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1. Netanyahu bei der Regierungsbildung gescheitert

Bis zum letzten Moment kämpfte Israels amtierender Regierungschef Benjamin Netanyahu um seine politische Zukunft, die auch entscheidend dafür ist, ob er verurteilt wird und möglicherweise wegen Korruption für Jahre ins Gefängnis geschickt wird. Netanyahu war nach den Parlamentswahlen am 23. März von Staatspräsident Reuven Rivlin mit der Regierungsbildung beauftragt worden. Die Pattsituation der Blöcke erschwerte die Aufgabe, eine Mehrheit für die Regierungskoalition zu erreichen. Netanyahus Mandat für die Regierungsbildung lief schließlich am 4. Mai ab, ohne dass es ihm gelungen war, eine Koalition zu bilden. In einem Verzweiflungsakt forderte Netanyahu ein „schnelles Referendum, um aus der politischen Sackgasse herauszukommen“. Damit zielt er auf die Direktwahl des Regierungschefs. Um nicht zum fünften Mal innerhalb von nur zwei Jahren wählen zu müssen, rief Oppositionsführer Yair Lapid von der Zukunftspartei (Yesh Atid), der nun von Präsident Rivlin mit der Regierungsbildung beauftragt wurde, zur Bildung einer Einheitsregierung auf. Nötig sei eine Regierung, "die das Vertrauen zwischen der Öffentlichkeit und ihren Anführern wiederherstellt".

What's wrong with Israel's political system?

Last month's elections in Israel – the fourth in two years – failed once again to produce decisive re-

sults, and the country is left to wonder if there is any way out of its current political stalemate. (...) Even if a government will be formed, it will probably feature the most unlikely composition (...). Part of this electoral madness has to do, no doubt, with the extremely polarizing leadership of Netanyahu, whose dominance in the Israeli political landscape has produced pro and anti-Netanyahu camps – of an almost equal size - whose fervent support or opposition to the current prime minister has become their dominant, if not defining political attribute. The dual allegiance of several small right wing parties both to the anti-Netanyahu cause and to traditional right-wing agendas has made it impossible for them to join either Netanyahu or his left-wing opponents. This, together with the failed experiment in building a grand coalition after the third elections in 2020 has resulted in political deadlock and the inability to form stable governments.

On a deeper level, however, one may see the Israeli political crisis as one focused (...) on the future of Israeli democracy: Will the country be first and foremost Jewish or democratic? This foundational tension, which manifests itself in a host of unresolved political issues – including the relationships between state and religion, the commitment to civic equality and rights of members of minority groups, and the scope of judicial review over political decisions – has been increasingly moving to the forefront of Israeli politics (...). The four rounds of election can (...) be seen (...) as a process of realignment of the Israeli

political map with the severance of old alliances and gradual formulation of new ones. What's at stake is not just the political and legal fate of Netanyahu, but also the general direction the politics of the country will pursue from the current point of inflection: Whether it will be led by a political constellation committed to the values of a liberal democracy and to strong and independent democratic institutions, or continue to be led by political forces supporting traditional or conservative values and the reigning-in of "elitist" democratic "gatekeepers."

Prof. Yuval Shany, JPO, 21.04.21

Netanyahu is attacking Israel. Stop him

Israel is under attack, only this time the attack is coming from within. What Benjamin Netanyahu showed (...) is that there is no line he is not willing to cross when it comes to undermining, weakening and sabotaging Israel's democratic character and rule of law. (...) Here was a single person holding an entire nation hostage solely to advance his own personal interests. Netanyahu's refusal to appoint a justice minister is a direct assault on this nation. It is that simple. His reasoning is also simple: Netanyahu does not want to fill the role with someone who is not subservient and willing to go along with coordinated efforts to escape his bribery trial. (...) The government is being run by a person who puts himself before the nation. (...) Netanyahu was the person who personally violated Israeli law by trying to appoint one of his Likud cronies as justice minister, breaking the law that he himself passed and violating the agreement with Blue and White that he himself signed. (...) Netanyahu can no longer serve as prime minister. His decisions are not made to advance the security, safety and stability of the country or its citizens, but rather what's good for him and him alone. Israel deserves better.

