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**1. Iran-Abkommen**

*Benjamin Netanyahu kündigte infolge des Iran-Abkommens an, den Kampf gegen die Aufhebung der Sanktionen fortzusetzen. Der israelische Ministerpräsident sprach von einem „schlimmen historischen Fehler“. Insbesondere wird auf israelischer Seite kritisiert, dass die tatkräftige Unterstützung von Terrororganisationen durch den Iran im Rahmen des Abkommens keinerlei Erwähnung findet und der Iran dadurch international politisch rehabilitiert wird, ohne den Weg des Terrors verlassen zu haben. Das Abkommen sollte sicherstellen, dass der Iran das Nuklearprogramm nur zivil und nicht für den Bau von Atombomben nutzt. Insgesamt bleibt die nukleare Infrastruktur weitgehend intakt. Allerdings verpflichtete sich Teheran dazu, den Vorrat an angereichertem Uran sowie die Zahl der Zentrifugen zu verringern. Im Gegenzug sollen stufenweise die Wirtschafts-sanktionen und Handelsbeschränkungen gelockert werden.*

**The agreement of the brave**

Obama (...) presented the characteristics of a global reconciliation. (...) He opened the clenched fist and extended a broad hand. He was both generous and cruel towards Iran. The most serious sanctions were imposed by his administration, and the biggest promises to the Iranian regime were given during his era. (...) The agreement isn't perfect, but it contains

a great promise of calm. (...) And that will be the next stage: The US is already planning student exchange agreements with Iran, tourism, new deals, partnerships in areas of culture and knowledge. Different winds began blowing between Washington and Tehran on Tuesday. Not like the storm raging in the Obama-Netanyahu relationship, a storm which is blowing the most important component in Israel's national security – its relationship with America – in every direction. (...) Israel will pay the price through its isolation. Even when Obama goes home, it's uncertain that a Republican president will be elected to replace him, as Netanyahu hopes. And even if a Republican president is elected, the agreement with Iran is almost an established fact. The agreement of the brave.

Orly Azoulay, JED, 15.05.15

**Israel will survive nuclear deal**

(...) The agreement's different sections deal with two issues, and with these two issues only: Nukes and sanctions. But their ramifications are immeasurably wide. It's not by chance that the global media rushed to refer to the agreement as "historic": Way beyond the nuclear issue, it marks a possible turning point in the balance of power in the Middle East, in Iran's diplomatic and economic – and perhaps military – standing and in its relations with the international community, and first of all with the United States. (...) Netanyahu would have preferred an American military operation, which would have destroyed the

nuclear facilities along with large parts of Iran. (...) The battle against Obama carries a troubling price. It has to do with the compensation package the defense establishment expects to rightfully receive from America. (...)

Nahum Barnea, JED, 15.07.15

### **Iran deal puts military option back on table**

At the end of the day, the success of the agreement signed on Tuesday in Vienna depends on the goodwill of the Iranian leadership, which is notoriously untrustworthy. Israel should therefore take the necessary precautions and prepare for an Iranian violation of the agreement. (...) From Israel's point of view, the (...) government will now have to decide whether or not to attack Iran if and when the ayatollahs decide to make a break for a nuclear weapon. (...) The deal only delays the process, in the best of circumstances for 10 years or more, in the worst of circumstance for one or two years. (...) Already today, Iran is a threshold state, capable of enriching uranium to the level required for developing a warhead two-three months down the line. (...)

Ron Ben-Yishai, JED, 15.07.15

### **The day Obama awarded Iran hegemony in the Middle East**

(...) US President Barack Obama and Secretary of State John Kerry essentially determined the future of the Middle East, and established Iran's hegemony in the region at the expense of Saudi Arabia and the Sunni world. Rouhani and Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Khomeinei, who approved the accord, understood that they didn't need to get the bomb in order to become the key regional power. It would be enough to become a nuclear threshold state with billions of additional dollars at its disposal and to achieve greater influence in the Middle East. (...) this accord (...) has determined the result of the Sunni-Shiite struggle (...). For several years now, countries such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and the Gulf States have been struggling against Islamic extremism from the likes of Al Qaida and the Islamic State on the one hand, and the Iranian Shiite axis on the other. Now that struggle will become far more complicated. Iran emerges from this accord strengthened, stable and with endless resources that will be directed to weaken those countries by every means possible. By bringing hundreds of millions of dollars to Iran, this agreement will enable the regime to extend its influence throughout the region, to establish areas of influence even in areas where it has hitherto not been involved. (...) The clearest current

example of this is that after four months when Iran delayed transferring financial assistance to Hamas and Islamic Jihad because of budgetary concerns, it has in the last few days renewed the flow of money to Palestinian terror groups in Gaza — precisely because the accord gave it the confidence to do so.

