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**1. Iran greift Israel an**

Mit dem Beschluss durch hunderte Drohnen, Marschflugkörper und Raketen reagierte das Regime in Teheran auf den mutmaßlich israelischen Luftangriff auf ein iranisches Konsulargebäude in Syriens Hauptstadt Damaskus Anfang April. Dabei waren u.a. zwei ranghohe Vertreter der Revolutionsgarde – Mohammed Resa Sahedi und Mohammed Hadi Hadschi Rahimi – getötet worden. Über Stunden verharrte die israelische Bevölkerung in Erwartung der iranischen Luftangriffe. 99 Prozent der abgefeuerten Geschosse konnten abgefangen werden. Als sehr hilfreich bei der erfolgreichen Abwehr des Großangriffs zeigten sich die in der Region stationierten Truppen der USA, Großbritanniens und Frankreichs sowie vor allem auch die Beteiligung Jordaniens, wodurch zahlreiche Geschosse abgefangen werden konnten, noch bevor sie den israelischen Luftraum erreichten. Israel war infolge des harten Vorgehens im Gazastreifen und der hohen Verlusten unter der palästinensischen Zivilbevölkerung ins Visier internationaler Kritik geraten. Mit dem iranischen Angriff änderte sich der Ton vor allem in Washington und Berlin. Westliche Regierungen zeigten sich solidarisch mit Israel, drängen jedoch gleichzeitig aus Sorge vor einer weiteren regionalen Eskalation zu einer maßvollen Reaktion. Sollte Israel massiv Ziele im Iran angreifen, steht die eben gewonnene internationale Solidarität auf dem Spiel. Zugleich droht in diesem Fall ein erneuter iranischer

Vergeltungsschlag. Allerdings will Israel nach diesem ersten direkten Angriff durch den Iran die Abschreckung aufrechterhalten.

**Monday's assassination could reshape the war**

The killing of Hassan Mahdavi, the commander of Iran's Quds Force for Syria and Lebanon, is the most significant assassination attributed to Israel since the start of the war. Mahdavi was not just another senior official – he was the most important Iranian figure in the region, second only to Hassan Nasrallah in importance. Mahdavi was an extremely powerful and experienced figure. (...) The assassination (...) is the harshest blow Iran has suffered in years. While various other Iranian figures have been struck in recent months, the sword has not come this close to Iran's top leadership before. (...) Mahdavi's assassination puts Iran in a difficult dilemma (...). Iran has four main options: First, not to respond – an unlikely scenario. Second, to respond broadly in a way that leads to a wider war, such as by firing rockets into central Israel – a low probability. Third, to respond forcefully but not necessarily in a way that would lead to an all-out war – a high probability. And fourth, to strike an Israeli target around the world like an embassy – also a high probability, though such an operation would take time and may not be the immediate retaliation. (...) Despite assessments that the Israeli-attributed assassination will not lead to war, the IDF is preparing for that scenario. (...) The national priority remains the

southern arena, accomplishing a decisive victory over Hamas and freeing the captives. But the understanding that the northern front is heating up and that the tit-for-tat strikes expected in retaliation for the assassination could spiral out of control into a wider conflict, cannot be ignored.

Yoav Limor, IHY, 02.04.24

### **Fending Off Iran Attack Is a Major Israeli Achievement. Retaliation Would Risk an All-out Regional War**

The extensive Iranian attack on Israel, with hundreds of drones, cruise and ballistic missiles, ended (...) with minimal damage. (...) The importance of the results of this nocturnal conflict must not be underestimated. They are an unprecedented achievement in the history of Israel's wars – albeit with some help from friends – that largely takes away the main card held by Iran and the axis: drones and missiles. The impressive Arrow System interceptions have garnered most of the attention, but Israeli and American pilots downed hundreds of cruise missiles and drones. (...) The main question left is what comes now. Israel will have difficulty going on as usual after such a massive attack (...). Israel has good reason to settle accounts with Iran, who has been cynically pulling the strings of terrorism against Israel for years. It must however take into account the possible ramifications of a response. A massive Israeli strike on Iran could lift any restraint on Hezbollah's part. Paradoxically, as long as Iran hasn't obtained nuclear weapons capability, the greatest threat to Israel comes from Hezbollah in view of the massive arsenal held by the Lebanese Shi'ite group and its proximity to Israel's border. (...) Without a doubt, there are those in the cabinet and in the government who feel that the opportunity is now ripe to completely shake things up: A regional war in which the West and the Sunni states will stand behind Israel in one way or another, leading to Iran losing its strategic assets and Hezbollah's arsenal being mostly destroyed with Lebanon sustaining massive damage to infrastructure. (...) The dangers to the home front in an all out war are numerous (...). The question as usual is what does Netanyahu want. The person who dumped all the responsibility for the failures of October 7 on the defense establishment (...) is now basking in the unprecedented success of the Israeli Air Force and its partners. (...)

