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**1. Versehentlicher Raketenangriff**

Israels Armee geht inzwischen davon aus, dass die zwei Raketen des Typs M-75 Fajr, eine Langstreckenrakete aus iranischen Werkstätten, die Tel Aviv für einige Minuten den Atem anhalten ließen, unbeabsichtigt abgefeuert wurden. Das Militär reagierte mit rund 100 Luftangriffen auf zumeist militärische Anlagen der Hamas. Vier Menschen trugen bei den Angriffen leichte Verletzungen davon, wie das palästinensische Gesundheitsministerium berichtete. Die vergleichsweise geringe Zahl der Verletzten im Gazastreifen zeigt, dass Israels Armee vorsichtig vorgeht, um Provokationen und eine schlimmere Konfrontation zu vermeiden. Israels Regierungschef Benjamin Netanyahu war Ende letzten Jahres in die Kritik von Ex-Verteidigungsminister Avigdor Liberman und anderen Koalitionspartnern geraten, die ihm vorwarfen, nicht konsequent genug gegen die islamistische Führung im Gazastreifen vorzugehen. Der Schlagabtausch endete damit, dass Israel der Regierung Katars erlaubte, regelmäßig große Bargeldsummen in den Gazastreifen bringen zu lassen, um die akute Finanznot zu lindern. Liberman war daraufhin von seinem Amt zurückgetreten. „Gerade diese Woche genehmigte Israel die Zahlung von weiteren 20 Millionen Dollar an die Hamas“, kommentierte Liberman den jüngsten Raketenbeschuss. Dieses „Schutzgeld“ werde Israel keine Ruhe bringen. Noch am Donnerstagnachmittag war es zu

heftigen Ausschreitungen bei Protesten in Gaza gegen die hohen Lebenshaltungskosten und die hohen Steuergelder, die die Hamas den Palästinensern abverlangt. Demonstrant\_innen steckten Autoreifen in Brand und blockierten Straßenkreuzungen. Die Sicherheitsbeamten der Hamas reagierten mit harter Hand. Mehrere Menschen mussten mit Verletzungen ins Krankenhaus eingeliefert werden, darunter Frauen und Kinder. Politische Analysten in Israel zogen zunächst eine Verbindung zwischen den Unruhen in der Stadt Gaza und den beiden Raketenangriffen, die Tel Aviv vollkommen unerwartet trafen. Raketenalarm gab es in Tel Aviv zum letzten Mal vor fünf Jahren, als die Hamas im Verlauf des Gazakrieges die Stadt angriff. Israel mit Raketen anzugreifen, um von internen Problemen abzulenken, gehört zu den Methoden der Hamas. Medienberichten zufolge soll es ägyptischen Vermittlern noch in der Nacht gelungen sein, die Konfliktparteien zu einem Waffenstillstand zu bewegen.

**Gaza awaits a new Israeli government**

(...) For Hamas, having Israel at its doorstep allows it to maintain its identity as an entity and challenge the Palestinian Authority by being the only entity that is willing to raise the flag of resistance to Israel. As far as Israel is concerned, it prefers the devil that it knows – Hamas – than toppling it and then having to deal with the severe consequences. This is the

reason why the two sides have been holding indirect talks through Egyptian and Qatari mediators to achieve an extended truce that would essentially cement the status quo. (...) For Israel, any round of hostilities means not only that rockets will hit Tel Aviv and other communities deep inside Israel, but also that the economy will take a hit. As far as Hamas is concerned, the fact that it is fighting for its existence blunts the blow it may receive when it fights Israel. That is why Hamas has over the past year constantly walked on the brink. It escalated the violent protests along the Gaza Strip fence, increased the intensity of the attacks using airborne explosive devices, and effectively used any compromise with Israel as the starting point for renewed negotiations aimed at getting more concessions. (...) The new government formed after the election will have to come up with a policy that would put an end to Hamas' foot-dragging and attrition.