Yaakov Katz, JPO, 27.04.21

Israel deserves more than Netanyahu's chaotic governance

The State of Israel is a worrying situation and in urgent need of true leadership (...) Netanyahu is not the right man (...). There is no possible military action that Israel can take against Iran's nuclear facilities without the assistance and even active participation of the United States. (...) Only direct talks between the Israeli prime minister and the American president could result in any policy shift, and that is not scheduled to happen any time soon. (...) Another notion promoted by the prime minister, that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict could be resolved

without addressing Palestinian demands, is revealing itself to be pure fantasy. (...) The Hamas terror group that rules Gaza is unrelenting in its efforts to increase its might on the West Bank and it too must be stopped at all cost. But yet again Israel appears to have no clear strategic plan. And with no dialogue between Israeli and Palestinian leaders and no economic or political advances for the Palestinian people, the PA will continue to be weakened and violence will likely break out. (...) Israel is also failing to deal with the growing tensions with Jordan. (...) relations with Amman today are reduced to mere security arrangements as all other aspects of the peace agreement are neglected. The lack of trust and personal animosity between Netanyahu and Jordan's King Abdullah are harmful to these extremely important bilateral relations. Domestically, Israel is also suffering from the lack of a functioning government and policies. There is no investment of resources or plans to deal with critical matters such as healthcare, the economy, transportation and education (...). Israeli citizens can only look on in dismay at Netanyahu's chaotic governance. (...)

Amos Gilad, YED, 28.04.21

Netanyahu's attempt at a constitutional putsch put rivals closer to government

The explanations for Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's flip-flop range from political (...) to the legal (...), to the psychological (...). It's possible that all the explanations are valid. Still, the contrast between his wild behavior in the cabinet (...) and his sudden U-turn, is extreme, and every Israeli should be worried. (...) It was a perfect illustration of the mythic barb by Ariel Sharon: "I don't know which Bibi to believe, his right hand or his left hand." (...) He is surrounded by a gang of yes-men. (...) The chief "strategist" is Netanyahu's older son (...). The prime minister wanted to block the appointment of Benny Gantz as justice minister for reasons related to his trial; he would have had no problem continuing to leave this most important ministry with no minister. Another consideration was the fifth election to which he hopes to drag the country. He wasn't interested in having Gantz in this sensitive ministry until October, at least. (...) Netanyahu was almost 100 percent convinced that Abbas and his three party colleagues would not facilitate the establishment of a "change" government. They wouldn't support it, nor would they abstain in a vote; they would vote against it. But the "good" meeting, as the Yamina chairman described it, made it clear to Netanyahu that Abbas is not in his pocket. This unique politician

is keeping his word. He is soliciting bids for his support. The change camp thus took another significant step toward forming a government. The next few days will be critical.

Yossi Verter, HAA, 29.04.21

How can Israel prevent an eternal merry-go-round of elections?

(...) had Israel adopted several reforms proposed in recent years, it would now be a country with a stable government and a state budget (...). Take, for example, an idea that has been promoted for decades, principally by the Israel Democracy Institute: That is, that the head of the largest Knesset faction should automatically become prime minister, with no need to win a vote of investiture. (...) in this situation, it would be legitimate for the candidate to establish a government on the basis of having received the support of a significant segment of the voting public. In addition, parties would find it easier to join the coalition or at least to grant it conditional support from the outside. Furthermore, this rule would encourage politicians to put together joint electoral lists, and perhaps — united parties before the elections — rather than afterwards. (...) another idea (...) to change the electoral system. (...) Instead of Israel being, in effect, a single countrywide district that elects 120 representatives, there would be several districts, each allocated the number of Knesset members in proportion to its population. This would create pressure to form large lists and parties and to vote for them, because parties would require relatively broad support in order to win in a district (...). We can only hope that something good will emerge from the current mess, and that the coalition formed in the coming weeks (...) will focus on changes that will strengthen Israeli democracy and restore the possibility of consensus. Precisely today, when the Knesset is composed of 13 parliamentary groups (...) with very different and even incompatible worldviews on most issues, consensus on the need to reform the system could be the glue that holds them together. (...)

Gideon Rahat, TOI, 29.04.21

Time for an Israeli coalition of change

The latest “round of fighting” between Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and the State of Israel ended with Netanyahu’s surrender. (...) Netanyahu decided to appoint Kachol Lavan chairman Benny Gantz to the post in the transition government. (...) The criminal defendant also announced that he plans to bring other ministerial appointments to the cabinet (...).

