

### Schlaglicht Israel Nr. 20/14 Aktuelles aus israelischen Tageszeitungen

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### 1. Vorgezogene Neuwahlen

Nach einem Eklat zwischen Regierungschef Benjamin Netanyahu und den Koalitionspartnern von Yesh Atid und Hatnuah entschieden die Abgeordneten am 9. Dezember für die Auflösung der Knesset und vorgezogene Neuwahlen am 17. März kommenden Jahres. Netanyahu hatte Finanzminister Yair Lapid und Justizministerin Tzipi Livni unter dem Vorwurf aus ihren Ämtern entlassen, sie planten einen "Putsch" gegen ihn.

### Reality check: Netanyahu's cynical politics

(...) Netanyahu's third term as prime minister gave Israel the worst government it its history and we should be grateful for its sudden and unexpected demise. On the diplomatic front, Israel's relations with the United States have hit an undisputed alltime low due to Netanyahu's arrogant interference in America's internal politics. Over in Europe, countries are queuing up all over the continent to recognize an independent Palestinian state in protest at the breakdown in negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians and Israel's continued settlement activities (...). Far from providing security to Israel's citizens, Netanyahu led a 50-day unresolved war against Hamas this summer that failed to defeat this terrorist group, cost an unprecedented amount of IDF soldiers' lives and severely damaged the economy, as well as causing untold destruction in Gaza that will only serve to sow the seeds of future conflict. (...) Israel desperately needs a new leader, (...) Labor Party leader Isaac Herzog may just prove to be the right man at the right time. Herzog has the ministerial experience, political skills and socialdemocratic vision for the country that is so badly needed if Israel is going to stop itself descending into an authoritarian, religiously nationalistic country that is out of step with the rest of the developed world. (...)

Jeff Barak, JPO, 07.12.14

### To Bibi or not to Bibi, that is the question

(...)This time around, it's extremely personal, and for Netanyahu, it's even about his persona. (...) Since Netanyahu is essentially running against himself, his Likud party has set a minimum of 20 Knesset seats it must win for him to be re-elected. (...) With less than 20 seats, Likud will no longer be the largest faction within the right-wing bloc, and Netanyahu is likely to be toppled as party leader shortly after the election and might end his political career. (..) The only way that Labor party chairman Isaac Herzog could replace Netanyahu is if, following the elections, Labor forms an alliance with Livni's Hatnua party (if it still exists), Lapid's Yesh Atid and Meretz. (...) The final scenario that could see Netanyahu pack his bags and head home to Caesarea depends on a strong centrist bloc. Considering the anger with and disappointment in Lapid, the chances of that happening are slim. However, the public forgets quickly and, frankly, Israelis are angrier with Netanyahu. All this could lead to an unexpected alliance between Lapid and Liberman. (...) The chances of any of these scenarios playing out may be small, but if Netanyahu does not form the next coalition it will be because of one of them. (...)

Yonit Levi und Udi Segal, TOI, 04.12.14

### Elections deepen economic and fiscal gloom

(...) 2015 will be another year in which the government will be run according to the rules of a 1/12 budget, meaning on the basis of the budget approved for 2014, divided by 12 for each month. This means that all the one-time supplements approved in 2014, all the money promised for this year, every amount that deviated from the approved budget, no longer exists. In effect, there is no fiscal policy, and every budget supplement will depend on the quality of the political maneuvering in the government and the Knesset Finance Committee. In simple language, we are entering not only an election campaign, but also the season of political opportunism. This situation will last as long as there is no new approved budget, i.e. until the end of the first half of 2015, at best. The next government, whatever its composition, will have to cope with a rather difficult budget legacy from the very outset, in its first month of existence. From an economic perspective, the absence of a fiscal policy puts the responsibility for the safety of the economy on the Bank of Israel's shoulders, even if it lacks the tools to do the job. (...) Nevertheless, there is one bright spot: the devaluation in the shekel exchange rate in recent months. The weakening of the local currency is a combined result of the currency ratios in the global market, the lowering of the domestic interest rate, and political and security uncertainty. Eventually, a weaker shekel should help the exporters, although they will have to deal with a prolonged slowdown in the overseas industrialized markets. (...) The feeling that the cost of living is climbing is still evident, even if the Central Bureau of Statistics' figures show that inflation is negligible, or even negative. (...) Netanyahu thinks he can cope with the recession, the unease, and stagnation.