Doron Matza, IHY, 14.03.19

#### **Hamas second 'mistaken' rocket fire from Gaza**

(...) why did Hamas fire the rockets (...)? For two major reasons. Firstly, because of the serious and exceptional riots that took place (...). The organization's leadership felt threatened as it has not felt since it seized power in the Gaza Strip in 2007. Secondly, because of the talks with the Egyptians over a lull in the tensions along the Israel-Gaza border, which have been going on for some time. Hamas has a long list of demands, including \$30 million a month (...), funding for UN-sponsored jobs, an increased electricity supply and an increased range for fishing. (...) The wheat in the south of Israel is about to ripen, and if the fields are burned, the damage will be considerable. Hamas is saying no, the marches will continue and we will keep them in check (...). So with talks apparently at a dead end, and in the face of a mass protest within Gaza over living conditions, Hamas realized it had to urgently channel the anger and frustration of the people under its rule at Israel. (...) given that Israel has no desire to see an escalation that would require a ground invasion of Gaza during an election campaign, and so that residents of the south would not claim that only attacks on Tel Aviv elicit a harsh response, the reaction was overall relatively restrained. (...) Both the Hamas rocket fire and the Israeli response fell within the same scale of proportionality, in which a major campaign was avoided as both sides sought to limit the incident to a short flare-up. (...) there could still be riots as Gazans mark the first anniversary of these protests at the

end of the month. The second risk is of a random incident, such as a severe outcome during rocket fire at Israel or in one of the IDF attacks in Gaza. Either way, the Israeli army is ready for an escalation.

Ron Ben-Yishai, YED, 15.03.19

#### **Iranian fingerprints in Gaza**

(...) Iran, which controls the terrorist group and its leaders and which gives it money and provides it with the type of missiles used in Thursday's attack, is directly responsible. Iran doesn't hide its desire to spark a conflagration in Gaza with the aim of sabotaging and even halting Israel's efforts to dislodge the Islamic republic from Syria. (...) Hamas, however, is also responsible for the missile attack, because it hasn't taken action against Islamic Jihad and other recalcitrant groups in Gaza, which continue targeting Israel. Hamas lends a hand to the escalation along the border as a matter of routine, hoping to improve its negotiating position with Israel and receive aid dollars from Qatar. (...) the missile attack on Gush Dan indicates the collapse of this conception and essentially the illusion (...) that it's possible to control the flames Hamas is fanning along the Gaza border and prevent them from spreading. At the end of the day, those who shoot at Israeli communities near Gaza will also shoot at Tel Aviv. It is also evident that Hamas isn't omnipotent in Gaza. (...) before the missile attack, demonstrations erupted in Gaza against the organization over the grim economic situation there. (...) Although Sderot and Tel Aviv are theoretically the same, it's clear that the missile attack on Gush Dan crosses a red line that Israel cannot abide. But even at this critical juncture, it's important for Israel to avoid playing into the hands of the enemy, whether Islamic Jihad or Iran. (...) the missile attack is a wakeup call for all of us that the reality of limited friction in Gaza, which is supposedly under control, cannot last for very long.

Eyal Zisser, IHY, 15.03.19

#### **Little ghosts from Gaza**

(...) Israelis don't want to hear about Gaza. (...) After all, we left, and in any case it's all Hamas' fault, as the government "explains" from every platform, especially abroad. (...) Ghosts float above Gaza in the election campaign of the chief of staff of that military operation, now a politician who seeks to replace the prime minister and return "statesmanship" to Israel. To get elected, his campaign ads count bodies, as many as possible, and showcases a drone's-eye-view of Gaza's destruction. If that's

the way the campaign looks, how will a future military action look, under a statesmanlike government. (...) every Friday at the Gaza border fence (...) sharpshooters fire from embankments inside Israel, around the Gaza Strip. (...) The day the American Embassy opened in Jerusalem, on May 14, 2018, 73 people were killed. The youngest of them, Az-Adin Asamak, was 13. Almost his entire short life in Gaza was spent under siege. Children who were born in Gaza at the start of the Israeli blockade are now celebrating their 11th birthday, if they survived operations Cast Lead, Pillar of Defense and Protective Edge. Both they and their families are certainly asking how things will look in the future. Two million people in a besieged and crowded area, with little electricity and polluted water. Not only bombs are killing Gaza's children, so is polluted water. (...) The ghosts don't give one's soul a rest, but in the dense reality of our lives, this is a matter of life and death. As long as life in Gaza is governed by Israeli drones, artillery and snipers, this cruelty will continue to kill bodies there – and souls here too. But the lives of 2 million people will not be controlled this way forever. Only a way out that is one of justice and freedom, rights and equality will cut the endless loop. (...) Hagai El-Ad, HAA, 11.03.19

