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1. Terror in Paris und Netanyahus Appell an Frankreichs Juden

In der Folge der Terroranschläge gegen Charlie Hebdo und einen koscheren Supermarkt in Paris, rief Israels Ministerpräsident Benyamin Netanyahu während der Solidaritätskundgebung die in Frankreich lebenden Juden zur Auswanderung nach Israel auf. Netanyahu kam mit seinem Appell an die jüdische Bevölkerung Frankreichs unter schwere Kritik, insbesondere in Frankreich. Die von radikalen Islamisten verübten Terroranschläge lösten in Israel große Empörung und Beunruhigung aus.

Learning the hard way

(...) Terrorist attack follows terrorist attack, but the French establishment has trouble issuing a coherent response. French President Francois Hollande, who visited the offices of the magazine that was targeted by terrorists Wednesday, did describe the incident as a terrorist attack, but he refrained from pointing an accusatory finger at anyone, or any group or ideology that may have fueled the attack. (...) The massacre at the Charlie Hebdo offices can also be explained away as a lone-wolf attack, but it is obviously a symptom of a much deeper problem. In fact, it is a serious disease threatening all of Europe -- the radical Islam disease. After all, when you acknowledge the fact that close to a fifth of France's

Muslim population sympathizes with ISIS, it is easy to understand the kind of atmosphere that gives rise to radical Islamist terrorism in France. (...) French Muslims face difficult financial and social issues due to their failure to integrate into French society. But the French need to understand that they can't afford any slack in the war against terrorism. With all due respect for "understanding" the killers' motives, they need to be fought with every possible means, regardless of efforts to solve the underlying problems. As we know, Paris has preached to Israel for many years to try to understand the motives behind Palestinian terror attacks. They have suggested that we try to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as a necessary step toward eradicating terrorism. Now they are learning the hard way that terrorism must be fought unflinchingly. That is how it is fought in Israel, without regard to criticism on Benjamin Netanyahu's government, as legitimate as it may be. Now, it is how France will fight it, too. (...)

Eyal Zisser. IHY, 08.01.14

In Israel, Charlie Hebdo would not have even had the right to exist

(...) In France, freedom of speech is considered a universal right, while in Israel such a weekly would not be able to exist because of the Israeli law that bans "offending religious sensibilities." During my

years as a cartoonist I have had to become familiar with the laws restricting the Israeli press. (...) The law prohibits illustrating Moses, Jesus or Mohammed in a way that would hurt the feelings of believers. When I first started out I didn't know there was such a law in Israel. Once, as a hungry beginning illustrator one cold Parisian winter, I approached Wolinski with a proposal for a comic in Charlie. He wanted something about the Middle East, Israelis and Arabs, and I suggested a hostage-taking terror attack in which Palestinian terrorists take over a kibbutz. The incident turns into an orgy with the women kibbutz members and volunteers; extremist clerics also take part. He was enthusiastic about the idea. When I returned to Israel, I didn't show the draft to anyone because there was no one to show it to, but I didn't think it was prohibited. I found out about the law only years later, when my caricature in a well-known newspaper that criticized the cruel pre-Yom Kippur custom of *kaparot* — swinging a chicken over one's head to atone for sin — was brought up for discussion in the Knesset. (...) From the rostrum, the police minister compared my work to the caricatures in the Nazis' *Der Stürmer*, and on the minister's instructions my editor and I were summoned for questioning. Sometime later I was cut from the paper's staff.

Ido Amin, HAA, 12.01.15

Jerusalem is no safer than Paris

My message to the Jews of France is this: Jerusalem is no safer than Paris. (...) The people of Israel have been targeted in terror attacks, suicide bombings and rocket fire on a scale way beyond the recent incidents you now witness in France. More than one thousand citizens of Israel lost their lives during the second intifada. (...) Know that when you come to Israel, terror will not have ended; that only several weeks ago four Jewish people, who came from other countries to be part of the Jewish state, were murdered during prayer in a Jerusalem synagogue by Islamic fundamentalists who believe in killing Jews and in the destruction of Israel. Know that there are parts of Jerusalem that are unsafe; parts of Jerusalem that stand behind looming concrete barriers; that there are some 300,000 Palestinians who make up the population of Jerusalem, a city of 800,000 people and that the reason for this is that governments of Israel annexed vast areas including Palestinian towns and hamlets that were never part of Jerusalem following the Six Day War. Know that our current government and the Netanyahu-Liberman collaboration wishes to see a continua-