Avi Temkin, GLO, 02.12.14

### Time for the revolution

(...) Many people are concerned by the fraying relations between Netanyahu and the United States administration, and by the way Israel is becoming the target of criticism and sanctions from European countries. Netanyahu's current term has been wasted. It's amazing to see how two of his partners, Lapid and Bennett, mocked him: One did as he pleased at the treasury and the other made himself the minister of settlements. Netanyahu's decision to call an early election showed that he's on the verge of panicking. (...) Netanyahu could have harnessed Tzipi Livni's zeal in order to reach an accord, but he was afraid she would succeed. He thwarted her at every turn, making a mockery of her efforts. (...) Netanyahu tied her hands. Livni joining forces with Isaac Herzog is the best news to be heard in a long while in the political wilderness. (...) Booting Netanyahu from power is a national interest, and now it's in the hands of Buji and Tzipi. (...) Time for the revolution.

Yoel Marcus, HAA, 12.12.14

### New centrist bloc must stay sane

There is a scent of change in the air. The union between the Labor Party, led by Isaac Herzog, and Hatnua Chairwoman Tzipi Livni is creating a new situation. (...) The new union is at a crossroads. It can step to the left and it can go to the center. (...) Netanyahu is shifting to the right. And the more he shifts to the right, the more his position is undermined, because one-third of the Likud voters are far from the radical group taking over the party. The shift to the right drives them away. Herzog and Livni are facing a similar, almost identical danger. The hesitant voters are asking themselves what is the difference between them and Meretz. There is a difference. Of course there is. But it's now their job to present a clear alternative. (...) Livni made certain to present a national, Zionist line in Wednesday's press conference. But they will need much more than that in order to emphasize the differences. (...) Herzog's statement Wednesday against the "me, me, me" culture is definitely refreshing (...) Ben-Dror Yemini, JED, 12.12.14

### Can the duke become king?

(...) Herzog is the German word for "duke." Isaac Herzog (...) is indeed of aristocratic origin. (...) Slightly built, blue-eyed, with a fair complexion, Herzog (54) looks more British than Israeli. He speaks softly, expresses himself in a moderate way and has no enemies. He is the very opposite of the typical Israeli politician.He surprised everybody when he beat one of these for the chairmanship of the Labor Party. (...) During the last years, Israeli media have been obsessed with the idea that "Israel is moving to the Right." That Netanyahu, bad as he is, is preferable to those who will inevitably succeed him - outright fascists, warmongers, Arab-eaters. It was almost fashionable to declare that the Left is finished, dead, deceased. (...) And suddenly there is a chance - a remote chance, but a chance nevertheless - for the Left to regain power. ( ... ) HERZOG WON his first success of the current campaign by forming a common list with Tzipi Livni. It is now up to him to keep up the momentum and make alliances with - possibly - Lapid, Kahlon and Meretz. If successful in the elections, he must stretch out his hands to the Orthodox and the Arabs. (...) Can the duke become king? Well, that's what the history books tell us.

Uri Avnery, JPO, 12.12.14

### I'll vote, but who for?

This is first election campaign, since I received the right to vote, in which I am still undecided about how to cast my ballot. But never fear; there is no danger that I will give up that right - even though I am fully cognizant of my inability to influence the character of Israeli society. (...) In the Israeli government and in the Knesset there are those who demand that Israeli Arabs be denied a vote, who wish to rip up the Declaration of Independence, while nationality bill pushes the Israeli society to withdraw more and more into a nationalist shell. This time, I do not know who to vote for because I have lost a sense of political distinction. There is almost no leftwing, and a great deal of rightwing - parties that have become home to a battery of vocal celebrities and a host of journalists, but few ideologues. (...) There are almost no parties, just seasonal temporary lists, remnants of parties and unnatural associations - and all to take part in a survival reality show. It is only the patsy voter who does not change. (...) Rafik Halabi, JED, 12.12.14