## 2. Israelische Parlamentswahlen

*Erschien ein weiterer Wahlsieg für Benjamin Netanyahu anfangs als nahezu abgemacht, sieht sich der Regierungschef aktuell im offenen Fall. Ein Grund dafür sind die drohenden Anklagen. Bestechung, Betrug und Vertrauensbruch macht Israels Oberstaatsanwalt Avichai Mandelblit Netanyahu zum Vorwurf. In drei Fällen hält Mandelblit die Beweislage ausreichend für eine Anklage. Für Israels neue Mittepartei Blau-Weiß kommt die Verkündung des Oberstaatsanwalts wie ein Geschenk des Himmels. Die bevorstehende Anklage wird Netanyahu unmittelbare Wähler-Sympathien kosten, aber noch entscheidender ist, dass er, sobald ein Verfahren gegen ihn sicher ist, große Mühe haben wird, die nötigen Partner für eine Regierungskoalition zu rekrutieren. Wirtschaftsminister Moshe Kahlon kündigte schon vor Monaten an, dass entweder er oder Netanyahu vom Amt zurücktreten würden, sollte es zu einer Anklage kommen. Unterdessen entschied das Zentrale Wahlkomitee über das Verbot der Kandidatur für Ofer Cassif, der für die antizionistisch-arabische Hadash-Ta'al Liste antreten wollte, und der ebenfalls antizionistischen arabischen Partei Balad. Das Verbot stieß auf großen Unmut bei linken Knesset-*

*Abgeordneten und Wähler\_innen, die die Entscheidung gerade auch mit Blick auf die Kandidaten der rechtsradikalen Partei Otzma Yehudit, die vom Zentralen Wahlkomitee zugelassen worden waren, als Ungerechtigkeit empfanden. Das Oberste Gericht gab den Berufungen gegen den Entscheid des Zentralen Wahlkomitees statt und ließ die Kandidatur von Ofer Cassif und Balad zu. Hingegen verbot der Oberste Gerichtshof die Kandidatur des rechts-extremen Michael Ben-Ari.*

## Netanyahu should resign for the good of the country

(...) Benjamin Netanyahu (...) is not a monster. He is one of the most important statesmen to ever enter Israeli politics, and under his leadership the past decade has been one of the most fruitful for Israel. (...) Nevertheless, Netanyahu has been involved in some questionable deals in recent years. (...) his quid-pro-quo behavior is corrupt. Worse still, Netanyahu's achievements can't overshadow the crises his actions are certain to create in the long term (...) the deteriorating relations with the American Jewry, the concessions to the ultra-Orthodox (...), the division and incitement he creates among Jews within Israel itself, the negative attitude he perpetuates towards Israeli Arabs and the inevitable reality of a binational state he is leading us toward. (...) Netanyahu's vendettas against the judicial system and anyone who refuses to be his avid supporter could lead us to disaster. (...) There is Netanyahu the statesman—with a series of worthy achievements under his belt—and there is Netanyahu the politician, who is willing to damage the national interests and may even lead us all to the brink of civil war for the sake of his own interests.

(...) I feel entitled to directly address him: This is an historic opportunity to do something important for the country you love, please don't destroy what you've accomplished. And you've accomplished a lot! (...) It's still not too late for a deal that would see you resign in return for the closure of all your criminal cases. (...)

