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Die Themen dieser Ausgabe

- 1. Neuer Chef für die Arbeitspartei..... 1
- 2. Zündstoff im Streit zwischen orthodoxen und liberalen Juden 3
- 3. Empörung über Hebron-Entscheidung der UNESCO 5
- 4. Gewalt am Tempelberg 6
- 5. Eklat mit Jordanien 9
- 6. Drei Tote bei Attentat in Halamish 10
- 7. Medienquerschnitt..... 12

1. Neuer Chef für die Arbeitspartei
Eine Absage erteilten die Genossen von Israels Arbeitspartei den alten Hasen an der Spitze, als sie Avi Gabbay überraschend zum neuen Chef wählten. Erst vor gut einem halben Jahr schloss sich der 50-jährige Wirtschaftswissenschaftler der sozialdemokratischen Partei an. Im Mai 2016 hatte er seinen Posten als Umweltminister aufgegeben. Damals verabschiedete er sich auch aus der Mittepartei Kulanu. Parteichef Moshe Kahlon schimpfte ihn daraufhin einen „hinterhältigen Verräter“. Als Sohn marokkanischer Einwanderer wuchs Gabbay mit sieben Geschwistern in einem Übergangslager auf, entpuppte sich als begabter Schüler und machte das Abitur an einem Jerusalemer Elitegymnasium. Nach der Militärzeit, die er beim Nachrichtendienst ableistete, und dem Wirtschaftsstudium begann er seine berufliche Laufbahn beim Finanzministerium. Kurz darauf wechselte er zur größten Telekommunikationsgesellschaft des Landes Bezeq, wo er es bis zum Generaldirektor schaffte und „unangemessen viel Geld verdiente“, wie er selbst zugibt. Ganz anders als sein Vorgänger Isaac Herzog, der vorläufig die Fraktion weiterführt, denn Gabbay ist kein Abgeordneter der

Knesset, lehnt er eine Große Koalition mit Benjamin Netanyahus Likud entschieden ab. „Politisch bin ich wie Yitzhak Rabin“, sieht er sich selbst auf den Spuren des 1995 ermordeten Regierungschefs und verspricht, die Friedensgespräche mit den Palästinensern aufzunehmen, sollte die Arbeitspartei die Wahlen für sich entscheiden. Als Erstes will er dann die staatlichen Investitionen in isolierte Siedlungen stoppen und arabische Wohnviertel in Ostjerusalem unter die Kontrolle der Palästinensischen Autonomiebehörde stellen.

The most radical thing one could do: Back Israel's Labor Party
 (...) This party has done everything possible to disappoint its supporters. It is a spineless opposition. It crawled on its belly to the governing coalition. (...) It has zero charisma and its internal politics recall a dysfunctional family with patterns of abuse. Nevertheless, it's a leftist, social democratic party and, under the current conditions, the only one that can try to extricate us from the ruins left behind by previous governments. (...) it's time to breathe new life into the Labor primary. (...) Even if Labor isn't the party of

your dreams, and even if you don't intend to vote for it in the next Knesset election, emotional involvement, enthusiasm, caring, anger and joy are the only fuel the leftist camp needs. (...) I've already declared my firm support for Amir Peretz, and now I'm rooting for him and Labor from the bleachers – because that's the most radical left-wing thing to do right now.

Iris Leal, HAA, 02.07.17

Avi Gabbay, the man who came out of nowhere

The man who came out of nowhere, who was never a Knesset member, who never participated in a cabinet meeting, who has no security-related background and who never managed a political body, had done it easily, nonchalantly, almost naturally. (...) the Labor Party is desperate for something new. It's a time of changes, that is evident all around the world, and Israel is part of the trend. (...) Choosing Gabbay is its way of choosing life. An option of reinventing itself. By picking Gabbay, it picked the new, the unknown, an adventure. (...) he managed to instill hope (...) We've seen better speakers. But he has the ability to directly connect with people, sound reliable, not bombastic. One of our own. (...) The feeling is the Labor Party decided to walk on the edge (...) it's a revolution. (...)

Sima Kadmon, YED, 11.07.17

A former Likudnik is exactly what Labor needs

(...) if the party is really interested in a proper shake-down, there is nothing like a former Likud member to indicate a change. (...) he comes from the Finance Ministry and from the world of business. For all intents and purposes, he is a capitalist. (...) in spite of everything, the Labor Party wants to live. It realized that things must change. (...) Never before has a guest from "another planet," or another party, performed such a quick takeover of an Israeli party that wishes to regain power. (...) I doubt there's a single person in Israel who knows his political opinions, beyond banal statements like "commitment to peace." (...) Gabbay has sat in a government that made decisions that were (...) odd and puzzling. He was a partner. He kept quiet. And he of all people has become the true Messiah? It only means that the party members are fed up. They are simply fed up. The vote contractors' politics didn't work; the desire for change did. (...) Gabbay will have to take a new path. If he leans to the left, he will become the media's darling, or at least a pretty large part of the media. If he leans to the right, he will suffer blows. Netanyahu is praying he'll choose the first and easy path. If Gabbay wants

to turn the Labor Party into an alternative, he shouldn't give Netanyahu that gift.

Ben-Dror Yemini, YED, 12.07.17

Labor looks outside for new hope

(...) Seventy years after it established the state, the Labor movement is thirstier than ever for recognition, for a warm embrace. (...) Welcoming Tzipi Livni to the party ahead of the primaries can be seen in a similar vein, as something that provides a new spirit of hope. It seems the Labor party's confidence is so frail that it does not believe it will ever be able to walk upright again without someone holding its hand. (...) the head of the Knesset's main opposition party will not also be opposition leader. While the person he appoints to that position -- Isaac Herzog, (...) maybe even Amir Peretz -- will meet with world leaders and receive updates on a variety of matters from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Gabbay himself will try to find his political footing outside the Knesset.

Mati Tuchfeld, IHY, 11.07.17

Israel doesn't need 50 shades of center-right. New Labor leader Avi Gabbay must present a substantive alternative to Benjamin Netanyahu's worldview

(...) newly elected chairman Avi Gabbay has breathed new life into the party. The left now feels that it's possible to expand its ranks and even to return to power. (...) Gabbay, who has voted Likud in the past, (...) believes in improving government agencies and public systems by "upping the budget for civilian spending to proportions similar to the norm in the OECD." (...) On the diplomatic front, Gabbay has been careful not to stray beyond the bounds of the familiar comfort zones: Two states, a regional peace process and freezing settlement construction outside the major blocs. (...) Gabbay's main goal is to bring new voters to Labor – starting by returning those who decamped for Yesh Atid – and thus to replace the government. (...) Nevertheless, winning must not become the be-all and end-all. If the goal is to replace Benjamin Netanyahu without posing a real alternative to his policies, the opposition already has Yesh Atid Chairman Yair Lapid. We don't need 50 shades of center-right. Therefore, Gabbay must present a substantive alternative to the current prime minister's worldview. (...) Gabbay would be wise to make it clear to the public where Labor is heading under his leadership and to sketch out the direction in which he wants to lead the country.