Avi Issacharoff, TOI, 15.07.15

### **Fighting smartly**

(...) the battle to prevent a bad deal from being finalized is not over. (...) Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has set up a task force to coordinate efforts to sway US public opinion and that of Congress. (...) The objective (...) is to muster the support of enough Democrats willing to join Republicans in opposing the deal so that, if push comes to shove, US President Barack Obama's veto can be overridden by a two-thirds majority. (...) The first step in an Israeli-led anti-Iran deal campaign is to enlist leading politicians who are not members of Netanyahu's government. (...) Second, the Israeli campaign against the deal must avoid personal attacks on the US president. Lobbying efforts must focus on the issues. (...) Third, Israel must make it clear that it does not oppose — and never has opposed — a deal with Iran. (...) Fourth, Israel should work to form an informal alliance with countries like Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states that share Israel's concerns about a nuclear Iran. (...) The long-term success of a deal with Iran depends on building a strong consensus. (...)

Editorial, JPO, 14.07.15

### **Give the Iran nuclear agreement a chance**

The nuclear agreement signed Tuesday between Iran and the six world powers is an incredible diplomatic achievement and a historic milestone in the West's relations with Iran since that country's 1979 Islamic Revolution. For the first time since Ayatollah Khomeini seized power, there were direct negotiations between Iran and the United States. Those talks led to an agreement, which in addition to its technical clauses includes mutual recognition and equality among its signatories. (...) This agreement does not grant Iran an international certificate of good character — it still poses a threat to regional peace — and there is no certainty regarding its plans after the agreement expires. (...) But like any agreement, even the best of them, the proof will be in the pudding, in Iran's adherence to the pact's language and spirit — as it acted with regard to the interim agreement — in the effective oversight of the agreement's implementation, and in the uncompro-

mising insistence on the fulfillment of all the agreement's clauses. (...) Editorial, HAA, 14.07.15

### **Deal makes Iran stronger**

The nuclear deal reached between world powers and Iran on Tuesday was a historic event, illustrating how the world has legitimized Iran's nuclear ambitions, just as long as it curbs them for the next decade, after which Iran may pursue nuclear weapons if it so desires. This, of course, is based on the optimistic assumption that the Iranians will not deceive the international community and develop a bomb ahead of schedule. (...) Beyond Iran becoming a nuclear threshold state, the deal also has several immediate ramifications, most notably a regional nuclear arms race, and greater Iranian intervention in conflicts across the Middle East. (...) The deal will also see greater Iranian interference in Middle East conflicts, in Syria, Iraq, Yemen, and other places. There will be nothing to curtail its intervention, and it will have more available funds to invest in such initiatives. (...) The deal may also see the Islamic State group become stronger. (...) Yaakov Amidror, IHY, 15.07.15

## **2. Vermisst in Gaza**

*Zwei israelische Staatsbürger befinden sich offenbar in den Händen extremistischer Palästinenser im Gazastreifen. Erst nach richterlicher Aufhebung der Nachrichtensperre wurde bekannt, dass der 1986 in Äthiopien geborene Avera Mengistu bereits kurz nach dem Gazakrieg im vergangenen Sommer freiwillig die Grenze in das von der Hamas kontrollierte Gebiet überquerte, wo er nun gegen seinen Willen von den Islamisten festgehalten werde. Hintergründe über den zweiten Mann, bei dem es sich angeblich um einen Beduinen aus dem Negev handelt, wurden nicht öffentlich gemacht.*

### **A call to Hamas: Release Israeli civilians held in Gaza**

(...) This weekend I listened to Prof. Kasher on the radio, going through all sorts of contortions in answering a question about the justification for the gag order that was imposed regarding Ethiopian Israeli civilian Avera Mengistu who is being held in Gaza. (...) Good thing Prof. Kasher wasn't asked about the other citizen being held in Gaza, who had the misfortune to be born to an Arab family. (...) Does the code of humane behavior, and I don't mean Prof.

Kasher's code here, permit the use of civilians as bargaining chips? After all, neither of these unfortunate civilians has any military involvement in the conflict. And according to all normal and ethical conventions they truly belong at home and not on the negotiating table. Hamas must demonstrate leadership in this matter and return the captives, if it is control of things there. I expect that some people will be eager to explain to me that Israel holds hundreds of Palestinians without trial, like the administrative detainees, including Palestinian parliamentarian Khalida Jarrar. They'll say that the Israeli courts also automatically approve their continued incarceration. Well, friends, you are right! Israel follows the immoral code of Asa Kasher. The Palestinians must adopt a different code, one that is as far removed as possible from Kasher's ethics.

