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1. Gespräche zwischen Israel und Libanon

Seit Jahrzehnten zum ersten Mal treffen sich Vertreter_innen aus Israel und dem Libanon zu Gesprächen über ihre Meeresgrenze. Schauplatz ist der UN-Stützpunkt in Nakura im Südlibanon. Besonders umstritten ist ein Keil von 860 Quadratkilometern vor der Küste beider Länder. Dort werden Gasfelder vermutet. Von der schweren Finanzkrise getroffen erteilte der Libanon mehreren ausländischen Unternehmen Bohrrechte, was in Israel auf scharfe Kritik stieß. Auch die Landgrenze ist nicht bis ins Letzte geklärt. Diese steht jedoch vorerst nicht auf der Tagesordnung der Verhandlungen. Die beiden Staaten befinden sich offiziell noch immer im Krieg. Die letzte große militärische Auseinandersetzung liegt 14 Jahre zurück und endete lediglich mit einem Waffenstillstand. Seither kam es wiederholt zu punktuellen Schusswechseln. Israel zog seine Truppen im Jahr 2000 nach 18 Jahren Besatzung und einem verlustreichen Guerillakrieg gegen die Hisbollah-Miliz aus dem Südlibanon zurück. Die von den Vereinten Nationen gezogene "blaue Linie" wich allerdings von früheren Grenzverläufen ab. Eine völkerrechtlich verbindliche Regelung fehlt bis heute. Nun steht aber der Libanon wirtschaftlich am Abgrund und die Regierung in Beirut unter heftigem Druck. Dies hat zu den am 14. Oktober begonnen Verhandlungen mit Israel geführt.

Peace with Lebanon? Not so fast

Lebanon has never been a strong nation. (...) Saudi Arabia (...) is now keeping its distance. Other Arab and Western nations have also turned their back on Lebanon (...) French President Emmanuel Macron, who felt obligated to come to Lebanon's aid, came back empty-handed when his plan to form a technocratic government failed due to sectarian bickering. (...) Hezbollah (the true power in Lebanon) insisted on maintaining Shiite control over the Finance Ministry - to keep the money following into the organization's and its leaders' coffers. The country is also suffering from a severe brain drain, with over 1,800 young intellectuals moving to the United Arab Emirates over the last two months alone. (...) In the meantime, Beirut is still trying to recover from the massive port explosion in early August that killed 200, more than 6,500 injured and over 300,000 homeless. Lebanon has not been in a sorrier state since its civil war in the 1970s and 80s, but this time the world is apathetic. (...) I asked several old friends in Beirut if it finally is time for (...) an agreement. Although we all support peace with Israel, they said, it is still far away. Ultimately, while Hezbollah has received a serious blow to its reputation within Lebanon and the world, until it lays down its arms, there really is nothing to talk about.
 Smadar Perry, YED, 03.10.20

Don't be fooled by Erdogan and Hezbollah: The gas wars aren't over

(...) Israel and Lebanon, two countries that are technically at war, agreed to talks over their disputed maritime boundary. The week before that, Turkey and Greece, which seemed at the brink of war despite being NATO allies, agreed to negotiations to resolve their territorial disputes.

Could these developments be (...) a small start to something enormous? (...) The East Mediterranean and its natural gas resources are sorely in need of some diplomacy. On the one hand, gas has become the basis of cooperation between Israel, Egypt and Cyprus, via the East Mediterranean Gas Forum. On the other hand, it's become a source of friction, mainly because Turkey has opted for an aggressive policy of not only claiming vast swathes of the East Mediterranean waters as its exclusive economic zone but dispatching drilling ships, accompanied by warships to back them up. (...) Erdogan's aggressive policy in the East Mediterranean is unfortunately less about natural gas than about aggressive nationalism and power politics. (...) No one has actually found any gas in the areas disputed with Greece and natural gas prices are so low that commercial development is a distant prospect. Coming to terms with Greece would undermine Turkey's claims to Cyprus' EEZ, which Erdogan would never agree to. The same logic almost certainly applies to Lebanon's agreement to talk to Israel. With no permanent government, its economy is in shambles and few friends besides Syria and Iran, both of whom are in similarly dire straits, Lebanon's back is also against the wall. In theory, an agreement with Israel settling a disputed 860 square kilometers (...) of Mediterranean waters would give a boost to Lebanon's economy and help it pay off its immense debt. (...) For Lebanon, gas isn't such a distant prospect as it is for Turkey, and if it were up to the technocrats who are supposed to be running Lebanon, the two sides might reach an agreement. But as the collapse of the last technocratic government in Lebanon shows, it's Hezbollah that really runs the country. (...)

