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1. Patt der Blöcke bei Parlamentswahl

Mit einem erneuten Patt endete die vierte Parlamentswahl innerhalb von nur zwei Jahren. Weder das Lager des amtierenden Regierungschefs Benjamin Netanyahu verfügt zusammen mit seinen erklärten Verbündeten über die nötige Mehrheit von 61 der insgesamt 120 Knesset-Sitze noch der Anti-Netanyahu-Block. Das heterogene Lager aus Rechten, Linken, Liberalen und arabischen Parteien hält immerhin 57 Mandate. Unentschlossen blieben zunächst die Parteien von Naftali Bennett, dem national-religiösen ehemaligen Bildungsminister mit seiner „Yamina“ (Nach rechts) und die islamisch-arabische Partei Ra’am unter Mansour Abbas. Beide gelten als Königsmacher und werden am Ende über die Zukunft Netanyahus entscheiden, der sich in einem Korruptionsverfahren vor Gericht verantworten muss und möglicherweise zu einer Gefängnisstrafe verurteilt wird. Eine weitere Regierungsperiode sieht Netanyahu als Chance, dem Richterspruch zu entkommen. Problematisch für ihn ist, dass er dazu neben den beiden ultra-orthodoxen Parteien, die vorerst fest zu ihm stehen, die offen rassistische Partei Religiöser Zionismus mit der muslimisch-antizionistischen Ra’am unter einen Hut bringen müsste.

Labor Zionism is the way forward

(...) Avoda, Israel's Labor Party, is the Party that established the State of Israel. Labor Zionism embodies a distinct vision of Jewish destiny as a free

nation, building a just society and safeguarding it. (...) If the last year and COVID-19 has taught us anything, it's that the social safety net established by Avoda, was the safety net that helped Israel overcome much of the challenges of the last year. The kuppot cholim community health providers, the medical establishment, the social services, and the National Insurance Institute are all fruits of Labor Zionism. To come out of the crisis, and to be prepared for future challenges we need to ensure our citizens have the infrastructure they can count on. These are exactly the times when it's all right to ask, what the country can do for us. This is specifically the agenda of Avoda. (...) Merav Michaeli won the leadership. She gathered the support and legitimacy of the party members, because of her outspoken positions on feminism, social affairs and public services, security, and also because she refused to join the Netanyahu-Gantz government on principle. Since Michaeli's victory and the internal processes of bringing in new blood, the party is vibrant and kicking and once more a relevant political player. The list is a reflection of Israeli society, with a common denominator of putting social issues at the heart of the decision making process. (...) Avoda has risen from the dead and is placing equality, education, social services, and much more on the table. The party believes that, like when we established the state, the Jewish State of Israel requires territorial compromises. Without those compromises,

Jews in the Jewish homeland will ultimately become a minority. (...)

Peter Lerner, JPO, 17.03.21

Meretz's positions are its strength, not its weakness

(...) Meretz's position comes from and should come from what is right (...). Meretz is the only party that presented the public with a peace plan based on Israeli-Palestinian agreement. The main points of the initiatives are a Palestinian state along the 1967 borders and an equal, mutually agreeable exchange of territories. (...) No prime minister in Israel has yet made any proposal like that. When an Israeli prime minister accepts it, there will be a real chance for peace. This model will improve security (...). For decades, Meretz has warned that building up the settlements not only causes security to deteriorate, but is also illegal and against the Fourth Geneva Convention as well as the International Criminal Court charter. And now a probe has been launched because of the Right's policies. We do not want to see any Israeli on trial in The Hague. The way to prevent that does not include enabling the crime of the settlements. The way to prevent Israelis from being tried in The Hague is to stop the settlement crime and reach a mutually agreeable end to the occupation. (...)

Mossi Raz, IHY, 19.03.21

Israel needs a new political approach

(...) There could be a Likud-led coalition or one made up of factions that oppose the Likud and its leader Benjamin Netanyahu. There could even be a fifth election cycle soon (...). It is, therefore, incumbent upon Israelis to search for a logical solution that would move the country forward. Israel must reboot many of its institutions, including its political establishment and leadership. One man alone is responsible for the repeated election campaigns and that is Netanyahu. (...) Israel should have an emergency government made up of the four leading parties outside Likud: Yesh Atid; Yamina; New Hope; and Yisrael Beytenu. The four people at the head of these parties should lead the country in a temporary government that would be in power for a year or two at most, in order to deal with the problems caused by Netanyahu and his governments over recent years. The new government would concentrate its efforts on issues that have a wide consensus and postpone matters of ideology for a later date. (...) The country's political system must be rebuilt on the basis of justice and ethics. There must be legislation

to bar anyone who indicted for crimes from running for prime minister. (...) The courts are the third branch of government and must be protected. There has to be a supermajority of 75 or 80 for MKs to reinstate any law overturned the Supreme Court. It is imperative to rebuild public trust in the government, repair the rifts in Israeli society and have some national reconciliation after the toxic atmosphere of the past two years. (...) The success or failure of such a government would depend on the politicians that comprise it. If they are able to put their egos aside for the good of the country, it may yet succeed in its mission.