Amos Harel HAA, 14.04.24

### **Iran failed, and Israel succeeded, but its response should be carefully considered**

The Iranian attack's failure is mainly attributed to the IDF's defensive plan, which relied on precise military intelligence and the exceptional capabilities of the Air Force pilots and their active protection systems. The main question now is how Israel will respond to this attack, and in what manner. (...) One vector is the need to deter Iran. (...) If Israel fails to respond to this attack aggressively, the ayatollahs and their allies in the "Axis of Resistance" – as well as regional countries willing to normalize their relations with Israel – may see it as a weakness. (...) the second vector (...) is no less important (...): the aggressive demand by the United States, the UK, France, Germany and Canada that Israel refrain from a disproportionate response that could endanger the region's stability. Such a regional war would also serve Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar in Gaza. Therefore, Israel has an interest in responding to the Western demand and returning to focus on the wars in Gaza and the northern border, leaving the schooling of Iran for another opportunity. In any case, response and revenge are dishes best served cold. It's better to plan them well to ensure their effectiveness, even if it takes time and is done covertly. When considering a response, priority should be given to maintaining Israel's legitimacy in the eyes of the West. (...) Iran's failure didn't only provide evidence of Israel's military intelligence and air superiority, and the exceptional efficiency of its multi-layered active protection system in intercepting missiles, but also achieved diplomatic successes of paramount importance. (...) The Iranian attack brought the regional situation back to its true proportions, wherein Iran and its proxies, including Hamas, are the ones threatening the Middle East's stability and are poised to ignite a full-scale war due to their hostility and hatred of Israel. (...)

Ron Ben-Yishai, YED, 14.04.24

### **What is resilience?**

Our entire country was awake (...) when they should have been asleep. Iran decided to light up our skies with a terrifying barrage of missiles around 2 a.m. (...) if any other country had gone through what we had last night, it would have looked like the early Corona days: bombarding supermarkets, stocking up on toilet paper, hunkering down in a state of terror and panic. There would have been utter chaos. And yet, (...) life as usual. Missiles all night, shopping for matzah ball mix in the morning. It sounds ridiculous, hilarious, unbelievable, but this,

unfortunately, has become our normal. And it got me thinking of the meaning of resilience. (...) It's not giving up. (...) It's every parent of every soldier that lost his life in this war and still manages to find the strength to LIVE. (...) It's the soldier who's leg was amputated who kicks around a soccer ball with his new prosthetic leg less than three months after the amputation. (...) It's the farmers who are continuing to plant and pick the vegetables we eat while their farms and orchards are in the line of fire. (...) It's our ability to find humor in a situation that isn't very funny at all. And a thousand more examples like these. Our country is the very definition of what resilience looks like.

Chavi Feldman, TOI, 14.04.24

### **Iran's Attack Is a Strategic Opportunity for Israel. Will Netanyahu Squander It?**

There are two possible strategic meanings to the Iranian missile and drone attack on Israel (...). The fearsome Iranian arsenal was blunted not just by Israeli technology but an alliance of Western powers (...) working alongside Israel and friendly Arab nations. They overcame their differences against the common enemy. (...) The other interpretation is that Iran is no longer deterred from launching a direct strike on Israel. No state has directly attacked Israel for 33 years, since Saddam Hussein's Iraq launched Scud missiles during the 1991 Gulf War. That taboo is now broken. (...) The unprecedented Iranian attack is an inflection point. Israel, along with the main Western powers and its Arab neighbors, just proved that a coordinated response utilizing a network of radars, various types of interceptor missiles and fighter jets can shield a country from a combined attack of ballistic and cruise missiles, and swarms of suicide drones. It is a milestone in the historic development of military technology, with global implications. Similar levels of defense could protect other countries such as Ukraine and Taiwan. (...) The full details of how Sunni Arab regimes helped protect Israel, without doubt saving Israeli lives from Iranian missiles and drones, may not be known for a while. But this is a historic shift. Whether you credit Yitzhak Rabin and Bill Clinton for the peace agreement with Jordan in 1994, or Benjamin Netanyahu and Donald Trump for the more recent Abraham Accords, the result is the same. (...) There is an Israel-Iran conflict and an Israel-Palestine conflict, but the Arab nations – or at least their leaders – are working together with Israel. (...) the trend in the region is still toward an Arab-American-Israeli alliance against Iran and its proxies. It is an opportunity for Israel to

build on this budding partnership and bolster its deterrence. The meager result of the Iranian attack can be a strategic blow for the regime in Tehran if the alliance continues and is enhanced. (...)

