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**Die Themen dieser Ausgabe**

1. Die drusische Gemeinschaft in Israel bangt um das Schicksal der Drusen in Syrien .....	1
2. Michael Oren kritisiert Obama.....	2
3. Kulturstreit.....	4
4. Medienquerschnitt.....	6

**1. Die drusische Gemeinschaft in Israel bangt um das Schicksal der Drusen in Syrien**

*Die in Israel lebenden Drusen sorgen sich um das Schicksal ihrer Glaubensbrüder und -schwestern in Syrien. Vier Jahre lang hielt sich die Religionsgemeinschaft aus dem syrischen Bürgerkrieg heraus, bis Milizen der Nusra-Front in der syrischen Provinz Idlib ein Blutbad anrichteten und mindestens 20 Drusen töteten. Demonstranten auf den Golanhöhen riefen dazu auf, die syrischen Drusen im Kampf gegen die Islamisten zu unterstützen. Aus Zorn darüber, dass, wie sie behaupten, verletzte Rebellen der Nusra-Front in israelischen Krankenhäusern behandelt werden, stoppten aufgebrachte Drusen an der Grenze einen Krankenwagen und lynchten den hilflosen Mann.*

**Blood covenant**

The Druse are in danger and Israel has an obligation to help them. (...) The Druse population in Israel – not including the Druse who live on the Golan Heights – have consistently been loyal to Israel. (...) The Druse, bitterly aware of what it means to be a persecuted religious minority, seem themselves as having a “blood covenant” with the Jews of Israel. (...) Those Druse in Syria and Lebanon who remain antagonistic toward Israel do so more out of a need for self-preservation than an identification with the anti-Semitism that surrounds them in much of the Muslim world. (...) As an embattled religious minori-

ty living in the Middle East, the Jews of Israel are the natural allies of other groups such as Yazidis, Kurds, Baha’is, and Christians. But the ties between the Druse and Israel are unique and strong. Perhaps one day after the complete disintegration of Syria, a Druse state or autonomous region will be created after previous attempts in 1921 and in 1967 failed. Such a state, which Israel should help to create, would be a natural ally. (...) Israel has an obligation to use all means at its disposal to protect Druse from murderous extremist Muslims. We must remember that, if not for the Jewish state’s military might, augmented by the contribution of the Druse, these same fanatics, given the chance, would treat Jews no better (...).

Editorial, JPO, 18.06.15

**Quiet in the Golan, for now**

The IDF was forced on Wednesday to respond to media reports of major drama taking place just across the border in the Golan Heights. The border is quiet, IDF officials explained, and there is no real danger to the Druse in Syria, so hysteria is not necessary. It would have been better, however, if the words “for now” had been added to the end of these statements. (...) Events in Syria are driven by their own dynamics, and they may develop in ways different from what Israeli officials expect (...). The IDF knows the situation could change rapidly, and it is making the requisite preparations. While the State

of Israel has a blood covenant with its own Druze community, it does not plan to absorb thousands of Druze refugees from Syria. Yet the IDF's public commitment to preventing the massacre of Syrian Druze could leave Israel facing a dilemma, as Israeli Druze increase the pressure on the Israeli government to help their brethren across the border. (...) Israel's overriding aim must remain as it has been -- to avoid, as much as possible, getting drawn into the Syrian civil war.

Yoav Limor, IHY, 18.06.15

### **It's Druze's duty to stand by their brothers**

After visiting the concentration camps in Poland and seeing from close up the brutality in which the Nazis executed millions of Jews while the world's countries stood idly by, I swore to myself that I would never forgive, never forget and never let it happen again – no matter who we are talking about. As a Druze living in Israel, I see this state as my home and as an inseparable part of me. (...) The radical Islamic organizations participating in the civil war in Syria are working for ethnic cleansing: They are far off from Islam. But radical organization like the Islamic State and Jabhat al-Nusra have already reached both sides of the Mountain of the Druze and are waiting for the right time to attack (...). I ask myself: Is it possible that Israel, the state of the nation which saw six million of its members annihilated by the Nazis while the world's countries didn't lift a finger to save them, will stand idly by? The members of the Druze community have fought and died for Israel's security. Will Israel not intervene to save our brothers? (...) Israel will have to act one way or another in light of the possible massacre of our Druze brothers. It can transfer the Druze weapons, medical equipment and everything needed to ward off the Islamists. (...) Standing by our brothers in Syria is our duty. If a person has failed to find something he is willing to die for, he is not fit to live. And if we don't die for our brothers, who will we die for?

