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Die Themen dieser Ausgabe

1.	Rivlin erteilt Netanyahu das Mandat für die Regierungsbildung	1
2.	Atomanlage in Natans beschädigt nach Wiederaufnahme der Verhandlungen mit Teheran	3
3.	Netanyahu vor Gericht	5
4.	Medienquerschnitt	7

1. Rivlin erteilt Netanyahu das Mandat für die Regierungsbildung

Ohne Zweifel seinen eigenen Wünschen zuwider erteilte Israels Staatspräsident Reuven Rivlin erneut Benjamin Netanyahu den Auftrag, eine Regierungskoalition zusammenzustellen. Die Parlamentswahl am 23. März war mit einer erneuten Pattsituation ausgegangen. Netanyahus Likud verlor zwar sechs Parlamentssitze, schnitt jedoch mit 30 Mandaten mit deutlichem Abstand am besten ab. Yair Lapid zweitgereichte Zukunftspartei erhielt lediglich 17 Sitze in der Knesset. Für die Koalitionsverhandlungen hat Netanyahu 28 Tage Zeit und kann zudem eine zweiwöchige Verlängerung beantragen. Rivlin äußerte sich wenig optimistisch zu den Chancen des Likud-Chefs. Er habe Netanyahu lediglich aufgrund der Zahl der Empfehlungen das Mandat übertragen, meinte er. „Aus moralischer und ethischer Sicht sei es keine leichte Entscheidung gewesen“. Netanyahu muss sich derzeit wegen Bestechlichkeit, Betrugs und Untreue vor Gericht verantworten. Sollte es ihm nicht gelingen, innerhalb der Frist eine regierungsfähige Koalition zusammenzustellen, wird Staatspräsident Rivlin vermutlich Yair Lapid mit der Bildung einer Koalition beauftragen. Falls auch Lapid an der Aufgabe scheitern sollte, droht Israel eine erneute Wahl. Es wäre der fünfte Urnengang in Folge.

Gideon Sa'ar's views are terrifying, but his courage may be just what Israel needs

Gideon (...) Sa'ar's views scare me. He's the man who wanted to close grocery stores on Shabbat. He's the man who sees Hebron, where an unruly, extremist Jewish minority imposes a reign of terror on the Palestinian majority, as an Israeli city no less legitimate than Tel Aviv. He's the man who, as interior minister, presided over the establishment of the Holot open detention facility for asylum seekers (...). But neither of these (...) essential points make it any less true that Sa'ar is the bravest politician in our political world, and together with Lapid he is standing upright amid the general repulsiveness. (...) Sa'ar has suffered from character assassination by his former Likud party, terrible smears, a humiliating defeat within the party when he dared to do what none of its other senior members did – run against Netanyahu for its leadership (...). But Sa'ar, unlike Bennett, doesn't blink or flip-flop. He broadcasts neither tension nor hysteria. (...) Sa'ar not only demonstrated loyalty to his voters but also distinguished himself from Netanyahu. In contrast to Netanyahu's doublespeak, misleading messages, lies, psychological terror and gaslighting, Sa'ar speaks simply, directly and consistently. This is what I promised. This is what I think. This is what I will do. (...) he's trying to work out a rotation between Bennett and Lapid – he must now agree to form a government together with the Arab parties. (...) If Netanyahu is truly harming Israel, as Sa'ar said, and if

Sa'ar himself is truly as brave as he seems, this is the difficult choice he must make. (...)