Oudeh Basharat, HAA, 12.07.15

### **Racial discrimination? Nonsense!**

Two Israeli citizens decided, of their own volition, to cross into the Gaza Strip. (...) They did so because of some inner drive, for personal reasons. (...) The media made it look as if the two were soldiers, combat fighters, or daring agents who worked for the Mossad or the Shin Bet security agency. (...) The worst accusation was that Israel's leaders had no interest in preventing Avera Mengistu from crossing into the Gaza Strip because he was an Ethiopian-Israeli, and now that he is there the government has not stepped up to the plate to secure his safe return. (...) This is just nonsense. It is borderline incitement. Gilad Schalit was kidnapped while carrying out his official duties in uniform. He was held in captivity alone for more than five years. He had no plans to go to Gaza. His non-Ethiopian descent did not help him. (...) The Talmud tells us that "all of Israel are responsible for one another." While this is undoubtedly true, and Prime Minister Netanyahu has promised to work hard to bring them home, we must not let the racially charged narrative take hold. (...)

Dan Margalit, IHY, 19.07.15

### **No racism, just a grim reality**

The difficult, painful story of Avera Mengistu and his family represents the deep schism that exists among Ethiopian immigrants in Israel. Out of pain and frustration, we are looking around to find someone to blame for the whole story. (...) There is no abandonment and no racism here; there is a sad, painful reality that demands focused work by the government to return the young man to his family, safe and sound. Anarchists are trying to brainwash us and are

dragging us into dark places, claiming that the state ignored him and let him enter Gaza unhindered. (...) Most young Ethiopians attended school at institutions to which children from disadvantaged families are sent. (...) Living conditions are crowded, the shaky financial situation is discovered, and the returned soldier has to get used to behaving differently at home. Communication between parents and children is defective: The parents' Hebrew is rudimentary and incorrect, and the children have an incomplete command of Amharic. So the crisis that leads the young people into the abyss grows, and they have no one to talk to. Some turn to alcohol as a substitute for the advice and support they don't get, and it gives them a momentary escape from themselves. From there, the road to alcoholism is short. (...)

Ayanawo Fareda Senbatu, IHY, 10.07.15

### **Netanyahu handled Mangisto affair correctly**

(...) Now that the curtain has been lifted over the absence of Avraham Mangisto and the Bedouin citizen (...), we have (...) to note that the Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu handled the current affair correctly. Netanyahu was right when he decided to hold discreet talks with Hamas and when he decided not to inform the cabinet and the subcommittee of the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee about the talks for the two citizens' release. (...) Two Israelis crossed the border voluntarily. They were not kidnapped, they not taken captive, and with all the required caution, it should be stated that they are responsible for their fate and there is no reason to rock an entire country in negotiations which will end with the release of dozens of murderers who will kill more Israelis. There is no arrogance or disregard here towards Israelis of Ethiopian descent or members of the Bedouin community. Netanyahu did not hide the recent affair from the public. He tried to handle it sensitively, out of an understanding that public exposure would drag Israel into extreme negotiations, which would be accompanied by criticism from the opposition and social organizations that will try to turn the affair into another aspect of discrimination. (...)

Shimon Shiffer, JED, 13.07.15

### **3. Religionsminister verprellt Reformjuden**

*Religionsminister David Azoulay von der ultraorthodoxen Shas-Partei ließ die Debatte über die Frage wiederaufleben, wer Jude sei. Azoulay*

*schimpfte Reformjuden eine „Katastrophe“ und setzte hinzu, dass sie „keine Juden seien“, wobei er später diejenigen davon ausnahm, „die der Religion Israels folgen“. Eine umfassende Entschuldigung kam nie von ihm. Die Meretz-Abgeordnete Tamar Zandberg erinnerte daran, dass das Reformjudentum zusammen mit den konservativen Juden den größten Teil des Judentums in der Welt ausmachten. Zandberg kündigte an, dass das derzeitige „Monopol über die Definition, wer Jude sei“, nicht für immer in den Händen des orthodoxen Judentums bleiben werde.*

