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Aktuelles aus israelischen Tageszeitungen

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1. Ankündigung einer palästinensischen Einheitsregierung

Sieben Jahre nach dem Zusammenbruch der letzten palästinensischen Einheitsregierung haben Fatah und Hamas angekündigt, innerhalb von fünf Wochen eine neue Regierung zusammenstellen zu wollen und in sechs Monaten Wahlen abzuhalten. Seit dem Bruch zwischen den beiden Fraktionen herrscht die Hamas, die auch in Europa und den USA als Terrororganisation gilt, in Gaza, während die Fatah in der Westbank die Regierung stellt. In der Vergangenheit hatte es bereits mehrmals ähnliche Ankündigungen einer Versöhnung zwischen Fatah und Hamas gegeben, die aber nie realisiert wurden.

Israel reagierte auf die Ankündigung mit der Absage eines geplanten Treffens im Rahmen der Friedensverhandlungen und kurz darauf mit einem kompletten Abbruch der Gespräche. Zuletzt hatten sich die seit neun Monaten laufenden Verhandlungen nur noch um die Frage gedreht, ob sie über April hinaus weitergeführt werden würden.

Der palästinensische Präsident Mahmoud Abbas sagte, er sei zu einer Weiterführung der Gespräche unter bestimmten Umständen bereit, und die Hamas werde von der PLO (die Palästinensische Befreiungsorganisation, die die Verhandlungen offiziell führt) in der Vergangenheit unterzeichnete Verträge anerkennen. Israelische Stellen forderten jedoch, dass die Hamas dies sowie eine Absage an die Gewalt selbst öffentlich verkünde.

Time for consequences

"It's hard not to admire Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas's brazenness. Two weeks ago, Abbas signed on to 15 international agreements that among other things require the PA to respect human rights and punish war criminals.

And this week, he signed a unity deal with two genocidal terror groups all of whose leaders are war criminals. [...]

Here it is worth noting that under the Geneva Conventions, every single rocket launch from Gaza into Israeli territory is a separate war crime.

Abbas was only able to sign the Geneva Conventions on the one hand, and the unity deal with terrorist war criminals on the other, because he is utterly convinced that neither the US nor the European Union will hold him accountable for his actions."

Caroline Glick, JPO 24.04.14

For Netanyahu, another excuse to miss an opportunity

"If Netanyahu weren't so busy looking for excuses to *not* talk to the Palestinians, he would discover a few interesting things about the agreement.

First, Abbas has potentially brought Netanyahu and the international community what they were demanding: a government, with no Hamas representatives, made up only of technocrats, without politicians and with Abbas himself at its head. The government is supposed to deal not only with the West Bank, but also with the Gaza Strip.

And maybe that is what is making Netanyahu nervous. [...] For years, Netanyahu and his people have been complaining that Abbas couldn't deliver peace even if he wanted to, because of the split between Gaza and the West Bank. And now, just as Abbas is showing the first signs that he can deliver, Netanyahu is again claiming that there is no partner."

Avi Issacharoff, TOI 25.04.14

Is Hamas ready to talk with Israel?

"Is Hamas riper now than in the past to conduct negotiations with Israel? The panic that gripped Israel's government in view of the Fatah-Hamas reconciliation signed this week indicates that the

question should be directed at Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu before it is directed at Meshal. [...] No inclination has been reported on Hamas' part to condition its joining the PLO on revoking the [Oslo] agreements. [...] Abbas has stated that there is no contradiction between the peace talks and the reconciliation agreement. This could indicate an agreement between Fatah and Hamas to maintain the peace talks, as Meshal made clear already in 2012, when the basic reconciliation agreement between the two movements was ratified."
Zvi Bar'el, HAA 25.04.14

A second chance to test Hamas

"Can Hamas really be ready to end the conflict with Israel? Well, yes.

How do I know? Because Hamas founder Sheikh Ahmed Yassin told me so 15 years ago. [...]

In May 1999, Yassin called for an end to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and for the first time suggested he might recognize Israel's right to exist. In an interview at his home in Gaza City, he told me that the conflict could be ended if Israel withdrew from the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. [...]

Let's imagine a new Palestinian Authority unity government is sworn in [...] in which both Hamas and Islamic Jihad participate. If that happens [...] it will mean that Hamas and Islamic Jihad have been incorporated under the umbrella of the PLO, the representative body that signed the Oslo, Hebron, Wye and Annapolis Agreements, all of which recognize the state of Israel. That seems like a significant step away from calling for Israel's annihilation and a first step, however tentative, towards peace."