David Rosenberg, HAA, 05.10.20

Direct border talks with Lebanon hold wider significance

(...) Approximately 20 years ago, Israel decided to withdraw from Lebanon to an internationally recognized border. (...) Israel and the UN agreed on the "Blue Line," a temporary land-based border to be recognized by the international community. (...)

Israel has chosen to mark its border with a line that stands at 90 degrees to the shoreline. Thus, the maritime border line with Lebanon is the one facing northwest towards the Levantine country. Lebanon (...) chose a different method, which states that the maritime border is a continuation of the land-based border. According to this method, the border is a straight line facing just west of Rosh Hanikra, which is located at the most north-western corner of Israel. A controversy has thus arisen concerning the Israeli decision on the border and the Lebanese decision. In 2000, the UN decided not to rule on the matter, thus creating an ongoing state of disagreement. (...) The very fact that negotiations are being held between Israel and Lebanon has positive implications that go beyond the need to resolve the conflict. (...) resolving this dispute will allow the two countries to search for additional pockets of gas in the area. (...) the negotiations are a clear loss for the Lebanon-based Hezbollah terror group, which has so far prevented negotiations. (...) As long as the dispute over the maritime border stands, the organization can continue to claim that Israel is stealing Lebanon's natural resources and that this is a justifiable reason to go to war. If the negotiations between Lebanon and Israel do indeed bear fruit, it will pull the rug from under Nasrallah's feet. (...) A peace agreement between Israel and Lebanon is a long way off. But any normalization agreement between the two states is a good sign. (...)

Giora Eiland, YED, 10.10.20

Lebanon's future runs through talks with Israel

Ironically, it was the devastating Aug. 4 explosion that decimated the Port of Beirut, pushing Lebanon into an unprecedented economic crisis, which prompted the country's government to understand that the only way they could save Lebanon from complete economic ruin was to tap into the country's offshore natural gas reserves. (...) Lebanon's liberal circles have long demanded that Hezbollah disarm and allow the Lebanese army do its job, and the fact that the US and many EU members no longer differentiate between its political and military wings, rather have designated Hezbollah as a terrorist group, adds to the pressure Nasrallah is under. This is why he has remained silent when the Lebanese government declared it would pursue the resolution of the disputed maritime borders via indirect talks with Israel. (...) given the normalization between Israel, the UAE, and Bahrain, with new Arab countries reportedly seeking rapprochement with the Jewish state, and with the Saudis now allowing Israeli flights

to travel through its airspace, even Hezbollah cannot deny the fact that the Middle East is changing. (...) Daniel Siryoti, IHY, 11.10.20

