



## Schlaglicht Israel Nr. 1/21 Aktuelles aus israelischen Tageszeitungen 1.-15. Januar

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#### 1. Verschärfter Lockdown infolge steigender Neuinfektionen trotz umfassender Impfkation

*Ungeachtet eines dritten harten Lockdowns in Israel und ungeachtet der intensiven Impfkampagne stiegen die Zahlen über Tage auf über 9000 Neuerkrankungen. Insgesamt haben sich bislang über eine halbe Million Menschen in Israel mit dem Coronavirus infiziert. Ein Licht am Ende des Tunnels ist indes zu erkennen. Gut ein Fünftel der Bevölkerung ist bereits mit dem schützenden Serum geimpft worden. Ziel der Regierung ist es, bis Ende März alle über 16-Jährigen gegen Covid-19 zu immunisieren. Nachdem zunächst ausschließlich mit dem deutsch-amerikanischen Mittel der Firmen Biontech und Pfizer geimpft wurde, wird nun auch der Impfstoff des US-Konzerns Moderna eingesetzt. Vorläufig gelten allerdings weiter strenge Einschränkungen. So darf das eigene Haus oder die eigene Wohnung nur in einem Umkreis von 1000 Metern verlassen werden, die Schulen, der Handel, alle Kulturstätten, Cafés und Restaurants sowie Fitnessstudios und Schwimmbäder sind geschlossen.*

#### Wave No. 3 is here – We must learn our lesson

(...) Winter is here and with it a third wave of coronavirus infections. Yet despite this, there has been no structured and orderly process at a national level of learning from experience with regard to policies and actions taken so far by the government, its ministries, and the executive agencies under its

aegis (...) the state's handling of the pandemic reflects a lack of capacity to manage crises not related to war. (...) There are no laws, regulations, guidelines or government handbooks on managing ongoing crises to provide us with methodologies for reviewing and evaluating public policy in a systematic way. (...) 15% of businesses are expected to close down by the end of the year, mostly among small and medium-size businesses; around one million are unemployed; socioeconomic gaps are widening, (...) there is a terrifying rise in domestic violence (...). The government of Israel must develop a clear strategy for coping with the pandemic (...). The coronavirus pandemic, with all its destructive effects, is likely to be with us for months to come, and thus presents us with an opportunity to adopt and implement a culture of inquiry and evaluation of public policy in Israel. (...)

Ron Tzur, Nissim Cohen, JPO, 02.01.21

#### Israel's healthcare is in the best Jewish tradition

The coronavirus pandemic has already taught us a lesson in humility. (...) The same measures that saved humanity during the 1918 Spanish flu pandemic, can save us now in 2020: Hygiene, social distancing, mask wearing and personal responsibility. (...) With all due respect to masks, and after millions were spent on government public service announcements telling us to wash our hands, it is the HMOs, the oldest remnant of Jewish tradition, that have come through. Long before the Spanish

flu, Jewish communities around the world knew that care for the common good connects all people. (...) Jewish communities have always collected funds for those among them who are less fortunate. Charity boxes have long been present in every synagogue - providing for the poor, the orphaned, and most of all the sick. (...) The early socialist laborers instituted a kupa, a communal fund, whose monies would provide health care to their members. That same idea continued into statehood with the establishment of Israel's HMOs. They (...) are the very organizations that are providing Israelis with the vaccines that will rid us of this pandemic. Our government must apologize for keeping them out of the rooms where decisions were being made in the early days of the coronavirus crisis. (...)

Merav Batito, YED, 02.01.21

### **Lockdown must be tightened**

A lockdown is not a strategy for handling the COVID crisis, it is a doomsday weapon and a demonstration that policies of denial have failed. It is also the result of the public's low willingness to follow the regulations enacted by the authorities. (...) we need to learn our lessons and reach conclusions about how we wound up here after a second lockdown, and why we still don't feel the third one. It has already been announced, and business owners and the business sector are paying the price. (...) Israel's vaccination campaign is a light at the end of the tunnel, and the big question is how we can connect these amazing steps toward national vaccination to the serious situation we find ourselves in. What we need now is national policy that will quickly cut back on the number of people being infected and the number of confirmed cases, in addition to vaccinating most of the country's elderly population. This will allow us to open up the economy and put our society's life back on track. (...)