Matthew Kalman, HAA 27.04.14

Abbas embraces the Islamists

"Had the reconciliation deal [...] included clauses specifying a commitment by Hamas to recognize Israel, to renounce terrorism and to respect previous Israeli-Palestinian agreements [...] there might have been some mileage in the 'good news for Israel' argument. But the Fatah-Hamas deal specified nothing of the sort. Quite the reverse. [...] Haniyeh [...] restated his organization's consistent position that the peace process with Israel does not serve Palestinian strategic interests. [...]

Wednesday's superficial unity deal [...] was Abbas's latest act of willful weakness. He is escaping the deeply uncomfortable pressure to compromise with Israel and instead embracing a veneer of Palestinian unity. It was also an act that underlined the impotence of the American interlocutors, whose warnings

against an alliance with Hamas were blithely ignored."

David Horovitz, TOI 24.04.14

Ending illusion of peace-seeking Abbas

"It's a good thing that this unity is taking place now, [...] as the intention is clear. Just imagine what would have happened if Israel had transferred territories in the center of the country to the Palestinians, and then the unity with Hamas and Jihad had taken place, with the latter two even controlling these territories. [...]

So it's also good to tell the truth, after months of selling illusions to the public about a 'peace process' and partners that we never had, illusions that the broad public didn't really fall for. So goodbye illusion, hello reality."

Guy Bechor, JED 24.04.14

Hamas wins, Abbas loses

"Hamas is the agreement's biggest winner. [...] The unity deal signed Wednesday gives Hamas international legitimacy, which could allow it to receive aid and donations to help it extract itself from the crippling crisis threatening both its rule and the wellbeing of Gaza's people. [...]

In contrast, Abbas and his Fatah party do not get that much out of this newfound unity. They get brownie points for actually reaching the deal, which is highly popular in the West Bank. [...]

Israel has nothing to be sorry about. The deal between [...] can be used to paint Abbas and his men as terrorists in sheep's clothing – a far cry from the dovish peaceniks they claim to be. The Hamas-Fatah merger goes a long way to giving weight to this claim."

Ron Ben-Yishai, JED 24.04.14

More Palestinian fraud

"The announcement of the reconciliation agreement opened a ray of hope for those who believe that Abbas has honest intentions: A unity government is not being established immediately, but rather in five weeks. In diplomacy, this type of behavior is called setting an ultimatum. Abbas turned an hourglass on the Israeli and American tables and gave them five weeks to surrender to his demands.

Even an explicit and hurried verbal agreement requires significant and perhaps lengthy diplomatic talks. It is very reasonable to assume that even as PLO and Hamas representatives were holding talks, other PLO representatives, disguised as 'peace doves,' were meeting with Israeli representatives as

part of the ritual called the 'peace process.' If this is not fraud, then that word probably needs a new definition."

Alexander Bligh, IHY 24.04.14

A long way to go

"This peace agreement reflects a joint Fatah-Hamas response to the public's expectations in the West Bank and Gaza, that in the absence of progress with Israel, there should be at least some form of unity on the Palestinian side. [...] Abbas, who has not faced elections since 2006, needs the reconciliation in order to boost his legitimacy. Hamas' Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh needs money. [...]

Reconciliation at this stage does not truly reflect that Abbas has chosen 'Hamas instead of peace,' as Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu charged. [...] Essentially, nothing has actually changed: There's still no unity government and no elections."

Amos Harel, HAA 24.04.14

2. Gewalt durch israelische Extremisten in der Westbank

Seit längerem verüben extremistische jüdische Siedler in der Westbank sogenannte "Price Tag"-Anschläge auf palästinensische Ziele – die Taten reichen von Graffiti-Vandalismus bis zu Steinwürfen und Zerstörung von Privateigentum. Oftmals folgen die "Preisschild"-Angriffe auf Evakuierungen von illegalen Siedlungen. Nun haben sich die Extremisten wiederholt auch gegen die israelische Armee gewandt – obwohl diese in der Westbank für ihren Schutz zuständig ist. In der Siedlung Yitzhar sind bereits mehrere Male die Reifen von Militärfahrzeugen zerstochen worden. Als mehrere illegal gebaute Gebäude in der Siedlung abgerissen wurden, kam es zu heftigem Widerstand und Ausschreitungen in einem Armeelager in der Nähe. Etwa 50 Siedler stürmten den Posten und zerstörten Geräte und Zelte, während die Soldaten untätig daneben standen.

