



## Schlaglicht Israel Nr. 14/14

### Aktuelles aus israelischen Tageszeitungen

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#### 1. Resümee Gazakrieg

*Nach gut sechs Wochen heftiger Kämpfe und mehrerer gescheiterter Feuerpausen zwischen Israel und der Hamas im Gazastreifen fiel schließlich am 26. August der vorerst letzte Schuss. Unter ägyptischer Vermittlung und der palästinensischen Fatah-Führung im Westjordanland einigten sich die Konfliktparteien auf eine unbefristete Waffenruhe und Verhandlungen über langfristige Lösungen für den Gazastreifen, die Ende September in Kairo aufgenommen werden sollen. Das Resümee der Kämpfe ist bei den Führungen auf beiden Seiten positiv. Die Regierung in Jerusalem zeigte sich befriedigt über die Zerstörung der geheimen Tunnel und der Infrastruktur der Hamas, die insgesamt stark geschwächt worden sei. Der Hamas wiederum reichte es, Israels Armee bis zum letzten Tag Widerstand geleistet zu haben, um von einem Sieg zu sprechen.*

#### **Hamas and Israel rave the limitations of brute force**

"Operation Protective Edge" is entering its second phase – that of shaping images and perceptions. Politicians claim victory, journalists grade the two sides for their humanity or lack thereof, and everyone debates the identities of the fatalities. The battle over perceptions is crucial, but before we slip into it we should assess what happened in the war itself. In a nutshell, Hamas and Israel became painfully aware of the limits of their power. Both sides realized that the fantasies that they cultivated in recent years have crashed against the rocks of reality. (...) is much less than what the Hamas was banking on. Militarily speaking, Hamas's poor offensive performance buried, literally and

metaphorically, ten years of intense efforts in the sands of Gaza.

If Hamas came face to face with its military shortcomings, Israel rediscovered that it was unwilling to pay a high price for the temporary destruction of Hamas. It would seem that Israel has the military capacity to destroy Hamas's infrastructure and reach its leadership, but to do so it would have to pay dearly in soldiers' lives, in an economic crisis and triggering an international imbroglio. Such a steep price makes a maneuver into Gaza untenable (...) Hamas and Israel have both experienced rude awakenings, as each had to face the limitations of its power. Diplomacy would have been a logical way to move forward and steer clear of a military dead-end. However, for the time being this is a worthless insight, since both sides clutch desperately to yesteryear's dreams, refuse to face up to their weaknesses, and are incapable of making painful concessions. Mutual hatred and distrust continue to dictate policy, and preclude taking the minimal risks required for entering the diplomatic path."

Nimrod Hurvitz, HAA, 04.09.14

#### **Israel won Gaza war after all “**

“Hamas lost most of its rockets, the tunnel system in which it invested a fortune, a long list of senior military wing members, about 1,000 fighters, headquarters, emergency supplies, etc. All of its attempts to surprise Israel with unusual actions (...) failed with no exception. The same applies to the situation in the diplomatic arena: Hamas has lost the support it had left in the Arab world, and its rivals in the region (the Palestinian Authority and Egypt) have grown stronger. Its political situation in the Strip has deteriorated as well: The gap between the

organization and civilians who were badly damaged has grown, civilian infrastructure has been destroyed at an unprecedented level, and its demands to open the crossings with supervision for a seaport and an airport have been rejected.”

Issac Ben-Israel, JED, 07.09.14

### **Misplaced frustration**

“The operational objective -- other than eradicating the terror tunnel's threat -- was striking an agreement based on the principle of "quiet will be met with quiet." Once it was made clear that Hamas had set its sights higher, demanding things like an airport and a seaport, Israel did the right thing by saying that if the negotiations were about more than a truce, then it too had a demand, namely the full demilitarization of the Gaza Strip. After all, if we were to discuss more of Hamas' demands, it was only fair to discuss more of Israel's demands as well. (...) I am not frustrated by the results of Operation Protective Edge because I understand Israel's objectives: dealing Hamas a debilitating blow, eradicating the terror tunnels, and rejecting any change in the status quo that defines Israel's relations with Gaza and the limitations imposed on the Strip.

Having achieved all of this, I have no problem with the operation's results -- although I also have no doubt that we need to start preparing for the next Gaza campaign.”