Ravit Hecht, HAA, 01.04.21

Rivlin's false pretense of preventing a fifth election

(...) The hype about the reaction of Likud officials to Rivlin's statement gave way (...) to a different "drama": Netanyahu's appeal, on live television, to Sa'ar and Yamina Party leader Naftali Bennett to "come home" to a right-wing, Likud-led coalition. Remaining true to his campaign promise, Sa'ar immediately rejected the suggestion. Bennett didn't respond (...). None of the above alters what is unfolding as the likely scenario of a fifth round of elections. (...) Rivlin's address was outrageous: He had the nerve to assert that the "people of Israel" are demanding "unconventional alliances." This is a complete lie cloaked in pretty words born of a fantasy about the creation of a coalition consisting of ideologically disparate parties (...). Indeed, the outgoing "unity" government's dysfunction pales in comparison to that which would ensue from the current options on the table. The only exception is a right-wing, Likud-led government that includes Bennett and Sa'ar. Since that's not happening, no party leader, including Netanyahu, has a viable solution that will last for more than about five minutes, and everybody knows it. In their desperation to oust Netanyahu, the left-wing parties are willing to go as far as to consider backing Bennett, whom they view as a far-Right fanatic, for prime minister. They and his detractors on the Right believe that once Netanyahu's out of the picture, the Knesset can disband, and a new election can happily be held, without him in the way. If Rivlin agrees to take part in such a charade, he won't be preventing the country from another round at the ballot box; he'll simply be operating under the pretense that he did everything in his power to avoid one.

Ruthie Blum, JPO, 01.04.21

A recipe for political instability

Yamina leader Naftali Bennett (...) will, to a great extent, decide the fate of the future coalition. (...) Bennett is identified with a certain part of the Zionist camp, but all of a sudden, he also has many fans in the post-Zionist camp. (...) There are important issues to deal with: bolstering Israeli society's resilience vis-à-vis the coronavirus pandemic, and the Iranian threat. The country needs a government dedicated to public health in something of a preventative medicine approach. (...) We need real deci-

sions. (...) In a right-wing government comprising "natural" partners, Bennett and his No. 2 Ayelet Shaked, could upgrade their statues. There are those who speak of a power-sharing deal. Bennett, for all his faults, is smart and a strategist. A stable right-wing government can position him as defense or finance minister – solid points from which to make the leap to the Prime Minister's Office. On the other hand, a power-sharing deal is a recipe for political instability. A government that is sure to fall apart within a year or 18 months does little to further one's political ambitions and even less to promote national interests. (...)

Amnon Lord, IHY, 04.04.21

Rivlin hints Netanyahu not the favorite, forcing PM to change strategy

(...) Netanyahu could find himself in a dangerous position. Yesh Atid leader Yair Lapid due to pressure might agree to a rotation agreement with Yamina chief Naftali Bennett, hence solidifying a new government. The prime minister is working frantically behind the scenes to get Bennett, his former defense minister turned rival, to recommend him for the premiership. He will then move on to convince Ra'am leader Mansour Abbas to do the same. Various elements within Israel's right-wing are pressuring Bennett to not agree to any government not headed by Netanyahu, but the Yamina head has yet to proclaim his true intentions. Pundits estimate that an outline for a rotation government between Bennett and Lapid is in the works – which will be the end of Netanyahu's rule. However, no talks have yet taken place between the two, other than a friendly phone call where both wished each other a happy Passover. Another evidence for the pressure being put on Lapid to agree to rotation with Bennett was seen Tuesday in a tweet posted by New Hope chair Gideon Saar. He addressed the Yesh Atid chief in a very clear manner, saying: "I let go of my ego, now it is your turn."

Moran Azulay, YED, 04.04.21

Netanyahu's Latest Win Proves There's No Such Thing as the 'anti-Bibi Bloc'

Benjamin Netanyahu has racked up another victory. (...) he has been tasked with forming a government despite not winning a majority at the polls. (...) for now, there's nobody who could replace him, and he isn't going anywhere. (...) One person is clearly responsible for Netanyahu's victory, and that's Gideon Sa'ar. By refusing to recommend Yair Lapid to form a government, he ensured that Netanyahu

would get the presidential nod. (...) even though he still hasn't acceded to Netanyahu's clumsy wooing and his calls to return home to the Likud party, Sa'ar didn't dare switch sides and hand the keys to the leftist bloc, headed by Lapid. (...) The exact same thing happened after the 2019 election. (...), because Avigdor Lieberman refused to join forces with the Joint List. (...) There's no such thing as the "pro-change bloc," the "anyone but Bibi bloc" or whatever else you want to call it. There's a collection of parties that oppose Netanyahu, but representing their principles and their voters is more important to them than replacing the prime minister. (...) Netanyahu isn't supported by a majority of the public, but he doesn't need a majority to rule. A cohesive minority that stands behind him is enough to enable him to stay in office time after time and buy a little more time as caretaker prime minister or as head of a "parity government" like the one he formed with Benny Gantz last time. Sa'ar left Likud and formed his own party in the hopes of changing this reality, but failed. Now the ceremony is over, and all that remains is spin about the maneuvers lying in wait for Netanyahu if he fails to form a government and the mandate is given to Lapid or Naftali Bennett.