### 2. Der Tod von Ziad Abu Ein und mögliche Folgen für die Sicherheitskooperation zwischen Israel und Palästinensische Autonomiebehörde

Nach dem Tod des populären Fatah-Funktionärs Ziad Abu Ein stellt die palästinensische Autonomiebehörde in Ramallah die Sicherheitskooperation mit Israel in Frage. Abu Ein, zuständig für den Bereich Siedlungen und Trennanlagen, war während einer Demonstration zusammengesackt, in deren Verlauf es zu Rangeleien mit den Soldaten kam. Die gemeinsam von Pathologen aus dem Westjordanland, aus Israel und Jordanien vorgenommene Autopsie wird unterschiedlich interpretiert. Für die Palästinenser ist er ein Märtyrer, in Israel geht man davon aus, er sei einem Herzversagen erlegen.

## The question we haven't asked about Ziad Abu Ein

(...) I don't think that the forces intentionally harmed Abu Ein any more than they often rough up Palestinians (as well as Israeli demonstrators from across the political spectrum) and use a liberal amount of tear gas. However (...) there are only very limited situations in which the Israeli security forces are allowed to prevent Palestinians from freely working their lands, or demand advance coordination. (...) They are only allowed to issue on the spot closure orders if there is absolutely no other way to prevent bloodshed. This was not the case on Wednesday. (...) Thank God, we don't experience such tragic consequences every day. However, on a regular basis, the army does everything it can to persuade or force farmers to coordinate in advance access to lands for which no advance permission is required. It used to be that we would frequently need to call army commanders, and ask them to order their soldiers to cease preventing access. This happens less frequently today, because many farmers have simply acquiesced to accessing their land only with advance permission. (...) when Palestinians (...) exercise their right to access their land without advance permission, it seems like a provocation to the Israeli security forces. An Israeli minister, Yuval Steinitz, even called this entirely peaceful event a "violent demonstration." (...) When we cease to see a provocation and a security threat in every attempt by Palestinian farmers to exercise their right to safely work their lands, we will not only avoid tragedies and achieve a modicum of justice, but we will be one step closer to reconciliation.

Arik Ascherman, TOI, 12.12.14

### Violence or stability?

(...) Abu Ein was a particularly popular figure in Palestinian society. Unlike other high-ranking PA officials who tend to put on airs, drive around in expensive cars and insulate themselves from the masses, Abu Ein was a grassroots activist closely connected to the Palestinian street. (...) His popular-

ity among Palestinians is also attributable to his violent past. (...) Abu Ein was sentenced to life for his role in a 1979 terrorist attack in Tiberias. Two 16year-olds - Boaz Lahav and David Lankri - were killed and 36 others were wounded when a bomb went off during a Lag Ba'omer celebration. (...) In part due to his popularity among Palestinians, in part due to the already tense state of affairs, security forces are bracing for violent protests this weekend. Israel should do everything possible to defuse the situation. Defense Minister Moshe Ya'alon's statement expressing sorrow over Abu Ein's death was a step in the right direction. (...) The real danger is that security coordination between the PA and Israel will deteriorate. (...) A total breakdown of coordination is unlikely (...) security coordination is the basis for PA stability, which in turn facilitates control over donor countries' funds that keep the PA operating and paying salaries. (...) But PA President Mahmoud Abbas might decide that a partial break in security cooperation is politically advantageous. He might think that at his advanced age he has nothing to lose and that, absent any real successes to boast of, he wants to leave a lasting mark. Palestinian journalists say that Abbas gives a lot of thought to the legacy he will leave. Will it be violence or stability, terrorism or peace? Editorial, JPO, 11.12.14

## A critical moment for Israeli-Palestinian security coordination

(...)Whether or not calm will prevail depends largely on whether Israelis and Palestinians continue to coordinate their security efforts in the West Bank. (...) Abu Ein's death could have extensive and damaging consequences - because he was a minister, because the incident was caught on video, and because of the symbolism of what took place. (...) There are apparently some things that never change in the territories: The army prepares thoroughly for the protest, stations a battalion commander to monitor the forces and keep everyone restrained, and in the end a Jeep driver who joins in the fray without even a helmet or a protective vest causes a major incident. Abu Ein's death could be a taste of the kind of incidents to expect in the next few months. This election season can be expected to take place under a shadow of tension on the security front, and the election could tempt various groups to escalate the security situation in a bid to undermine the Netanyahu government and indirectly affect his chances of reelection. And since there's a scent of possible political revolution in the air, the government could intentionally heat up conflicts so as to convey determination. (...). But now is the time for extra caution  $(\ldots)$ 

