



## Schlaglicht Israel Nr. 17/13

### Aktuelles aus israelischen Tageszeitungen

21. Oktober – 04. November 2013

#### 1. Freilassung palästinensischer Gefangener

26 palästinensische Gefangene, die zum Großteil zu lebenslanger Haft verurteilt worden waren, sind am 30. Oktober freigelassen worden. Alle hatten zwischen 1984 und 1994 ein oder mehrere Israelis getötet.

Im Rahmen der derzeit laufenden Verhandlungen zur Wiederaufnahme des israelisch-palästinensischen Friedensprozesses ist die Freilassung von insgesamt 104 Palästinensern als vertrauensbildende Maßnahme vorgesehen. Gleichzeitig kündigte die israelische Regierung jedoch den Bau von mehreren tausend Wohneinheiten in den jüdischen Siedlungen in der Westbank an.

Der Koalitionspartner HaBayit HaYehudi kritisierte die Freilassungen scharf und reichte einen Gesetzesvorschlag ein, mit dem weitere Freilassungen blockiert werden sollten. Der Parteivorsitzende Naftali Bennet bezeichnete zudem Justizministerin Zippi Livni, die die Verhandlungen mit den Palästinensern führt, als "Gefahr für Israel". Während Premierminister Benjamin Netanyahu sich nicht an dem Schlagabtausch beteiligte, feuerten andere Likud-Mitglieder zurück, so der Innenminister Gideon Saar, der Bennet riet, die Koalition zu verlassen, wenn ihm ihre Politik nicht passe.

Auch Angehörige der Opfer der verurteilten Palästinenser protestierten gegen die Freilassungen.

#### Release without relief

"Apparently this is what it takes to get the Palestinians back to the negotiating table. Instead of using the release of terrorists as part of the bargaining process, something that would take place after the successful conclusion of talks, we're expected to let them literally get away with murder in the hope of kick-starting and maintaining discussions.

[...] The Palestinians have reason to believe that the longer they hold out before actually seriously negotiating, the more murderers will be released from Israeli jails."

Liat Collins, JPO 31.10.13

#### Prisoners of the settlements

"The government hastened to announce that the release would coincide with the publication of tenders for the construction of hundreds of new homes in West Bank settlements. [...] Why should a confidence-building measure whose purpose is to facilitate the negotiations with the Palestinians require an immediate and dangerous counter-operation that could jeopardize the talks? [...]

The release of prisoners, like the entire negotiating process, is seen as a terror attack - and thus in need of retaliation. [...]

Israel [is] creating facts on the ground in an area whose future is supposed to be determined in these very negotiations. [...]

As long as there is no agreement with the Palestinians on their future, the settlements are illegal growths and their expansion adds insult to injury."

HAA 27.10.13 Editorial

#### The lesser of three evils

"Freeing prisoners was the lesser evil.

Preferring a prisoner release to a settlement freeze may seem counter-intuitive. [...]

[But] agreeing to freeze Jewish construction in east Jerusalem and the West Bank while allowing Palestinian building to continue would be tantamount to accepting the erroneous definition of these areas as 'occupied Palestinian territory,' rather than disputed territory to which Israel has a valid claim. [...]

Even for very minor adjustments to the 1967 lines, the only justification the West now acknowledges is the sheer impracticability of expecting any Israeli

government to forcibly uproot hundreds of thousands of Israelis from their homes.

Hence it's vital for Israel to also put as many Jewish residents as possible into other areas it wants to keep under a final-status deal – and that requires building houses for them."

Evelyn Gordon, JPO 04.11.13

### **The right not to be murdered**

"So what is the problem with the release of racist killers? The problem is something else entirely. It is the definition of the term 'peace talks,' which, in this case, means 'talks about the conditions under which the Palestinians would be willing not to murder Jews.' If we fail to achieve peace, the Arab side is very clear: In the absence of an agreement, there will be terror. [...]

But that is not all. The release of Palestinian prisoners was not so that they would not kill us, but rather in exchange for their willingness to talk to us about the conditions under which they would be willing not to murder Jews."

Gonen Ginat, IHY 01.11.13

### **Villains of the peace**

"When cabinet ministers attack their own government's decisions because they are reluctant to directly attack Netanyahu, they automatically turn Justice Minister Tzipi Livni into someone willing to sell Israel's national interests [...]. As if she is acting on her own initiative and not according to the prime minister's guidelines.