Anshel Pfeffer, HAA, 14.04.24

### **A historic moment sheds light on historic opportunities**

(...) A 99% intercept success rate is incredible, and the fact that many missiles and drones were shot down outside Israeli air space helped save lives, although one girl is severely hurt and is fighting for her life, and some material damage sustained. (...) We are proud and grateful to our allies for standing staunchly by us at this moment of great emergency. If there was any doubt if the criticism of Israel's behavior in Gaza would bleed into support against an attempt at its annihilation, that concern was laid to rest, with the US, the UK, France, and others lending their aid and support. (...) Israel needs a proper strategy. We have the time, and now is not a time to be rash; it is a time to be strategic and smart. (...) the fight isn't over; this is precisely the time to strengthen the strategic alliances that we have, and the regional cooperation that we've built and that they should stand the test of time. Israel proved (...) that it is an anchor of military and technological prowess, of security in the Middle East – all thanks to the IDF. We will build a local coalition against Iran and exact punishment from it, in the place and at the time that is correct for us.

Editorial, JPO, 15.04.25

### **'This is not over,' IDF officials warn as they push for retaliation against Iran**

(...) The military sees great importance in building a coalition against Iran. From an operational standpoint, such an international coalition was established within days, led by Israel and the United States, which required joining forces and early detection systems. The IDF hopes to enlist other countries to join the coalition to put Iran in its place - nations that view Iran as a threat to themselves and to world peace, as it nears nuclear capabilities. (...) There is also good intelligence, as demonstrated in the exact anticipation of Iran's targets in their strike against Israel (...). But despite that, it was the intelligence failure to anticipate Iran's response to the killing of its senior IRGC member in Damascus earlier this month that led to the Iranian attack, which the IDF now insists must be retaliated against. The test will come when other senior Iranians are in Israel's crosshairs - those who are responsible for acts of

terror against Israel, or for building the capabilities of Hezbollah. Will the military now allow them to be targeted? Time will tell.

Yossi Yehushua, YED, 15.04.24

## 2. Krieg im Gazastreifen

*Stoisch reagierte Hamas-Politbürochef Ismail Haniyeh auf die Nachricht, dass drei seiner Söhne und drei Enkelkinder im Gaza-Krieg zu Tode gekommen waren. Er danke Gott für diese „Ehre“, so zitierte ihn Al Jazeera. Unterdessen hält Israels Regierungschef Benjamin Netanyahu ungeachtet heftiger internationaler Kritik weiter an den Plänen für eine Bodenoffensive in der Grenzstadt Rafah fest. "Das wird geschehen – es gibt ein Datum", erklärte er. Rafah gilt als die letzte Hochburg der Hamas im Gazastreifen. Derzeit halten sich über 1,5 Millionen Palästinenser\_innen in der Stadt auf. Großen Unmut und große Betroffenheit löste weltweit der Tod von sieben Mitarbeiter\_innen der Hilfsorganisation World Central Kitchen aus, die bei einem versehentlichen israelischen Drohnenangriff starben. Israels Militär kündigte „eine gründliche Untersuchung“ des tragischen Vorfalles an. Zwei Offiziere seien bereits aus dem Dienst entlassen worden. Die Hilfsorganisation stellte ihren Einsatz im Gazastreifen umgehend ein.*

### Rafah and the Ten Plagues

(...) the holiday of Passover (...) does not feel like any other year. (...) Our Seders will feel different due to the Hamas massacre of October 7, the ongoing war, and the issue of the hostages that continues to consume so many of our lives. The Haggadah, the script of the Seder (...) is the blueprint for our continual struggle for a greater sense of freedom from harm, intimidation, and constriction. It is also the blueprint for us to understand the tactics of our enemies. The Haggadah claims that new enemies arise against the Jewish people in every generation, but their strategies feel familiar. (...) Perhaps the most significant message of the Seder this year is that the Haggadah teaches that an overwhelming punishing response is the only appropriate action against such villains. (...) We spill out wine as we recite, "Blood, frogs, lice, wild animals..." We take the progression of the plagues for granted. There is a false ease in which we effortlessly move through the plagues without honoring their message. (...) Could you imagine the different narrative had Egypt survived the first three plagues, won public support for a ceasefire, and then been emboldened to in-

crease Jewish suffering? As absurd as that story sounds, it is exactly our current trajectory today. Israel must rid Gaza of Hamas. (...) Sometimes, the only way for our values to triumph is through force. If we don't succeed, our children's future hangs in jeopardy. This is one of the lessons of the Seder; one of the lessons of history that we too easily forget. (...) Would God and Moses have stopped punishing the Egyptians, there would be no Seder because the Egyptians would have succeeded in crushing us. (...) We must honor the plagues and comprehend that Rafah is but the next important step in our efforts toward liberation today.