Maj. Gen. (ret.) Yaakov Amidror, IHY, 02.09.14

### **It's not over**

“The end of the fifty-day war in Gaza — Israel's longest since its establishment in 1948 — is marked by two contradictory trends. On the one hand, Israeli society has shifted markedly to the right. Polls show that if elections were held today, the Likud and its key coalition partners (...) would garner additional support; the parties of the center and the left would shrink substantially. For the first time in twenty years, there is not a majority in the country in support of a two-state solution. On the other hand, across the political spectrum, most Israelis are not convinced that the country emerged victorious from this war. They live in constant fear of another armed confrontation in the near future. And they would dearly love to find a formula to end what has become a pattern of predictably recurrent rounds of violence.

(...) Since the 1967 war, no Israeli government has followed up an armed engagement with a peace initiative. This road not taken may be precisely the

one needed to overcome the strains buffeting Israeli society and lead it towards a livable future. The brief days since the August 27th ceasefire went into effect have accentuated the government-orchestrated tendency not only to justify the Gaza operation and how it was handled, but also to move on to other matters. This helps to explain the ease with which attention has shifted from the southern to the northern front. The Islamic State is rapidly replacing the Hamas as a key source of concern, conveniently deflecting attention away from the aftershock of the war and its domestic and external repercussions. (...) It is enticing — even appealing — to succumb to such a mindset. Moving on from a truly awful summer to old and new challenges at home and abroad goes a long way towards averting a painful process of introspection that the current leadership dreads. (...) Israelis will not be able to fulfill their quest for normality, stability and safety by supporting the politics that have brought them to this point. They cannot expect to avert future wars if they follow leaders who promise no alternative. The behavior of a major portion of the Israeli public appears to openly defy their most profound aspirations. At this critical moment, it is useful not only to remember that the road that will be taken is in the hands of each and every citizen of the country, but to translate this perception into action.”

Naomi Chazan, TOI, 08.09.14

### **The lesson of this summer's awful war**

“At the end of an awful summer, after 50 days of war between Israel and Hamas, the need for a viable Israeli-Palestinian partnership could not be clearer. Israel must and will always fight tenaciously, courageously, wisely and with the unified backing of most of its populace against the violent challenges of states and semi-states, like Hamas's Gaza, that seek our destruction. But our nation would much rather not have to live by the sword if attaining a more peaceful reality were possible, and it's hard to envisage the country continuing to flourish practically and psychologically if a relentlessly violent future is all we have to look forward to here. (...) Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas learned from Israel in the course of the conflict that Hamas, even as it talked “unity” with him this spring, had been plotting to engineer his downfall. He also saw, and commendably spoke out against, Hamas's ruthless and despicable sacrificing of Gazans' lives in the cause of its ideological war against Israel.

So, (much of) Israel internalized that it could not “smash” Hamas without terrible losses and consequences, and Abbas internalized (even if his people did not) that Hamas is the enemy of the Palestinians and an ongoing threat to his rule. Plainly, Netanyahu and Abbas should have plenty of constructive talking to do. In short, the interests of both their peoples require that they try again to partner in a genuine, joint endeavor to forge a better future.”

David Horowitz, TOI, 02.09.14

## 2. ISIS/Islamic State und Israel

*Unmittelbar an den Gazakrieg anschließend beherrschte die neue Gefahr des Islamischen Staates (ehemals Islamischer Staat in Irak und Syrien) die Schlagzeilen. Die Medien beschäftigte vor allem die Frage, wie gefährlich IS Israel werden könnte und welche neuen Koalitionen in der Region gebildet werden. Die Hinrichtung der beiden US-amerikanischen Journalisten fand breite Berücksichtigung in den Blättern, vor allem die von Steven Sotloff, der Jude war und mehrere Jahre in Israel gelebt hatte.*

### ISIS is no existential threat to Israel

“Despite the trail of horrors it is leaving behind, ISIS is operating hundreds of kilometers away from our border, and even if it were closer, it would unlikely be able to harm Israel and its residents. At the end of the day, we are talking about several thousand unrestrained terrorists riding pickup trucks and firing with Kalashnikovs and machine guns. Together with several other militias that have joined it (and may desert it once the military momentum grinds to a halt), ISIS is now said to include about 10,000 fighters – half of the size of Hamas' military force. And unlike Hamas, which is indeed on our fences, ISIS has no tunnels, no artillery abilities, no ability to strategically target the State of Israel, and no allies to supply it with advanced weapons. (...)The frightening possibility that ISIS ideology would take root among the Palestinian population, including its most radical factions, is highly unlikely. This terror organization's jihadist ideology is so radical that it has even been rejected by al-Qaeda, and we should not expect it to be seen favorably in Gaza or the West Bank. (...) In fact, ISIS has led to an almost unbelievable broad coalition against it, all of whom seek to destroy it. Here is a short, clockwise list: Russia, Turkey, Iran, the Kurdish militias (Pêşmerge), the

