligations and [make sure] these resources are available to Iran," the ministry said on Monday.

HUMOR, RESTRAINT:

How Israel's spokespeople navigate the media battlefield

• By ZACHY HENNESSEY

In an interview with *The Jerusalem Post*, two prominent voices from the Israeli government shed light on the challenges and strategies involved in presenting Israel's side of the story to the world. Eylon Levy and Tal Heinrich, English spokespersons for the Israeli government and its prime minister respectively, shared insights into their experiences, coping mechanisms, and the evolving dynamics of media coverage during conflicts.

Addressing the challenge of responding to challenging questions from the foreign press, Levy emphasized the importance of exercising restraint. "For a long time, the international community has been urging us to exercise restraint during conflicts in Gaza. And that's a good lesson to apply in interviews with hostile media, not just in conflict with hostile terror organizations," he said.

The conversation shifted to evaluating Israel's performance in presenting its story during the current conflict compared to previous rounds. Heinrich commended the American media for doing a good job in their coverage, and drawing on her background as a former journalist, highlighted the changing landscape of public awareness, attributing it to increased vigilance and the role of social media.

"What I can say is that Israelis over the years have become very much aware of what foreign media is doing and saying and are very quick to put journalists or media outlets on the spot if something is totally off," she noted.

Levy emphasized the collective effort of the team in actively engaging with var-



FROM LEFT: Maayan Hoffman, Avi Mayer, and Eylon Levy. (Marc Israel Sellem/The Jerusalem Post)

ious media outlets worldwide. "Wherever there is a news outlet, if they want an Israeli government spokesman to be there, we will be there to tell Israel's story – because if we're not there, someone else will be – and that someone is not going to tell our story," he said.

Recognizing the gravity of the situation, the hosts touched on the role of humor in managing the stress of intense interviews. Levy noted that humor serves as a coping mechanism in dark times.

"My job outwardly is to explain Israel and explain Israel's story," he said. "And if along the way, there is a way to provide a little bit of comic relief to raise national morale, which is so broken at the moment, then I'm happy for the jokes to come at my expense."

When asked to grade the foreign media's performance during the conflict, Levy emphasized that it varies across outlets and journalists. He acknowledged fair but tough questions, while cautioning against the misconception that the entire global media is against Israel. Heinrich discussed challenges faced with some Euro-

pean outlets, particularly in Western Europe, citing a perceived false moral equivalence.

"It's a challenge. I mean, we're answering their questions, but sometimes it just doesn't sink in," she said.

In addressing the ongoing "PR war," Heinrich stressed that Israel is not fighting for likes on social media but for its survival. She highlighted the importance of conveying that Israel's cause is just, irrespective of public opinion fluctuations.

As the interview concluded, the speakers discussed the lessons learned from the ongoing media campaign. Levy expressed hope that such efforts would not be needed in the future, envisioning the dismantling of the Hamas terror state as the ultimate goal.

"We're constantly learning on the move, trying to tighten up our message," he said. "And I can say, some of the unsolicited advice I get over social media is perhaps not very helpful – but sometimes I get advice and I say 'yes, you know what, that is exactly how we should say it; that is a good point.' And I find myself incorporating it in our messaging as well."

The clinics from the Department of Optometry at Hadassah Academic College have opened their doors for evacuees from the South and the North

Hundreds of evacuees from the Gaza Strip border area and the North were examined and treated in recent weeks by Hadassah Academic College Jerusalem's Department of Optometry

Since the beginning of the war, the Department of Optometry at Hadassah Academic College in Jerusalem provided free eye examinations and issued glasses for evacuees of the South and the North. The department is continuing its activities for the residents and is receiving them at the department's clinics in the college.

In the first days of the war, many professionals from the Department of Optometry at Hadassah Academic College Jerusalem came to the hotels by the Dead Sea where residents of the Gaza border area were evacuated and conducted free-of-charge eye and vision tests for more than 800 evacuees. In addition, over 700 pairs of glasses and contact lenses were issued to them for free. This was a collaboration of the college together with the Hadassah Ein Kerem Hospital and commercial companies from the optical industry.

Following this, the clinics from the optometry department at the college opened their doors to evacuees from the South and the North staying in Jerusalem, where eye and vision tests



Photo courtesy the Department of Optometry Hadassah Academic College Jerusalem

were conducted for them and glasses and contact lenses were issued free of charge. The department's clinics offer the evacuated residents staying in Jerusalem a comprehensive package of free examinations in all the department's eye clinics: an eye lens clinic, an eye exercise clinic, and vision focus for children, and a low-vision clinic for the visually impaired.

In the last few days, another

donation of contact lenses and glasses was obtained and so far, more than 160 pairs of glasses and lenses have been given to the evacuated residents who came to the clinics. So far, about 200 evacuees have come to the clinics for treatment.

"It is important to us to maintain the eye health of the evacuee residents, who are far from their homes and their daily routine. We referred some of the evacuees we examined for further treatment at the Hadassah Ein Kerem Hospital and thus their sight was saved in time, and we see this as an important mission." Dr. Hadas Ben-Eli, head of the Department of Optometry at Hadassah Academic College Jerusalem, explains.

Dr. Ben-Eli adds, "The clinics are very busy and there is a long waiting list, so this is very gratifying and proves that there is a high demand among the evacuees for tests. At the moment the stock of donations of glasses and lenses is enough for the coming period and when it runs out, we will make another effort to raise another donation."

To coordinate a visit to the eye clinics at Hadassah Academic College Jerusalem: 02-6291968



DIASPORA AFFAIRS Minister Amichai Chikli speaks with Jerusalem post Zvika Klein. (Marc Israel Sellem/The Jerusalem Post)

MINISTER AMICHAH CHIKLI:

'We shouldn't accept Qatar as a mediator'

Five-fold rise in global antisemitic events

• By ZVIKA KLEIN

Israel shouldn't have agreed to Qatar being a mediator with Hamas, as well as the need to combat an alliance of socialist and green political factions, Amichai Chikli, Diaspora Affairs and Combating Antisemitism Minister told The Jerusalem Post.

Chikli mentioned during the interview that there has been a 500% increase in antisemitic incidents around the globe and added that he wouldn't see it as an exaggeration to say that the state of antisemitism "is the worst, since the 1930's."

The minister addressed what he calls the Red-Green Alliance, which represents a coalition between "red" parties, often social-democratic or democratic socialist, and "green" parties with a focus on environmental issues. This partnership is built on shared left-leaning values and a joint critique of corporate and capitalist institutions.

"The radical left works hand-in-hand with radical Islam," he said, adding that "This is something that disturbed us the most because it's coming from the top universities, which have unfortunately been remaining silent After October 7. Many of them said 'we condemn the loss of life on both sides' - as if there are two sides in this hideous event."

According to the Chikli, "They're working together with the demonstrations on the campuses. And I think that this is a very disturbing phenomenon that you can see. [Regarding] the old philosophy of intersectionality with Black Lives Matter and other issues, also the Palestinian issues, [that

they apply] so automatically, they would see the Jews as colonialist oppressors," he said.

"One can observe these unusual organizations, such as Queers for Palestine, which may appear quite absurd," the minister said. "However, this phenomenon is part of our broader philosophy. It's tragic because Ivy League universities, bearing names like Veritas at Harvard or the motto In Lumine Tuo Videbimus Lumen [Latin for 'In Thy light we see light', Psalm 36:9] at Columbia from the Book of Psalms - were founded centuries ago with a strong commitment to pursuing truth and upholding their reputations."

They say "We are seeking the truth, but actually, we see that in the Ivy League universities, there is no truth. And because there is no truth, there is also no good or bad." Chikli explained that "the main problem of the world: the progressive and the relativist approach that is dominating us."

"One of the most intriguing observations is the contrast in perspectives among students at Ivy League universities in the United States, particularly those in the STEM field versus those studying political science or Middle Eastern Studies," he pointed out. "In the STEM disciplines, students often exhibit a pro-Israeli stance, while in the latter fields, there is a prevalent pro-Palestinian sentiment. This divergence can be attributed to significant investments made by countries like Qatar and others, totaling billions of dollars, particularly in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks."

"These investments have had a profound impact, shaping the

viewpoints within these academic faculties," he said. "The research conducted on this East-West gap is particularly fascinating, shedding light on the extent to which external influences have permeated these academic circles. This development, in turn, poses a potential threat to the fundamental values of the United States and also raises concerns within the Jewish community."

Chikli, a member of the coalition-leading Likud Party said he thinks Qatar mediating between Israel and Hamas is wrong. "I believe it's a significant mistake. I have reservations about Qatar serving as a mediator, primarily due to trust issues. It's as if the US would turn to Pakistan, which once harbored Bin Laden, for moderation on behalf of itself, and I find this notion quite implausible," he said.

"Currently, heads of Hamas are staying in luxury hotels in Qatar," the minister said. "It's worth noting that, recently, there has been significant attention on Qatar regarding antisemitism, particularly in the context of the recent World Cup. Displaying an Israeli flag or any symbol of Israeli identity could have led to significant trouble in Qatar. This raised concerns about the suitability of Qatar as a mediator."

Asking to address Diaspora Jews, Chikli said that, "At this moment, it's imperative that we stand up as proud Jews and refuse to tolerate hatred. We must demand moral clarity above all else. If we cannot condemn the atrocities committed on October 7, if we cannot condemn Hamas, then meaningful dialogue becomes impossible."

YAD VASHEM CHAIR DANI DAYAN:

The 'academization' of antisemitism is a worry

• By ALAN ROSENBAUM

Dani Dayan, Chairman of Yad Vashem, the World Holocaust Remembrance Center, said that the most troubling manifestation of current antisemitism is its 'academization,' which is thinly veiled as anti-Zionism.

In a one-on-one interview with *Jerusalem Post* editor-in-chief Avi Mayer at the Jerusalem Post Second Front Conference, Dayan said, "I have just returned from a visit to Ivy League college campuses in the United States. I am seeing a process that did not start now but is being accelerated."

"In the most prestigious academic institutions in the US and Europe, they are building - stone by stone, piece by piece, article by article, book by book - a pseudo-academic intellectual justification for eliminating the State of Israel as we know it," he said, adding that building this type of advocacy can eventually lead to concrete action to annihilate Israel.



YAD VASHEM Chairman Dani Dayan (L) in conversation with Jerusalem Post Avi Mayer. (Marc Israel Sellem/The Jerusalem Post)

While acknowledging that the cruelty and barbarism of the Hamas attacks approached, and perhaps equaled that of the Nazis, Dayan explained that there is a significant historical difference between the two. "During the Holocaust, we were at the mercy of our enemies. Here, in spite of the fact that the IDF arrived late, it came, and we will exact a price from the perpetrators."

During the Holocaust, he

continued, Jewish heroes like Mordechai Anielewicz and Pavel Frenkiel, leaders of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, had no chance of victory.

"By making false comparisons between the Holocaust and the actions of Hamas, we are playing into the hands of Hamas," Dayan said. "They want to traumatize us - and there is no greater terror or trauma than feeling that we are in the midst of the Holocaust."

'Israel is traumatized, but we will recover,' says Emunah Israel chair

Yifat Sela highlights secret of Israel's resilience: Helping those in need

• By ALAN ROSENBAUM

Yifat Sela, Chairwoman of Emunah Israel, speaking at The Jerusalem Post "The Second Front - The battle for Israel and the Jewish people" Conference, said that while Israelis have been traumatized by the events of October 7 and its aftermath, the country will recover from its trauma.

"We have the facilities to deal with it - the strength of our people and our organizations, which will help us emerge from this trauma," she said. "We have experienced smaller traumas before, and while this is a huge new trauma, we will recover."

At the conference, Sela was interviewed by Tamar Uriel-Beeri, managing editor of *jpost.com*.

She said that 10% of Emunah's employees live in the Gaza settlements and a number of its daycare centers are located in southern Israel. Rocket attacks have forced children in these centers to go into shelters, thus adding to the trauma.

With nearly 160 programs - including children's residential homes, schools, and a network of daycare centers across the country, in addition to its counseling centers - Emunah has been



EMUNAH ISRAEL Chairwoman Yifat Sela speaks with Tamar Uriel-Beeri. (Marc Israel Sellem/The Jerusalem Post)

helping the people of Israel for over 80 years.

Discussing the level of trauma in the country and how it has affected children, Sela recounted the story of a child who told his mother that he had found the best place in the house to hide from terrorists. Another asked his mother if they had insurance to repair their home should it be damaged by enemy rockets.

Sela said that the organization, which provides ser-

VICES for the most vulnerable children and families in Israel, has tried to get children into their daily routine as much as possible, thereby enabling their parents to return to work.

Emunah has 13 counseling centers throughout Israel, staffed with a hundred therapists who are providing therapy and emotional support to the children and employees of Emunah, she said, adding that the organization has opened a

special hotline to offer emotional support for the general population.

"Everyone in Israel feels the stress," the Emunah leader said. "We try to manage our own stress and still manage to help other people. Emunah is an organization that helps other people, and by helping others, we can gain more strength."

For more information about Emunah, visit worldemunah.org or write to ruth@worldemunah.org

UNITED HATZALAH FOUNDER:

'On Oct. 7, we fought like Maccabees'

Hundreds of UH volunteers poured into southern Israel to save lives

• Jerusalem Post Staff

October 7 demonstrated the importance of having a civilian, non-governmental EMS (emergency medical services) organization in Israel, United Hatzalah Founder and president Eli Beer said while speaking at The Second Front - The battle for Israel and the Jewish people Conference organized by *The Jerusalem Post*.

On that date, now referred to in Israel as "Black Saturday," hundreds of United Hatzalah volunteers poured into southern Israel - despite the danger - in order to save lives.

"The national ambulance services were sending only armored vehicles to the area and they have very few, but

we started sending in every vehicle we had," Beer recalled. "Our volunteers said that they felt the need to help in spite of the danger and that in times of war, they felt a responsibility as first responders."

United Hatzalah paid a heavy price as a result of the attack by Hamas.

"Of those who were in the area when Hamas attacked, we had two volunteers killed, another kidnapped, and several injured. The first volunteer to be killed was providing medical coverage in the field at the big party near Re'im," Beer said, referring to the Supernova music festival where the terrorists massacred over 360 people.

"He was an Arab Muslim from Nazareth who at 6:25

a.m. told us that there was a big terror attack."

Beer explained that the man was killed by the terrorists after refusing to leave an injured Jewish woman.

A number of other volunteers were wounded in the first few minutes after the attack yet continued to operate under fire. Among those who rushed to the South from other areas, almost none sustained injuries, and they helped treat thousands of injured people and saved many lives.

"I have 1,200 stories of heroes who went to save lives," he said.

With Hanukkah approaching, Beer highlighted how much the story of the Maccabees, who fought to free Isra-

el from the Seleucid Empire, inspires him in leading Hatzalah.

"I really think the Maccabees are an example of what United Hatzalah is, because they took responsibility to protect the Jewish people, and they were volunteers," he said.

"The Maccabees told themselves that if they did not protect the Jewish people, if they did not fight, there would be no Jewish people anymore. If it wasn't for them, we would not exist today."

Similarly, "United Hatzalah shows why a civilian non-governmental organization can make a difference," he concluded.

This article was written in cooperation with United Hatzalah.

AJC HEAD:

'We must continue to be proud Jews'

• By ALAN ROSENBAUM

In a one-on-one interview with *The Jerusalem Post* editor-in-chief Avi Mayer at the Jerusalem Post Second Front Conference, Ted Deutch, CEO of the American Jewish Committee (AJC), said that the current spike in antisemitism in the United States and around the world brings with it a sense of impunity.

"We've seen rallies with people holding up swastikas," Deutch said. "We've seen violence against Jewish communities in the US and around the world and vandalism against Jewish institutions and cemeteries."

The most troubling aspect of the current wave of antisemitism, he pointed out, has been the desire of protestors to go into the streets in the United States and around the world to march in support of Hamas terrorism and praise of what happened on October 7.

Deutch noted that the three primary sources of antisemitism today come from the far Right, the hard Left, and Islamist extremism. "The far Right and the far Left often line up touching, and this is a moment where we are seeing that kind of overlap," he said. He added that antisemitism does not only put the Jews at risk but endangers society as a whole. "Ultimately, society as a whole is put at risk when this kind of rabid antisemitism is allowed to spread."

In order to defeat antisemitism, he said, it needs to be called out when it occurs. "We can never accept it as normal. We need to work with our allies with whom we have relationships. AJC has spent a long time developing relationships with other faiths and ethnic groups."

"Now is the time to lean on other faiths and ethnic groups to stand with us. We need business leaders, university presidents, and politicians to stand with the community against antisemitism."

"We have to continue to be proud Jews."

STOPANTISEMITISM HEAD LIORA REZ:

'Witnessing younger generations believe they are with the oppressed is surreal'

• By ALAN ROSENBAUM

Liora Rez, Executive Director of StopAntisemitism, a watchdog organization that publicly exposes antisemitic behavior and creates consequences for those who espouse bigotry toward the Jewish people, said that the most dangerous trend in today's climate of antisemitism is the false equivalence between Hamas terrorism and the struggle for social justice. "It is surreal to see younger generations believe that they are on the side of the oppressed as they celebrate antisemitic savagery," she stated.

Rez spoke to Steve Linde, editor-in-chief of the *Jerusalem Post* Second Front Conference.

In response to Linde's query as to how the landscape of antisemitism has changed since October 7, Rez said, "All the masks have come off. Antisemites around the world are using the massacre to air their grievances against the Jewish state as a fig leaf for their hate, revealing their bigotry. If this were about Israel, a synagogue would not be vandalized.

Jewish students would not be targeted, and hostage posters of kidnapped children would not be ripped down."

The ripping down of the posters displaying the names and faces of those kidnapped by Hamas, says Rez, is significant because it indicates a deep-seated hatred. "Taking down posters indicates a callous disregard for the suffering of Jewish hostages and their families. It is an affront to human dignity that cannot help but be antisemitic. Imagine how much hate it takes to rip down a poster of a missing baby."

Rez said that antisemitism on social media plays a role. "They go hand in hand. Social media firms have a responsibility to crack down on this activity, and the groundswell of antisemitic and pro-terror context online continues to foment violence against Jews on a global scale."

When people spot antisemitism, she said, they should report it. "Do not turn a blind eye to what is happening. If you see something, we want to hear about it. Report it to stopantisemitism.org."



CYBERWELL CEO Tal-Or Cohen Montemayor (L) in an interview with Tamar Uriel-Beeri. (Marc Israel Sellem/The Jerusalem Post)

Antisemitic content on Facebook doubles since Oct. 7 – CyberWell

Tal-Or Cohen Montemayor, founder and CEO of CyberWell, tells Post's 'Second Front, Conference' about surge in online Jew hatred

• By ALAN ROSENBAUM

Speaking at the Jerusalem Post Second Front Conference, Tal-Or Cohen Montemayor, founder and CEO of CyberWell, stated that since the Hamas attack on October 7, online antisemitism has surged by 86%, adding that one of the largest increases has been on Facebook, which recorded a 193% increase in content deemed likely to be antisemitic. "There is a clear surge not

only in online antisemitism but in calls to violence against Jews – specifically in Arabic, where there was an increase from a very small percentage to over 26% of the data: clear outward violence and justifying the killing of Jews online," she said in her interview with Tamar Uriel-Beeri, managing editor of Jpost.com.

The data is taken from a report prepared by Cyberwell, which is the first open database of online antisemitism using

open-source intelligence techniques to track online antisemitism in real-time across the major social media platforms.

Cohen Montemayor stated that the social media platforms were unprepared for Hamas's hijacking of social media for use as psychological warfare against Israel.

"Hamas extrapolated on the ISIS tactic of using digital to video," she said. "There was a live stream of the kidnapping and murder of a family on Face-

book, videos of women being dragged through the streets of Gaza after being raped, a live lynching that was posted on Twitter – these are things that are extremely violent but really should give us pause.

"They are national security issues. Other terror organizations saw what Hamas did, in abusing the lack of readiness on the social media platforms to automatically remove this content, and now are abusing it as well."

Since its launch in May 2022, CyberWell has been working with content moderation teams and policy teams at Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok to drive enforcement of improvement of their digital policies. Cohen Montemayor cautioned viewers to always verify any information posted on social media via other news sources, pointing out that all social media platforms create an echo chamber of reinforced bias.

Experts debate ways to combat antisemitism and anti-Zionism on campus and in society

• By ALAN ROSENBAUM

A panel of experts debated the best way to fight antisemitism and anti-Zionism on campus and in society in a special panel at the Jerusalem Post Second Front Conference. Participants included Dr. Dan Diker, president of the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs; Jonathan Davis, vice president for external relations and head of the Raphael Recanati International School at Reichman University; and Nimrod Palmach, CEO of ISRAEL-is, an organization dedicated to improving global perceptions of Israel. Steve Linde, editor-in-chief of the Jerusalem Report, moderated the panel.

Diker, who authored the book, *Students for Justice in Palestine Unmasked*, in 2018, contended that the Students for Justice in Palestine organization paved the way for the October 7 massacre. He stated that the organization's ideology, "From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free," is a "clar-

ion call for genocide against the Jews." Diker added that "Hamas leadership in Gaza is energized and encouraged by the fact that they have the unqualified support of thousands of university students across 200 North American campuses that legitimized the mass murder of Jews."

In response to a question from *The Jerusalem Report* editor Steve Linde about the impact of antisemitism and anti-Zionism on Israeli academia, Jonathan Davis said Qatar has fueled many Western universities with \$2.5 billion in donations. "Jewish philanthropists need to band together," he said, adding that "Donors need to gather and discuss what they want to do with their funds and discuss what the limits are of professors with academic chairs with regards to antisemitism and pro-genocidal remarks."

Nimrod Palmach stated that 2014's Operation Protective Edge, when Israel fought in Gaza for 51 days attempting

to destroy Hamas terror tunnels, was the tipping point of antisemitism against Israel, and marked the increasing influence of social media, especially among the younger generation.

"While we spent time in the front in battle, we lost a whole new front when we were not defending Israel on a front that we didn't realize existed – that of social media." He added that ISRAEL-is attempts to tell the story of Israel to the world via young Israelis who go abroad and connect with their peers in the US and other places around the world.