Ben-Dror Yemini, YED, 03.03.19

## The Blue and White platform – a balancing act of right and left

Israel Resilience's party platform (...) does deal with economic and social issues, but the main issue will be diplomatic - and it is clear that an effort is being made not to drive away right-wing voters. The two-state solution is not mentioned, nor is the term "Palestinian state" for that matter. (...) In the spirit of the

right-wingers in the party, the platform explicitly states that there will be no unilateral disengagement from Judea and Samaria (...). Similarly, the terms "two-state solution" and "Palestinian state" are replaced by a plan for a regional conference to promote Israel's separation from the Palestinians. (...) One particularly interesting issue on the platform is the Nation-State Law, which Gantz (...) promised to amend, and Zvi Hauser (...) co-drafted. The solution, according to the platform, is an initiative to legislate the "the principle of equality" as a Basic Law, separate from the Nation-State Law or as a counterweight to it, in order to emphasize the rights of non-Jewish citizens of Israel. Beyond the diplomatic sphere, the Blue and White platform will also tackle several controversial issues. For example, it will include support for public transportation on Shabbat in secular communities and places where it will not impact the observant Jewish public, subject to a decision by the local authority. The platform also includes a promise to pass a surrogacy law that includes gay men – something that drew widespread criticism of the outgoing government.

Yuval Karni, YED, 05.03.19

#### **Blue and white blood in Israeli election**

(...) Netanyahu mocks the sick logic of his political rivals who are furious over Likud's joining forces with the Kahanists of Otzma Yehudit (...), but who have no problem joining forces with the Arabs. (...) The Central Elections Committee that approved the candidacy of Kahanists Ben Ari and Ben-Gvir and disqualified the Balad-United Arab List roster and Ofer Cassif, a candidate for the Hadash-Ta'al list, acted according to that exact same logic. (...) The ideological gaps, the objections to actions or statements are all a drop in the ocean compared to the feeling of togetherness of those who belong to that "great Jewish family." (...) Netanyahu always cuts reality into two parts: Jews and Arabs. (...) Gantz and Lapid (...) won't make a bloc with the Arabs, period" (...) For too many Israelis, the thought of organically changing the character of the state, which is determined democratically by its citizens, is like undermining Israel's physical existence. Anyone who feels this way is denying the healthy development of the Israeli nation and holding on fearfully to the Jewish nation, regardless of the costs to the country's civil fabric. Those who feel that way will certainly consider Ben-Gvir a lesser threat to Israel's future than an Arab party running for Knesset that calls for civil equality, perish the thought. (...)

Carolina Landsmann, HAA, 08.03.19

#### **Corrupt, racist politicians' outrageous move against Israel's far-left**

It was hard not to feel a bit depressed after the decision by the Central Elections Committee to let the Kahanists run for the Knesset while barring Ofer Cassif from Hadash-Ta'al and the whole Balad-United Arab List slate. (...) Like the false symmetry of the "extremists on both sides," this too is outrageous. (...) A number of quotes of Cassif were raised in the explanations for his disqualification (...). A few of the justifications are tainted with fascist infantilism, like mentioning his desire to change the national anthem to a poem by Shaul Tchernichovsky. And a few are despicably manipulative; for example, the claim that he supports terrorism. (...) the important matter that violates the law is the clear position of Cassif and Balad to significantly weaken, if not cancel, the Jewish characteristics of the state. This position aspires to two kinds of state, neither of them Jewish: One is a state of all its citizens, the other is what the Palestinians decide. (...) The right wing – except for a few fig leaves that have withered and fallen off – has comfortably settled in the Jewish position. The nation-state law was intended to define – even if only symbolically – the rights of the Jewish majority on this side of the Green Line. And after 50 years of military control over a population without civil rights, along comes the law to legalize land ownership and dispossess this population without a legal impediment. (...) The right wing is leading to a Jewish and undemocratic state. Who's running against it? The Zionist left, which is getting entangled in its blue and white garb. It no longer even dares say "two states."