Nolan Lebovitz, JPO, 02.04.24

### The Palestinian Death Toll in Gaza Is Israel's Biggest Taboo

The most taboo number in Israel is 34,000. (...) This is the number of people killed in Gaza, according to Palestinian sources. We have no other source. We aren't told how many we killed. Either we killed nobody, or all of those we killed, regardless of how many, were terrorists (...). We were found guilty. We are now at the sentencing. We have been absolved of killing terrorists, but convicted of killing women and children. (...) The difference between revenge and self-defense is the difference between 13,000 terrorists killed (...) and 9,000 children and 6,000 women killed. Killing terrorists is self-defense. Killing women and children is revenge. We are proud of the self-defense, but deny the revenge. Revenge is for hotheads and not becoming of a normal country, and now go convince the world that this is how you defend yourself. It's a dialog between the deaf. The world asks about destruction and starvation, and we answer with horrifying descriptions of rape. (...) Military analysts will call for "the return of the hostages," but won't say what everybody knows: that only end of the war will bring them back. They won't say that every eliminated senior Hamasnik will be replaced, while those of us who will die because of that elimination can't be replaced. (...)

Yossi Klein, HAA, 03.04.24

### Civilian casualties occur in fog of war as in killing of WCK staff

The deaths of seven World Central Kitchen aid workers were a terrible tragedy. We can only admire the courage and humanity of these men and women, and others like them who work to alleviate the suffering of the civilian population, while knowing they could be killed or seriously wounded in a war zone where by definition nowhere can be safe.

While combatants on both sides have an absolute duty to adhere to the laws of war and where possible avoid killing uninvolved civilians, the ultimate responsibility for all killings in this war — including the WCK workers — lies with Hamas. (...) knowing the ethos of the IDF and its strict adherence to the laws of war, it is unthinkable that the action was deliberately intended to kill aid workers. (...) whoever ordered and conducted the strikes believed the vehicles that were hit contained terrorists, suggesting incorrect intelligence or failure of surveillance, possibly compounded by human error. (...) differentiating between enemy forces and uninvolved civilians is made much more challenging by Hamas terrorists' use of human shields, always moving and fighting in civilian clothes and sometimes using civilian vehicles such as ambulances and aid trucks. (...) the independent investigation will reveal the full facts and be made public. If there is intentional malice, breaches of IDF rules of engagement, or reckless behavior, individuals will be held accountable under military justice. (...)

Richard Kemp, YED, 03.04.24

### **World Central Kitchen, Israel, and the Rafah operation**

If the simple delivery of a small amount of humanitarian aid, coordinated between two friendly organizations, the World Central Kitchen and the government of Israel, ended in a disaster, what can one frankly expect from a complex operation consisting of evacuating an unfriendly population of more than one million people concentrated in Rafah, and providing for weeks food and basic health services to this population? Does Israel expect to coordinate this operation with Hamas to avoid civilian casualties? (...) Israel should heed the advice of President Biden in this matter, leave the world of fantasies, and look for other ways to proceed. (...) then, we will be able to say that the lives of the eight workers of the World Central Kitchen have not been wasted and sacrificed in vain. Lesson learned.

Jaime Kardontchik, TOI, 03.04.24

### **Unintentional killings of WCK workers is tragic, but Hamas is still to blame for war**

(...) It is one of the innumerable tragedies of the war in Gaza, a war callously triggered by Hamas's invasion of Israel on October 7, its murder of 1,200 people, and its kidnapping of 240 hostages. (...) Quickly taking responsibility for the WCK accidental deaths was the correct move. (...) Yes, these incidents do happen in the less-than-sterile conditions

of battle. They have happened to every country that has ever engaged in warfare. (...) All civilian casualties in Gaza, even those mistakenly caused by Israel, need to be laid at Hamas' doorstep. Had Hamas not attacked on October 7, or had it released the hostages shortly thereafter and surrendered, none of this would be happening. Israel will investigate and learn the lessons of this tragedy because this is what it does and because this is what is right. (...) What Israel does need, (...) is for the international community to rein in its hypocrisy and stop treating battle zones as crime scenes, something it only inexplicably seemingly does when the Jewish state is involved.