Diker said that many people misunderstood the nature of the BDS movement and that rather than a peaceful, grassroots expression of political criticism, it is a terror-affiliated movement. "The best way to fight it," he said, "is to expose it for what it really is."

In response to Linde's query whether the battle of antisemitism has presented any new ideas, Davis said in the US, any-

one who wishes to side with Hamas should be shamed.

"We need to take off our gloves. It is no longer a time to be politically correct. It is time to present the case that Jewish lives matter." He also made a plea on behalf of Jewish unity, stating that "If we don't use the opportunity now to unite as Jews, and agree on the issues, then the 1,400 people who were massacred were killed for nothing."

Returning to the theme of the origins of contemporary anti-Israel thought, Diker said that the root of the problem dates back to the 1960s, when Israel was branded as an imperialist, colonialist power due to its attachment to the US.

"We failed to pay attention to that," he said, adding, "We have decades of work to catch up. The war for international legitimacy is no less important than using F-35s against the Iranian regime."

Davis stated that it is important for Israeli academics to present a "welcome wagon"

of study opportunities for English-speaking students in Israel. He also contended that the best way to fight antisemitism is by presenting facts. While Islamic fundamentalists and white supremacists on campus are unlikely to change their views, the average person who doesn't know where Gaza is can be persuaded of the truth, he said. "We need to present the facts as they are."

Palmach demurred, saying that while in a perfect world, presenting the facts would be the best way to present Israel's case, today, we need to take a different approach.

"The younger generation doesn't care about facts," he said. "Something else appeals to them. In his view, the best way to reach out to Gen Z and Gen Y today is by what he called "storytelling," showing that people in Israel enjoy food, fashion, and partying.

"This methodology may look soft," he said, but first, we need to make the connection and, only then, present the facts."

RABBI, EVANGELICAL LEADER:

Prioritize outreach to Christians

• Jerusalem Post Staff

After October 7, the strong and unwavering support of Evangelical Christians for Israel and the Jewish people is more crucial than ever – and both Christian and Jewish leaders need to work closely together so that this support continues to exist and grow, an Evangelical leader and a rabbi argued.

Joel C. Rosenberg, founder and editor-in-chief of All Israel News and Rabbi Tuly Weisz, founder of Israel365, made the case for these considerations while speaking at the Jerusalem Post event "The Second Front – The battle for Israel and the Jewish people."

"When I was the rabbi of a synagogue in Columbus, there was not a single individual in the system of the Federation of Jewish Communities who had a meaningful relationship with the over 1,000 pro-Israel Churches of Central Ohio," Weisz said.

Since then, Weisz moved to Israel and started Israel365, an organization devoted to offering Christians in America and worldwide the opportunity to connect with Israel through different channels.

"The war really demonstrates that we are in a crisis and emphasizes how important it is that we reach out to Christians," he said. "If we do not do it, we are in big trouble – and America is in big trouble."

In order to understand the dangers for America and the world, Weisz warned that Christians should pay attention to the message antisemitism is sending and understand that Israel is fighting for the sake of civilization.

"For the very first time, the antisemites are not only attacking the Jews, they're also attacking the Christians," he said. "They are calling for a jihad against Jews and Christians. They are saying, 'First the Shabbat people, then the Sunday people.'"

While tens of millions of Christians in the United States and around the world are indeed supporting Israel, recent polls have shown that this sentiment is declining, especially among young Evangelicals. According to Rosenberg, whose news outlet covers Israel news from a Christian perspective and caters to Evangelical readers, this phenomenon also needs to be addressed.

"We need to educate Christian young people about biblical history, as well as Jewish history even outside of the Bible," he said.

Pastors who only teach the New Testament and fail to teach the Hebrew Scriptures – what Christians call the Old Testament – are failing to teach older and younger Christians the history of God's deep love and important plan for Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and

the entire Jewish people, Rosenberg noted.

But this Biblical history is critical for every Christian in the 21st century to know and embrace, he explained.

What's more, Christians need to be proactive in showing their love for – and solidarity with – Israel and the Jewish community, Rosenberg urged.

"Evangelical pastors in the United States, Canada and around the world need to reach out to rabbis and Jewish leaders and invite them to sit together," he said. "Yes, there is going to be a fundamental disagreement about whether Jesus is the Messiah and that's not unimportant, but we can understand that we don't agree about it and we can still stand together."

Rosenberg said that many of those who persecuted Jews during the first half of the 20th century were "Christians in name only."

"Hitler hated Christians," he said. "At the same time, it would be hard to make the case to the Jewish people that Christians were not involved in their persecution. However, people who actually read and believe in the New Testament cannot be antisemitic. Jesus was Jewish, his disciples were Jewish; they were devout Israelis following the Torah. This is why it is crucial for people to read the Bible themselves and not just rely on a priest."

As Israel continues to grapple with the war, Rosenberg emphasized the importance of praying for the country, also expressing some surprise at the fact that Jewish leaders have not made a similar appeal.

"The fact that the chief rabbi has not called for a national day of prayer and fasting for most Evangelicals is curious, but we don't mean it as a criticism: just as a concern," he said.

"We are passionate about prayer," Rosenberg said. "We need to plead for God's help. Not because we don't trust the IDF but because the IDF alone, according to the Bible, isn't enough."

"I don't agree with the undertones that Israel is not turning towards God," Weisz replied. "We are seeing an unprecedented religious revival in Israel right now."

"On the other hand, I do agree that it would be nice if the government took a more active role in the religious revival," he said. "But we have to remember that we have a secular government, and the people are more religious and more spiritual. And I think that when the dust settles, there will be a government that does look more religious, embraces the God of Israel, and is more faithful to the words in the Bible."

'We must be aware, awake, stand up, fight back'

Adam Milstein speaks out on antisemitism at Jerusalem Post 'Second Front' conference

• By ALAN ROSENBAUM

Israeli-American investor and philanthropist Adam Milstein, speaking at *The Jerusalem Post Second Front Conference*, said that the Jewish people need to be aware, awake, stand up, and fight back against antisemitism.

He pointed out that he has been writing about the sources of antisemitism since 2016, which he attributes in great

part to the far Right, far Left, and radical Muslims.

Milstein told Maayan Hoffman, deputy CEO for Strategy and Innovation for the Jerusalem Post Group, that, unlike classic antisemitism, this new form is being led by the Islamo-leftist alliance between the radical Left and Muslims – secular Muslims that together created an alliance against the West, Judeo-Christian values, and Israel. He added that the

ultimate target of this alliance is not the Jews but rather, Western civilization and the United States.

In his interview with Hoffman, Milstein, who regularly shares his views on Israel and antisemitism in the pages of *The Jerusalem Post*, stated that antisemitism should not be presented as a Jewish problem. It is, in his words, "an American problem. This is not about the Jews. We're just the canary

in the coal mine. This is about America and the West."

Social media, in his view, is also a major factor in the promotion of antisemitism around the world. "The number of people getting the news from social media is increasing every day," Milstein said.

"The problem is that the information distributed by social media is not checked or validated. It is misinformation and disinformation. Propagan-

da is not only allowed on social media but it's being promoted. The more hate you spew, the more attention the algorithms will give you."

Milstein cautioned that the massive spike in antisemitism will be followed by even greater acts of violence against America and the West, calling it "a sign for the future." When any kind of resistance is justified against oppressors and occupiers, America should watch out.



ISRAEL365 FOUNDER Rabbi Tuly Weisz (R) and All Israel News founder and Editor-in-Chief Joel Rosenberg (L) speak with Maayan Hoffman. (Marc Israel Sellem/The Jerusalem Post)

'A tree for every Christian standing with Israel would form a continental forest'

• By ALAN ROSENBAUM

In an interview at *The Jerusalem Post* Group Second Front Conference, Yael Eckstein, president and CEO of the International Fellowship of Christians and Jews (IFCJ), told Maayan Hoffman, deputy CEO of Strategy and Innovation for The Jerusalem Post Group that

Evangelical Christians supported Israel before the October 7 massacre and continue to stand with the Jewish state.

Eckstein said that while during the Holocaust there were righteous Christians who acted to save Jews, among them Oskar Schindler and Corrie Ten Boom, today, there are far more who support the

State of Israel.

"It is different now than it was 80 years ago. If we would plant a tree for every Christian who is standing with Israel now, we would have a forest covering an entire continent," Eckstein said.

She added that the IFCJ was in an immediate position to act following the events of

October 7 – and donated \$15 million in the first weeks of the war.

"We have been investing in security infrastructure for years and have been in contact with security heads of the northern and southern border of Israel since the Second Lebanon War in 2006," said Eckstein.

"On October 7, we were work-

ing both with the Home Front Command and with local municipalities in Beersheba, Sderot, and Sha'ar Hanegev, bringing prepared food to people in their bomb shelters, and preparing food for after the 30 hours when people from the kibbutzim were released from the shelters.

"Since that day, we've

learned that needs change quickly. We have been able to shift and accommodate through partnerships with local municipalities and local organizations and through our ability to identify a need and implement those programs if there is no other answer."

Eckstein cited the Fellowship's donation of 4,200 flak

jackets, helmets, and security gear to civilian first responders as an example of the organization's ability to assess and provide what was needed.

"We are telling the people of Israel that 'you are not alone,'" she said. "Never again will you be alone. There are millions of Jews and Christians who stand with you."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Immigrant entrepreneurs need help

New immigrant business owners have raised concerns over the lack of adequate state support during the war. This issue was highlighted at a meeting of the Knesset Aliyah, Absorption, and Diaspora Affairs Committee chaired by MK Oded Forer (Yisrael Beytenu).

The Fund for Loans to Immigrant Business Owners of the Aliyah and Integration Ministry, a nearly 40-year-old support system, saw a decline in efficiency following its transition to a leveraged fund in 2013. The fund stopped to operate in 2019 leaving a void in the financial support network for these entrepreneurs. • Zvika Klein

Iran vows to respond to Syria strike

Iran will respond to attacks on its interests in Syria, Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Nasser Kanaani said on Monday when asked about the killing by Israel of two Iranian Revolutionary Guards in Syria last week. "No action against Iran's interests and our advisory forces in Syria will go unanswering," Kanaani said.

The IRG members who served as military advisers in Syria were killed in an Israeli attack, Iranian state media said on December 2. • Reuters

Michaeli slams global women's groups

Labor Party leader Merav Michaeli on Monday accused international women's groups of betraying feminism itself by showing indifference to Hamas terrorists' acts of sexual violence against Israeli women during the October 7 massacre.

Speaking to Radio 103FM, Michaeli emphasized the world's indifference towards the rapes committed by Hamas and slammed international women's organizations for their silence: "These organizations have not only betrayed Israeli women, they have also betrayed feminism itself," she said. "Today it is Israeli women suffering, but tomorrow it could be anyone else." • Walla

Soldiers to get university scholarships

The Knesset approved a law that will provide 100% scholarships to released IDF soldiers in a first reading on Monday evening. Coalition chairman Ofir Katz said on Monday that the legislative process would be completed in the next two weeks. • Jerusalem Post Staff

Turkey: Don't target Hamas men abroad

Turkey has warned Israel of "serious consequences" if it tries to hunt down Hamas members living outside the Palestinian territories, including in Turkey, a Turkish intelligence official said on Monday.

"Necessary warnings were made to the interlocutors based on the news of Israeli officials' statements, and it was expressed to Israel that [such acts] would have serious consequences," the official said.

KAN reported on Sunday that Israel would hunt down Hamas in Lebanon, Turkey, and Qatar even if it takes years, Shin Bet chief Ronen Bar said in a recording. • Reuters

Columbia students back Hamas attack

A student group at Columbia University's School of Social Work in New York will host an on-campus "teach-in" about what it calls the "October 7 counteroffensive," students from Columbia Social Workers 4 Palestine announced online.

"We will discuss the significance of the Palestinian counteroffensive on October 7th," the group said in a post on X, "and the centrality of revolutionary violence to anti-imperialism. See y'all there!"

The army-green poster for the event depicts a machine gun shooting a flower through a broken chain, as a dove looks on. The event is to take place on Wednesday. • Jerusalem Post Staff

Electric buses charge wirelessly at Electreon's Rosh Ha'ayin terminal

• By ZACHY HENNESSEY

Israeli startup Electreon has introduced the world's first commercial wireless charging terminal for buses, marking a significant leap in electric vehicle infrastructure.

Electreon's terminal, located in Rosh Ha'ayin, allows 24/7 wireless charging for electric buses in Israel's Petah Tikva and Rosh Ha'ayin areas, serving the public seamlessly as part of regular transportation services. Oren Ezer, CEO of Electreon, expressed satisfaction, stating, "Public electric buses will be able to charge efficiently, economically, and almost without using ground resources."

The project, executed in partnership with Electra Afikim, a major Israeli transportation

operator, involves an income of approximately NIS 5.8 million (\$1.3m) in 2023 for Electreon. The company, beyond technology provision, manages all construction phases – including electric infrastructure and civil engineering works.

In addition to installing the wireless charging infrastructure, Electreon has incorporated its technology into electric buses from international suppliers like Higer, Ankai, and Sunwin. Electra Afikim plans to integrate these buses into regular service lines, benefiting public transportation users in Israel.

Wireless charging brings operational advantages, including immediate and automatic charging, remote control capabilities, and real estate savings in parking lots. Electra Afikim,



ELECTRA AFIKIM'S lineup of electric buses at Israel's first wireless charging electric bus depot. (Alexey Izmalkov)

serving around 80 million passengers annually, aligns the project with its vision to lead in service, quality, and innovation.

Transportation Minister MK Miri Regev emphasized the government's support for innovation.

"I believe that the technology we are launching today will achieve similar success, and I hope that this will be good news for other companies in Israel and around the world," she said.

The Afikim project was launched in parallel with another innovative project on Wednesday, November 29, when the first public electric road in the United States was inaugurated in partnership with the automotive company Ford in Michigan, the originator and birthplace of the modern automotive industry. This initiative was personally led by Michigan as part of the state's policy to lead the adoption and encouragement of breakthrough technologies in the transportation sector.

75 Christians from ten nations arrive in Israel for 'hope, healing, service' tour

• By MAAYAN HOFFMAN

Seventy-five Evangelical Christians from 10 nations landed in Israel over the weekend on what is being dubbed a "hope and healing service tour" to support border communities who were impacted by the October 7 massacre.

"We believe that when someone you love is hurting, you show up for them," said Michael Mistretta, CEO of the Fellowship of Israel Related Ministries (FIRM), who leads the delegation.

"We're witnessing this wave of Christians who are coming to Israel, even in a time of war, not just to tour, but to serve the people of Israel; to show up in person and say, 'Israel, we're with you. We want to stand with you in your time of need,' he said.

"These Christians came to say, 'We love you, Israel.'"

They come to Israel from the United Kingdom, Moldova, Ireland, the Netherlands, Canada, Germany, Portugal, Singapore, Kenya, and the United States. Most are Evangelical, although some Catholics and Christians of other denominations are also on the tour.

FIRM's educational development director, Casey Tait, said many Christians had contacted the organization and said they were praying and giving money but wanted something else to do to help. As such, "we mobilized quickly and came up with all sorts of

different projects."

With members ranging in age from 13 to 93, this is the largest Christian delegation to visit Israel since the start of the war.

They will spend the week traveling throughout the country, including planting hundreds of trees in an October 7 memorial garden in Kela Alon and packing family-size grocery boxes to feed hundreds of families throughout Israel. Participants will be doing light renovations in several kibbutzim and hosting a recreational day for 400 children of displaced families from the northern communities – temporarily living in Afik and Midreshet Hagolan.

This Wednesday, the delegation will participate in a "National Serve Day" initiative in Dorot and Ein HaBor, orchestrated by FIRM and supported by local partners. Collaborating with a dedicated team of 500 Israeli volunteers, the group will engage in various activities, including harvesting and planting crops such as flowers and sweet potatoes.

Additionally, they will contribute to the community by undertaking cleaning tasks and making light repairs in homes and schools with non-structural damage.

These efforts aim to prepare the local infrastructure for the return of displaced families, fostering a sense of restoration and renewal.

Finally, they will meet with heads of

communities, local government officials, and families affected by the war.

FIRM IS an eight-year-old non-profit organization that serves a network of 74 Messianic Jewish and Arab Christian missionaries in Israel, as well as Israel in general.

Messianic Jews are generally people who were originally born into the Jewish faith but have embraced the belief in Jesus. However, a significant portion of those identifying as Messianic Jews today may not have Jewish ancestry but are drawn to the combination of Christian and Jewish beliefs and practices.

Being a Messianic Jew is extremely controversial in Israel and the Jewish world, especially because these individuals also often focus on converting Jews to Christianity.

Tait said that "missionizing is not the organization's primary role." While she admitted that "obviously we want to share the love of God [Jesus], and people we work with in Israel will share their stories," she said that there is no forceful proselytizing and that the NGO makes it straightforward to any volunteers that their trips are not an avenue for evangelism.

"That is not the goal at all," Tait stressed. "We understand the complications and live according to our values, but the goal is not through acts of service to evangelize."

There are around 310 Messianic Jewish congregations in Israel. Tait said about 700 Messianic Jewish soldiers serve in the army, including elite units.

SINCE OCTOBER 7, Christians have contributed over \$10 million to an emergency crisis fund facilitated by FIRM for numerous war relief projects. These collaborative efforts have provided 2,200 ceramic bullet-proof vests, 1,700 helmets for reserve units, tactical gear, and essential supplies for first responders.

In a significant feeding initiative, some 15,000 grocery boxes have been distributed through 10 hubs nationwide, ensuring sustenance for 50,000 displaced individuals. Moreover, 60,000 hot kosher meals have been served to both soldiers and families.

FIRM has partnered with hotels across Israel to provide shelter and support for displaced families, accommodating around 1,500 people in seven locations, including over 400 children.

"The Jewish people feel alone in the world – like they don't have many friends," Mistretta said. "It is one thing when Jewish families come and serve and another thing when non-Jews come and serve – not just in good times but hard times."

He said FIRM plans to run a similar trip at the end of January, and hopes to have hundreds of volunteers join him then.

Protesters hurl 'genocide' chants at Jewish-owned eatery in Philly

• By ZVIKA KLEIN

On Saturday, a group gathered outside "Goldie" – a Jewish-owned falafel outlet in Philadelphia – loudly chanting accusations against the restaurant. The incident elicited strong reactions from both Pennsylvania's governor and other political figures.

Mike Solomonov, an Israeli-born chef who was raised in Pittsburgh, and who is renowned for winning the James Beard Award, is the owner of the falafel chain. The protesters' chants included "Goldie, Goldie, you can't hide, we charge you with genocide."

Pennsylvania Gov. Josh Shapiro said: "Tonight in Philly, we witnessed a blatant act of antisemitism. This was not a peaceful protest. A restaurant was targeted and mobbed simply because its owner is Jewish and Israeli. Such hate and bigotry are reminiscent of a very dark time in history."

US Rep. Brendan Boyle (D, 2nd District) said he couldn't believe he had to say it, but "targeting businesses simply because they're Jewish-owned is despicable. Philadelphia stands against this sort of harassment and hate."

The Philadelphia Inquirer said the march was organized by the

Philly Palestine Coalition.

In October, the group called for a boycott of Jewish businesses, including Goldie and others owned by Solomonov.

The organization shared positive messages on social media on October 7, despite the murder of women and children. Memes such as "Palestine lives," and "The resistance lives" were published there, while they claimed that "Hamas rampaged and invaded three Israeli towns" at the time.

Their protests extended to local media, with allegations of disproportionate coverage of the Ukrainian crisis, compared to Gaza.

REMEMBERING AVRAHAM AVI-HAI:

OBITUARY

• By GREER FAY CASHMAN

The large funeral chamber at Eretz Haim cemetery near Beit Shemesh was filled to capacity as mourners came to honor Avraham Avi-Hai, a man of many paths that collectively came under the umbrellas of the Jewish world and the Zionist enterprise.

Those who came represented some of the different signposts in his life and the many paths he had taken. A few even remembered him from the time when he was still called Syd Applebaum.

Israel and the Jewish people were important to him, even when he was a boy in Canada, where he was born, to a Toronto-based, Yiddish-speaking traditional family of Polish background on January 23, 1931.

He was a pivotal figure in the renewal of Hashomer Hada'ati, the religious Zionist youth movement that saw as its mission the building of religious kibbutzim in Israel.

The movement merged with Bnei Akiva, and when Avi-Hai arrived in Israel in 1952 with his first wife, they initially lived in Kfar Darom, where he was a farmer and a construction worker.

But manual labor was not really his forte, and he moved to Jerusalem where he quickly launched a career in journalism, reporting on politics and economics. His first job in journalism was at *The Jerusalem Post*, where he was hired by Gershon Agron, the paper's founding editor, who was later

mayor of Jerusalem.

His next career move was to Israel Bonds, where Avi-Hai served as director and head of public relations at its Israeli office.

Impressed by Avi-Hai's abilities, Teddy Kollek, who before becoming the legendary mayor of Jerusalem, worked closely with Israel's founding prime minister David Ben-Gurion, recruited Avi Hai into government service. He was appointed director of the Overseas Division of the Prime Minister's Office.

In later years, he was secretary for public affairs for former prime minister Levi Eshkol, working hand in glove with Yaakov Herzog, the uncle of Israel's current president.

Part of their work involved persuading every religious stream in Judaism to set up its headquarters in Jerusalem so that the city would not only be the capital of Israel, but the capital of the Jewish people, regardless of nationality.

He helped the Conservative Movement in founding what is now the Schechter Institute of Jewish Studies, and aided the Reform movement in establishing Hebrew Union College. Both institutions are located in Jerusalem.

Avi-Hai spent 10 years as a speechwriter for Levi Eshkol, firstly when he was finance minister, and later when he was prime minister. When Eshkol was the first prime minister of Israel to officially visit the US, Avi-Hai was a member of his delegation.

It was at that time that he

changed his name from a typical Diaspora one to an Israeli one.

During the time that he worked with Eshkol, he took two years' leave to continue his academic studies in the US, receiving degrees from the Jewish Theological Seminary and Columbia University, where he studied political science.

From the late 1960's to the early 70's, Avi-Hai organized the Prime Minister's Economic Conference in Jerusalem, after which he moved into academia, becoming the founding dean of the Hebrew University's School for Overseas Students.