2. Demonstrationen gegen Netanyahu trotz Lockdown

Ungeachtet der strengen Corona-Regeln kam es auch in den vergangenen Wochen vielerorts weiterhin zu heftigen Protesten gegen Israels Regierungschef Benjamin Netanyahu. Tausende Menschen im ganzen Land versammelten sich entlang großer Straßen, an Kreuzungen oder auf Brücken. Die Bestimmungen der Ausgangssperre, die seit dem jüdischen Neujahr bis zum 17. Oktober galten, beschränkten das Demonstrationsrecht auf einen Umkreis von 1000 Metern vom Wohnort und die Zahl der Demonstrant_innen auf maximal 20 pro Ort. Die Regierung erklärte die Maßnahme als notwendig zur Eindämmung des Coronavirus. Aus Sicht von Kritiker_innen zielten die Regeln darauf ab, die Proteste gegen Netanyahu zu behindern. Die Polizei ging zum Teil mit Gewalt gegen die Demonstrant_innen vor. Die Anzahl der Demonstrant_innen stieg jedoch von Woche zu Woche an und erreichte zuletzt mit 260,000 Menschen – verteilt im ganzen Land – einen neuen Rekord. Zu den Protesten aufgerufen hatte unter anderem die Bewegung „Schwarze Flaggen“. Auslöser der Demonstrationen gegen Netanyahu waren Korruptionsvorwürfe. Gegen den 71-Jährigen Ministerpräsidenten laufen derzeit drei Verfahren, er streitet alle Vorwürfe ab. An den Protesten nehmen inzwischen aber auch Kritiker_innen des Coronavirus-Krisenmanagements der Regierung teil. Die massiven Einschränkungen des öffentlichen Lebens waren wegen stark gestiegener Infektionszahlen verhängt worden. Zuletzt zeichnete sich ab, dass die Zahl der Neuinfektionen wieder abnimmt.

Confirmed cases of antidemocratic infection

(...) One can no longer be disappointed by the anti-democratic behavior of Benjamin Netanyahu, because there are no expectations of him. (...) We need no further proof of how much scorched earth he's willing to leave in order to save himself. By contrast, there is great aggravation at the fact that his plots and ploys are succeeding solely due to the support of Kahol Lavan. The backing of senior party members (...) for the denial of the basic democratic right to demonstrate, and their collaboration with the suppression of protest, is a blow to the hundreds of thousands of people who voted for them, who were

deceived by their promises to replace the criminal suspect at the country's helm. (...) Despite Netanyahu's false claims, the demonstrations – which take place outdoors with participants wearing masks – make only a marginal contribution to the spread of the coronavirus. The battle against the virus is being utilized by Netanyahu to suppress dissent against him and to silence his critics. This is criminal exploitation of a true emergency situation to take politically repressive steps against those who oppose the government, and against those who are protesting, among other things, the government's failure to cope with the pandemic. (...)

Editorial, HAA, 01.10.20

Playing politics with coronavirus could trigger open revolt in Israel

Energy Minister Yuval Steinitz has repeatedly stated (...) that the only way Israel can avert a disaster of historic proportions is with a total, hermetic lockdown - no one enters and no one leaves. His radical proposition is based on a calculation by several physicists and mathematicians, and warns Israel could see more than 30,000 coronavirus deaths. This solution suggests that restrictions must be more severe and their enforcement tighter. People would be able only to move a minimum distance from their homes, there would be a complete shutdown of the economy, more police on the streets and draconian penalties for anyone breaking lockdown rules. (...) What kept Israelis inside their homes during the first lockdown back in April and May was a combination of fear of the virus and faith in the system. (...) Only later did we find out that there was no success, merely an invitation for the real catastrophe to come. Netanyahu's most egregious sin was using political tools to oversee the pandemic. (...) The politicization of the coronavirus knew no bounds (...). The outcome of all of this balagan is one of the worse crises of confidence that Israel has ever known. A great chasm emerged between the government and the citizenry, including complete disbelief in directives and the motives behind them. (...) Dictatorships have a quick and easy method to deal with lack of trust: deploy the troops on the streets and shoot anything that moves. Democracies tend to take less drastic measures. In this case, the necessary solution - and the less painful one - is replacing those in power who failed. (...) For the first time since the creation of the state, Israel could experience civil revolt on a mass scale. The first seeds of this are already visible on social media. It is all too easy and almost natural for such a scenario

to occur. (...) the chain of events is already in motion and the political echelons should take heed.
Nahum Barnea, YED, 05.10.20

