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**1. Netanyahu berät mit Putin über Syrien**

*Die verstärkte militärische Präsenz Russlands in Syrien stand im Mittelpunkt der Reise von Regierungschef Benjamin Netanyahu nach Moskau. Präsident Vladimir Putin beteuerte, dass die Aufrüstung einzig dem Zweck diene, die Terrorvereinigung ISIS zu bekämpfen. Satellitenbilder aus der Region Latakia lassen Geheimdienstler indes vermuten, Moskau errichte Militärstützpunkte. In Jerusalem besteht Sorge vor der Kooperation zwischen Russland und Iran und damit auch der Stärkung der libanesisch-schiitischen Hisbollah, die Teheran finanziert. In Konsequenz der neuen russischen Militärpräsenz in Syrien könnte es für Israel künftig schwerer sein, Angriffe auf Waffenlieferungen an die Hisbollah zu fliegen. Angesichts des verstärkten Engagements der russischen Führung wächst die Kritik gegen die Haltung von US-Präsident Barack Obama in der Syrien-Frage.*

**Risk and opportunity**

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's decision to grab the bull by its horns and (...) visit Moscow to meet with Russian President Vladimir Putin, is the right call (...). Israel's concern over Islamic State's rise to prominence has taken a back seat to its concern over the establishment of "Little Syria," which would supposedly be controlled by Assad but in actuality be under the thumb of Iran and Hezbollah. Even more disconcerting is everyone in this Little Syria -- Assad, Hezbollah and Iran -- enjoying the safety of the Russian umbrella. The Americans

could also help this materialize, because similar to their policies in Iraq they are liable to sacrifice certain principles for the sake of fighting Islamic State, and even come to terms with Iranian and Hezbollah forces battling the Sunni group on Syrian soil. (...) The Russian presence (...) provides an opportunity, perhaps as a force of restraint in Syria. After all, Assad needs Putin no less than he needs Iran and Hezbollah. Putin, not the Iranians, is the one capable of curbing any initiative or decision against Syria in the international arena, and he is also the only one who can deter the West from such an attempt. Moreover, as opposed to Iran and Hezbollah, Putin has no intention of ruling Syria and altering its makeup, for example by enforcing Iran's brand of Shiism on the country's Alawite and other citizens. All Putin wants is to advance his interests and ensure he maintains his military strongholds, and from this perspective he is more comfortable than Assad to work with. (...)

Eyal Zisser, IHY, 21.09.15

**Good to have Kremlin on speed dial**

(...) Russia cannot afford itself another Afghanistan, but it needs to take action in Syria as a bargaining chip against the West. To be effective Moscow needs to fight the Islamic State group and the Nusra Front (al-Qaida's Syria branch), and by doing so it can enjoy the best of both worlds: global support for fighting ISIS and keeping Assad in power. The president of the United States, Barack Obama, still hasn't decided what to do, if anything. (...) The Syrian

chaos is troublesome and concerning. In the old days, the American sheriff was around, but these days every player is a kingpin. Israel cannot stand idly by as Putin deploys his military machinery in Syria. It needs to have its hand on the pulse. (...) The Israeli and Russian interests in Syria are far from being compatible (...). Israel is concerned over the security of its borders and citizens. Russia is concerned for Assad's security. (...) Russia's activity in Syria reminds us of the Cold War era, but it's not quite the same: The Soviets built blocs, the Russians are sewing pockets. And it is because we are not in Russia's pocket that Netanyahu's visit to Moscow on Monday was so important, to explain to them why the "open skies" policy in Syria is so vital for us. Boaz Bismuth, IHY, 22.09.15

### **The Russia-Iran link**

(...) Again, after an extended absence, Russia looms as the Middle East's imposing hegemon – one whose self-interests determine who will prevail and who will fail. (...) Obama is doing his utmost to disengage from the very spheres that Russia covets, and Putin helped push Obama in that direction (...). In 2013, Putin swayed Obama not to react militarily to Assad's use of gas against his own people, but to allow the Syrian leader to relinquish his chemical stockpiles. Obama was only too eager to be offered a way out, even if Assad continued butchering Syria's civilians by other means. Then came the deal on Iran's nukes in which Moscow again coaxed Washington into an ultra-conciliatory stance to avoid confrontation. (...) Iran was propelled to the forefront as a regional power, operating in chummy collusion with Russia to prop up Assad in an ostensible anti-terrorist alliance. (...) Qassem Soleimani, chief of Iran's elite Quds Force, flew twice to Moscow for consultations with Putin in flagrant violation of an international travel ban for masterminding terrorism. Shortly thereafter, Putin began shipping tanks, armored personnel carriers, and more to Syria. (...) Right before Obama's eyes, a three-way military axis – comprising Russia, Iran, and Assad's Hezbollah proxy – audaciously manifested itself. The fact that Iran is finally off the American/Western nuclear hook and is flushed with cash made this unabashed partnership with Moscow possible. Russia, let's not forget, is Iran's primary weapons purveyor and builder of its nuclear facilities. It made sure that Iran would be treated indulgently during the recent nuclear negotiations. (...) The danger to Israel isn't only that Iran can now openly become a key player in Syria, but that aggression will be indirectly funded