Ravit Hecht, HAA, 09.03.19

#### **Forget marijuana, Feiglin's been smoking some pretty strong ideological stuff**

Normally, there would be no sane reason to devote 800-plus words to Moshe Feiglin and his Zehut Party. (...) But the potheads and the other young voters that constitute much of his base should take the trouble to read Zehut's unusually detailed party platform. It's a strange brew of Torah, extreme nationalism and, more than anything else, a call for small government and free markets. Its ideas are so far outside the Israeli political spectrum that at least one commentator has speculated that its framers were jumping the gun on marijuana legalization when they sat down to write it. (...) Feiglin may be an advocate of extreme liberty, but like other people on the political extreme, deep down he believes that his worldview is the only correct one. Everyone else

has yet to see the truth because they are either deluded or corrupt. His Jewish state of free markets and Jewish law works only if everyone becomes an observant Jew like himself -- and that's exactly what the Zehut program envisions. Freed of the rabbinic monopoly, Jews will find their Torah mojo. (...) Zehut will distance the state from dealing with matters of culture and religion," his platform explains, with the kind of certainty that comes with perfect faith in ideology, not the real experience of history.

David Rosenberg, HAA, 14.03.19

### **The Feiglin fantasy**

(...) Unlike the political platforms of normal parties, Zehut's isn't mealy-mouthed about almost anything. Everything revolves around an ideology of free markets and individual freedom that has simple and easy answers for all our problems. Therefore it promises that a free market economy will deliver Israel rapid economic growth and ever higher standards of living, not because history shows this, but because the ideology of free markets posits this to be true. (...) Every sane Israeli wants an end to the interminable conflict. That's why so many of us supported the Oslo Accords and the Disengagement – and other acts of lunacy. Out of a desperate hope of finally putting all this fighting and killing and dying behind us so we can get down to the business of living our lives. So when Zehut comes along with a brand-new, never-before-tried plan of just winning, it's attractive. Even to people who have traditionally been on the left. Because the main reason they been on the left is that the idea of resisting our enemies in any real way has been painted by their teachers and by the press as a recipe for ensuring that the conflict never ends. Zehut is breaking – obliterating – the ruling paradigm. And that's scaring the life out of the establishment press and the establishment politicians. (...) For the rest of us, it's a light at the end of a very long and very painful tunnel, and we aren't about to let an outmoded establishment deny us a better life.

Lisa Liel, TOI, 14.03.19

### **Yes to the Arab slate, no to the Kahanists**

Only in the Israel of Benjamin Netanyahu, Avigdor Lieberman and Bezalel Smotrich could the desire for civic equality between Arabs and Jews be equated with incitement to racism. (...) The struggle for full civic equality, even if Israeli Zionists finds it uncomfortable, is a legitimate political struggle that should take place in the legislature. By contrast, the racism of Rabbi Meir Kahane's followers is not legitimate.

One must reject any effort to draw a symmetry, a comparison of "the extremists on both sides" — between Cassif, who champions equality, opposes the occupation and calls for Jewish-Arab cooperation, and the Kahanists, who reject democratic values, hate Arabs and favor their expulsion, at best. (...) With the exception of its chairman, however, the Central Elections Committee is composed entirely of politicians; in keeping with the zeitgeist in the Knesset, they ignored Mendelblit's opinion. (...) The right to vote and to be elected is derived from the principle of equality, the foundation on which democracy rests. That's why undermining this right is justified only in the most extreme cases, when the enemies of democracy use the freedom that democracy assures them and the tools it provides in order to damage it. Cassif does not meet that definition. On the other hand, Ben Ari's incitement to racism, which the attorney general called "a call for the violent denial of rights and the systematic and deliberate humiliation of parts of the population" is an example of an extreme and exceptional case that justifies disqualification.

Editorial, HAA, 14.03.19

### **Racism, blackmail, and the Israeli elections**

The Israeli elections are turning into a joke, but the last laugh will go to the gangsters sitting in Ramallah. What have we so far? First, the smaller so-called right-wing parties unite so their votes won't be wasted. (...) various actors on the political scene start accusing this union of harboring a racist party in the form of Otzma Yehudit. (...) American Jewish lobbies, including AIPAC, jump on the bandwagon bemoaning the very presence of this right-wing bloc because it includes a party these supposedly pro-Israel Jewish organizations consider racist. (...) Israel has a problem (...) with its Arab Muslim (...) neighbors living in Judea, Samaria and Gaza (...) with the fanatical Jew hatred (...) making a joke of any prospect of peace between Israel and those whom popular parlance has come to call Palestinians. (...) there is no way Israel can allow a Palestinian state to emerge in Judea and Samaria or to continue in Gaza. (...) The only solution is for Israel to annex Gaza, Judea and Samaria and extend Israeli sovereignty over these areas. And since Israel could not integrate two million people who are committed to its liquidation, the Arab Muslim population in these territories has to leave. Their departure can be planned or chaotic, merciful or brutal, but it has to happen. It also has to be recognized that this is the only pragmatic and reasonable solution for all

concerned. To advocate such a program is not racist. It is simply recognizing reality and dealing with it in such a way that does not lead to the deaths of millions of people. (...)