Amos Malka, YED, 21.03.21

Goodbye to a lousy government

(...) no one will miss the outgoing government. This includes Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (...). This also includes the ministers who received fancy portfolios albeit with zero authority (...) the fate of Israel's 35th government, formed at the peak of the coronavirus pandemic in Israel, was writ in stone before it ever convened. This is primarily because the gulf between Netanyahu and Gantz was too wide to bridge. (...) Netanyahu (...) invested most of his efforts in preserving his bloc, first by allowing Ben-Gurion Airport to remain open in the midst of the pandemic so as to not upset then-U.S. president Donald Trump and the Haredi sector. Netanyahu also worked to eviscerate the Defense and Foreign ministries - both headed by Blue & White ministers - while bending the Finance Ministry to his own personal and political needs. At the height of the health crisis, Netanyahu effectively neutralized all his ministers sans the Health Ministry, which was also under to his authority. All Gantz could do is use the coalition agreement to torpedo any unlawful moves by his erstwhile partner, such as Netanyahu's attempts to abolish the independence of the judicial system. For these reasons, the fourth election in two years, more so than the three that preceded it, is Netanyahu's fault. Meanwhile Netanyahu has promised his constituents a "full right-wing government," though he (...) leaves the definition of "full right-wing" to the likes of his extremist protégés Bezael Smotrich and Itamar Ben-Gvir, who define it as the destruction of the state's legal system. (...)

Nahum Barnea, YED, 23.03.21

The era of two political blocs is over

The fact that Arab politicians have voiced support for Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (...) says everything you need to know about the election cam-

campaign, as it underscores a big leap forward in the relations between Likud and Arab voters. (...) This campaign has managed to dispel several myths (...). The two myths that have been dispelled is the presupposition that there are two political blocs. This was true in past elections, but it turns out that the Left doesn't really have a bloc that will be able to form a government (...) the only glue holding together the Left is the personal animosity toward Netanyahu, but it is fragmented as ever. (...) The Likud under Netanyahu's leadership has waged war on two fronts during the past 12 months. One front is the pandemic, and the other is the political climate. (...) The public, despite being brainwashed by the media, has experienced first hand what the meaning of coming back to life is. This has given Likud a boost, with voters faced with only one other option: continued political gridlock.

Amnon Lord, IHY, 23.03.21

Workable unity government needed to keep Israel from a fifth election

It will be torturous for anyone to form a government with the cards the Israeli electorate dealt out (...). There are jokers in this hand, and kings and queens and aces, but not enough cards of the same rank or the same suit to come up with a full house or a straight – in other words, to form a government. (...) If Israel goes to an astonishing fifth election, the results will be the same as in the previous four. This is who we are right now: a nation split in two over Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. The only thing that could, like a magic wand, clear up this political logjam would be either for Netanyahu to voluntarily step down, or for the Likud to show him the door. (...) Netanyahu's opponents have tried to convince the public that this is an untenable and undemocratic situation. But they failed (...). And the political card Netanyahu must recognize is that he cannot form a coalition with his political allies that will enable him to get immunity. He does not have the numbers. Instead of dragging the nation to yet another election in the hope that he will get those numbers, he now has to move on and realize immunity is not in the offing. Dealing with the deck the electorate dealt means recognizing compromises will need to be made and deep-seated animosities set aside, so that a functioning government can be formed that is able to lead the country for more than a year. (...) Now is the time for the nation's politicians to genuinely put Israel above all else and form as wide a government as possible, including elements from the Right and the Left, the ultra-Orthodox and the

secular, and – for the first time – the Arab sector. (...)