by the resources the US has consented to release and by the vast business opportunities it steers to Tehran. Those funds, combined with unimpeded Russian ambition will thus not only help ensure Assad's survival, but will also allow the further arming of Hezbollah and Hamas. (...) Editorial, JPO, 30.09.15

### **Where is Putin leading the Middle East?**

(...) The Russian move is aimed at saving the Bashar Assad regime from a collapse - Russia appears to be the only world power supporting the Syrian president's survival unconditionally (...) Where is President Vladimir Putin leading the Middle East? (...) Israel, for its part, has shown its determination not to allow Iranian and Hezbollah activity in the Golan Heights, and this aspect has surely not escaped Putin's eyes and he must take it into account when outlining his policy in Syria. (...) There is a desire on both sides to prevent a deterioration, hence the decision to establish immediate security-ties which may expand to comprehensive negotiations on Syria's future, including the issue of the Iranian presence on its territory. (...) Israel has a clear interest in it. (...) Putin is keeping his cards, beyond the goal of saving Assad the person, close to his chest. (...) the expanding dialogue between the US and Russia requires Israel not to be portrayed as a neutral player between the battling world powers in the Middle East. The Israeli-American alliance goes two ways(...). When it comes to Syria, it will be important that the US takes care of Israel, just like Russia is taking care of Iran. (...)

Efraim Halevy, JED, 21.09.15

### **What Putin's Syrian strategy means for Israel**

(...) The US president wants to end his time in office without another war and without having to send more US troops to fight on foreign land. (...) Putin has totally different goals. Besides his known ambition to return Russia to its tsar-glory days, an ambition held by communist leaders in their time, he also wants to gerrymander the world into spheres of influence. For instance, eastern Ukraine is mine – western Ukraine is yours, Syria is mine – Saudi Arabia is yours, and so on. (...) Bashar Assad gave the Russians what his father Hafez refused to his last breath. The Russians used to have one dock in the port of Tartus in Syria's Alawite enclave, and now they have the entire port, as well as an air base north of Latakia. Now the Russians have a permanent strategic anchor in the eastern Mediterranean – just like the US and NATO have their presence in

Turkey. (...) Putin is creating an axis in which Iran, Syria, Iraq, and Russia are up against the pro-Western axis of the Gulf states and Egypt, and he has yet to say his last word on the matter. He made an intelligence-based alliance with Iraq, supposedly to combat ISIS, but the Islamic State isn't the main story here. Russia, as a global superpower with crucial influence in the Middle East, that's the story. (...) Putin is currently doing for Assad what Nixon's US did for Israel during the Yom Kippur War, 42 years ago. (...) Assad currently controls less than a quarter of Syria's original territory, but that's enough for the Russians. They can implement everything they want to in the confines of Shi'ite-Alawite "little Syria", which spans from the Latakia coastline to Damascus. That gives Russia a corridor to southern Lebanon. (...) Russia will probably serve as a stabilizing force in Syria, but what's less appealing is that it will legitimize an Iranian entrance into the country, under its supervision. (...) But as of now Israel needn't be too worried about Russia's increased presence in the region.

