



**Schlaglicht Israel Nr. 22/21**  
**Aktuelles aus israelischen Tageszeitungen**  
**16.-31. Dezember**

**Die Themen dieser Ausgabe**

1. Israel bleibt Abkommen mit Iran gegenüber skeptisch .....	1
2. Gantz trifft Abbas .....	4
3. Mansour Abbas bezeichnet Israel als jüdischen Staat .....	5
4. Israel beginnt mit zweiter Boosterimpfung .....	7
5. Medienquerschnitt .....	8

**1. Israel bleibt Abkommen mit Iran gegenüber skeptisch**

*Israels Regierungschef Naftali Bennett zeigt sich in der Frage eines Abkommens mit dem Iran ein wenig kompromissbereiter als es bisher die offizielle israelische Haltung war. So hätte er gegen „ein gutes Abkommen“ keine Einwände. Allerdings sei er skeptisch, ob das realisierbar sei. Aus Teheran verlaute-ten vorsichtig optimistische Signale. So erklärte der iranische Außenminister Hossein Amirabdollahian, dass schon „in naher Zukunft eine schnelle und angemessene Einigung“ möglich sei. Dazu müssten allerdings die anderen Verhandlungspartner Ernsthaftigkeit und guten Willen zeigen. Iran hofft auf eine Rückkehr zu dem Atomabkommen von 2015, als die fünf UN-Vetomächte und Deutschland mit dem Iran vereinbart hatten, das Atomforschungsprogramm so zu gestalten, dass der Bau von Atombomben unmöglich ist. Im Gegenzug wurden Wirtschafts-sanktionen gelockert. Drei Jahre später zogen sich die USA unter dem damaligen Präsidenten Donald Trump aus dem Abkommen zurück. Israel fordert ein verbessertes Abkommen, das strengere Be-schränkungen für das Atomprogramm vorsieht und das iranische Langstreckenraketenprogramm sowie die Unterstützung feindlicher Gruppen an den Gren-zen Israels berücksichtigt. Unterdessen wird die Möglichkeit eines israelischen Präventivschlags erneut öffentlich diskutiert. Militärische Beobachter hegen allerdings nicht die Illusion, dass das irani-*

*sche Atomforschungsprogramm dauerhaft gestoppt werden könne.*

**The Israeli-Iranian war of perception**

Iran's little 'target map' stunt is an amateurish at-tempt at psychological warfare which is bound to continue as tensions mount between the two long time arch-foes. "Just one wrong move!" — that was the Tehran Times' (...) headline, which was accom-panied by a map of Israel dotted with markers, each symbolizing a potential target. This article (...) is a part of the ongoing psychological warfare campaign (...) and is in fact meant to serve as a direct threat to Israel following Jerusalem's own series of threats regarding a potential independent attack on Iran. (...) The article also quotes Ynet (...) as saying that Israel's attack on a chemical storage facility in Syria six months ago is "a direct message" to Iran. (...) It seems that the Iranians are particularly interested in what is happening in Israel and are therefore trying to correspond with publications both in Israel and abroad. (...) Despite the high stakes, Iran's latest move was extremely low effort. The map accompa-nying the article shows a variety of "targets", some in the West Bank, including Nablus and Jenin, as well as along the border with Egypt, and generally cover almost every point in Israel — a highly unlikely scenario. And yet, it seems that the map and the article did manage to generate some panic among the Israeli public, the majority of which lack the

knowledge to dive into the details of Iran's actual capabilities. These publications and articles won't stop any time soon though, quite the opposite in fact. (...)

Yossi Yehoshua, YED, 17.12.21

### **The West Dances to Iran's Tune**

(...) It's all about pretending to do something to curb Iran's relentless pursuit of WMD and getting back to lucrative trade with Iran. (...) It seems to me that the democratic countries negotiating with Iran either don't care if Iran gets nuclear weapons, or they sort of care but are the most inept negotiators ever. Russia and China (...) continue to trade with Iran, propping up its economy. (...) The talks are very good for Russia as well as China. It's obvious that the Iranian negotiators run rings around the Western ones and have done so repeatedly. (...) And so it goes: Iran advances its nuclear weapons program, the West blah-blahs, Iran steps away from negotiations, the West blah-blahs, Iran nears its goal to threaten the region with nuclear attacks. Blah, blah, blah... (...) The West has the stronger hand versus Iran but doesn't use it. The P5+1 are richer, stronger, bigger, and even have more energy resources (...). Yet Iran has endlessly spun-out negotiations over years, allowing it to achieve nuclear weapons breakout, or perhaps "only" near-breakout capability. Iran has not been penalized for being the greatest funder of global terror, nor is it penalized (...) for continually saying that Israel must be annihilated. Iran has faced no impediment to becoming the strongest Muslim power in the region and is developing intercontinental ballistic missiles which have no use except to deliver nuclear payloads. THIS MUST BE STOPPED!