tion of this absurdity, calling any solution "dividing Jerusalem." Know that parts of Eastern Jerusalem are poverty-stricken, lack education, housing, policing, lighting and that in this discrimination and desperation, extremism flourishes. (...) So, if you are fleeing France under the threat of an Islamic tsunami, urged by the rhetoric of Netanyahu and Liberman, save yourself the trouble. You are merely replacing one set of threats with another. (...)

Jonathan Zausmer, TOI, 11.01.14

Can Charlie Hebdo's spirit include Israel?

(...) Western leaders and media must realize that religious minorities in the Middle East are the canary in the coalmine for the West when it comes to Islamist threats. And Israel provides the clearest early warning of all, precisely because -- despite Israel's location in a region of Islamists and dictatorships -- the Jewish state has free elections, freedom of speech, a vigorous political opposition and independent press, equal rights and protections for minorities and women (...), and a prosperous free market economy. (...) when there is an attack in Europe, North America, or Australia, there is widespread grief, solidarity, and an acceptance of whatever policy reaction is chosen. But when Israel is targeted, there is almost always a call for "restraint," as happened last November after fatal stabbings by Palestinian terrorists in Tel Aviv and the West Bank. (...) Israel is still the country that everyone loves to hate. So it's the cheap way to please Muslim voters in Europe and oil producers in the Gulf. But what happens to Israel eventually comes to the West, because Israel is an extension of the West. And just as surrendering Czechoslovakia failed to appease the expansionist appetite and murderous rampage of Nazi totalitarianism, so too will feeding Israel to Islamist totalitarianism fail to appease that movement. In the end, there is no set of concessions -- short of civilizational surrender -- that the Islamists will accept. (...) Worse still, Europe's gestures of appeasement only encourage the Islamists. The best response to the Charlie Hebdo attack is to redouble the free expression Islamists meant to stifle. Similarly, the best response to Islamist attacks on the only Mideast democracy, Israel, is to increase support for it.

Noah Beck, JPO, 11.01.14

Bibi's vulgarity: Using the Paris shooting to justify Israeli colonialism

(...) Being the lofty expert in terrorism that he is, Israel's prime minister did not indulge in the regular

human reactions of shock, horror and sadness that typically accompany an incident like the one in Paris. Such gawky emotions are for lesser beings who don't grasp the big picture, as he does. Instead, Bibi took it upon himself to lecture France – and the rest of the world, while he was at it – about how to deal with Islamist terror; a prescription which seems to consist entirely of thinking as he does and supporting Israel, come hell or high water. (...) Why bring Israel into the equation? The Charlie Hebdo journalists died because, in the twisted logic of their killers, they had ridiculed the Muslim prophet. It's probably fair to assume that the killers are not members of their local France-Israel friendship association, but that their views on Israel had absolutely nothing to do with their murderous rampage on Wednesday. To make Israel the focal point, as Bibi did, is not only crass and vulgar; it testifies strikingly to the cognitive deficiencies of the man. His invariable reduction of the complexities of the Middle East and Islamist radicalism to Muslim hatred of Israel is beyond ludicrous. It's a salutary reminder of his mental befuddlement for the Israelis who will have to decide whether to retain his services in March. (...)

Roy Isacowitz, HAA, 08.01.14

Call for French aliyah: Fulfillment of Zionism or capitulation to terrorism?