One cannot dismiss the seriousness of what transpired. Netanyahu (...) set out on a brainwashing operation to distort what had happened and get the public to believe that the illegal was actually legal, the crooked actually straight, and the con man actually the victim. (...) It’s always the same method: It’s not he who publicly violated the Basic Law that he himself legislated, it’s once again that gang of conspirators (...), who framed him and are leading a regime-change effort (...). The truth is far simpler. (...) under the rotation government clause (...) there cannot be votes on ministerial appointments without the agreement of both blocs (...). Although Netanyahu backed down on this, it’s only a matter of time until the next eruption. Netanyahu will do anything to stay in power, and he is backed by a gang of blind sycophants, who instead of restraining him have totally submitted to his authority. (...) The great damage that Netanyahu has done to democracy, the rule of law and proper administration is their fault as well. (...) To conduct the ideological battle between right and left, it must first be assured that Israeli democracy is still standing.

Editorial, HAA, 29.04.21

2. Palästinensische Wahlen abgesagt

Nur wenige Wochen vor den am 22. Mai geplanten Parlamentswahlen kündigte Palästinenserpräsident Mahmud Abbas eine Verschiebung an. Die Abstimmung könne erst stattfinden, wenn sichergestellt sei, dass auch die Wähler in Ost-Jerusalem "ihre demokratischen Rechte ausüben dürfen", begründete er seine Entscheidung. Es wären die ersten Wahlen in den Palästinensergebieten seit 2006 gewesen. Zwar kursierten schon seit längerem Spekulationen über eine mögliche Absage, dennoch stieß die Erklärung des 85-Jährigen auf großen Unmut vor allem bei der Hamas, die Abbas beschuldigt, er nutze das israelische Verbot gegen Wahlen in Ost-Jerusalem als Vorwand. Die Chancen auf einen erneuten Sieg der Hamas waren mit dem Zwist innerhalb der Fatah, die sich jüngst in drei Listen aufspaltete, nochmal gestiegen.

Palestinian elections: Abbas's calculated risk or gamble?

(...) In 2009, Abbas’s term as president was extended with no end date. He is now 85 years old, and his health has been deteriorating. It is the twilight of his rule, and this fact is creating a leadership power struggle in the ranks of Fatah. The elections are intensifying this inner-power struggle and creating a

rift within the party. A political split within Fatah weakens the organization (...). Abbas is therefore taking a considerable risk in calling for elections. (...) it is unlikely Abbas's move stemmed from international pressure. It is more likely Abbas is concerned about his legacy. The Palestinian cause (...) has plummeted in the Arab political agenda. (...) Abbas wants to stop the erosion. He wants the Palestinians to regain their centrality on the political agenda of Arab states and strengthen the status of the PA in the regional and international arena. (...) The elections are deepening the split within Fatah and increasing unrest in the Palestinian street. Disturbed with the possibility that Hamas will gain power and become stronger, regional key players like Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and the UAE are pressuring Abbas to call off the elections. The Biden administration continues to send signals to Abbas that this is not a good time to have elections. Therefore, Abbas may blame Israel for refusing to allow Jerusalemite Palestinians to run for political office in the Palestinian territories and use that as an excuse to "postpone" the elections. Whether a calculated risk or a gamble, Abbas's next move will define his legacy. (...)

Avi Melamed, JPO, 21.04.21

The end of an era in Palestinian politics

Thirty-six parties will run in the Palestinian parliamentary elections in May, if they actually take place that is. This is a massive number of candidates, all of whom have been required to pay a serious personal price in order to run. Candidates must resign from their job (...) and wait for their resignation to go into effect, thereby running the risk of not being able to come back to their workplace if they lose. (...) Palestinians have also understood the importance of this vote, with voter registration being recorded at a record 93.3%. Therefore, we must focus all of our wills and efforts into making this election an opportunity for change, to end the legitimization of the current state of affairs and do away with the endless infighting. (...) The occupation grows, Israel's settlements expand and the divisions among the Palestinians deepen. (...) voters will cast a ballot for parties they see as able to truly bring change and not only spout slogans. The public will back those who can deliver a concrete plan to achieve the most we can right now, while striving for the fulfillment of our national historical rights. If the elections are called off, the current regime will have lost its last remaining shreds of legitimacy. (...) This is the beginning of the end of an era in Palestinian politics.