Editorial, HAA, 12.07.17

2. Zündstoff im Streit zwischen orthodoxen und liberalen Juden

Der Konflikt um die Gebetsrechte an der Klagemauer, über die Israels orthodoxes Establishment und liberale Juden streiten, hat mit der Regierungsentscheidung, der Knesset eine umstrittene Gesetzesreform zu unterbreiten, weiteren Zündstoff erhalten. Dabei geht es um die alleinige Zuständigkeit des Oberrabbinats für Konvertierungen. Befürworter der Initiative behaupten, dass das Gesetz Israels Konvertierungssystem festige und damit seine Unbescholtenheit garantiere. Anhänger des liberalen und Reformjudentums in Israel und Amerika kritisieren dementsprechend den Verrat der Regierung am jüdischen Pluralismus. Die Beziehungen waren mit der Abkehr Benjamin Netanyahus von dem Kompromiss über die Gebetsrechte an der Klagemauer ohnehin schon schwer belastet. Israels Regierungschef stoppte überraschend die Umsetzung einer Anfang letzten Jahres vereinbarten Regelung, die nicht-orthodoxen jüdischen Frauen und Männern am südlichen Abschnitt der Klagemauer das gemeinsame Gebet ermöglichen sollte.

Israel needs Diaspora Jewry, not their money

(...) There's been a lot of hand-wringing (...) about the irreparable damage to the relationship, for good reason. (...) the money involved sounds like a lot. But the estimate is not very relevant. Only 8 billion of that are charitable contributions by American Jews, of which a lot of that comes from Orthodox Jews and that money isn't threatened by the Kotel controversy. (...) Israeli business doesn't need "Jewish generosity" any more. (...) Certainly, the loss of American charity could be made up by, for instance, cutting stipends for adult Haredim in full-time study and pushing them into the workforce, where they could be contributing to the economy rather than taking from it. But (...) Israel still needs American Jews' political support in Washington and (...) distancing Israel from Diaspora Jewry would strike at the heart of the Zionist enterprise. (...) Israel is and should be at the center of the Jewish world – the heart of Jewish religious and cultural life and (ideally) a source of inspiration for those who live elsewhere. Even if we don't need Diaspora Jews to buy a vacation apartment here, we want it to be their second home. That means making Israel a welcoming place for all Jews. By turning Judaism's most important center of worship into a monopoly of one extremist faction, we have failed.

David Rosenberg, HAA, 02.07.17

A cry for help

(...) What's taking place here isn't an internal religious argument or a spiritual dispute, it's a political battle that has to do with control and resources and recognition. (...) it appears that a close threat from within the government outweighs a familiar threat from overseas. (...) it's convenient for Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to soothe the coalition, even at the expense of threats from the heads of the Reform movement (...) we must not ignore our collective responsibility to the Jewish people in the Diaspora. (...) For the Jews of the Diaspora to return to Zion, we have to strengthen their connection to the Jewish people and their state by combining religious and national tradition, in the right amounts. (...) This is why we should compromise on the framework agreement for prayer at the Western Wall. Nothing evil would have transpired if a place at the southern end of the wall had been earmarked for mixed-gender ceremonies. The opposite: Visitors would have made their way from the southern end to the "classic" Western Wall, thus connecting to their roots. (...) Reform Judaism today needs Israel more than Israel needs it. The worrying numbers about the shrinking community in Judaism's liberal streams demands cooperation with the government of Israel (...) The struggle for Jewish identity, even the vaguest, is a struggle for our existence. (...)

Dror Eydar, IHY, 02.07.17

Diaspora Jewry can't fight Western Wall battle alone

(...) The Kotel battle has turned into a world war between the government, the Haredim and the Diaspora Jewry. In between, there are many Jews whose attitude towards the issue ranges from complete indifference to ineffective anger (...) Despite the injustice suffered by Jews in the United States and in other countries, the reality is that the Western Wall's fate won't be determined by those who don't live here. Alone, the Diaspora Jewry will be incapable of defeating the ultra-Orthodox community's crowded and organized system. (...) without the active involvement of Israeli Jews, the public domain will be shaped by those who care more. This applies to the educational system, to the army and to the Western Wall, which is losing its relevance among those who have had enough of the Haredi dominance at the site. At the moment, this battle is headed towards a major knockout.

Einav Schiff, YED, 02.07.17

Reform Judaism's true mission at the Western Wall

(...) the Western Wall plaza is one of the sites where the state maximizes its involvement in religious affairs, and where it most strongly manipulates religion for political purposes. (...) In the current political context, activities aimed at expanding the Western Wall compound above and below ground are an integral part of the government's efforts, backed by the messianic right wing, to establish facts on the ground to thwart an agreed-upon political resolution and further destabilize relations between Israelis and Palestinians in Jerusalem. (...) It is no accident that the Reform movement's battle for the Western Wall plan received backing from Temple Mount activists such as Yehuda Glick along with support from Education Minister Naftali Bennett. While some settler groups joined hands with the Haredim against the Reform movement, other members of the messianic right wing supported the plan, and not because of any sudden affection for the Reform Movement but more likely because they had a quid pro quo in mind. (...) Prime Minister Netanyahu's position on the Western Wall plan sends a message to the Reform Movement that it does not count in the Israeli political and public realm. The truth is that the presence of an active and influential Reform Movement is crucial for Israeli society, now more than ever. Reform Jewry can and should play an important role in leading a pluralistic religious discourse grounded in principles of social and gender justice and tikkun olam. Such a discourse would recognize the importance of the Western Wall in Jewish tradition and identity, while at the same time treating the site within the context of the larger political reality in which it is centered. The clear moral voice of the Reform Movement will be needed when additional holy sites and Palestinian properties in the Old City and Historic Basin face the danger of being handed over to private settler groups and when the Temple Mount movements escalate pressure to change the status quo. (...)

Yudith Oppenheimer, TOI, 02.07.17

Don't give up on the Diaspora

(...) This is not a crisis that can be ignored. The bond between the Jews in Zion and the Jews in the Diaspora, which began even before the establishment of the State of Israel, and Diaspora Jews' unwavering support, are at the foundation of the state and its continued existence over the years. (...) U.S. Jewry is gradually assimilating into America. (...) The Diaspora Jewish community promotes many initiatives and projects in Israel. These initiatives would never

come to be without the Jewish community's generosity and without its affection for the state. This is a bond that we cannot afford to lose. If the Jewish people want to survive, we cannot turn our backs on a third of ourselves over some internal dispute, as important as it may be. (...) The Western Wall issue and the conversion issue are important problems for every Jew, whether he or she is in Israel or abroad. (...) The State of Israel, more than just another sovereign state, is above all the home of every Jewish son or daughter, wherever he or she may live. We must therefore sit around the debate table in a respectful manner and resolve this crisis gently and with sensitivity.(...)

Zeev Bielski, IHY, 03.07.17

Why you should care about Conversion Bill (even if you aren't a convert)

(...) the Conversion Bill (...) will strip the recognition of Jews who underwent private conversions in Israel independent of the state and would make them ineligible to make aliyah under the Law of Return. This bill will directly affect past, present and future converts. It also indirectly affects all Jews from any type of progressive stream of Judaism, even if you aren't a convert or a descendant of a convert. (...) This Conversion Bill is a direct affront on Jews around the world, on their belief systems and the authority of their rabbis. The moment that Israel does not accept the converts of any stream of Judaism, then it is not accepting its community as a whole. (...) It won't stop there. Converts are only the canary in the coal mine of the ultra-Orthodox's monopoly of Judaism in Israel. They may be coming after your converts first, but ultra-Orthodox leaders' hatred towards Reform, Conservative, and egalitarian streams of Judaism runs deep. It stretches from convincing much of the Israeli public that Reform or Conservative rabbis and Reform and Conservative Jews are not real rabbis or real Jews, by using derogatory and inflammatory statements to limiting financial funding for m progressive streams of Judaism in the state. (...) Just as in the United States, the religious extremists are trying to chip away at minority, women's and LGBTQ rights, the religious extremists are attempting to implement discriminatory religious policy in Israel. (...)