The terrorist attacks in Paris, anti-Semitic and otherwise, have elicited widespread calls in Israel for French Jewry to come on mass aliyah. Such exhortations are in line with two well-established Zionist principles: negation of the Diaspora and Israel as a safe haven for persecuted and endangered Jews. It stands to reason that even without the electioneering that is so rampant these days, Prime Minister Netanyahu and other Israeli ministers would have portrayed emigration to Israel as a Zionist antidote for the anti-Semitism and atmosphere of fear that have developed in recent years in France, in particular, and in Europe, in general. Nonetheless, this instinctive reaction – perhaps Pavlovian is a better word – should give reason for pause and discomfort, even among the most ardent of Zionists. Because whether French Jews answer these calls by emigrating to Israel or whether they simply take the advice in principle and go somewhere else, in some ways this campaign is no more than blatant capitulation to terror. It gives its instigators a prize they could never have dreamed of: a frenzied flight of Jews, at best, or the complete elimination of Jewish presence in France, at worst. By encouraging mass emigration, Israeli politicians could very well be helping terrorist

fanatics finish the job started by the Nazis and their Vichy collaborators: making France Judenrein. (...) Israel might view the absorption of thousands of French Jews as a rescue operation that strengthens the Zionist enterprise, but the Islamic fanatics could draw the opposite conclusion: First we'll kick the Jews out of Paris, Berlin and London, they'll tell the Muslim world, then we'll take Tel Aviv, Haifa and Jerusalem. (...) On the one hand, Israel issued platitudes of solidarity with the French, but on the other its undermining message was clear: Paris is either unwilling or incapable of overcoming the Islamic terror and anti-Jewish forces that threaten it, and Jews should run for their lives. Just imagine the scandal that would have erupted after the 2002 massacre in the Park Hotel in Netanya, if a French politician would have told French citizens in Israel that it's time to come home, to their safe and sound birthplace. (...) There is nothing wrong with Israel promoting emigration, preferably out of choice and not out of fear, but this week was not the right time for such a campaign: the government should have seized the opportunity to strengthen the Jewish community in France, rather than weaken it.

Chemi Shalev, HAA, 11.01.14

Islam vs. West: An ongoing clash of civilizations

(...) The goal of the attack on the office of satirical weekly Charlie Hebdo was not to frighten newspaper editors so that they would not publish one cartoon or another. The goal was to show and prove who controls the streets and consciousness of the French Republic: The Western liberalism or the fanatical Islam. This is a clash of civilizations, not a gang's intimidation campaign. (...) In order to defeat the Islamic terror in Europe, it's not enough to invest in the security and intelligence services and train police officers so that they will at least know how to shoot. It must be countered with a clear alternative: The ethical liberal system, which is prepared to fight for its future with all its might, not to give up and not to capitulate. (...)

Sever Plocker, JED, 09.01.14

2. Vorgezogene Neuwahlen

Die für den 17. März 2015 angesetzten Wahlen zur Knesset rücken näher. Im Vorfeld waren Anfang des Monats die Mitglieder des Likud und der Avoda aufgefordert, ihre Kandidat_innen für die Knesset zu wählen. Parteivorsitzender Benyamin Netanyahu wurde mit rund 85% der Stimmen in seinem Amt bestätigt. Mehr noch als bei den letzten partei-

internen Wahlen im November 2012 wurden diesmal Politiker_innen, die die Zweistaatenlösung ablehnen, an die vorderen Listenplätze gereiht. Bei der Avoda hingegen wurde eine dem Friedensprozess und der sozialen Gerechtigkeit verpflichtete Liste gewählt mit drei Frauen unter den ersten zehn Plätzen und zwei Vertreter_innen der sozialen Protestbewegung unter den ersten fünf Plätzen.

Return of the true Likud

After being accused of losing control of the Likud party, and despite being ridiculed by the Left for allegedly allowing his party to fall prey to hardliners and radicals, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu proved Thursday that the Likud has a very obvious leader. Some may approve of the primaries' results and the list they shaped, and other might not be as happy, but one thing is clear: The Likud's Knesset list has been shaped in the image of its leader and represents "the return of the true Likud," as Netanyahu put it. Netanyahu fought to see candidates whose prospects were questionable, like Strategic Affairs Minister Yuval Steinitz and MKs Tzachi Hanegbi and Gila Gamliel, slated in realistic places on the list. The same was true for former MK Avi Dichter, who joined the Likud after leaving Kadima, and Defense Minister Moshe Ya'alon. The prime minister was able to achieve all of his goals. (...) Netanyahu does, however, face a problem when it comes to the representation of women on the Likud's list. The highest-placed woman on the list -- MK Miri Regev, in the fifth slot -- was not who he had hoped to see there, and the absence of women in realistic places is not something the ruling party can get away with. (...)