And the elections and their results aside, no one can stop the coming change.

Hani Al-Masri, YED, 23.04.21

Palestinian election infighting will end in rockets on Israel

As the day of the Palestinian parliamentary elections draws near, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas' Fatah faction (...) is on a collision course with the Hamas terror group that controls the Gaza Strip (...). The breakup of the Fatah party all but ensures Hamas a win, which neither Israel nor Abbas are prepared to accept. This would be a repeat of the 2006 election that resulted in two separate and conflicting Palestinian entities, one on the West Bank led by Fatah and the other in the Gaza Strip under Hamas rule. (...) The timing of the elections also plays well into the Islamist party's plan. Abbas is nearing the end of his reign. He is in his mid-80s and in poor health, paving the way for new leadership. But Israel, having refused to announce whether or not it will allow East Jerusalem Palestinians to participate in the elections, has left the door open for Abbas to postpone the elections indefinitely. (...) Hamas, on its part, accuses the president of searching for any excuse to avoid a humiliating loss. This all connects to an uptick in violence over the past weeks with riots in Jerusalem and rocket fire from Gaza directed at Israel's south. (...) Abbas also benefits from the Jerusalem clashes and has repeated his insistence that parliamentary elections will not take place without East Jerusalem voters partaking in the polls. (...) Elior Levy, YED, 26.04.21

Israel is not prepared for the Palestinian elections

(...) Palestinian elections (...) could be postponed (...). If this happens, blame will be cast on Israel, and the excuse will be a refusal by the government to allow Palestinians to vote in east Jerusalem. The truth is that the blame lies with the PA and Hamas. They have prevented Palestinians from having any real say in their affairs for a decade and a half, ever since the last election (...). Hamas cannot be allowed to come to power in Ramallah, a move that would present an inevitable avenue to more conflict. (...) Many Fatah officials have been tough on Hamas, and Hamas will want revenge. On the other hand, Israel has not appeared to really care about the outcome. While quietly admitting that a Fatah failure in the elections could hurt Israel, Jerusalem has made an effort not to interfere. Clearly, if Israel is seen to favor one side, that side may do worse.

(...) The elephant in the room here is not just the potential for chaos in the PA, but Israel's own lack of a government. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has supported inertia and managing the conflict with the Palestinians, as opposed to actually initiating anything. He believes the status quo works in Israel's favor. According to this thinking, a divided PA and leadership mean that, in the long term, Israel is not confronted with a new intifada or international pressure. (...) Recent clashes in Jerusalem, however, show how things can spiral out of control. (...) The Jewish state needs to have a strategy with the Palestinians. Ignoring them hasn't worked. (...)

Editorial, JPO, 28.04.21

Abbas shoots himself in the foot

In January of this year, Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, who has held office without elections for two decades, declared elections for the PA parliament and presidency, slated for May 22 and July 31 respectively. Now, barely three months removed since that ambitious declaration, Abbas is looking for a way out of the predicament he created and now appears on the verge of canceling them altogether. (...) It's entirely possible he never had any intention of ever following through, and that he simply sought to present himself to the new Biden administration as a proponent of democracy and to push Israel into a corner by painting it as a serial obstructor of Palestinian efforts to hold democratic elections. (...) It's no surprise that Abbas has looked for an excuse to dial back the decision. As per usual, he will pin the blame on Israel. (...) It's unclear what Abbas achieved from his election ploy. But for the 85-year-old leader, who can count his political future in months, not years, even buying a few more days or weeks is a lifeline. What is clear is that this election fiasco has set the general outline for the looming succession battle once he's gone – an epic within the PLO and even within Fatah that threatens to tear this movement to pieces. Hamas, for its part, has only to sit by and watch while its dirty work is done by others.