He was also a visiting professor of history at the University of Rochester in the US, and taught political studies at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and at Bar Ilan University.

He never tired of promoting Jerusalem. During Kollek's early years as mayor, Avi-Hai was involved in a news and feature service that was entirely dedicated to the city.

In 1976, he purchased an apartment in Yemin Moshe, which in the 1890's had been the first Jewish neighborhood to be settled outside the walls of the Old City; it had been no man's land between 1948 and 1967. Under Teddy Kollek, it was revived and renovated while retaining its old-world ambience. Avi-Hai lived there for the rest of his life.

From 1976 to 1988, he served as chairman of the Keren Hayesod United Israel Appeal, which is the fund-raising arm of the Zionist Movement.

During that time, he was also a member of the Jewish Agency for Israel and the World Zionist Organization.

An inspiring orator, with an authoritative, albeit pleasant voice, Avi-Hai also worked for Israel Radio and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, for which he covered the Eichmann trial.

In his twilight years, Avi-Hai returned to journalism, writing for both the *Post* and its flagship publication, *The Jerusalem Report*.

He also authored books, most recently his autobiography, which he wrote together with Ilan Evyatar, a former editor of the *Report*.

Unfortunately, Avi-Hai did not live to see it published. He passed away this past Sunday, December 2, at age 92. The book's tentative title is: *It all just happened*.

A charismatic personality, with an insatiable curiosity, Avi-Hai was also an ardent traveler who sometimes took family members with him abroad.

Further, he had a fine sense of humor, and an abiding interest in his three daughters, his grandchildren, and his great-grandchildren – and treated his two stepsons as if they were his own.

He was very proud of the fact that his four-generation family numbered in excess of 60 people.

Avi-Hai is survived by his wife Henrietta, his daughters Shosh, Tova, and Drorlee, his stepsons David and Daniel Bassan, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren.

HEROISM ON DISPLAY

A striking mural in Ofakim's Mishor Hagafen neighborhood sponsored by Bank Hapoalim has been erected to commemorate the residents' bravery on October 7. The mural, created by graffiti artist Arad Levy in collaboration with Elad Mazmer, aims to represent themes of unity, strength, and remembrance. It has several elements such as a female police officer and a man donning a kippah shaking her hand. Israeli flags as well as sites of the city also appear in this artwork. "Our goal is to highlight the heroism of Ofakim's residents who stood valiantly against the terrorists," Levi said.

(Text: Jerusalem Post Staff; Photo: Arad Levy and Elad Mazmer)



What happened to the chief of Shifa Hospital?

ANALYSIS

By YONAH JEREMY BOB

The IDF's legal division, the Shin Bet, the Justice Ministry, and Israel Police all declined to provide details on the status of Gaza City's Shifa Hospital's Director, Muhammad Abu Salmiya.

Some sources hinted informally that he is in Shin Bet custody. The agency, along with the IDF, announced his arrest on November 23. There has been no official update since.

In Israeli civilian courts, the standard rule is that the state needs to file an indictment within a specified number of days – or, in exceptional circumstances, within a few weeks – to justify keeping a suspect in detention.

In the military courts, which have jurisdiction over Palestin-

ians in the West Bank, it may take months before an indictment is filed by the military's prosecution. During this time, the Shin Bet can keep a suspect in detention for longer periods of time if their crime is security-related.

Another type of detention is administrative, usually reserved for terrorists whom security officials fear will perpetrate violence.

Notably, Israel has a law for "unlawful combatants," used for the dozens of Hamas terrorists captured while fighting the IDF.

On November 28, the Palestinian-oriented Middle East Monitor reported that "the Government Media Office in Gaza said yesterday evening [November 27] that Israel had extended the detention of... [Salmiya] for

an additional 45 days."

No Israeli office has confirmed this, but when questioned in the past about the handling of unlawful combatants arrested during the war, the IDF said that "there are terrorists who were captured in connection with the slaughter perpetrated by a terrorist organization and who are detained by Israel."

"This is in accordance with the law, whether based on [judicial] detention orders, or the authority of IDF officials who have the jurisdiction to order their detention – which, in the case of the latter, judicial review regarding any continued detention will take place before a judge 45 days from the date of the detention order."

On November 23, Israeli and IDF officials' responses as to why there has been silence on

Salmiya's arrest ranged from surprise to a promise that an announcement would go out soon.

Yet even the announcement that did come later that afternoon did not make any direct charges against Salmiya. Instead, the statement relayed that he was arrested and brought to the Shin Bet for interrogation following significant testimony and video evidence from others that Shifa was used as a command center for Hamas during the director's tenure.

Moreover, the joint IDF-Shin Bet statement said that Hamas "utilized many resources, including electricity, to strengthen its tunnels which it built under the hospital. In addition, Hamas kept military items stored in the hospital and its immediate

surroundings."

The organizations added that after Hamas's attack on October 7, it "used the hospital as a refuge for its terrorist forces, and even brought Israeli hostages to there that were kidnapped during the day of slaughter. A pathology report confirmed that IDF Cpl. Noa Marciano was murdered on the grounds of the hospital."

They added vaguely that "a decision regarding his detention would be made in conjunction with the findings of the investigation regarding his involvement with the hospital's connection to terror."

Salmiya faces allegations of "aiding the enemy during wartime and providing service to terrorist organizations," *Al-Quds*'s news reported.

If true, Salmiya would still eventually need to be prose-

cuted under a special "unlawful combatants" proceeding or in Israeli civil or military courts.

For comparison, the US has held unlawful combatants of al-Qaeda after the September 11, 2001 attacks on the Twin Towers and the Pentagon – only if they were battlefield arrests, not conspirators or those who aided the terrorist group in logistics, as Salmiya may eventually be accused of.

However, Israel's law on "unlawful combatants" could be used more broadly: if Israel has direct eyewitness testimonies, or footage to incriminate the director, he could be brought to trial.

Alternatively, Israel may not have such direct incriminating evidence, and the evidence it does have may be more ambiguous, such as the notion that

it would be impossible for any reasonable director to be completely oblivious to the sheer volume of Hamas's uses of his hospital.

In this case, it might still try to mount a case for an easier-to-prove, more minor charge, such as aiding and abetting terrorism, without being a member of a terrorist group.

Yet, another possibility is that the Shin Bet hopes to scare him into providing them with intelligence information so that they may be able to more quickly uncover the remaining aspects of Hamas's concealed presence at Shifa, in which case if he cooperates, he may be released without charge.

There was heavy global criticism of Salmiya's arrest when it was announced.



BINYAMIN YEHOASHUA NEEDHAM



NERIYA SHAER



BEN ZUSSMAN

ATTACK

Continued from Page 1

Guterres called for a "sustained humanitarian ceasefire in Gaza, the unconditional [and] immediate release of all hostages, and unimpeded [and] sustained humanitarian aid flow to meet the needs of the people throughout the Gaza Strip."

Lynn Hastings, who is the humanitarian coordinator for the Palestinian territories, panned Israel's safety zones in the south.

"Israeli military operations have expanded into southern Gaza, forcing tens of thousands of others into increasingly compressed spaces, desperate to find food, water, shelter and safety," she said.

"Nowhere is safe in Gaza and there is nowhere left to go," Hastings said.

"The conditions required to deliver aid to the people of Gaza do not exist. If possible, an even more hellish scenario is about to unfold, one in which humanitarian operations may not be able to respond," the humanitarian coordinator said.

"The quantities of relief supplies and fuel allowed in are utterly insufficient. Despite the enormous efforts of the Egyptian and Palestinian Red Crescent Societies, UN agencies, and other partners, the use of only the Rafah crossing – meant for pedestrians – to bring in trucks of goods does not work," she said.

"What we see today are shelters with no capacity, a health system on its knees, a lack of clean drinking water, no proper sanitation, and poor nutrition for people already mentally and physically exhausted: a textbook formula for epidemics and a public health disaster."

Head of the Geneva-based International Committee of the Red Cross, Mirjana Spoljaric, visited Gaza on Monday, issuing a statement in which she said the level of human suffering was intolerable, calling for the protection of civilians, respect for the laws of war, and the release of hostages held by Hamas.

In Washington, State Department spokesman Matthew Miller defended the resumption of Israel's military campaign to oust Hamas from Gaza that began after the October 7 attack. He blamed Hamas for the war and said that more people should call for the terror group to lay down its arms.

"It is Hamas that is putting [Palestinian] civilians in harm's way," he said. "I am surprised that I do not hear more people say 'why doesn't Hamas move out of schools? Why doesn't Hamas take additional steps to protect civilians?' Because we think they should, as we think Israel should."

"We would welcome Hamas

laying down its arms at any point," he said. "They could do it today if they cared about Palestinian civilian life."

Miller also called on Israel to do more to protect civilians in Gaza.

The United States is watching IDF actions in Gaza "very closely," Miller said as he explained that there were differences between Israel's military campaign that resumed on December 1 and the one that ended on November 24.

"Too many Palestinians were killed in the opening weeks of the conflict," Miller said.

"We have seen a more targeted request for evacuations" by Israel so that the army is focused on clearing specific points rather than asking an entire city to evacuate, he said.

Civilians have been asked to relocate to "de-confliction zones rather than being asked to flee," the State Department spokesman said.

During US Secretary of State Antony Blinken's visit to Israel last week, he clarified to officials: "We do not want a military campaign in the south that looks like it was in the north."

Blinken was briefed "on plans intended to avoid mass casualties."

It was understood that there would be civilian casualties: "that is true in all war zones and is particularly true here," given that Hamas operates from within civilian areas, Miller said.

Both Miller and Sullivan addressed the collapsed hostage deal by which 81 women and children were freed, but there are still some 17 or 20 women and children among the captives.

Qatar and Egypt mediated the deal. Sullivan said that Israel and US officials are still in conversation with those two countries to seek a way to resume hostage releases.

Miller said that the hostage deal partially fell apart last week because Hamas wanted to prevent the remaining Israeli women it holds in Gaza from talking about their time in captivity.

"It seems one of the reasons they don't want to turn women over that they have been holding hostage, and the reason this pause fell apart, is that they do not want these women to be able to talk about what happened to them during their time in captivity," Miller alleged during an emotional moment in the press conference.

Later in the briefing, the State Department spokesman clarified that he does not know this claim to be a definitive fact.

Separately, in the briefing in Washington, Miller addressed the issue of settler violence saying that the US has also spoken with Israel about doing more to crack down on attacks against innocent Palestinians in the

West Bank, Miller said.

"We have seen them take some steps to respond to violence. We do not think those steps have been sufficient. They need to prosecute people who engage in violence against [innocent] Palestinians," he said.

"We have made very clear to the Israeli government that we will be taking additional steps to hold people accountable for violent extremism," he said, explaining that this could include visa restrictions.

Miller also addressed the issue of rising antisemitism, condemning it in the strongest terms.

"We oppose antisemitism wherever we see it," Miller said. It's tragic that after October 7, "one of the responses has been an increase in antisemitism that is extremely tragic and it's incumbent on everyone in positions of authority to speak out."

LEVEL

Continued from Page 1

demonstrations and protests." Travelers should also check current events in their destination spots to see if there is anti-Israeli or anti-Jewish activity, even for countries largely deemed safe.

Once out of the country, travelers should "avoid exhibiting Israeli and Jewish symbols, and large gatherings of Israeli and Jewish officials."

Travelers should keep contact information for a local Israeli embassy or consulate with them, as well as emergency services numbers, the NSC added.

RESERVIST

Continued from Page 1

Jerusalem.

When three of the victims were killed by two Hamas terrorists, Castleman – Israeli civilian and an attorney from Mevasseret Zion with a background in the security services – responded, and along with Israeli security forces on the scene, shot and killed the two terrorists.

In security camera footage, Castleman can be seen dashing with his gun from the other side of the road and shooting at the attackers. Frijia then aims at Castleman.

Castleman kneels, raises his arms as a sign of surrender, and then opens his shirt before Frijia shoots him.

Frijia and another soldier involved were finally questioned under caution overnight, although the police and the prosecution have still not selected a potential charge.

In past cases where IDF soldiers killed Palestinians while breaking the rules of engagement, such as shooting someone who has surrendered, the

charges have traditionally not been murder, but either manslaughter, second-degree murder, or even mere negligent homicide.

Whereas murder can carry up to a life sentence, manslaughter convictions of IDF soldiers have often carried sentences of under two years or even one, and negligent homicide convictions have carried sentences of weeks to several months.

Despite the seemingly airtight video evidence that Frijia shot Castleman while his hands were raised, The Jerusalem Post understands that Frijia is claiming that after Castleman raised his hands, he made other suspicious movements with them.

Though Frijia consented to a polygraph test, the investigation so far has uncovered significant gaps between the soldier's testimony and evidence found at the scene of the shooting.

According to Frijia's lawyers, Col. (res.) Shlomi Tzouf and Col. (res.) Ran Cohen Rochberg, the footage published on social media was not reflective of the actual situation.

Further, they said that, "from where the fighter was standing, from the sights he saw and the sounds he heard, the fighter was convinced with all his heart that he was firing at a terrorist who still posed a life-threatening danger to him and to everyone around him. He had no intention of carrying out an illegal 'extra-judicial killing,' and this was not how he acted. Immediately after he saw that the person was wounded and on the ground, he stopped shooting."

"After hearing the fighter's testimony, we have no doubt that under these unusual, extreme circumstances, the Military Advocate General's Office will also reach the clear conclusion that with all the heavy sorrow from the terrible result, this is a tragic mistake that does not justify taking criminal actions against the fighter," they concluded.

Meanwhile, Rabbi Amichai Elyahu, Israel's heritage minister, called on Israeli security forces to gun down all terrorists encountered at the scene of terrorist attacks, doubling down amid a debate following Thursday's friendly-fire incident.

Asked by Ynet whether, following the killing of Castleman, he would like to change his public call, Elyahu responded: "We must get to a point of checking the death [of the terrorist]; we must move toward terrorists being killed and deterred."

Tal Spungin contributed to this report.

POSSIBLE

Continued from Page 1

attacks," they said. "Our findings suggest that traders informed about the coming attacks profited from these tragic events, and consistent with prior literature, we show that trading of this kind occurs in gaps in US and international enforcement of legal prohibitions on informed trading."

The professors referred to patterns in early April when it was reported that Hamas was initially planning its attack on Israel.

"Short volume in EIS (the MSCI Israel ETF) peaked on April 3 at levels very similar to those observed on October 2, and was far higher by an order of magnitude than other days prior to April 3," they said.

The story of the new study was first reported on Israel's financial news website The Marker. (Reuters)

IDF

Continued from Page 1

hostage by Hamas during the Re'im music festival massacre on October 7, was murdered in Gaza captivity, his family was notified on Sunday. Samerano, 21, from Tel Aviv, escaped the festival in the direction of Kibbutz Be'eri on the day of the attacks before being shot and taken into Gaza.

Meanwhile, the fate of Hamas terrorists in southern Gaza will be "the same as and worse" than those in northern Gaza, Defense Minister Yoav Gallant warned on Monday evening.

"We will continue until victory and until all goals are achieved: the elimination of Hamas and the return of the hostages to the State of Israel."

IDF Southern Command Chief Maj.-Gen. Yaron Finkleman on Monday told troops he was visiting in Gaza. "We will continue in Shejaia, Jabalya, and the south – until the defeat," of Hamas.

The IDF opened up a safe corridor for the humanitarian movement of civilians on a bypass road west of Khan Yunis in southern Gaza on Monday, according to the military spokesperson for Arabic media, Avichay Adraee – another hint of the advancing IDF invasion in the south.

Some observers have speculated that the IDF invasion has moved slowly in case Hamas might return to the negotiating table to return more hostages. The more committed ground forces become in southern Gaza, the harder it will be to have them stand down for another ceasefire.

Palestinian terrorists did not

stand down, however, firing rockets at central Israel, as well as southern towns and the major southern city of Beersheba.

Meanwhile, the IDF struck an operational headquarters, weapons storage warehouse, and other infrastructure used by Hezbollah in southern Lebanon on Monday, in response to continued rocket fire by the terrorist group toward northern Israel.

Among the targets hit were a Hezbollah weapons depot near Arab Al-Aramshe and sites from which rockets were launched in southern Lebanon. IDF artillery fire targeted several other sites in southern Lebanon as well.

According to the army, several projectiles were fired toward an IDF post near Arab Al-Aramshe, and toward Matat, Tel Hai, Shtula, and Kiryat Shmona on Monday.

The Hezbollah terrorist organization took responsibility for at least nine attacks against sites in northern Israel on Monday, with the group having fired on Israel well over 1,000 times since October 7.

According to Lebanese reports, an empty house in Umm al-Tut, another house in Bint Jbeil, and another one in Maroun el Rass in southern Lebanon were hit by Israeli strikes. A fire broke out in the house in Bint Jbeil, according to the reports.

Additionally, a Syrian citizen was injured in Israeli strikes in Wazzani in southern Lebanon on Monday, according to Lebanon's National News Agency (NNA). The report did not state what condition the Syrian was in.

Lebanese Prime Minister Najib Mikati met with US Ambassador Dorothy Shea in

Beirut on Monday to discuss the situation in southern Lebanon and the Gaza Strip, according to NNA.

Lebanese Foreign Minister Abdullah Bou Habib told the Lebanese *Nidaa al-Watan* newspaper that European Union officials had warned Beirut against entering a war with Jerusalem, with Bou Habib claiming that Israel "took the initiative and threatened."

The foreign minister added that Israel has sent several messages through the EU demanding that Lebanon implement UNSC Resolution 1701 and force Hezbollah to move back north of the Litani River. Bou Habib claimed that Lebanon had only conducted violations of the resolution recently and accused Israel of violating the resolution 30,000 times annually.

The foreign minister committed to implementing the resolution called for Israel and Lebanon to reach agreements about their land border, saying "This could reduce the tension and enhance the chances of peace and stability in southern Lebanon."

On October 8, the day after Hamas's Gaza border massacre, Hezbollah started unprovoked attacks against Israel, following the intensifying fighting between the IDF and Hamas.

Moreover, since the beginning of the year, Hezbollah and Palestinian factions operating with the Lebanese-based terrorist group's approval have conducted attacks against northern Israel, including an infiltration and bombing attack near Megiddo in March and the establishment of tents staffed with armed terrorists in the Har Dov area.

Walla contributed to this report.



קרן הסיוד היסוד FOR THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL

The Keren Hayesod-UIA family in Israel and around the world expresses deep sorrow over the passing of

Dr. Avraham Asher Avi-hai z"l

Former World Chairman of Keren Hayesod-UIA
Leader, Zionist, author, and journalist.

Dedicating his life to cementing the bond between Diaspora Jewry, the State of Israel, and its national institutions, his life story is woven into the fabric of the State of Israel and Keren Hayesod-UIA.

We send our condolences to his entire family.

May his memory be a blessing.

Steven Lowy AM
Chairman, World Board of Trustees

Sam Grundwerg
World Chairman



The Jewish Agency for Israel mourns the passing of

DR. AVRAHAM ASHER AVI-HAI Z"l

Former World Chairman of Keren Hayesod and past Member of the Executive of the Jewish Agency

Our deepest condolences to the Avi-Hai family

May they be comforted amongst the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem

Mark Wilf
Chairman of the Board
The Jewish Agency for Israel

Major General (Res.) Doron Almog
Chairman of the Executive
The Jewish Agency for Israel

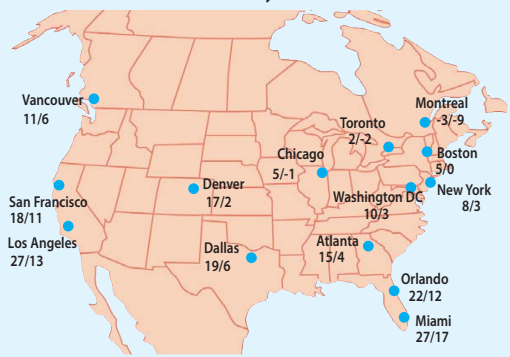
• Sports Editor: URIEL STURM
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Weather



	Wednesday
Kiryat Shmona	19/11
Tiberias	25/16
Haifa	21/14
Netanya	23/16
Ariel	19/11
Tel Aviv	23/16
Jerusalem	18/10
Ashkelon	22/15
Dead Sea	26/18
Beersheba	22/12
Mitzpe Ramon	18/7
Eilat	27/14

North America Weather Today



Mac TA rallies to edge Hapoel Jerusalem

Maccabi Haifa ekes past Hapoel Beersheba • Hap Haifa blanks Hap TA • Hap PT tops Beitar

LOCAL SOCCER

• By JOSHUA HALICKMAN

Maccabi Tel Aviv defeated Hapoel Jerusalem 2-1 on Sunday night at Teddy Stadium as Osher Davida scored the second-half winner to hand the yellow-and-blue the three points in Israel Premier League action.

Ofek Bitton gave the capital city Reds a 1-0 lead with a goal against the run of play as the first half came to an end. But Eran Zahavi found the equalizer for visiting Maccabi 10 minutes into the second half.

With Robbie Keane's squad pushing for the go-ahead goal, Osher Davida did exactly that as he found the back of the goal to give Tel Aviv the hard-earned away victory.

"It wasn't easy and especially when they scored the goal against the run of play," Keane said following the game. "We weren't sharp in certain areas, but we showed character to come back with a goal down as we saw the substitutions make an impact. We are concentrating on each game at a time."

"We had a long break and we played well and prepared well but not good enough for Maccabi Tel Aviv," Hapoel coach Ziv Arie said. "Maccabi is a team that always gets their chances, but we will work hard and we have a derby coming up later in the week and while it's not ideal to go into that game after a loss we will be ready."

Up by the Carmel Mountain, Maccabi Haifa just got by Hapoel Beersheba 1-0 with a late second-half injury-time goal via Dean David, who slotted home a tremendous pass by Lior Refaelov to take the points.

"The first half we should have been up 2-0 or 3-0, but we came out with nothing," Haifa coach Messay Deago said. "We knew that Hapoel Beersheba hadn't played in quite some time, but a goal in the 94th minute is very, very sweet. We have a lot of games coming up and we are playing with a short roster."