With a coalition like this, and with allies like these, not only is Netanyahu unable to make any progress in the peace process, he cannot even give the appearance of trying to make any progress. [...]

What must be done is to reshuffle the cabinet and avoid at all costs the possibility of playing into the hands of the government's radical partners."

Yoel Marcus, HAA 01.11.13

### **Free construction, not terrorists**

"It is forbidden to free murderous terrorists. Period.[...] A release such as this, specifically after a wave of terror, adds fuel to the fire of terrorism, [...] torpedoing peace efforts and the diplomatic process rather than bringing peace closer. [...]

The second issue here is not related to the first, and it is forbidden to connect the two. We must continue to build in Jerusalem and Zion, because settlement and developing the land are the lifeblood of Zionism, the cornerstone and very foundations. The link between releasing terrorists and building in the land of

Israel is like mixing the impure with that which is holy."

Nadav Shragai, IHY 28.10.13

### **Netanyahu, what were you thinking?**

"When 85 percent of the population of your country is against what your government is doing, how is this democracy? [...] That is not democracy, that is benevolent dictatorship. [...]

The moral authority and justice that Israel has earned and lived by for centuries has, by your government's actions, been blackened. Where do you get the right to release killers of our children, fathers, mothers, brothers and sisters?

[...] The victims of terrorism will not forgive you."

Herbert Friedberg, JPO 30.10.13

### **Don't tie the government's hands**

"Bennett's [...] proposal [...] is nothing more than a Habayit Hayehudi campaign ploy. It was meant to make Likud ministers look bad. [...]

It would be wrong to pass this bill because one must never tie the hands of a future government with legislative shackles. The issue is a diplomatic one. [...]

An Israeli government worthy of its name needs to have enough courage to stand its ground and refuse to release prisoners under unforeseeable circumstances, rather than hiding behind a law forbidding it from releasing them. A law tying the government's hands is a weapon reserved only for governments that don't trust themselves."

Dan Margalit, IHY 27.10.13

### **What, never ever forgive?**

"Murderers go free in the State of Israel. Even the most abhorrent of them [...] are released from prison at some point — and that's a good thing. [...]

But when Palestinian prisoners are freed [...] no matter how much time has passed or who they are or what they did, mourning is decreed. Never forgive and never forget [...].

It's very doubtful that even one of them, in the autumn of his life, will repeat his actions.

They're fighting for the liberation of their people, a just struggle waged by abominable means, and they thought, wrongly, that their acts of murder would bring them closer to their goal. They're not the first people in history to act this way, Israel included, nor will they be the last. But at some point they too may be forgiven."

Gideon Levy, HAA 31.10.13

### **No solace**

"There was an understanding at the time of signing the Oslo Declaration of Principles in September 1993 that all of those Palestinians who committed crimes against Israel and Israelis would be set free with the return of Arafat. But they were not. The Palestinians have never forgotten this issue and have brought it to the table constantly over the past 20 years.

[...] From the Palestinian perspective this has remained as one of the unfulfilled promises of Oslo that are responsible for the demise of the peace process. [...]

I have met released murderers face to face. [...] Many cannot say that they are sorry and they justify their actions for political purposes. But I know, I saw and I witnessed tortured souls – people who cannot forget that they took an innocent life. This is particularly the case for those who killed civilians."

Gershon Baskin, JPO 30.10.13

### **Nothing will come of prisoners' release**

"Habayit Hayehudi [...] was not being demagogic when it described the release of prisoners this week as an exorbitant price Israel is paying for Tzipi Livni's negotiation hobbies.

Apart from Livni herself, no one here really believes peace will come from her negotiations [...]. Netanyahu and Abbas resumed the peace talks mainly to get John Kerry off their backs and secure an alibi in case a third intifada erupts.

The release of terrorists may be the fuel that will ignite this intifada. Even if the released prisoners themselves will not return to their bad ways [...], their release from prison as a group will create a sense of victory on the Palestinian side and generate a new round of violence."