Kamil Wahabi, JED, 18.06.15

### **How far will Israel go to protect Syria's Druze?**

(...) For months, the leaders of Israel's Druze community have been expressing their concerns about what may happen in Khader and Jabel Druze to Israel's leaders. The position of Netanyahu's government is clear: Israel will not send military forces to Jabel Druze, far from its border, but it has appealed to the United States with a request to help the Druze living there, along with aid provided by Jordan. The (...) long-standing obligation to pre-

serve the "blood alliance" between the state and its Druze citizens, which led to thousands of Druze men serving in Israel's security forces, is on a collision course with Israel's strategy of minimal intervention. This includes a low-profile policy of assisting civilians near the border, but not direct involvement in fighting taking place inside a neighboring country.(...)

Amos Harel, HAA, 18.06.15

### **The good Druze and the bad Druze**

The brutal lynch of wounded Syrian rebels (...) paints a bleak picture of the absence of rule of law and raises a troubling question: How can an angry mob succeed in preventing a life-saving activity – and even murdering and hurting injured people (...) The leaders of Israel's Druze community should gain control of the extremists among them, and the Israel Police should impose order not only on the streets of Tel Aviv – but also on the Golan Heights roads. Israel's citizens should welcome the fact that the IDF evacuates wounded regardless of their religion. (...) Only a month ago, the IDF thwarted an attempt by terrorists to plant explosive devices on the Golan border – and all these terrorists had been sent by Hezbollah from the Druze village of Khader. (...) The Druze are only hurting themselves by trying to present this village as a stronghold of fighters for justice. This is a village which generously hosts Hezbollah members and Syrian President Bashar Assad's soldiers. (...) despite the huge suffering experienced by Syria's residents since the civil war began, quite a few of them are Israel haters.

Yossi Yehoshua, JED, 24.06.15

## **2. Michael Oren kritisiert Obama**

*Michael Oren, ehemals israelischer Botschafter in Washington, stellt in seinem jüngst erschienenen Buch über die Beziehungen zwischen Jerusalem und Washington die These auf, US-Präsident Barack Obama habe Israel den Rücken gekehrt und „Grundprinzipien“ der bilateralen Beziehungen aufgegeben. Dazu gehöre die Regel, Auseinandersetzungen „niemals bei Tage“ zu führen und „Überraschungen“ bei für den Verbündeten relevanten Entscheidungen zu vermeiden. Als Höhepunkt bezeichnet Oren die veränderte Haltung Washingtons gegenüber Iran und Obamas Bereitschaft, mit „Israels schlimmstem Feind“ zu verhandeln. Oren spekuliert ferner über die Motive Obamas, die er in der Kindheit des US-Präsidenten vermutet und der Tatsache, dass sein muslimischer Vater die Mutter verlassen habe.*

### **Blowback from the Oren revelations**

(...) Ambassador to the U.S. Michael Oren's evaluation of the Obama administration (...) created enormous anxiety, and polarized a situation within the American Jewish community. (...) Oren made it clear that Obama maintained and even strengthened the defense relationship with Israel. But (...) it was Obama who deliberately acted to weaken and "jettison" the relationship. Oren cites chapter and verse of Obama's humiliation of Netanyahu and his double standards in continuing to condemn Israel and not even once confronting the PA and Abbas, thus reinforcing Palestinian extremism and encouraging their intransigence and refusal to compromise. (...) He notes that Obama does not even accuse those who perpetrated the murderous attack on the kosher delicatessen in Paris of engaging in anti-Semitism (...). Oren speculates that Obama's abandonment by his mother's Muslim husbands prompted him in his later life to seek acceptance from their co-religionists. The response from the administration was, predictably, one of outrage. (...) Netanyahu has been treated far more shabbily by Obama and his administration than any leader of a rogue state. (...) However, at no stage did we hear any repudiation by Obama of these constant vile attacks on a purported ally. (...) The greatest impact, which has yet to be fully assessed, is within the Jewish community. Oren does not mince words about his abhorrence with the manner in which certain Jewish "liberals" in the administration and media (...). I predict that when the dust settles, nothing will change with the far-Left liberals whose veneration of Obama is almost messianic. But among more open-minded pro-Israel Democrats, Oren is likely to have a profound impact and will hopefully encourage some of them to review their position. The conservatives will of course claim that they were always on the right side of the angels, and that Oren is merely stating what they have been saying for years. (...)