Ron Ben-Yishai, JED, 29.09.15

## 2. Unruhen in Jerusalem

*Der von Steinwürfen verursachte tödliche Autounfall eines Israeli am Abend des Neujahrsfestes Rosh Hashana war Auftakt einer neuen Runde gewalttätiger Auseinandersetzungen in Jerusalems Altstadt. Hunderte israelische Sicherheitsleute stürmten den Tempelberg und die Al Aqsa Moschee, in der sich palästinensische Demonstranten verschanzt hatten, bewaffnet mit Steinen und Feuerwerkskörpern. Anlass der erneuten Eskalation, so vermuten Analysten, sei das Verbot der muslimischen „Glaubenswächter“ am Tempelberg. Israels Verteidigungsministerium beschuldigte die männlichen „Mourabitoun“ und die weiblichen „Mourabitaat“ der Hetze gegen jüdische Besucher des Tempelberges. Die Regierung hat eine Mindesthaftstrafe von vier Jahren für Stein- und Molotowcocktailwerfer als Abschreckungsmaßnahme beschlossen.*

### Incitement leads to escalation

The murder of Alexander Levlovich, who was killed on Sunday night after his car was hit by rocks, should not be classified as being part of a popular uprising or "intifada." (...) Palestinians have used rocks to kill 13 Israelis, although not in Jerusalem. (...) The recent wave of attacks in Jerusalem (...) is unique because it largely feeds on the ongoing incitement spread from the Temple Mount. This

incitement sets the area ablaze time and time again primarily because it has used one successful rallying cry: "The Al-Aqsa mosque is under threat." It is not too hard to fight back against those who spread this libelous claim. Last week, for example, Israel finally did something on that front (...): It outlawed the "mourabitoun" and "mourabitaat" (Arabic for male and female sentries) -- two groups of provocateurs affiliated with the Islamic Movement in Israel, who regularly hold vocal protests in the Temple Mount area. They have been instigating violence in the area for years on end, making sure Jews who visit the site endure a living nightmare. What happened in Jerusalem this Rosh Hashanah is a reaction to the Israeli crackdown. (...) In terms of public diplomacy -- Israel (...) must (...) tell the world what really takes place on the Temple Mount and highlight the concessions it has made to accommodate Muslim worshippers. (...) Israel made a major concession following the 1967 Six-Day War, when it decided to let the Islamic Waqf hold de facto control of Judaism's holiest site -- despite the fact that it is only the third-holiest place in Islam. Israel went even further and banned Jewish prayer at the site. (...)

Nadav Shragai, IHY, 16.09.15

### Stone throwing can't be tackled without a police chief

Jerusalem is losing hold of the security situation. The occasional "lone wolf terrorist" can no longer be blamed. (...) The police are failing, the terrorists are undeterred by the punitive measures and feel they have legitimacy to go on. (...) The murder of a baby in his bed failed to ignite the most explosive area in the world, but that is now being done by the joint prayers on the Temple Mount. (...) An urgent improvement is needed in intelligence, the police must carry out much more arrests and operate more snipers and forces disguised as Arabs in order to collect intelligence, and severely punish the rioters using all legal means in order to restore the calm in the capital. (...) If the fact that there is no police chief were not enough, the most relevant district at the moment is experiencing a deep command crisis. Therefore, the prime minister and public security minister should perhaps devote their time not only to emergency discussions, but also to finding a suitable police commissioner who will know how to command the police and the Jerusalem District at this time of crisis.

Yossi Yehushua, JED, 16.09.15

### The sanctity of provocation on Temple Mount

(...) The attempt to present visits by Jews to the site as affirmative action motivated by the principle of equality is playing dumb and dangerous in its pretention, akin to the (successful) Israeli journalistic attempt to squeeze out of Palestinians theological denials about the Jewish connection to the land and mount, and to the possibility of the Holy Temple's past existence. The Jews are not a persecuted minority in Israel struggling for its religious rights. The Jews are the rulers. (...) Thus, Palestinians have every reason and justification to fear that the "visits" and the police raids in the holy mount are part of a Jewish operational plan: a plan to complete their exclusion within their own homeland and the marginalization of Palestinian history, a plan to wipe out the deep ties of some 12 million people to this country. From this perspective, Al-Aqsa is a microcosm of all of Palestine. Its religious importance to Islam unites and empowers Palestinian resistance initiatives more than any other threatened region, such as Gaza. Here, everybody – religious and secular, Christian and Muslim, Fatah and Hamas – are united. And instead of refuting their fears, the Israel Police and Israeli government act as if directed by the conviction that the Jews' right to a provocative "visit" is holier than the duty to prevent a religious war.