Jessica Fishman, YED, 04.07.17

3. Empörung über Hebron-Entscheidung der UNESCO

Israels Regierung kommentierte die Entscheidung der UNESCO, Hebron und die Grabstätte der Patriarchen als gefährdetes „palästinensisches“ Weltkulturerbe anzuerkennen, mit Empörung. Als „surrealistisch“ bezeichnete Israels Regierungschef Benjamin Netanyahu die Botschaft des Welterbekomitees. Andere Stimmen in Israel sprachen von Antisemitismus. Aus Protest ließ Netanyahu eine Million Dollar vom Mitgliedsbeitrag einfrieren, den Israel an die UNESCO zahlt. Zwölf Staaten des Welterbekomitees stimmten für den palästinensischen Antrag, nur drei dagegen und sechs enthielten sich. Die Entscheidung des UNESCO-Gremiums umfasst eine jährliche Evaluierung der Altstadt von Hebron, wo einige hundert israelische Siedler inmitten von rund 200.000 Palästinensern leben. Die Resolution hält weiter fest, dass Hebron eine der ältesten Städte weltweit ist und bis in die Kupferzeit 3000 Jahre vor christlicher Zeitrechnung zurückreicht.

What's the big fuss about the UNESCO resolution on Hebron?

Israeli leaders became furious after UNESCO voted to recognize Hebron's Old City and Tomb of the Patriarchs as Palestinian heritage sites on Friday. But what's all the fuss about? The tomb is holy to adherents of both Islam and Judaism. For Jews, it's considered the burial site of the biblical patriarchs and matriarchs: Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebecca, and Jacob and Leah. In Arabic, the tomb is known as Ibrahim mosque, and Muslims revere it because they consider Abraham a patriarch through his son Ishmael. The UNESCO resolution matters to both sides. A lot. (...)

Editorial, HAA, 09.07.17

When nothing is sacred, UNESCO ruling comes as no surprise

(...) The Jewish connection to the Cave of the Patriarchs is thousands of years old and began many years before Islam was born. (...) When something is "sacred," we can't give it up even if we really want to. We can agree or disagree with this outlook, but we can't deny the significant role that sanctity plays in battles, and especially in national battles. The battle over the people of Israel's historical and modern right to the places that are the cradle of the Jewish people's existence is being waged between two very different sides. One side, the Arab-Palestinian side, knows how to sanctify the things it finds important. The other side, the Jewish-Israeli side, acts in a way

that conveys that nothing is sacred. The moment that the State of Israel, as the Jewish people's representative, is willing to put on the negotiating table issues like the sovereignty and status of the Temple Mount and the Cave of the Patriarchs, the message to the Palestinians and to the entire world is very clear: Nothing is actually sacred to us. When on one side, the entire educational system is focused on strengthening the sacred status of the right to the land, while on the other side, talking about our right to the Temple Mount or to the Cave of the Patriarchs is considered "religionization," we are losing the battle before it even began. In such a reality, the UNESCO ruling comes as no surprise. The real surprise is that such a ruling was only made now.

Shlomo Puterkovsky, YED, 09.07.17

Hebron is a shared heritage site in Palestine

(...) the automatic outrage demonstrates how central cultural and religious heritage sites have become in justifying Israel's sense of righteousness about holding onto the West Bank. (...) The decision itself (...) specifically says that the "al-mosque Ibrahim/ Tomb of the Patriarchs" "became a site of pilgrimage for the three monotheistic religions: Judaism, Christianity and Islam." (...) Hebron (...) is a quintessential example of a shared heritage site (...) and of clear universal historical value. What a pity that it is falling victim to the awful feuds over "who was here first." (...) What Netanyahu and others are really worried about is (...) that a large part of the international community recognizes that Hebron is in Palestine. (...) The professional body which advises UNESCO, ICOMOS, found problems with the Palestinians' nomination dossier. (...) It is definitely a pity that the Palestinians did not include Tel Rumeida, the ancient town which dates back to 4000 BCE, in their nomination. (...) it's probably safe to say that those who voted in favor on Friday were driven primarily by a desire to support the Palestinian right to establish a state along the pre-1967 borders. As such it was a protest vote, not against the age-old Jewish connection to Hebron, but against 50 years of Israeli occupation. Ancient Hebron can be Jewish. Yes, as well as Muslim and also of significance for Christians and others. But it is not Israeli territory. (...) as long as there is no solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, UNESCO will no doubt continue to be a central stage where Israel and the Palestinians fight their wars of precedence and rights.

Editorial, JPO, 11.07.17

UNESCO resolution on Hebron isn't anti-Semitic at all

(...) UNESCO's decision (...) recognized the Old City of Hebron (...) and the Ibrahimi Mosque (...) as a world heritage site holy to three faiths. (...) And because this heritage site isn't on the moon, but in the State of Palestine (...), the name written in parentheses is Palestine. And that's what all the fuss is about. (...) A degree of comfort can be found in the moving sight of the consensus, which has returned to its glory days. Opposition and coalition are united in celebrating the world's wickedness toward the Jews. (...) An Arab adage says, "If the master of the house is drumming, all the members of his family will go out to dance." Netanyahu is drumming, and everyone is going out to dance. (...) The question is whether Israel's position derives from a religious commandment – that every Jewish site must be severed from its connection to non-Jews, even if it's under their sovereignty – or whether it derives from Israel's refusal to recognize the Palestinian people and their right to establish a state. (...) perhaps both are true. (...) Therefore, the Israeli uproar over the UNESCO decision reveals the government's true face: It is set on conflict with the Palestinians, not reconciliation. And this stance is no less significant with regard to the state's self-definition: Is Israel the state of a single ethnic group, even if it's the majority, or is it a modern civic state?
Odeh Bisharat, HAA, 11.07.17