Amos Harel, HAA, 11.12.14

# Israel-Palestinian security cooperation is not in danger

(...) The Palestinian public is angry and frustrated. It is angry at Israel and frustrated by the lack of any real response from the Palestinian Authority. The same public sees security cooperation by the leadership in Ramallah as a form of collaboration with Israel, and it is hard to swallow - let alone when a Palestinian minister dies during a popular demonstration against the Israeli occupation, even if it is from a heart attack. (...) The termination of security cooperation between the parties, if it happens, will force the Israeli security forces to change their practices in the West Bank, but that does not mean they will not be able to operate in territory fully under Palestinian control should the need arise. On the other hand, a break in cooperation will allow Hamas to coordinate and consolidate its position and power in the West Bank, both in terms of civilian and military infrastructure - which would undermine the position of the Palestinian Authority. This is one of the reasons why Hamas frequently calls for an end to security coordination with Israel. And although Hamas is now joined in its demand by Fatah activists, it still does not signal that the end of the coordination is nigh. An informed source in Ramallah told Ynet that the initiative is only in the declarative. (...) for at least for now there is no change - and the civil and security cooperation between the Palestinian Authority and Israel is business as usual. Elior Levy, JED, 12.12.14

## Israel-Palestinian security cooperation is crucial for Abbas' survival

(...) The security cooperation is the heart of the Oslo Agreements. It is the most important, most sensitive issue between Ramallah and the IDF headquarters in Tel Aviv: (...) If it were not for the daily discreet coordination, if it were not for the Shin Bet's involvement in thwarting terror attacks and arresting Hamas activists, no one would have been able to promise Abbas that he would survive for so many years without a single hair on his head harmed. (...) Abbas is rocking on his chair. On the one hand, he is a rais without elections in the horizon. No one, including the American administration, which boasts democracy, will push for elections that could end in a nasty surprise. On the other hand, he is also a rais without masses following him and without achievement. Prisoners have not been released, lands have not been returned, the economy has not grown. He has even failed to develop the planned city of Rawabi. More and more, you hear the phrase "rahat Palestine" (there goes Palestine). If until now the word "rahat" was said about every loss and failure, now they mean that Palestine has disappeared – that the chance of building a state is gone – and the responsibility for that falls on Abbas' hunched shoulders. (...)

Smadar Perry, JED, 14.12.14

### 3. Mehr EU-Staaten für Anerkennung von Palästina

Großbritannien, Frankreich und Spanien – ein europäisches Parlament nach dem anderen entscheidet sich für die Anerkennung eines palästinensischen Staates. Präsident Mahmud Abbas verschiebt den Konflikt und die Lösungssuche erfolgreich immer weiter auf die internationale Bühne. Das EU-Parlament diskutiert eine Resolution zur Anerkennung, und bei der UN in New York soll nach dem Wunsch der Palästinenser der Sicherheitsrat eine Resolution verabschieden, die einen zeitlichen Rahmen für das Ende der israelischen Besatzung festlegt.

### En route to 'land without peace'

(...) Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas is now leading a move whose goal is to overturn this principle, and effectively to replace Resolution 242 with a new resolution that would impose a solution on Israel, without negotiations and without an end to the conflict. Unfortunately, this move is gathering speed. It's impossible to ignore the fact that parliament after parliament in Western Europe has adopted resolutions by a large majority calling for unilateral recognition of the state of Palestine. There has been a change for the worse in the general atmosphere, and Israel's diplomatic standing is steadily being eroded. (...) It's hard to claim that this feeling is groundless. It's enough to listen to the statements of Habayit Hayehudi ministers Naftali Bennett and Uri Ariel, or those of ministers and Knesset members from the ruling Likud party. To these, one must add various bills that undermine Israel's image as a state with democratic values, a state that respects human rights and the rule of law. If Israel can't figure out how to convince its friends abroad that it indeed wants peace, even at the price of painful concessions, and that it is loyal to the values of liberty, justice and equality that are shared by the

entire democratic world, it is headed for a severe diplomatic crash. It won't happen tomorrow or the day after, but the writing is already on the wall. Yehuda Ben-Meir, HAA, 15.12.14