This is a marathon, not a sprint, and over the course of a year we've gotten tired. It would be best if we didn't collapse in the final stages (...). The more we adhere to the restrictions, the shorter the "third lockdown" will last. (...)

Joshua Shemer, IHY, 05.01.21

### **In Israel, yet another political lockdown**

(...) How can you reduce the rate of infections with a lockdown that's not being enforced? Intensifying the lockdown is the collective price Israeli citizens must pay for poor enforcement (...). The bitter truth is that the government headed by Benjamin Netanyahu is incapable of implementing a differential policy, with-

out which the coronavirus' spread cannot be curbed without shutting down the entire country. Netanyahu's political calculations, particularly his dependence on the ultra-Orthodox parties, prevents him from managing the coronavirus crisis efficiently. That's why Israel is being dragged time after time into full, "equal" lockdowns, because it is afraid to lock down only those areas with high infection rates. (...) in those areas where the government really has no authority to impose differential regulations, there is also no full observance of the lockdown. Among the new limitations decided on (...) is to close all schools except for special education frameworks and those serving teens at risk. Like a broken record, the cabinet decision was followed by an order from the leader of the non-Hassidic Haredim, Rabbi Chaim Kanievisky, to keep the Haredi Talmud Torah schools open even though the rules forbid this (...). The Haredi education system has been operating for months in violation of the rules and continues to operate as usual even though all the Haredi cities have been defined as "red" zones, with high incidences of infection. (...) Israel will be marking time between stringent and less-stringent lockdowns until the vaccination campaign is completed. As usual, the public will pay the price.

Editorial, HAA, 07.01.21

### **Vaccinating the Palestinians is in Israel's interest**

The strength Israel is radiating both as a country and a society in its ability to obtain vaccines and inoculate its citizens faster than any other country stands out against the chaos running rampant around the world, both in the advanced and enlightened Western Europe and North America, as well as our surrounding region, where health systems lag behind and the firm hand of security forces make it difficult to realistically assess the magnitude of the crisis. But the hope of a speedy exit from the crisis obscures the fact that in Israel's backyard, the coronavirus continues to spread unhindered. (...) if morbidity in the Palestinian territories goes unchecked, Israel will find it difficult to take complete control over morbidity in the territories under its control. It's enough to see what is going on in east Jerusalem to understand the severity of the problem. Israel then must take action, take responsibility, and ensure the inoculation of all of its residents west of the Jordan River. Such a move is necessary to deal effectively with the pandemic, but there are other significant advantages from Israel's perspective. (...) A vaccination campaign led by Israel would undoubtedly bolster its image among its friends and allies, and

should they take part logistically and financially, its new friends like the United Arab Emirates, making such a move doubly beneficial from a diplomatic perspective. Yet the greatest significance of a campaign to vaccinate the Palestinians is that it would see Israel take responsibility for the population in Judea and Samaria and possibly Gaza. This would best express the fact that (...) Israel remains sovereign for every matter on the ground. (...)

Eyal Zisser, IHY, 11.01.21

### **Vaccinate, so that you can be fruitful and multiply**

The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines are the fastest and safest vaccines in the history of vaccinology created without cutting corners and approved by the FDA. (...) a combination of factors contributed to this unprecedented achievement, including several layers of reviews by panels of distinguished scientists independent of government and industry. Yet the new face of COVID-19 vaccine refusal is that of a young woman, aged 18-34, afraid that the vaccine causes infertility. (...) scientists anticipate that the safety and efficacy of the vaccine in pregnant women will be comparable to those who are not pregnant — based on the way that this type of vaccine works. Because these vaccines do not use a live virus, experts believe that they are unlikely to cause infertility or congenital anomalies. (...) Pregnant women have been advised to take great caution to avoid COVID-19 exposure. (...) Bodily changes during pregnancy decrease lung capacity, and any viral infection that affects the lungs can make it extremely difficult for a pregnant woman to breathe. (...) A healthy pregnancy is one of the most important steps a woman can take to insure a healthy baby. (...) the risk of COVID-19 and its potentially devastating effects on maternal health during pregnancy, potential for preterm birth far outweigh any theoretical, unfounded concerns regarding the vaccine. For those contemplating pregnancy, there is no reason to delay vaccination. (...)