Editorial, JPO, 24.03.21

Bennett, don't join Netanyahu

(...) Israel is stuck. Neither of the blocs can declare victory, and the possibility of a fifth election hasn't been taken off the table. (...) The good news is that Meretz, Labor and Kahol Lavan not only passed the electoral threshold but did so comfortably, with at least six seats apiece and apparently even more. The bad news is that the right grew stronger, and that even if the country is clearly split in two about Netanyahu, from an ideological standpoint, the left is still in bad shape. The unabashedly right-wing views of many Knesset members in the anti-Netanyahu bloc make them good candidates to desert to Netanyahu's bloc, their natural political home. We can only hope that when Netanyahu tries to entice them, they, as well as Bennett and his colleagues in Yamina, will remember who they're dealing with and what is at stake. Bennett, his Yamina colleagues and all the rightists in the "anyone but Bibi camp" have a responsibility to stop Netanyahu, who won't hesitate to use any means to escape justice. They must prevent the governing coalition of his dreams, which would be the most extremist, nationalist and benighted in Israel's history (...). This is a battle for the country, and we must hope they will choose to be on the right side of history.

Editorial, HAA, 24.03.21

2. Pessah 2021

Rechtzeitig zum diesjährigen Pessach-Seder lockerte die israelische Regierung die Corona-Maßnahmen. Dreimal musste das Land in einen strengen Lockdown. Israel zog mit der unbürokratischen, massiven Impfkampagne weltweit Bewunderung auf sich. Ende März lag die 7-Tage-Inzidenz bei 73. Anders als im vergangenen Jahr, als Familienbesuche an Pessach, mit dem an den Auszug des jüdischen Volkes aus Ägypten erinnert wird, strikt untersagt blieben, waren dieses Jahr die Bewegungseinschränkungen innerhalb der Landesgrenzen aufgehoben. Deutlich gedämpft blieb indes der internationale Tourismus. Aus Sorge vor Corona-Mutationen bleibt die Einreise nach Israel weitgehend auf Fluggäste mit israelischem Pass beschränkt. Obschon der Binnentourismus boomt, bedeutet das für die Tourismusbranche gerade in der Oster- und Pessachzeit schmerzhaft Einnahmeverluste.

Why we should include Zipporah in the Seder

Zipporah, the wife of Moses, receives very little exposure in the Bible. She is ostensibly in the shadow of the Jewish story but in fact, when we delve more deeply into the story, she appears to constitute it. Zipporah proactively creates the legendary covenant between man and God through the de facto performance of the commandment of circumcision. God commands the removal of the foreskin of every Jewish male on the eighth day of life, and this act constitutes a rite of passage that transfers the baby from the status of an uncircumcised person to the status of a Jew, granting him a Jewish identity and affiliation. Moses delays in performing the act and, just before the angel comes to punish the child for his father's failure to perform the task, his wife, Zipporah, takes the initiative and, with the help of a flint stone (...), cuts the foreskin, turning her son Gershom into a Jew and saving his life. (...) The act of circumcision is a transformative act that changes a universal anonymous person into an entity with a specific, particular Jewish identity. This particular act of circumcision was an act of rescue, an act in which the spirit overcame the material, an act of female agency seizing the moment and turning it into an act of connection and of hope. (...) It is worth noting that since the time of Abraham the role of mohel (...) has been perceived as a distinctly male role. (...) The following story was told by Rabbi Israel Shapira, the Bluzhever Rebbe, who witnessed it during his incarceration in the Janowska concentration camp, on the outskirts of the city of Lvov, Poland. (...) a gaunt, haggard woman approached the rabbi and asked him for a knife. (...) The woman took the knife the rabbi had given her, approached a pile of rags on the floor, opened it and suddenly a small baby was revealed. And so, right before the astonished eyes of those present and the Nazi soldiers, the woman circumcised the baby, cutting off his foreskin quickly and professionally (...). The stories of Zipporah and the woman from the Janowska camp ought to enter the memorial pantheon of the Seder night. Moreover, we should mention them among the words of the Haggadah that we relate to ourselves and our loved ones on Seder night. This year, too, we will again consciously choose freedom and will base it on the acts carried out by two brave women who, in a moment of utter darkness, chose a liberating action of identity and, with their own two hands, created freedom and redemption.