The police have to cool it

(...) There has been a change in the police's approach to protest. Numerous incidents were recorded of violence by police officers against participants in demonstrations (...). The demonstrators generally observed social-distancing guidelines and protested nonviolently against antidemocratic legislation unprecedented in a law-abiding state. The police (...) were sent to use great force in the name of a government that has completely failed in its handling of the coronavirus crisis, and is headed by a person who has been charged with severe felonies. (...) The main reason for the protests is the law limiting demonstrations outside the official Jerusalem residence of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. It is an antidemocratic law that only spurs more Israelis to protest against a bad government, which, in addition to its failed handling of public health and the economy, has deprived the people of the only tool that democracy gives them against bad government: the right to protest. The amendment restricting demonstrations must be repealed immediately. (...) Editorial, HAA, 05.10.20

A police chief maybe able to curb brutality

(...) In these turbulent times, it's hard to imagine most Israelis agreeing on anything. Yet there is something that unites haredim, secular Israelis, Arab-Israelis, settlers and Ethiopian-Israelis these days, and that is a sense that police violence has gotten out of control. (...) What most of these groups have in common is that they are either a minority group or in a minority political position, exercising their democratic right to protest what they view as injustice coming from the power of the state. This is not an excuse for breaking the law. (...) Israel's police officers need to show more restraint. (...) The coronavirus pandemic does not spare people based on their politics. It does not know whether the person it is infecting is haredi or a protester against Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. But the police do know whom they are accosting. In all cases, they should be more selective in the way they use force and the settings in which they do so. (...) Police violence must be curbed.
Editorial, JPO, 05.10.20

Instead of fighting protesters, wage war against coronavirus

For political and highly irregular reasons, senior positions in the public service, such as the chief of Israel Police, have remained vacant for a considerable period of time.

(...) this situation led to outbursts of violence against citizens who had turned out to protest the government's policies. As part of some mayhem in Israeli streets, demonstrators who had stayed close to their homes – in accordance with government health regulations – were assaulted by hotheaded citizens who had been incited to do so. While this was going on, the Israel Police failed twice: once by not protecting the demonstrators (...) and a second time by using disproportionate force and violence against innocent citizens. It appears that those who have sought to weaken and undermine the police by freezing the appointment of a permanent police chief for almost two years have now succeeded. The police seem to be behaving like a flock without a shepherd. (...) if breaking the chain of infection were the foremost goal driving the allocation of police resources, we would expect to see the broad deployment aimed mainly at preventing crowds inside closed buildings. (...) The public realizes that when Netanyahu puts senior appointments on hold (...) in order to advance his personal and legal situation, the government's ability to tackle the medical and economic challenges of the coronavirus pandemic is severely undermined. (...) The appointment of senior civil servants is not a privilege reserved for government ministers; it is, rather, their obligation, so as to enable government institutions to function professionally and optimally. It is absolutely vital that the cabinet appoint persons to fill the posts that have been left vacant for far too long. (...) Instead of waging war on protesters, the government should be fighting against the coronavirus and its ravages. But it is impossible to make progress on that front when the organs of government and democracy are hobbling along and, at best, functioning at less than their full capacity.

It is imperative that the government change its course immediately. The lives and livelihoods of all Israelis are at stake.

Yohanan Plesner, JPO, 06.10.20

3. Ultraorthodoxe im Abseits

Tausende Trauergäste versammelten sich entgegen der strikten Corona-Regeln in Israel ohne Sicherheitsabstände bei der Beerdigung eines Rabbiners,

der an den Folgen von Covid-19 gestorben war. Derartige Verstöße von Teilen der ultraorthodoxen Bevölkerung gegen die Lockdown-Regeln wiederholen sich. Die Kluft zwischen Israels frommer und weniger frommer Bevölkerung vertieft sich. Mit Grund für den Unmut der Weltlichen sind die unterschiedlichen Regelungen, die für die Gruppen gelten. So blieben die Mikwen, die Tauchbäder zur rituellen Reinigung, auch im Lockdown weiter geöffnet, während öffentliche Bäder geschlossen sind. Die weit über dem Durchschnitt liegenden Infektionszahlen im orthodoxen Sektor, die mit ein Grund für die zweite Ausgangssperre waren, die die Wirtschaft erneut schwer belastet, sind ein weiterer Grund für die Frontenbildung.