Sharon Galper Grossman, TOI, 15.01.21

## **2. Veränderte Parteienlandschaft im Vorfeld der Neuwahlen**

*Mit den für den 23. März angesetzten vierten Neuwahlen innerhalb von zwei Jahren kommt die Regierung des nationalen Notstandes, die erklärtermaßen zur Bekämpfung der Corona-Krise gebildet worden war, zum vorzeitigen Ende. Ausschlaggebend für die Auflösung der Knesset war die ergebnislose Haus-*

*haltsdebatte. Israels Regierungschef Benjamin Netanyahu hofft, im Wahlkampf mit der erfolgreichen Impfkampagne gegen das Corona-Virus zu punkten. Außerdem schreibt er sich die jüngste Annäherung zu einer Reihe muslimischer Staaten zu. Koalitionspartner Benny Gantz, Chef von Blau-Weiß, muss hingegen um den Einzug in die Knesset bangen, nachdem sich sein Bündnis in mehrere Kleinstparteien aufgelöst hat. Die parlamentarische Sperrklausel von 3,25% droht diesmal auch für die Arbeitspartei zum Verhängnis zu werden. Für die links-liberale Meretz sieht es aktuellen Analysen zufolge hingegen noch ganz gut aus. Parteiliche Verschiebungen ergeben sich vor allem rechts vom Likud. Als stärkster Gegner Netanyahus wird sein früherer Parteigenosse Gideon Sa'ar gehandelt, der mit seiner neuen Partei Tikva Hadasha (Neue Hoffnung) zu den Wahlen antritt.*

### **Looking for the right formula on the Left**

(...) Amir Peretz (...) was right in announcing he would not run for the leadership of Labor. Benny Gantz should have done the same. It's possible that by partnering with the Netanyahu government, Gantz prevented a lot of bad things from happening, including the delusional idea of unilaterally annexing a third of the West Bank, but this has been a failed government, and even Gantz's own party is turning its back on him. (...) Ofer Shelah was a first-rate journalist. He is a man of immense knowledge, smart and opinionated. (...) At the moment, I don't think the new party he has formed will be able to run on its own in the upcoming election. He will have to find a way to join up with another party on the center-Left. (...) Meretz's clear voice on the two-state solution; separation of religion and state; and equality for all Israel's citizens must be heard (...) it would be best if the party made a joint run with another party on the Left to ensure that Meretz stays independent. At age 76, Ron Huldai has decided to run for the Knesset as a party leader. (...) His CV – a kibbutznik, a fighter pilot and high-ranking officer, a former high school principal, and a highly successful mayor – could give him the chance to become Israel's Joe Biden.

Yossi Beilin, IHY, 01.01.21

### **Forecast: the next coalition will be the largest unity government, with a twist**

The next Israeli government (...) will be formed by the Likud, all leftwing parties, the Ultra-Orthodox, and an Arab splinter. It's a calculated guess. Bibi will stay the most popular. The anti-Bibi right-wing will

now take the attitude of the left (...) while the left will wake up and see that it will get more done in a unity government under Bibi than in the opposition. The Orthodox parties will choose a seat at the table too. The opposition would also have small parties from the whole spectrum. But it's still possible that Bibi says: I'm too old for this nonsense and shoves Barakat into the limelight to succeed him. That could pacify some of the rightwing anti-Bibi guys and create the possibility of a rightwing government with all of the left in the opposition. But, if Trump doesn't flee to Israel in time and lands in jail, or does (...), Bibi could persuade Kushner to be his successor. In other words: Israeli politics: never a bore. (...)  
Moshe-Mordechai van Zuiden, TOI, 02.01.21

### **Blue and White vanishes with same speed it appeared**

(...) What is happening today to Blue and White appears to be the fate of all new center parties with dreams of grandeur, which might do relatively well in their first elections, but fail to gain sufficient power to form an alternative to the regime they seek to oust. (...) Who, within the "just not Bibi" camp, will be able to form a stable government, made up of a diverse group of right, left and center parties, all of which believe that a change is vital, not necessarily for ideological reasons, but, rather, to rid Israel of a corrupt regime based on the personality cult of a man whose trial on three criminal indictments is about to begin, who has managed to shake the democratic foundations of the state, as well as its social cohesion in the last few years? (...) Gideon Sa'ar, Naftali Bennett or Avigdor Liberman (...) believe that Netanyahu must go, and share very negative personal experiences serving under him. (...) The non-right-wing parties that are natural candidates to join this government will be Yesh Atid (...), Ron Huldai's The Israelis, Blue and White (if it survives), the Labor Party (if it survives), Meretz (if it survives), or any new center-left combination that might replace them within the next month.