Mati Tuchfeld, IHY, 02.01.15

Between Begin and Netanyahu

(...) Begin -- the biggest democrat among Israel's prime ministers in the past four decades, and the modest of them all. He never forgot, not even for a second, that his first commitment was to serve all of Israel's citizens, without making any distinction between secular and religious, Jews and Arabs, his supporters and his opponents. (...) Unlike Begin, who managed to appeal to diverse audiences, the list led by Netanyahu marks fixation, obsolescence. While Bayit Yehudi Chairman Naftali Bennett continues to pursue and present to the voter a pan-Israeli list, rather than a list of the old National Religious Party -- in the Likud, which for several decades turned to the center of the public stage and aimed to take what we remember as the Liberal

Party under its wings, Netanyahu is focusing on only one issue: The settlements. In other words, the Likud has become a party which represents only one sector. No more talking about solving the housing crisis and an equal share of the burdens. There is one direction: Judea and Samaria. (...) I remember the excitement in the audience which gathered at Metzudat Ze'ev that night in 1977, when Begin asked his wife Aliza to join him on the podium for the victory moment. "I remember the devotion of your youth, your love for me as a bride, how you followed me into the wilderness, through a land sown with mines," he said in a paraphrase of a famous verse from the Book of Jeremiah. (...) They stood there without hair designers, without royalty etiquette from other places -- a couple which really walked the entire way, made the entire journey, together. (...)

Shimon Shiffer, JED, 02.01.15

Labor needs a defense guru

(...) The high number of females on its list will give Labor-Hatnuah a unique position in the general elections campaign. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu will be forced to put a woman in the reserved No. 11 spot on the Likud list, even if he had originally wanted to choose a man. With six women in the top 20 spots on the Labor-Hatnuah list, Labor leader Isaac Herzog may have enough females, but he still needs a defense guru, in addition to the admirable Omer Bar-Lev (6th on the list). Shaul Mofaz? Amos Yadlin? Yom-Tov Samia? Anything is possible. (...) Without an experienced military figure, the relevance and pretense of any political party are put into doubt. If Labor-Hatnuah does not find such a figure, it will have a weak case to make as it seeks to oust Likud from power. The Labor-Hatnuah list is fresh, young and has high female representation. But it also has weaknesses, as it lacks security credentials and various segments of the population, including new immigrants, are not represented. Other than Yachimovich, there are no prominent warriors against cartels and monopolies, even though Stav Shaffir and Itzik Shmuli have had some successes in this field. (...)

Dan Margalit, IHY, 15.01.15

The likable Labor list returns to the lies of the 1970s

(...) Topping the list is Isaac Herzog, whose second name is Mr. Nice Guy. A man with no enemies, of whom it is said that he's never quarreled with anyone or annoyed anyone. A good guy, in the bad sense of the word. Right behind him is Shelly Yaci-

movich. She, in contrast to Herzog, is not (always) so nice, and has no patience for all this occupation nonsense. She devotes her life to the struggle for social justice, but for Israelis only. This is a strange breed of left-wingers, espousing a nationalist social democracy, a local invention not seen elsewhere – the pursuit of justice halts at the Green Line. (...) The following candidate is Stav Shaffir, an impressive and determined young woman, also involved in the fight for social justice. Whereas Yacimovich once explained that a school built in the settlements would have been built in any case, Shaffir at least tries to oppose the scandalous funds pouring into the settlements. Shaffir's comrade in the social protest Itzik Shmuli is also not concerned with the occupation. He is the one most associated with "social" issues, to the exclusion of Palestinians. (...) Herzog talks of negotiations with the Palestinians that will last – get this – five years (!), which means five more years of photo-ops and building settlements. Herzog promises to freeze construction outside the large settlement blocs – wow! Earth-shattering news! However, the Etzion Bloc will remain ours forever and ever since it "protects Jerusalem." (...) There is not even one candidate who sees the struggle against the occupation as his or her flagship issue. Not a single one. There is not even one social-democrat candidate who will devote time and effort to resolve the fate of asylum seekers from Africa. (...)