Isi Leibler, IHY, 24.06.15

### **Center Field: Michael Oren versus Obama and Obamerica: A damage assessment**

(...) Ambassador Oren, who represented Israel in Washington from 2009 to 2013, skillfully brings readers inside the rooms where decisions are made, inside the studios where images are shaped, and inside the Israeli and American mentalities where this critical relationship plays out. (...) Oren knows better than his critics that American presidents have

squabbled with Israel before. But after two decades of warm if occasionally contentious Clinton-Bush bonding, Oren charges that Obama has "abandoned" Israel by being so harsh. (...) Oren breached the Obama Omerta, enforced by Obama's ruthless, accept-no-criticism loyalists. Never forget that beneath Obama's Harvard- Hawaii veneer lies a Chicago pol. The cult of Obama has his supporters in a polarized America caricaturing any criticisms as a Fox News, implicitly racist assault on Obama and his multicultural rainbow "Obamerica." (...) I believe Michael Oren is sufficiently terrified by the pending Iran deal – which Obama seems more anxious to close than the ayatollahs – that he sounded the alarm, aware he was risking his diplomatic future. (...) Obama and his comrades cannot (...) call Netanyahu "chickenshit" then deny any tensions exist. (...)

Gil Troy, JPO, 30.06.15

### **With an ally like Oren...**

I'm guessing Michael Oren's recent assaults on President Barack Obama stem from his spell at Kibbutz Gan Shmuel. At 16, Oren was rejected by kibbutz girls who saw him as a weakling Diaspora Jew. He's still trying to show them how wrong they were by attacking the leader of the biggest superpower. Pop psychology? Of course. Just like Oren's. (...) According to Oren, both Obama and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu are responsible for the rift that developed between the United States and Israel. But only one of them is to blame. (...) Obama broke a long-standing principle that has governed U.S.-Israel relations for years: One doesn't publicly air any disputes. What a scoundrel! (...) Obama announced a new U.S. policy that supports the establishment of a Palestinian state along the 1967 borders with an exchange of territory, including a freeze on construction in the West Bank. This is an amazing claim. First of all, Oren seems to think everything is personal. Is it unthinkable that Obama would consider this to be an American and Israeli interest? Secondly, is it possible that Oren hasn't heard of the Clinton parameters laid out in 2000? They include a Palestinian state within the 1967 borders with exchanges of territory. (...) I'm not sure to what extent Obama managed to heal wounds inflicted on him by a father's abandonment by exhibiting sycophantic behavior toward Islam. But I can tell Oren I called the only female kibbutz member I know in Gan Shmuel, and she told me that, in her view, it's very macho for an Israeli politician to

insult an American president – macho in the sense of being very dumb.

Raviv Drucker, HAA, 28.06.15

### **Michael Oren's baseless anti-Obama articles**

(...) Oren is today a Knesset member on behalf of the Kulanu faction. The things he wrote about Obama were so unusual in their style, so blatant, that his party leader, Finance Minister Moshe Kahlon, felt the need to apologize for them in a letter to the American ambassador to Israel. (...) Some of Oren's colleagues, in Jerusalem and in Washington, thought that he had gone mad; others estimated that he is trying to sell his new book this way. The scandal will likely pave his way to embracing interviews in right-wing radio and television channels in America. (...) The psychological descriptions of the mental affiliation that Obama developed to Islam as a child could have just as easily described an opposite Obama policy. The argument that all of Netanyahu's errors stem from good faith and that all of Obama's errors are intentional is not in line with the facts. Oren should know that. (...) His articles are baseless not only on the factual side. They are baseless in understanding history. (...) Obama believed that distancing himself somewhat from Israel's policy, while boosting the security aid and continuing the diplomatic support, would allow him to achieve the peace he and Israel have been hoping for. (...) Netanyahu had different plans; Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas had different plans. The responsibility for the failure is divided between the three of them. We, as Israelis, should demand responsibility first of all from our prime minister.