Editorial, JPO, 04.04.24

### **Unintended Tragedies, Vicious Accusations**

(...) There is no reason to believe that the prime minister was untruthful in characterizing the killings as unintentional, or that the chief of staff was untruthful when he said the attack resulted from misidentification. (...) Israel could have no possible reason for intentionally killing aid workers from a very well-respected international charity organization. Any rational person would recognize from the outset that killing aid workers would bury Israel under a mountain of international criticism, as even the unintentional killing has done. (...) if Netanyahu is guilty of murder, it would follow that numerous other Israelis—particularly Israelis in the IDF—are also guilty of murder. (...) It is difficult to know how to respond to the bizarre, grotesque ideas that are frequently expressed by Sen. Sanders, other than to shrug one's shoulders and insist on returning to planet Earth. The senior senator from Vermont apparently is ignorant of the fact that, in urban conflicts, it is tragically inevitable that civilians as well as combatants are killed. And when combatants deliberately hide behind civilians, as Hamas terrorists do, civilian deaths are sure to increase. Rather than trying to learn what every intelligent person knows, Sanders viciously lashes out at people he does not like. There is no basis for his accusation of "murder," but the senator doesn't care that there is no basis. That's Bernie Sanders.

David E. Weisberg, TOI, 04.04.24

### **We Israelis Must Act Now to End the Humanitarian Crisis in Gaza We Helped Create**

(...) Hunger, thirst, lack of basic hygiene and sanitation, shortages of medications, medical supplies and equipment, as well as the precarious life in unsettled refugee conditions have brought about and will

result in illness and mortality from infectious diseases, malnutrition and worsening of underlying chronic mental and physical illnesses. (...) The main victims of these tragedies will be the most vulnerable members of society - children, pregnant women and older people. (...) In previous decades, Israel played an important role in training and infrastructure support in Gaza's healthcare system, and it is in Israel's interest to maintain health in the region. (...) Israel, as the entity "in charge" both de facto, and according to international law, must make every effort to accomplish this daunting task. The wrong-headed policy of limiting or not facilitating aid has clearly not brought Hamas to surrender. (...) Nor has this policy resulted in the return of the hostages, even after six months! And there is no reason to believe that the effect of the humanitarian crisis has skipped over our hostages; they are also suffering from a lack of food, water and medicines. (...) There is no reason to assume that epidemics will be restricted to Gaza as infectious diseases know no borders. (...) this disaster does not serve Israel's interests either militarily or from a health perspective. (...) The tragic killing of aid workers from the World Central Kitchen underscores not only the necessity of providing adequate food aid, but also Israel's responsibility and duty, to the extent possible, to guarantee the safety of those agencies addressing food insecurity in Gaza. (...)

Ronit Calderon-Margalit, Orly Manor, Ora Paltiel, HAA, 04.04.24

### **Accountability in war**

(...) More than 300 civilians were killed during President Obama's two terms in office. Some say the numbers were underestimated. (...) Neither of those tragic mistakes led to the United States ending its war against terrorism. Contrast this with the recent tragedy in Gaza where World Central Kitchen workers were killed in a mistaken Israeli strike. Two senior Israeli officers were immediately dismissed and several top commanders in the Israeli Defense Forces were formally censured. Israel has conducted, and is continuing to conduct, an intensive investigation into the death of the aid workers. (...) no nation has taken precautions to avoid civilian casualties the way Israel has. (...) The death of the WCK workers is precisely what the terrorists, and Hamas in general, have been preparing for. (...) There would be no war in Gaza at all had Hamas not acted upon its stated desire to destroy the Jewish people. (...) the world condemns Israel for a mistake, which Israel also condemns and is investigating, while

saying little or nothing about terrorist groups that publicly state their intention and desire to murder all Jews and Christians in the Middle East. (...) War exacts a terrible and dramatic price. (...) Israel, in connection with WCK, has stepped up to the plate faster than any nation has under similar circumstances and undoubtedly will continue to flagellate itself. In reality, a fair analysis must be made as to whether WCK was working with Hamas and, if so, in what manner. (...) Hopefully, the truth will provide answers as to how civilian casualties can be further reduced in Gaza (...).

Cliff Rieders, TOI, 05.04.24

### **Outrage over WCK deaths is about saving Hamas, not civilians**

(...) A mistaken strike that caused the deaths of seven World Central Kitchen aid workers who were bringing food and other supplies into the Strip is being treated as not merely a tragic accident all too common in wars, but as an act of transcendent symbolism that proves that Israel's tactics are too brutal to be allowed to continue. (...) Mistakes in war always happen as US wars in Iraq and Afghanistan – and famously before that, in Korea and Vietnam – proved. (...) While Biden issued a lengthy and passionate statement denouncing the deaths of the seven aid workers, he did no such thing when his own orders led to the accidental deaths of innocents. Instead, he let military officials make the statement about the error and take the fallout while he went to the beach for the weekend. (...) Even when armies take special care to avoid accidents, anyone who enters a combat zone where bullets and bombs are flying is at risk of being killed or wounded. (...) In the case of the World Central Kitchen victims, the problem, which remains ongoing, is accentuated by the fact that Hamas terrorists lurk near aid convoys since they steal most of what has been brought into Gaza for civilian use. (...) That doesn't lessen the grief of the families of those who die as a result of errors. But it should put the situation in perspective. Their deaths (...) are the responsibility of the terrorists and their many supporters. (...) If Biden really wants to end the fighting in Gaza, then he should be directing all of his anger and threats against Hamas and its backers, not the Israelis. (...)