Stephen Schecter, TOI, 15.03.19

### 3. Unruhen am Tempelberg

*Die israelische Polizei sperrte temporär die Zugänge zum Tempelberg in Jerusalems Altstadt. Zuvor warfen Palästinenser eine Brandbombe auf eine Polizeiwache. Grund für die Angriffe war offenbar der Streit um das Bab al-Rahma („Tor der Vergebung“), ein seit vielen Jahren polizeilich geschlossenes Gebäude auf dem Gelände. Palästinenserpräsident Mahmud Abbas kritisierte die „gefährlichen israelischen Eskalationen“ und warnte vor „ernsten Konsequenzen“. Er rief die internationale Gemeinschaft auf, einzuschreiten. Bei der Suche nach den Tätern kam es zu Rangeleien mit der Polizei, die mehrere Palästinenser verhaftete. Der Tempelberg war in den vergangenen Jahren wiederholt Ort und Anlass für gewaltsame Auseinandersetzungen. Er ist sowohl für Juden als auch für Muslime eine der wichtigsten religiösen Stätten. Der 1967 festgelegte Status quo erlaubt Muslimen, die die Anhöhe mit der Al-Aksa-Moschee als „Edles Heiligtum“ bezeichnen, komplette Religionsfreiheit. Juden dürfen den Tempelberg besuchen, aber nicht dort beten. Während orthodoxe Juden aus Sorge, sie könnten die wichtigste heilige Stätte beschmutzen, den Tempelberg meiden, ziehen national-religiöse Gruppen regelmäßig dorthin und provozieren die muslimischen Gläubigen.*

#### Unrest on the Temple Mount: Why now?

(...) due to Abbas' reaction to Israel's latest anti-terror measures, his popularity on the Palestinian street has already risen. Many Palestinians are now volunteering to pay the terrorists' salaries, inspired by Abbas's hard-line stance on this issue. (...) the Temple Mount has always been a battleground for all kinds of organizations and states. (...) Israel supported Jordan (...), because Israelis perceived them to be opposed to the (...) the Islamic Movement in Israel, Hamas, the radical group Hizb ut-Tahrir, which has a strong presence in Jerusalem, and other Islamist groups that wanted to radicalize the people against Israel. They viewed Jordan as a state that could bring some stability. All of these groups are not a partner for Israel. It was much easier for Israel to maintain law and order when the orders came from Amman rather than Hamas or the

Islamic Movement. However, now there is a regime in Jordan that is delegating authority to the PA. Given this, Israel should not compromise its sovereignty further." As Ben Gad noted, "Jordan does not have the right to hand over authority."

Rachel Avraham, IHY, 01.03.19

#### Caution on the Temple Mount

(...) The harsh comments by right-wing Jewish Temple Mount advocates and Israeli politicians about a loss of sovereignty amount to a hollow expression of national pride. As in earlier incidents on the mount (...) Israel would suffer no loss of respect, sovereignty or security if the Bab al-Rahma building remained open. (...) Israel acted unilaterally on the mount out of a desire to demonstrate sovereignty, and (...) Israel's response led to an outbreak of violence and for the most part also to an Israeli retreat from its original stance. A courageous Israeli leadership would have acknowledged that the Temple Mount problem is not unrelated to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. A courageous leadership would admit that, despite all the slogans and declarations about sovereignty and the unity of Jerusalem, Israel is not free to act as it pleases on the mount. Past experience shows that unilateral actions put at risk not only the security of Israeli citizens but also relations with the Palestinian Authority, Jordan and the rest of the Arab world. Since there is no courageous leadership in Israel, it would be hoped that, at the very least and despite the upcoming election, decision makers would opt to handle the crisis in a balanced way. The meeting this morning is a chance to reach a quiet understanding that the building would be opened, but for extended renovation work that would take considerable time. Any attempt to force the building's closure would be an act of irresponsibility towards Israel's citizens.