Zehavit Gross, JPO, 24.03.21

Passover message could bring together Israelis of all sectors

With Passover (...) Israelis of all sectors of the population can relate to the holiday's message of freedom. Last year Israelis were locked down at home on the night of the Seder, unable to hold the big family meals that are a feature of the holiday for so many of us. People took to their balconies to sing "Mah Nishtanah" and "Chad Gadya," at a distance from their neighbors, to feel like they were part of something bigger. Some non-Orthodox families held Seders over Zoom. Yet nothing compares to the real thing, and many expressed sadness and longing for their traditional Seders. That longing continued in Israel, through three lockdowns, and a year in which sickness and death were at the beginning of every newscast and seemed to lurk around every corner. Many thousands of Israelis lost their livelihoods. Now, after a year of immense difficulties for so many of us, we are going from being enslaved by COVID-19 to freedom. (...) we can now enjoy our Passover with our loved ones, as we are accustomed to doing. (...) this Passover provides a fitting occasion to celebrate the freedoms that have been returned to us after a year of severe restrictions. Why is this night different from all other nights? Because we can finally have a Passover Seder with our full families. (...)

Editorial, JPO, 25.03.21

Celebrating Freedom

Pesach is all about freedom, a concept that has taken on new meaning for most of us given what the world has been like over the past 12 months. (...) There were no guests or festive gatherings last Pesach and there were many people who spent yom tov completely alone. Our shuls were locked and we faced a devastating virus that left us mourning unfathomable losses, even as we had serious reason to fear for our personal safety and that of our loved ones. (...) this Pesach is a completely different experience, one where we can enjoy freedoms that we only dreamed of last year. (...) As we emerge cautiously from our modern-day plague and share yom tov with friends and family, the words of the Hagada are coming alive in ways that most of us haven't seen before, with Hashem figuratively splitting seas for us and taking us from darkness to light. (...) But even as we savor our newfound freedoms, it is important to remember that there are people in our communities who have yet to be liberated from the chains that enslave them. Those who struggle with abuse, addiction, and other mental health is-

sues are still very much in the dark, living the frightening life that we remember all too well from last year. (...) As we sit down on Pesach night and invite those who are hungry to come and join us, let us all open our hearts to those who are still being plagued with hardships and support them in any way we can as we take the time to truly contemplate what it means to go from slavery to freedom and from darkness to light.

Zvi Gluck, TOI, 25.03.21

Our story

On seder night, we will tell a story (...) we repeat in the same form, in every home, in every community, on a set date, for thousands of years already. Only we, the Jews, have a story whose first chapters were written by our ancestors, and whose later chapters, we write ourselves. This unique night demands that once a year, we leave the here and now, our little every day joys and troubles (...) to connect to "the Jewish people through the generations" and understand that we are part of a those generations. These terms are a little grandiose for most of us, but the Passover Haggada simplifies them with the wisdom of the ancients. We have an obligation to the past – our history is not devoid of meaning – and to the future, because we have a destiny. That is how identity is created. (...) We have returned to our land, to some extent inspired by the Exodus. That huge drama has inspired a spirit of revolution and hope in other peoples and societies, too, but only for us is it genetic code. We are the only ones who see ourselves in this ancient and contemporary story. We are the only ones commanded to feel it in every generation, to see ourselves and show ourselves as if we were the ones leaving Egypt now. (...)

Nadav Shragai, IHY, 26.03.21

A very different Passover in Bahrain

(...) For the first time in our history, we are celebrating Passover with the Jewish communities of the Gulf (...). As Jewish life continues to grow in the Gulf, the local Jewish communities of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates decided to come together to share resources. (...) While each of our communities remains independent, we share a common goal and vision for Jewish life in the GCC to flourish for the benefit of both residents and visitors. (...) We have arranged for nearly 650 pounds of matzah to be shipped to the six GCC countries along with kosher-for-Passover food. The volume of matzah we are

bringing in speaks to the growth of Jewish life regionally. (...) We are celebrating the reopening of our synagogue, The House of the Ten Commandments, in Manama. Our synagogue is a regional symbol of the possibilities for Jewish life to grow in the Gulf. It is the oldest synagogue in the Gulf and, following its recent renovation, we look forward to welcoming not just our immediate Jewish community, but tourists and local students of all faiths as well. We cannot wait to provide tours for them as they learn more about Judaism. (...) Because of the signing of the Abraham Accords, that dream is now a reality and many of us will spend time next year in Jerusalem. (...)

Houda Nonoo, YED, 26.03.21

The Passover codicil a Jew must never overlook

(...) We began the Seder as slaves in Egypt, tasting salty tears. Then, we raced through the desert sand and ate matzah baked in a hurry. We passed through the Sea of Reeds and escaped from Pharaoh's army. We praised God for helping us escape and for saving our lives. Now our job at the Seder of remembering, telling and re-living this astonishing journey to freedom has been completed. (...) The Haggadah ends with the Jewish people's great hope for the future: "Next Year in Jerusalem", when Jerusalem, the eternal capital of the Jewish people is the symbol of the Jewish people's eternity. (...) The Israelite-Jews escaped Pharaoh's annihilation decree and hoped to enter their promised homeland in the near or not so far-off future. Present time or the near or not-so-far-off future must not be taken for granted.