Steve Kramer, TOI, 23.12.21

### **Israel's Iran question: To strike or not to strike?**

(...) One former IDF general claimed at the time that in total, Israel would have to strike close to 100 primary targets, possibly in sorties lasting two days. (...) According to most estimates, Israel is capable of unilaterally attacking Iran's nuclear facilities (...) Natanz is one of the most difficult targets, even if the missiles on their own will not succeed in penetrating, Israeli pilots could glide them in. (...) What people often overlook when considering whether Jerusalem can go it alone against Tehran is that the technical know-how is Iranian. It is not from a foreign source, like was the case of the Syrian reactor destroyed by Israel in 2007 (...), or the Iraq reactor destroyed by Israel in 1981 (...) even if Israel attacks and suc-

ceeds in causing extensive damage, Iran will not need help to rebuild it – Tehran will be able to do it all over again on its own. (...) there is another case to make as well: that the ayatollahs will be emboldened by the Israeli strike as the world instead cracks down on Israel for acting unilaterally. (...) In the IDF, the generals are confident (...) that they can get the job done. (...) Israel's military is powerful and could definitely deal Iran a blow that would set back and delay its nuclear progress. But there are questions that need to be asked: will an overt airstrike really achieve so much more in terms of a delay than continued covert operations? Is the war that will ensue worth just a few years delay? And is the diplomatic fallout something Israel can sustain for an undefined achievement? (...)

Yaakov Katz, JPO, 24.12.21

### **Israel fast approaching moment of truth with Iran**

The nuclear talks between world powers and Iran are moving forward and will soon reach the decision-making stage. (...) The Iranians, masters of negotiation, tried conditioning the continuation of talks on the removal of sanctions and were rebuffed. (...) It seems that despite the mutual threats and prevailing sense that the talks were headed toward failure, an agreement will ultimately be reached that will restrict Iran's pace of uranium enrichment and give Tehran what it wants with the removal of most of the draconian sanctions. (...) under the yoke of sanctions and a sputtering economy that threatens the regime's survival, Tehran must get the sanctions lifted and help its economy. A tactical short-term concession on behalf of a long-term strategic goal is a known method of Islam. (...) If a deal is reached, currently sanctioned funds will be un-frozen, allowing Iranian terror and influence to increase and run amok across the Middle East. We can expect the situation in Syria to change as well, and for the Iranians to apply even more pressure in an effort to cement their influence there. The Iranian threat won't be eliminated and will remain close to the threshold point. (...) As for an Israeli military strike: It has the ability to attack Iran and will soon have no other choice because the proverbial sword is almost on its neck. It appears this moment is fast approaching. (...) The preparations currently underway are meant to improve the IDF's attack capabilities and finalize a better plan of action. The IDF must receive a clear directive from the Israeli government, which defines the objective: Significant and devastating damage to Iran's nuclear program; and the target date: fall of 2022. (...) The plan should be diverse,

include elements that will catch the Iranians off guard, and inflict heavy damage on their nuclear facilities and air defenses. At the same time, Israel must prepare for an Iranian response from its soil, and from Hezbollah as well. (...) Beyond the operational preparations, Israel needs to prepare a diplomatic plan to legitimize a military strike and soften the international reaction.  
Eliezar Marom, IHY, 26.12.21