Jonathan S. Tobin, IHY, 05.04.24

### **Six months into the war, it is time to ask some difficult questions**

(...) in Gaza, the IDF is not really moving anywhere. (...) the international support that might have been left for Israel is now pretty much gone. And then there is Rafah (...) Israel is stuck. (...) Six months into this war, it is time to ask some difficult questions. The arguments in favor of an operation in Rafah make sense but with every day that passes it becomes harder to make the case especially in light of the growing humanitarian crisis in Gaza. The same can be asked about the protests right now against Netanyahu as well as Gantz's call for early elections. Is now really the time for all of that? And specifically regarding Gantz: If he wants early elections, then why does he remain inside the coalition? (...) The world's patience for Israel's operation had run out even before the killing of the aid workers; Israeli public frustration is peaking to the point soon that the protests will be unstoppable; and the coalition appears to be slowly collapsing. (...) Hamas will see an early election as a victory and it will not be wrong. Continuing to wage a war during an election campaign and even expanding it with an operation in Rafah will not be accepted so easily by the Israeli people and it will be hard to do. (...) Ending the war now and continuing to carry out pinpointed strikes against Hamas – something Israel will anyhow need to do even after an operation in Rafah – has its merits, as does the launching of an operation to complete the dismantling of Hamas's remaining battalions in Rafah. And, of course, there are the hostages who get lost deeper and deeper in Hamas tunnels every day they are not brought home.

It is time to make some decisions.

Yaakov Katz, JPO, 05.04.24

### **3. Geiseln im Gazastreifen**

*Das Schicksal der Geiseln im Gazastreifen bleibt weiter ungewiss. Die von den USA, Ägypten und Qatar vermittelten Verhandlungen scheinen in einer Sackgasse zu stecken. Die USA hatten eine sechswöchige Feuerpause vorgeschlagen und den Austausch von 40 Geiseln gegen 900 palästinensische Häftlinge, darunter 100, die wegen Mordes zu lebenslanger Haft verurteilt sind. Die Hamas beharrt auf einen dauerhaften Waffenstillstand und den vollständigen Abzug der israelischen Truppen aus dem Gazastreifen. Die israelische Regierung will sich hingegen die Möglichkeit offenhalten, die Kämpfe nach einer Feuerpause fortzusetzen. Anfang April kam die*

*Nachricht vom Tod einer weiteren Geisel: Elad Katzir war zusammen mit seiner Mutter aus dem Kibbutz Nir Oz entführt worden. Der Islamische Jihad zeigte noch kurz vor seiner Ermordung ein Video des israelischen Landwirts. Seine Mutter, die 78 Jahre alte Hanna Katzir, war im November aus der Geiselhaft freigekommen.*

### **Following failure in withholding Hamas, now is Doha's chance to rebrand**

Six months have passed since the terrible October 7 massacre (...). The fact that the leaders of Hamas oversaw the entire operation from their fancy five-star hotels in Doha is known. And that the Qatari government never thought of showing an ounce of introspection, uttering a word of apology, or even partly condemning the massacre committed by the criminal organization they have been empowering and harboring for decades – is sadly not very surprising, either. Yet now, for some reason, the world looks to Doha as if it is the messiah who will bring about the release of the Israeli hostages (...) responsibility for the lives of our hostages largely lies in the hands of Doha (...). From a redheaded one year old baby to an 86-year-old grandfather - the responsibility to all of these innocent lives lies on the shoulders of the sheikh, depending on his level of creativity in pressuring the leaders of the fanatic religious extremist group. After all, the Hamas leaders' safe haven in Doha hotels is within reach of the royal palace. (...) Qatar has many tools to pressure Hamas (...). Like some of their counterparts in the Gulf and beyond, the regime in Doha has tremendous potential to become an agent who stands for peace and stability, promotes understanding and multiculturalism in the region, and invests its remarkable wealth and inexhaustible energy in initiatives that empower a sense of approaching one another rather than endorsing destabilizing actors – all without having to give up on any of its traditional values. (...) detach from the political and social crusade against the West; push forward peace-building initiatives; and use all its resources to punish and pressure Hamas to give up their arms, release the hostages, and mark a path for a regional solution to the conflict. (...)