Aluf Benn, HAA, 07.04.21

2. Atomanlage in Natans beschädigt nach Wiederaufnahme der Verhandlungen mit Teheran

Stillschweigen bewahrt die Regierung in Jerusalem zu dem iranischen Vorwurf, Israel stecke hinter dem Stromausfall in der Atomanlage von Natans. Das ist übliche Praxis, auch wenn Israel keinen Hehl daraus macht, einen Atomstaat Iran notfalls mit allen Mitteln zu verhindern. Zweifellos erleichtert der Zwischenfall die eben wieder aufgenommenen Verhandlungen über eine Rückkehr zu den 2015 getroffenen Vereinbarungen, die Ex-US-Präsident Donald Trump drei Jahre später unilateral aufkündigte. Der Iran seinerseits verletzt die Abkommen wiederholt. So verkündete Teheran nach der Sabotage der Atomanlage Natans, man stünde unmittelbar davor, die Urananreicherung auf 60 Prozent zu steigern. Erlaubt waren laut Abkommen nur 3,67 Prozent. Für die militärische Nutzung des atomaren Materials sind 90 Prozent nötig. In Wien, wo die beteiligten Verhandlungspartner über eine Annäherung der Positionen ringen, war man keinesfalls erfreut über die nun erschwerten Bedingungen für ein Gelingen. Aus Berlin, Paris und London kamen Mahnungen, die Lage nicht noch weiter eskalieren zu lassen.

Israel should not interfere in Iran nuclear talks

(...) Despite Iran's refusal to negotiate directly with the United States and its demand for the lifting of all sanctions on it as a condition for returning to compliance with the agreement, its willingness to take part in talks could point to a diplomatic breakthrough (...). The enormous economic pressure did in fact greatly affect the country's functioning and cause grave damage, mainly to Iran's citizens. However, it did not bring down the government and it generated a response that brought Iran's nuclear capabilities closer to their pre-agreement levels. President Joe Biden's avowed desire to return the United States to the nuclear agreement and the acceleration of diplomatic measures to keep Iran from the slippery slope of nuclearization pave a positive path toward eliminating the Iranian threat. They might also prepare the ground for additional agreements that could restrict Iran's room for maneuver in the military sphere. The fear and anxiety of Israel and a few of the Persian Gulf nations regarding the revival of the nuclear deal, which they believe to be too limited and too short in duration, are understandable. Iran acted secretly, lied to and deceived the international community and proved that it did not recoil from violating the terms of the agreement. (...) But Israeli military and intelligence officials (...) believe that despite its faults, the nuclear agreement is an effective means of slowing Iran's military nuclear program. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu disagrees with this assessment. He was tireless in his efforts to thwart the agreement before it was signed and, later, to persuade Trump to withdraw from it. This position, which offers no practical alternative policy toward Iran, now puts Israel on a collision course with Biden and could as a result damage the wall of defense that is so vital to Israel's security. (...)

Editorial, HAA, 03.04.21

The Bombs Will Fall On Iran's Nukes

As the US looks to get back to the 2015 Iran nuclear deal (...) at best this will only be a temporary solution to the Ayatollahs getting "the bomb." (...) While the deal may temporarily put curbs back on Iran and reduce their uranium enrichment, it does nothing to resolve the fatal flaws of the original agreement. Worse yet, it puts Iran back on track to fund its nefarious weapons programs, global support of terrorism, and ambitions of an Islamist Caliphate, and move itself towards becoming an eventually sanctioned, yet extremely radical and dangerous, nuclear weapons power. (...) Israel which has been repeat-

edly threatened by the radicalized Iranian regime with a true existential threat of “nuclear Holocaust” cannot wait endlessly until Iran achieves this ultimate destructive capability to use on the Jewish State. (...) Israel cannot afford the introduction of nuclear weapons. For us, it is not a question of a balance of terror, but a question of survival. We shall, therefore, have to prevent such a threat at its inception. (...)