### The greatest lie about geopolitics

Arab propaganda has succeeded in turning the Palestinian-Israeli conflict into the foremost geopolitical issue. This phenomenon started at the United Nations, where the General Assembly adopts many anti-Israeli motions with great majorities every year. The Arab-Muslim bloc of the UN represents many votes. (...) The frequent boycott campaigns against Israel can be better understood in light of the false centrality given to the Palestinian-Israeli issue. (...) This is very convenient for the Arab and Muslim leadership. It draws attention away from the many atrocities and high criminality occurring daily in parts of their world. This has been going on for decades. In the 1980s, nearly 1.5 million people died in the Iran- Irag war. For decades, large numbers of Christians have been forced to flee, having been chased out or murdered. In Syria, there are by now around 200,000 dead and nine million refugees. The cruelty of the Islamic State movement seems to exceed that of what the world has so far seen in the Islamic world. (...) Let us assume that a miracle happens and there is a sudden viable peace between Israel and the Palestinians. Will the US and its allies drop one bomb less on IS? Will there be fewer refugees from the Syrian civil war? Will fewer Iragis die as a result of suicide bombers and other attacks? Will IS or the pro-Iraqi government Shi'ite tribes behead one less person? (...) At some point the world's leaders will be forced to acknowledge that the main threat to the world does not come from Israel but from other actors in the area.

Manfred Gerstenfeld und Jamie Berk, JPO, 13.12.14

### France's theater of the absurd

(...) The decision by France's parliament is hypocritical and does nothing to promote peace in our region. (...) Israel didn't wait for Sweden or for parliamentary decisions in Ireland, Britain, Spain, or France -- and Belgium and the European Union tomorrow -- to recognize a Palestinian state. Look at the 1947 two-state proposal, or the speech of (rightwing) Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at Barllan University in which he spoke of the idea of two states for two peoples. We would remind the members of France's parliament that we are still waiting for PA President Mahmoud Abbas to make a comparable speech at Bir Zeit University, recognizing a Jewish state. (...) The approach that international recognition of a Palestinian state will move things forward is totally removed from reality. How has making Palestine an observer nation in the U.N. in 2002 benefitted the Palestinians? How have they benefitted from Palestine being recognized as a UNESCO member -- by France, as well -- in 2011? Paradoxically, if a Palestinian state is ever founded, it will be through Israel's doing. Boaz Bismuth, IHY, 04.12.14

### 4. Medienquerschnitt

Zum mutmaßlichen Luftangriff auf Syrien

### After alleged Israeli strike, the ball is now in Assad's court

(...) It's safe to assume that if Assad does choose to respond, it won't be in the form of rocket and missile fire at Israel; he'll go instead for a more low-profile model of terror attacks along the border or other targets that will make Israel think twice in the future. Damascus is already furious about what it defines as "the daily assistance" Israel is providing to the Syrian rebels. (...) Defense Minister Moshe Ya'alon has (..) listed (...) - the violation of Israeli sovereignty, the transfer of chemical weapons to Lebanon. and the transfer to Hezbollah of quality arms that could undermine Israel's "operational supremacy." (...) Hezbollah has a tendency to try to smuggle weapons in the winter, under the cover of stormy weather, which, the organization believes, could hamper efforts to locate the convoy. Furthermore, in light of the recent successes notched up by the rebels in their assaults on Syrian military installations, coupled with concerns that the rebels could lay their hands on the Hezbollah arms warehouses too, Hezbollah is under more pressure than ever before to transfer the equipment from Syria to Lebanon. (...)Ya'alon is obliged to remain particularly vigilant and not allow anyone to make irresponsible use of the defense establishment. Alex Fishman, JED, 09.12.14