Nurit Greenger, IHY, 31.03.21

3. Zurück zur Normalität

Israel gehört zu den ersten Ländern der Welt, deren Regierung die Pandemie landesweit als besiegt erklärt. Befreit von den Corona-Maßnahmen strömen hunderttausende Menschen über die Feiertage an die Strände, in die Naturparks, zum Shoppen, in Restaurants und Bars. Der Grüne Impfpass macht es möglich, sogar Schwimmbäder und Fitnesszentren der breiten Öffentlichkeit zugänglich zu machen. Eine Diskussion des menschenrechtlichen Aspekts findet kaum statt. In Israel wird überwiegend mit dem Pfizer-Biontech-Vakzin geimpft. Nachdem gut die Hälfte der rund 9,3 Millionen Einwohner_innen bereits zweimal geimpft wurde, erwägt das Gesundheitsministerium ab Mai auch die Impfung von 12-

bis 15-Jährigen. Laut Pfizer-Biontech deutete eine Zulassungsstudie auf eine Wirksamkeit des Impfstoffs in dieser Altersgruppe von hundert Prozent.

The coronavirus gave Israel another reason to choke Gaza

(...) Over the past year, health experts and senior Israeli officials have met almost daily to discuss the restrictions that would stop the virus from spreading. In the past 12 months Israel has made more than 60 changes regarding the restrictions on movement and possibilities for letting West Bank residents enter Israel for work. But whether there was a need to continue the suffocating lockdown on Gaza was discussed zero times. If Israel's internal policy is a volatile chart like the product of an echocardiogram, Gaza policy has flatlined. If there's a plan to lift the coronavirus lockdown on Gaza, it's not in sight. Exceptions committees at Ben-Gurion Airport are set up and disbanded, (...) but at the Erez crossing only those needing critical medical care and a few others are allowed through. (...) Meanwhile, Israel continues to ignore its duty to vaccinate the rest of the Palestinians, whom it tries not to see even though they share the same piece of land between the river and the sea. Among them are thousands of permit holders in Gaza, but Israel is blocking their exit to make a living in Israel and the West Bank, contributing directly to a further deterioration in the Strip. (...) There is no way to solve this moral and legal failure in whose name Israel is willing even to risk its people's lives without understanding that its Gaza policy isn't viable and must change.

Noa Galili, HAA, 19.03.21

It is too soon to declare victory over the pandemic

Long before anyone even dreamed of vaccines, Israel emerged from its first lockdown to fight the coronavirus pandemic (...). An irresponsible decision to reopen the economy despite warnings from health professionals, coupled with reprehensible behavior from some business owners, religious groups and others, led to a second lockdown. (...) Israelis would be wise to remember these facts, especially when some officials are extending "apologies" to the Haredi community for advocating harsh restrictions during the Purim holiday at the end of February. The relatively low morbidity after Purim should not be celebrated. We should look at just how low it could have been, had health regulations over Purim been observed and not flouted across many sectors of Israeli society. Israelis paid dearly

for cutting loose and celebrating the holiday irresponsibly with secular street parties and religious gatherings. (...) Israel should wait before celebrating the end of the pandemic (...). Israel has prematurely celebrated the end of the pandemic twice in the past year. This eagerness has cost lives and destroyed livelihoods. Why would we repeat the same mistakes now, when we are so close to real victory?
Sever Plocker, YED, 19.03.21

Let us celebrate breaking the bonds of the coronavirus

Israel's recovery is particularly conspicuous amid the backdrop of the current situation in Europe, which is dealing with a vaccine shortage, a public disinterested in getting vaccinated, spiking morbidity rates, lockdowns and protests. (...) The State of Israel is the first in the world to see the light at the end of the tunnel (...) thanks to the extraordinary combination of the Israeli government importing enough vaccines, a public health system with rare capabilities, and the majority of the public answering the bell to get vaccinated (...). This is also the time to reopen the country's borders to all Israelis. The leadership must unite the tribes. (...) Israel can bring home its citizens from across the globe when they need help. Now, too, as an ethical matter of the highest order, the country must not close its gates to its citizens. (...) This is also the time, now more than ever, to remember that if we are united, no force in the world can defeat us.