### **The frank apology to Reform Jews that should have been made**

(...) In the spirit of reconciliation, and with assistance from one of my teachers and mentors Rabbi Yitz Greenberg, I offer this letter of apology that the minister could have written, were he being frank, to begin the process of repair and healing: To My Dear Reform Brothers and Sisters, This is how I should have addressed you, instead of with the hateful, divisive language that I spoke. I know the Bible says that (...) a Jew maintains the status of being a Jew even if he violates Jewish law. Therefore, even though Reform Judaism violates laws that we Orthodox hold sacred, I had no right to impugn your Jewishness. As such, I am deeply sorry for the pain I have caused. (...) I also now recognize that living in a democracy means acknowledging the rights of others to believe and practice, even if they are contrary to my own beliefs. My comments as a minister undercut the recognition of Israel as a land of religious freedom and democracy. I understand now that Israel as a democracy is one of the major factors in the American public's respect and support. My comments eroded that pillar of support. As such, they were a genuine assault on Israel's security. (...) My words now fail me. What more can I say other than please forgive me. With deepest regret and respect, David Azoulay. (...)

Rabbi Yehoshua Looks, HAA, 15.07.15

### **Freeing Judaism**

(...) Azoulay's comments aroused nearly across-the-board criticism. (...) In a country not bound by a shaky coalition agreement, such hurtful and hateful words by a cabinet minister on a subject he is in charge of would be grounds for immediate dismissal. But this is Israel, and the most that a prime minister dependent on his partners, no matter how distasteful, can do is express his displeasure. (...) Legislation is not the solution. (...) Instead, the

question of "Who is a Jew?" should be opened up to the competing definitions of the major recognized streams of Judaism – Orthodox, Conservative, Reform and Reconstructionist. Like in the Diaspora, the Jews of Israel should be permitted to operate as sovereign selves. They should be given the freedom to choose among the different streams of Judaism. They should be allowed to practice Judaism in a way that feels right for them. Religious services presently monopolized by the Orthodox Chief Rabbinate such as marriage and divorce, burials, synagogue construction, kosher supervision and the state funding of rabbis' salaries, should be privatized. (...) Israel is a Jewish state and it should remain that way. But the means of Jewish expression are many and varied. (...)  
Editorial, JPO, 13.07.15

### **Do not distance Judaism from Jews**

(...) Absurdly, the rabbinate -- which is supposed to make Judaism accessible to the public -- has become one of the greatest forces distancing Judaism and the Torah from society. (...) Over the last two years, there was a glimmer of hope that things were likely to change via the conversion reform bill and the new composition of the electoral body for rabbinical courts. (...) The cancellation of the bill puts us in the face of great danger. (...) The current conversion system, which functions through the rabbinical courts of the Chief Rabbinate and the army, converts about 2,000 people each year. We are in the midst of the growing danger of intermarriage in Israel, which will mostly affect traditional and secular Jews. The conversion reform bill was meant to allow regional rabbis to perform conversions, making the procedure easier and encouraging more people to convert. Now, within 10 years, we are likely to reach an assimilation rate in Israel equal to the one in the Diaspora. (...) Judaism is in our souls. Today, many Israelis are seeking out tradition as well as Jewish identity, roots and values. Unfortunately, it seems that the time has come to build a real alternative to the rabbinate, for the sake of the future of Judaism in the State of Israel. (...)  
Rabbi Ronen Neuwirth, IHY, 07.07.15

### **The government of Israel versus the Jewish people**

(...) Although millions of Reform and Conservative Jews in the United States are accustomed to harsh statements from ultra-Orthodox rabbis and politicians in Israel, Azoulay's statement still breaks a record of ignorance and lack of awareness of what

is happening in the Jewish world. It reflects a regrettable confusion between a basic dispute about beliefs and opinions and an inferior brand of delegitimization and hatred. (...) Every divisive and hostile statement by an Israeli minister, as junior as he may be, resounds painfully in Jewish communities abroad, in all the denominations; touches exposed nerves; and distances Jews from Israel and from their Jewishness. (...) More than other subjects on the agenda, questions of religious identity are causing American Jews to become alienated from Israel. (...)  
Editorial, HAA, 14.07.15

### **Israel should back Reform Judaism**

(...) The last thing Israel needs right now is a religious clash with U.S. Jewry, but it may not be avoidable. (...) In every religion, when a denomination breaks off from the mainstream, its members are often treated with even more hostility than the members of other religions. (...) Ultra-Orthodox Jews refuse to acknowledge the legitimacy of the Reform denomination, even though it has been in existence for exactly 205 years, and they certainly refuse to refer to its sages as "rabbis." For someone like Azoulay, funding Muslims and Christians is more legitimate than funding the religious activity of Reform Jews, which he deems a desecration of God. (...) The problem arises when these positions become a national affair. Israel has given the rabbinical courts complete control over matrimonial laws. "Rebellious wives" and bastard babies are declared in these courts, which only recently were torn away from the jurisdiction of the Justice Ministry and restored to the ultra-Orthodox ghetto. Reform rabbis are prohibited from marrying couples in Israel, and when they perform such ceremonies anyway, the state does not recognize these marriages. (...) Indeed, the problem is not Azoulay, but rather his ultra-Orthodox monopoly. World Jews, including Israeli Jews, should know that Azoulay is free to declare Reform Jews to be non-Jews, but Israel must respond by declaring that it recognizes them and their rabbis. (...) Israel does not need a Religious Services Ministry, nor does it need the kind of people who use their status within such a ministry to infuriate good, devoted Jews across the ocean. (...)  
Yossi Beilin, IHY, 14.07.15