### **This is what would happen if Israel struck Iran**

(...) the international and Israeli media have been replete with reports of Israel's inability to destroy the Iranian nuclear program and ostensible lack of a military option. (...) By framing the issue as the ability or inability to achieve a "knockout blow," one that puts an end to Iran's nuclear program, these reports miss the point. (...) Iran now has the necessary knowledge to reconstitute the program after an attack and even the U.S. can no longer simply put an end to it by military means. (...) Rather than a long-term postponement of Iran's nuclear program, an Israeli attack would likely have more limited ambitions. The objective would not be, as some have speculated, to draw the U.S. into a military conflict, but to gain additional time and to create a situation in which the international community (...) would be constrained to finally take decisive diplomatic and economic measures, especially given the possibility of further Israeli action. For that, Israel's limited capabilities are more than sufficient. (...) that an Israeli attack would lead to a regional conflagration (...) is certainly a possibility that planners must take into account, but it is also a classic case of the worst possible scenario being portrayed as the most likely one. (...) Iran would have to respond, but there is every reason to believe that the response would be directed primarily against Israel, via a massive Hezbollah attack. (...) Israel's home front will face a level of destruction such as it has never experienced before and Israel may even find itself in a multi-front war, not only against Hezbollah, but Iran itself, Iranian-affiliated forces in Syria, Iraq and Yemen, Hamas and more. (...) Those who are totally averse to any risk of retaliation should, indeed, oppose military action. They should also prepare to live in a world in which Iran and other rogue states are essentially free to acquire nuclear weapons. (...) In reality, only a diplomatic agreement, even a flawed one, holds out the possibility of a long-term postponement of Iran's nuclear program. If and when the moment of truth comes, when all other options have been exhausted, Israel will likely find itself facing Iran alone.

We have been there before: Facing the Iraqi and Syrian nuclear programs, among other critical occasions. At that time, Israel will have no alternative but to launch a strike and let the pieces fall where they may. That is what the IDF is preparing for today. Bad as this option may be, allowing Iran to go nuclear would be intolerable.

Chuck Freilich, HAA, 26.12.21

### **The Iranian threat: No nukes for us – or Israel**

Over the years we have learned that when a politician or a general declares that "all options are on the table," he is actually referring to a single option – the military option. Supposedly that's the only option that will remain to Israel if the negotiations with Iran don't produce a nuclear agreement that satisfies the political leadership in Jerusalem. (...) We're left with the option of a direct military strike against the Iranian reactors, whatever the costs, in a loss of lives on the home front, in expenditures of billions of shekels and in damage to Israel's foreign relations. Has anyone read or heard about preparations for the possibility that Iran will announce that it accepts all the restrictions that the United States wants to impose on it; that in addition, it will allow inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency to visit its nuclear installations without advance warning, and will even agree to extend the treaty by another 15 years – all that, on one condition: that Israel signs exactly the same document? The Islamic Republic can also promise "not to be the first country in the Middle East to introduce nuclear weapons." This Isra-bluff has been working beautifully for decades, as has the stamp of "according to foreign sources" on reports that Israel is equipped with dozens of atomic bombs ready for launching. (...) With the exception of the administration of former U.S. President Donald Trump, not a single partner to the negotiations with Iran agrees with Israel's position on demilitarization. (...) U.S. President Joe Biden has taken a firm stand regarding demilitarization. (...) he promised that the issue would be at the center of his administration's agenda. (...) As far as is known, the decision makers in Jerusalem, those who declaim that "all options are on the table," did not consider the possibility that Iran would pull out the doomsday weapon: an overall agreement for nuclear demilitarization of the Middle East – including Israel – and acceptance of all the demands. It's much sexier on television to show helmeted pilots talking about preparations for war.

Akiva Eldar, HAA, 28.12.21

### **Military superiority has to be proven**

(...) It's hard to find a scrap of hope in Israel that anything good will come out of the Vienna talks (...). That doesn't mean that Israel is out of options, but it will require it to decide on its red lines and what it will do if they are crossed. (...) Iran is a source of concern to Israel not only because of the nuclear issue. Its attempts to arm its satellites in the region with weapons that include cruise missiles and other precision capabilities continue ceaselessly. (...) Israel has to decide, for itself and by itself, what it intends to do about this new threat. The years it spent wavering as Hezbollah accelerated its armament following the 2006 Second Lebanon War led to the current balance of power. Israel cannot allow a similar balance of power to exist in the air, as well, and might have to take preemptive action to take these capabilities away from Hezbollah before the organization makes another move and, heaven forbid, brings down an Israeli plane. There is a similar dilemma about Hezbollah's constantly expanding precision missile capabilities. Here, too, it would be better for Israel to take the initiative; localized clashes on the border or other tactical events could serve as a starting point. It's a shame Israel didn't do this back in February, when Hezbollah fired missiles at the UAVs, which was apparently what led to a strike on anti-aircraft batteries in Syria that Israel was hesitant to execute in Lebanon. (...) Israel might need to flex its muscles in 2022 to remind the neighborhood that it still has superiority and can use it.