Gideon Levy, HAA, 15.01.15

Spot the difference between the Zionist Camp and the right

(...) dear Palestinians, please remain silent: the "Zionist Camp" plans to take over the government. They've put the issue of the occupation into the deep freeze, stowed the settlements in the attic, and swept the borders under the carpet. Quiet, we're holding elections! Yet the intelligent Israeli peace-seeker can't help wondering. Let's assume the Zionist Camp is indeed elected to run the country. Who will guarantee that its leaders, Livni and Labor chairman Isaac Herzog, will agree to establish the Palestinian state? At the minute, it's not clear what they want; they are afraid to reveal their positions. (...) Is there a volunteer in the audience willing to explain to the leaders of the Zionist Camp that they are supposed to constitute the dovish alternative? Essentially, this has been the Labor Party's way throughout its history. (...) If it were about to rain, Arabs say, we would see clouds on the horizon. But at the minute, aside from the clouds of January,

there is nothing: No recognition of a Palestinian state; no drawing of borders; no freeze on settlement construction. Godot has already arrived, but we're still waiting for tidings from the Labor Party. And therefore, with great regret, we must say that the Zionist Camp is essentially no different from the right. Both of them act like speculators in the market, whose only goal is to gouge as many Palestinian rights as possible. But as is well known, an unjust peace is a recipe for the next war. (...) With a camp like this, prepare for a continuation of the occupation. All those who support peace should know that the battle has just begun.

Oudeh Basharat, HAA, 05.01.15

3. Beitritt Palästinas zum Internationalen Strafgerichtshof

Palästinenserpräsident Mahmoud Abbas beantragte die Aufnahme zum Internationalen Strafgerichtshof, um Israel wegen Verstößen gegen das Völkerrecht und Kriegsverbrechen zur Verantwortung ziehen zu können. Die Regierung in Jerusalem legte aus Unmut über diesen Schritt die Zoll- und Steuereinnahmen, die Israel laut Wirtschaftsabkommen im Namen der Palästinenser kassiert, auf Eis.

How Israel stands to lose at the ICC, without a single trial taking place

(...) The ICC is a court of last resort, and the prosecutor can only launch a preliminary examination (followed by a full criminal investigation) if Israel proves "unwilling or unable" to investigate itself. Israel could plausibly argue it had the ability and will to investigate its own alleged crimes – there are 13 investigations into Operation Protective Edge already underway – although its record of military investigation has been accused of falling far short of international legal standards. The occupation, however, could be put on trial. Jurists and international justice aficionados will happily dissect legal minutiae on this issue for years to come. (...) The mere prospect of an investigation by such a prestigious body serves as the ultimate delegitimation, Jerusalem's current bugbear. Unlike the United Nations, whose report on the summer's war is expected to be devastating, the ICC cannot be accused of having an anti-Israel agenda. After all, it has so far only brought African cases to trial. (...) The Zionist dream was about the Jews defending themselves. Israel is now permanently on the defensive, in a forum where its hard power no longer has much force.

Daniela Peled, HAA, 06.01.15

If Palestinians join ICC, Israel's actions may trigger court's jurisdiction

(...) The fact that the Palestinians are moving to join the court completely changes the situation. The prosecutor will now have to decide whether to treat Palestine as a state that can join the court — which is likely to happen. (...) Recognition of Palestine as a state and its joining the ICC can be interpreted as an extension of the court's jurisdiction over all Palestinian territory in the West Bank and Gaza. The scope of incidents in both places would make it harder to claim insufficient gravity. (...) It's still a long way before Israelis are prosecuted. The prosecutor may try to quash any attempts to deal with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict so as to avoid a collision course with the United States and certain European countries. On the other hand, all current cases are against Africans, so the prosecutors, which is currently considering some cases involving world powers such as the United States and Russia, may be eager to show the court does not only prosecute Africans. (...) The Israeli High Court's recent approval of punitive house demolitions reflects the gap between Israeli legal positions and international norms; such demolitions could be construed as war crimes. This is but one example of the risks posed by the Palestinians' move in recent days.
Aeyal Gross, HAA, 03.01.15