Gulf states, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, the Syrian army, the Lebanese army, Hezbollah and Israel. (...) For all these reasons, we can take our hand off the siren button. ISIS is not a significant threat to Israel in the near future.”

Amos Yadlin, JED, 03.09.14

### US helpless in the face of ISIS

“Americans have been executed by their rivals in the past, but this time it was in defiance, with special effects, a professional camera and an echoing microphone (...) America, which has the strongest army in the world, learned once again that ideology – even an insane one – and feelings of deprivation and disrespect cannot be defeated with smart bombs and laser-guided missiles. The rules have changed, the messages have been aggravated, and the US is now playing in a field it is still unfamiliar with in terms of its nature, the impulses raging in it and the unrestrained motivation of the new players. (...) President Barack Obama promised to destroy them. (...) He will continue bombing their posts in Iraq, and will maybe even make a decision to strike in Syria. But that's not what will make ISIS disappear.”

Orly Azoulay, JED, 05.09.14

### A tragedy of good and evil

“Obama's response to the televised decapitation of two American citizens at the hands of the Islamic State, an organization he dismissed in January as “JV” (junior varsity), was to join forces with Iran to eradicate it. Yes, Obama is actually helping the Islamic Republic. This is the Islamic Republic that refers to America as the “Great Satan.” The same regime that is engaging in a charade of negotiations with the U.S. and Europe in order to buy time to complete its nuclear weapons program. You know, the program whose purpose is to subjugate the West. Oh, and to wipe Israel off the map. (...) Imagine Obama's surprise, then, when the Muslim world did not suddenly become pro-American. The first black U.S. president, who reminisces about the music emanating from the mosques of his childhood in Indonesia, failed to arouse the admiration of the very Muslims he has tried so hard to appease. If anything, they see him as a slave. The irony would be delicious if it didn't involve the loss of so many lives.”

Ruthie Blum, IHY, 05.09.14

### ISIS: Spreading the Islamic dream

“Two primary processes led to the rise of ISIS. The first was the oppression of the large Sunni minority in Iraq. The fall of Saddam Hussein, who was Sunni, and the installation of a democratic regime in Iraq essentially transferred power to the country's Shiites (60 percent of the population). (...) The second process is the Syrian civil war, which began in 2011 and ushered al-Qaida into that arena. Until February 2014, ISIS was part of an al-Qaida alliance of organizations fighting Syrian President Bashar Assad. The collapse of this alliance was the result of the horrific acts attributed to ISIS. The falling out with al-Qaida was not of an ideological nature, it was merely over tactics. Following its disengagement from al-Qaida, ISIS began to thrive. As of today, ISIS has an army of around 50,000 fighters in Syria and another 30,000 in Iraq. (...) In the eyes of the Muslim masses across the globe, ISIS represents a powerful Islamic awakening: an Islam fighting its enemies and cleansing itself of foreign influences, Shiites, Yazidis, Kurds and others. The thousands of believers flocking to ISIS recruitment centers want to see this dream become a reality.”  
Shaul Bartal, IHY, 07.09.14.

### **Israel shouldn't underestimate ISIS**

“The Israeli tendency to disregard this terror organization is clear. We say to ourselves: They include only several thousand members, and we can destroy them with the thrust of a shell. Didn't we reach Entebbe and Dubai? We'll reach them too. They may be multiplying like mushrooms after the first rain of the season, but we will destroy them even before the last heat wave. (...) We are good in mobilizing plenty of tanks, in moving thousands of infantry soldiers, and we have shot down hundreds of enemy planes which failed to reach their destinations over the years. (...) But, and this is another thing we have learned from years-long experience, we are not that successful in the small wars, in the retaliation operations, in minor tactics warfare. (...) The war on these murderous organizations almost definitely calls for insane coalitions, like the US and Iran for example. We currently see Iran as a horrible enemy of ours, following the intention to build nuclear facilities, and the US is the only one which can prevent such a catastrophe. What shall we do? We will have no choice but to understand that the war on the Islamic State organization creates weird matches. At the moment, it's urgent to fight the murderous terror organization till the end. The important thing is to neutralize the Iranians' ability to build a bomb.”