Israeli society needs to disengage from ultra-Orthodox

The coronavirus pandemic has ripped off all the masks to reveal the true nature of the Israeli society, which as it turns out has been cracked open and torn apart. From the poor leadership skills of our public officials, from the lack of fellowship to the outright hostility among Israel's many tribes. This is the true legacy of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's rule - administrative chaos and a split society. That split is exceedingly noticeable when it comes to the relationship between the Haredi community and the secular public, where hostilities have recently reached an all-time high. Now, add to this the sector's priorities blatantly favoring religious rituals over public health. (...) Even when data clearly showed that the infection rate in synagogues and yeshivas is exceptionally high, the sector still managed to secure exemptions for prayer and studies in religious institutions. In addition, between the two waves of the pandemic, the ultra-Orthodox politicians refused to accept partial closures of their communities with high contagion rates, in accordance with the national traffic light outline, which could have prevented a general lockdown. (...) The secular public must understand that the differences between them and the ultra-Orthodox are dramatic. The pandemic has revealed how little connection there actually is between the two sectors, and how different their values are in all aspects of life. (...) A way must be found to separate the two communities, perhaps by turning Israel into a federation with sectoral subdivisions. Let the ultra-Orthodox live their own lives, with no mutual coercion, where each sector provides for itself. (...) We have seen that living together has brought us nothing but hostility and infighting, separation might actually be healthier for us all. (...)

Dr. Ram Fruman, YED, 01.10.20

The price of Netanyahu's capitulation to the ultra-Orthodox

Some 40 percent of all people diagnosed with the coronavirus this week were ultra-Orthodox; that's about three times their proportion of the population. (...) This mass infection is currently the driving force behind the virus' spread in Israel. To a large extent, all of Israel is under a tight lockdown with an unknown end date because of the disease's rapid spread in the ultra-Orthodox community. (...) a large portion of the excess incidence of the illness in this community stems from their decision to disobey the regulations (...). The ultra-Orthodox insisted and still insist on (...) mass prayer services, mass public meals with the rabbi, celebrations on Sukkot and Simhat Torah (...) Many of them don't practice social distancing, and they obey their rabbis' orders rather than those of the state. (...) This lawless behavior is the result of years of capitulation by successive Israeli governments, which in practice allowed the ultra-Orthodox community to act like a state within a state. But Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has turned this history of capitulation into a political strategy that ensures his survival in power. Netanyahu effectively sabotaged efforts to curb the virus when he caved in to ultra-Orthodox mayors and canceled the lockdown on cities with a high incidence of the virus, and also when he compromised with the ultra-Orthodox on a controversial plan to allow yeshiva studies to continue. Netanyahu has neither the political nor moral ability to stand up to the ultra-Orthodox, even when their lawlessness costs human lives. (...)

Editorial, HAA, 02-10-20

Who are the ultra-Orthodox community fooling, who are they killing?

(...) on Shavuot, COVID-19 was still raging. And on Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Sukkot and Simhat Torah it still raged. (...) why can't the Jewish world, the haredi, ultra-Orthodox world in particular, accept this hard truth? (...) As Jews, we know how to abide by rules and regulations: Shabbat, kashrut, the 613 commandments we obey on a daily, weekly, monthly and yearly basis. How is it that people either don't realize or don't care that by flaunting the rules being imposed on us by medical professionals, they are risking their lives, the lives of people about whom they care, even the lives of people whose names they now know but whose lives they have – because of their own selfish and self-serving needs and de-

sires – altered forever. (...) Weddings are celebrated and then, about five days later, the parents or grandparents of brides and grooms are testing positive for the virus. They might die. (...) People mourn, sitting shiva (...) and the mourners themselves end up sick, hospitalized or dead. (...) It is a deadly cycle. (...) Do they not see the correlation or can they just not accept the truth? (...) avoiding large groups save lives. (...) wearing masks save lives. (...) social distancing saves lives. (...) It's not rocket science, but it is science. (...)