Noah Klieger, JED 29.10.13

## **2. US Spionage-Affäre**

*Die Enthüllungen über die weitreichenden Spionageaktivitäten der us-amerikanischen Sicherheitsbehörde NSA sind auch in den israelischen Medien intensiv diskutiert worden. Durch die von Edward Snowden veröffentlichten Geheimdokumente ist deutlich geworden, dass die USA nicht nur ihre Feinde sondern auch ihre engsten Alliierten, darunter die deutsche Kanzlerin Angela Merkel, abgehört haben.*

*Laut Berichten der New York Times hat Israel teilweise eigene Daten mit der NSA ausgetauscht, ist aber auch selbst Ziel der Abhöraktionen geworden.*

*So hätten die amerikanischen Spionageakte in Israel insbesondere auf militärische Informationen abgezielt.*

### **An ear for an ear**

"No one should be surprised that allies are not exempt from espionage. [...]

Intelligence plays a critical role in diplomatic negotiations, too. [...] Netanyahu has been a U.S. intelligence target since the 1980s. [...] Now he cannot possibly be less of a concern to Obama than Merkel is - she is Europe's de facto leader, but she isn't capable of igniting the entire world. If the White House is monitoring two dozen or so international leaders, it's unreasonable to think the prime minister of Israel isn't on the list. [...]

The main objective is to head off an Israeli surprise attack on Iran. When Netanyahu knows that Obama knows, and will act to stop him, it eliminates the chance of rash military action. And for that we owe thanks to both the attentive Obama and to Merkel, the sacrificial surveillance victim."

Amir Oren, HAA 27.10.13

### **Spy vs. spy**

"Israel has not really been implicated in this scandal yet, and that is a good thing. Israel is on the cutting edge of technology, and most likely takes every precaution to protect itself from friend and foe alike. But in instances where the world is able to forgive the U.S., it won't be so quick to forgive Israel. Therefore, it is very likely that many here in Israel, like in the U.S., are praying that the floodgates that Edward Snowden opened will soon be closed again, before any more damage ensues. Not just on the diplomatic front, but also in the operational-intelligence arena."

Yoav Limor, IHY 28.10.13

### **US spying just a symptom**

"It is no coincidence that Putin gave Snowden temporary political asylum. The whistleblower has become a goldmine of embarrassing scandals that deepen the suspicion and mistrust in the US and Obama, mainly on the part of traditional allies. [...] Putin, who wants Russia to reclaim its superpower status, detected Obama's weakness and the cracks in the West's positions. [...] Snowden is merely a pawn in the chess game Putin is playing.

Perhaps the talented employees of the NSA [...] went too far and spied on European leaders. Maybe they believe these leaders are not doing enough to terminate terror cells, and perhaps while monitoring

the phone calls they find out what Europe's leaders really think of Obama and his policy.

In any case, Obama has a lot of work ahead of him. A tough stance during the negotiations with Iran [...] can serve as an appropriate response to the Snowden leaks and rehabilitate the US' international status and its relations with allies in Europe and other parts of the world."

Eytan Gilboa, JED 27.10.13

### **America's double standards**

"America is admitting that according to its standards, espionage among friends is legitimate, when it is needed. And it will continue doing so. After having admitted as much, it would only be right for the U.S. to release Jonathan Pollard, who, not because he could but because he thought he needed to, relayed information to a very close ally of the U.S. [...]

Pollard consistently argued that his actions were motivated by a need to protect the existence of the State of Israel. [...]

Enough with the double standards. And Obama, who views fairness as the ultimate value, must, in the name of his country, apologize to Pollard, whose crime fell well within the bounds of 'espionage among friends' when necessary. He must be granted his freedom as soon as possible."

Smadar Bat Adam, IHY 29.10.13

### **Acts of reason, not treason**

"Germany and France are livid with the United States because of Snowden's revelations [...] but their leaders aren't brave enough to offer him the respect and refuge he deserves. Snowden has been banished and oppressed. [...] If not for Snowden, Merkel would never have known that the American Big Brother is listening to her cell phone conversations, and Germany wouldn't have known that this is how its greatest ally behaves."