Eitan Haber, JED, 08.09.14

### **NATO vs ISIS**

“The defeat of Islamic State – also known as ISIS – is impossible, however, unless NATO is willing to deploy ground forces large enough to seize the group's strongholds in Syria and Iraq. (...) Islamic State must and will be destroyed. The group has massacred religious minorities, including Christians and Yazidis. It threatens the Kurdistan Regional Government, one of the few positive long-term developments to arise from the invasion of Iraq. It is also a direct threat to Western societies: hundreds of its terrorists hail from Britain, the US and other Western countries to which they eventually plan to return to continue the jihad. Obama took an important first step toward eradicating Islamic State at the NATO summit. Now the momentum must be maintained.”

Editorial, JPO, 07.09.14

### **ISIS flips the script**

“U.S. President Barack Obama, at the beginning of his first term in office, asked that the United States erase the term "Islamic terror" from its lexicon. Obama did not want to tie terrorism -- which is a negative term -- to Islam, so as not to offend the hundreds of millions of Muslims around the world within the framework of America's appeasement policies in the wake of the George W. Bush era. Almost six years later, however, Obama, with no other choice, is amassing the broadest possible coalition to wage a military campaign against the Islamic State (ISIS). (...) Obama is right in seeking to include Arab and Muslim states in his coalition. ISIS is undoubtedly a cancerous tumor, which threatens, first and foremost, the Arab world from which it grew. Arab states, however, are so factious, so suspicious, so afraid of the reaction in the streets -- but primarily so untrusting of Obama (the Gulf States, namely Saudi Arabia) -- that they will not rush to join his campaign.”

Boaz Bismuth, IHY, 07.09.14

### **Israel must look beyond the Islamic fanatics – at itself**

(...) we are first of all Israelis – that is, there is no place in the world that is not politically marked. But what does being Israeli mean? Narrowing down to national subjectivity doesn't reduce the obligation to act in accordance with values; it just highlights the obligation to act in accordance with your own values. Being Israeli means knowing that your story

is the story of the conflict. Being Israeli means knowing that as long as there is no two-state solution, the Palestinians are "the poor of your city." Israel's political leadership must take responsibility for the future and understand that those who are expelled from the world into its "mental hospitals" will sooner or later explode. If Israel looks at Hamas and sees the Islamic State, it will eventually get the Islamic State. But if it's wise enough to insist on interpreting the latest round of violence as part of the Palestinian national struggle, it will see that it has at its disposal not just the tools for a diplomatic solution to the local conflict, but an opportunity to create a common regional front against the ideology of revenge, Islamic State-style.

Carolina Landsmann, HAA, 04.09.14

### 3. Haushaltsverhandlungen

*Die aktuelle Debatte über den Haushalt für das kommende Jahr droht die Regierungskoalition in die Knie zu zwingen. Finanzminister Yair Lapid (Yesh Atid) hält an seiner Reform der 0%-Mehrwertsteuer für Erstkäufer einer Eigentumswohnung fest, Regierungschef Benjamin Netanyahu will den Plan auf Eis legen und fordert zudem eine Aufstockung des Verteidigungsbudgets um mindestens 8 Mrd. Schekel. Lapid hingegen will höchstens 2,5 Mrd. Schekel mehr für Israels Sicherheit bereitstellen. Weiterer Konfliktpunkt ist Lapid's Festhalten an seinem Versprechen, die Steuern nicht zu erhöhen. Stattdessen will er die vor allem durch den Krieg entstandenen Zusatzbelastungen für den Staat mit einer Ausweitung des Defizits begleichen.*