(...) what happens in Israeli politics in the next 75 days will undoubtedly be as fascinating as it will be fateful. (...)

Susan Hattis Rolef, JPO, 03.01.21

### **A new day, a new party**

(...) a new campaign brings with it new parties (...), which often fall apart soon after the election or, perhaps, last just until the next election. (...) when the only purpose of establishing new parties is to politically eliminate other parties or other people and

to take control instead, nothing good can come out of such political maneuvers. (...) You cannot achieve anything by splitting the society. (...) we know how destructive division is to our society. What do we do? We realize that we cannot reconcile our differences, yet we must find a way to coexist despite the fragmentation. (...) without division, there is no unity. If we have no disagreements, we can live peacefully next to each other, but not with each other. We may live side by side, but not in any form of unity, but as neighbors who ignore one another, oblivious to each other's existence. (...) we humans must toil on our connection, exert for it, and overcome hatred and conflicts. (...)

Michael Laitman, IHY, 04.01.21

### **Benny Gantz's political career is not over yet**

(...) Hendel and Hauser were right-wingers who never hid their positions. (...) This is why they've now joined Gideon Sa'ar, which is much better fit for them. Sa'ar is a right-wing radical who has strong ideological views and lots of integrity. (...) Blue and White, in its strange composition, never missed an opportunity to make a bad decision (...) the person who more than anyone else is responsible for the fact that a right-wing government could not be formed is Benny Gantz. (...) On the other hand, if it weren't for Benny Gantz, Blue and White would not have been created, there wouldn't have been a political party to stand up against Likud, and Bibi would have easily formed a government two years ago. The person whose decision hampered Bibi's abilities was Benny Gantz. (...) The truth is that Gantz displayed more courage than anyone else during the moment that brought about such a dramatic change in Israeli politics. (...) Even the harshest of his critics claim that he is a decent person and that even when he did err, he did so in good faith and believing that he was doing the right thing for the State of Israel, and not looking out for himself, his wife or children or his own personal or legal interests. How many senior Israeli politicians can we say this about? (...) He might never become prime minister, but he just may be the one to garner enough votes to make him the decisive factor in the next election (...).

Ehud Olmert, JPO, 07.01.21

### **The Israeli Left's Plot to Save Netanyahu**

In the past weeks, leaders on the left have been scheming to keep Netanyahu in power. In his wildest dreams, Netanyahu himself, the cleverest of politicians, probably never imagined such an efficient

plot. It would have seemed inconceivable that the left would actually serve up on a silver platter an immunity government that will save him from facing trial. (...) the question of immunity will rest on just a few thousand votes. The two blocs (...) are polling neck-and-neck, on the brink of the 61 Knesset seats needed for a majority. Every wasted vote will bring the other side that much closer to the target. (...) the center-left stands to waste far more than 1,400 votes. Moshe Ya'alon, Yaron Zelekha, Ofer Shelah, what's left of Labor and other parties – the polls show that each may draw the support of hundreds of thousands of voters, but will fall short of entering the Knesset. (...) And that's still within the optimistic scenario in which the small parties in this bloc that currently do pass the threshold – Hayisraelim, Kahol Lavan and Meretz – really do make it, otherwise the number of wasted votes will be nearly half a million. A reminder to all the self-styled leaders: For every Knesset seat that they leave outside, half goes to the right-wing bloc. Right now they're leaving out at least six, which means Netanyahu gets at least three, which ensures him a government. (...) The desire for a range of parties that will reflect a range of voices, contrary to the confederation of views in Kahol Lavan, is understandable. But the Israeli system requires that politicians make common cause (...) the system requires political mergers, otherwise both the politician and the voters of their not-quite-large-enough political camp risk political oblivion. (...)