Yoav Limor, IHY, 29.12.21

## **2. Gantz trifft Abbas**

*Trotz heftiger Kritik im Westjordanland und im Gazastreifen entschied sich Palästinenserpräsident Mahmoud Abbas dazu, die Einladung von Israels Verteidigungsminister Benny Gantz anzunehmen. Die beiden Politiker waren bereits im August im Westjordanland zusammengekommen. Diesmal trafen sich im privaten Wohnhaus von Gantz unweit von Tel Aviv. Es war der erste offizielle Termin seit zehn Jahren, den Abbas in Israel wahrnahm. Dem Treffen gingen heftige Gefechte zwischen israelischen Siedler\_innen und Palästinenser\_innen voraus. Auf der Gesprächsagenda von Abbas und Gantz stand die finanzielle Notlage der palästinensischen Führung in Ramallah, die Sicherheitskooperation sowie Möglichkeiten, den politischen Prozess wieder aufzunehmen. Zum vereinbarten Maßnahmenpaket gehört die vorgezogene Überweisung der von Israel kassierten palästinensischen Steuergel-*

*der. Zudem will die israelische Regierung den Wohnsitz von knapp 10.000 im Westjordanland und dem Gazastreifen lebenden Palästinenser\_innen anzuerkennen, die bislang als illegal galten. Israel hat nach wie vor die Kontrolle über das Einwohnerregister in den 1967 besetzten Gebieten. Die islamistische Führung der Hamas im Gazastreifen nannte das Treffen einen Verrat an der palästinensischen Sache. Auch innerhalb der israelischen Regierungskoalition wurde Kritik laut.*

### **And now for a Bennett-Abbas meeting**

The meeting between Defense Minister Benny Gantz and Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, held at Gantz's home, is an important step in the right direction. (...) It should come as no surprise that Likud was quick to incite against the meeting (...) and issued its usual threats (...). After the ongoing criminal negligence of the Netanyahu government – this was the first meeting between Abbas and officials in Israel since 2010 – any positive movement along this critical path is perceived as dangerous by the warmongers and the sanctifiers of the greater Land of Israel. Prime Minister Naftali Bennett was informed ahead of time about the meeting, and it may be assumed that he agreed to it. It should be welcomed, but Bennett and Foreign Minister Yair Lapid must be called upon to meet with the Palestinian leader. Real change requires a change in attitude toward the Palestinians, and mainly requires a courageous and sincere attempt to put an end to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Editorial, HAA, 29.12.21

### **Gantz-Abbas meeting makes good common sense**

Defense Minister Benny Gantz's meeting (...) with Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas neither heralds peace lurking around the corner nor portends a massive Israeli withdrawal from Judea and Samaria. What it does do is make good common sense. Abbas is no lover of Zion. (...) His paying hundreds of millions of dollars to terrorists and their families is unconscionable (...). Yet he and the PA he heads are still better from an Israeli perspective than the Hamas alternative. (...) Israel has an interest in propping up the PA, as flawed and corrupt as it is, because security cooperation with the PA is important in keeping a lid on the violence in the West Bank (...). Certainly, with tension on the rise in Judea and Samaria (...) a meeting at the highest level to discuss ways to tamp down the tension is smart. (...) While Gantz is certainly a logical choice

to be meeting with Abbas, he is by no means the most logical choice. That would be Prime Minister Naftali Bennett. (...) Neither Bennett nor Israel gains anything by boycotting the PA president. On the contrary, it makes Israel appear as the recalcitrant party in this conflict, which is an inaccurate reflection of reality. Even if Israel believes peace is but a distant mirage, it – and its leader – must strive to be seen in the eyes of the world as the party trying to make that mirage real.

Editorial, JPO, 29.12.21

### **Despite backlash, Gantz did right in meeting Abbas**

Despite promises and proclamations, during Benjamin Netanyahu's 12 years in power Israel did not withdraw from the Oslo interim peace accords, it did not cut its ties with the Palestinian leadership in the West Bank and did not declare the Palestinian Authority (PA) as either an enemy or a terrorist entity. With this in mind, it is hard to call Netanyahu and his right-wing bloc's criticism of Defense Minister Benny Gantz's meeting with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas as anything other than a ridiculous show of hypocrisy. (...) Abbas did not meet Gantz to kickstart the long-defunct peace talks (...), but to discuss security issues and maintaining security ties between Israel and the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank. This is clearly in Israel's interest and the IDF and Shin Bet top brass will testify to that. (...) of all possible options that Israel has in the West Bank — that is, the PA, Hamas or total anarchy — cooperating with Abbas is still the least horrible one. (...) There are times when even the opposition must act responsibly and take political and national security considerations into account. Not everything is political. (...) In the absence of a peace process, Israel must maintain its communication channels with the Palestinians. Even if the opposition protests and the coalition's right flank click their tongue in disapproval. Gantz did the right thing (...).