Andy Blumenthal, TOI, 05.04.21

Israel is sending the U.S. a clear message on Iran

(...) Tehran and Jerusalem are signaling to Washington that the Middle East must be higher up on U.S. President Joe Biden's list of priorities and that if untreated, the conflict between Israel and Iran could escalate to all-out war. (...) Israel has come to understand that Washington is hoping to de-escalate their conflict with Iran at almost any cost so that the administration can focus its attention on the coronavirus pandemic, infrastructure and adversarial relations with China and Russia. The Iranian nuclear program is a nuisance to the Americans. Biden has committed to preventing a nuclear Iran and his administration is concerned that if Tehran continues to develop its atomic capabilities, Israel might launch a strike against it. This would certainly lead to a war that the U.S. would be dragged into it whether it likes it or not. To avoid this, the administration is prepared to make significant concessions to the Iranians (...). Officials in Israel are concerned. (...) Israel wants to stop the Iranians from fulfilling their plan, but is facing serious obstacles. The current government has little to no sway over Washington's foreign policy decisions (...). Meanwhile, Iran's economy has rebounded thanks to covert oil sales to China and Russia and its leaders no longer fear the sanctions imposed on the country.

In fact, Iran inches closer every day to becoming a nuclear threshold state.

Ron Ben-Yishai, YED, 07.04.21

US must understand Iran's word is worthless

Tehran's announcement that it began enriching uranium using advanced centrifuges was another step in the extortion campaign that it has been conducting in recent months vis-à-vis the United States. (...) This action has only one purpose: blackmail. Iran's very obvious intent is to make the US anxious enough to re-enter the nuclear accord from which former President Donald Trump pulled while lifting the sanctions crippling the Iranian economy. Tehran

Iran feels confident not only because Washington clearly intends to resume nuclear talks, but also given its 25-year strategic partnership deal with China and the fact that it has been able to increase its oil sales despite the sanctions. (...) Washington seems eager to bring this matter to a close. Instead of the noose remaining on Iran's neck, suffocating its economy, for some reason, it is the Americans who feel pressured. This is bad news for Israel, which believes that the original agreement was bad, and at least requires significant changes (...) senior officials, (...) are slated to visit Washington over the next few weeks, in an effort to influence the administration to toughen its positions in the renewed negotiations with Tehran. (...)

It is unclear how effective the Israeli pressure will be, if at all, but the effort must be made nonetheless. (...) Although the cards Israel is holding are less favorable than those in Trump's time, there is plenty of time to try and convince the US that Iran's word is hollow given its track record of serial breaches of agreements and commitments and that there is no reason to believe it will not continue to do so in the future.

Yoav Limor, IHY, 11.04.21

Israel needs to stop the chatter about secret operations

Intelligence sources were quoted by many media outlets as confirming that Israel was behind a cyberattack at the Natanz nuclear facility (...). Although Israel did not officially accept responsibility, the military censor took the unusual step of imposing no censorship restrictions on local media, which explicitly credited the Mossad for the covert operation. (...) The attack on Natanz (...) is an important development, as is the message conveyed to the Iranians and the Americans. Iran's nuclear plans must be stopped, the US should be paying attention, and international powers must not give Iran whatever it wants in the nuclear negotiations. On the other hand, we are concerned about the blatant leaks and media reports and credit fights between the Mossad, the IDF and the political echelon. (...) In the past, classified operations were kept under wraps, allowing Israel to operate with impunity and carry out successful missions without claiming responsibility for them. (...) people who needed to know – Israel's enemies – knew, but Israeli officials stayed mum to give the country the ability to maneuver and follow a policy of deliberate ambiguity. Leaking reports of a cyberattack (...) on the same day as the incidents themselves is a clear break with tradition. And if

politicians talk, then it's also difficult to separate the attack from the political mess the country is currently facing. (...)