Arnon Ofek, IHY, 26.03.21

Coronavirus: The pandemic's impact on emotional health

(...) The real change caused by the virus was that those who were already in unsafe relationships had nowhere to go other than their homes, which were unsafe. With that in mind, the increase in domestic violence complaints means something very different. The abused were in danger before there was a single lockdown; COVID simply intensified something that already existed. (...) While the pandemic raised the urgency for emotional healthcare (...) the issues clients had were unrelated to the pandemic itself. (...) Even in severe situations, people are often unaware of or unable to get the help they need. (...) In 2021, we as a society should invest in and value emotional health services to the point where anyone in our country can swipe their insurance card and receive quality emotional health services. Emotional health is beneficial for individuals and society. (...) coping by avoidance doesn't really

work. The coronavirus is a prime example of this. School is not a place for children to hide from physically abusive parents. (...) People shouldn't have to figure out how to deal with their emotional health issues amid a vacuum of affordable quality services. Eventually, stress levels increase and the ways we use to cope won't work anymore. COVID-19 is not the only stressor out there. If we address our issues head-on, we won't have to deal with them later. (...) COVID-19 lifted up the rug and showed us what's underneath: people who need help. (...) As we move out of the pandemic, we stand to gain tremendously from revisiting the way we talk about and subsequently address emotional health in our communities. If we do, the next crisis (...) won't result in these same statistics. (...)

Mordechai Katz, JPO, 30.03.21

4. Medienquerschnitt

Belastungsprobe für die Beziehungen zwischen Israel und Jordanien

A third front?

The weakness of the government in Jordan could lead to very difficult situations for Israel. (...) As if Israel, and particularly the IDF, didn't have enough to worry about, with Hezbollah, Syria, Islamic Jihad and Hamas on its northern and southern borders, they may very well be faced with a major threat in the east, on the very long border with Jordan. A weak, bankrupt government in Amman, is now faced with a threat to its control of the Temple Mount because of the Abraham Accords and disappearing support for the Jordanian position there, as well as the importance of the Mount itself and the al-Aqsa mosque, increasingly coming under critical review by Sunni Muslim authorities.

In the upcoming months, Jordan may very well be subject to (...) 1. A coup-d'etat by the Bedouin-dominated Jordanian army, overthrowing the Hashemite monarchy, which has shown itself increasingly unable to govern the country effectively, establishing a military dictatorship. 2. A revolution encouraged and supported by Islamist terrorist organizations, with Iranian support, on the part of the majority "Palestinian" population. Obviously, alternative number two is the less desirable outcome from the Israeli standpoint, since any such upheaval would undoubtedly spill over into the West Bank, meaning that Israel would be threatened by Islamist extremist control all along its eastern border--an IDF night-

mare. Should such an upheaval take place, Israel would have little choice but to preempt anti-Israeli activity along its long eastern frontier by invading and taking over the West Bank, with all that that would entail, and perhaps Jordan itself, with the purpose of installing a more moderate government. (...)

Norman Bailey, GLO, 22.03.21

Netanyahu, Don't endanger the stability with Jordan

(...) Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has delayed approval of a Jordanian request for water, despite the recommendations of Israeli experts (...). In response, Jordan refused to let Netanyahu fly out of Amman for a pre-election visit to the United Arab Emirates. The tension increased further when Netanyahu, in an unprecedented step he took without consulting the relevant authorities, ordered the immediate closure of Israeli airspace to flights from Jordan, in violation of bilateral agreements. Aviation authorities eventually persuaded him to retract the order. Now it turns out, however, that the prime minister, in what appears to be an act of personal vengeance for thwarting his electioneering in the Persian Gulf, is delaying routine approval of Jordan's request for additional water (...). This affair only adds to the growing tension between Netanyahu's government and the Jordanian monarchy. (...) Netanyahu is acting like he is willing to endanger the stability of the peace agreements with Jordan. That is an egregious strategic error. (...) The crisis with Jordan, a country critical to Israel's security and welfare, offers an opportunity to present an alternative at a time when a new government is in the making. (...) we must not abandon long-standing agreements with our close neighbors.

Editorial, HAA, 29.03.21

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Verantwortlich:

Dr. Paul Pasch,
Leiter der Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Israel

Redaktion:

Susanne Knaul
Judith Stelmach

Homepage: www.fes.org.il

Email: fes@fes.org.il