#### **Lapid, Flug entrenched in opposing positions**

"Even after their reconciliation talk, Governor of the Bank of Israel Karnit Flug and Minister of Finance Yair Lapid were still sticking to their respective positions on the 2015 budget. (...) Flug asserts that Lapid's current policy will cause an undesirable increase in the budget deficit, increase the debt-GDP ratio, and force future governments to increase tax rates and cut welfare spending. This can be interpreted as meaning that the Governor believes that Lapid is sacrificing Israel's socioeconomic future for the sake of the present. Furthermore, Flug is more than hinting that Lapid, and essentially the entire government, is incapable of dealing with the need to set priorities. (...) tax revenues should be increased,

first of all by eliminating exemptions and also by raising tax rates. The attempt to avoid this measure will not only jeopardize financial stability, but will also render the Israeli economy more vulnerable to economic upheaval and have a negative impact on the people's welfare. (...) How can we know if the message has gotten through? The answer is fairly simple: if the prime minister publically summons Lapid and Flug to a meeting with him, it will be a hint of his willingness to move in the direction of the Bank of Israel's positions. What it actually means is that Netanyahu will make it clear to Lapid that the 0% VAT plan must be "postponed," that he must consider which tax exemptions to eliminate without causing a riot - essentially, some of the exemptions under the Law for the Encouragement of Capital Investment are involved - and how possible it is to close tax loopholes as early as next year. Flug, however, is not merely demanding that tax revenues be addressed. She is also telling the government that priorities must be set, meaning a decision about where government spending will go. In this matter, the prime minister will find it much harder to go along with Flug. Netanyahu will avoid a quarrel with the Ministry of Defense on the budget it is demanding, and with the Habayit Hayehudi (Jewish Home) party on the amounts it is demanding be invested beyond the Green Line. What remains is a cut in infrastructure and civilian spending, while depositing the political cost of this behavior on the Finance Minister's doorstep."

Avi Temkin, GLO, 02.09.14

#### **Giving up before reaching the starting line**

There's something amazing, almost unbelievable in the ease with which the ministers from Yesh Atid surrendered millions of shekels from the funding of their respective ministries. Take the ministry of education for example: Over NIS 500 million was cut from their budget in one swing of the sword. The cuts however, didn't affect the mood of the education minister one bit. In fact, he raised his hand in favor of the budget swipe. When he played host two days ago to the prime minister in the ministry's situation room, he looked like a groom beneath his chuppah. Everything's alright, he promised everyone, everything is great and no educational programs will be affected. He didn't utter a word about the critical hit that higher education will suffer, or about the classrooms that won't be built. (...) He criticized Health Minister Yael German and Welfare Minister Meir Cohen, also ministers from Yesh Atid. German saw how the reformation she promised in health services

have gone down the drain, and never opened her mouth; Cohen muttered something about the government taking from those who already have nothing, but in the end joined the herd. Yes, Operation Protective Edge left a big hole in its wake in the nation's budget. Responsible governments deal with such holes through budget cuts and tax increases. But the question of what sectors to cut from and how much is an issue that's up for public debate. A minister's job is to struggle for the benefit of their clientele - the students and their parents, the sick and their families, the elderly, the physically impaired, and the poor. The fight for funding is the core of the job of any minister. If they give up before reaching the starting line, what are they there for? (...) The lack of experience of Lapid and his ministers have come back to haunt them. (...) You know how much I appreciate you, Yair, Cohen chimes in. But there's still a question that's bothering me: Where were you during this entire war? You had the perfect opportunity to be the leader of the people, to listen to the residents of the south, to prove that some in the government speak, and others in the government take action. Instead you withdrew, and promised verification on the death of Mohammed Deif. (...) You're really stubborn Yair, and I say that as a compliment. We owe a lot to your obstinacy. But sometimes you go overboard. Now, as you demand that we surrender to such cruel cuts, it wouldn't hurt anyone if you got rid of the program to buy apartments with zero taxes. You know that Slomiansky will keep squeezing you until you give up our soul, and meanwhile the contractors aren't building and when they aren't building, the prices go up and not down. Cancelling the zero taxes program will be your contribution to the national effort. Listen to me; raise taxes even though you promised not to. After 50 days of fighting, no one will hold you to your word. Take the same opportunity to convince Netanyahu not to buy the plane he wants for himself or the palace being built for him in the government complex at the cost of hundreds of millions of shekels. The cuts, like happiness, start from within. (...)