Amnon Harari, HAA, 14.01.21

### 3. Sturm auf den US-Kongress

*Schockiert reagierte Ministerpräsident Benjamin Netanyahu auf die Erstürmung des Kongresses in der US-Hauptstadt Washington. Er bezeichnete die Ausschreitungen als "schändliche Tat, die aufs Schärfste zu verurteilen ist". Auf eine eventuelle Mitverantwortung für die Entwicklungen seitens US-Präsident Donald Trump ging Netanyahu nicht ein. Die beiden Politiker verbindet eine enge Freundschaft. Auf Twitter verurteilte auch Außenminister Gabi Ashkenazi den Angriff auf die „Festung der Welt-Demokratie“. Als Zeichen der Solidarität mit der US-Demokratie beleuchtete das Rathaus von Tel Aviv die Fassade in den Farben der US-Flagge. In den israelischen Medien wurden die Ausschreitungen in Washington heftig diskutiert. Einige Stimmen fragten sich laut, ob ähnliche Vorkommnisse auch in Israel vorstellbar wären, falls Benjamin Netanyahu nach den Wahlen am 23. März die notwendige*

*Mehrheit zur Regierungsbildung nicht mehr zusammen bekäme.*

### What happened at the Capitol can happen at the Israeli Knesset

Israel, like the United States of America, is no stranger to violence. Both countries have sadly been devastated by terrorist attacks and have seen their political leaders assassinated. But watching the images of thousands of people breach the Capitol (...) with the encouragement of the US president seemed like a new low for what was supposed to be a beacon of democracy to the world. (...) the thought that something like this cannot happen in Israel because Israelis are better at security or intelligence is not only arrogant, but naïve. It is the same sentiment that people used to share until November 4, 1995, when Yitzhak Rabin was assassinated. Until then, people were sure that something like the JFK assassination could never happen in Israel. It did. (...) We have daily protests on our streets – against the prime minister, against the police, against the IDF draft bill. Everyone is protesting about something. In addition, we have a prime minister like the US president who daily attacks the police, the attorney-general, the courts and the media. The cases against the prime minister are referred to as an attempted coup, and together with senior members of his party, they call on people to resist. The prime minister openly pushes a narrative that he and his followers are second-class citizens, and that a deep state – the justice system in this case – is out to bring him down because he is from the Right and they are from the Left. Sound familiar? (...) when democracy – its values and its institutions – are consistently and systematically attacked, eroded and dismantled. Violence is a potential next step. (...)

Jaakov Katz, JPO, 07.01.21

### What happened in Washington can happen in Israel too

The violent mob and its attack on the United States Congress (...) was the direct result of a union between a populist president suffering from a severe personality disorder and tens of thousands of angry followers who like him believe their country was stolen from them. But what made this union so explosive was the use of social media, spreading incitement, fake news and conspiracy theories at the speed of light. (...) This digital monster, which does not differentiate good from evil and truth from lies, has risen up against its creators. Other than out-

going President Donald Trump and the violent thugs who rioted in his name, the blame must be directed at the leaders of the Republican Party. (...) They knew how dangerous he was, but did nothing to stop him. Many of them (...) publicly supported his mendacious claims, granting him an illusion of legitimacy when he insisted the elections were stolen from him. (...) Trump began legitimizing right-wing violence early in his administration. (...) Storming Congress was only to be expected and the unacceptable ease with which the mob was able to breach the Capitol must be investigated and understood. (...) Not only America's political system should learn from the events that unfolded before the eyes of the entire world. Populists and unruly masses, nursing feelings of disfranchisement, exist elsewhere. (...)  
Ron Ben-Yishai, YED, 08.01.21