Editorial, JPO, 13.04.21

Netanyahu is playing with fire in Iran

(...) Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is playing with fire. Official Iranian spokesmen vow that Iran will respond. (...) There is no question that they will seek reprisal against Israel, even if success is not assured. (...) the conflict between Iran and Israel (...) could spin out of control, leading Israel into a cycle of violence in which it does not necessarily hold the upper hand. Some 95 percent of all trade with Israel is by sea. The Israeli navy is relatively small and its ability to protect and secure maritime trade is limited, particularly in areas like the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea, which are far from Israel's shores. (...) Decisions ordering military operations, dispatching troops who risk their lives, must be independent of outside considerations, political or otherwise, and must not be based upon emotions or impulses. Two and a half years ago, at the recommendation of then-IDF Chief of Staff Gadi Eisenkot, the political leadership decided to step up pressure on Iran. The operations that had hitherto been conducted by air and on the ground (...) were executed with surgical precision. (...) Shadowy incidents of sabotage in Iran, combining cyber-warfare and secret agents, are very efficient. Biden's administration could live with it and even tacitly applaud it. But that only applies as long as the secrecy is maintained. The gratuitous chitchat, originating in loose lips leaking to the New York Times, which has become a sort of laundromat for top-level Israeli leakers from both political and military circles for the sake of their own aggrandizement or internal reasons in Israel, is dangerous. (...)

Yossi Melman, HAA, 13.04.21

Israel is walking straight into an Iran crisis with eyes wide open

Most of the people who brought us an unnecessary, preventable war in the Gaza Strip in summer 2014, 51 days with no victory, are also involved in what's happening today – a steady, dangerous slide toward the possibility of an even worse military conflict with Iran. (...) Israel now risks conflict that's an order of magnitude greater. That's the situation on the eve of our 73rd Independence Day. (...) the external danger of a clash with Iran is growing. (...) Netanyahu is walking toward this crisis hand in hand with Gantz, despite their enmity. (...) Israel (...) is being dragged

toward conflict by constantly escalating the blows it deals the enemy. (...) the security cabinet isn't meeting, the caretaker government barely functions and oversight bodies (...) are sleeping. And of course, there are the main player's legal problems. (...) You'd have to be incredibly naïve, or a diehard Netanyahu fan, to think this doesn't affect his considerations on defense issues. A military crisis is a proven method for bringing about political change. (...) Netanyahu (...) is acting as an agent of chaos because chaos serves him. (...) Relations with the administration will likely chill further if it turns out the Americans were actually surprised by the Natanz attack. (...) Israel may once again find itself isolated, with the Iranian nuclear threat downgraded from a global problem to an Israeli one.

Amos Harel, HAA, 14.04.21

3. Netanyahu vor Gericht

Zum Auftakt des Gerichtsverfahrens gegen ihn musste sich der amtierende Regierungschef Benjamin Netanyahu schwere Vorwürfe von der Staatsanwaltschaft anhören. Staatsanwältin Liat Ben-Ari sprach in ihrem Eröffnungsplädoyer von Machtmissbrauch und einem „ernsten Fall von Korruption“. Netanyahu habe die ihm anvertraute Regierungsmacht genutzt, um sich „Vorteile von Inhabern großer Medienverlage zu verschaffen“. Ben-Ari betonte, dass vor Gericht alle gleich seien. Die Anklage stütze sich auf „solide Beweise“. Der Regierungschef erschien auf richterliche Anordnung persönlich vor Gericht, durfte den Verhandlungssaal aber noch vor Beginn der Zeugenanhörung wieder verlassen. Neben dem Vorwurf, Netanyahu habe versucht, auf die Berichterstattung Einfluss zu nehmen, steht er unter Verdacht, teure Geschenke reicher Persönlichkeiten angenommen zu haben. Der Angeklagte selbst sprach unverändert von einer „Hexenjagd“ auf ihn und behauptete, dass es sich um einen Putschversuch der Staatsanwaltschaft handle.