Micah Halpern, JPO, 13.10.20

Bereishit– Blind servants, enlightened sinners, the Haredim and us

Many of us have felt saddened and angered by the conduct of some in the Haredi community; the failure to socially distance, to wear masks, to abide by the rules, to care about anyone but themselves. (...) we shouldn't be surprised. (...) every ideology and every path of life held up as being the be all and end all, to the exclusion of everything else, risks descending into chaos and causing pain to others. (...) Whenever we are fixated, the world becomes narrowed. When we obsess, we can see only that which is near to us, and when something challenges our worldview, it is the challenger that must be wrong, not us. (...) the Torah wishes to warn us away from treating knowledge as power but is also concerned lest our devotion and dutifulness make us impervious to knowledge altogether. What is required is a balance between wisdom and humility. Achieving such balance is really hard. (...) This then should be the aim, always- to aggrandize the Torah, to teach the world something which is worthy of being listened to, to act in ways which are attractive to those beyond our communities. We do these things, not for our own sake, but because it ensures that we are 'in the zone', avoiding the two extremes of blind godliness on the one hand and seeking to turn ourselves into God on the other.

Harris Bor, TOI, 15.10.20

4. Medienquerschnitt

Facebook löscht Holocaust-Leugner_innen

Facebook's stand against Holocaust denial should lead the way online

The social media giant Facebook has taken the correct and historic step of removing Holocaust denial content. In recent years, antisemitism has

increased across the globe (...). Facebook says it will prohibit any content that denies or distorts the Holocaust. This is a commendable step, and Facebook should be applauded for finally confronting the insidious spread of Holocaust denial on its platform. (...) the Holocaust is further removed from living memory. Those who experienced the horrors of the Nazis and the camps are no longer capable to confront the deniers on their own. (...) Facebook says it (...) took down millions of pieces of hate speech in the second quarter of this year. That is a huge amount of hatred. (...) Social media allows for the easy spread of antisemitism and motifs that are linked to antisemitism. (...) Facebook and other social media platforms have long struggled with the balance between enabling freedom of expression and not becoming places where people are radicalized with hate. (...) Much remains to be done to reverse the trend of antisemitism. Our society has largely failed against this tidal wave of hate. That Jews are often targeted in violent attacks (...) and the fact that they have to go to synagogue behind walls and armed guards illustrates the shameful complacency in the face of this hatred. Facebook should be applauded for its decision, and other social media companies should follow its lead. (...)

Editorial, JPO, 13.10.20

With one post, Mark Zuckerberg changed Holocaust education forever

With the tap of a smartphone, Mark Zuckerberg just had an unfathomable impact on the future of Holocaust education. He decreed that denying or distorting the Holocaust just won't fly on his 2.4 billion-user platform. People can no longer hide behind the excuse of "free speech." It is, declared Zuckerberg, "hate speech." The impact this will have on the news feeds of so many people is huge(...) Facebook, the gold standard in social media, has set a precedent which other social media platforms will ultimately be expected to follow. (...) Hatred needs a place to germinate and grow, and it has found fertile soil in cyberspace. While driven anti-Semites and Holocaust deniers will find alternative spaces to peddle their hatred, they have just suffered an unimaginable blow. (...) Zuckerberg's decision doesn't just cut off the Holocaust deniers; it weaponizes what they fear most: historical truth. Facebook has promised not only to remove denial from their platform, but to direct those searching for the Holocaust to trustworthy sources of information. (...) Having a giant like Facebook calling Holocaust denial and distortion out for what it really is, shows educators and students

that we are not alone. It shows that the reality even in the vast digital world, can change, and we as users can now call on the other platforms to follow suit and eradicate Holocaust denial and distortion wherever it is found.