Nahum Barnea, JED, 03.09.14

### **The scandal of Israel's low wage economy**

"NIS 5,831. That's the median monthly wage of employees in Israel in 2011, which is the most up-to-date, accurate and reliable figure available from the National Insurance Institute. One the Israeli economy's main problems, if not the main one, is dismal wages. The fact that half the employed workers in Israel, some 3.3 million people, earn up to NIS 5,831

gross per month is what should be uppermost in the minds of those drafting the 2015 budget. The monthly wage is the basis of the existence and survival of every citizen in Israel, the basis of every household's consumption, and in fact one of the chief measures of the health of any society. If somewhere in the corridors of the Bank of Israel and the Ministry of Finance they don't start to understand and digest why wages are so low and what needs to be done to push them upwards, then this year's annual budget festival will be more of the same: endless disputes over how to share out the cake better (...), and not serious discussions on how to make the cake bigger in order to enable as many people as possible to earn more. If once more we are witness to loud and prolonged arguments over the defense budget, as is turning out to be the case, then we shall end up with some kind of compromise of a few billions hither or thither, and miss the opportunity to deal with the really important things. At the moment, the combination of a real estate bubble and miserably low wages is the mother of all problems in the economy. The generation that is mortgaging itself in purchasing a home at an inflated price divorced from any logic, is tied to it till old age because of its low earning power. Their earning power is inevitably eroded over the years, because there are not enough high quality jobs in the economy with decent pay, and there is insufficient enforcement and regulation to restrain the erosion of low wages. In Israel there are too many low quality jobs with low productivity, with correspondingly low wages. At the same time, there are not enough high quality jobs with high productivity and high wages to match. Such jobs are mainly to be found in the high-tech sector, which, for all its success, accounts for a low proportion of the labor market. This imbalance has been described many times, and is the root of all evil in the Israeli economy. The only way out of this is to make the cake bigger through long-term measures. In the end, this must be a result of selling innovative products and services overseas. Expanding exports is one way to expand the offering of high quality jobs in Israel and raising wages substantially from their present squalid level, a bad outcome of exaggerated reliance on service industries that is dragging the economy down. The basis of exports is investment in research and development and preserving Israeli know-how. Intel is a good example. For all the legitimate debate over tax breaks, Intel has established research and production here that has become a seedbed for the start-up industry. But there are plenty of contrary examples: Israel sells its know-how, its

research base, to the highest bidder; it hires its brains out to the world; and it generally receives zero tax on the activity in its R&D centers. Annual sales of drugs invented in Israel in the labs of the Weizmann Institute and research universities amount to \$30 billion, but only \$6-7 billion comes from drugs developed in Israel, and even less from drugs produced here. In other words, Israel has missed a tremendous opportunity to set up a major pharmaceuticals industry that will generate high quality jobs and also contribute tax revenues. In the end, the main beneficiaries of these inventions are the pharma companies that buy the intellectual property, the inventors themselves, and the academic institutions. The Weizmann Institute, for example, earns about NIS 1 billion a year in royalties on drugs invented in its laboratories. Imagine what added value the State of Israel would gain if all these drugs were also developed and commercialized here in Israel.”

Eli Tsipori, GLO, 04.09.14

#### **NIS 45 billion: Them's the (tax) breaks**

“Finance Minister Yair Lapid has painted himself into a corner with a number of unambiguous statements, in which he has vowed not to raise taxes in 2015, and won't be part of a government that does so. His way to deal with the astronomic demands of the defense establishment is to widen the budget deficit and cut back on social services. Lapid is also making things even more difficult for himself by clinging to his plan for zero value-added tax on inexpensive apartments for first-time home buyers, which could cost the budget up to 3 billion shekels (\$830 million) a year. His plan has aroused serious opposition from every possible direction, including within the treasury. Not just because of the lost tax revenues, but because of the socioeconomic distortions it would create by setting loose a flood of demand for new homes and pushing up prices further. But it would also further distort the tax system, which already awards some 45 billion shekels a year in exemptions and deductions. (...) The government grants a great many exemptions and deductions (...) All told, these exemptions cost the treasury 45 billion shekels a year in lost revenues, which is almost the same as the entire budget for education. Rescinding them, however, would not increase tax revenues by the same amount because the breaks themselves encourage certain economic activities that would decline or disappear if the incentives were cut off. (...) Many economists (...) contend that canceling tax breaks is better than raising taxes. It is quite

reasonable to assume the rest of the government and the Finance Ministry know this too, but that is where the problem starts. Canceling tax breaks requires battles with powerful interest groups. Those who receive a tax break didn't win it easily, and won't give it up easily, either. (...) It will be difficult to cancel the advanced training fund break this time, too, but maybe the time has come to return it to its original purpose: Investment in professional training. The return to the economy on such a tax break would be much greater if the money were spent on training (...) Tax breaks distort the economy, even if the damage is hard to measure. To eliminate them will require fighting strong interest groups that created them in the first place, but it is certainly better than just another round of across-the-board budget cuts that harm social and other services. Properly handling the tax breaks – and those who benefit from them – can serve as a sturdy ladder that Lapid can use to climb down from the tree he has gotten himself stuck in.”