### **In Israel Too, the Virus Breaks Down Society, Community and the Most Basic Norms**

Above all, the crazy images from Capitol Hill (...) are being ascribed, for good reason, to the conduct and legacy of the outgoing president who apparently suffers from disorders that only someone with a psychology background could define. Donald Trump's presidency will be remembered as an inconceivable mishap, a noisy and continuous disruption, a bleak chapter in history whose causes will be the subject of myriad historical and cultural studies. (...) it's possible and apparently necessary to place these pictures from Washington in the album of the terrible year of the coronavirus, whose greatest damage – with the exception of the lives it continues to claim – has been the destruction of the community and society. And in the wake of that, we've suffered the unbearable weakening of the individual. Events like what just happened in Washington (...) are displays at the extreme. But day in and day out, countless less dramatic scenes of disintegration are taking place – the disintegration of the social structures that give people their sensitivity and inspiration. The outside is abandoned. Flocks are scattering. Power is flowing to the few who rule the many – the coronavirus age is a paradise of dictators or those with a lust for power. People who just want to make a living, meet with friends or just breathe some fresh air are harassed by the police. People are afraid of losing their jobs. People are afraid of freely expressing their opinions (...). There is no conversation, no togetherness, no cultural life. There is fear. (...) what's happening in people's inner worlds, in the absence of an external world to moderate it. All this makes it easier to understand the

desperate need for sharp divisions, for clear categorization. The ultra-Orthodox are to blame. The protesters are anarchists. (...) We all have our own demon, and that demon has a name, a face or an identity and must be deemed the guilty party in this insulting and infuriating situation. The division into good guys and bad guys is an almost desperate attempt to impose some order on the chaos. To determine cause and effect. (...) thinking about the tightening of the lockdown is suffocating and depressing because it reminds us of and perpetuates the disintegration and its dangers, the loss it's causing. May it be the last lockdown.

Ravit Hecht, HAA, 08.01.21

### **In the wake of tragedy, it's time to make a change**

(...) It would be a mistake to blame Donald Trump for what happened at the Capitol. His words (...) may have contributed (...), but at the end of the day, everyone is responsible for their own actions. (...) It is the people themselves that are to blame. No, not just the people who rioted and vandalized and terrorized the Capitol. It is all people who refuse to have compassion and understanding for their fellow man. We as a society have changed. (...) Somewhere along the way, people stopped respecting each other. (...) When people who disagree shut each other out, the door doesn't just stay shut – it starts to splinter and break from the tension. Those who stand on each side become separate entities from each other with different beliefs, values and perspectives. (...) The tension builds and spills over. It spills over as looting and rioting in the name Black Lives Matter. It spills over into not-so peaceful protests. (...) What is happening in America now should serve as a wake-up call to us all. We are living through an incredibly tense and uncertain time (...) a breeding ground for anger and resentment. (...) we need to make a change. Start small – speak to one person who disagrees with you on one issue, and, without attacking each other, try to come to an understanding. (...) There can be no real unity though, without discourse and understanding. (...)

Meira Lerner, TOI, 08.01.21

### **Capitol riots prove Americans don't practice what they preach**

(...) Trump (...) did not stand on the sidelines. He inflamed tensions in a speech (...). But the compound and the offices weren't the only things destroyed in the riots. American democracy and the Republican party were destroyed along with them.

The world's most important democracy has proved how low a threshold it has. Despite all the talk of promoting democracy around the world, Americans find it hard to implement the system at home. The protesters, who clearly do not represent the majority of Republican voters, have also destroyed the party's legitimacy. (...) The radicalization among some of the party's members has already made it something of an outcast in certain circles. (...) Instead of using democratic means to promote moves their rivals oppose, they now rule out democracy when they don't get their way. (...) If the Republican party wants to maintain any shred of legitimacy moving forward, it, as well as the man at its head, must speak in one clear voice (...). Americans have a right to protest if they believe there was voter fraud. But they don't have the right to try and forcefully change the election outcome. (...)  
Ofit Dayan, IHY, 08.01.21