Ohad Merlin, JPO, 06.04.24

### **Israel's Hostages in Gaza: A Matter of Life and Death**

(...) Every day that there is no hostage deal, the physical and mental health of the hostages are harmed. Every day that passes is torture for each

and every one of them and a living hell for their families, who are going crazy with worry, sadness, pain and yearning. (...) Unfortunately for the hostages, they are in the worst possible hands. (...) Netanyahu is wasting time (...). The public cannot (...) abandon the families of the hostages to fight this battle alone, because that is exactly what Netanyahu and his partners in crime in the government are doing. Netanyahu only understands political power and the party exercising political power against him today is the extreme right, which is pressuring him to continue the war, even at the cost of the hostages' lives. As far as they are concerned, the hostages are a legitimate sacrifice to achieve their messianic goals of conquest, settlement and the population transfer of Palestinians. The public in Israel must stand with the families to create a counterweight against the extremists. (...) The hostages must be returned. The war in Gaza must end. And Netanyahu must go. It's a matter of life and death.  
Editorial, HAA, 07.04.24

#### **A hostage deal is also a win for Egypt**

(...) the leadership in Cairo has no plans to revoke the peace accords with Israel (...). But at the same time, Egypt continues to warn against an Israeli offensive on Rafah, which if it does take place, would shake the Egyptian-Israeli peace to its core. Cairo is preparing a proposal that would include the release of hostages and the return of Gazan's to the northern parts of the Strip. (...) Relations between Israeli officials and their Egyptian intelligence counterparts is better than could be expected. There is full understanding between the parties and the Israeli delegation has enormous respect for Abbas Kamel, Egypt's chief of intelligence and for his senior officers. (...) Israelis are well aware of the Egyptian government's view of Hamas and the Brothers and also of Iran's continued efforts to insert itself into the negotiation process. But the gap between the sentiment of the people and their government broadens. What the world sees is the Egyptian street and the efforts to hold protests against Israel, the press and the venomous anti-Israel editorials and the extensive reporting of the plight of Gaza's civilians. Egypt has been sending trucks carrying aid into the Strip, airdropping food and supplies and is soon to deliver aid by sea. (...) Egypt continues to fight for its senior position in the Arab world. (...) If President Abd el-Fattah el Sisi succeeds in bringing a substantial deal between Israel and Hamas, Egypt could again claim its central position among Arabs.  
Smadar Perry, YED, 08.04.24

#### **Sinwar could not care less about a deal**

The negotiations Israel is conducting with Hamas for the release of the captives are unfortunately not progressing (...). Israel has shown a willingness to be flexible in its positions and make compromises and concessions – only to have Hamas keeps hardening its stance, unwilling to make any compromise or deal. (...) six months after the war began, it is clear to all that the traveling circus called "Hamas-abroad" that moves from one luxury hotel to another has no real meaning or leverage. After all, they are not the ones making decisions – that role falls to Hamas leader in Gaza, Yahya Sinwar, hiding deep in a bunker somewhere in the southern strip for fear of IDF soldiers searching for him. Communication with Sinwar is intermittent and partial, making negotiation management difficult and prolonging the process. But the problem is not technical, not a matter of communication – it is a matter of substance. Sinwar does not (...) want a deal, rather Israel's surrender to all his demands: a ceasefire and end to the war; withdrawal of the IDF from the strip; the return of Gazan refugees to their homes; the wholesale release of prisoners from Israeli jails; and ultimately – guarantees and assurances for his safety and that of his men after the fighting ends. Sinwar does not care about the residents of the strip. For him, they are "grease for the wheels of the revolution," expendable for the cause. (...) Israel has a moral obligation to leave no stone unturned in its effort to return the captives it abandoned on October 7. Their return will be a victory for Israel and the Israeli spirit, and an important element in the victory we will achieve over Hamas.  
Eyal Zisser, IHY, 08.04.24

#### **Netanyahu's Aversion to Decision-making Is Holding Up the Hostage Deal with Hamas**

(...) Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has sent mixed messages about his willingness to reach an agreement and is maneuvering between pressure being applied by different wings of the coalition. It's difficult to get the impression that Netanyahu has made a strategic decision in favor of a deal. It's possible that the situation is actually the opposite – under the cover of the pressure, he is avoiding a decision that could cost him a considerable political price. (...) Returning the men and women hostages, he said, is the primary objective of the war. Then he added, "(...) all of them together. We will bring back all of them." The remarks may imply toeing the line with the Likud MKs for their release in a single



round. (...) It seems that Hamas feels no urgency to reach an agreement, because the external pressure on the organization has eased. (...) Netanyahu has previously contributed to delaying the negotiations by his public leaks and declarations. (...) Meanwhile, Hamas is raising its own difficulties. In the past few days, the Hamas delegation in Cairo, in separate meetings with the mediators, claimed that the organization could not find 40 hostages who met the criteria set. (...) Despite optimistic declarations, fear is rising that the negotiations may again deadlock. It's impossible to rule out the assessment that this, too, was Netanyahu's intention from the start.