Abbas reaches a dead end

The Palestinian Authority's senior officials are banging at the doors of the international world and suing for recognition, despite the fact that the unilateral move against Israel violates the Oslo Accords. (...) The Palestinian Authority is at a dead end. Its attempt to foment a mini-intifada in Jerusalem and set the focus of a pan-Arab issue in Israel's capital did not work. There are rumors that Abbas' sons are rapidly selling their enormous assets. Could it be that the "rats will flee the sinking ship" first? There is little to envy about Abbas. The Palestinian problem has become moot and has long slipped into being a marginal nuisance in the region. The imaginary Palestinian refugees the Arab countries have absorbed have become a ludicrous historical anecdote, in light of the thousands of real refugees without a roof over the heads that escaped the massacres and tragedies in the Arab states.(...)
Dr. Reuven Berko. IHY, 08.01.14

PA has not done its homework

(...) From an international law perspective, analysis of Palestinian Authority's threats reveals that they

are likely hollow, although their intent and ability to hurt Israel is still real. It appears though that Palestinian Authority itself is not that well versed in international organizations. (...) But contrary to popular belief, the ICC in The Hague does not deal with the conviction or investigation of a nation's crimes and Mahmoud Abbas cannot "sue Israel." The ICC deals with cases and actions of individuals. (...) The Palestinians have yet another obstacle. The Hague sees itself as an authority of last resort. It is required to investigate only if the accused nation does not have a reliable legal system that can investigate itself with. Israel has such a body and the High Court has received international praise and recognition. The Palestinians would have to make great efforts to convince The Hague judges that Israel does not investigate its own behavior and it is doubtful whether these efforts will bear fruit, in light of the numerous internal investigations Israel conducts. In light of all the limitations, it looks like the Palestinians have a long way to go before -- if at all -- they succeed in suing Israeli officials. (...)
Omer Dostri, IHY, 05.01.14

Ya'alon must not interfere in Gaza war probe

Defense Minister Moshe Ya'alon seems to be exploiting his final days as defense minister to bolster his position both before the election and afterwards when ministerial portfolios are distributed. His fear of losing the defense post is the logical explanation for the crude message he sent to Israel Defense Forces Military Advocate General Maj. Gen. Danny Efroni not to open a criminal investigation into the events of "Black Friday" in Rafah during last summer's Operation Protective Edge, in which three soldiers and at least 130 Palestinians, most of them civilians, were killed in the IDF's efforts to thwart the abduction of an officer. (...) A real investigation of suspicions of criminal acts committed during the war, and above all the use of massive and disproportionate force that led to a high number of deaths, as on "Black Friday" in Rafah, is essential for the IDF and the State of Israel. Such a probe has the power to prevent international investigations, which will entangle Israel and the IDF in an "adventure" in international justice, the outcome of which is unpredictable. In addition, only by conducting such an investigation can the IDF draw the operational lessons necessary to prepare for the next rounds of fighting expected with Hamas and similar groups. A legal process free of pressure and vested interests is the difference between the defense forces of a democracy and the armed gangs that determine justice for themselves.

No one should understand this better than the defense minister.

Editorial, HAA, 11.01.15

The strategic failure of Operation Protective Edge

Operation Protective Edge sent Israel back to Gaza – big time. In the coming days, when the army summarizes the operation's lessons, it won't be able to ignore this outstanding strategic achievement that the IDF and political echelon served the state's citizens with as a gift for 2015.

The Egyptians are moving away from Gaza, while Israel is reconnecting to the Strip in an embrace which will lead us very soon back to the pre-disengagement days. (...) Only recently, different international bodies – including the US State Department – asked Israel to consider building a gas pipe to Gaza in order to provide a stable solution to the energy crisis. The water pipes in Gaza carry salty water. Selling drinking water from tankers is a profitable business in Gaza – there are several dozen domestic desalination facilities there, alongside three small governmental facilities. But most of the drinking water is supplied by Israel, which sends in 5 million cubes of water a year, and that amount is expected to be doubled. (...) The distress over the destruction left behind by Operation Protective Edge has created a 30% increase in the number of mass marches towards the fence and in the number of people jumping over the fence in search of work in Israel. (...)