Yuval Karni, YED, 31.12.21

### **Gantz And Abbas Driven By Different Priorities**

(...) Gantz and Abbas hew to very different agendas, which is hardly surprising. Gantz placed the emphasis on security issues, but he also announced confidence-building measures designed to improve the lives of Palestinians in the West Bank, which Israel has occupied since the 1967 Six Day War. (...) Israel and the Palestinian Authority last conducted peace talks in 2013 and 2014, but they yielded no encouraging results and ended acrimoniously,

prompting Bennett's predecessor, Benjamin Netanyahu, to move away from his 2009 endorsement of a two-state solution. (...) Bennett, the leader of the far right-wing Yamina Party, has come out against a renewal of negotiations with the Palestinians and refuses to meet Abbas. But recognizing that Israel needs to strengthen Abbas in the face of attempts by Hamas to build an operational base in the West Bank, he supports Gantz's argument that Israel should help the Palestinian Authority and prop up its moribund economy. In accordance with this strategy, Israel has promised the Palestinian Authority loans to the tune of nearly \$200 million and has begun to ease conditions in the West Bank, where tensions have flared of late. (...) Cognizant of the upsurge of violence and of Hamas's desire to establish a presence in the West Bank, Gantz intends to assist its rival, the Palestinian Authority. (...) But (...) Israel cannot attain real and lasting peace and security unless the national aspirations of the Palestinians are met through a negotiated two-state solution. Sheldon Kirshner, TOI, 31.12.21

### **3. Mansour Abbas bezeichnet Israel als jüdischen Staat**

*Für Schlagzeilen in den hebräischen und arabischen Medien sorgte Mansour Abbas, Chef der arabischen Koalitionspartei Ra'am, nachdem er im Verlauf einer Konferenz in Tel Aviv den Staat Israel als einen jüdischen Staat bezeichnete. Es gelte, Wege zu finden, wie sich die arabische Gesellschaft integrieren könne, meinte er. Damit sprach Abbas einen empfindlichen Punkt für die arabische Bevölkerung innerhalb Israels an, die sich als diskriminiert betrachtet. Nach einer ganzen Reihe von als unterdrückenden neuen Gesetzen verabschiedete die Knesset im Sommer 2018 schließlich das umstrittene Nationalstaatsgesetz, das offen den jüdischen Charakter Israels bekräftigt. Die arabisch-israelischen Parteien sind strikt antizionistisch und streben nach einem Staat aller seiner Bürger\_innen. Der Streit darüber, wie Israel zu definieren sei, legte auch den Friedenprozess mit der PLO (Palästinensische Befreiungsorganisation) lahm. Ex-Ministerpräsident Benjamin Netanyahu hatte die Anerkennung Israels über viele Jahre zur Vorbedingung für Verhandlungen gemacht. Palästinenserpräsident Mahmoud Abbas zeigte sich empört über den Chef der Ra'am, der „das falsche israelische Narrativ übernimmt, anstatt den Kampf seines Volkes zu unterstützen“.*

### **Mansour Abbas recognizes the reality of Israel**

(...) The issue of the Jewish nature of Israel has been the crux of the ongoing conflict with the Palestinians. (...) the declaration by Mansour Abbas looms large as a potential turning point in how the Arab minority views the country. The inclusion of Ra'am in the current coalition was already a turning point in Israel's history. Its participation signified a pragmatic approach for Arab-Israeli leaders, one that focused on improving the lives of their constituency. Abbas and his party campaigned on solving issues in Arab communities and improving the quality of life. (...) That refreshing hands-on approach to leadership, which recognizes the reality and attempts to work within the system to improve constituents' plights, unfortunately, hasn't been adopted by Mansour's fellow Arab lawmakers from other parties. (...) Likewise, Joint List leader Ayman Odeh dismissed Abbas for giving in to the Jewish majority. (...) Mansour Abbas's statement (...) was long overdue from an Arab-Israeli leader, but it's certainly most welcome. Let's hope that other courageous leaders also come forward with similar declarations. Sometimes small, incremental changes lead to seismic shifts in society. If this is indeed a turning point in the way the Arab citizens of Israel view their country. We can look back on Abbas's statement as a game changer.