The sanctity of Hebron was violated long before UNESCO

(...) the sanctity of the Tomb of the Patriarchs was meticulously divided between Muslims and Jews (...) one group has the Jewish tombs, the other group has the mosque, with Abraham as their shared father. (...) Israel's occupation was still in its infancy, and the country was very careful to demonstrate its respectful attitude to all the religions. But the settlers didn't see it that way. More than they saw the cave as a holy place, they adopted it as a battlefield. Sometimes among themselves — Yemenites, Ashkenazim and Sephardim — and at other times between themselves and the Muslims. The place was so sacred in the eyes of the settlers that Rabbi Moshe Levinger allowed his toddler son to urinate at the top of the stairs at the entrance for the Muslims. The settlers of Kiryat Arba had so much respect for the site, and were so meticulous about preserving its sanctity as a Muslim house of prayer, that they brought bottles of wine in order to celebrate a bar mitzva or to perform a wedding ceremony. It wasn't only a demonstration of strength against the Muslims. The main purpose of

such acts was to decimate the rules and regulations meant to maintain the status quo in the cave. (...) The UNESCO declaration of the Tomb of the Patriarchs as a World Heritage site located in Palestine perfectly sums up its history in the days in which the settlers rule in Hebron. Suddenly the United Nations has touched the Jews' sense of sanctity as though this site belonged to all the religions. (...) The Tomb of the Patriarchs has become a fortified army base surrounded by a "sterile" area, an unquestioned symbol of the settlers' victory over the non-Jews and of the IDF's subordination to the Army of God. Truly, the Tomb of the Patriarchs is worthy of being called a World Heritage site, not because of the tombs of our patriarchs and matriarchs, but as a monument to the Jewish national religious victory over the Muslims. (...) Nobody, not even the United Nations, is allowed to deny Israel this great achievement.
Zvi Bar'el, HAA, 12.07.17

4. Gewalt am Tempelberg

Nach tödlichen Schüssen auf dem Tempelberg in Jerusalems Altstadt sperrten die israelischen Sicherheitskräfte das Gelände zunächst für zwei Tage komplett und montierten anschließend Metalldetektoren und Überwachungskameras an Zugängen zum Gelände rings um den Felsendom und die al-Aqsa-Moschee. Bei dem Anschlag mit Schusswaffen waren zwei israelische Grenzpolizisten sowie die drei Attentäter zu Tode gekommen. Mit den Metalldetektoren sollte sichergestellt werden, dass keine Waffen mehr auf den Tempelberg geschmuggelt werden. Die Sicherheitsmaßnahmen erregten den Unmut gläubiger Muslime, die gegen „die Verletzung des Status quo“ protestierten und sich der Kontrolle durch die Metalldetektoren verweigerten. Federführend bei dem Protest waren Vertreter des Waqf, der Islamischen Religiösen Stiftung. Der Waqf verwaltet die muslimischen Pilgerstätten in Israel und den Palästinensergebieten im Auftrag Jordaniens. Nach intensiven Beratungen der Regierung wurden die Metalldetektoren inzwischen und Überwachungskameras von den Zugängen zum Gelände rings um den Felsendom wieder entfernt.

Israel's security conundrum

(...) The Old City of Jerusalem is not an airport or shopping mall, where visitors can be checked physically. The Muslim masses -- sometimes in the hundreds of thousands -- worship at the mosques every Friday. It isn't practical to inspect everyone, one at a time, to ensure that no one is a terrorist with a

weapon. Doing so would require vast investments of money and manpower, and would mainly force the thousands of worshippers and other visitors to the Old City to wait in endless lines, which in turn would become targets themselves for attacks. (...) The constant incitement against Israel regarding the Temple Mount persistently motivates young Palestinians to carry out attacks in east Jerusalem. (...) even the most innocuous of actions there can serve as motivation for violence. (...) The fact that Arab-Israelis carried out the attack should first and foremost concern the Arab population, because it paints them as a fifth column in the eyes of many Israelis. (...) the terrorist plot hatched in Umm el-Fahm flew under the radar of the Shin Bet security agency, while police are struggling to get a handle on the issue of illegal firearms in the Arab sector. (...) Considering the high ratio of Druze-Israelis serving in the Border Police, it was inevitable that they, too, would be among the victims. However, it's hard to ignore the symbolism in their deaths. Druze men, serving in the Israeli police, killed by Arab Israelis while guarding the Temple Mount. Yoav Limor, IHY, 16.07.17

Allah's warriors from Umm al-Fahm

(...) This act by three Israeli Arabs will unfortunately bring forth a knee-jerk reaction by some of Israel's Jewish citizens, who will hurl indiscriminate accusations against Israel's Arab citizens. Those who incited the terrorists from Umm al-Fahm will not regret this secondary effect. The integration of Israeli Arab citizens into Israeli society runs contrary to their credo. (...) Umm al-Fahm is known as a hotbed of the northern branch of the Islamic Movement. (...) It is they who for years propagated the lie that the Al-Aqsa mosque was in danger of being destroyed by Israel, attempting to fan hatred for Israel among all Muslims. (...) Many will call these terrorists Palestinian freedom fighters (...) Strangely enough, many on the Israeli left who should be well acquainted with Middle Eastern reality have adopted a similar mind-set. They have accepted the idea of a Palestinian nation, distinct from a Jordanian nation, and insist that Israel end the "occupation" and provide the Palestinians a chance to establish a free democratic state. (...) Many of them probably wish that they could separate from the Palestinians who are Israeli citizens as well, if that were possible. Allah's warriors from Umm al-Fahm may have reinforced these feelings. Moshe Arens, HAA, 17.07.17

The Temple Mount is in our Hands

The Temple Mount is a holy site, but there is nothing sacred about the status quo. We've been hearing repeated oaths of allegiance to the status quo, with people on all sides declaring they have no intention of changing it. (...) But if something isn't working, it can – and should – be changed, and then the new order will become entrenched. We'll have a new status quo. (...) Jews should have the right to visit the Temple Mount without being accosted by gangs of young punks funded by the Islamic Movement. (...) why should the Wakf hate-mongers have any status whatsoever with respect to the compound? Or the gates? Why are Jews only allowed to enter through the Mughrabi Gate? And why so few? Why are Jews the only ones kept out whenever there is an outbreak of Muslim violence? Why can't we walk around freely? Why should we give the enemies of Israel the status of a state within a state? (...) The Temple Mount has become an arena of hostility and terrorism, and an ex-territorial one to boot. You can't appease the aggressor; you have to stand up to him. (...) Here's what we should do: send the Wakf officials packing. Deploy security forces throughout the Temple Mount, so that everyone, including Jews, will feel safe. And make it clear that our sovereignty over the site is more than just empty words. Gilad Sharon, JPO, 19.07.17

Abbas can't evade responsibility

Those hoping to revive the peace process breathed a sigh of relief when Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas joined Jordan's King Abdullah in condemning last Friday's Temple Mount terror attack. (...) Abbas will get credit for saying the right thing in this instance. But he cannot evade responsibility for what happened and what may follow (...) No one has done more to promote the lie that Israel is seeking to destroy the Temple Mount mosques than the PA leader. (...) Abbas is skilled at playing a double game in which he poses as the defender of Islam against settlers while also posing as Israel's reliable security partner. Like all good scams, there is a measure of truth in his attempt to sell himself to both the Israeli public and the West as someone eager to combat terror. (...) Abbas' apologists are right that the PA helped quell the "stabbing intifada" in recent years. But it is also true that (...) the PA leader (...) told his people that "stinking Jewish feet" should not be allowed to profane the holy places of Jerusalem. (...) once unleashed, this sort of propaganda can't be controlled (...) Abbas' motive for speaking about a threat to Al-Aqsa was entirely cynical. Doing so allowed him to

compete with Hamas for popular support. (...) this most recent example of Palestinian terrorism shows exactly why Israel's focus on forcing the PA to cease incitement is a core issue rather than a distraction from efforts to promote peace. It isn't enough for Abbas to condemn some terror attacks while staying silent about others (...). As long as the PA actively seeks to spread the "Al-Aqsa is in danger" story rather than condemn it as a dangerous, no one should take Abbas' peacemaker pose seriously.
Jonathan S. Tobin , IHY, 19.07.17