## 4. Medienquerschnitt

### Islamischer Staat auf Sinai-Halbinsel

#### Will Islamic State strike at Israel?

(...) The Salafi terrorist groups in Sinai have become stronger over the past few years, and they have been joined by mercenaries and terrorists from other countries. (...) The concern in Israel goes beyond the potential deterioration in Egypt's ability to govern Sinai, which in turn will surely make the peninsula-entrenched terrorist groups more brazen in their actions. Israel's concern is over the impact this will have on the Gaza Strip, especially given the close ties between the Salafi groups in Sinai and Gaza, and the fact that the Salafi groups in Gaza are actively trying to undermine Hamas rule. (...) Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi has already proved he is committed to fighting terrorism, and it is highly likely that Israel would afford Egypt any aid necessary in this fight, knowing that should Cairo fail, Israel may find itself in the cross-hairs of Islamic State terrorists.

Yoav Limor, IHY, 02.07.15

#### ISIS in Sinai is a serious threat to Israel

(...) In the short run, we have to prepare for the possibility that the attack on (...) the Egyptian security forces in northern Sinai (...) will develop into an offensive towards the Israeli border. (...) The report that ISIS fighters gained control of armored vehicles (...) requires special preparations and alert. The jihadists could drive them towards the border terminals with Israel and the border fence in order to break through them with the heavy weight of the tanks and armored personnel carriers. That is why the IDF quickly shut off the crossings and alerted all the communities along the border with Egypt, especially in its northwestern part. (...) The battles taking place between the Egyptian army and the ISIS fighters could also develop into rocket and mortar fire towards Israel (...). What we are now seeing is a semi-military organization using a hybrid method of action, which combines terror and planned, coordinated military fighting. Like the other ISIS branches across the Middle East, the members of the "The Caliphate in the Sinai District" are also well equipped with weapons and modern ammunition. (...) It's surprising to discover that the training, operational planning and the movement of the ISIS forces from their hiding areas towards their targets on Wednesday escaped the Egyptian intelligence's eyes. It's very possible that the preparations also

escaped the eyes of other intelligence services in the area, those operated by countries which have good relations and security cooperation with Egypt. (...) It isn't hard to estimate that if the current regime in Egypt is undermined, the State of Israel's national security will be seriously affected as well.

Ron Ben-Yishai, JED, 02.07.15

### Appell für die standesamtliche Hochzeit

#### Who's afraid of civil marriage in Israel?

On Sunday a civil union bill, which would enable civil marriages in the country, was submitted to the Knesset, for the ninth time. There is seemingly no reason why the proposed legislation submitted by Yesh Atid Knesset member Aliza Lavie should not pass. Everyone knows that Israel is the only democracy that does not permit civil marriage in the country, and nearly everyone, including many religious people, understand that the situation is insufferable. (...) It is nearly certain, however, that this bill too will be rejected, in part on the false argument that if Jews in Israel get married without the rabbinate as intermediary, other Jews would not be able to marry their descendants, thereby creating a rift in the Jewish people. (...) But contrary to the statements of those who have been threatening us, civil unions would in no way promote a schism among the people. Believe it or not it represents the position of Jewish religious law, halakha. (...) And from a practical standpoint as well, opposition to civil unions is insignificant. In 2011, at total of 8,995 Israelis, about 11 percent of all the couples who married that year, wed in civil ceremonies abroad. (...) Opposition to civil unions is baseless both from the standpoint of halakha and practically speaking and involves more than a little hypocrisy. The ultra-Orthodox community already keeps separate marriage registries or lists than those kept by the Chief Rabbinate, and in practice, they would never marry into secular families. In other words, the split in the Jewish people that they warn against is already here and has been for some time. (...)

Avi Garfinkel, HAA, 07.07.15

HAA = Haaretz

JED = JediothAhronoth / Ynetnews

JPO = Jerusalem Post

IHY = Israel HaYom

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