Amira Hass, HAA, 17.09.15

### **Basic protection**

Alexander Levlovitz, 64, was not killed in a car crash Sunday night, as some reports over-cautiously phrased it. Levlovitz, driving home in Jerusalem from Rosh Hashana dinner, was murdered in cold-blood by Arab stone-throwers whose aim was hardly innocuous. Stone-throwers are terrorists in every sense of the word, and they are out to cause harm – preferably fatal, if they "succeed." (...) The tendency internationally is often to belittle the crime of stone-throwing and regard it as an expression of youthful exuberance, which is how the Arab communities which send out brainwashed youths to target Jewish traffic like to present things. Unthinkably, stoning Jews has become a popular sport which is glorified in Arab society as heroic. There's nothing grassroots or spontaneous about the end-products of systemic and incessant incitement to homicide. (...) the latest government initiative to legislate minimal sentencing requirements is nothing less than vital. (...) Attacks on innocent travelers mustn't be belittled merely because the weapon of choice isn't a firearm. (...) Stones, rocks, blocks and boulders all kill. (...)

Editorial, JPO, 17.09.15

### **Rocks don't kill people, people do**

One shouldn't make light of the lethality of an object hitting a car, its driver or its passengers while the vehicle is moving at normal speed. (...) But Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his ministers (...) want to go much farther. (...) Mere murderers or rapists, drug dealers or corrupt politicians, none of these tripped Erdan's anger trigger — only stone-throwers. (...) Netanyahu, Erdan and company are trying to cover up their haplessness with demagoguery. The Palestinians' popular protests have many causes, including the Netanyahu government's stubborn insistence on blocking any progress in the peace process. Israel should not accept violence toward its citizens and soldiers, but rocks don't kill people; the individuals who use them to stone passersby and harm them kill people. Even if Jerusalem were to wake up tomorrow and discover that in a brilliant operation, every stone had been removed from the city overnight and checkpoints established at all the entrances to the capital, staffed by guards who assiduously prevented even the tiniest pebble from being brought in, the violence would not end. It would be merely be channeled into different methods. (...) Taking action against those who endanger lives is already permitted, while retroactive measures and disproportionate punishment will remain forbidden. Not that any of this bothers Netanyahu: After all, for him, what matters is the verbiage and distracting people's attention.

Editorial, HAA, 18.09.15

### **Mandatory minimum sentences for stone-throwing in Israel will lead to injustice**

(...) the Justice Ministry published the preliminary draft of a law that would mandate a minimum sentence for stone throwers. Like all legislation that seeks to interfere with sentencing, this is a bad bill that will create distortions, injustice and lack of coherence. (...) Israel's criminal legislation is based on maximum penalties as prescribed by law. (...) If a judge rules leniently, he must provide his reasons for doing so – just as the new bill states judges can do under extraordinary circumstances. Leaving discretion to judges in these cases contradicts the stated goal of legislating minimum sentence in the first place and creates forced uniformity in sentencing. The problem with legislating minimum sentences is the arbitrary manner in which the Knesset operates. It does not bother legislating minimum sentences for offenses such as manslaughter, rape or bribery – but it does for stone throwers (...); it manifests itself

in imposing long prison terms on individuals convicted of relatively minor offenses, while criminals who have committed more serious crimes will be released from prison before them. (...) The bill is also political in the sense that it is driven by a desire to demonstrate that something is being done, and does not meet a real need. It is not based on any research which proves that penalties imposed by the courts for stone throwing are too light and don't act as a deterrent. There is already discrimination between Arabs and Jews in terms of sentencing for stone throwers, and the concern now is that the proposed bill will make it even worse. (...) Criminal punishment is a complex doctrine, and politicians should refrain from using it as a political and populist tool.

Editorial, HAA, 28.09.15

### 3. UN-Vollversammlung

*Die diesjährige UN-Vollversammlung stand im Zeichen der zunehmenden Gewalt im Nahen Osten und dem gemeinsamen Ziel, der islamistischen Terrororganisation ISIS ein Ende zu machen. Dazu gehört auch Frieden in Syrien. Nicht einzig waren sich US-Präsident Barack Obama und Russlands Präsident Vladimir Putin über die Rolle von Syriens Machthaber Bashar al-Assad. Während Obama al-Assad für einen „Tyranen“ hält, setzt Putin seine Hoffnung auf den syrischen Präsidenten beim Kampf gegen die Terroristen. Der israelisch-palästinensische Konflikt gehörte eher zu den Randthemen der Generalversammlung in New York.*