Remove Metal Detectors First

It's hard to exaggerate the possible danger posed by the events this week on the Temple Mount. (...) The Temple Mount is not like the Western Wall or a shopping mall, as Jerusalem Police Chief Yoram Halevy claimed. Tens of thousands of people come to the Temple Mount on Fridays within a short amount of time. The metal detectors will make the pressure at the entrances unmanageable. But more importantly, in the eyes of the Palestinians, the metal detectors are meant to humiliate them, to restrict them and to allow freedom of worship for Jews on the Mount. (...) Past experience shows that if there's one issue that can unite the entire Arab world against Israel and lead to bloodshed, it's the Temple Mount. (...) One can assume that the police and the government understand their mistake, but they are afraid to backtrack for reasons of honor and image. One must remember that this is a volatile situation that could end up costing lives on both sides. That's why the government should give in, remove the metal detectors and then have discussions with officials responsible for security arrangements on the Temple Mount.
Editorial, HAA, 20.07.17

Keep the metal detectors

The very public disagreement between the Shin Bet security agency and the Israel Police over the continued presence of metal detectors on the Temple Mount is sending an unhealthy message of apprehension to our enemies. Once the detectors were installed at the entrance to the site, the only way to reverse the decision is in shame. Arabs will interpret Israel's about-face as weakness, and it will bolster their view that Jews only understand force. (...) Israel is supposed to be the sovereign power on the Temple Mount. This sovereignty has been eroded to an absurd degree, as it is the only place that a Jewish child cannot utter a Jewish prayer without being expelled. We have been walking on eggshells for 50 years now, straining not to awaken sleeping monsters. (...) we

must not be deterred. The ones making the threats should be afraid. We are in the three-week period of mourning the destruction of the first and second Jewish Temples. The memory of Jerusalem's destruction and the prayer for its resurrection preserved our hope of returning to Zion for thousands of years. There were times that our enemies could slaughter us freely. Those days are gone, thank God. Israeli policemen and soldiers are not carrying hoes. Those who want to rage will reap the whirlwind.
Dror Eydar, IHY, 20.07.17

On Temple Mount, will reason trump politics?

The Israeli decision to set up comprehensive security inspections and walk-through metal detectors at the entrances to the Temple Mount in Jerusalem may well seem reasonable and justified, in light of the deadly terror attack last Friday near the compound. But any attempt to apply "justice" or "reason" to the holy site is irrelevant (...) it seems outraged Muslims are hardly interested in Israel's objective security needs at this point. (...) the question of why the detectors' presence has been met with such animus by Muslims is a valid one (...) Two of the clerics responsible for that call were the grand mufti of Jerusalem, Muhammad Ahmad Hussein, and the former mufti, Sheikh Ekrima Sabri. Both have suffered a decline in their standing in the eyes of the Palestinian public recently, and both could potentially regain some lost glory through their confrontational approach. And if top religious leaders declare the Al-Aqsa Mosque under attack, no Palestinians would dare say differently, lest they be deemed traitors and collaborators. (...) However, this all has less to do with any actual outrage than with Fatah's need to give rival faction Hamas a political fight for the hearts and minds of the Palestinian public. (...) the detectors' removal would be a victory for the extreme, threatening voices that are now trying to force Israel's hand (...) yet a repeat of the last major conflagration at the Mount – the Western Wall Tunnel riots of 1996, when 17 Israelis and 100 Palestinians were killed in intense fighting – won't do anyone any good. (...) In the end Israel will probably need to be the responsible adult in the room in this matter, as there don't seem to be many of those on the Palestinian side at the moment. (...)
Avi Issacharoff, TOI, 20.07.17

Lesson learned: violence pays

The need to conduct security checks, and prevent the smuggling of weapons or explosives into such a sensitive site, should be self-evident. It is ludicrous to view metal detectors as a threat to freedom of Islamic

worship, or a change to the status quo at the holy site. (...) why did the Israeli defense establishment still recommend getting rid of the metal detectors? (...) A provocation at the Temple Mount can fuel radical elements (...), who will try to exploit the issue to generate Islamic unity (...) Israel has no interest in uniting the Islamic world against it. (...) the Temple Mount issue is a battle over sovereignty, which fits into a much larger picture. It is an important matter, but it is not the only way to look at the situation. A second approach to the crisis (...) is based on the importance of Jewish-Israeli sovereignty, and Israel's right to introduce reasonable security measures. Only time will tell which narrative should have prevailed, and what price Israel will pay for not upholding sovereignty. Amir Avivi, TOI, 27.07.17

5. Eklat mit Jordanien

In Amman griff ein junger Jordanier einen israelischen Wachmann mit einem Schraubenzieher an und stach ihn in den Rücken, worauf der Israeli nicht nur den Angreifer erschoss, sondern versehentlich auch den Vermieter der Wohnung, in der der Wachmann wohnte. Während jordanische Berichte zunächst davon ausgingen, dass es sich um einen Streit um Geld gehandelt haben könnte, vermutet man in Israel, dass der Angriff durch die Krise am Tempelberg motiviert war. Für die israelische Version spricht, dass der Vater des jordanischen Angreifers seinen Sohn als Märtyrer bezeichnete. Israels Entscheidung, die Metalldetektoren am Tempelberg zu demontieren, kam fast zeitgleich mit der Ankündigung Jordaniens, den Botschaftswachposten nach Israel ausreisen zu lassen, ohne ihn vorher zum polizeilichen Verhör zu bestellen. Die Regierung in Jerusalem stritt einen Zusammenhang der beiden Entscheidungen ab. Tatsache ist, dass Jordaniens König Abdullah II. im Vorfeld der Kabinettsentscheidung telefonisch von Israels Regierungschef Benjamin Netanyahu forderte, die Metalldetektoren am Tempelberg entfernen zu lassen.

The Amman Shooting Incident at the Israeli Embassy

(...) No doubt this extremely serious event will complicate the already strained relationship between Jordan and Israel, entangled in sensitive regional negotiations to resolve the Temple Mount crisis and stabilize the situation. (...) The Jordanian regime is already threatened by another crisis. On July 17, a Jordanian military court convicted 1st Sgt. Maarek Abu Tayeh of the premeditated killing of three US

Green Berets last November at Prince Faisal Air Base in al-Jafr, in the kingdom's south. He was sentenced to life in prison. Since the ruling, Abu Tayeh's tribe, the Howeitat, an important supporter of Hashemite rule, has been protesting (...) A recent historic example proves the difficulty of Arab regimes, even those with diplomatic relations with Israel, with regard to sustaining normal relations with the Jewish state. In September 2011, seven months after the popular uprising in Egypt, hundreds of protesters against Egypt's ruling generals broke into the Israeli embassy in Cairo, tearing down large sections of a security wall. (...) In a similar incident in September 1999, in Germany, 200 Kurdish PKK supporters armed with iron bars entered the Israeli consulate in a tranquil Berlin suburb. (...) In contrast to the Egyptian behavior, German police arrested 30 PKK supporters and cordoned off the area, and helicopters circled over the consulate building. (...) Hopefully, the Amman shooting incident will be solved through intensive political and diplomatic contacts before it grows to a major bilateral and regional crisis. Ely Karmon, JPO, 24.07.17