Editorial, HAA, 05.03.19

#### Arab support for Al-Aqsa and the Palestinians

There are more webpages in Arabic for Al-Aqsa mosque than webpages on Palestinian resistance. (...) Religious rather than nationalist or pan-Arab sentiment means that in relative terms, the Al-Aqsa mosque is more important to the Arabs than Palestinian resistance. (...) Islam was a major (...) theme in the most tumultuous periods of strife between Jews and Arabs in the Holy Land. (...) During the Second Intifada, the Palestinian Authority and Fatah tried in vain to name the conflict the "Independence Intifada" in its struggle against a rising Hamas, which wanted to color the conflict with Israel in reli-

gious terms. Today, it is universally referred to in Arabic as the "Al-Aqsa intifada," even in Fatah and PA discourse. The same religious zeal regarding the Palestinian cause can be found in the Arab world. (...) Why emphasize the religious nature of the conflict? The answer lies among English-language readers, many of whom are secular and who believe others are motivated by secular concepts. A search for the term "Palestinian resistance" in English compared to "Al-Aqsa mosque" produces more than three times more web pages for the former than for the latter. In Arabic, more web pages are generated for the mosque. To understand the Middle East, you have to think in Arabic and take religion much more seriously than it is taken in the West.

Professor Hillel Frisch, IHY, 05.03.19

### **The Temple Mount is not equally holy to Jews, Christians and Muslims**

The once rightwing but now just failing Jerusalem Post has just claimed that the Temple Mount is "venerated as holy in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam alike." It is not. For Jews, it's the holiest place on earth. For Islam, it's the third holiest place. (...) And for Christians, who reject this world and only see holiness in disconnecting from the terrestrial, the only holy thing about it is that Jesus was once there – a nostalgic interest. It is shameful and outrageous that a self-described Zionist Israeli newspaper equates these things. This is not the first time that Israelis cheapen Jews' connection to the Temple Mount. (...) Our enemies have taken it over more than a millennium ago and they are destroying the archeology but they are not breaking the law, not disgracing Judaism and God and there is no need to fight. You can't just report lies and manipulations of the truth without any refutation. One of the constants of the ultra-right and racists in general is the talk of all Arabs being this, that and the other. You can't just publicize that. You can't just ignore the differences between Jews, Christians and Muslims but you also can't treat people differently on the basis of stereotypes about their background or religion. And that is final.

Moshe-Mordechai van Zuiden, TOI, 07.03.19

### **Jordan's survival depends on Al-Aqsa**

If one sign that the messiah is coming is the appearance of supernatural phenomena, then given the situation in Jerusalem we are on the eve of his arrival. Oddly enough, it is precisely around the sealed Gate of Mercy on the Temple Mount that a series of mishaps have recently occurred that sug-

gest the messiah might also pass through on his donkey. (...) The structure has never served as a mosque. (...) The gaining of footholds on the Mount (...) is aimed at turning Al-Aqsa into leverage in their demand for a Palestinian capital in Jerusalem. (...) The artificial noise at the mosque was aimed at illustrating how Jerusalem remains a "burning issue" and is far from a done deal. But every Muslim child knows that no religious site in an Islamic city makes it a capital. (...) the Jordanians have created a joint front with the Palestinians, through the preservation of a Jordanian majority on the Waqf Council. King Abdullah understands that if the Hashemite dynasty cedes control over managing Al-Aqsa, which was agreed upon with Israel, the throne will lose its religious legitimacy. They have not forgotten that the Palestinians tried to take control of Jordan and kick out the royal family in the 1970s. This understanding is the motivation for the joint Israeli-Jordanian coordination on the Temple Mount. As for us, we should keep the Arab parable that "we have come to eat grapes, not kill the guard" in mind. We must emphasize that the joint Jordanian-Palestinian move will not lead to Jerusalem's division but rather a Jordanian-Palestinian confederation, with Amman as its capital.