Sami Peretz, HAA, 11.09.14

#### **4. Medienquerschnitt**

*Über die israelische Ankündigung, ein Gebiet von 4000 Quadratkilometern südlich von Bethlehem zu annektieren und der internationale Protest gegen diesen Plan.*

#### **Israel scoring own goal with land annexation**

“There is nothing like annexation or appropriation or another construction project to infuriate the entire world. (...) Annexation or appropriation is not the proper Zionist response to jihad or Hamas. On the contrary, it's an anti-Israel response. Because when it comes to new chapters in history, most of the victims of jihad are Arabs or Muslims. This means that there is an option for new coalitions. Most Muslims, for example, on one front with the West and Israel, against ISIS, Hamas and Qatar. And what does Israel do? It gives everyone the finger. An irritating move, which is already making headlines in the world's newspapers. In the exact critical hour when there is a chance for a new coalition, Israel is insisting on stealing the limelight. Instead of pointing an accusing finger at the jihad coalition, from Hamas to the Islamic State, Israel is scoring an own goal. Instead of uniting against the dangers of global terror, Israel is providing its enemies with further ammunition.”

Ben-Dror Yemini, JED, 09.09.14

### **Israel's land appropriation: Foolish, ill-timed and self-destructive**

Perhaps there could be a more foolish, ill-timed, and self-destructive decision than the one made by Israel's cabinet this week, but it is hard to imagine what it might be. (...) Nothing unites the world against Israel like settlement building. And while there is never a good time to build settlements in the territories, the timing in this case was astoundingly bad, even for tone-deaf Israeli politicians more concerned with immediate political advantage than with Israel's standing in the world. (...) Israel needs to look after her own security and interests. But the problem I have is that building settlements in Gush Etzion does not add to Israel's security in any conceivable way; it does not protect her citizens from rocket fire or guard them from terrorists. In fact, by undermining her political standing and weakening her regional alliances, it does just the opposite. (...) We in the Jewish community need to stop denying reality. Settlement building is a disaster. To be sure, Zionist principles and democratic values dictate an end to settlement expansion. But all that aside, practical reasons are enough. At a time when the war with Hamas is unfinished, Iran pursues nuclear weapons, and Syria and Iraq are engaged in a bloody civil war, Israel has enough challenges to meet without the endless complications that flow from building more settlements. A little common sense, please. Israel's government needs to reverse its decision of last week and stop expanding settlements once and for all.

Rabbi Eric H. Yoffie, HAA, 03.09.14

### **Don't be rattled by the condemnations**

"It has become a common and tedious ritual: the international condemnation and the outcry of the Left. There is nothing to get excited about here. The Jews began the process, which could bring about the day when sovereignty is held over at least part of the ancient Jewish homeland. Good grief. There are two things forbidden to Jews: materializing any sort of sovereignty over the land of Israel, and defending themselves against the Arabs with arms. Too bad we have fallen back to history. (...) Despite the propaganda of lies, let us go back to the basics: Judea and Samaria are not Palestinian lands, not even by international law. Moreover, these are disputed territories. From our perspective, these are Jewish lands that were stolen from us during the Muslim occupation, which began in the seventh

century and continues till this very day. Despite all of that, the Palestinians continue to practice unilateral annexation all over the place, without meeting protest. While the Palestinians are subject to "the laws of nature," the Jews must oblige international law. If Israel wants to protect its control over the state -- not just in Judea and Samaria -- it must take the same actions in order to step up the application of its sovereignty; it is the natural behavior of the locals. (...) Israel cannot for any practical reason give up Judea, Samaria or the Jordan Valley. Those still arguing this option should be referred to the now-shuttered department of Syrian peace negotiations, which until very recently had been advocating for a pull-out from the Golan Heights in exchange for peace with Syria. God have mercy." Dror Eydar, IHY, 02.09.14