Netanyahu's trial may not be decided in court

(...) Despite the old cliché of a wall of separation between law and politics, Netanyahu is continuing his attempts to build a coalition that will allow President Reuven Rivlin to task him with forming the next government. This mission, if successful, will allow the prime minister to try to form a coalition through which he can continue to exert control over and influence the outcome of his trial. This potential government is so important to him because of the direct connection between his position as prime

minister and perhaps his final attempt to create a situation in which he can freeze, delay or even end the continuation of his trial. (...) Netanyahu might be telling the public that he is working hard to deliver more coronavirus vaccines even as he is searching for a magic formula to inoculate himself against the law. (...) Each prosecution witness will be subjected to attacks on their credibility (...). But by the end of May, the future of the trial and its aftermath will probably be decided once and for all — and that ruling will be handed down from the prime minister's residence.

Tova Tsimuky, YED, 04.04.21

Netanyahu's trial is a challenge for a divided Israel

(...) Unfortunately, the recent election and the Netanyahu trial have made it appear that Israel is split between pro-Bibi and anti-Bibi camps. (...) Watching Israel's prime minister appear in court on charges of fraud, bribery and breach of trust should make all Israelis uncomfortable. At the same time, we should be proud of the fact that we live in a democracy in which all citizens should be treated equally and fairly by the law of the land. (...) It goes without saying that Netanyahu, who has proclaimed his innocence from the very outset, deserves a fair trial, both in the Jerusalem District Court and in the court of public opinion. (...) the citizens of Israel must now put their trust in the president and then in the candidate he chooses. It is our sincere wish that this candidate is able to form a government that represents all Israelis, a leader who will be able to work swiftly to heal the rifts that are plaguing the country — and avert a costly fifth election. (...) We have to focus on the bigger prize, which is that next week the country will be celebrating 73 years of statehood (...). Israel has achieved so much, from providing a haven to the Jewish people after the horrors of the Holocaust to becoming a leading light unto the nations. (...) the only way to really celebrate all that the country has achieved in its 73 years is to do so together — and not as a people divided by religion and race, politics and economics, or the pandemic, which separated us from one another for too long.

It should not be that hard.

Editorial, JPO, 06.04.21

Netanyahu's scorched-earth battle with court is unhealthy for democracy

(...) "It's a witch hunt," Netanyahu said, railing against the judiciary, the police, and the rest of Israel's criminal justice system. (...) It was a scorched-

earth speech as all-encompassing as any can be. Netanyahu attacked everyone: the police chief, the attorney-general, the prosecution. His message was simple: they are against me, and they are corrupt. Burn it all down. Does Netanyahu not realize what he is doing? (...) It wasn't that long ago that Netanyahu took a completely different approach to political corruption cases. In 2008, when Ehud Olmert was prime minister and under police investigation, Netanyahu called on him to resign. This was before the police had completed their investigations; before they had recommended that Olmert be indicted; before the indictment had been filed in court; and before the trial had actually begun. Nevertheless, Netanyahu was adamant. (...) with severe testimony being heard from each successive witness, every decision that he makes now is suspect. Is he doing something because it is in the interest of the nation, or because it serves him personally? (...) In an ideal system of government, people need to be able to trust their government, and work off the assumption that what their elected officials do is almost always meant to serve and advance the nation. But that is definitely not the case in Israel today. (...)

