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Die Themen dieser Ausgabe

1.	Erste Reise von Regierungschef Bennett in die Vereinigten Arabischen Emirate	1
2.	Israel signalisiert Angriffsbereitschaft	2
3.	Einreiseverbot für Tourist_innen verlängert	5
4.	Medienquerschnitt.....	7

1. Erste Reise von Regierungschef Bennett in die Vereinigten Arabischen Emirate

Als historisch gilt die Reise von Israels Regierungschef Naftali Bennett nach Abu Dhabi, wo er mit Kronprinz Scheich Mohammed bin Zayed zusammentraf. Es war die erste Reise eines israelischen Regierungschefs in die Vereinigten Arabischen Emirate (VAE). Bei den Gesprächen im privaten Palast des Kronprinzen soll es um die bilaterale Kooperation und wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit gegangen sein sowie – Medienberichten zufolge – um die drohende Gefahr eines iranischen Atomstaats. Israel und die Emirate haben im vergangenen Jahr ein Abkommen über die Aufnahme diplomatischer Beziehungen abgeschlossen. Israel unterhält inzwischen eine Botschaft in Abu Dhabi und die Emirate umgekehrt in Tel Aviv. Außerdem gibt es eine direkte Flugverbindung.

Bennett was well-welcomed in the UAE

(...) This meeting and Bennett's trip to the UAE are significant on several levels. First, there is the image they convey, one showcasing Israel-UAE relations and demonstrating they are moving smoothly forward to the extent that an Israeli leader can travel in the Gulf. (...) foreign relations (...) must be based on respect, honor and pragmatic planning that takes into account protocol and clarity. This is how the Gulf perceived things, and it is how Israel should learn to act. For too long Israel fumbled when it

came to basic relations with its neighbors such as Jordan and Egypt. It took for granted diplomacy as a building block. Bennett's message has sounded the right notes. He has said that relations should remain strong, and they can build on economic aspects and other themes. (...) Hooking Israel and the UAE together as part of a partnership of countries of moderation in the region can expand stability beyond our neighborhood to other friends, partners and allies further abroad, such as India, the United States, Greece, Cyprus, Morocco, Egypt and Jordan. It is also important for showing a strong front against Iran. Bennett's landmark trip should be built upon to create lasting bonds with our friends in the Gulf.

Editorial, JPO, 13.12.21

Bennett reaped what Netanyahu sowed

As one of the architects of the Abraham Accords, Benjamin Netanyahu can and should have been the one to represent Israel in the Gulf but somehow Naftali Bennett, who mislead the Israeli public, got to be the first Israeli prime minister to meet the UAE crown prince. Some 18 months after making history, the Abraham Accords are alive, kicking and surging forward and nothing can damper their success. The architects of the peace treaty – then-US President Donald Trump, then-Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and the crown prince – made it possible for three more Arab nations to forge peace with Israel – true, warm peace that make Egypt and Jordan want

to follow suit. They also proved to the international community that, truth be told, Israeli-Arab peace is absolutely possible even without the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. (...) it is not Bennett who was supposed to be the first Israeli premier to meet the leader of the UAE – historical justice should have afforded this honor to Netanyahu. (...) Bennett took full advantage of Netanyahu's mistakes, trampled on his own promises to the public, defrauded his constituents, cooperated with the Muslim Brotherhood and anti-Zionist elements – and pretended to do so because he had no choice, and all so he could succeed Netanyahu and become, example, the first Israeli prime minister to meet the UAE leader in public. In his statements in the Emirates, he did not even bother to mention Netanyahu. (...)

Ariel Kahana, IHY, 14.12.21

UAE sees Iran as a threat, but talks to everyone

Prime Minister Naftali Bennett's visit to the United Arab Emirates, and his meeting with Crown Prince Mohamed bin Zayed, could have been seen as just another sign that bilateral ties were growing warmer over the course of the first year since they were established, if it hadn't taken place at a critical time. He arrived just as the Iranian nuclear talks in Vienna were at an impasse, and the drums of war could be heard in the background. (...) there are only two possibilities. Either the Iranians will fold, pull back from their impossible demands and sign a deal of one kind or another, or the "military option" will become unavoidable (...). This is why Iran's race to a nuclear bomb will naturally be one of the main issues in Bennett's meetings with the crown prince, along with promoting bilateral ties. (...) The Emirates have been doing business with Iran for years, but see the ayatollah regime as a threat to their security and the security of the gulf, and believe that Israel can be trusted to help them in any way it can. (...) If the Vienna talks get hopelessly bogged down, the Emirati connect could actually turn out to be a secret channel through which messages can be delivered, moments before the aircraft take off.