Nahum Barnea, JED, 23.06.15

### **Michael Oren's wildly unconvincing, deeply trivial attack on Obama**

(...) in what way has Obama abandoned Israel? By eliminating or even reducing military aid? No. (...) By withdrawing diplomatic support? No. The Obama administration has so far not only vetoed every United Nations resolution critical of Israel, it has expended enormous energy pressuring other countries to oppose them. In 2011, when Mahmoud Abbas was seeking UN approval for a Palestinian state, a source close to the White House told me that he personally lobbied 150 foreign diplomats against the Palestinian bid. "Sometimes," he mused, "I feel like I work for the Israeli government." (...) U.S. presidents had been supporting the two-state solution for a decade, and Obama had repeatedly endorsed that view himself. The United States had

opposed settlement building for even longer, and Obama's predecessor, George W. Bush, had pushed for a settlement freeze as part of the road map in 2003. (...) Oren's argument isn't just unconvincing; it's trivial. Yes, it's preferable to give allies due warning and to keep disputes private if that makes them easier to resolve. But these procedural issues don't lie at the heart of the Obama-Netanyahu conflict. At its core, the conflict is about substance. Obama supports a Palestinian state along the 1967 lines, with land swaps; Netanyahu does not. Obama supports a nuclear deal that allows Iran to maintain some nuclear infrastructure; Netanyahu believes that continued sanctions and the threat of war can make Tehran capitulate completely. (...)

Peter Beinart, HAA, 17.06.15

### **3. Kulturstreit**

*In der Kontroverse über die staatliche Förderung kultureller Institutionen und Veranstaltungen, die politisch umstritten sind, verschärften Kulturschaffende und Politiker den Umgangston. Der Streit begann, als Israels Kultur- und Sportministerin Miri Regev (Likud) einem jüdisch-arabischen Theater zugesagte Subventionen strich. Einem arabischen Theater in Haifa drohen ähnliche Sanktionen. Die Grenzen der freien Meinungsäußerung bekamen schließlich auch die Veranstalter der Jerusalemer Filmfestspiele zu spüren, als Regev ultimativ forderte, eine Dokumentation über Yigal Amir, den Mörder des früheren Regierungschefs Yitzhak Rabin, aus dem Programm zu streichen.*

### **The herd mentality of Israeli artists**

(...) Oded Kotler and his ilk don't represent Israel's artists, but they do set the tone. They've grown accustomed by now to the notion that the power of expression is their private monopoly. And God forbid anyone else should dare to claim that he, too, has something to say. They will brand him an enemy, a beast, a fascist. No, we're not dealing here with rebels, but with a bunch of spoiled brats who've grown accustomed to the pleasures that come with power. (...) Some of those at the convention earn 10 times the minimum wage – at the expense of the state of course. Yet they are the ones who are branding the minimum-wage earners beasts. When it comes to rebellions, we've never seen the like of this one – an Israeli-made bluff of the most shameful proportions. (...) In an interview with Israel Radio, Prof. Nissim Calderon argued that democratic states

don't intervene in cultural content. Calderon is right. Democratic states also fund critical cultural performances. And that's how it should be. No one in a democracy, however, requests funding for shows that glorify terrorists, or turns a murderer, from al-Qaeda or the Taliban, into a "political prisoner." (...) Ben-Dror Yemini, JED, 19.06.15

### **Let culture decide the culture war**

(...) Artists, politicians, psychologists and journalists are among the protagonists in this ongoing Israeli Kulturkampf, and they should continue fighting so long as their vocal cords are intact. Ultimately, it all boils down to two bad options: to censor productions such as "Jenin, Jenin" -- the controversial Mohammad Bakri movie alleging an Israeli massacre in Jenin -- or to side with artistic freedom, even if this means letting them spread their lies. In 1994, when the Motti Lerner play "Kastner," about Hungarian-Jewish leader Rudolf Kastner, was made into a television docudrama, the High Court of Justice rejected a petition to take out a segment that cast the famed Jewish paratrooper Hannah Szenes in an embarrassing light. The principle of artistic freedom prevailed. After the court handed down its ruling, Supreme Court President Aharon Barak made a personal appeal to Lerner, asking him whether he would agree to take out the controversial part and he agreed. This case was resolved in exemplary fashion. (...) Regev's actions are unwarranted. Ultimately, the proper place to handle such lies and falsities is in the media, the coffee shops, and the theaters themselves. Politicians should not decide their fate through some administrative fiat. (...)