Gideon Levy, HAA 27.10.13

## **3. Israel und der UN-Menschenrechtsrat**

*Im seit 2006 bestehenden UN-Menschenrechtsrat unterziehen sich alle UN-Mitgliedsstaaten einer "allgemeinen regelmäßigen Überprüfung" (Universal Periodic Review), bei der die Menschenrechtsslage in dem betreffenden Staat untersucht wird und er seine eigene Sicht auf die Lage darstellt.*

*Im März 2012 kündigte der Menschenrechtsrat eine Untersuchung der jüdischen Siedlungen in der*

*Westbank und Ostjerusalem an. Daraufhin begann Israel einen Boykott des Gremiums, das als äußerst Israel-kritisch gesehen wird. So ist Israel der einzige Staat, der als eigenständiger Punkt der Tagesordnung bei jeder Ratsversammlung vorgesehen ist.*

*Auf Druck von mehreren westlichen Staaten hat sich Israel nun aber bereit gefunden, am Universal Periodic Review (UPR) seiner Menschenrechtsslage teilzunehmen. Der deutsche Außenminister Guido Westerwelle hatte in einem Brief an Premierminister Benjamin Netanyahu darauf hingewiesen, dass ein Boykott des UPR zu schweren diplomatischen Schäden führen würde.*

*Im Gegenzug für ein Ende des Boykotts forderte Israel die Aufnahme in der Ländergruppe "Westeuropa und Andere" des Menschenrechtsrats. Israel gehört bisher keiner regionalen Gruppe an und ist deswegen besonders isoliert.*

### **Europe, US pressuring Israel to endure discrimination at UN Human Rights Council**

"The United Nations is gearing up for yet another attack upon Israel – even more outrageous on this occasion because it has been arranged in the name of equality. [...] The Council soon adopted a short permanent agenda that governs every regular session. It contains one item for censuring Israel alone, and one general item for all other 192 UN countries combined. Thirty-five per cent of all the resolutions the Council has passed that are critical of specific states have been directed at Israel – compared to nothing on states like Russia, China, or Saudi Arabia. [...]

It is little wonder, therefore, that the world's worst human rights violators are delighted by the grotesque moral relativism of the Universal Periodic Review and repeatedly applaud its 'universality.' Even more lamentable is the backing that the procedure receives from the United States and Europe, who understand full well that the UPR is a veil standing between the emperor and his birthday suit. [...]

Israel is under no obligation to enable 192 countries to boast that Israel will be treated 'equally' under the UPR, when it is treated unequally at every Council session before and after."

Anne Bayefsky, JPO 27.10.13

### **Israel's foolish boycott backtrack**

"In the Orwellian universe we all currently occupy, the very term 'human rights' means the exact opposite. [...] The fact that even U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and his predecessor, Kofi Annan,

accused the UNHRC of disproportionate focus on Israeli violations of human rights shows just how pernicious and pointless it is. [...]

It is beyond unfathomable, then, that Israel reversed its decision to stay away. No good can come of its subjecting itself, yet again, to the hypocritical judgment of its detractors. [...]

The outcome of this pathetic exercise in futility will become apparent by the end of the week. But since the best predictor of the future is the past, Israel would have done better -- and been far wiser -- to uphold its boycott."

Ruthie Blum, IHY 29.10.13

### **An important decision**

"Israel cut all its ties with the Human Rights Council in March 2012 [...]. The step was a protest against the Council's intention to establish a committee to examine the settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. [...]

Even if the Human Rights Council discriminates in an unfair manner against Israel, that is not enough to negate its right to establish a committee on the settlements. [...]

A resource such as the hearing has the power to actually reduce the potential for political bias against Israel and to advance Israeli interests, which include joining the Western Europe and Others Group of nations in the Human Rights Council. Today Israel is not a member of any one of the regional groupings, something which contributes to its isolation and makes it harder for Israel to enlist support in diplomatic processes."

HAA 28.10.13

### **Israel and the Rights Council**

"Fellow democracies [...] had exerted excruciating pressure on Israel to cooperate with the UNHRC, lest it be seen as setting a precedent for rogue regimes.

This was accompanied by nebulous carrots dangled before Israel. One is that Israel will cease being the sole geopolitically unaffiliated country at UN forums in Geneva. [...]

These promises are far too vague to constitute tangible diplomatic achievements. They certainly do not justify Israel's reversal of an eminently justified policy. [...]

become efficient and eliminate the fat from its operations."

HAA 03.11.13 Editorial

Not showing up was hardly ideal, but better than more spectacles of the sort the UNHRC invariably stages. [...]

Now Israel has switched tack and two days ago defended its record in a hearing that descended into a kangaroo court, where some of the most repressive regimes pass judgment on a sterling democracy and where the damning verdict had been composed long before the proceedings began."