Yaakov Katz, JPO, 09.04.21

Benjamin Netanyahu has the right to a fair trial

I am very deeply concerned about the future of Israel. I am referring not only to its internal social stresses between secular and religious, between Jews and Arabs, but I am also equally and specially concerned by Israel's capability to resist and successfully overcome external political, economic and security pressures. (...) Let us remove one big obstacle to the formation of the next Israeli government. People might have completely different opinions regarding the worthiness of Benjamin Netanyahu's trial. Many believe that it is a just trial against a corrupt politician. Many others believe it is a political maneuver to get rid of a popular leader by means other than the ballot box. In any case, most will agree that the trial has become a big obstacle to the formation of a good and stable government and is causing great harm to Israel. (...) As a practical (...) way out, I propose the following: A new law should be presented and approved with no delay by the new Knesset. The new law regards the rights of a Prime Minister, during and after serving in office, to a proper defense against any allegations of crimes he/she allegedly committed while she/he served as Prime Minister. The law will simply state that the State should provide monetary assistance to the Prime Minister (...) for an appropriate defense of

his/her case, commensurate with the resources allocated by the State to the State prosecution. Furthermore, the law will reaffirm that he/she is considered explicitly innocent, with all the rights pertaining to innocent people, until proven guilty by the Court. (...) This law will apply also to Benjamin Netanyahu. Hopefully, this will help the speedy formation of the new government under Yuli Edelstein as Prime Minister (...). I really do not see any other candidate that could command immediate respect and recognition both internally and in the international arena. (...)

Jaime Kardontchik, TOI, 10.04.21

4. Medienquerschnitt

Ermittlungen des Internationalen Strafgerichtshofs

If the International Criminal Court lacks jurisdiction, is everything legal?

(...) Diplomatic activity has garnered support for Israel's position from jurists in Western countries, including some who fear the ICC in The Hague will set its sights on them too. Anyone in Israel who doesn't go along with this position is denounced as a traitor. (...) But even if Israel's position is legally correct, the ICC's lack of jurisdiction cannot obscure the crimes being committed in the territories, and Israel cannot absolve itself of responsibility. The court's jurisdiction is one thing, and the crimes being committed in the territories are another. (...) The High Court may have opened its doors, but criminal acts by Israelis in the territories continue, day in and day out. Palestinians there are subjected to violence, land theft, the uprooting and burning of trees, restrictions on mobility and being prevented from earning a livelihood, damage to water sources, home demolitions and nighttime military raids on their homes, sometimes in order to arrest children. The state authorities stand by, and under their patronage, the Palestinians live under a regime of oppression, dispossession and injustice. Hardly anything from this lawless situation reaches the courts in Israel. Under continual attack, the High Court of Justice employs a policy of restraint and does not appear to have the wherewithal to ensure that the occupation rests upon the pillars of the law, and to ensure due protection for the Palestinians as required by Israeli and international law. One may argue that the ICC is tainted by antisemitism, or that

it lacks jurisdiction, but neither of these constitutes a response to the injustices of the occupation. (...)

Yehudit Karp, HAA, 05.04.21

Feiertags-Depressionen

Despairing Israelis, remember that history is being written every day

The period of the national holidays always brings out the big national arguments too, and raises the intensity of the emotions that accompany them. But it seems that this year these holidays are awakening more despair than ever in the Israeli minority that still clings to the basket of liberal values, including watchwords that today are considered almost offensive, such as equality, rule of law and freedom of expression. (...) The successor of Rabbi Meir Kahane, Itamar Ben-Gvir, and the representative of misogynists and homophobes, Avi Maoz, were sworn in as Knesset members. (...) Rabbi Arik Ascherman, who battles the occupation, was beaten with a baton by a settler. Lawmaker Bezalel Smotrich called for the deportation of Arab citizens on the eve of Holocaust Remembrance Day. The Israel Prize was denied to Oded Goldreich because of his anti-settlement opinions. Joint List lawmaker Ofer Cassif was beaten by a policeman during a protest. Finally, as of now, the Independence Day edition of Israel Hayom newspaper stars Elor Azaria as a war hero. It is hard to keep up with the pace of the shock and outrage. (...) the Israeli center-left must recover from its memory of holding power. They must begin to understand that there is no "process" here with an ending known in advance. The story is not yet written; it is being written every day. And this is the key to overcoming all despair, from the largest and most difficult struggles to the smallest. Historical "processes" are written every day, every hour, hill after hill. When the big picture is too despairing, it is worth focusing on the small gains that everyone can have a hand in achieving.

Noa Landau, HAA, 14.04.21

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