Editorial, JPO, 22.12.21

### **Mansour Abbas's 'Jewish state' bombshell**

(...) Ra'am joined the current coalition, led by Prime Minister Naftali Bennett and scheduled for a rotation in 2023, with Foreign Minister Yair Lapid at the helm. Abbas, meanwhile, has accomplished one key aim: receiving large sums of money for the Arab sector. (...) He said that he was changing Israeli politics and society such that from now on, it will be natural for Arab parties to be members of the government. Perhaps. But it's not for nothing that he had to hire private bodyguards to protect him from Arab citizens angry at him for "selling out" to the Zionists by vowing to place legislative work for his community above Islamism and Palestinian activism. (...) This is not to say that he's become a Zionist or that his party is uniform in its objectives. (...) The hope is that his voters won't be the only Arab Israelis weary of leaders championing the Palestinians while abandoning their own towns to gang wars and gun violence. It remains to be seen whether backers of Arab legislators, who use their seats in the Knesset to undermine the state, will undergo a shift in perception. Indeed, time will tell if he's an actual trend-setter. Though he deserves kudos for breaking with the

longstanding tradition of his peers in the Knesset, let's keep in mind that he's a politician with an agenda beyond the one he touted in his election campaign. (...).

Ruthie Blum, JPO, 23.12.21

### **Islamist leader Mansour Abbas proves again he's Israel's man of the hour**

Mansour Abbas is the most important figure to arise in Israeli politics. He's the man of the hour. As an Arab Israeli, he challenges not only Israelis – Jews and Arabs alike – but also the Palestinian leadership in the West Bank and Gaza. (...) For years, the paradigm that the road to peace in the Middle East passes through the solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has held sway in Israel and abroad. Benjamin Netanyahu sought to switch to another paradigm: The Palestinians can be bypassed and regional peace pursued without resolving the local conflict. Within these two paradigms, the status of Arab Israelis has been stuck at the end of the historical line. Abbas turned this paradigm on its head, putting Arab Israelis at the top of the Palestinian agenda. (...) Abbas may only represent Arab Israelis and not even all of them. Still, his willingness to accept the mother of all demands – recognition of Israel as a Jewish state – is significant because it could reveal the Israelis' true face. (...) Abbas believes that you have to change to produce change, and he is changing and is changing reality before our eyes. Therefore, he has positioned himself as a relevant leader in Israel (...). It's no surprise that he mentioned his bodyguards in the interview and talked about personal danger. Abbas is the most dangerous leader for opponents of peace and reconciliation, both in Israel and in Palestine. And we all know how peace-seeking leaders in the Middle East are repaid. (...)

Carolina Landsmann, HAA, 25.12.21

### **Ra'am leader isn't alone**

Ra'am leader Mansour Abbas' statements about Israel being a Jewish, democratic state was a foundational one and sparked hope that despite everything, those in the Arab sector who feel a connection with the country and want to integrate will be able to do so. (...) Mansour Abbas' important comments reminded me of 1980, when the Arab leadership in Israel was sober and realistic – a leadership that recognized Israel as a Jewish, democratic state. That leadership grew out of power, understanding, and a recognition of reality and respect for the nation and its symbols. MK Sif a-Din al-Zoabi, from the

United Arab Party, was the first member of the community to insist that Arab Israelis should stand up and be full partners in the Jewish state of Israel. Abbas is striding brilliantly and with confidence on a path the leader Sif a-Din al-Zoabi laid out wisely and courageously. This path sees things as they are, accepts, espouses a dignified life, and eschews the torturous path of endless death that Mansour's friends set out and followed until they woke up. (...) The serial "rejecters," the ones who stood in opposition then and still oppose, are the main obstacle to the possibility of the Arab sector integrating into Israeli society as equals. Those of us who want to join hands with the citizens of Israel without forgoing our national identity, honor the national symbols and the country's laws (...). Welcome, Abbas, on board the train of sanity, the human society of reason, those who seek to integrate, and want to connect. Nael Zoabi, IHY, 26.12.21

#### **4. Israel beginnt mit zweiter Boosterimpfung**

*Angesichts der schnellen Ausbreitung der Omikron-Variante hat Israel die Verabreichung einer vierten Corona-Impfdosis aufgenommen. Zum zweiten Mal geboostert werden zunächst über 60-Jährige, Menschen mit geschwächtem Immunsystem und Krankenhauspersonal. Die Zahl der täglichen Corona-Neuinfektion nahm jüngst erneut dramatisch zu. Experten rechnen mit einem Anstieg auf bis zu 20.000 Neuinfektionen pro Tag. Die Zahl der Krankenhauseinweisungen von Covid-19-Patienten blieb hingegen nahezu unverändert. Unterdessen stoßen die strikten Reisebeschränkungen zunehmend auf Kritik in der Bevölkerung. Seit Ende November dürfen ausländische Besucher\_innen nicht mehr einreisen.*