Hochrangige Politiker verurteilten die Tat und kündigten Konsequenzen an. Verteidigungsminister Moshe Ya'alon sagte, Anschläge dieser Art müssten als Terrorismus behandelt werden.

Wenige Tage später wurde die Yeshiva (Religionschule) in Yitzhar, die als Brutstätte für extremistische Ideen gilt, von der Armee geräumt und vorläufig gesperrt.

The pogrom in Yitzhar

"These provocateurs do not recognize Israel's sovereignty, despise its values, see the state as a rebel entity that desecrates their values. This group is gaining power in front of our eyes. [...] They are not akin to small areas of weeds in a field. They are the field and we are the weeds. It is either them or us. [...]

Jewish terror, that is growing up in our midst is an existential threat. It is a greater existential threat than both Palestinian terror and corruption of state institutions as demonstrated by Ehud Olmert. This cancer is quietly eating away at the state from the inside, below the radar. When it begins to be painful there will be nothing left to treat because it will be too late. [...] The sovereign in the West Bank is supposed to be the IDF under the mandate of the minister of defense. [...] The time has arrived to restore the sovereign. The fact that the problematic elements among the settlers pay no notice of the IDF, the police, and the state, is distressing."

Ben Caspit, JPO 13.04.14

The price is going up

"These acts of terror – and there is no better name for them – have been going on too long, and the price we are paying for not punishing the perpetrators is climbing. [...]

'Price tag' operations are carried out by a meticulously organized network of cells devoted to the sole purpose of threatening the government so that it will desist from harming the settlement enterprise in any way. This network closely resembles terrorist organizations both in structure and mode of operation and it succeeds in veiling its headquarters and any internal communications between cells. [...] The time has come to reinforce the law, and restore social order as is befitting in a modern and enlightened society."

Gadi Zohari, JPO 21.04.14

No to administrative arrests

"Defense Minister Moshe Ya'alon is in favor of issuing administrative arrest warrants against extreme right-wing activists. [...] It is regrettable that it took violence against Israel Defense Forces soldiers for a decision to be made to take determined action against the violence of right-wing activists, which comes after years of law-breaking on their part in actions against the Palestinian population. [...]

But administrative arrests are a draconian step that must be rejected. They can be justified only when there is clear-cut concern that a person might com-

mit a dangerous act and there is no other way to prevent it. [...]

With regard to the violence of extreme right-wing activists, administrative arrest is proposed as a magic solution and a substitute for dealing thoroughly with years of neglect to enforce the law."

HAA 14.04.14 Editorial

Israel needs a 'Posse Comitatus Act'

"Is it fair to penalize the entire yeshiva because of the actions of a few? Since when do the authorities have the right to impose collective punishment on an entire subset of Israeli citizens? [...]

The Israel Defense Forces, as its name implies, is supposed to defend Israel from its enemies, not be unleashed against its citizens. [...] Leave law enforcement duties to the police, where they belong. [...]

The use of the IDF in situations such as the expulsion of the Jews from Gush Katif, or the demolition of Jewish outposts in Judea and Samaria, only serves to rupture the consensus that exists in Israeli society regarding the military. [...]

In a country that cherishes freedom, a way can and must be found to keep the military from being used for law enforcement purposes."

Michael Freud, JPO 21.04.14

A settlement of insurrection

"The Yitzhar rioters had two objectives - preventing the demolition of illegal structures, and traumatizing senior government officials and the public into not even thinking about evacuating settlements as part of an agreement with the Palestinians. [...]

A violent response by the defense establishment will not help. Punishment, no matter how justified, will only increase zealots' motivation and they will find ways to keep up their activities regardless. The only ones who can stop nationalistic criminals are the settlers themselves, and primarily their leadership."

Ron Ben-Yishai, JED 09.04.14

Addressing the extreme rights' violence isn't a high priority

"The sad truth, which is well understood by the IDF, the police and the settlers, is that in most cases the tough talk is merely talk. Soldiers and police will receive limited support if they clash with settler law-breakers, while extremist settlers have broad political support that helps them avoid punishment. At most, they receive light punishments."