Partners on the Temple Mount

The cabinet decided (...) to remove the metal detectors (...) reports indicated that the decision was part of a deal forced on the cabinet by the events in the Israeli Embassy in Jordan. (...) The agreement (...) is no substitute for a thorough investigation of the fatal incident in Jordan. No less important is an examination of the decision making process that created the fiasco of installing the metal detectors, which turned out to be a strategic blunder. (...) The important lesson from the episode is that Israel needs Arab and Muslim allies, who are just as fearful as it is of a conflagration that could set the streets in Arab nations on fire. It is worth mentioning in regard to recent events the effective involvement of Jordan, Egypt and Saudi Arabia, which invested great efforts, direct and indirect, to bring about a solution. (...) This cooperation between Israel and Arab states created, for the first time, a public basis for speaking about this sensitive issue, one that is not generally discussed between Israel and these countries. This meeting of interests has created an ad hoc partnership that should be nurtured and deepened, and that cannot be detached from the peace process. (...) Editorial, HAA, 25.07.17

Amman embassy shooting was just what Netanyahu needed

(...) While the heated argument cost two Jordanian citizens their lives, it provided Netanyahu with a way out of the metal detector fiasco at the Temple Mount. (...) The safety of the diplomats at the Israeli Embassy in Amman was not the only thing at stake; so was the future of Israel's relations with Jordan and other Sunni states in the region, including Turkey and Saudi Arabia, and the chance of quelling the violence in Israel and in the West Bank. (...) Netanyahu sowed the wind and reaped the whirlwind. The metal detector idea was born in the arrogant mind of police officers. (...) The rules of the game were set 50 years ago by then-Defense Minister Moshe Dayan: The Israeli flag won't be raised over the Temple Mount mosques. Israel will be the de fact sovereign, through the Israel Police, but the Waqf, whose leaders receive their salary from Jordan, will be responsible for the daily activity. Every move will be coordinated. Dayan was afraid, rightfully, of a religious war that would sweep the entire Muslim world. (...) Placing the metal detectors and then removing them demonstrated to the entire world that Israel is not the landlord. Netanyahu, and the ministers who pushed him, weakened the Israeli foothold in the Temple Mount compound. Nahum Barnea, YED, 25.07.17

Preserving Israel-Jordan ties

(...) Despite the complexity of their relationship, both Israel and Jordan have a clear interest in preserving and strengthening it (...) Israel has in recent years turned Jordan into a partner in the administration of the Temple Mount, and has even anchored this partnership, albeit not explicitly, in the peace treaty between the two countries. From Israel's standpoint, Jordan is a strategic, regional and security asset. (...) All this and more now depends on this crisis letting up. (...) While Israel and Jordan share the site, they are both present and absent from it (...). With or without metal detectors, relations between the two countries will rise or fall on the Temple Mount and at its gates. If I had to make a wager right now, I'd say both sides have too much at stake to allow themselves not to resolve the current challenge. Nadav Shragai, IHY, 25.07.17

Jordan is key to Temple Mount

(...) Israel has tried to give Jordan a more prominent role in defusing the Temple Mount crisis, but this effort was complicated by the security incident at the embassy. (...) Had Israel decided not to pay the price, relations could have soured further and the scope of

the violence could have increased. (...) those who thought the controversy over the Temple Mount was a local matter that would fade away were wrong. (...) It will take time before tensions subside, and security forces will have to stay on high alert in the near term both in Israel and, as the embassy incident shows, abroad. (...) to send Shin Bet Director Nadav Argaman, rather than Mossad Director Yossi Cohen, to Jordan to resolve the crisis (...) an interesting choice considering that relations with the kingdom are usually handled by the spy agency. The fact that Argaman was dispatched is a particularly painful public rebuke of the Mossad (...) the decision by the Office of the Military Censor to prevent Israeli news outlets from reporting on the incident for about 12 hours, despite the information being disseminated freely on social media (...) did not contribute to Israel's security. In fact, it severely undermined its own credibility and ensured that Israelis will turn elsewhere for news. Yoav Limor, IHY, 25.07.17

Investigate the Israeli security guard

(...) It's good that the security guard in the Israeli Embassy in Jordan's capital, who was stabbed and shot his assailant and landlord to death, was not given up to Jordanian justice. (...) But the glorifying of the guard's heroism, presided over by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, is simply too much. (...) It could be that the security guard's version of events is correct, but to confirm it there needs to be a criminal investigation by the Israel Police in cooperation with the Jordanian police. Political considerations in diplomatic garb must not prevent an effort to get at the truth. (...) Netanyahu acted as if the return of the embassy staff to Israel was a successful rescue mission by the elite fighters of Sayeret Matkal at the end of a heroic military operation. (...) there was an immediate phone call to the "commander in chief" and a warm embrace the next morning. "We knew you'd be back," said the prime minister. A poor man's Entebbe. (...) Israel and the entire region need leadership that is thoughtful in its actions and moderate in its messages, which is the opposite of how Netanyahu behaves. Editorial, HAA, 27.07.17

6. Drei Tote bei Attentat in Halamish

Israels Justizministerin Ayelet Shaked von der Siedlerpartei Habayit Hayehudi fordert die Todesstrafe für den palästinensischen Attentäter, der in der Siedlung Halamish drei Israelis während des Abendessens

überfiel und erstach. Seit Staatsgründung ist in Israel nur ein einziges Mal die Todesstrafe eingesetzt worden. 1962 wurde Adolf Eichmann erhängt für sein Zutun am Massenmord an den Juden im Zweiten Weltkrieg. Regierungschef Netanyahu unterstützt den aktuellen Appell von Justizministerin Shaked. Die Zeit sei reif dafür, meinte er im Verlauf eines Kondolenzbesuchs bei Angehörigen der drei Anschlagsoffer. Eine Gesetzesreform sei dazu nicht nötig. Voraussetzung sei lediglich die übereinstimmende Entscheidung der Richter. „Wir müssen dafür sorgen, dass er (der Attentäter) nicht mehr lächelt.“

Halamish attack: The writing was all over the wall

The heart explodes at the site of the images from the Halamish home. Terror is terror, murder is murder. (...) The lightness in which young Palestinians are tempted to carry out horrid, unfounded acts in the name of religion casts a heavy shadow on the chance for a real reconciliation. (...) We don't have to fall in love with them; we have to work vis-à-vis these people undauntedly, coherently and sensibly. (...) The writing wasn't just on the wall—it was on the table, in every internal discussion. (...) The problem likely begins with Jerusalem District Police Commander Yoram Halevy, who acted this week as if he doesn't know or doesn't understand the sensitivity and explosiveness of the Temple Mount issue. The same applies to Police Commissioner Roni Alsheikh and Public Security Minister Gilad Erdan. The (...) Palestinian public reacted (...) in a consensus, in a mass call to act against Israel. (...) Regardless of how Israel saw the empty mountain—as far as the Muslims are concerned, it was a humiliation that must not be accepted. (...) The fear of right-wing voters was replaced with a fear of a new intifada. Now, terribly late, wisdom has suddenly kicked in: The metal detectors will be removed, the Temple Mount will be opened (...). All that is left for the government to do is to pray to Allah and hope things will calm down on the ground. (...)