#### **Amid Omicron confusion, Israel must close airport to be safe**

(...) There is a rise in hospitalization in many countries in Europe and elsewhere and some worry hospitals will not be able to respond adequately to the pending needs. (...) As 2021 winds to a close (...), the world is discovering that the crisis is far from over. (...) Omicron is up in countries with high rates of vaccinations and it is still unclear whether it is more infectious than the Delta variant or spreading quickly because it is able to overcome the immunity provided by the vaccine. (...) Amid all the confusion, Prime Minister Naftali Bennett has been trying his best to reduce the risk to Israelis and advance a prudent policy (...). He has met with opposition from some of his own ministers who routinely pander to

their constituents. Their political calculations are simple and no less cynical: If the omicron variant turns out to be contagious but to cause only a mild disease, they will be able to say they were right to reject mitigation measures. If it turns out to cause mass hospitalizations, they will claim Israel is no different than any other country in the world so they cannot be blamed for Omicron's effects. Bennett has not yet asked for lockdown or a ban on public gatherings. All he wants is to block the variant's ability to enter the country through the Ben Gurion airport. This is not an unreasonable request considering the uncertainty the entire world is experiencing. (...)

Nadav Eyal, YED, 19.12.21

#### **If Bennett really thinks COVID vaccines are urgent, this is what he should do**

(...) If the prime minister genuinely felt that full vaccination was critical, not just as a political pose but as a matter of life or death, if he really felt the sword on the neck, he should have convened – weeks ago, but it's not too late – an open news conference on Zoom, inviting every Israeli to voice their concerns about the vaccine, allowing every shred of doubt to come to the surface, and then providing answers (...). He could have brought Health Ministry officials and sat there himself (...) to answer questions as they arose. (...) he should have come out to the people demonstrating outside his home (...) and, within the bounds of his security protocols, sat down and talked to them, trying to understand what they were saying. He should definitely have retroactively condemned the police violence against the protesters. Yes, despite what he surely hears from his media consultants and despite his apparently anachronistic image of politics and its direct interface with the public. (...) The failure of the vaccination campaign is first and foremost a vote of no-confidence in this government and in politics in general. The demonization by "new fascists," self-proclaimed liberals, of anyone daring to cast doubt won't help. Anyone who really cares must first understand this loss of trust.

Yair Assulin, HAA, 23.12.21

#### **Israel is wrong to close its borders to Diaspora Jews -**

(...) it was disappointing (...) to hear Bennett say that while the Diaspora is "close to my heart," he would not be changing corona regulations to allow the Jews of the world to enter the State of Israel. Diaspora Jews are foreigners who have been banned from entering Israel since the end of No-

vember (...). Bennett's position might seem understandable. (...) his responsibility is first and foremost to safeguard the security of the citizens of the country whose government he currently heads. While most Israelis certainly feel an affinity to Jews from around the world, they don't think having them enter Israel during a global pandemic needs to be a national priority. The pandemic is raging, this argument goes, and foreigners – even Jews – should stay in their countries and we will stay in ours. They are wrong. The problem with this thinking is that it looks at Israel through the narrow prism of being a country just for the people who live within its borders. It disregards the significance and symbolism it holds for other Jews from all corners of the globe. Keeping Jews out for over a month now undermines the way Jews – especially those who do not live here – look at Israel: as a sanctuary, a safe harbor, a place for inspiration, and national connection. (...) It is a place at the center of their very identity, one they pray for, care about, and support in more ways than one. (...) these bans come with a price – a price that Israel's government should refuse to come to terms with. After a month of the country shut down to foreign Jews, it is time to reopen.  
Yaakov Katz, JPO, 30.12.21