"Our first half wasn't great and we didn't play at all to the pace of the game," Beersheba bench boss Elyaniv Barda began. "In the second half we had three very good chances to win the game



ERAN ZAHAVI (center) and Osher Davida (left) each scored goals for Maccabi Tel Aviv in a 2-1 comeback win over Hapoel Jerusalem at Teddy Stadium. (Maccabi Tel Aviv/Courtesy)

and we looked better, but it was still not enough. It's tough to give up a goal so late in the game but we can't dwell on that as we have another match in a couple of days."

At Bloomfield Stadium, Hapoel Haifa slipped by Hapoel Tel Aviv 1-0 as Tomer Yosefi scored the lone goal of the contest in the 27th minute to take the win and the three points for the Carmel Reds.

"Hapoel Tel Aviv is a talented team and a very dangerous one," Haifa coach Roni Levy began. "For our first game after returning to play I am very happy. There have been some very difficult days and God should watch over all of our soldiers who are in Gaza. I have to give credit to the guys as they gave it their all and I am content with how they performed."

"We tried to control the ball as much as we could and create as many chances as possible," said Hapoel Tel Aviv's new coach Borja Lema, who took over from Michael Valkanis following the game. "We couldn't find the goal and

we will continue to work and improve. We played well and now we have to look ahead."

Elsewhere, Hapoel Hadera blanked Maccabi Petah Tikva 3-0 thanks to Elad Madmon's hat-trick as the club dedicated the win to captain Menashe Zalka, who is currently serving in IDF.

"The owner of the team asked a few weeks ago as to how much Elad Madmon is worth to us," Hadera coach Niso Avitan said about the man of the match. "I told him that if someone offered a million euros he should take it, but now I would say the deal would be off. He's very talented and I hope he will stay grounded and modest as his career continues on."

"I didn't expect this," Petah Tikva coach Benny Lam said. "Due to what has been going on in the country I guess that anything is possible. It just really surprised me and maybe I made a mistake with the lineup I used. It's too bad, but I have to keep things calm and lift the guys' spirits. Meanwhile, Bnei Sakhnin and Maccabi

Netanya played to a 1-1 draw to split the points up in the Galilee.

Eitan Azoulay opened the scoring when he latched onto a Guy Mizrahi ball to give Netanya a 1-0 lead in the 20th minute.

But Boris Enow was sent off at the start of the second half leaving the diamond city side with only 10 players as they looked to hold onto the lead. However, Yoel Abuhazzeira found the equalizer in the 84th minute to earn a point for Sakhnin.

"For the entire stretch of the game we just weren't good enough," Netanya coach Ron Kozuk said. "The red card changed the complexion of the game. We knew it would be tough and that we would have to play right up until the end - we needed to keep the score as is and we didn't do that."

"We played decently," Sakhnin coach Slobodan Dragic began. "We didn't know exactly how we would look playing after not having had a game in two months. We didn't have enough confidence in order to win, but we played against a good team that had a full complement of foreign players at their disposal while we just had one."

At the Moshava Stadium, Hapoel Petah Tikva downed Beitar Jerusalem 1-0 as Fortune Bassey found the lone marker of the match in the 29th minute.

It looked as if Fred Friday had evened up the game for Beitar in the 80th minute, but his goal was judged to be offside by the VAR (Virtual Referee Assistant) as the hosts took the win.

"We had plenty of chances in this game in the first half and then in the second," Petah Tikva coach Ofer Tesselpepe said. "We were able to take three very important points. The guys are working very hard and they come into every practice with the ultimate commitment and we can see that on the pitch as they play the exact same way."

"Everything went against our team," Beitar head coach Yossi Abukasis said. "We had some great chances in the second half but every single call seems to go against us and it's a shame that this is the case. In the final 20 minutes we had some very good chances, but the ball didn't go into the goal."

Maccabi Bnei Reineh and Ashdod SC played to a goalless draw as each team took a point for their efforts.

SPORTS SHORTS

Indonesia to bid again for U-20 WCup

JAKARTA (Reuters) — Indonesia will declare its interest to soccer's world governing body FIFA in jointly holding the 2025 Under-20 World Cup with Singapore, its president said on Monday, despite his country being stripped of the hosting rights to this year's tournament.

President Joko Widodo said the two countries were also interested in a bid for the biannual Under-17 tournament somewhere between 2025-2029 and would be suitable hosts for either.

Indonesia staged this year's U-17 contest, which concluded on Saturday, with Germany beating France on penalties.

Muslim-majority Indonesia was in March stripped of the rights to host the U-20 contest just seven weeks out from its start due to opposition from some government officials to the participation of Israel.

Senior world champion Argentina took over as hosts of the May 20-June 11 tournament, where Israel finished a surprise third after losing in the semifinals to winner Uruguay.

Guardiola unconcerned with City's slump

MANCHESTER (Reuters) — Manchester City's longest winless run in the Premier League for six years is no cause for alarm, according to manager Pep Guardiola after his side's thrilling 3-3 draw with Tottenham Hotspur on Sunday.

Jack Grealish's 81st-minute goal appeared to have won the game for reigning champion, City but Dejan Kulusevski's header in the 90th minute condemned City to a third successive draw.

Guardiola's side have now conceded eight goals in their last three Premier League games and they also let in two against RB Leipzig in the Champions League in midweek.

"The performance was quite similar to what we have done lately," Guardiola told a press conference. "It's not the first time we are in this situation where we are playing good but results don't come."

Michigan, Texas open as CFP favorites

No. 1 Michigan and No. 3 Texas have been installed as the favorites to win their College Football Playoff semifinal games on New Year's Day.

Texas will face No. 2 Washington in the first game of the day at 5 p.m. ET in the Rose Bowl. The Wolverines opened as 1.5-point favorites at BetMGM and FanDuel, while DraftKings is offering Michigan -2.0.

The Crimson Tide were the controversial final team to make the CFP, edging out undefeated No. 5 Florida State.

Michigan cruised to a 26-0 victory over Iowa in the Big Ten title game on Saturday. The Wolverines won six games this season while coach Jim Harbaugh was serving suspensions.

The second game of the day will feature Texas taking on No. 2 Washington, a program Longhorns coach Steve Sarkisian led from 2009-13. The teams also met in last year's Alamo Bowl, with Washington winning 27-20.

Despite being the lower seed entering the Sugar Bowl, Texas opened as a 4.5-point favorite by BetMGM and FanDuel.

The Longhorns rolled to a 49-21 win over Oklahoma State in the Big 12 title game on Saturday.

Washington defeated Oregon for the second time this season with a 34-31 triumph in Friday's Pac-12 title game. The Ducks were in contention for a CFP bid prior to the loss.

The winner of the Rose Bowl is expected to be favored in the January 5 national title game. • Reuters

Why should pros miss out on playoff controversy fun?



ANALYSIS

• By NATE DAVIS

Here are the top 32 things we learned from Week 13 of the 2023 National Football League season:

1. Sunday was a wild affair in the football universe, starting early with the controversial announcement of the College Football Playoff field. Thank the pigskin gods that the NFL's post-season bracket isn't constructed so, uh, subjectively? Nevertheless, it makes for a fun thought exercise regarding how that might work in 2023, given eight teams entered Week 13 with at least eight victories — suggesting the pros, as with the college ranks, have an unusual number of bona fide contenders this year.
2. Put the San Francisco 49ers No. 1 in my NFL CFP after they dismembered the Philadelphia Eagles 42-19 at Lincoln Financial Field in a much-hyped — if highly disappointing — rematch of last season's NFC championship game.
3. Philly holds a 50-49 scoring advantage in a pair of games that were expected to be quite close and compelling... but neither was.
4. Niners QB Brock Purdy may well have bypassed Eagles QB Jalen Hurts in the MVP race after throwing for 314 yards and four TDs on Sunday. Of course, Purdy's elbow injury in the NFC title game was the point where San Francisco's Super Bowl hopes — at least for the 2022 season — evaporated.
5. The 49ers improved to 9-1 this season in games where WR Deebo Samuel has played, the lone loss coming at Cleveland

when a shoulder injury knocked him out. Sunday, the trash-talking Samuel backed up the yak with 138 yards from scrimmage and three TDs.

6. San Francisco RB Christian McCaffrey's 2-yard TD run made him the third player in NFL history with 50 TDs on the ground and 25 more via reception. He joins Hall of Famers Lenny Moore and Marshall Faulk.

7. Rough afternoon for the Eagles, yet they still qualify for this NFL CFP — their 10-2 record remaining the league's best... even if they failed to join the 1972-73 Miami Dolphins as the only clubs to win at least 11 of their first 12 games in successive seasons.

8. Matters may not improve in Week 14 for the reigning NFC champs, who visit the Dallas Cowboys for "Sunday Night Football." Lose that game, and Philly surrenders first place in the NFC East to "America's Team," which has won 14 in a row at AT&T Stadium.

9. But after facing Dallas, Philadelphia isn't currently scheduled to face another team with a winning record for the remainder of the regular season.

10. And the Eagles still have chief security officer Dom DiSandro. You don't.

11. Philadelphia and the Denver Broncos, who entered Week 13 as the NFL's hottest teams, both saw their five-game winning streaks snapped.

12. Speaking of the Cowboys, would you put them in the NFL CFP? After all, they don't currently own a win against a team with a winning record — though that's only true because they knocked the Seattle Seahawks from 6-5 to 6-6 after Thursday night's 41-35 roller coaster.

13. But, hey, we're including "Dem Boyz" amid QB Dak Prescott's MVP-caliber play — which has helped WR CeeDee Lamb evolve into an All-Pro-caliber weapon — and a defense that's so often dominant and racks up splash plays left and right.

14. I acknowledge no AFC teams have yet been picked for this NFL CFP — my committee and rules, not yours. But an invite will be issued to the defending

Super Bowl-champion Kansas City Chiefs. Anyone else going to bring Taylor Swift to the party and drive up our ratings?

15. The Dolphins, quite likely the league's most explosive team, seem like the odd team out in this scenario — essentially because they've beaten up on non-Power Five teams but haven't hung with the elite. The Fins did improve to 9-3 for the first time since 2001 on Sunday, when they lashed Washington 45-15, and now sit atop the overall AFC standings.

16. Miami WR Tyreek Hill finished with five catches for 157 yards and two TDs. His league-leading 1,481 receiving yards are the most ever through a dozen games during the Super Bowl era (since 1966).

17. The "Cheetah," who is vying to become the first 2,000-yard receiver in NFL history, is now on pace for 2,098.

18. Huge game in Houston on Sunday, the Texans roping the Broncos in a game that could determine which of these teams qualifies for a "New Year's Six," er, playoff spot.

19. Denver, which entered Sunday converting nearly 39% of its third downs, went 0-for-11... though it must be noted Denver was perfect on three fourth-down attempts.

20. Of more importance, a Broncos defense that had 15 takeaways over its previous four games didn't get one from Houston.

21. However the Texans suffered a major blow, rookie WR Tank Dell going down with a season-ending ankle/fibula injury.

22. Congratulations to Mike Evans. On Sunday, the Tampa Bay Buccaneers Pro Bowler became the first player in NFL history to start a career with 10 consecutive 1,000-yard receiving seasons.

22a. Evans' seven grabs for 162 yards and a score were pretty much the difference in the Bucs' 21-18 win over the Carolina Panthers, who remain stuck on one win even after the ouster of coach Frank Reich.

23. Congratulations to James Conner. The Arizona Cardinals may not have much left to play for in 2023, but he was scintillating — 105 yards, 2 TDs rushing



GREEN BAY PACKERS defensive back Carrington Valentine avoids a penalty flag as he throws to Kansas City Chiefs receiver Marquez Valdes-Scantling late in the fourth quarter of the Packers' 27-19 upset victory over the visiting Chiefs at Lambeau Field. (Mark Hoffman/USA Today Sports)

Sunday — in his return to Pittsburgh, where he overcame cancer while playing for the Pitt Panthers and later starred for the Steelers, who drafted him in 2017.

24. New Orleans Saints QB Derek Carr is dealing with shoulder, back and concussion issues and has now failed to finish three games this season — his new team falling a full game behind the first-place Atlanta Falcons in the NFC South standings after Sunday's loss to the Detroit Lions.

25. The NFC North-leading Lions' 9-3 record represents their best start since 1962.

26. Saints RB Alvin Kamara scored his 52nd and 53rd career rushing TDs on Sunday, breaking Mark Ingram's franchise record.

27. Looks like the Jets players are doing everything they can to ensure QB Aaron Rodgers doesn't rush back from his Achilles injury... and even the team didn't bother to re-sign Joe Flacco.

28. Speaking of Flacco, he passed for 254 yards and two TDs for the Cleveland Browns, who lost Sunday to the resurgent Los Angeles Rams. Still, think the Jets could have used that kind of production from the Super Bowl 47 MVP?

29. Three days after the Cowboys and Seahawks combined for zero punts — just the fifth time that had happened in NFL regular-season history — the Los Angeles Chargers and New England Patriots teamed up for 15 in the Bolts' 6-0, uh, victory.

30. The Patriots have suffered multiple home shutouts in a season for the first time in their almost 64-year existence.

31. Game of the day? Not 49ers-Eagles, y'all. We're talking about the one which the nation just couldn't wait to see: Colts-Titans. Indianapolis beat Tennessee 31-28 in overtime on WR Michael Pittman Jr.'s 4-yard TD catch from QB Gardner Minshew II two plays after Alec Pierce's 55-yard reception.

31a. Prior to that? Titans K Nick Folk missed his first PAT of the season in a game that ended 25-25 in regulation.

32. Wanted to end this week with a tip of the cap to the NFL — and most definitely to its players — for the ever-growing expansion of the "My Cause My Cleats" program, which allows for unique footwear that spotlights and raises money for so many worthy causes. Wouldn't mind seeing the league relax its stringent uniform rules beyond this weekend given the good that can come of it. (USA Today/TNS)

NFL Week 13 results (home team in CAPS): Thursday: DALLAS 41, Seattle 35. **Sunday:** Detroit 33, NEW ORLEANS 28; Indianapolis 31, TENNESSEE 28 (OT); HOUSTON 22, Denver 17; LA Chargers 6, NEW ENGLAND 0; Atlanta 13, NY JETS 8; Arizona 24, PITTSBURGH 10; Miami 45, WASHINGTON 15; TAMPA BAY 21, Carolina 18; LA RAMS 36, Cleveland 19; San Francisco 42, PHILADELPHIA 19; GREEN BAY 27, Kansas City 19. **Monday:** Cincinnati at JACKSONVILLE (late). **Byes:** Baltimore, Buffalo, Chicago, Las Vegas, Minnesota, NY Giants.

COMMENT & FEATURES

THE JERUSALEM POST • TUESDAY, DECEMBER 5, 2023

THE JERUSALEM POST

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No more Mr. Nice Guy

Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan has made it clear, once and for all, that despite the talks, the friendly back-and-forth, and the warming relationship that appeared to be developing until a short while ago, Israel and Turkey are not going to be allies anytime soon – at least not on his watch.

On Monday, the Turkish leader said that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu will be tried as a war criminal over Israel's ongoing offensive in the Gaza Strip, referring to the Israeli leader as the "butcher of Gaza."

This narrative has been consistently maintained by the Turkish president since the war first broke out, even as over 1,200 Israelis were massacred at the hands of Hamas terrorists who broke into towns and private homes, setting fire to houses and raping partygoers.

Shortly after the war broke out, Turkey condemned the civilian deaths that resulted from Hamas's October 7 massacre but also urged Israel to react in a restrained way.

A week into the war, Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan held a call with Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh to discuss a potential release of civilian prisoners. That was the most amicable behavior seen in Turkey, and there has been nothing like it since.

Much to the contrary: Turkey has consistently maintained its condemnation of Israel's defensive military campaign in Hamas-ruled Gaza, while claiming that Hamas is not, in fact, a terrorist organization.

"Hamas... is a liberation group, mujahideen waging a battle to protect its lands and people," Erdogan said two weeks after the war broke out.

Several days later, he claimed Israel was committing "war crimes."

"We will tell the whole world that Israel is a war criminal. We are making preparations for this. We will declare Israel a war criminal," he said.

As diplomats were recalled from Turkey and Israel alike, it became clear that the facade Erdogan once maintained of a warming relationship between Israel and Turkey was just that: a facade.

Israel is a "terror state," he maintained two weeks ago, calling its military effort in Gaza "the most treacherous attacks in human history."

His attacks weren't targeted only at Israel: He lashed out at any country that expressed any form of support for the Jewish state, including "the West" as a whole.

"Those who feel indebted to Israel cannot speak freely. We did not go through the Holocaust process; we don't have such a situation, because our respect for humanity is different," Erdogan said last month during a joint news conference with German Chancellor Olaf Scholz.

Last week, Erdogan told United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres that Israel "continues to shamelessly trample on international law, the laws of war, and international humanitarian law" and must therefore "be held accountable for the crimes it committed in front of international law."

Finally, on Monday, he told the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in Istanbul that "Israel is not only a murderer but also a thief" and that Netanyahu must be tried as a war criminal because he is the "butcher of Gaza."

There is no going back from these statements. While Israel had been seeing some semblance of a growing relationship with Turkey after a long bout of strained ties brought on by the 2008 crisis in their relations, and while Israel had been willing to put Erdogan's past outlandish comments behind it in order to facilitate a warming of ties, his recent ones signal a rupture that will not be mended anytime soon.

It is one thing to criticize the Israeli government's actions during this war, or even in the lead-up to the war. It is quite another thing entirely to suggest that the State of Israel and its leader are war criminals as they fight a defensive war forced on them by a terrorist group that just committed the greatest massacre of Jews since the Holocaust.

There is plenty of room for legitimate criticism in international relations, but this is not criticism: it is the desperate cry of a leader who thinks his actions will not carry any consequences.

It is time for Israel and the international community to show him that this is not the case.

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If I had Bibi's ear

For the country's good, we need a national transition plan

• By MARK SIMON

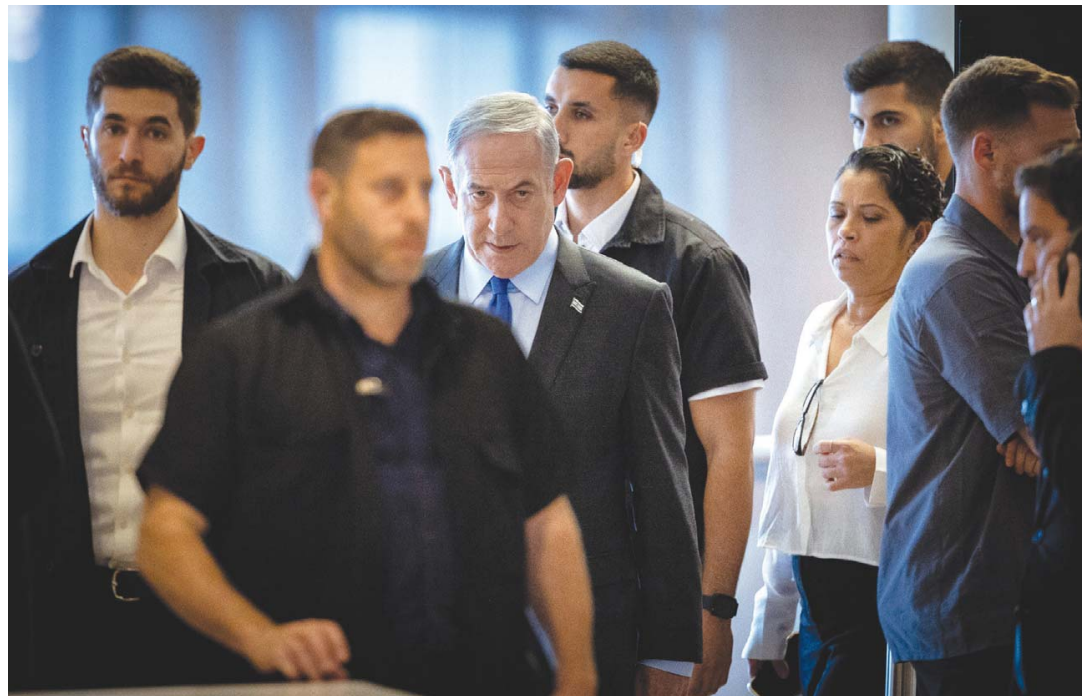
It has been over two months of horror and pain for all of us in Israel. Most people I speak with are just trying to keep their heads above the proverbial waters. The same holds true for me in my day job as CEO of a consulting firm that advises companies as well as family businesses, family offices, and foundations.

Of all the professional functions we perform, one of the most delicate is transition planning, whose purpose is to implement a smooth succession of power and continuity of wealth between generations of family members within a company or organization. Given the complexity of this task, one of the keys to success is initiating a strategy as early on as possible. The overarching goal is to control the process and avoid being controlled by events that are all too often forced upon us. Experience teaches us that dealing with issues under pressure and in haste leads to impulsive and sub-optimal decision-making.

After giving much thought to our current political predicament in Israel and speaking with several colleagues about the situation, my conclusion is that we, as a country, need a national transition plan. My working title for this effort is "For the Good of Our Country."

Prior to the horrific atrocities of October 7, Israeli society was tearing itself apart. Each side proclaimed the virtue of its positions with righteous indignation, screaming slogans and hurling the most egregious accusations at their ideological opponents. There was plenty of vitriol to go around and little, if any, effective communication. It is a sad and pathetic reality that it took Hamas to unify us.

A consensus of Israelis believes presently that Israel must defeat Hamas and set about healing the Jewish state. There will be time, down the road, for the inevitable official inquiries – when we will need to figure out what went wrong and who should be held accountable – but that's for later. Now, we need to rescue all the hostages, destroy Hamas,



PRIME MINISTER Benjamin Netanyahu heads to the Likud Knesset faction meeting on Sunday. (Yonatan Sindel/Flash90)

and work on our national recovery.

Having lived in Israel since 1988, I've participated in my fair share of Israeli elections. I voted for the Likud in several of those ballots but could not, in good conscience, do so today. While I know that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is not perfect, I actually think that he has done many great things for Israel. That said, I feel – and I don't think I'm alone here – that it is time for him to step aside and let others take the reins of a new government. For the good of our country.