JPO 30.10.13 Editorial

## **4. Medienquerschnitt**

*Die Vielfalt der in Israel relevanten Themen kann in einem Medienspiegel nicht umfassend wiedergegeben werden. Um den deutschen LeserInnen dennoch einen Einblick in das breite Themenspektrum, das in den Medien behandelt wird, zu gewähren, veröffentlichen wir in dieser Schlaglichtausgabe wieder eine kleine Auswahl an weiteren Themen, die in den vergangenen zwei Wochen die israelische Gesellschaft bewegten.*

*Über eine **Aufstockung des Verteidigungshaushaltes**, der erst vor wenigen Monaten gekürzt worden war*

### **Defense always wins**

"The 'compromise' reached over the weekend is a near-total rollback of the planned cuts to the defense budget. It's a stinging loss for [...] the treasury and Israel's citizens. [...]

After intense lobbying by the Defense Ministry and the IDF, the security cabinet [...] has now voted unanimously to restore NIS 2.75 billion of the NIS 3 billion 'cut' from the military budget. [...] The defense establishment proved, once again, that it always has the upper hand. [...]

In light of the huge additional allocations the IDF got after the 2006 Second Lebanon War, [...] as well as the great reduction in the conventional threats facing Israel as a result of the domestic crises in Egypt, Syria and Iraq, now would be a good time to introduce cost-cutting and efficiency measures [...], and to divert the savings into health and welfare [...].

But in capitulating to the defense establishment's demands [...] Netanyahu has robbed all meaning from the demand for the defense establishment to

### **The army cannot be run like a business**

"A citizen who chooses to devote his or her life to the Israel Defense Forces ought to be rewarded with a middle class standard of living and no less. [...].

Certainly, the defense budget has plenty of fat that needs trimming. [...]

[But] the Finance Ministry thought that angry Israeli citizens would demonstrate against the IDF over its request for additional budget. It appears as though the Finance Ministry forgot that the IDF is made up of citizens who won't participate in its defamation."

Dan Margalit, IHY 01.11.13

*Zum Jahrestag der Balfour-Erklärung, mit der die britische Regierung sich 1917 für eine jüdische nationale Heimstätte in Israel aussprach:*

### **Lord Balfour and the Holocaust**

"The problem is that the same political logic that granted Britain and the West the power to internationally recognize the Jews' right to a homeland [...], also created a new geopolitical order that made it advisable to relentlessly undermine the status of Jews in population centers throughout Eastern and Central Europe. [...]

The founding of a Jewish national homeland in Israel was, for the British, based on the principles of self-determination [...]. These principles applied also to the ethnic nation-states created after the Allied nations' victory in the territories that comprised the Austria-Hungarian Empire. [...]

The right to national self-determination was a right reserved for only some of the citizens in those areas [...]-the groups that were considered superior to others, like the Czechs in Czechoslovakia or the Serbs in Yugoslavia. [...]

Even as political Zionism benefited from the Western powers' ignorance of the Middle Eastern realities, that same ignorance spoiled the footing of Jewish populations in Eastern Europe. [...] The Jews in Poland and other multiethnic states [...] therefore became the most vulnerable group, the very existence of which constantly undermined national identity and pointed to the limits of cultural tolerance between rival ethnic groups."

Dmitry Shumsky, HAA 03.11.13

### **The Balfour betrayal: How the British Empire failed Zionism**

"The Balfour Declaration was a milestone in the history of Zionism. For the first time, a great power in Europe had recognized the goals of the Zionist movement. After the First World War, the League of Nations made the Balfour Declaration part of its mandate. [...]

But [...] the British, in the end, reneged on their promise. [...] In what proved to be a disastrous

British policy in regard to the Jews of Europe, England closed the gates of immigration of Zionists to Palestine. In 1939 [...] British colonial secretary Malcolm MacDonald restricted Jewish immigration to Palestine – a drastic curtailing that closed the escape route for Jews seeking a safe haven [...]. This betrayal of Lord Balfour's promise was a calculated political move by the British Empire to appease the Arabs of Palestine and the Middle East, enhancing the power of the empire in the region. [...]

The lesson we should learn is that the promises of empires and superpowers to the Jewish people often turn out to be the worst sort of perfidy."

Eli Kavon, JPO 02.11.13

HAA = Haaretz; JED = Jedioth Ahronoth; JPO = Jerusalem Post; IHY = Israel HaYom; TOI = Times of Israel; GLO = Globes

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