#### UN bias

(...) The UN never ceases to blow our minds although the organization's barefaced bias shouldn't surprise any reasonable Israeli. (...) Invariably, however, we are shown that no absurdity is too absurd for the UN. The UN Security Council for instance managed in one outlandish statement to ignore the in-your-face aggression by Muslims on the Temple Mount while inter alia also expunging all trace of Jewish links to Judaism's holiest site. (...) there was no mention of the term Temple Mount, thus in effect wiping out 3,000 years of Jewish history (...). All that was mentioned was the subsequent superimposed Arabic Haram al-Sharif (...). It was as if Jews were never there, have no connection to the Mount, had invented a bogus narrative about a nonexistent temple and now seek to usurp the rights of Muslims whose sanctuary this was exclusively from time immemorial. (...) In these explosive and

volatile circumstances, the council's most urgent concern was to affirm that "the members of the Security Council underscore that Muslim worshipers at the Haram al-Sharif must be allowed to worship in peace, free from violence, threats and provocations." (...) The holy sites are annually exploited to ramp up tensions ahead of the High Holy Days when throngs of Jewish worshipers congregate at the Western Wall, directly below the Mount. (...) The gross misrepresentation of past and present has come to be expected from the UN whenever it addresses itself to Israel. (...)

Editorial, JPO, 26.09.15

#### Fundamentally flawed

Many of us here in Israel have long ago given up on the UN as an irredeemably distorted institution. (...) In no other UN institution is the cynicism and hypocrisy more pronounced than in the so-called Human Rights Council. Human rights luminaries such as China, Cuba, Pakistan, Russia and Syria not only consistently escape censure, they are given special honors. The Jewish state, meanwhile, is regularly singled out for special condemnation. (...) As one foreign ministry official put it, "This is the planet, these are the rules and it is what it is." (...) The UN could have been a force for good in the world. As an institution that brings together all the nations of the world, the potential is limitless. Wars could be prevented before they even begin; blatant human rights abuses could be addressed and stopped; genocides could be avoided; the damage resulting from famines and natural disasters could be ameliorated. And all this could be achieved through dialogue and cooperation. But the UN has failed to come close to living up to its potential. (...) Don't expect too much from the UN and you won't be disappointed.

Editorial, JPO, 28.09.15

#### The most UN-derful time of the year

The annual U.N. General Assembly gathering is very much like a soccer league's kickoff match. Just as in sports, the season gets underway when diplomatic players arrive with their managers at a predetermined date to lay out their worldviews. (...) This annual event and speeches have become a mechanical routine, and Monday's speakers acted accordingly. Arab leaders and the U.N. secretary-general called for renewing talks between Israelis and Palestinians; Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff said she was sick and tired of construction in the settlements. (...) The late Israeli Foreign Minister Abba Eban used to slam Arab leaders over their

hostility toward Israel, saying they never missed an opportunity to miss an opportunity. This is equally true when it comes to Obama's foreign policy. He has been reluctant when it comes to exercising military force, to the point that he is now a borderline pacifist. This policy complicates his desire to see Syrian President Bashar Assad go. (...) Obama has drawn red lines to check Assad's brutality in Syria, but when Assad breached those lines, the U.S. president looked the other way. (...) Now that even German Chancellor Angela Merkel is considering talks with the Syrian dictator to help stem the flow of German-bound refugees, Obama has finally called for Assad's ouster. By expressing that view, Obama publicly poked Putin in the eye. (...) Putin has lost faith in Obama, and vice versa. (...) Putin still thinks that his resolve and strength will lead to victory, and just like many other autocrats before him, he is riding high thanks to his aggression. But over time, he could see a reversal of fortunes. As for Obama, it seems that, even seven years after entering the White House, he has yet to fully figure out what is in America's best interest. (...)  
Dan Margalit, IHY, 29.09.15

#### 4. Medienquerschnitt

##### Hoffnung auf Fatah-Jugendführer

###### Israel must free Marwan Barghouti

Rumors are circulating that Mahmoud Abbas, the 80-year-old president of the Palestinian Authority, will soon resign. The individual elected to succeed him will, in large measure, shape Israel's security matrix for years to come. While Israel cannot select Abbas's successor, it can help ensure that this political transition is smooth and leads to an era of peace and justice for both Israelis and Palestinians. Circumstances are such that one move in particular would serve this goal well: the release of Marwan Barghouti from prison. (...) He consistently polls as the top contender to replace Abbas, notwithstanding his imprisonment. His widespread popularity stems, in part, from his resistance to the Israeli occupation. Also, he is regarded as one of the few Palestinian leaders who is not tarnished by accusations of corruption. While many in Israel consider him an arch-terrorist who deserves to languish in jail for his despicable crimes, there is good reason to believe his release is aligned with the security interests of Israel. (...) Barghouti would strengthen the Palestinian Authority to the detriment of Hamas. (...) Bar-