Amos Harel, HAA 11.04.14

The real danger posed by the 'price tag' thugs

"True peace will be built on the growing relationships between Jews and Arabs on the ground — first and foremost on the relations between Jewish and Arab citizens of the State of Israel. [...] Great progress has been made here in the last 66 years. After years of military government in regions of Israel populated by Arabs, we abolished military rule and fully recognized the civil rights of Israel's Arab community, followed by the gradual integration of Israel's Arab citizens into Israeli society. [...]

It is this process that the Jewish criminals against Israeli Arab citizens and the Arabs of Samaria are trying to sabotage. The physical damage they cause and the resulting psychological harm will take a long time to heal. They impede progress toward peace and represent a danger to Israel."

Moshe Arens, HAA 16.04.14

3. Terroranschlag in der Westbank

Ein israelischer Zivilist ist bei einem Anschlag in der Westbank getötet worden. Am Abend des Pessach-Festes eröffneten Unbekannte das Feuer auf drei Autos auf einer Straße nordwestlich von Hebron, die in die jüdische Siedlung Kiryat Arba unterwegs waren. Zwei weitere Zivilisten wurden verletzt. Die Armee ging zunächst von einem Einzeltäter aus, räumte aber später ein, dass es sich scheinbar um einen geplanten Anschlag gehandelt habe. Es bekannte sich jedoch keine der palästinensischen Organisationen zu der Tat.

Premierminister Benjamin Netanyahu machte die palästinensische Regierung verantwortlich: Die ständige Aufwiegelung in den palästinensischen Medien habe zu dem Anschlag geführt.

Der palästinensische Religionsminister Mahmoud al-Habash verurteilte die Tat. Präsident Mahmoud Abbas sagte, er wolle die Kooperation zwischen israelischen und palästinensischen Sicherheitskräften fortführen, selbst wenn es zu einem Abbruch der Friedensgespräche kommen sollte.

Time to draw new lines

"Restraint and failing to respond in kind to acts of aggression [is] unacceptable [...] because it not only falls short of instilling the attacker with shame and restraint, it actually does the opposite -- it encourages him to act more aggressively because he feels that 'here he can.' [...]

It is impossible not to connect this murder with the release of the Palestinian prisoners (including of course those with 'blood on their hands'). Therefore

the responsibility for the murder falls on the perpetrators, but the creation of the climate among the Palestinians for such acts falls on the entire Israeli government, which agreed to turn the other cheek to [...]

Israel now needs to declare to the Palestinians [...] that it is halting everything and will turn back the clock on the prisoner release if Mizrahi's killer and his handlers are not turned over to Israeli custody within 48 hours. [...]

Only a measure such as this will clarify to Abbas and his cohort that the rules of behavior have changed, that 'here they absolutely cannot' make innocent civilians military targets, and that anyone involved in crimes against humanity -- will rot in prison until the end of their days."

Zeev Jabotinsky, IHY 17.04.14

Don't play into the terrorists' hands

"What was the despicable murderer trying to achieve? [...] What could be his goal other than to tell us that there is no point in negotiating, to reinforce the belief that some of us have that there is no one to talk to, to get some of us to call on our government to cancel the talks with the Palestinians? Why should we play into his hands and make those wishes come true? [...]

We [...] sever talks with the Palestinians almost automatically in response to terrorist acts carried out by Hamas, even though these actions are clearly intended to damage the Palestinian Authority's credibility as the body in charge. [...]

Israelis who oppose continuing negotiations because of terrorist attacks generally oppose the talks anyway. It is legitimate, even if mistaken, to oppose talks with our neighbors, but it is a much graver mistake to base one's opposition on the acts of Palestinians seeking to torpedo the peace talks."

Yossi Beilin, IHY 17.04.14

Incentives for murdering Jews

"In recent years the deterrent for terror attacks was further eroded as successive Israeli governments released large groups of brutal murderers, including cold-blooded killers of infants, in return for an Israeli hostage and more recently as a prerequisite to Abbas merely agreeing to negotiate with Israel. These releases have become such a routine that [a terrorist] is now confident that if imprisoned, it is highly unlikely that he would serve his full term. [...]

That Abbas only mumbled that it would be premature on his part to condemn the latest murder until such time as a 'full investigation of the incident was

concluded' should be considered the ultimate affront. [...]

The erosion of deterrence now impinges directly on the security of Israeli citizens, which must be the primary concern of any government. The current trend is creating an environment where terrorists feel that the risks and penalties they are likely to incur in shedding Jewish blood have now been dramatically minimized. [...]