Alex Fishman, JED, 06.01.14

4. Medienquerschnitt

Woher droht 2015 Gefahr für Israel

What strategic challenges does 2015 hold for Israel?

(...) On the Iranian front, the nuclear program has been frozen. The diplomatic process vis-à-vis the international community is still in a stalemate. (...) On the Palestinian front, another ambitious American attempt to solve the conflict failed, leaving the Israelis and the Palestinians in a status quo. (...) The battle against Hamas this past summer ended without a real military or political change either. So far, the fears of an intifada in the Palestinian Authority territories or in Jerusalem have also proved to be false. On the northern front, the bloody civil war in Syria has reached a strategic tie between the regime and the rebels. While Syrian President

Bashar Assad has tightened his grip on Damascus and the Alawite areas with the help of Russia, Iran and Hezbollah, the Kurds are in control of their area and the Sunnis are controlling wide areas as well through their different organizations. From an Israeli perspective, 2014 ended with the Golan Heights not serving as an active front against Israel, and there is no strategic threat from the global jihad in general and the Islamic State in particular. (...) On the Lebanese front, after seven quiet years vis-à-vis Hezbollah (...) we are seeing initial signs raising concerns of an escalation. (...) A greater risk is reflected from the PA's diplomatic moves in Europe and in the UN, which will likely lead to a significant diplomatic battle in 2015. (...) we must form a different, comprehensive and initiating policy and come up with new solutions for the challenges of the future.

Amos Yadlin, JED, 02.01.15

Handy-Firmen droht Bankrott

Israel's mobile carriers fear for their future

Senior cellular companies sources are warning of a severe crisis in the cellular sector this year, in which some of the companies may sink into a hopeless situation, and be unable to repay their debts. (...) The prices of Golan Telecom, HOT Mobile, (...) are pulling down the entire private market, but this sector, which is locked into long-term agreements, is seeing the gaps between what it is paying and the private market prices, and is demanding a renegotiation of its contracts. When a company refuses, the customer waits until the contract expires, and then switches to a competing company. In most cases, the cellular company gives in and reopens the contract. (...) In the bottom line, large business customers will demand the prices prevailing in the private market, and the result will be a steep drop in the companies' revenue. (...) Since the state has already signed, and no shareholder in the communications companies has the courage to say things clearly, because everyone is afraid that some Minister of Communications will attack them in return, the ball is in the employees' court, because it is their jobs that are at stake. It is fairly obvious that the management at these companies will demand to reopen agreements and to lay off additional workers, because there is no economic law enabling them to do otherwise. Can a new Minister of Communications do anything about it? Since it is clear that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu will not deal with this issue in the course of his duties as Minister of Communications, because he is busy with the

elections at the moment, it remains to wait for a new Minister of Communications, or a crisis created by the workers. The problem is that as it stands now, laying off employees will not be enough. It will get much worse before it gets better.

Gad Perez, GLO, 07.01.14

Keine Heizung für afrikanische Flüchtlinge

In Israel's sinful prison, the innocent are freezing

If ever there was an expression of the State of Israel's dehumanization of the asylum seekers taking refuge here, or further proof that the Holot detention facility cannot meet the needs of those living there but is simply a jail whose inmates are subject to the whims of their jailers, the recent winter storm certainly illustrated this. While people all over the country were trying to keep themselves and their homes warm, the inmates at Holot were banned from bringing heaters into their rooms, and forced to protect themselves from the extreme cold using layers of clothing and blankets. Most of them simply stayed in bed, using their body heat to keep warm. All this because the Israel Prison Service, which is responsible for operating the facility, argued that it was not possible to bring heaters into the rooms because they posed a fire hazard and that there were heated areas for the residents. (...) Even given the policy of alienation and routine insensitivity that the state demonstrates toward these people, it's hard to understand how human beings – after seeing the physical suffering in Holot during the freezing weather – wouldn't do everything possible to prevent or relieve that suffering. (...) Holot is a prison erected in sin that deprives innocent people of their freedom, without due process. The asylum seekers do not have "appropriate living conditions," as the government argues. The recent storm proves once again that Holot must be dismantled and its 2,200 inmates released.

Editorial, HAA, 12.01.15

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