By Prof. Eyal Zisser, IHY, 29.04.21

Abu Mazen's epic elections blunder is a gift to Hamas

With Abu Mazen's announcement indefinitely delaying the Palestinian legislative elections, it appears the best days are behind the PA President along with the rest of the veteran Fatah Palestinian national leadership and even the Fatah movement itself. Abu Mazen's irresponsible and predictable

decision to call the elections and his decision to cancel them (...) are liable to emerge as one strategic fumble too many, in the wake of which the processes for changing the Palestinian national leadership will accelerate. (...) East Jerusalem was the ladder that enabled a desperate Abu Mazen to climb down from the elections he called, by presidential decree, after reaching understandings with Hamas. (...) Hamas, which had prepared impressively for the elections and anticipated significant gains and perhaps even victory, was unwilling to provide Abu Mazen with the ladder. (...) Hamas was not sitting on the sidelines and worked in its own way to steer developments in its favor and increase its support in advance of the elections. This stance also strengthens it now that the elections are canceled. The events, like Hamas's conduct, have expanded the Hamas support base among Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem, but no less so among residents of the West Bank. (...) As for Israel, even with the suspension of elections, playing into Hamas' hands remains unwise. (...)

Kobi Michael, TOI, 30.04.21

3. Unruhen in Jerusalem

Die polizeiliche Entscheidung, das Damaskus-Tor für abendliche Versammlungen während des Fastenmonats Ramadan zu sperren, gilt als Hauptgrund für die heftigen Auseinandersetzungen zwischen Palästinenser_innen und Polizeikräften in Jerusalem. Zusätzlich zur Eskalation beigetragen hatten einerseits jüdische Extremist_innen mit einem Video, das sie singend und betend auf dem Tempelberg zeigt, andererseits ein Video, in dem zu sehen ist, wie ein Palästinenser einen ultra-orthodoxen Juden in der Straßenbahn ohrfeigt. Dutzende Demonstrierende wurden vorübergehend festgenommen. Es gab zahlreiche Verletzte. Der Gewalt in Jerusalem folgte eine Serie von Raketenangriffen aus dem Gazastreifen. Israels Armee reagierte mit Luftangriffen. Auch in Jaffo kam es zu Unruhen zwischen arabischen und jüdischen Einwohner_innen.

Lighting a fire in Jerusalem

(...) Israel's government and police are acting irresponsibly and aggressively and thereby contributing to the violence. At the start of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, police decided that East Jerusalem residents should be prevented, at any cost, from sitting on the steps leading to the Old City's Damascus Gate. (...) The police provided no satisfactory

explanation for this decision, and many East Jerusalem residents viewed the closure of the steps as one humiliation too many. (...) At the same time, an ugly practice began in which young Palestinians assaulted Jews in order to post videos of the attacks on social media. Then, as if tensions were not high enough, lawmakers from the far-right Religious Zionism party went to Damascus Gate (...) to scold police officers for not doing enough to protect Jews. They were accompanied by a group of young people who sang songs of anti-Palestinian hatred and vengeance against. (...) the assaults on random Arabs escalated. (...) police are behaving aggressively toward Palestinians while displaying indifference to Jewish assailants. (...) The police must back down, remove the barriers on the stairs, begin a dialogue with East Jerusalem residents and ensure the safety of all the capital's residents in every part of the city (...).

Editorial, HAA, 21.02.21

Jerusalem violence could trigger the entire Muslim world

One cannot detach the events (...) in the Gaza sector from the ongoing riots in Jerusalem. Hamas wanted to project solidarity with the residents of east Jerusalem and gave recalcitrant groups in Gaza the green light to fire rockets at Israel. (...) it will do everything in its power to fan the flames in Jerusalem and simultaneously douse them in the south. This stems from the fact that the situation in Gaza is good (...) compared to the situation there several months ago. The economy is trending upwards and unemployment is down, as is the COVID-19 morbidity rate. In the coming weeks, toward the end of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, Hamas is due to receive another cash shipment from Qatar, and it very likely doesn't want to upset the positive momentum at the height of Ramadan. This also explains its efforts to ensure that the rocket fire doesn't extend beyond Gaza-area communities. Hamas, however, likely won't be able to ignore the strife in Jerusalem if it continues. It is being called out on social media and will have to respond. (...) The Israel Police was also instructed to implement tougher measures against the rioters – Jews and Arabs alike. The main concern raised by officials is that the riots are not motivated by one specific cause. (...) Jerusalem is one issue every Muslim can rally around and Israel must make sure the events in the capital aren't perceived as a religious war. This (...) explains Hamas' desire to fan and exacerbate the flames in the capital and is precisely

why Israel needs to do all it can to lower them – especially with the Palestinian Authority's parliamentary elections next month and Israel's expected decision to deny east Jerusalem residents from participating. (...)

Yoav Limor, IHY, 25.04.21

How can Israel respond to rocket fire?