### ***Zu dem Phänomen der häuslichen Gewalt gegen Frauen, die bis in einen Mord eskaliert***

#### **Women abandoned to their fate**

"Avital Rokah of Jerusalem was (...) allegedly by her estranged husband, after three years of being obsessively stalked by him after she left him. Rokah's relatives have accused the police of mishandling the case. They note that the husband had been released from custody, albeit with restrictions, only a week before the murder, even though the previous day he had threatened her while putting a knife to her throat, and showed her an ax and set of knives he had bought, according to the family, to demonstrate the seriousness of his intentions. Rokah was murdered less than a month after singer Dafna Bar Zion was murdered, allegedly by her ex-husband, in Tel Aviv. She, too, had repeatedly complained to the police about her ex's violence, harassment and threats. Unfortunately, these two cases constitute additional evidence of the inadequate police response to women who complain of violence and intimidation by their partners. They come on top of other cases that were examined in a report by the Public Security Ministry's comptroller, whose details are summarized in today's newspaper. The report describes serious blunders in the police's handling of domestic violence. The report shows that, in some of the cases, which occurred in the years 2010 and 2011, the police officers responsible for handling domestic violence cases acted in contravention of regulations, undermining the ability to follow up on complaints. (...) In Rokah's case, police argue that she refused their suggestion to



enter an abused women's shelter. Though this option must be made available to women under threat, it's hard to understand why the victims are the ones who have to be locked up, and not those who threaten their freedom and safety. The police and other law enforcement authorities must conduct a comprehensive examination not just of Rokah's murder, but of the entire punishment and enforcement policy in this area, so the next murder can be prevented."

Editorial, HAA, 09.09.14

### ***Zum Einsatz von UN-Beobachtertruppen auf den Golanhöhen und andernorts***

#### **Who needs the UN observers, anyway?**

"I am referring not only to the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force on the Golan Heights, but to all the UN peacekeepers and troops who have been freeloading here since the War of Independence. They have been at most useless and at worst a hindrance. Once every two weeks they count the tanks and the artillery of the Israel Defense Forces on the Golan Heights to make sure that Israel is not violating the Agreement on Disengagement. What do they do in Syria? They flee or are kidnapped. Israeli intelligence does not need them to assess whether Syria is building up its forces on the border. (...) The observers were of no help during the Yom Kippur War, and in Lebanon they caused damage to Israel: Hezbollah terrorists operated right below their outposts, killing Israeli soldiers and seizing the bodies, and the observers never even reported to Israel what they had seen. But in Lebanon the IDF sometimes had to refrain from taking action so as not to hurt the observers. They have cost billions, and nobody reads their reports. That money could have been used to resettle Palestinian refugees or to feed the starving in Africa. And they sit in Jerusalem like a bone in the throat, like the remnant of a foreign commissioner in Jerusalem, like the vestige of the demand to internationalize Jerusalem. The time has come to end this farce. "

Aryeh Eldad , HAA, 08.09.14

*Zur Umsetzung des Beerdigungsgesetzes, das israelischen Staatsbürgern die Wahl zwischen weltlicher und orthodoxer Bestattung einräumt*

#### **Israel must obey Alternative Burial Law, without discrimination**

"The Alternative Burials Law (1996) specifies that every Israeli citizen has the right to a secular burial,

funded, just as those carried out by local hevra kadisha religious burial societies are, by the National Insurance Institute. The law's purpose was to rectify a discriminatory and unjust situation in which Jews in Israel had only two choices for burial in most cases: either in a cemetery operated by a hevra kadisha or in a private cemetery, at a cost that could reach tens of thousands of shekels. The demand for a secular burial reflects not only the personal choice that is every citizen's right but also, in some cases, necessity. Some Israelis, for example those who immigrated to Israel in accordance with the Law of Return but are not considered Jews under religious law, can only be buried in secular cemeteries or a section of a "regular" Jewish cemetery reserved for individuals of "doubtful religious status." Nevertheless, in the 18 years since the law was enacted the state has established only a handful of secular cemeteries, provides minuscule budgets for their operation and does not allocate sufficient land to the nonprofit organizations that run them. (...) the state bears the main responsibility. It must obey the law as it is required to do, and not discriminate among its citizens. "

Editorial, HAA, 08.09.14

HAA = Haaretz

JED = JediothAhronoth / Ynetnews

JPO = Jerusalem Post

IHY = Israel HaYom

TOI = Times of Israel

GLO = Globes

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