Dan Margalit, IHY, 16.06.15

### **Censoring of documentary on Rabin's murderer shows entire nation lost its marbles**

(...) What, for God's sake, is the connection between freedom of expression and "Beyond the Fear," a documentary about the assassin of Yitzhak Rabin? (...) Sane societies seek to examine themselves and understand their pains and violence and traumas, in part through the arts. The really interesting question is how it came to be that no such film about Yigal Amir had been made thus far. How is it that Rabin's murder in 1995, which changed the course of history in Israel, and the murderer himself, are barely of interest to those engaged in art, film and literature here? (...) There has never been such a broad Israeli consensus. The only conclusion that can be reached, as a result, is that this consensus is hiding precisely the opposite -- that is, the deepest

possible fissure in society. (...) The desire to silence the film "Beyond the Fear" and not learn about the assassin is simply to go on denying the political nature of the murder. Amir is a political murderer, a dedicated soldier who gave his life for the political ideas that he believed in and still does. He is not, as those who deny the political nature of the murder have tried to portray it, some renegade or crazy. He is an educated man, a loving father and devoted husband. Anyone who refuses to see or let others see Amir's human side wishes to divorce him from the context in which he acted, and prefers to think that he represents only himself -- that he did not act on behalf of a well-formed worldview that is subscribed to by about half of Israeli society. Culture and Sports Minister Miri Regev, who came out against the film, is a scapegoat attracting Israeli society's pathology, but her overbearing behavior is turning her into almost a caricature of a fascist, expresses a healthy insistence on shifting the pathology right back at the doorstep of society. Thanks to her, perhaps, what has been denied will finally be brought to the surface and elaborated. It's possible that the culture war that she opened up is actually an opportunity to prevent a civil war. (...)

Carolina Landmann, HAA, 19.06.15

### **Artists' rights and theaters' duty**

(...) Let's assume that the Foreign Ministry (...) organizes a major conference for Israelis who permanently reside in Europe in order to recruit them to the PR campaign against the boycott which is currently troubling Israel. And as part of this conference, the Foreign Ministry includes an Israeli play in the program in order to encourage the Israelis and strengthen their connection to the state. And let's assume that one of the actors announces that he refuses to perform in front of "emigrants" due to the extra patriotism surging within him, and that this actor just happens to be the manager of a small children's theater which is funded by the Culture Ministry. Would the Culture Ministry cancel his theater's funding because its manager is a "ardent Zionist" who refuses to perform in front of "emigrants"? Probably not. It would likely even increase the funding. (...) So the fact that the culture minister decided to take revenge against the children's theater run by Norman Issa in Jaffa just because he refused to perform in front of settlers in the Jordan Valley shows us that it's not the actual refusal which led to the decision. There is a refusal she accepts from an ideological perspective and maybe even welcomes, and there is a refusal she punishes for from an ideo-

logical perspective. And this is something she has no legal authority to do, and that's what the protest was about – and rightfully so. An artist has every right, like any other citizen, to avoid doing something according to his conscience, apart from what the law binds him to do like all other citizens. But the Culture Ministry is authorized to cancel governmental funding to a theater which refuses to perform in front of a certain Israeli audience for ideological reasons. For example, if a religious or Hasidic theater is invited to perform in a club of an LGBT community with Israeli members, and the theater refuses to perform in front of that club, the Culture Ministry must cancel or cut the funding of that religious or Hasidic theater. (...) a theater which receives governmental funding cannot boycott a certain Israeli audience unless it gave up the funding in advance.