Reuven Berko, IHY, 11.03.19

### **Take back the Temple Mount**

With predictable petulance, the Palestinian leadership has been deliberately raising tensions on the Temple Mount, seeking to exploit the sensitive preelection season in Israel to further strengthen its hold on the holy site. (...) This latest escalation, coupled with the Wakf's repeated flouting of Israeli law, warrants a quick and firm response by the government to bolster Israel's sovereignty at the Jewish people's most sacred site. (...) The Jewish people did not wait 19 centuries to return to the Temple Mount only to see control over the site slip through its fingers. (...) Instead of giving in to the Wakf's threats and mischief, Israel needs to reassert its full sovereignty over the area. A good place to start would be to punish the Wakf by reducing its presence at the site, and stripping it of much of its power to decide what goes on there. It is simply absurd that a foreign body controlled by the Jordanian government and the Palestinian regime are allowed to administer the primary holy site in the heart of Jerusalem (...). Denying Jews their fundamental right to freedom of worship there for fear of offending Palestinian sensibilities is a stain on Israel's democracy. (...)

#### 4. Medienquerschnitt

##### Trumps Friedensplan

###### Why the right shouldn't fear Trump's 'Deal of the Century'

(...) Kahol Lavan – even if it wins the election – will not bring about a revolution in the peace process. Gantz thinks that maybe it is possible to do something about it but only with the leadership that comes after Abbas. Abbas is too tightly constrained by his past positions. In this context, Ya'alon is even further to the right than Netanyahu, who was willing to talk about a Palestinian state along the 1967 lines with land swaps on an equal basis. (...) An American who is in on the secret of the "Deal of the Century" was asked why the United States won't propose a Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital. Netanyahu won't agree, he answered. This deal isn't a plan, they say in the administration, it's more of a "vision." What's the difference? We have no intention of imposing anything. Trump's team is so eager not to confront Netanyahu that they are even considering postponing the release of the plan until after a new government coalition is formed. They will certainly decide according to what is best for the prime minister. It is already quite clear that establishment of a Palestinian state will not be mentioned in the plan, and certainly it will not speak of a capital in East Jerusalem or about the 1967 lines. We understand the Palestinians will reject it, say the Americans, but that is only the present leadership. Under them are many people who would be happy to join us. It's been a long time since we have heard that old and pitiful claim.

Raviv Drucker, HAA, 04.03.19

###### The deal of the last century

(...) History teaches us that compromise proposals, presented by foreign mediators, have not enjoyed success in the Israeli-Palestinian arena. (...) The basic assumption at the heart of the American proposal is that it's possible to force upon the Palestinians a peace deal that doesn't come close to meeting their expectations and demands. It is a faulty assumption that won't pass the reality test. Indeed, Arab (...) rulers will put heavy pressure on the Palestinians, but won't dare make concessions on their behalf or in their name, because they don't want these concessions attributed to them in the annals

of history. Hence the Palestinians will always have the last word, and they are either incapable or unwilling to make the historical decision to end the conflict. (...) The Americans, similar to the Arab rulers, don't have the bargaining chips to pressure Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas and his cohort, who prefer a sputtering, teetering PA in Ramallah over a quasi-state that far from meets their minimum demands. (...) Finally, the Palestinian leadership's weakness and the splits within its ranks certainly aren't conducive to any courageous decisions, let alone concessions. The American deal of the century, therefore, will most likely join the long list of peace plans to end in a thud. (...) long-awaited peace isn't around the corner.

Eyal Zisser, IHY, 04.03.19

HAA = Haaretz

YED = Yedioth Ahronoth / Ynetnews

JPO = Jerusalem Post

IHY = Israel HaYom

TOI = Times of Israel

GLO = Globes

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Verantwortlich:

Dr. Paul Pasch

Leiter der Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Israel

Redaktion:

Susanne Knaul

Judith Stelmach

Homepage: [www.fes.org.il](http://www.fes.org.il)

Email: [fes@fes.org.il](mailto:fes@fes.org.il)