If I had Bibi's ear, if I were his trusted adviser, I would tell him the following:

"Bibi, you have done so much for our country. You've led it for longer than anyone else. Now, it is time for a change. We need a national transition plan for the smooth and effective succession of power. You're tremendously talented, Bibi, but you're not the only person capable of leading our country. It is time to pass on the mantle

of leadership to another. "This is for the good of the country. It's for the good for your party, the Likud. And it will be good for you too.

"My friendly advice is that in the coming days, you should announce emphatically that, after Hamas is destroyed, there will be new elections in which you will not be a candidate. Announce that you are retiring from politics, effective at the conclusion of the elections.

"This plan will help you to achieve several important goals. First of all, it will give you several months to craft an orderly transition of power and name a successor. During this time, you will have ample opportunity to structure and position the Likud as best as possible for the upcoming elections and beyond. Under the banner of "For the Good of Our Country," you will have a good chance at repatriating many of the talented ranks who have abandoned the Likud in recent years.

"Once you announce your coming departure from pol-

itics, many of the calls for your ouster will be finally and firmly silenced. You will effectively take the air out of your enemies' sails and get to leave office on your own terms, 'for the good of our country.' This would be a far more palatable exit than running in the next election and getting crushed at the polls, something that I think would probably happen.

"I am quite confident that after you announce your retirement from public office, 'for the good of our country,' we can also structure an arrangement to relieve your ongoing legal troubles. Your legacy will be spared the damage of a conviction and its consequences.

"If you take my friendly advice, you can leave office on your terms and be remembered as magnanimous. You will be remembered as the longest-running prime minister who put the country's needs over his own, knowing that Israel needs to heal and remain unified for as long as possible.

"Bibi, you are a very gifted politician and a loyal patri-

ot. You've served and led our country for a very long time. It is time to pass the leadership torch to a successor of your choosing, for the good of our country."

Our country has suffered greatly in the past two months. The seeds of our rehabilitation lie in the heartwarming unity that has taken root across every segment of our society. I pray that it continues. A return to the incessant, vile protests – both for and against judicial reform – that were ripping apart the fabric of our nation is the last thing that Israel needs. The ball is firmly in Netanyahu's court to decide whether Israel goes forward or, frightfully, moves backward into chaos.

The writer is CEO and founder of The Cedar Group (www.thecedargroup.org), a boutique management consulting firm specializing in transition planning, conflict management, negotiation, and mediation services for companies, organizations, and private individuals; both in Israel and internationally.

The persistence of the Quds Force

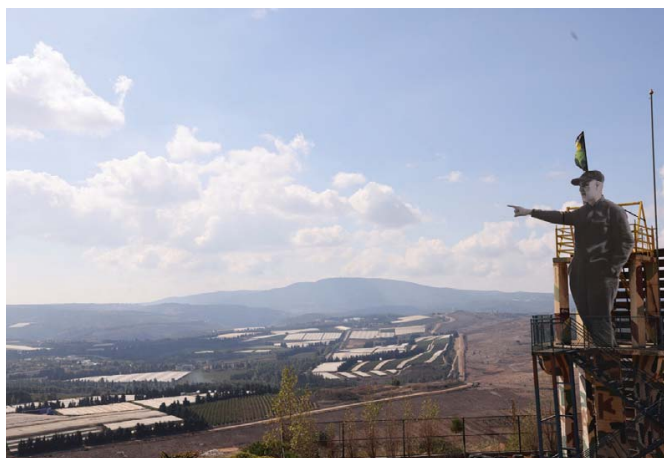
• By ERFAN FARD

The Quds Force, an elite paramilitary arm of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), is a clandestine network with a history deeply rooted in spreading theocratic ideology and engaging in malign activities across the Middle East and beyond. Under the presidency of Ebrahim Raisi, concerns about the Quds Force's role and its potential threat to global security have escalated as it continues to operate covertly and support proxy groups, amplifying instability in various regions.

The Quds Force has gained infamy for its involvement in supporting armed groups and militias in conflict-ridden countries such as Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Afghanistan, and Yemen. Utilizing these groups and local recruits, it pursues an expansionist agenda aimed at advancing Shi'ism and Khomeinism. The force is seen as an instrument of the autocratic Iranian regime, dedicated to exporting its radical ideology and fomenting chaos.

The US Department of the Treasury designated the Quds Force as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) in 2007, marking a significant recognition of its threat on the global stage. Canada and Israel followed suit, underscoring the dangerous nature of this paramilitary entity. The Quds Force's operations have historically been shrouded in secrecy, making it difficult to ascertain its true strength and influence.

Over the years, the Quds Force has engaged in activities ranging from supporting terrorist organizations to promoting sectarianism and terrorism in the Middle East, Africa, and even the Latin American hemisphere. Its actions align with the strategy of Ayatollah Ali



A CUTOUT of late Iranian Quds Force Major-General Qasem Soleimani stands in a tourist park named Iran Garden at Maroun al-Ras village near the Lebanon-Israel border. (Thaier al-Sudani/Reuters)

Khamenei, the Supreme Leader of Iran, aiming to spread extremism, antagonism, and an aggressive anti-Western agenda. This agenda has led to the support of extremist groups and fueled sectarian violence across multiple regions.

One pivotal event that heightened global concerns was the failed assassination attempt on the Saudi ambassador to the United States in 2011, orchestrated by the Quds Force. The incident highlighted the organization's audacity and intent to target high-profile individuals on foreign soil. Additionally, Quds Force campaigns against American and Israeli interests underscore the gravity of the threat.

The Quds Force underwent a transition in leadership after the assassina-

tion of its commander, Qasem Soleimani, in January 2020. His successor, Esmail Qaani, and deputy commander Mohammad Reza Fallahzadeh have continued the organization's anti-American and anti-Israel agenda. Their close association with Soleimani during his tenure has influenced their ideology and operational tactics, furthering the dangerous trajectory of the Quds Force's activities.

With Raisi's ascent to power, the Quds Force remains focused on undermining the US and Israel, contributing to regional crises, and endorsing antisemitism and terrorism. The Quds Force's activities are in line with its long-term objectives of spreading chaos and destabilizing the Middle East. The interna-

tional community must not underestimate the potential for further escalation of terrorism under Raisi's administration.

The recent appointment of Fallahzadeh as deputy commander of the Quds Force is noteworthy. It symbolizes a continuity of leadership and a commitment to the organization's core objectives. Fallahzadeh, known for his radical Shia ideology and close ties to Soleimani, represents a concerning shift towards a more aggressive approach. This new leadership tandem of Qaani and Fallahzadeh is reminiscent of the Mughniyeh-Soleimani alliance, focusing on militant proxy models and cultivating ties with various terrorist groups.

Despite this threatening outlook, it is essential to recognize that the Quds Force operates on a global scale yet lacks the capability for direct confrontation with major world powers such as the US and Israel. The Iranian populace views the bombastic speeches of IRGC and Quds Force commanders with skepticism, aware of their exaggerated claims.

In conclusion, Raisi's presidency is cause for heightened concern regarding the Quds Force's relentless pursuit of its nefarious objectives. Its persistence in supporting terrorism, endorsing extremism, and seeking to destabilize regions remains a significant global threat. The international community must unite to counter this menace by employing diplomatic, intelligence, and targeted sanctions approaches to neutralize the Quds Force and ensure the safety and stability of the affected regions.

The writer is a counterterrorism analyst and Middle East studies researcher based in Washington. A Jewish Kurd from Iran, he is the author of The Gruesome Mullah. See more at www.erfanfard.com.

The ridiculous US plan for 'the day after'



ABOVE THE FOLD
• By MICAH HALPERN

'A revitalized Palestinian Authority" – that is what US Secretary of State Antony Blinken is calling it. His use of language is ethereal. At best, it means absolutely nothing. At worst, it means absolutely nothing.

And yet, this new mantra has become "the plan," as visualized by the United States of America under the leadership of President Joseph Biden, for "the day after" in Gaza and the West Bank.

A revitalized PA, the day after the war between Israel and Hamas is over, would put the PA in charge. So, I ask, where's the change, the improvement, the vision?

Blinken did mention new and free elections and a free and independent press within the Palestinian Authority. In reality, it means putting current PA leadership right back in charge.

While the US, accompanied by the international community, is quick to snap its fingers and come up with proposals with catchy names for the "situation" in Israel, the application and practical translation into reality of those proposals are as tangible as ether.

Don't just trust me; learn from recent history.

In 1994, immediately on the heels of the much-heralded 1993 Oslo Accords, the Gaza-Jericho Agreement, also known as the 1994 Cairo Agreement, was signed. Its purpose was to establish the PA, which would govern Jer-

icho and other Palestinian enclaves in the West Bank and parts of Gaza.

The plan was to create a "new Palestinian" governing body and to sideline the old leadership, meaning Yasser Arafat. Instead, in Tunis, through Yasser Arafat's cunning and political foresight, the Palestinian Central Council made the PA accountable to the Palestinian Executive Committee, aka Yasser Arafat. Simply put, Arafat became the leader of the new PA.

So much for a "new Palestinian governing body."

Back to 2023: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has made it very clear that Abbas and the PA cannot be part of the rebuilding of Gaza. His statements are very explicit and understandable. As the prime minister has maintained over and over again, "There isn't going to be in Gaza a civilian authority that teaches its children to hate Israel and to destroy Israel..."

"We can't have [in Gaza] an authority that pays families of terrorists...and it can't be an authority that the person who is heading it hasn't condemned the October 7 massacre. There needs to be something different." Clearly, Netanyahu is speaking about Mahmoud Abbas and the PA.

So, while it is not quite clear what Blinken's "revitalized PA" would be, we are beginning to see what it will not be. From Israel's point of

view, it will not be the Palestinian Authority.

As for free elections, they are nothing more than another Western pipe dream. The West believes, once again, that they can just snap their fingers and voilà. The West, led by the United States, is so self-absorbed and cocky that they cannot understand that Democracy (with a capital D) is not just about elections. And even if it were, at this stage, it is impossible to safely actualize elections.

Again, let history lead the way.

ON WEDNESDAY, January 25, 2006, Palestinian Legislative Elections, free elections, were held in the Palestinian Authority including Gaza. Out of the 132 seats in the Palestinian legislature, Hamas won 74, and Fatah (the PLO) won 45 – an overwhelming majority.

Hamas politically massacred the PLO.

Certainly, elections are important, but understanding democracy and freedom are essential to building blocks leading to elections. Given the situation then and now, there is no doubt that Palestinians would overwhelmingly cast their ballot for Hamas.

One of the most significant reasons Israel is embroiled in its current war with Hamas today is the 2006 free popular election.

Here was the mistake: non-democratic parties must not be permitted to run for office in a fledgling democratic society. And the reason is simple: if they win, they will suspend democracy.



US SECRETARY of State Antony Blinken speaks at a news conference in Tel Aviv on Thursday. (Saul Loeb/Reuters)

That is exactly what Adolf Hitler did after he was democratically elected in Germany. In early 1933, almost immediately after assuming the position of German chancellor, Hitler quickly passed the Enabling Act. Hitler ended democracy only a few years after Germany became a democracy.

Many democracies prevent anti-democratic parties from standing for elections. Israel does. Racist parties are banned from running in elections. For obvious reasons, Germany has very

strict laws about this as well. In 2006, Hamas should have never been permitted to run. Neither should the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), which won three seats. Democracy must defend itself, especially in fledgling new environments.

Dictators reject elections. Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas was elected in January 2006 for the first and last time. It has been almost 18 years, and Abbas has repeatedly delayed elections. He even removed a

duly elected Hamas prime minister and installed his own; he could not permit Hamas to control the Palestinian parliament. While Hamas should never have been able to run in the first place, Abbas ended democracy.

Should "a revitalized PA" come to pass, none of the old guards can be allowed to be up for election. They represent – they embody, they symbolize – the anti-democratic PA regime.

A free election will succeed only after people are

taught about equal protection under the law, minority rights, and an independent judiciary, to name a few. Only when those running for office believe in the concept of free elections can it work. Only after they are educated, strong, and willing to stand for true democracy can it happen.

At this point, the pool of PA candidates is woefully small.

The writer is a social and political commentator. Watch his TV show Thinking Out Loud on JBS.

Taking hostages is a war crime

• By NEVILLE TELLER

The events of October 7 have proved too flagrant to be ignored by the body that is supposed to be the world's watchdog on protecting and advancing human rights.

The UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) was established in 2006 with one overriding purpose – to rectify the egregious faults of its predecessor body, the UN Commission on Human Rights (UNCHR). During the 60 years of its existence, the Commission accrued a raft of objectionable practices, high among them an obvious anti-Israel bias.

UNHRC is UNHCR with just one letter transposed, and it soon became obvious that all the UN had done was substitute Tweedledee for Tweedledum. It did not take long before the same anti-Israel stance began to emerge from the new Council. Since its founding, it has passed more than 90 resolutions condemning Israel – more than against Iran, Syria, North Korea, China, Russia, Cuba, and Venezuela combined. The Council would have the world believe that Israel is more guilty of human rights abuses than all the blatant abusers of human rights put together.

Its determined anti-Israel position was actually codified in a decision in 2006 to include as a permanent feature of its sessions a review of alleged human rights abuses by Israel. Even Human Rights Watch, no friend of Israel, urged the Council to look as well at international human rights and humanitarian law violations committed by Palestinian armed groups. This proposal was not followed through.

Now the Council's commission of inquiry has undertaken an investigation on "possible international crimes and violations of international human rights law in Israel and the Palestinian territories since October 7, 2023." The Commission's findings will be delivered to the Human Rights Council in June 2024.

Given the longstanding anti-Israel bias of the chairperson, Navi Pillay, and several commission members, what sort of picture it will eventually present is a matter for speculation. But it is perhaps a hopeful sign that on October 10, the commission included the following in a media release: "The taking of hostages is a violation of international law and constitutes an international crime."

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has a unique role in the system of international humanitarian law. It works on battlefields, reports on the problems encountered, and makes practical



RELATIVES OF hostages hold a news conference in Tel Aviv last week. (Avshalom Sassoni/Flash90)

proposals for improving international humanitarian law. Its proposals have led to the revision and extension of international humanitarian law, notably in 1906, 1929, 1949, and 1977. This special role of the ICRC is now formally recognized by the states party to the Geneva Conventions – that is, practically the whole world.

According to the ICRC, the prohibition on hostage-taking is now "firmly entrenched in customary international law and is considered a war crime."

Among the elements of the offense in international armed conflict are:

1. The perpetrator seized, detained, or otherwise held hostage one or more persons.
2. The perpetrator threatened to kill, injure, or continue to detain such person or persons.
3. The perpetrator intended to compel a state...to act or refrain from acting as an explicit or implicit condition for the safety or the release of such person or persons.

ON OCTOBER 11 the Lieber Institute published a lengthy, detailed, and explicit survey of the provisions in international law regarding the taking of hostages. The Lieber Institute is situated at West Point and is part of the US Military Academy. Its purpose is to contribute to the global dialogue on the complex issues surrounding the law of war and to maintain the primacy of law in today's armed conflicts. It seeks to bridge the divide between legal scholarship and battlefield experience.

The Lieber document explains that the provisions of the law of armed conflict depend on how a conflict is classified. The ongoing conflict between Israel and Hamas is best characterized as non-international in character. Therefore, the applicable treaty law is Common Article 3 of the four 1949 Geneva Conventions, and this unequivocally forbids hostage-taking. The International Court of Justice has determined that "the taking of hostages is prohibited."

The Lieber document goes on to explain that as a war crime, the offense of hostage-taking is subject to universal jurisdiction. That means that any state, even those with no connection to the hostage-taking, is free to prosecute offenders. Many states have accordingly criminalized the offense in their penal codes.

On the matter of hostage-taking alone – the unspeakably brutal onslaught on innocent civilians is an issue in its own right – the Lieber paper adjudges that Hamas has "without the slightest doubt" violated the law of armed conflict. It concludes: "Hostage-taking was a central feature of Hamas's opening salvo in its conflict in Israel...those involved are subject to worldwide prosecution as war criminals under international criminal law."

The basis for this conclusion is the International Convention against the Taking of Hostages, a UN treaty under which states agree to prohibit and punish hostage taking. The creation of an anti-hostage-taking treaty was a project initiated by the Federal Republic of Germany in 1976. The

convention was adopted by the UN General Assembly in December 1979 and came into force in 1983. As of October 2016, 176 states are party to the convention.

Too little public consideration has been given to the likelihood of the Hamas organization eventually being found guilty by the UN and other international bodies of the war crime of hostage-taking and consequently that its leaders would then be liable to be arrested, charged, and imprisoned in virtually any part of the world.

Ismail Haniyeh, Hamas's senior political leader, may believe himself safe in Qatar, but in Qatar he would have to stay. If Yahya Sinwar, the leader of Hamas in Gaza who masterminded the October 7 onslaught, is not captured by the IDF within the Gaza Strip, he would be on the run for the rest of his life. Mohammed Deif, architect of the Hamas tunnel complex, along with Marwan Issa, Khaled Meshal, Mahmoud Zahar, and a host of other Hamas leaders, would have nowhere to hide but in the few states not prepared to fulfill their obligations under the International Convention against the Taking of Hostages and prosecute them. Even so, they would all, no doubt, have in mind the fate of the perpetrators of the Munich Olympics massacres.

All provided that Israel achieves its primary war aim and destroys Hamas.

The writer is the Middle East correspondent for Eurasia Review. His latest book is Trump and the Holy Land: 2016-2020. Follow him at: www.a-middle-east-journal.blogspot.com.

Threats and battle for national identity

• By SRULIK EINHORN

In recent months, Europe has faced a series of challenges stemming from radical shifts in ideology, notably highlighted by the failure of Israeli intelligence to warn of a Hamas attack. The aftermath has seen a surge in extreme Islamist celebrations and terrorist parades across European capitals, awakening a realization that radical Islam is becoming a threat to the liberal continent.

This realization, in turn, has yielded political shifts. The prominence that Geert Wilders gained in Dutch politics – his Party for Freedom won the recent parliamentary elections by a landslide – reflects a global trend favoring so-called "extreme Right" candidates.

Terrorist parades in London, Paris, and Amsterdam that are disrupting the cities' peace have brought to a head the problems originating from the growing influence of radical progressive movements over the past decades. Local communities bear the brunt, experiencing fear and economic strain as businesses close and public spaces lose vibrancy. Responses from European governments vary, showcasing the complexities of dealing with this multifaceted issue.

The media's role deserves a critical evaluation for the apparent disconnect between mainstream and institutional media, on the one hand, and the citizens they serve, on the other. Over the last decades, the media has increasingly delegitimized local culture and national sentiments.

As a strategic consultant, I propose a counterintuitive approach to media engagements: a "what the media says – do the opposite" strategy. Despite biased portrayals, most Europeans remain open-minded and hospitable

but understand that the influence of extreme progressive ideologies threaten to tear down social and cultural fabrics, substituting them with an intolerance that is reminiscent of the Hamas model.

As we navigate through these turbulent times, we need to address the root causes of discontent. To that end, bridging the gap between the intellectual elite and the public becomes paramount. Leaders who genuinely understand citizens' concerns and commit to protecting their unique values, developed and passed on through succeeding generations, are likely to prevail in this era of uncertainty. The war on national identity is a battle for the soul of a nation, shaping the trajectory of countries for years to come.

Confronted with these challenges, leaders who prioritize core values find success. Love for one's country, family warmth, and shared traditions resonate universally, providing a basis for leaders addressing the dangers posed by radical progressive ideologies.

Political candidates are now rightly expected to focus on core values that resonate with the public. Despite being degraded in media studios, these values strike a chord with the public, which recognizes the danger posed by radical progressive movements.

The battle for national identity is not on the battlefield but at the ballot box, where voters increasingly recognize the need to protect their cultural heritage. This call to action transcends political affiliations, uniting people against a common threat. It will end in victory.

The writer, a strategic adviser and a creative director to world leaders, is the founder of www.perception.media.



GEERT WILDERS, leader of the PVV party, gestures as he meets with party members at the Dutch Parliament, in The Hague, after last month's parliamentary elections. (Yves Herman/Reuters)

These catastrophic mistakes

• By HAYIM LEITER

Something has snapped in our national consciousness. The change occurred on November 30, after two Hamas terrorists killed three people and injured 16 in Jerusalem. We've heard similar news again and again. But as routine as it felt, something was different. The false narrative we had all been living with since the war began also died.

Throughout my entire rabbinic career, I've been arguing for a measured response in dealing with the Palestinian problem. In fact, I wrote a piece to that effect two weeks ago. I argued that there must be 10 righteous people in Gaza. And just as Abraham argues with God over Sodom and Gomorrah, collective punishment must be averted, even at great cost to our own soldiers.

In the last few days, I realized I was wrong – but this last terror attack was only part of the wake-up call.

You may be wondering what could have caused such a change. Footage of the atrocities committed on October 7 has been floating around social media for almost two months. What could have come to light in the past few days that is more shocking than that?

The testimony and actions of the released hostages is what has rocked me to my core.

Roni Krivoy is a Russian-Israeli man whose family fled



RONI KRIVOY escaped from his captors but was then captured by Gazan civilians who handed him back to Hamas. (Hostage and Missing Families Forum)

rampant antisemitism in the former USSR only to be kidnapped into Gaza from the music festival. While in captivity, the IDF hit the building in which he was being held. This gave him the opportunity to escape his captors. He was on the run for four days, trying to get to the Israeli border. He

failed but not for lack of trying. He was captured by Gazan civilians and turned back over to Hamas.

Another hostage reported that she was kept locked in the attic of an UNRWA teacher's home, where he was given little food and no medicine. For those unfamiliar with the organization, it is the United

Nations' representative in Gaza; these are the same people who run the schools that indoctrinate Gazan youth in the philosophy that Jews are subhuman and deserve nothing less than death.

These stories have left me with one question: where are the righteous gentiles of Gaza?

Are there no stories of people there aiding the hostages and hiding them from these murderous villains? Even German civilians did this in the Nazi era. What I realized, as the blood of 19 more Jews was drying on the streets of Jerusalem, is that there are none.

We Jews need to realize something fundamental – this war is not about vengeance. This war is not about who did what wrong first. And certainly, it is not about a two-state solution. The other side is not interested in compromise. In the present reality, these people will never stop until we are dead.