A.B. Yehoshua, JED, 20.06.16

#### 4. Medienquerschnitt

##### UN-Menschenrechtsrat untersucht Gaza-Krieg

###### The UN Council for the Encouragement of Terrorism

(...) Objectivity has never been the UNHRC's strong suit, as it seems obsessed with Israel. (...) Try telling the authors of the report that in Israel missiles protect civilians, while in Gaza civilians protect the missiles. Try explaining to the writers and to the "citizens of the world" that if it weren't for the stringent rules of engagement imposed on our pilots and soldiers, then according to the number of airstrikes and Hamas' use of human shields, the casualty figures would have been exponentially higher. (...) The most damaging aspect of the report is that if the world today no longer allows Israel to win wars unequivocally (...), then its writers are essentially preventing Israel from fighting or even just defending itself. However, the glass was half full this time. Firstly, the Palestinians were also held culpable for what transpired. They fired indiscriminately, executed collaborators, built tunnels that traumatized Israel's civilian population. In other words, not everyone in Gaza is a saint. (...) What will the world ultimately remember from the latest report? That Israel committed war crimes and killed 500 children. And we will yet again see that not only are we not expected to win, we are not even allowed to defend ourselves. (...)

Boaz Bismuth, IHY, 23.06.15

##### Israel should have cooperated with Gaza inquiry

(...) The latest UN report makes a clear reference to the "inherently indiscriminate nature" of these bombardments. During the course of the war, the Palestinians fired 4,881 rockets at Israel, causing death and destruction. (...) The UN report also points out, correctly, that Palestinian factions in Gaza "put Gazans in danger" by firing projectiles from "densely populated areas." By doing so, Hamas and its allies committed war crimes. (...) Hamas cynically adopted a "human shield" policy, knowing full well that Israel would be condemned for killing innocent civilians. (...) Given these facts, it's hard to understand why Israel refused to cooperate with the UN inquiry. (...) the Israeli case for responding to Hamas aggression might have been stronger had Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu invited members of the UN commission to Israel and given them full access to political leaders, army commanders and pertinent files. (...) The International Criminal Court, which the Palestinians have joined, is reportedly planning to issue a report on the war. In its own best interests, Israel should offer to cooperate with this important and influential body.

Sheldon Kirshner, TOI, 23.06.15

##### Streit um Rahmenvertrag für die Gasgewinnung

###### Politics trumps consumerism on natural gas

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is not trying to fool us when he warns us that Israel's natural gas will be left in the ground if no agreement is signed with the gas companies. He really believes it. Netanyahu knows of more than a few examples of countries who drove international companies away from their gas fields, only to beg them to return. (...) Noble Energy has a lot to lose here. (...) Noble Energy, a respectable public company, will find it hard to explain to its shareholders why it is apparently violating this agreement - if someone in the government only bothers to make this argument. It is also possible that Noble Energy is playing for time. (...) It is very possible that Noble Energy has an interest in delaying its plans until gas prices recover. Is the government aware of these possibilities? Netanyahu's order to conclude the negotiations within a month proves that none of this interests him at all. He is unwilling to take a chance, and is hoping with all his might that the Leviathan reservoir is developed. Not just to satisfy the Republican senators in the US calling him up to plead Noble Energy's case, and not just to ensure additional sources of supply for the economy and billions in tax reve-

nues for the state treasury. Netanyahu desires gas as a geopolitical card that he can use in his contacts with rulers in the vicinity. Is King Abdullah mad at us? Let's see how we can help him with gas - the Jordanian Electric Power Company really needs it. Does el-Sisi want to talk about cooperation? Maybe we'll get together and sell gas to the Europeans. Do the Turks want Iranian gas? What for? It's much better for them to buy Israeli gas. In Netanyahu's great game, there's no room for the little gas consumer.

Amiram Barkat, GLO, 17.06.15

### **Why Netanyahu's natural gas deal makes sense**

(...) So many lies have been told about the gas issue that your head starts to spin. "The government surrendered the whole way," say the social activists – and that is a lie. The government doubled the tax rates on the natural gas companies (...), retroactively, after they had already found gas in the Mediterranean – and that is an unprecedented act in terms of its breadth. (...) "The framework perpetuates the monopoly," claim those same socially aware people – and that is a lie, too. The framework dismantles the monopoly – not perfectly, but it dismantles it. (...) There will be three players competing among themselves, and then the price will fall, and the service will improve. The social activists claim that the price of gas needs to be \$3 per thermal unit and not \$5.40, because "that is the world price." Another lie. There is no world price for natural gas. There is only a local price, which depends on the production costs and local supply and demand. (...) It is true that the gas framework is not perfect. There is no such thing. But it is an agreement that is the best in the present circumstances. It will bring billions of shekels into the country's coffers, from royalty payments and taxes. It is good for industry and good for the citizens. We must not allow the social activists turn us into Venezuela and Egypt.