Oded Granot, IHY, 13.12.21

A Milestone in the Middle East

It was a milestone in the annals of Israel's bilateral relations with the Arab world. (...) Naftali Bennett became the first Israeli prime minister to visit the United Arab Emirates. It is one of four Arab countries that agreed to normalize relations with Israel under the diplomatic umbrella of the 2020 Abraham Ac-

cords, which was brokered by the former U.S. president, Donald Trump.(...) Six months into his premiership, he has cemented Israel's burgeoning relationship with the UAE, a monarchy that wants to do business with Israel and shares its fear of a nuclear-armed Iran. The speed and vigor with which the two countries have consolidated relations is astounding. No such thing happened after Israel signed peace treaties with Egypt and Jordan in 1979 and 1994 respectively. When Bennett arrived in Abu Dhabi, the UAE's youth national soccer squad was in Israel playing Israel's team. It was the first such visit by an Arab national sports club in Israel's history. (...) Bennett spent four hours, two hours longer than scheduled, with the Emirati leader, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed. (...) Prior to arriving in the UAE, Bennett described Israel-UAE relations as "a precious treasure." (...)

Sheldon Kirshner, TOI, 15.12.21

2. Israel signalisiert Angriffsbereitschaft

In Israel wächst die Sorge vor einem Aufweichen der wirtschaftlichen Sanktionen gegen den Iran. Deutliche Worte fand Mossad-Chef David Barnea im Verlauf seiner Reise nach Washington, als er ankündigte, dass der Iran niemals in den Besitz von Atomwaffen kommen werde. Bereits im November hatte Generalstabschef Aviv Kochavi erklärt, dass sich die israelische Armee auf die Möglichkeit vorbereite, mit militärischen Mitteln gegen eine nukleare Aufrüstung Irans vorzugehen. Seit fünf Monaten verhandelt Teheran über einen erneuten Atomdeal, allerdings ohne, dass die USA bei den Gesprächen dabei sind. Deutschland, Frankreich, Großbritannien, Russland und China vermitteln zwischen den zwei Staaten.

Israel can only depend on Israel

(...) Negotiations and treaties are useless for numerous reasons. The Iranian leadership and military leadership believe (...) and they cannot be swayed otherwise, that they are commissioned by God or Allah, therefore a higher, undisputed, unstoppable, and supernatural force. Westerners have no idea of what this deep rooted, entrenched belief concept is, and how powerfully it engulfs every bit of Iranian leadership life, duty, actions and performance. (...) following western or Israeli terms, who many times are openly referred to as Satan which should immediately also reflect Iran's candid disrespect or disdain of westerners and Israelis, reflects zero chanc-

es of success. Especially long-term, demands or terms, or any terms that are not Iranian terms. The path of negotiations and treaties is downright (...). Treaties or sanctions have demonstrated Iran flexes, adjusts and perseveres through negative or restrictive treaties and sanctions, and with the help of their allies, Russia, China and North Korea. Plus, since 1948, all nations, including USA, despite being supportive, have demonstrated they will not directly militarily intercede for Israel, due to their own inner political and domestic disagreements, economies, Russia, China and Iranian terror threats. (...) all these nations have one time or another, or consistently, called for Israel's restraint, stoppage, boycotting, and/or prevented Israel from defending themselves in the major wars, numerous conflicts and terror attacks. The only true, complete victories Israel has attained is when they did it on their own. Israel can only depend on Israel, all the time, every time, forever. The sooner they realize and accept this reality, the sooner they will firmly succeed. The military option. (...)

Don Davis, TOI, 03.12.21

What Israel must do to stop Iran's nuclear program

Israel's policy towards Iran since the signing of the nuclear deal in 2015 has been nothing but a failure, stemming from ineptitude and the dangerous illusions of its leader. Netanyahu chose to clash with the administration of former U.S. President Barak Obama, missing a golden opportunity to bolster Israel's military strength, which would have enabled the IDF to act independently against the Iranian nuclear program. (...) But worst of all, Netanyahu failed to prepare a joint Israeli and American "Plan B" to surgically set Iran's nuclear program back many years - should Tehran opt to proceed to head towards the nuclear threshold. (...) Now, Iran is months away from becoming a nuclear threshold state, which would be unstoppable shall it choose to produce a nuclear weapon. (...) The nuclear capability would be there in order to ensure the future of the regime and its independence to act. The Iranian ayatollahs are extreme in their ideology but they are not fools. They want to solidify their hegemony in the region, but not to bring their nation back to the stone age. Once they become a nuclear threshold state, they will enjoy an improved position and enjoy immunity from military aggression against them. (...) A nuclear Iran - and even it being a nuclear threshold state - would be a cardinal change for the worst as far as Israel is concerned, but it does not pose an

immediate existential threat. (...) The real and immediate danger is in a nuclear race beginning in the region. After Iran achieves nuclear capability, Turkey will attempt to follow suit, as will Egypt and Saudi Arabia. Within one decade one third of world's dictatorships will aspire to the same goal. That would see a nuclear device in the hands of terrorists and could endanger the world at large and not only Israel, and there must be preparation for that scenario as well. Bravado and empty rhetoric is not the way to proceed and will only make Israel weaker and minimize its ability to act in self-defense. (...)