(...) Hamas has been successful in tying its attacks on the Negev (...) with the unrest in Jerusalem (...). Jerusalem is a handy battle cry and rallying point in the Muslim world. (...) both Fatah and Hamas are seeking to use the issue of Jerusalem to distract from the internal problems and challenges they are facing ahead of the PA elections scheduled next month. Israel so far has refrained from stating outright that it will not permit the Palestinian elections to take place in east Jerusalem, but this possibility is already being used as a way to justify both the current violence and Abbas's possible postponement of the balloting altogether. Hamas has a history of using rocket attacks on Israel to get what it wants, be it a cash inflow from Qatar, to divert attention from domestic problems, or this time, as an election ploy. The situation is a tricky one for Israel. On the one hand, it does not want to risk an escalation that could so easily spiral out of control into a full-blown war; on the other, if Israel does not respond to a massive rocket barrage on its sovereign territory, it will lose its deterrence. Hamas needs to learn that terrorism doesn't pay, and the international community needs to convey that message. (...)

Editorial, JPO, 26.04.21

Hamas' goal is a Temple Mount cleansed of Jews

Hamas' demand that Israel start prohibiting Jews from visiting the Temple Mount "in exchange" for quiet in the Gaza sector, can only come from a terrorist organization that feels immune to repercussions for its untamed behavior (...). Instead of Israel deterring the terrorist group – Hamas is looking to deter Israel. It has succeeded in doing so in the past. (...) Hamas is no longer (...) satisfied with knife and car-ramming attacks across Israel "on behalf of al-Aqsa" and its "liberation." (...) Now, Hamas is allowing itself to go one step further and put things on the table: No more Jewish visits to the Temple Mount. Essentially, it wants to return to the time when Jews were banned from visiting their own most holy sites. We need to hope that no one in any of the Zionist political parties, defense establishment, or Israel Police is even remotely entertaining this impertinent demand. The ability to visit the Tem-

ple Mount is all the Jews have left after former Defense Minister Moshe Dayan decided in 1967 to prohibit Jewish prayer at the site. (...) Israel must respond with a resounding and public "no," if nothing else than to rehabilitate its deterrence with Hamas. Nadav Shragai, IHY, 27.04.21

Jerusalem's Palestinians need a diplomatic solution not a security one

(...) The recent demonstrations that began in Jerusalem and spread to the occupied territories cannot be disconnected from Israel's efforts to try to deny the right to political expression. Israel has used emergency regulations to justify the closure of Orient House, the PLO headquarters in Jerusalem, and the Palestinian Chambers of Commerce in the city, to arrest senior political and religious Palestinian leaders and to prohibit people from praying in mosques for months on end and from travelling abroad. And then they are surprised when there is an uprising. (...) Palestinians living in Jerusalem are granted Israeli residency. They can move around freely, drive in their cars and even benefit from government welfare services. But they are (...) not entitled to form their own political parties, nor join any Palestinian faction, be they affiliated with the left or the center. In fact, the only elections in which they can participate are for charitable organizations. (...) The issue of Jerusalem cannot and must not be resolved by oppressive and unrestrained police actions, but by granting them freedom of political expression and the right to establish an independent political entity that will allow Palestinians to choose their leadership freely. This could be used a vehicle to ease periods of tension such as the ones we have recently witnessed. (...) The sooner Israel elects to deal with the issue on the political level and not as a security issue, the better it will be for all concerned and the sooner peace and quiet can return to the Holy City.

Daoud Kuttab, YED, 27.04.21

We are on the way to another Intifada

The events that have transpired in Jerusalem (...) are not a coincidental occurrence that will disappear so quickly. We are on the brink of a violent awakening that could intensify and lead to violence and acts of terrorism on our streets. (...) the Palestinian Authority is headed by a leader who wants peace and opposes terrorism. (...) We have uncountable reasons to be suspicious of the Palestinians, to doubt their abilities and willingness to move forward toward a true and substantive peace (...). Neverthe-

less, the PA cooperates with Israel to prevent terrorist attacks. (...) most terrorist attacks take place in Jerusalem, where there's no presence of Palestinian security forces, and where they are not responsible for any terrorist activity – this responsibility falls solely upon us. There are almost no security-related incidents in areas that are under the PA's jurisdiction. (...) new circumstances have arisen that could drag us into a new round of terrorist activity and bloodshed on both sides. (...) For a very long time now, Jews in various areas of the West Bank have been harming Palestinians in an organized and systematic fashion in a way that causes them severe economic hardships, as well as physical harm. (...) Until recently, this violence has been routine for some settlers who have been harassing Palestinian residents (...). But now a dangerous new dimension has been added. Far-right circles have been smelling the scent of political defeat that could threaten their entire life's work. (...) The organization Lehava (...) explicitly works to ignite the fire that will lead to violent reactions, which will end in another wave of terrorist activity (...).