#### Axis of evil stronger than any revolt

(...) There is little left of Syria as we knew it, with the exception of one thing -- the strategic alliance between Damascus, Tehran and Hezbollah, which has only grown stronger over the past few years. The deeper Assad has become embroiled in the quagmire of civil war, the more dependent he has become on his Iranian ally and its proxy, Hezbollah. (...) Syria's alliance with Iran and Hezbollah is so strong that Assad has not thought twice before giving his allies what little he has left, including his Russian-made weapons. These weapons are of no use in his war against the rebels, but for Hezbollah -- as admitted by Israel -- these are game-changing arms, which are likely to give it a significant advantage in any future conflict with Israel. Hezbollah, for its part, has thrown its full force behind Assad, while still diligently working to bolster its abilities versus Israel; as if Syria is not ravaged by civil war, and as if it has not lost hundreds of operatives in the fighting. Any future conflict between Israel and Hezbollah will be based -- much like any conflict with Hamas in the Gaza Strip -- on missile arsenals and terrorist cells that would most likely use tunnels to clash with security forces and attack Israeli civilians. (...) With all due respect to civil wars, Israel still remains a top priority for its enemies. Prof. Eval Zisser, IHY, 09.12.14

### Ultraorthodoxe Frauen in der Politik

### Haredi women's place: Not in the political arena

(...) In the Haredi community, it is well-known that behind every successful Haredi man stands an amazing woman who is smart, creative and boasting great capabilities. Haredi women have been drivers of tremendous things, both publicly and privately, from Devorah the prophetess, who was known to be smarter than her husband, to Sara Shneirer, a divorced ultra-Orthodox woman who founded the Beit Yaakov education movement for Jewish girls. (...) Haredi women have greater intuition, creativity, multi-tasking skills, and other vital abilities that would be very useful in the political arena. (...) For those reasons, Haredi women should be involved in politics. Just not in the spotlight. (...) I think we need to prioritize working within our communities for greater change. (...) (...) Any female who works in the political world is exposed to things that can be harmful to her role as a Jewish woman. There's a lot still to be done from behind the scenes, and we should focus on that 100%. (...) We can make it happen, without holding seats in the Knesset. Chevy Weiss, TOM, 08.12.14

### Ölkatastrophe in der Arava

## How to prevent Israel's next environmental disaster

(...) An important lesson to be drawn from the ecological disaster in the Arava is the need to amend the outdated 1952 oil law, which does not provide the Environmental Protection Ministry with sufficient authority and means to enable it to be involved in the planning and supervision of oil and gas production and delivery operations. A modern law would allow more effective supervision of the oil and gas companies, including Eilat Ashkelon Pipeline, at least in everything regarding surveillance of company storage and transport facilities. (...) A government decision from last year mandated reducing oilbased fuel use by 60 percent by the year 2025. It also mandated that Israel become a center for research and industrial knowledge in technologies in the field of alternatives to oil. The time has arrived to implement this decision and ensure that the oil that will continue to flow during the coming decade be transported in well-protected pipelines, accompanied by an efficient warning system that will make it possible to minimize the damage (...) Editorial, HAA, 07.12.14

Gleiches Recht nicht für alle

### Israel's High Court is sadly silent in case of lesbian couple

Many people in Israel, including the prime minister, take pride in society's liberal attitude toward women and gay people and boast that Israel's liberal democracy is superior to other regimes in the Middle East. But sometimes this effusive self-praise comes up against the gloomy Israeli reality. For four months an all-male rabbinical court has been disrupting the lives of two women whose only sin is their desire to live as a couple. An injunction by the Jerusalem Rabbinical Court forbids the two women from living together with the children of one of them, or even to meet in the children's presence. (...) We shouldn't be surprised by the attitude of the rabbinical court, which argued in its response that the "Torah of Israel opposes homosexual relations," and that it does not accept the opinion of the expert it had appointed. But it's hard to understand the helplessness of the representatives of the rule of law, first and foremost the High Court justices, in the face of discrimination based on sexual orientation. This case is another expression of the distorted relationship between religion and state in Israel, and of the Orthodox establishment's vast freedom to intervene in the most private of issues. As long as there is no separation of religion and state, Israel will not be a democratic country. The court must intervene quickly to ease this couple's distress and end the injustice. Editorial, HAA, 01.12.14

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