This war is about standing up for ourselves. The idea of collateral damage no longer makes sense to me. The people in northern Gaza especially have been given every opportunity to leave and head south. Those who remained are there for a reason. They are part of the problem. The narrative that died this week is that there are good people on the other side who can't voice their dissension because Hamas will kill them. Much to my dismay, that just doesn't seem to be true.

The poison of Jew-hatred has seeped so far into the Gazan psyche that the only thing that can save them is brute force. They must be shown that this path only leads to their demise.

It is well documented that during hostage releases, the terrorists forced the captives to wave goodbye to them. This is a propaganda attempt to portray themselves as humane captors. The only thing more cruel than this was the mob of civilians that gathered nearby to mock and spit at the Israeli women and children as they drove by.

But something amazing happened in one of these videos. The terrorists barked instructions at Rimona Kirsht as she exited one of the vans. The footage shows her, after her more-than-50-day prison sentence, giving a terrorist a death stare. I have no idea where she found the strength to do so. In effect, Kirsht told him that he has no power over her.

In that one moment, Kirsht showed the entire country what needs to be done. We must stand up for ourselves and root out this evil once and for all. We must look the entire world in the eye – the world that has kept us captive to their wants and desires for too long – and say that we will do whatever needs to be done to stop this here and now. The only choice the rest of the world has is to support us or get the hell out of our way.

The writer is a rabbi, a wedding officiant, and a mohel who performs britot (ritual circumcisions) and conversions across the world. Based in Efrat, he is the founder of Magen HaBrit, an organization protecting the practice of brit milah and the children who undergo it.

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A Jew in Hong Kong



• By BEN M. FREEMAN

For the past two weeks, I have had the privilege of being a Jew in Hong Kong.

Hong Kong is where I lived for six years. It's where I began my work on building a modern Jewish Pride movement. It is where I began wearing a kippah, becoming a visible Jew. Watching Jew-hate rise all over the world, and taking part in the fight against it, I always knew that I was lucky to be Jewish in such a place.

There is little cultural context for Jew-hatred here. Despite being a former British colony, the vast majority of its citizens are local Hong Kongers. To them, I am just another foreigner. Sometimes, when living here, a local person would stop me in the street to ask why I was wearing a small hat. They were, of course, referring to my kippah.

Such encounters were always an amusing reminder of the oversized role that Jews play in the Western and Muslim worlds. It made total sense to me, why a person who grew up in Hong Kong would have no idea about the cultural customs of a tiny group of people indigenous to the Levant.

Not everyone was ignorant, of course, but it was refreshing to be able to be an anonymous Jew. It was not all rainbows and butterflies; however, the Jewish schools and the JCC have extraordinary security, which has been increased in recent months. It is also true that Jews here take precautions with regard to their physical safety – and there have been instances of antisemitism – but by and large, Hong Kong is far safer for Jews than other parts of the Diaspora.

My trip back to Hong Kong was planned well before October 7. It was intended to celebrate my partner's 37th birthday and to reacquaint us with the city that we called home for almost a decade, but in the end, it gave me more than just a walk down memory lane. It provided me with a fresh perspective on Jewish life in the Diaspora as a whole.

The week after October 7, I flew to North America to embark on a four-week speaking tour to raise consciousness around Jewish Pride and support for Israel during our time of crisis. I visited cities including New York, Toronto, Tucson, and LA and saw firsthand an anti-Jewishness churning beneath the surface erupt into the open.

I felt vulnerable as a visible Jew wearing two Magen David necklaces and a kippah as I traversed the continent and countless airports. My partner asked me to wear a baseball cap and to conceal my necklaces. It took me about a nanosecond to recognize that, and while I always advocate for people to make decisions about their visible Jewishness based on their physical safety, this was precisely a



'NOT ONCE did I consider my safety as a visible Jew. Not once did I look over my shoulder. I felt comfortable and at ease,' says the writer of his trip to Hong Kong. (Gary Swart)

time when I needed to demonstrably inhabit my personal space as a Jew. I did not want to hide, although I understood that I was putting myself at risk by being an out Jew.

AFTER FOUR weeks in North America, I returned home to London incredibly apprehensive. Since October 7, I – and all other Jews – watched in horror as Jew-hate seemed to engulf London. Though I felt vulnerable being in North America, it was nothing compared to how I felt at the prospect of being a Jew in the UK capital.

During the week before leaving for Hong Kong, I seriously considered my physical safety whenever traveling to a city center that, according to some, had become a no-go area for Jews every weekend. And while I was relieved not to have encountered any danger, I also felt angry that I had to consider my safety in this way. More than just a reflection on my physical safety, I was hyper-aware of the emotional toll I was putting myself through. I wasn't just concerned for my physical safety, I was apprehensive about being verbally accosted – an experience that leaves a deeper scar.

Ultimately, I was physically fine in London, but I still had to consider my safety. I was not able to relax in the city in which I live. All this unfairness came crashing home to me as soon as I found myself back in Hong Kong. Spending two weeks there during this awful time was a gift. Admittedly, I didn't exactly switch off. I wrote this column and spent plenty of time on social media advocating for Jewish pride.

The difference was, I was able to relax in my surroundings. Not once did I consider my safety as a visible Jew. Not once did I look over my shoulder. I felt comfortable and at ease, sensations I had not felt in eight weeks.

This is how life should be for Jews. That is what I was reminded of in Hong Kong. It is simply unacceptable that we have to always think of our safety in other parts of the Diaspora. That we can never truly relax. That we have to guard our children as they learn in school or when they pray in synagogue. It is laudable that the British government has granted three million pounds for Jewish security in Britain. But the fact remains: they shouldn't have to.

Being in Hong Kong was a gift. It allowed me to release tension I had been holding for weeks. But it also gave me a fresh perspective on what our lives can be like as Jews. While it is an absolute necessity for us to protect ourselves, we should never stop being outraged that we have to.

Yes, the context of Hong Kong is vastly different, but it is how we, as Jews, should be able to live. We should be free to walk down the street as visible Jews without looking over our shoulders, and we should never stop expecting the societies in which we live to guarantee this right. Jew-hate is a non-Jewish problem. Ultimately, it's their responsibility to fix it.

The writer is the founder of the modern Jewish Pride movement, an educator, and the author of Jewish Pride: Rebuilding a People. His new book, Reclaiming Our Story: The Pursuit of Jewish Pride, is now available.

The haredi needle isn't moving

Only imposed change would achieve integration

• By SHUKI FRIEDMAN

The hope that the war would make the haredim (ultra-Orthodox) want to further integrate into the broader Israeli society lies in shards on the hard ground of data-based reality. A Jewish People Policy Institute (JPPI) survey conducted by themadad.com and the Askaria polling firm shows that across all critical aspects of haredi integration and responsibility parity in Israel, according to the haredim themselves, the current war will change nothing. Only an externally imposed change that curtails state support for the haredi way of life and requires them to shoulder their share of the security and economic burden would propel their socio-economic integration and save Israel from a third-world future.

A few social media photos and newspaper headlines proclaiming haredi IDF enlistment sparked a sense of hope that in light of the ongoing war and the massive call-up of reserves, the haredim understood that the pre-war status quo could not hold. Some touted a haredi revelation that it was no longer possible to be nearly 20% of Israel's Jewish population and not shoulder their fair share of the security and economic burden. However, a JPPI survey conducted six weeks into the war reveals that a significant majority of the haredim believe that nothing really needs to change.

Even now, as the war approaches the two-month mark and the images of some haredi males in uniform have become iconic, one-third of the haredi public sees them as indicators of a negative development. They fear these images will create rifts within haredi society and raise expectations in the broader Israeli

society that haredim will enlist in the future. Another third sees it as a positive but temporary phenomenon that will not affect haredi willingness to enlist in the longer term. Haredi resistance to any change regarding post-war conscription is sweeping. Only 9% believe that their blanket exemption from IDF conscription should be canceled. By contrast, a huge majority of over 80% believe that whether or not there is an increasing security risk, the haredi conscription exemption should continue untouched.

One small but nevertheless bright spot is the share of haredim (about 20%) who consider alternative national service paths, for example, being part of a uniformed ZAKA emergency response team, to be a legitimate option.

The haredim are struggling to preserve and fortify the walls of the ultra-Orthodox ghetto, and they rely upon state funding to do so. It is, therefore, not particularly surprising that the majority of haredim (55%) believe that the war will leave haredi society unchanged. Only 6% think that the war will substantially impact haredi society; another 32% believe it will move the haredi needle slightly toward deeper integration into Israeli society.

When it comes to budgetary considerations, the Haredim are convinced that what will continue to be. Even in light of the war's hard-hitting economic impact, one-third of the haredi public believes the budgetary allocation for their community should increase.

Forty-seven percent believe that it should be cut at a rate commensurate with other cuts the war will demand. Surprisingly, and perhaps divorced from reality, 44% of Haredim believe that the war will lead to reduced tensions between them and other Israel-

Another 24% believe there will be no tension at all.

THE BITTERSWEET aspect of the war raised in the haredi context was the mobilization of many of them to pitch in and be of service in the war effort. Everyone is familiar with the images of ZAKA volunteers doing their sad but holy work after the massacre in the south and of the efforts of other haredi organizations. But the circle of haredi individuals engaged in assisting the home front is even larger.

In fact, 32% of haredim report being involved in the war effort, and another 53% know someone in their close circle who has been involved. At least, it seems the majority of haredim did not oppose it.

Haredi integration into the army and the economy poses a strategic challenge for Israel. The budget allocated to the haredi sector, which further increases support for their insularity, is detrimental not only to the exigencies of the war but also on the most fundamental level.

If the current government, or its successor, continues this approach after the war, within two decades Israel will have the services and infrastructure of a third-world country and an even more limited capacity to meet the growing security challenges.

Integration of the haredim into the broader Israeli society is not just a political issue; it is an existential one. The data show that the war will effectuate a change from within haredi society. If the majority of Israelis do not unite and demand change, the path we are on will lead us to an unspeakable abyss.

The writer is vice president of the Jewish People Policy Institute (JPPI) and a lecturer in law at the Peres Academic Center.



A JEWISH PEOPLE Policy Institute survey conducted six weeks into the war reveals that a significant majority of haredim believe that nothing needs to change. (Yaakov Cohen/Flash90)

AI might help meet COP28 targets – but at what cost?

• By JACK GRAHAM

DUBAI (Thomson Reuters Foundation) – When ants travel between their nest and a food discovery, the social insects deposit chemical pheromones along the trail to communicate with other ants making the trip.

Before long, the shortest route has the strongest chemical signature, helping other ants learn to use it, said Tshildzi Marwala, an artificial intelligence engineer and rector of United Nations University.

The “ant-based algorithm” and other learning systems, studied by data scientists, are now being used to reduce inefficiencies in manufacturing processes – one way to cut planet-warming emissions.

“Today we have ant-based artificial intelligence algorithms, because [they] are quite efficient,” said Marwala, who is also a UN under-secretary general, in an interview at the COP28 UN climate summit in Dubai.

From making solar panels work better to more accurately predicting weather, machine-learning tools could accelerate action on everything from reducing fossil fuel emissions to preparing for disaster threats.

With the promise – and risks – of AI quickly moving up the political agenda, COP28 will be the first UN climate summit to hold high-level discussions on use of the technology for climate action.

AI in solar power systems?

The meeting, which runs until mid-December, has seen a flurry of new emissions-cutting pledges, with 118 nations on Saturday promising to triple the world’s renewable energy by 2030.

AI could help turn some of them into a reality, Marwala said.

For instance, IT can be embedded within solar energy systems to maximise absorption, by helping solar panels determine the optimum position to catch the sun’s rays, much like sunflowers do.

Machine learning can also help to more accurately predict climate-driven impacts like floods and wildfires, with powerful computers testing likely scenarios at a fine scale.

But tech experts warn that a severe lack of data and AI tools in developing nations can make algorithms less accurate.

Sinead Bovell, a US-based tech commentator and “futurist,” said a lack of adequate data collection in the Global South means weather prediction systems are not necessarily accurate.

“If AI is going to work as a tool to combat climate change, it has to be a global group project,” she said in an interview.

Bovell said high-level talks at the summit showed leaders recognise AI is a “critical

tool” in reaching global climate goals.

“We’re going to need to have some of these technologies implemented to really achieve the objectives that we want in time,” she said.

AI could be a vital support, in particular, in achieving new pledges to triple renewable energy and double energy efficiency by 2030, its backers said.

At The Arctic University of Norway in Tromsø – the most northerly university in the world – materials scientist Matteo Chiesa and many of his PhD students work with companies on challenges deploying electricity in remote Arctic communities.

Power lines nearer the end of a grid connection are more vulnerable to faults, he noted – but data on things like wind power and direction, or how electricity is transported, can be passed through an algorithm to proactively identify weak points.

“That helps, for example, in managing the resources that [you have],” said Chiesa, who also works at the UAE’s Khalifa University.

He uses AI to improve forecasts of energy supply and demand so firms can reduce the price of power at off-peak times and cut demand during peaks.

“The idea is how do you regulate and how do you incentivize to shift... the use of electricity?” Chiesa asked.

Managing demand on grids is also getting more import-

ant with global increases in wind and solar power, which vary with the weather – and as electricity demand grows in response to new technologies such as electric vehicles.

Challenges facing AI use

So far, AI tools and data for climate action are concentrated in only a small number of nations, dominated by the United States and China.

According to data gathered by the Institute for Human-Centered AI at Stanford University, in 2022 private investment in AI hit \$47 billion in the United States – more than the next 14 nations combined, including China which had \$13 billion.

The big amounts of energy AI uses to run is another big worry, as are the large volumes of water needed to cool data centers.

Training GPT-3 – the model used by the firm OpenAI to power OpenAI’s ChatGPT in Microsoft’s US data centers may have directly consumed 700,000 liters of clean freshwater, according to an estimate published by the University of California, Riverside, in April.

Marwala, of UN University, said tackling these issues will require finding better methods of training AI systems, and ensuring the systems run on renewable energy.

“How much energy or carbon does the world have to pay for us to have those models?” he asked.



STUDENTS ATTEND school as Mount Marapi volcano spews volcanic ash, as seen from Nagari Batu Palano in Agam, West Sumatra province, Indonesia yesterday. (Antara Foto/Iggoy el Fitra/via Reuters)

11 killed, 12 missing as Marapi volcano in Indonesia erupts

JAKARTA (Reuters) – Eleven climbers were found dead in Indonesia on Monday and another 12 were missing after the Marapi volcano erupted in West Sumatra, a rescue official said, as search operations resumed following a temporary halt over safety concerns. Video footage showed a huge cloud of volcanic ash spread widely across the sky, and cars and roads covered with ash.

Three survivors were found on Monday along with the bodies of the 11 climbers, out of 75 who were in the area at the time of Sunday’s eruption, said Jodi Haryawan, spokesperson for the search-and-rescue team, adding that they were all local climbers.

“We have continued to search for the 12 missing climbers until this evening. We have not decided when we are going to stop the operation,” Haryawan said in a phone call, adding they would continue evacuating the three survivors and bodies of climbers.

Forty-nine climbers evacuated from the

area earlier on Monday and many were being treated for burns, Haryawan said.

It took around four to six hours to evacuate one dead body from the volcano, Haryawan said, adding: “It’s very difficult.”

The 2,891 meter (9,485 ft) high volcano spewed ash as high as 3 km. into the sky on Sunday.

Marapi is one of the most active volcanoes on Sumatra island and its most deadly eruption was in April 1979, when 60 people were killed. This year’s eruption resulted in ash spewing around 75 meters-1,000 meters from the peak. Authorities raised the alert to the second-highest level and prohibited residents from going within 3 km. of the crater. A small eruption on Monday morning prompted the search to be temporarily suspended for a few hours. The eruption spewed volcanic ash around 800 metres high.

Indonesia sits on the Pacific’s so-called “Ring of Fire” and has 127 active volcanoes, according to the volcanology agency.

Britain to announce measures aimed at bringing down net migration

• By ALISTAIR SMOULT

LONDON (Reuters) – Britain announced changes to its legal migration system yesterday, after a record number of arrivals in 2022 piled pressure on Prime Minister Rishi Sunak to act ahead of an election expected next year.

High levels of legal migration have, for more than a decade, dominated Britain’s political landscape. Sunak had promised to impose greater control after lawmakers in his Conservative Party criticized his record. He is also trying to send those who arrived illegally to live in Rwanda.

Sunak’s spokesperson said he believed net migration needs to be reduced “significantly.”

That could lead to new disputes with business owners who have struggled to hire workers in recent years, given Britain’s persistently tight labor market, and the end of

free movement from the European Union following Britain’s departure from the bloc.

Interior Minister James Cleverly gave a statement to parliament on Monday detailing more measures to reduce legal migration, and to “stop abuse of the system,” the spokesperson said.

Annual net migration to the UK hit a record of 745,000 last year, and has stayed at high levels since, data showed last month.

“We think the numbers are too high, they do need to reduce significantly and in the short term,” Sunak’s spokesperson said.

“The evidence we have is that some of the people coming across, particularly dependents, aren’t actively contributing to the workforce in any substantive way.”

These comments are likely meant to alarm business owners who have had to

adapt to Brexit.

In October, the government’s independent migration advisor recommended abolishing one of the main routes for businesses to hire migrant workers in sectors where there are severe staff shortages.

Beyond changes to the so-called Shortage Occupation List, local media also reported the government would raise the minimum salary threshold for foreign skilled workers from its current level of 26,200 pounds.

Britain’s severe shortage of candidates for filling vacancies remains a problem for many employers, although there are signs that this has started to ease in the face of higher interest rates.

The Bank of England reported last month that businesses were finding it a bit easier to hire, yet persistent skill-based talent shortages remain in some sectors.

Two dead in India, roads submerged as Cyclone Michaung nears

• By PRAVEEN PARAMASIVAM and JATINDRA DASH

CHENNAI (Reuters) – At least two people died and the runway of one of India’s busiest airports lay submerged due to torrential rain as two southern states braced on Monday for a severe cyclone likely to hit in the next 24 hours.

Cyclone Michaung was expected to make landfall on the coast of the southern Indian state of Andhra Pradesh on Tuesday morning, the country’s weather office said, with sustained winds of 90-100 kph (56-62 mph), gusting to 110 kph.

Two people were killed when a wall collapsed because of heavy rain in the Chengalpattu district of neighboring Tamil Nadu state, said joint director of the state disaster management department, C. Muthukumar.

In Tamil Nadu capital Chennai, the state’s largest city and a major electronics and manufacturing hub, cars were swept away as floodwater flowed



PEOPLE ARE taken to safety in a boat past partially submerged vehicles in a residential area following heavy rains ahead of Cyclone Michaung in Chennai yesterday. (Reuters)

through the streets, while its airport, one of the busiest in India, shut down operations for the day, citing severe weather.

Media showed pictures of grounded planes with their wheels submerged in water as the rain pelted down.

Taiwan’s Foxconn2317.TW and Pegatron4938.TW halted AppleAAPLO iPhone production at their facilities near

Chennai due to heavy rains, sources familiar with the matter reported.

Several areas of the city were submerged in knee-deep water and there have been power outages since Monday morning, a Reuters witness said, evoking memories of December 2015 when around 290 people died after catastrophic floods.

Authorities in both states were on high alert, evacuat-

ing thousands of people living in coastal areas, officials in both states said, with warnings issued to fishermen not to venture out to sea.

Schools, colleges, offices, and banks were closed on Monday and Tuesday in at least four districts of Tamil Nadu, including Chennai, because of weather conditions, a government notice said.

Parts of Andhra Pradesh were likely to get more than 200 mm. of rain over the next 24 hours, India’s weather office said.

In Andhra Pradesh, authorities had evacuated nearly 7,000 people from eight coastal districts and were preparing to evacuate a total of 28,000, depending on the cyclone’s path and severity, a senior official in the state’s disaster management department said.

At least 800 people have been evacuated so far from Bapatla, the coastal town in Andhra Pradesh where the cyclone is expected to make landfall on Tuesday, said P Ranjit Basha, district collector of Bapatla.

COP28 crowds: A dangerous distraction or sign of success?

• By VALERIE VOLCOVICI

DUBAI (Reuters) – Flashy country pavilions, corporate-sponsored cocktail parties, and a smorgasbord of side events have turned the annual UN climate summit into what some say is a trade show or circus.

In this year’s gleaming host city of Dubai, billboards advertised the benefits of wind energy, climate ambition, and ExxonMobil’s carbon capture projects.

With a record 84,000 registered attendees, this year’s Conference of the Parties, or COP28, is a far cry from its first in Berlin during 1995, which was a low-key affair with fewer than 4,000 delegates, all focused on multilateral climate change cooperation.

Some see this as a sign of success, while others regard this as a dangerous distraction from combating climate change, as over nearly three decades, global oil demands, carbon emissions, and temperatures have marched

steadily upward.

“It’s a lobby fest where politicians can schmooze with politicians, all under the guise of tackling climate change,” Pascoe Sabido, a researcher at the Corporate Europe Observatory, which scrutinizes corporate influence on policy-making, said.

The UN and COP backers say the planet would be much worse off without them.

For Alden Meyer, a senior associate at think tank E3G, who has attended every COP, the carnival-like atmosphere is a positive sign of increasing global engagement in the climate crisis, even if it means long queues for food and coffee.

“It’s a three-ring circus, and it is a good thing. It means the issue has reached critical mass,” Meyer said.

Lisa Jacobson, president of the 65-member Business Council for Sustainable Energy, which represents the energy efficiency, natural gas, and renewable energy industries, agrees.



DELEGATES WALK around Expo City during the UN’s Climate Change Conference in Dubai this week. (Thaier Al-Sudani/Reuters)

Jacobson recalled that in 2000 in The Hague, the turnout was so low that everyone fit into one auditorium. Having more than 80,000 people attend is something she only dreamed of.

“It’s all we wished for,” she said.

Pledges

Countries have adopted a strategy of announcing volun-

tary pledges and initiatives at the start of the COPs. These are meant to set a positive tone as delegations grind through two weeks of tough negotiations.

In Dubai, this process went into overdrive, with a succession of non-binding agreements, from promises to triple global renewable energy and nuclear power capacity, to speeding the shift away from coal and helping farmers

improve soil quality.