Zak Jeffay, TOI, 14.10.20

Beit Shemesh ohne weibliche Straßennamen

Erasing women's names from this Israeli city's streets is a threat to democracy

Without admitting it per se, the city of Beit Shemesh has been removing the first names of women from its street names. (...) excluding women from street names is another triumph for the campaign against democracy in Israel. It's another blow to the values at the heart of liberal democracy: human dignity, equality, and the freedom to know and to develop, together with the freedoms of expression and assembly. In Neve Shamir, a new neighborhood designated for the general public, the Beit Shemesh names committee plans to name several streets after Israeli heroes and heroines, including Sarah Aaronsohn, a member of the pre-state underground, Anne Frank, and Hannah Szenes. But representatives of the ultra-Orthodox community balked at naming streets after women. (...) This erasure of female existence has no basis in Jewish law or tradition (...). But with Haredi women working and earning more than ever and liable to demand recognition and status, they are being diminished and silenced by their symbolic exclusion from public discourse. Now even their names are being deleted. (...) the Beit Shemesh municipality's shameful capitulation to the jihadi demand to exclude women from the public square isn't a marginal issue at all; it is another surrender of liberal democracy's core values at a time when it is under attack from all sides. (...)

Orit Kamir, HAA, 08.10.20

Pelzverbot nicht für Ultraorthodoxe

Israel's Fur Ban Doesn't Include Its Main Buyers: Haredi Men

More than three decades after the world was horrified by the "Dumb Animals" ad featuring streams of blood spurting from fur coats to the strains of Vangelis, Israel is leaping to the forefront of the battle by imposing the world's first blanket ban on the fur trade. In general the world fashion industry seems to

have painfully absorbed the message. (...) The regulation proposed by Environmental Protection Minister Gila Gamliel (...) made headlines around the world. (...) As things stand, Israeli businesses can trade in fur after obtaining permits from the Nature and Parks Authority. The drive to outlaw the fur trade in Israel has been building for years, but it is on Gamliel's watch that the Wildlife Protection Law is finally being amended, prohibiting the nature authority from issuing pelt-trading permits. In spirit, the amendment is well and good. The cruelty to which animals are subjected for the sake of "haute couture" is incalculable and obscene. But in practice, Gamliel's revolution has a giant loophole. (...) the ultra-Orthodox community. Many Haredi men wear fur top-hats called shtreimels, though the woke among them these days wear hats made of faux fur. Gamliel (...) ruled that the ban won't apply "if the fur or product is to be used for the purposes of religion or religious tradition, scientific research, education or instruction." In fact the shtreimel has no place in the Jewish religion, which is why the draft proposal refers to "religious tradition." If anything Gamliel's decision created additional moral escape-hatches: She could have eschewed the exemption and the outliers, too, could have been persuaded to adopt fake fur. Allowing the fur trade to continue in Haredi circles merely adds another layer to the community's deliberate separation of itself from other Israelis. (...)

Avshalom Halutz, HAA, 07.10.20

Populistische Kampagne

Jibril Rajoub's problematic Palestine

While the Palestinian Authority finds itself mired in a state of deep depression, it seems as though Fatah secretary-general and central PA official Jibril Rajoub is shining in triumph. Rajoub is using the strategic crisis brought on by Israel's normalization agreements with Bahrain and the UAE to build himself up and claw his way into the president's seat the day after Mahmoud Abbas vacates it. Rajoub is solidifying his position by inciting against Israel, calling for the nullification of all agreements, advancing the peace talks between the Fatah-dominated PA and the Hamas terrorist organization and promoting a model of "popular resistance" - fighting against Israel mainly by way of rioting and civil unrest. This method, Rajoub insists, will facilitate cooperation with long-term rival Hamas and will even be received with understanding and even sympathy in the international arena. (...) Rajoub is currently

not in power in the PA political, security or economic spheres. (...) It appears that Rajoub is developing a head start over other presidential candidates, due to his combination of ambition and the personal attributes needed to become the next Palestinian national leader. (...)

Michael Milstein, YED, 13.10.20

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