Nahum Barnea, YED, 23.07.17

A home, not a battlefield

I think about the mother who was protecting her children behind a single closed door, able to hear from the upper floor of the house what was happening, the murderer making his way toward her babies, with nothing for her to do but lean against the door and pray. (...) Friday evening, a time for rest and for family. The five members of the Fogel family from Itamar were also murdered in their home on the eve of the holy Shabbat. And the four members of the

Gavish family were killed in their home in Elon Moreh on the eve of Passover. (...) In all these incidents, bloodthirsty killers broke into homes sanctified by a cup of wine and love, filled with the simple joy of dishes on the countertop and quiet conversation, and turned kitchens into slaughterhouses. (...) One of the pictures handed out by the IDF Spokesperson's Unit from inside the home shows an Israeli kitchen: a refrigerator covered with souvenir magnets from family events, a hot plate to keep the Shabbat food warm, glasses in the dish drainer. A typical kitchen. But there is also a huge blood stain. The floor is awash in human lives, blood of the pure and innocent that was simply and terrifyingly spilled by a person. And a stray slipper, an upside-down shoe, reminding us how homelike and ordinary the scene was. It wasn't a battlefield. It was a home, with dishes on the counter and a slipper. (...)

Emily Amrousi, IHY, 23.07.17

The worst part

The worst part is that when, minutes after I read the news about the latest terrorist attack, a Muslim woman came into the Starbucks where I'd been trying to work, I immediately began wondering where her sympathies might lie and imagining whether her modest dress could be hiding a knife, and what would happen if she suddenly ran over to stab me. No, the worst part is that three people are dead for absolutely no reason. (...) No, the worst part is that a 19-year-old was taught there was a reason to randomly kill random Jews, and posted on Facebook about it, and did it. (...) No, the worst part is that a woman who is a mother and a grandmother was wounded, and had to be informed, as she came out of surgery, that her husband and two of her children were gone. (...) No, the worst part is that his five children had to hide in the other room and listen in fear, and he can never comfort them again. (...) The worst part is that there's no way to know, and the more this happens, the more we fear and suspect and wonder who to trust or how we can ever talk to each other and determine that we don't want each other dead, that we're all nice human beings who don't deserve this pain. No, the worst part is that he knocked and they let him in — and the next time someone knocks, we will have learned not to open the door.

Sarah C. Rudolph, TOI, 23.07.17

Israel's tweeters of death

(...) The heads of Habayit Hayehudi have launched a despicable campaign. Since the attack in Halamish they have been ranting and raving about the military

justice system, trampling on the separation of powers and tweeting demands for the death penalty for the terrorist who was captured alive. (...) The death penalty is a dead letter in Israeli law, both civilian and military. Prosecutors haven't asked for it in years. (...) Execution, murder by law, is one of the worst injustices in human society. I have no affection or mercy for the murderer, which is why I don't want to become one. (...) This has nothing to do with the war against terror. This is bloodlust, as if there isn't enough blood and death in the world. (...) We must eliminate the death penalty entirely. A religious person might say that decrees of death are in the hands of God, not in human hands. I think that it's absolutely in human hands, and each person must choose whether to be a human being or to lose all semblance of humanity. (...) Leave killing to the Angel of Death. He has his hands full. We will concentrate on life.
Nitzan Horowitz, HAA, 26.07.17

7. Medienquerschnitt

Unsauberer U-Boot-Handel

How did massive defense deals slip under the public radar?

(...) The taxpayer has no clue about massive deals signed by the defense establishment under the title of "state secrets." It's a system which makes decisions on purchases worth millions, without any real accountability to anyone. (...) what the police are investigating today began in 2009, when in cooperation with then-Navy chief Eli Marom, two of the suspects in the affair succeeded in terminating the employment of Thyssenkrupp's representative in Israel, Shaike Bareket, and replace him with Ganor. At the exact same time, completely by chance, Bar-Yosef was appointed deputy head of the National Security Council, in the capacity of a CEO, following a recommendation from the prime minister. And the plot thickens. (...) Ya'alon was fired from the position of defense minister following a deep rift with Netanyahu, which Ya'alon says was the result of the deals with Thyssenkrupp. On June 1, 2016, Shimron and Ganor sat down with Avi Nissenkorn, secretary-general of the Histadrut labor federation, and with the chairman of the Navy shipyards' workers union, to discuss the shipyards' privatization—essentially, selling them to Thyssenkrupp. These are the shipyards that are supposed to handle the vessels that will be purchased from Thyssenkrupp. It's the perfect deal: Both selling ships and handling them. (...) Did the

prime minister know? There's no doubt that the police would like to know what he knew and what he didn't know. (...)
Alex Fishman, YED, 11.07.17

When power and greed get out of hand

(...) Shimron is Netanyahu's private attorney and his representative in any political negotiation (...) When lawyers run the kingdom's business and their private business simultaneously, the sin is waiting at the door, ready to strike. When it's about decisions worth billions and a prime minister's direct involvement, the sin is outrageous. (...) Attorney Shimron walked around government ministries like a king in his castle. He made a name for him-self through the prime minister's aura. Businesspeople were impressed and waited at his door. (...) There is another mystery around the submarine affair: Why was this huge purchase deal handled by the Prime Minister's Office instead of by the Defense Ministry? Why did Netanyahu insist, in a completely unprecedented manner, to hand the issue over to an office which is unfit to deal with it, without any control and without any discussion? (...) The big question is the role Netanyahu played in these two affairs. If he knew nothing (...) his competence is questionable. If he did know, holy cow. (...).

Nahum Barnea, YED, 13.07.17

Netanjahus umstrittene Reise nach Budapest

Mr. Netanyahu, don't go to Hungary!

If Viktor Orban doesn't personally and fully apologize, Prime Minister Netanyahu should cancel his visit to Hungary. (...) In a speech, recently Orban heaped praise on one of his predecessors, Miklos Horthy. He called him among other things, "an exceptional statesman." Horthy the "exceptional" served as Regent of Hungary, which was then a Kingdom, between 1920-1944. He is also one of the founding fathers of modern anti-Semitism. (...) Long before Hitler or Mussolini, he was one of the twentieth century European leaders who started the trend of anti-Semitic laws that limited the access of Jews to academia, and then later also to government jobs, the business sector and the media. (...) Horthy made anti-Semitism a central tenet of his regime and from 1933 saw Hitler as a natural ally. In 1940, he led Hungary into the 'axis' with Hitler and deepened his policy of anti-Semitism. First, tens of thousands of Jews were sent to forced labor camps. Then deportations began to the death camps. Among the victims were

many members of my family, all of them loyal Hungarian citizens whose only crime was being Jewish. Between May and July 1944, more than half a million Hungarian Jews were murdered. Miklos Horthy is a war criminal and is no less responsible for those murders than the Nazis. (...) If he has any national pride, the Prime Minister should demand a retraction from Viktor Orban. (...)
Yair Lapid, TOI, 05.07.17