Others proved more contentious, with oil and gas companies promising to decarbonize their operations, rather than reducing production of the fossil fuels responsible for global warming.

In the first five days of COP28, dozens of voluntary partnerships were launched or expanded, and at least 37 new financial pledges made, the Global Strategic Communications Council, which is tracking the promises, said.

Some worry pledges could distract from the real business.

“We’re always and – increasingly – cautious about the proliferation of additional declarations and pledges promoted at the COP,” said Daniel Lund, special adviser on climate to the island nation of Fiji.

“Fiji has joined calls in the past that were meant to be long-standing initiatives, but were quickly forgotten.”

Indonesian President Joko Widodo at a G77-China summit on the sidelines of COP28

said that these pledges looked promising, but diverted attention from what developed countries need to do now to combat climate change.

“COP28 must be an event to accelerate implementation, not a show of ambition,” he said.

Jake Schmidt, director of international programs at the Natural Resources Defense Council, said the pledges required accountability to prevent an epidemic of “file and forget.”

“While they create momentum for the talks at hand, it’s not clear there are a lot of mechanisms to hold people to account,” he added.

Big oil

While oil companies have always had a COP presence, UN documents show they have largely operated behind the scenes.

But in Dubai, the COP28 president’s day job is running the UAE state oil firm, while heavy hitters such as ExxonMobil’s CEO, Darren Woods,

have been in the front row of high-level events.

Drillers also briefly took the spotlight with an UAE-led pledge among 50 oil and gas companies, including Exxon, to cut CO2 emissions from their operations.

“The promises made clearly fall short of what is required,” UN Secretary General António Guterres told business leaders.

The UAE, an OPEC member, has argued that fighting climate change does not have to mean eliminating fossil fuels because technologies can be deployed to keep emissions from the atmosphere – a position that has drawn widespread criticism.

For former US vice president Al Gore, the whole COP process needs a rethink.

“When you have a petrol state in charge of the process, then we have this ridiculous situation where the main polluters have to give their permission for the world to make common sense decisions to save humanity’s future,” he said.

Israel's dangerous predicament in the North

• By ANTONY SGUAZZIN

A winding road in the North, lined with vineyards, leads to Kibbutz Menara atop the Ramim Ridge in the Naftali Mountains, where pomegranate and avocado trees grow.

It should be an idyllic scene.

Instead, gaping holes have been blown through the blackened walls of the community's double-story houses. A roof has collapsed and a twisted lump of melted metal denotes what was once a car.

For the last few weeks, Hezbollah, has been firing anti-tank missiles into the kibbutz from the Lebanese village of Meiss El Jabal in the valley a few hundred yards below. Other villages in the region have also come under fire, and the IDF has responded with strikes of its own.

While the world's attention focuses on the fighting resuming between Israel and Hamas militants in the Gaza Strip down South, this largely abandoned cooperative highlights an upcoming problem for the embattled Middle Eastern state: how to get the tens of thousands of people who have fled the region to return when an existential threat still lingers right across the border.

"Anyone who moves here will get injured. People have no actual security, or a sense of it, in order to return," YOSHIAU, a bearded 27-year-old mechanical engineering student, who's also a tank captain in the IDF, and whose full name must remain anonymous in accordance with this, said in an interview. "In order to allow the citizens to come back, we have to have a clear indication from our enemies in Lebanon, Hezbollah, that they have no intention of attacking people."

The issue has bedeviled Israel since



A SOLDIER stands next to the burned out wreck of a vehicle that was destroyed by Hezbollah's strike on Kibbutz Manara last week. (Jalaa Marey/AFP/Getty Images/TNS)

it fought Hezbollah in the Second Lebanon War in 2006. Yet, the sense of precarity that farmers and other inhabitants of Israeli areas lining the Lebanese border live with has reached unprecedented levels since Hamas terrorists poured out of Gaza into Israel on October 7, killing about 1,200 people and abducting another 240.

The US considers Hamas and Hezbollah to be terrorist organizations. Hezbollah is bigger and better-armed than Hamas. Both are backed by Iran and share the aim of eradicating the Jewish state.

United Nations Security Council Resolution 1701, adopted after the war in 2006 concluded, requires the

establishment of a demilitarized zone between the Israeli border and the Litani River, about 29 kilometers to the North. This has been widely flouted, and so far, the international community has done little to enforce it, Eyal Hulata, a former national security adviser in the Israeli government, said in a press briefing last Thursday.

"Hezbollah has planned to do something very similar in the North for years" to the incursion carried out by Hamas, said YOSHIAU, who left his wife and 18-month-old son at his home near the border with Gaza a few weeks ago to help guard the northern frontier. There was "an informal ceasefire" with Hezbollah

during the temporary truce in the South, he said.

Hezbollah began firing volleys of mortars, rockets, and anti-tank missiles at Israel on October 7, the heaviest barrage it has staged since 2006. The military was placed on high alert and fully deployed along the 48-mile-long border.

For now, many of the 250 people who usually live in Kibbutz Menara have decamped to the town of Tiberies, an hour's drive south on the western shores of the Sea of Galilee, where the government is paying for their accommodation.

While the stronger military presence may deter Hezbollah from crossing the border or stepping up

its attacks, it's unlikely to convince Israelis who live in the region to come home. Nor will it diminish the threat of Hezbollah's more advanced weaponry, which includes missiles that could strike as far afield as Eilat, on Israel's southeastern tip.

The conundrum in the North has been put on the back burner while the military and the government mainly focus on the war in the South, but the problem isn't going away and is of major concern to some of Israel's most prominent business leaders.

"People will not continue to be on the border with Hezbollah breathing over them and shooting at the fence or the houses with anti-tank missiles," said Erel Margalit, founder

and chief executive officer of Jerusalem Capital Partners, one of Israel's biggest venture capital firms. "Something is going to need to be done about that either diplomatically or militarily."

The government has begun paying incentives to workers to return to their jobs in the North, topping up their salaries, according to Ron Tomer, president of the Manufacturers' Association of Israel, who says 70 of the group's member companies operate there.

That doesn't address the security question, or provide long term clarity to those who live along the northern border as to whether they should return.

While Israel, concerned about the reaction of the international community, held back from preemptive ground invasions of both Gaza and Lebanon for years, the Hamas attack "changes that calculus." So, once Israel achieves its aims in Gaza of eliminating Hamas and freeing the remaining hostages, that may change, according to Hulata.

"Doing what we need in Gaza is difficult enough. We don't need to find ourselves entangled on two fronts," he stressed. "I would not propose to any Israeli government to wait again. I think we need to act before it happens to us to prevent another massacre of civilians in any part of Israel."

YOSHIAU, who passed corpses and cars riddled with bullet holes close to his home when driving north to join his unit on October 7, sees no immediate alternative to military maintaining an enhanced military presence along the Lebanese border.

"There's no other option," he said, even as he bemoaned missing key moments in his son's childhood. "We need to be here until we can bring back a sense of security." (Bloomberg/TNS)

Tensions increase over Gaza war as hate crimes spike in New York

• By JOSEPHINE STRATMAN

NEW YORK – A teacher in Queens shelters as students storm the halls because she went to a pro-Israel rally.

A father in Brooklyn shields his son from a Palestinian-hating coffee thrower.

Three Jewish men are beaten in an antisemitic spurt of violence.

A man spews anti-Islamic remarks at a halal food cart vendor.

A surge in hate crimes has plagued New York City since the brutal Hamas terrorist attacks of October 7 sparked the current war, the volume more than doubling in October as deep political divisions erupted onto college campuses and city streets.

But, for many, the divide runs far deeper than politics. Though the conflict lies 6,000 miles to the east, it is intensely personal for many New Yorkers.

The pro-Palestinian protest movement is a broad coalition made up of many younger people, including a large number from communities of color. They tend to lean toward a progressive worldview, with particular attention given to social injustice and anti-racism, especially after the murder of George Floyd in 2020.

Nevertheless, the Jewish community is feeling increasingly isolated and fearful as antisemitic hate crimes spike. To many who stand by Israel, the horrific terrorist attacks of October 7 on innocent civilians exposed Hamas's true goals: eliminating the Jewish state forever.

With passions running deep, the schism is not just fueling hate crimes, but tearing at the very fabric of New York.

Many New Yorkers feel like they live in parallel realities as fear and emotion spills into the streets in the form of protests, vigils, and skirmishes over posters of individuals kidnapped from Israel by Hamas. Relationships are fraying.

The conflict is accentuating not only political differences, but dragging race and class divisions into the crucible of the deadly, volatile conflict.

"It's explosive," Queens Borough President Donovan Richards told *The Daily News*. "You're seeing it play out on the street every day."

Palestine resonates

The conflict in Gaza has hit a nerve for young people and scores of left-leaning New Yorkers. For many, Israel's military power and history of conflict with Palestinians isn't just dangerous to those in Gaza – it represents a threat to all marginalized people of color.

Common concerns between Palestinians and other minority groups abound: harassment by police; struggles against violence and oppression; deep-running inequalities because of birthplace or skin color; the experience of being "othered," or shoved aside by society, politicians, and mainstream media.

Peter Coleman, an expert on constructive conflict resolution at Columbia University, said that many on the school's Manhattan campus over the last two months have drawn connections between the pro-Palestinian movement and the Black Lives



PRO-PALESTINIAN PROTESTERS demanding a ceasefire in Gaza block the Manhattan Bridge in both directions between Manhattan and Brooklyn last week. (Gardiner Anderson/New York Daily News/TNS)

Matter's one, and with overall themes of racial injustice.

"It taps into both trauma and violence, which is the history of that dispute of race relations in this country, and the guilt and shame of the dominant group," Coleman said. "And those things become part of this mix both in Israel and here in NY around the Israeli-Palestinian [conflict]... It's one of the reasons why these things take so much energy immediately, because there's a profound history behind them."

On Wednesday, thousands gathered near the Rockefeller Center tree lighting to call attention to what many of the protesters have characterized as a Palestinian genocide.

"My family, every minority group – this story of Palestine resonates with all of us because we've all been victims of the US, of the Western imperialism project," protester Sydney Ziems said. "My family is Venezuelan, and they have been displaced through aggressive sanctions in the name of human rights. Yet Israel can commit a genocide with no sanctions, no accountability."

Ziems, 31, is not Palestinian – but as a black Venezuelan woman, she says it is important to call out the US and other Western countries for the irreparable damage they've done to communities and counties of color.

"Every minority group has gone through this," Ziems, who lives in Brooklyn, said. "They always try to squash it down. This mirrors any type of group that's not white that tries to get liberation... There's clearly a double standard, and I'm sick of it."

Fatma, 32, PhD. student and resident of Harlem, said she's encouraged by the coalition of young people who are raising their voices in support not just of Palestine, but

also conflicts in Congo, Sudan, and in the US.

"All of our sufferings are connected on a systemic level" she said. "This country's government is funding the genocide in Palestine; my tax money is buying weaponry to kill the people in Palestine. Meanwhile, NYPD is getting trained in Israel, by IDF."

"I will stand with the truth, with the oppressed," Fatma said. It's about being on the side of the oppressed."

Jewish identity threatened

On the other side of the divide, Jewish New Yorkers feel an existential threat.

The attacks on Israel, they say, are intended not just to wipe out the Jewish state, but to eradicate the Jewish people altogether. At home in New York, the outcry in support of Palestine has often crossed the line from political discourse to a cover for antisemitism.

The pro-Palestine chant, "From the river to the sea," they say, echoes generations of anti-Jewish fervor reminiscent of Russian Cossacks and German Nazis.

"This is not about division," Rabbi Chaim Steinmetz, of Kehilath Jeshurun on the Upper East Side said. "This is antisemitism."

Jewish leaders point to the explosion across NYC of antisemitic hate crimes, including a troubling episode that unfolded last week at Hillcrest High School in Queens, when students raged in the halls, targeting a teacher who'd been to a rally in support of Israel.

This October, hate crimes in NYC shot up by 124% – with 56 more incidents than last October, according to NYPD data. Of the 101 total incidents, 69 were antisemitic, police said. The US Justice Department has directed US attorneys and the FBI to work closely with state and local law enforce-



POLICE OFFICERS form a barrier between pro-Israel and pro-Palestinian demonstrators at Washington Square Park last week. (Yuki Iwamura/AFP/Getty Images/TNS)

ment to combat the problem.

"What has happened in the wake of this war is that there have been direct attacks on Jews and Jewish institutions, and there has been antisemitism that has been hidden under the guise of anti-Zionism," Steinmetz said.

He added that much of the horror and devastation in the October 7 Hamas attacks on Israel have been lost in the mix. Most of those brutally killed in towns and kibbutzim near Israel's border with Gaza were civilians, including many women and children. A music festival was turned into a killing field.

"They refuse to accept the humanity of any Israeli. For them, what needs to be erased is the very fact that Israel exists," Steinmetz added. "And I think that the problem is that in this sort of politicized discourse, it now becomes acceptable to ignore concerns."

In a speech last Wednesday, Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer addressed the explosion of antisemitic hate crimes, calling this a "five-alarm fire."

"What may begin as legitimate criticism of Israeli policy, or even a valid debate over other religious, economic, and political issues, can sometimes cross into something darker, into attacking Jewish people simply for being Jewish," he said in his remarks.

His speech warned of lurking antisemitism, and that many young people are getting pulled into it.

"But rather than call out this dangerous behavior for what it is, we see so many of our friends and fellow citizens, particularly young people who yearn for justice, unknowingly aiding and abetting their cause," Schumer said.

In this context, many see the debate unfolding now as not so much about the historic conflict between Jews and Pales-

tinians in the Middle East, but a choice between good and evil.

"From our perspective, it's not complicated," Hindy Poupko of UJA-Federation of New York said. "The narrative is a simple one. Hamas is a terrorist organization that stands against humanity, and we are advocating for humanity."

The melting pot at risk

Following the unrest and spread of hate, people on both sides of the conflict have called for attempts to mutually understand one another to reconcile political differences.

But, for now, many see this as impossible. "I would not start people there yet," said Coleman, an expert on conflict resolution, adding that what we should hope for is simply that people "start to glimpse the humanity of one another."

Meanwhile, NYC's cherished identity as a diverse melting pot, where people from all different countries and religions come together in an environment of tolerance, could be threatened. With a presidential election cycle impending, and a nation primed for extreme division, NY could be headed into a storm of hate.

"There's a large disconnect right now," Richards emphasized. "And in what we saw happen in Hillcrest High School, it was a powder keg waiting to explode."

Richards fears that more unrest could come.

"I'm afraid that if we continue to let this war divide us, we're going to lose the very essence of what the city always represented as a beacon of hope," Richards said. "We're losing who we are. And I think we are sorely damaging the legacy that many of our forefathers and foremothers built the city on."

(New York Daily News/TNS)

TELEVISION

PROGRAMS

KAN HD (Y/H11)

06:00 Morning News - Israel at War
07:00 This Morning - with Arieh Golan
08:00 Kalman Liberman
10:00 Daily Agenda - with Keren Neubach
12:00 Israel at War - Sharon and Uri
15:00 Special Broadcast - Israel at War
16:57 Guy Zohar - Through the Looking Glass
17:59 Israel at War - Ayala Hasson
19:50 The Evening News - with Michal Rabinovic
22:00 Real Time 7 - War Report
23:00 Night News - with Akiva Novick
00:00 The Earth Was Formless & Void - 12. The

KESKET HD (Y/H12)

06:00 The Morning Headlines
07:00 The Morning News with Nir Raskin
09:30 Special Broadcast - with Nesli Barda and
12:00 Special News Broadcast
16:00 Special News Broadcast
19:15 Main Edition
22:00 To Be Announced
23:00 Special News Broadcast

RESHET HD (Y/H13)

06:00 This Morning - Preview
07:00 This Morning - Omer Yardeni & Rotem Isra
09:00 Israel at War - Elad Zohar and Yarden Ha
11:00 Israel at War - Amnon Levi
13:00 Israel at War - Omer Yardeni
15:00 Israel at War - Lucy Aharish
16:00 Israel at War - Netali Shem Tov
18:55 Israel at War - Raviv Druker
19:55 The Main News Edition
22:00 The Source - Episode 21
22:52 The Source - Panel Discussion
23:00 The Tube - Israel at War
23:50 Israel at War - Tal Berman

HOT CHANNEL 3 (H3)

08:40 Zaguri
09:25 Zaguri
10:10 Rabbit Hole
10:57 Everything's Gonna Be Okay 2
11:20 The Good Wife 2
12:04 Starstruck
12:29 Rabbit Hole
13:17 Everything's Gonna Be Okay 2
13:39 Starstruck
14:04 New Amsterdam 4
14:47 The Good Wife 2
15:32 The Young and the Restless - Yr. 46
16:11 The Bold and the Beautiful (2 eps)
16:55 The Young and the Restless - Yr. 46
17:34 Rabbit Hole
18:21 New Amsterdam 4
19:03 Connected
19:27 Connected
19:53 Starstruck 2
20:15 The Lovers
20:46 The Lovers
21:17 New Amsterdam 4
22:00 Malkot 2
22:55 Zaguri
23:41 The Lovers
00:13 The Lovers
00:44 The Good Wife 2

HOT ISRAELI ENTERTAINMENT

06:00 Renewal of Broadcasts at 08:00
08:00 Koka Ltd., Season 1
08:27 The Sade Family
08:51 Desert Rose 2
09:16 Wine and Roses
10:06 Love Is Just around the Corner
10:38 Michaela
11:25 The Sade Family
11:46 Timeline
12:05 Desert Rose 2
12:32 Wine and Roses
13:18 Love Is Just around the Corner
13:52 Michaela
14:38 The Sade Family
15:00 Full Speed
15:25 Desert Rose 2
15:51 Bat Et the Virgin
16:14 Wine and Roses
17:02 Love Is Just around the Corner
17:34 Michaela
18:21 Full Speed
18:46 Bat Et the Virgin
19:12 The Sade Family
19:33 Desert Rose 2
20:01 Wine and Roses
20:47 Love Is Just around the Corner
21:20 Michaela
22:04 Desert Rose 2
22:28 The Sade Family
22:53 04:20
23:20 Wine and Roses
00:09 Love Is Just around the Corner
00:42 Michaela
01:28 Desert Rose 2
01:52 04:20
02:17 Koka Ltd., Season 1
02:48 My Sister Jackie
03:15 My Sister Jackie
03:44 Renewal of Broadcasts at 08:00

HOT HBO (H4)

07:40 The Twelve
09:26 In Treatment HBO (4)
09:49 In Treatment HBO (4)
10:21 Ten Percent
11:13 Downton Abbey 6
12:03 The Twelve
12:56 The Pacific
13:49 In Treatment HBO (4)
14:12 In Treatment HBO (4)
14:43 Ten Percent
15:36 Downton Abbey 6
16:28 The Pacific
17:26 In Treatment HBO (4)
17:51 In Treatment HBO (4)
18:19 Ten Percent
20:12 Downton Abbey 6
21:00 The Gilded Age 2
22:00 The Sea Beyond 3
23:00 Game of Thrones 6
00:00 Sex and the City 4
00:30 Sex and the City 4

HOT ZONE (H5)

07:11 CSI: Vegas 2
07:53 S.W.A.T 6
08:34 Fire Country
09:17 The Rookie 2
10:00 Chicago PD 6
10:42 Law & Order: Organized Crime 3
11:24 Law & Order: SVU 19
12:06 9-1-1 S. 3
12:49 CSI: Vegas 2
13:33 Chicago Med 5
13:53 Fire Country
14:56 The Rookie 2
15:39 Law & Order: Organized Crime 3
23:58 The Food That Built The

17:03 Chicago PD 6
17:45 Fire Country
18:28 CSI: Vegas 2
19:10 9-1-1 S. 3
19:53 The Rookie 2
20:36 Law & Order: Organized Crime 3
21:18 Chicago Med 5
22:00 Fire Country
22:39 FBI: Most Wanted 4
23:22 FBI: Most Wanted 4

YES TV DRAMA

06:00 A Discovery Of Witches 3
06:30 The Resident 6
07:38 The Good Fight 6
08:27 The Bachelor 26
09:17 Bull 6
10:00 The Bold And The Beautiful 2020-2021
10:25 The Young And The Restless 49
11:05 A Discovery Of Witches 3
11:57 The Resident 6
12:47 Bull 6
13:36 The Good Fight 6
14:31 The Resident 6
15:21 The Bachelor 26
16:15 The Bold And The Beautiful 2020-2021
16:40 The Young And The Restless 49
17:20 A Discovery Of Witches 3
18:10 The Good Fight 6
19:00 Golden Bachelor
19:55 The Bold And The Beautiful 2020-2021
20:20 The Young And The Restless 49
21:00 Hotel Portofino 2
21:55 Based On A True Story
22:40 The Lawyer 2
23:30 Made For Love 2
00:10 In Treatment (2021)
00:40 Golden Bachelor
01:33 Our House
02:23 The Lawyer 2

YES TV ACTION

06:16 9-1-1 4
07:01 NcIs: La 9
07:46 NcIs: La 9
08:31 Law & Order: SvU 24
09:16 S.W.A.T 6
10:01 S.W.A.T 6
10:46 Chicago Fire 11
11:31 Chicago Fire 11
12:16 NcIs: La 9
13:01 NcIs: La 9
13:46 S.W.A.T 6
14:31 S.W.A.T 6
15:16 9-1-1 4
16:01 9-1-1 4
16:46 NcIs: La 9
17:31 NcIs: La 9
18:16 Chicago Fire 11
19:01 Chicago Fire 11
19:46 Leverage: Redemption 2
20:34 S.W.A.T 6
21:17 S.W.A.T 6
22:00 The Lazarus Project
22:45 Boardwalk Empire 4
23:43 Boardwalk Empire 4
00:22 Boardwalk Empire 4
01:20 The Watch
02:05 Vikings 6 Part 2
02:50 Boardwalk Empire 4