Amos Harel, HAA, 10.04.24

#### 4. Weitere Themen

##### Forderung nach Neuwahlen

###### **Gantz and Eisenkot: Stop Saving Netanyahu and Get Out of His Government**

War cabinet member Benny Gantz said (...) that the time has come for early elections, which he called to be scheduled for September. (...) There's no value to Gantz's statement so long as it comes from within the government. Gantz statement would have been relevant had the prime minister been someone who cares about the country's interests. But even October 7 didn't get Netanyahu to change his ways. (...) A change of attitude has also been seen among protesters. They've understood it's time to return to the streets and demand the replacement of the prime minister. The hostages' families and the protesters have all the reasons in the world to demand an election. Netanyahu is the one who led Israel with eyes wide shut to October 7, and has been making things worse since. As long as he stays in power and the Kahanist government continues to rule, things won't change in Israel. This government and its leader have no tools to extract Israel out of the mess they got it into. (...) Now Gantz and Eisenkot need to (...) leave the government and take up the demand for an early election. Six months is plenty. Things have gone far enough.

Editorial, HAA, 04.04.24

###### **Netanyahu is living in a delusional fantasy**

(...) According to the latest ratings, King Bibi scores a mere 20% of supporters among the general public in Israel. Netanyahu may indeed be the most detested leader ever to occupy the seat of ultimate power in the country. His indecisions, silences, and

overweening attitude, especially toward the Palestinian population but also toward his political enemies and rivals, make his time in office more of a burden than a blessing to most Israelis. He helped unite the opposition across the board, as was witnessed by the never-ending protests of hundreds of thousands of citizens that spilled into the streets. (...) Netanyahu, the conservative political realist, has entered into a phase of delusional fantasy, and the quicker he snaps out of it the better – not only for himself but also for the population at large. If he truly believes that the country is behind him, all he has to do is call for new elections. The public would then let him know if he is right or wrong. (...)

Mordechai Beck, JPO, 15.04.24

##### Verbot von Al Jazeera

###### **Al Jazeera will continue to broadcast in Israel, and stir the pot**

(...) Al Jazeera has become the first Arab channel to feature both left- and right-wing Israeli figures in its news programs. (...) The root of the problem lies at the heart of the channel in Doha. (...) the media empire is controlled by a family close to the ruler, who directs broadcasting according to instructions from the palace. If Israel carries out its threat to shut down Al Jazeera, it will join a questionable group of countries which includes Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Bahrain, along with the UAE, Iran and Iraq which are on the fence. However, the bad news is that it's not really possible. Al Jazeera doesn't give up. The trick is to arrange an interview with people from one of the "forbidden countries," by contacting them on social media and broadcasting them live. (...) Israel has tried to shut down Al Jazeera three times in the past decade. (...) we can't take down Al Jazeera, which broadcasts through satellites. They will broadcast from Ramallah and there's also no way to stop the channel's journalists who hold Israeli credentials. The only option would be to limit their movement, but only the police can do so. I predict Al Jazeera will continue to be a nuisance.

Smadar Perry, YED, 07.04.24

###### **Shuttering Al Jazeera is crucial and the decision is better late than**

Despite the hesitancy in Israel's legal system regarding the removal of the hostile Al Jazeera TV channel from local cable and satellite, this crucial step has finally been taken. (...) Reporters of the Al Jazeera network, which broadcasts to millions of

viewers worldwide, have become spokespeople for Hamas terrorists on the enemy's official propaganda channel. (...) the purpose of the establishment of Qatari television was to spread propaganda in the service of the Muslim Brotherhood. It was established to support Islamic extremism and escalate the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians. Qatari TV broadcasts false reports about Israel's desire to destroy al-Aqsa Mosque and the alleged genocide that Israel is committing against the "poor" Palestinians; and is responsible for mainstreaming the call for the destruction of Israel: "From the sea to the river, Palestine will be free." (...) Al Jazeera not only fans the coals of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict but even provides the matches to light the fire. The clerics who appear frequently on the channel legitimize acts of terrorism and murder. It is incomprehensible that a country that loves life could allow such a hostile channel to broadcast on local cable and satellite channels (...). The decision to close Al Jazeera in Israel is crucial. (...)  
David Ben-Basat, JPO, 14.04.24

HAA = Haaretz  
YED = Yedioth Ahronoth / Ynetnews  
JPO = Jerusalem Post  
IHY = Israel HaYom  
TOI = Times of Israel

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