Nehemia Shtrasler, HAA, 29.06.15

### **Gaza-Flotille**

#### **Block the flotilla of terror**

(...) As part of the effort to gain international support, Israel should show a degree of leniency in negotiating the future of the flotilla. For instance, unlike it the previous case, when Israel demanded to inspect the cargo at Ashdod port and only afterward ship it to Gaza, perhaps it could offer to conduct the inspection at sea, supervised by Egyptian and European representatives. But Israel must prepare itself for a

worst-case scenario in which small boats manage to reach the Gaza shore in a blatant effort to instigate a violent confrontation. Joint Arab List MK Basel Ghattas has told Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that he will be joining the new Gaza-bound flotilla. (...) Ghattas' statement comes as no surprise as he belongs to Balad, the radical faction of the Joint Arab List, of which his fellow MK Hanin Zoabi, who was on board the Mavi Marmara in 2010, is also a member. (...) it should be made clear to Ghattas and his ilk that the MK card in his pocket will not serve as legal protection if and when Israel decides to prosecute him. (...) Ghattas will be punished to the fullest extent of the law. If, God forbid, the flotilla ends in a confrontation, Ghattas had better not follow in Zoabi's footsteps. (...)

Dan Margalit, IHY, 22.06.15

### **Ghattas's mission**

(...) Ghattas thumbs his nose insolently at the state to which he owes at least a modicum of loyalty and whose taxpayers bankroll his parliamentary presumptuousness. (...) Like its predecessor, the current scenario is scripted as a deliberate provocation from which Israel cannot emerge unscathed. The choices before Israel are mostly bad. Letting the boats into Gaza would effectively break Israel's own very justified and vital blockade of the terrorist fiefdom. This would mean flinging open the gates to unrestricted imports of weaponry and strategic construction supplies. (...) The ideal solution is to somehow stop the boats, preferably before they depart their last port of call in Greece. (...) the flotilla's agenda (...) isn't (...) to bring humanitarian aid to purportedly besieged civilians. (...) Israel sends massive amounts of foodstuffs, medications and even cement into Gaza (...). From its outset, the flotilla was intended for one purpose only: to goad Israel into confrontation – and any sort of confrontation is a win-win proposition for the organizers, regardless of the eventual outcome. As in the Mavi Marmara precedent, the provocateurs are out to net lucrative propaganda profits. (...) Ghattas is a fitting understudy for Zoabi, famous for his in-your-face vituperation of Israel on any issue. (... (...)) If he is allowed to get away with his brazen abrasiveness and vitriolic defiance of this country's most basic interests, Israel would in fact be demonstrating its official failure of nerve. (...) Our very rule of law is at stake.

Editorial, JPO, 24.06.15

## **Brandanschlag auf Brotverteilungskirche**

### **Till when will Israel let its churches and mosques be burnt?**

The torching of the Church of the Multiplication of the Loaves and Fish at Tabgha (...) is the 18th arson attack on a church or mosque over the past four years. Not one of these cases has been solved, none of the perpetrators identified and, obviously, no one charged for the offenses. (...) Protecting the freedom of worship is one of the basic universal precepts included in all international treaties and constitutions, making up a central feature of cultural identity. (...) Legislation against damaging holy sites is crystal clear in Israel. (...) What did Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu actually broadcast to the public after the latest torching? That he had instructed the head of the Shin Bet security service to accelerate the investigation to find the perpetrators. Does this mean that defacing religious institutions was not on the Shin Bet's agenda until now? Can one also conclude that locating the perpetrators of anti-Arab hate crimes is not a focus of its attention? (...) The government of Israel, rightfully, wouldn't have ignored the torching of synagogues, the destruction of tombstones in Jewish cemeteries or assaults against Jews in other countries if governments were lax in investigating such crimes. Now, it must show determination to uproot such hate crimes from areas under its jurisdiction, defining perpetrators as terrorists who endanger Israel's security, no less than those who send car bombs into city centers.

Editorial, HAA, 21.06.15

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JPO = Jerusalem Post  
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