YES TV COMEDY

06:00 Veep 6
06:33 Veep 6
07:07 Silicon Valley 3
07:41 Silicon Valley 3
08:14 Avenue 5
08:57 Avenue 5
09:20 The Neighborhood 5
09:45 The Neighborhood 5
10:10 Veep 6
10:40 Veep 6
11:10 Silicon Valley 3
11:40 Silicon Valley 3
12:10 How I Met Your Mother 9
12:35 How I Met Your Mother 9
13:00 Hot In Cleveland
13:25 Hot In Cleveland
13:50 Friends 2
14:15 Friends 2
14:40 The Nanny 5
15:15 The Nanny 5
15:30 The Neighborhood 5
15:55 The Neighborhood 5
16:20 How I Met Your Mother 9
16:45 How I Met Your Mother 9
17:10 Hot In Cleveland
17:35 Hot In Cleveland
18:00 Friends 2
18:25 Friends 2
18:50 The Nanny 5
19:15 The Nanny 5
19:40 The Neighborhood 5
20:05 The Neighborhood 5
20:30 Hot In Cleveland
20:55 Hot In Cleveland
21:20 How I Met Your Mother 9
21:42 How I Met Your Mother 9
22:03 Friends 2
22:26 Friends 2
22:49 The Nanny 5
23:14 The Nanny 5
23:39 Dave 3
00:08 Dave 3
00:38 Entourage 5
01:07 Entourage 5
01:36 Veep 6

MIDDLE EAST TV (Y109/H150)

11:00 Rawhide
12:00 Touched by an Angel
13:00 The 700 Club
14:00 The Spirit - Led Life
14:30 Pour it Out with Ben & Jodie Hughes
15:00 The Rifleman
15:30 The Rifleman
16:00 Gunsmoke
17:00 Rawhide
18:00 Flavors Of Israel
18:30 It's Supernatural
19:00 The 700 Club
20:00 Touched by an Angel
21:00 One America News Network
22:00 It's Supernatural
22:30 Israel Daily
23:00 Manna Fest with Perry Stone
23:30 Wonders Without Numbers with David Rives
00:00 ILTV Weekly Review
00:30 The Rifleman
01:00 The Rifleman

HISTORY (Y37/H43)

06:00 Unexplained With William Shatner 3 - 12
06:42 History's Greatest Heists With Pierce Br
07:26 The Iran-Israel War -1
08:24 The Iran-Israel War -2
09:22 Beyond Skinwalker Ranch -9
10:04 Colosseum -5
10:49 Dark Marvels -5
11:31 Beyond Oak Island 3 -10
12:13 Unexplained With William Shatner 3 - 12
12:55 History's Greatest Heists With Pierce Br
13:37 Fdr -3
15:02 Beyond Skinwalker Ranch -2
15:44 Colosseum -5
16:29 Dark Marvels -5
17:11 Beyond Oak Island 3 -7
17:53 History's Greatest Heists With Pierce Br
18:36 The Proof Is Out There 2 -9
18:58 Beyond Skinwalker Ranch -6
19:42 Pawn Stars Do America -1
21:03 History's Greatest Mysteries -12
21:45 Storage Wars 15 -19
22:08 Storage Wars 15 -20
22:31 American Pickers 19 -6
23:16 Kings Of Pain 2 -4
23:58 The Food That Built The

World 3 -1
00:34 The Iran-Israel War -3
01:46 Hercules in the Desert: Operation Brothe
02:46 History's Greatest Mysteries 4 -20
03:30 Colosseum -5
04:15 Dark Marvels -5
04:55 Kings Of Pain 2 -3

CLASSICA HD

06:11 Telemann: Cantata "Ich danke dem Herrn"
06:29 Liszt: Totentanz S.525
06:43 Classical Spotlight
07:00 Mozart: Piano Concerto No. 27, K. 595
07:36 Choral Music by Bach, Schutz et al.
08:51 Semi-final: Joon Yoon
09:32 Documentary: Heitor Villa-Lobos
09:59 Semi-final I: Debussy, Chopin and Liszt
11:30 Classical Spotlight
11:00 Mahler: Symphony No. 8 (Luigi)
12:34 Works for Soprano and Piano
13:29 Brazilian Music for Cello and Piano
13:57 Bach: Sonatas for Violin and Piano
14:13 Bach: Brandenburg Concerto No. 5 (2021)
14:35 Classical Spotlight
15:02 Gennaro Manna: Arias in World Premiere
16:00 Tchaikovsky, Berlioz and Bizet
17:38 Mahler: Symphony No. 4 (2006)
18:36 Riccardo Chailly Conducts Mendelssohn
20:10 Schubert: Arpeggione Sonata, D. 821
20:35 Documentary: Heitor Villa-Lobos
20:59 Mozart: Divertimento No. 11, K. 251
21:27 Classical Spotlight
22:00 Schumann: Fantasiestucke, Op. 12
22:27 Segatta: Concerto Bizantino
23:06 My Heart is Burning
23:51 Classical:NEXT 2019 -Anniedz
00:19 Dvorak: Othello - Concert Overture
00:34 Classical Spotlight
01:00 Bellini: I Capuleti e i Montecchi
03:18 Europakonzert 2007: Berlin

YES DOCU (Y8)

08:35 Nothing Fancy: Diana Kennedy Cookbook author and environmental activist Diana Kennedy reflects on an unconventional life spent mastering Mexican cuisine. Dir. Elizabeth Carroll. 2019.
09:50 Crazy Money What happens if all the inhabitants of a Ugandan village suddenly receive a basic income for two years? Can you dream without money? The answer lies in the inhabitants' personal stories... Dir. Steven Janssens. 2020.
10:45 Super Greed: The Fight For Football In April 2021, twelve of the most powerful football clubs in the world broke away to launch a brand new competition. It was designed to run for the next 23 years. It lasted just 48 hours. Dir. Carl Hindmarch. 2022.
12:20 Pizza: A Love Story Filmmaker Guido Bechard chronicles the history of three pizza restaurants in New Haven. Learn about the love that goes into each pie. Moreover, discover a completely new appreciation for pizza as true culinary art. 2019.
13:45 Stand Up and Shout... "Stand Up and Shout: Songs From A Philly High School". Documentary featuring Philadelphia teenagers from Hill-Freedman World Academy engaged in a unique songwriting collaboration. Dir. Amy Schatz. 2023.
14:40 The Assassins Examination of circumstances surrounding the murder of Kim Jong-nam, the half brother of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un, and if the two killers are trained assassins or innocent pawns. Dir. Ryan White. 2020.
16:25 Roamers: Follow Your Likes Film follows a wide variety of characters on their journeys all over the world and in different social media ways. As "digital nomads," they're always on the hunt for the next perfect moment... Dir. Leona Leonhardt. 2021.
17:20 The CC Sabathia Story "Under The Grapefruit Tree: The Inspiring story of CC Sabathia - professional baseball pitcher who played 19 seasons in Major League Baseball (MLB). 2020.
18:25 Perfect Weapon The rise of cyber conflict as the primary way nations now compete and sabotage each other. Dir. John Maggio. USA, 2020.
19:50 The Treasures Of Crimea A collection of historical artefacts from Ukraine is stranded in a museum in Amsterdam as Russia annexes Crimea. For to whom should they be returned? Dir. Oeke Hoogendijk. Netherlands. 2021.
21:15 Trailblazers: Clint Eastwood The story of private life alongside extensive career of legendary actor now director Clint Eastwood. The documentary introduces also other little-known aspects to his cinematic personality. 2021.
22:00 A Compassionate Spy Steve James's engrossing documentary tells the story of Ted Hall, a young physicist who leaked nuclear secrets to the Soviet Union in order to protect the future of mankind. 2022.
23:40 Fyre Fraud Concert promoters and rapper Ja Rule advertise a high-end festival experience that fails spectacularly when they don't plan for the infrastructure to support the venue, artists and guests. Dir. Jenner Furst. 2019.

CHANNEL 8 (H8)

06:00 Magical Land of Oz
07:00 NOT CAROL
08:15 Strangest things 2
09:00 Road 90
09:55 Wild Romania
10:45 Queens that changed the world
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Kibbutz anxiety and bullet-riddled paintings

ART ROUNDUP
• By HAGAY HACOHEH

JERUSALEM – Ziva Jelin's 2010 painting, *Winding Road*, was riddled with bullets when Hamas invaded Kibbutz Be'eri on October 7. Now it is on display at the Israel Museum, Jerusalem, between paintings by other artists who depicted Kibbutz life, like Ori Reisman and Yohanan Simon. Jelin was the curator of the Kibbutz Art Gallery.

The rescued work is roughly two meters in size, and its reddish hue lends it an apocalyptic air. Amitai Mendelsohn, the museum's senior curator for Israeli art, lauded the inclusion of the painting as "an expression of the human spirit as it fights evil, and the power of art to offer hope even in these hard days." 11 Ruppun Blvd.

SPIRITS – A new sound work by Daniel Kiczales (curated by Amir Bolzman) is now shown at the Hansen House Tea House. The work uses an English interview originally given by former prime minister Yitzhak Rabin in 1994 to offer an eerie sound – the murdered Israeli leader allegedly singing with a choir of four men. The work has eight movements, each part dealing with different aspects of Israeli society. Opening hours are Monday to Thursday from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., and Friday from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Shown until February 1, 2024. 14 Gedaliah Alon St. Admission is free.

EIN HOD – On Friday, December 22, attend the 11:00 a.m. opening of Kibbutz Anxiety, an exhibition of paintings by Kibbutz Be'eri artist Haran Kislev at Mishkan Museum of Art, Ein Harod. Kislev described Ori Reisman as a genius and shared he could relate to the artist, who was also a Kibbutz member. Reisman was often ill-treated over his decision to contribute to the collective by painting rather than farming, and Kislev also had similar moments.

"What are we doing here really..." Kislev told art writer Ofir Hovav after the Hamas attack on his kibbutz. "A madness of wars and dread when, at the bottom line, all this is over mud and earth."

Curated by Avi Lubin. For more, call (04) 648-6038.



ZIVA JELIN points to bullet holes in her Kibbutz Be'eri painting. (Zohar Shemesh)

PHOTOGRAPHS BY Osnat Ben Dov were destroyed when Hamas attacked Kibbutz Be'eri. Now the photographs and art-books were reprinted and placed at Ein Hod in a continuation of the exhibition, *Shadow of a Fleeting Bird*, curated by Sofie Berzon Mackie.

Yigal Zorea, a well-known printer from the Kibbutz printing house, and a mini-celeb in the field of graphic design, is one of the artists showing his works at Ein Hod as part of the Vox Populi exhibition.

Another artist included is Zeev Engelmayer, also known for his invented alter-ego Shoshke. The exhibition shows support to Be'eri residents and those held by Hamas in captivity. Zorea now lives in Ein Gedi. Readers may follow his works via <https://kavimvenekudot.wordpress.com/>.

Janco-Dada Museum Ein Hod. Call (04) 984-2350 to learn more.

KIBBUTZ HAZORE'A – The Wilfrid Israel Museum hosts Cabri Gallery after it was temporarily closed due to the tense security situation up north. Jointly curated by Tamar Hurvitz Livne from Cabri and Shir Meller-Yamaguchi from the Wilfrid Israel Museum, this group exhibition includes fourteen artists, Jewish and Arab, who believe it is possible the

repair the broken tapestry of shared existence on this land. Among the artists are Dobi Harel and Doaa Bsis. Shown until Saturday, December 30.

RAMLE – The Contemporary Art Center Ramle offers free admission to those evacuated from the North and South of the country when entering the Pool of the Arches, where works by Jewish-American artist Daniel Rothbart are shown as part of the Ramle Anthropocene exhibition (18 HaShomer St.) Italian-Israeli artist Elena Ceretti Stein is presenting her artworks at the CACR (112 Herzl St.) as part of The Place Where Roads Meet exhibition.

Preregister at tour@goramla.com, or call ahead at (08) 9292650 to book your visit. Shown until January, 2024.

ART NEWS

When Oliver Bienkowski built a Holocaust monument in Marrakech, Morocco, in 2019, it was destroyed and he was ordered to leave. He then suggested to build a model of the Rainbow Kaaba for Documenta 15 in Kassel, Germany. Suggesting this cultural borrowing of Islam's most sacred site would be a positive thing for LGBTQ Muslims all over the world. The offer was ignored but he inflated it anyway.

Curated by Indonesian art-collective Ruangrupa, the 2022 Documenta

15 exhibition caused a major outcry in Germany and Israel, even without the Rainbow Kaaba model. The reason was a large mural, created by Taring Padi and titled *People's Justice*. It depicted a pig-faced man with a scarf showing a Star of David. The pigman wore a helmet with the name Mossad written on it. The mural was first covered in black drape, and then removed after a major international fiasco. Namely, how could German authorities approve and fund such a vile mural without realizing something is wrong?

It seems the planned 2027 Documenta 16 will do no better. Israeli artist Bracha Lichtenberg Ettinger quit its selection committee last month due to what she described as "dark times," *Der Spiegel* reported. All six members of the committee resigned too.

Bienkowski has a new dream, to rebuild the Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem, as an inflatable nylon fabric structure. He believes an inflatable temple is better than a concrete one because it would be possible to deflate, move, and re-inflate. "The time is right to share temple mound," he told *The Jerusalem Post*, "we need people in Israel to support us."

His vision of the new temple is all inclusive, with LGBTQ Muslims, Jews, and Freemasons – all able to share the sacred space.

Bienkowski is straight faced when he speaks about how his foundation, PixelHelper, rewrote the Quran in light of LGBTQ values.

Yet, his actions might be seen as a continuation of famous pranksters like Abbie Hoffman or Abie Nathan. The former attempted to levitate the Pentagon in 1967 with psychic energy to end the Vietnam War, whereas the latter flew to Egypt from Israel in 1965, despite the hostility between the two nations, with the hope his daring feat will hasten a peace accord.

Both men failed. The Pentagon did not levitate and the Vietnam War continued. Egypt arrested Nathan and deported him. But the things they wanted did eventually happen. The Vietnam War ended and Egypt signed a peace accord with Israel. Likewise, Bienkowski is asking why are there no Holocaust monuments in the Islamic world, and how is it that Muslim countries execute LGBTQ people every year.

He can be reached via oliver@pixel-helper.org.

SARIT SHAPIRA – was a leading art curator and writer until her death in 2018. Asia Publishing House had done a wonderful service to the local art scene by releasing a collection of her articles. Titled *Sarit Shapira: Hagot VeMaase* (Theory and Praxis), the volume offers a shining panoramic view

of Israeli art in the 1990's. As the artist Naomi Siman-Tov noted, *the Post* reported on a major group exhibition Shapira curated at Israel Museum in 1996. Titled *Saf*, it featured a tunnel-like work by Palestinian artist Khalil Rabah.

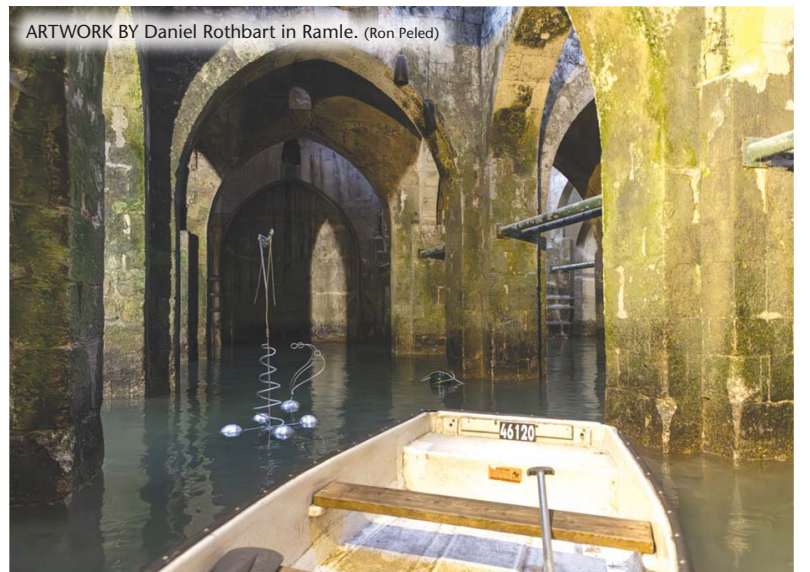
The artwork was burned down four months after the opening by a Jewish high school student who attempted to answer a question his friends asked: is the tunnel they are in flammable? The answer was yes.

Rabah requested to meet the young man and together, they co-created a work from the ashes of the original tunnel.

Siman-Tov described Shapira as having a super-power, which was to connect local and international artists in expressive productions of art shows we no longer witness today.

The book includes rare photographs. One of them is of an artwork by American artist David Hammons placed here. Hammons buried a red soda machine at the Peace Forest near Armon Hanatziv Promenade. NIS 150 per copy. See <https://www.asiapublishers.co.il/en>.

Art Roundup is a monthly glance at some of the finest art exhibitions and events currently shown across the country. Artists, curators, and collectors are welcome to send pitches to hagay_hacohen@yahoo.com with "Art Roundup" in the email subject.



ARTWORK BY Daniel Rothbart in Ramle. (Ron Peled)

Warwick, Crystal, and Latifah receive Kennedy Center honors

• By JEFF MASON and JASPER WARD

WASHINGTON (Reuters) – Washington celebrated singer Dionne Warwick, comedian Billy Crystal, Bee Gees member Barry Gibb, rapper and actress Queen Latifah, and opera star Renée Fleming on Sunday at the Kennedy Center Honors, the top US honor for achievements in the arts.

President Joe Biden lauded the work of the five performers during a reception at the White House before the show.

"The performing arts are more than just sound and scene. They reflect who we are as Americans and as human beings," he said.

The show kicked off with a tribute to Warwick, 82, a pop music star since the 1960s who has sold more than 100 million records and is known for hits such as "I'll Never Love This Way Again" and "That's What Friends Are For," a 1985 song she recorded with Gladys Knight, Elton John, and Stevie Wonder to raise awareness about AIDS.

"There simply is no song that Dionne Warwick cannot sing," said record producer Clive Davis, adding that she had "inspired musicians all over the world." Singer Cynthia Erivo performed a stirring version of Warwick's song "Alfie."

Crystal, 75, known for roles in films such as *When Harry Met Sally*, *City Slickers*, and *Analyze This*, was next up. Actors Meg Ryan and Robert De Niro appeared onstage to pay tribute to their friend.

"You're only 75. That means



BILLY CRYSTAL is introduced at the 2023 Kennedy Center Honors gala at the Kennedy Center in Washington, on Sunday. (Julia Nikhinson/Reuters)

you're just about six years away from being the perfect age to be elected president," De Niro quipped. Biden, 81, is running for re-election. The crowd roared.

Crystal is a Tony and Emmy-winning actor and writer, who hosted the Academy Awards nine times. Whoopi Goldberg, who also paid tribute to Crystal, said he should win an honorary Oscar for his service as the longtime host of the show.

Next up was Queen Latifah, 53, a musician and actress known for films including *Chicago* and *Bringing Down the House*, who won a Grammy Award for Best Solo Rap Performance in 1994.

"I feel very blessed. I feel very honored," she told reporters. Actress Kerry Washington said her friend was one of the "best rappers of all time."

Singers Tituss Burgess, Christine Baranski, and Susan Graham performed "You'll Never Walk Alone" from the Broadway show, *Carousel* in tribute to Fleming, 64, an acclaimed soprano who has performed at opera houses around the world and collected five Grammy Awards.

"It's wild" to be an honoree, Fleming said. "It's all joy." Movie star Sigourney Weaver appeared and praised Fleming's acting.

Opera singer J'Nai Bridges said ahead of the show that Fleming had helped make opera more mainstream.

"Renée Fleming has absolutely made opera more accessible," she told reporters. "She's broken through and really kind of paved the way for the generations like myself."

The show concluded with a celebration of Gibb, 77, a

singer and songwriter who performed with his brothers Robin and Maurice in the Bee Gees, a group that sold more than 220 million records. He has won nine Grammy Awards and, as part of the trio, is known for songs such as "Stayin' Alive" and "How Deep Is Your Love."

He told reporters ahead of the show that he felt the presence of his brothers, both of whom have died.

"It's very emotional," he said. "What we all did together – when we were good, when we were on – that was something to be proud of."

Country group Little Big Town performed Gibb's song "Lonely Days," singer Michael Bublé sang "How Can You Mend A Broken Heart," and Broadway star Ben Platt did a rendition of "Nights on Broadway."*

Young pianists on display

• Jerusalem Post Staff

The Piano Forever No. 15 competition, the national competition for young pianists, will be held from December 7 to 12 in Ashdod.

This year, 101 young pianists, including many from the South, will participate in the competition.

The purpose of the competition, which is intended for pianists aged six to 28, is to reveal, promote, and encourage promising young piano players.

The winners of the competition, which is being held in conjunction with the Culture and Sport Ministry, will be awarded cash prizes in excess of NIS 100,000. In addition, winners will be



ONE OF the contestants at last year's competition. (Liron Moldevan)

invited to perform with leading orchestras, both in Israel and around the world. The competition will take place at the Monart Cultural Center in Ashdod, with the finals being held on December 14. Entry to all stages of the competition is free.

Life imitates art in Clooney's 'The Boys in the Boat'

• By HANNA RANTALA

LONDON (Reuters) – Like the subjects of his new film, George Clooney took a chance on a group of actors to transform them into believable professional rowers for *The Boys in the Boat*.

The sports drama tells the true story of the inexperienced 1936 University of Washington rowing team which went on to beat Ivy League teams and compete for gold at the Berlin Summer Olympics.

Directed by Clooney, the film is based on the best-selling non-fiction novel by Daniel James Brown.

"When we started casting, we called them and said 'now, are you an athletic person?' And we said 'you have to be honest, because if you're not, we'll fire you,'" Clooney said in an interview at the movie's premiere in London on Sunday.

"And all the guys we got said they were, and they were. It took about three months of train-

ing, but we got them there."

Set at the height of the Great Depression, the film centers around poor student Joe Rantz, played by Callum Turner, who tries out for a place on the eight-man team after finding out it comes with pay and a bed. Actor Joel Edgerton's coach, Al Ulbrickson has his job cut out to turn his chosen candidates into a professional team that rows in unison and can match their top-level rivals.

The actors trained for about eight weeks under former Team GB Olympic rowing coach Terry O'Neill.

"It's the closest thing I'm ever going to feel to being part of a professional sports team," British actor Turner, 33, said.

Clooney, a fan of Brown's book, set out to make an uplifting movie, he said. "We're kind of in need of some nice stories right about now. It's a story that makes you feel good."

The Boys in the Boat is out in cinemas globally in January.