Netanyahu's diplomatic dance

(...) In Hungary, Netanyahu will be the guest of the Visegrad Group -- comprising Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovakia -- considered the most forceful opposition bloc to the EU's Franco-German leadership. (...) these countries are now considered Israel's closest allies in Europe. But there is a downside: The support for Israel comes from the ruling parties, which are known to flirt with the radical anti-Semitic Right. Hungary is the perfect example. Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban has (...) pressed for Netanyahu to make an official visit. And now, on the eve of the long-awaited visit, Orban's government has created two situations that have cast a shadow over the preparations for Netanyahu's visit. The first was when Orban delivered a speech in which he praised the late Hungarian dictator Miklos Horthy, the Nazi collaborator who introduced anti-Semitic laws in his country before Nazi Germany took that same step. The second was when a billboard campaign in support of Orban and against migration and foreign influence (...) targeted Jewish Hungarian-American billionaire George Soros, who funds anti-government organizations in Hungary and other countries around the world, including Israel. (...) To many Hungarians, Soros symbolizes Jewish control of their country and the world. (...) Netanyahu will need a great deal of diplomacy to tread this mine-field unscathed.
Eldad Beck, IHY, 12.07.17

Kronzeuge in U-Boot-Affäre

Submarine affair requires commission of inquiry
Thyssenkrupp representative Miki Ganor's apparent willingness to become a state's witness in the submarine (...) affair raises interest on the criminal side of the affair. (...) Even if we assume that the criminal investigation won't lead to any charges (...) we have here (...) a series of claims about the way defense purchases are handled (...) for example, the intention to purchase two ASW ships without informing the army. (...) The questions about the past are joined by a question about the future. The Germans promised

that if it turned out that a bribe had been paid in these deals, they would be cancelled. (...) what will happen with the sixth submarine, which is supposed to arrive in Israel in the coming years (...) Such a submarine costs NIS 2.1 billion and its maintenance for 30 years costs at least another NIS 2.1 billion. The IDF has more urgent needs. The second issue is the gas fields protection project. The boats are already under construction. Will it be stopped? Will a new bid be issued? (...) Just like we need a public committee to look into the purchase processes, we need someone to look into these concrete questions.
Giora Eiland, YED, 18.07.17

Deal in submarine affair doesn't mean Netanyahu is going down

(...) Ganor is spilling the beans on the so-called submarine affair; Ganor will tell all. (...) The identity of state's witnesses and the essence of their testimony (...) are supposed to remain secret until a draft indictment is issued and a summons issued to a hearing. Ganor is an unusual case. (...) It is a success for the police and prosecution, but through it they are conceding failure in obtaining independent evidence, at the price of mercy toward the main alleged culprit, because both sides were in trouble and this creates a practicable way out. (...) The state's witness agreement is an intriguing document. Take, for example, the Lador-Amedi agreement, signed between then-Jerusalem District (...) That cooperation made it possible to surprise Sara and Benjamin Netanyahu, simultaneously and separately, but in the end Lador recommended -- contrary to the opinion of then-State Prosecutor Edna Arbel -- that the case be closed. (...) The lesson is not to be too impressed by the signing of a state's witness agreement, which when put to the test could prove to be fragile. It seems the evidence against Netanyahu collected by the national fraud squad is more solid.
Amir Oren, HAA, 22.07.17

Waffenstillstand in Syrien

The Syrian ceasefire exposes how Trump and Europe have abandoned Israel
(...) Say what you will about Netanyahu, his entire track record shows that he's not interested in war, but he may be reaching the point that war is interested in him. The Iran-Hezbollah plan has been laid out explicitly by Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah, and backed up by the Al Quds Day demonstrations in Iran. (...) "We are coming," announces Hezbollah, in a Hebrew billboard across the border. Hezbollah is

announcing its intention - and daring us to stop it. (...) One thing that we should have learned from the Iran nuclear deal is that if we are not prepared to take action ourselves we will be faced with a fait accompli. It is an act of delusion to believe that somebody will step up to thwart Hezbollah and Iran. (...) America will abandon the fight and those counting on American backing will be left empty-handed. (...) Israel needs allies on the ground in Lebanon (...) the valiant Kurds deserve our support, both morally and militarily. The Israeli peace camp has frequently argued that unless Israel launches its own peace initiatives others will dictate peace terms. That has not yet happened, but it is happening militarily in the north. If Israel forsakes military options and alliances in Syria, we lose a seat at the table and will be left, vis-a-vis Iran, with either a Maginot line in the north, or total reliance on mutually assured destruction.
Amiel Ungar, HAA, 17.07.17

Kein Adoptionsrecht für LGBT

Israel's gay paradise lost

(...) Columbia University asserts that of 79 research papers that it has examined over the years, only four argued against same-sex adoptions, and their methodology was flawed. Some researchers maintain that adoptions by same-sex couples (...) can actually be healthier for the child. (...) members of the LGBTQ community can console themselves with the thought that they are not alone. On matters of birth, death, marriage, conversions and a whole range of other issues, their country discriminates against mixed marriages, people disqualified from Orthodox marriages, Reform and Conservative U.S. Jews and more – never mind Arabs and Palestinians on both sides of the Green Line. (...) the problem is not with Israeli society, which is mostly tolerant and open to persuasion, but with the government and coalition that runs its affairs. On the other hand, it's quite possible that what forced the government's hand is the heavy damage sustained by the ongoing hasbara campaign to portray Israel as an LGBTQ paradise, which was so convincing that even gay and lesbian people started to believe it actually existed.
Chemi Shalev, HAA, 19.07.17

Energie- und Wasserkrise in Gaza

My family in Gaza tells me: We can't breathe

I talked to my family in Gaza earlier this week and asked them: "How do you sleep at night when you don't have electricity?" The temperature at night there

doesn't go below 74 degrees Fahrenheit, and humidity is high. My 12-year-old sister answered: "We don't." (...) One option is to spend the day in the Capital Mall, the only mall in Gaza equipped with internet, air conditioners, private electrical generators and a place to sit down. (...) They can no longer go and sit by the sea, when the risk of catching diseases from the contaminated water is so high, though others have stopped really caring about getting sick or not. As a friend of mine told me: "The sea is 99% polluted, we swim in the 1% that's left." (...) Disaffection and rage have no limit in Gaza. Tension is evidently at peak, but it's going nowhere, and everything is standing still like a ticking bomb, the only hope is for when the bomb blows up. But popular dissatisfaction with Abbas or Hamas has no outlet. (...) My absent-mindedness was interrupted by my friend on the phone. He declared: "Wallah, if the Rafah crossing opened tomorrow, everyone would leave. And pushing to the head of the queue would be Hamas!"
Muhammad Shehada, HAA, 16.07.17

Keine Einreise für Boykottierer

Israel's anti-BDS blacklists

(...) This extreme measure that the Netanyahu government has chosen to take against opponents of the occupation, including Diaspora Jews who are otherwise entitled to immigrate to Israel, raises questions not only about this government's ability to contend with legitimate criticism in a democratic society, but also about the antidemocratic tools that were chosen to fight it. Blacklists of this kind require systematic spying on, surveillance and "tagging" of political activists worldwide. A properly run state cannot tolerate the existence of a wide-ranging, covert thought police of this kind, which categorizes foreign citizens according to their opinions in order to silence them. Israel's right-wing government is stepping up its means of oppression against its critics, and will continue to do so unless and until it is stopped. This can only be done by a strong, united opposition, which views the preservation of democracy and freedom of expression as a necessary condition for the future of Israel.
Editorial, HAA, 28.07.17

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