Failure to act now will compromise Netanyahu's leadership and undermine his legacy."

Isi Leibler, JPO 23.04.14

The markings of an organized attack

"Despite the diplomatic stalemate, Israeli and Palestinian security forces coordinated their efforts on Tuesday, as both sides remember well that the last terror attack to take place on the eve of Passover -- the 2002 suicide attack in the Park Hotel in Netanya -- led to Operation Defensive Shield in the West Bank. It is likely that Ramallah is just as concerned as Jerusalem that the stalled peace talks, Tuesday's attack and the events of the coming days will cause the security reality on the ground to deteriorate further."

Yoav Limor, IHY 16.04.14

Yet another attack without any advance warning

"Shootings at civilian Israeli vehicles on West Bank roads were one of the most prominent phenomena of the second intifada. Today too, when the territories are quieter, it is not particularly difficult to carry out such attacks. [...]

What is common to Mizrahi's murder and previous attacks is the lack of any warning by intelligence bodies. [...] The fact that there is tight surveillance by the Shin Bet security service and IDF intelligence reinforces the impression that most of the attacks are independently initiated rather than part of an organizational hierarchy, which is easier to pinpoint and monitor. [...]

Clearly a murderous attack at a time when the coalition is squabbling over a massive release of security prisoners reduces the space Netanyahu has to maneuver politically."

Amos Harel, HAA 16.04.14

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.

Zum Tode des Friedensaktivisten und langjährigen FES-Partner Ron Pundak, der maßgeblich an den Osloer Friedensverträgen sowie der Geneva Initiative beteiligt war:

Ron Pundak, realist for reconciliation

"Ron was an unusual and special person. A committed Zionist and Israeli patriot, he believed each and every human being, without exception, deserved respect and dignity. [...]

He was convinced that economic development and cooperation provided one of the foundations for creating conditions for peace. It was that work that led him to establish, with the urging of then Deputy Foreign Minister Yossi Beilin and ultimately the support of Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, a secret channel of communications with the Palestine Liberation Organization in Norway.

Those discussions ultimately led to the signing of the Oslo Accords. He was forever committed to that effort, believing, to the end, that the lack of success of that agreement was due to a failure of execution and not the substance. [...]

The peace camp has lost one of its greatest advocates and inspirations, a man who was relentless in his optimism and his belief that the world could and should be a better place for all its inhabitants. Israel has lost one of its patriots."

Geoffrey Lewis, TOI 18.04.14

Shalom, 'Oslo criminal'

"Pundak was [...] nearly the last of the believers in peace. [...]

He was clearheaded, one of the last few who still met with Arabs and saw them as equal human beings. [...] His dreams were realistic, even if they fit a reality much saner than the crazy one we've created here. [...]

The fire that burned in his soul was ignited not by injustice to the Palestinians but by the future of the country he loved and that never repaid him for his labors. [...]

Now Ron is dead, a ghost, just as another desperate attempt to blow life into the moribund peace process is set to give up the ghost. The man who wrote in his book, without even a touch of cynicism or despera-

tion, 'Fundamentally, the chance for a peace agreement remains,' would surely find fragments of hope even in these dark days. Now Ron won't speak either. No one will speak of peace in Israel anymore."

Gideon Levy, HAA 13.04.14

Zum tragischen Unfalltod des Militärkorrespondenten und Leiter des S. Daniel Abraham Center for Strategic Dialogue am Netanya Academic College Reuven Pedatzur, der seit vielen Jahren ein enger Partner der FES Israel war.

One of our last brave military commentators

"For years, Capt. Pedatzur was a uniquely critical voice among our military commentators and journalists [...].

In Israel, military reporting is a key factor in brainwashing the populace and shaping public opinion — the furthest thing from journalism. [...]

From the murky swamp in which journalists and officers swam, Pedatzur's voice shone through, perhaps our last brave military commentator. [...]

He would ask questions that few others dared to. Why do we need the Iron Dome anti-rocket system? [...] Why attack Iran? [...]

Few of his colleagues cared about such matters — they were satisfied quoting the IDF's statement on the latest targeted killing, even if it was a lie or propaganda. [...]

Pedatzur waged a holy war against sacred cows. It's not easy to go against the herd, especially when writing about the ritual of security. Pedatzur wasn't deterred."

Gideon Levy, HAA 17.04.14

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