## 5. Medienquerschnitt

### Ambitionierte Entwicklungspläne für die Golanhöhen

#### Plans for the Golan: finally matching declarations with deeds

(...) Fifty-four years after Israel took over the strategic heights in a pre-emptive attack against the Syrians in the Six Day War, there are only 27,000 Jews there, along with about as many Druze (...) and Alawites (...). Prime minister after prime minister pledged allegiance to its importance and promised to develop it, but often fell short in implementing those promises. (...) Demographics matter. Former prime minister Ariel Sharon was able to withdraw from Gush Katif because there were only some 10,000 Jews living there. Had there been 50,000, it would have been a different story. The same is true of the Golan Heights (...). This makes significant the government's cabinet meeting on the heights on Sunday and its decision to invest a billion shekel for the development of the region over the next five years. Finally, the government – which always talks about the strategic significance of the heights – is putting its money where its mouth is. (...) The new

plan put forward (...) aims to double the Jewish population on the plateau in five years, eventually reaching the 100,000 number Bennett talked about six years ago. To do that, new roads will have to be developed, better health services provided, and new job opportunities created. The plan calls for all of that and more – the question now is whether it will be implemented. (...)

Herb Keinon, JPO, 27.12.21

#### Golan development vital for region

(...) If there is one issue on which the majority of Israelis agree, it is the Golan. Especially now, as the country is reeling again from another wave of corona, we can all appreciate the rolling Golan hills, the greenery and snow, the water and the wine. We can't all visit Europe now, but we can go to the Golan to ski, play in the snow, or just admire its pristine beauty. (...) In the past decade, it has become clearer than ever that the Golan, strategically bordering Syria, must remain in Israeli hands. Its peaceful development is not only vital for Israel, but bolsters hopes for the entire region.

Editorial, JPO, 28.12.21

#### Kritik gegen Rabbi Lau

#### Chief Rabbi David Lau must resign

Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi David Lau paid a shiva mourning period visit this week to the family of haredi author Chaim Walder, who was facing numerous allegations of rape and sexual assault of minors at the time of his suicide. (...) This is a serious error on Lau's part and illustrates yet another bad choice by religious authorities in this country. We expect our institutions, both secular and religious, to take sexual assault and abuse of children seriously. (...) What will it take for religious leaders in Israel to stand with victims? (...) While Lau's office put out a statement saying we must not ignore harassment, and that these acts should be "uprooted," the words are not enough. (...) If we want to stop the next case, we must send a message from the highest levels that victims should speak out, and that abusers will not only face justice but also public shame. Lau's decisions in this case are not the only misstep befalling the Chief Rabbinate. Lau threatened (...) to stop approving conversions if the government's plan to reform the system for Jewish conversion is passed. (...) We are supposed to welcome and love converts, not harm the vulnerable because of arguments at the political level. Taken together, these two missteps represent a reason that



Chief Rabbi Lau should be fired so we can have renewed confidence in this damaged institution.  
Editorial, JPO, 20.12.21

### **Gebetsrechte an der Klagemauer umstritten**

#### **The Western Wall should be a place of unity for all Jews**

(...) The unity of the People of Israel is strengthened through our differences. (...) This is why, with the necessary debate and reform of issues relating to religion and state in Israel, one of the issues left on the agenda which has the strongest capacity to divide, but can also have the greatest potential to unite, is the Western Wall (Kotel) Compromise. The Western Wall compromise called for creating a state-recognized egalitarian prayer section at the southern end of the Western Wall called "Ezrat Yisrael" (...). Unfortunately, while the Reform and Conservative movements made great compromises to arrive at the understanding, the Chief Rabbinate did not, and eventually did not even honor what had been previously agreed. (...) by not implementing the compromise, we are saying to many of our brothers and sisters, especially in the Diaspora, that they have no place among us at one of the holiest and historically central points to the Jewish People on earth. The implementation of the Ezrat Yisrael is symbolic of the potential of our relationship with all the disparate parts of our people, near and far. The Western Wall should be a place of both unity and diversity. (...) The requirement of today is to keep the Jewish People whole and united. (...) Every single Jew who comes to pray at the Western Wall is making a strong Zionist statement that Zion is central to their identity, and they want to be at the place that is one of the most pregnant with Jewish tradition, history, heroism and sacrifice. (...) The Kotel should become a symbol of unity and accord, where every Jew finds and has their space. (...)

Elazar Stern, JPO, 23.12.21

Veröffentlicht im: Januar 2022

Verantwortlich:

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

Redaktion:

Susanne Knaul

Judith Stelmach

Homepage: [www.fes.org.il](http://www.fes.org.il)

Email: [fes@fes.org.il](mailto:fes@fes.org.il)

HAA = Haaretz

YED = Yedioth Ahronoth / Ynetnews

JPO = Jerusalem Post

IHY = Israel HaYom

TOI = Times of Israel

GLO = Globes