ghouti is the only potential candidate that can bridge the ever-widening gap between Fatah and Hamas. In this capacity, his release and presumed election will serve two purposes that will enhance Israeli security. It will both hasten the reconstruction of Gaza and likely begin the process of restoring a PA presence there. Israel's national security interests dictate that it must do all it can to rehabilitate Gaza (...) the release of Barghouti would reenergize the currently stagnated peace process and improve the chances of a peace deal based on the two-state solution. (...) Barghouti is a political leader not a military one (...) a man with a pragmatic approach to the conflict. (...) The Israeli government should take advantage of the opportunity now emerging and engage with this dynamic Palestinian leader. Releasing him from prison is the necessary first step. (...)

Nicholas Sidel, TOI, 16.09.15

##### Streik der christlichen Schulen

###### Israel cannot continue to punish the students in its Christian schools

The school year opened to great fanfare and numerous photographs of politicians together with students at schools around the country, yet 33,000 students enrolled in Christian schools have yet to begin their studies. (...) It is difficult not to assume that the issue's slide from the public agenda, the lack of interest among decision makers and the delay in addressing the issue stem from the fact that the schools serve Israel's Arab community. It is not far-fetched to presume that such a strike among Jewish schools would elicit much greater effort by the authorities to solve the problem. The Christian schools (...) have suffered double-digit percentage cuts in the last few years, alongside reductions in external funding sources, such as donations. The schools collected the difference from parents, but the Education Ministry's decision to limit the amount that schools can charge parents put the management board in an impossible situation. (...) These schools, which are known for their success and contribution to Arab and Israeli society, were mostly founded before the establishment of the State of Israel. After Israel's founding, they covered for its failures in the realm of Arab education. The government and the Education Ministry cannot continue to punish the students in the country's Christian schools. Israel must carry out its obligations as a democratic state toward these students, and return them to the classroom.

Editorial, HAA, 17.09.15

### **Zum geplanten Import chinesischer Arbeiter**

#### **Kahlon sells out Israeli workers**

The decision to import tens of thousands of Chinese construction workers has not brought housing prices down, but it has already (...) created unanimity between the Bank of Israel and socially oriented economists on the one hand, and the neo-liberal economists of the National Economic Council on the other (...). The headlines about fears of breaches of the Chinese workers' rights completely miss the real victims of this wretched decision: Israeli and Palestinian construction workers. (...) Tens of thousands of them are now exposed to wage reductions and worsening of their conditions, to the point of losing their jobs altogether. (...) In the Israel of 2015, there is a great deal of talk about the concerns over control of Israeli insurance companies passing into Chinese hands, but when it comes to the hands of construction workers, it's seen as something natural. Make no mistake. Through the decision passed by the government, the prime minister and the minister of finance sold out the employment future of the Israeli and Palestinian construction workers, for the sake of the hope of some temporary relief in the shortage of building starts, a vague and doubtful hope. (...) The contractors, agents, and those close to the levers of power stand to make a killing from the government's decision. Kahlon will fix them the second Mercedes, another Rolex, at the expense of the income of thousands of Israeli blue-collar workers and craftsmen, who are trying to earn a decent living. This "achievement" will cling for years to the record of a person who presents himself as a socially minded finance minister. (...)

Amiram Barkat, GLO, 21.09.15

#### **Bringing Chinese workers into Israel is akin to human trafficking**

(...) Since 2011, the government has resisted all the pressures brought to bear on it to resume importing Chinese laborers. (...) the worker-import trade may be the biggest bribery racket in Israel. What's more, Bank of Israel analysts have demonstrated that the continued import of foreign workers harms Israel's economy. (...) The Bank of Israel also found that relying on foreign workers reduces productivity in the building trades. Israel's construction industry is one of the most backward in the world because it relies on cheap foreign labor, rather than using advanced construction technologies. For all these

reasons, the government in 2011 decided to stop importing Chinese construction workers. The validity of this reasoning hasn't changed. All that has changed is that there is a new finance minister, Kahlon, a new head of the housing administration, Avigdor Yitzhaki, and a prime minister whose stance is weak and shaky, so that the two could hasten to show that they were the ones making decisions (...) contrary to the legal opinion of the Justice Ministry, which warned that this would give Israel the status of a country trafficking in human beings.

Editorial, HAA, 23.09.15

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