Ehud Olmert, JPO, 29.04.21

4. Medienquerschnitt

Human Rights Watch bezichtigt Israel der Apartheid

A most dangerous and mendacious report

(...) Omar Shakir, who heads the Israeli-Palestinian desk at Human Rights Watch (...) is a provocateur and a quarrel-monger, who has spent more than a decade campaigning to deny Israel's right to exist. (...) This new report authored by Shakir is pure fiction. It is the same old tired political position he has been touting for years. (...) The positions of Shakir and his organization are supported by a coalition that extends from Iran, Hezbollah and Hamas to "human rights organizations" that have allowed themselves to become the propaganda wing for some very dark groups. (...) In fairness, one should deal not only with the author and the organization behind the report, but with the report itself. The problem is that this is not really a report. It is a systematic collection of anti-Israel material emanating from those same organizations that Shakir already supports. (...) In reality, Shakir did no fact checking or investigations of his own, and the concept of fairness does not even come into it. He pored over anti-Israel publications that pretend to be

objectively critical and gathered anything that matched his preestablished hostility. The outcome was decided in advance. (...) it is Shakir's report that practices apartheid, for at its heart it is grounded in one law for Israel and one law for the rest of the world. (...) For decades, there has been a sharp debate within Israel itself over the Palestinian issue. Israel is not exempt from criticism. But it also does not need hostile organizations such as HRW preaching morality to it. (...)

Ben-Dror Yemini, YED, 27.04.21

So Israel's an apartheid state. What's next?

(...) The situation in Israel, the West Bank and Gaza could have been assessed as apartheid 10 years ago. (...) It is Human Rights Watch that has crossed the threshold, as the Israeli human rights organization B'Tselem did a few months ago, by deciding to use the A-word. Which raises the question, now that you've crossed the threshold, what next? (...) Not only is there no sign of that changing, it is almost certain that these other matters, from climate change to the showdown between the United States and China, with a global pandemic or two thrown in, will continue to push the Palestinians further down to the bottom of the international agenda. (...) It's not just a breathtaking arrogance and inflated sense of self-importance on the part of HRW to think that by their crossing the threshold and calling it apartheid, the discourse and politics will change. It's also a repetition of the same failed thinking that external pressure on Israel will solve the conflict and the unfounded expectation that of all the massive injustices committed around the world, this is the one the world will act to change. (...) Human rights organizations have a sacred duty to monitor and report human-rights violations. It's a Sisyphean task and the frustration of those who work in these organizations at what seems as a lack of influence over the situation is perfectly understandable. Bombastic PR campaigns that do nothing but banalize the term "apartheid" are not the way to address that frustration.

Anshel Pfeffer, HAA, 29.04.21

Ein reiches und teures Land

Israel is wealthy, but costly

Israel's high place in Forbes' GDP per capita ranking is good news, but far from being the whole story. What weighs on Israel's high position in the per capita GDP table is its even higher place in the cost

of living table. Israel is eighth in the world for price levels (...). Besides that, even if Israel's progress in the ranking is good news, it must not be forgotten that behind the average number hide two quite different stories of Israel's economy: against a prosperous technology sector that does not account for more than 10% of the workforce is a swollen public sector and a social periphery that has not succeeded in integrating into the technological economic miracle. The demographic trends indicate that Israel will find it harder and harder to maintain its place in the wealth ranking unless there is a real switch. (...) A more correct comparison of GDP per capita would take into account Israelis' low purchasing power. (...) The main thrust of economic policy in Israel in the coming years needs to be directed at narrowing this gap. The expected growth in the haredi (...) population, which has not so far succeeded in integrating into professions with high pay and productivity, will make Israel's challenge much harder. (...)

Amiram Barkat, GLO, 28.04.21

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