#### 4. Medienquerschnitt

##### Israel, Biden und neue Gespräche mit Teheran

###### Restoring Iran nuclear deal is good for Israel

(...) despite the existential importance of reaching a two-state solution with the Palestinians and preventing a binational catastrophe, there is no more urgent priority at the moment than a return to the 2015 nuclear agreement (...) between the world powers (...) and Iran. This will immediately stop the prospect of Iranian nuclear breakout, which has become a very real possibility since the Trump administration's abandonment of the agreement. (...) the expectation that Biden will condition the return to the same reality before Trump unilaterally breached the agreement in significantly improving the agreement is unrealistic and even dangerous. In order to reach an agreement on all issues, a long and arduous negotiation is needed, which requires aligning with the other powers that were partners to the agreement in order for the front against Iran to be effective. (...) there is no chance that Iran, Russia and China will agree to return to negotiations before ending the (...) sanctions which were unilaterally renewed by Trump. There is great urgency to return to the agreement also due to the June elections in Iran (...). The Revolutionary Guard candidates are extremists who prefer that the Iranian economy continue to falter rather than negotiate with the West and compromise. (...) in the years since Trump withdrew from the agreement (...) American pressure has

failed to cause Iran to change policy, even though it has done much damage to the Iranian economy. In fact, the contrary is true. Economic pressure is of no value if it is not accompanied by a diplomatic route that will allow Iranian leaders to justify a policy change. (...) it is necessary to renew the international coalition vis-à-vis Iran and its expansion, and it is necessary to strengthen the pragmatic side in Iranian regime that favor the good of the Iranian economy over efforts to achieve Shiite hegemony in the Middle East. The Israeli government (...) must be a player that contributes to the international effort to stop Iran and (...) cooperate with the Biden government in its efforts to return to diplomacy with Iran (...).

Nadav Tamir, JPO, 06.01.21

##### Sauerteigprodukte in Hospitälern an Pessach erlaubt

###### An important victory in the battle against religious coercion

(...) the High Court of Justice rejected a request by the Chief Rabbinate and the attorney general that it reconsider its ruling from last April allowing chametz (leavened bread) to be brought into hospitals during the Pesach holiday. Supreme Court President Esther Hayut wrote that the risk of undermining kashrut in the hospitals doesn't outweigh the risk of undermining the basic rights of hospital visitors. The court thereby clearly marked the boundary between the state and citizens' food choices in a democratic country. The ban on bringing chametz into hospitals exists nowhere in the law or in Health Ministry regulations. (...) In recent years, both visitors and patients have reported that hospital security guards rummaged through their belongings and even confiscated chametz. (...) hospitals have no authority to bar people from bringing in chametz over Pesach, search visitors' belongings or make comments about the kashrut of their food (...). This is an important victory in the battle against religious coercion and against the justification for enforcing it through security guards functioning as religious police. (...) The battle over chametz, the High Court's ruling and the reactions to it are another reminder of how vital the court is as a check not only on ultra-nationalist tendencies that erode and endanger democracy, but also on anti-liberal religious tendencies. (...)

Editorial, HAA, 12.01.21

## Hexenjagd auf palästinensische DJ

### Arrest of Palestinian feminist icon DJ Sama highlights repressive regime

If there's one thing oppressive regimes have in common, it's the silencing and arbitrary persecution of civilians who threaten the status quo. (...) the world (...) got a glimpse of the true face of the Palestinian Authority when world-renowned DJ and icon for Palestinian feminism, DJ Sama Abdulhadi, was arrested and detained by the Palestinian Authority for filming a video with 30 people at a Palestinian cultural site between Jericho and Jerusalem, with permission from the Palestinian Ministry of Tourism. (...) word spread around town that DJ Sama was holding a "party with alcohol" and "naked women at a mosque" at Nabi Musa (...). The Palestinian public was outraged, leading to local protests and ultimately, to DJ Sama's arrest and detainment for eight days by the Palestinian police. An initial reason for her arrest wasn't provided (...). As DJ Sama spent the start of the new year in a prison cell, the Palestinian public continued to protest and riot, even holding a mass gathering at Nabi Musa, rampaging and destroying parts of the EU-funded holy site in anger over the event. (...) DJ Sama was granted a permit for the filming by the Palestinian Ministry of Tourism, but once the public was outraged, the Palestinian government began a witch hunt targeting not only DJ Sama but also any and all involved in granting her the permit in the first place. (...) Sama was imprisoned (...) because of mob mentality and misogynistic bullying of a female Palestinian who refuses to fit the mold in a very conservative society. (...) DJ Sama was used as a scapegoat to teach a lesson to artists and civil society figures who don't fit into particular boxes of society and this is something all people of conscience must reject.

Emily Schrader, JPO, 04.01.21

Veröffentlicht im: Januar 2021

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