Ehud Barak, YED, 05.12.21

Bravado is not an effective weapon against Iran

(...) Prime Minister Naftali Bennett and other government officials have been making inexplicable and misleading statements. In a rare appearance last week, Mossad chief David Barnea said he vows Iran will never possess a nuclear weapon. Such a statement would not have been made without the knowledge - if not the urging - of the prime minister. (...) a nuclear Iran will (...) introduce an arms race into the region and change the Middle East for the worst as our bitter foe will be empowered as never before and immune from military action against it. The discussion over how many bunker busting bombs Israel will possess or whether it can refuel its attack aircraft on their long way to Iran, in case of an Israeli strike, lends to a narrow perspective on the crisis and serves those who wish to perpetuate the illusion that action is being taken and that there is a military solution to all things. (...) The maximum pressure campaign on Iran, egged on by Israel during the administration of former President Donald Trump, did not succeed in bringing the Islamic Republic to its knees. And the military actions taken by Israel to stop Iranian entrenchment in the region, also yielded no results. While Israel basked in its ability to drop bombs, the Iranian leadership was steadfast in its policies and demands, resulting in Jerusalem once again being distanced from the halls where decisions were being made. Israel's position is not a consideration in the nuclear talks and the Biden administration makes no secret of that fact. (...) Israel must work towards a regional alliance with the Sunni Arab nations that share its concerns over a nuclear Iran. (...) The government should continue to work quietly against Iran and its interests in all fields of operation, leaving an all-out military confrontation as a last resort even if such actions provide politically advantageous headlines.

Ofer Shelah, YED, 06.12.21

Israel must not support a temporary Iranian nuclear deal

(...) The American aspiration is to reach a "less for less" deal or a "different for different" deal. This effectively means a "more for less" or even a "much more for much less" deal. Even partial removal of sanctions will inject billions of dollars into Iran, allowing it to rehabilitate its economy and support terrorism, and will signal to markets that business can and should be conducted with Iran. (...) Iran has shown up at the negotiating table with maximal, absurd demands. The Iranians spoke only of the full removal of sanctions; American guarantees that a future US administration will not withdraw from the deal; and the full closure of all IAEA investigations. As for changes to their nuclear activities and regional actions, not a word was said. (...) In Israel, articles by and interviews with certain irresponsible officials (...) have been published in which they recommend accepting the fact that Iran will become a nuclear threshold state and preparing for this outcome because it is inevitable. This would be a grave mistake and harm national security. (...) All those proposing that we encourage or accept a partial deal have failed to realize that this is the worst of all possible options. This is not a temporary agreement, but an agreement that will become permanent. (...) We are approaching the moment of truth when it comes to Iran's nuclear program, and Israel might need to act on its leaders' promises to protect the security of the state and its citizens on its own. It would be a mistake to play for time and build a stable for horses that will be long gone once those stables are ready. Jacob Nagel, IHY, 07.12.21

What was the Mossad director thinking?

(...) the Mossad director needs to grasp a painful truth – he (...) is authorized to do only what he's told to do. (...) the Mossad director's "personal pledge" that Iran will never have a nuclear bomb is about as coherent and impressive as a personal pledge by his Iranian counterpart that Israel will never have a nuclear bomb. Moreover, the Mossad is undoubtedly an efficient assassination enterprise, and assassinations are very good for the ego, morale and the enthusiastic media. But they don't produce any real benefits. The Mossad also has a successful "dirty tricks" department that knows how to plant viruses in electric razors, disrupt the timetables of cable cars and even cause centrifuges to spin out of control. This department, too, is good at tactical annoyances but fails to produce any strategic benefits. By contrast, the Mossad and its ilk around the world have

been consistent failures for many years at anything connected to actual intelligence and strategic analysis. (...) Therefore, the Mossad director should try to enhance the functioning of his modesty gland and practice lowering his nose in front of a mirror. (...) His remarks were so arrogant, conceited, aggressive and inflated that together they create a frighteningly accurate reflection of Israel in 2021 – arrogant, conceited, aggressive and inflated. And for that, he has my thanks.

B. Michael, HAA, 09.12.21

The Mossad chief's declaration on Iran nuclear weapons is foolish and dangerous

The public and bombastic declaration by Mossad chief David Barnea, to the effect that the Mossad guarantees that Iran will never have nuclear weapons, is so embarrassing in its ignorance. (...) Only an ignoramus can believe that an external force, whether an espionage agency (the Mossad or the CIA) or an army, can prevent a country with a population of 85 million, with a nuclear and industrial infrastructure of the type now existing in Iran, from acquiring nuclear weapons. (...) If Iran were really determined to cross the nuclear threshold – it would have done so a long time ago. No external force except for the capture of territory and a defeat of the regime would be capable of denying Iran nuclear weapons, if it had a national commitment to achieving that goal. In the final analysis, delays and postponements, even as a result of large-scale military operations, could not prevent that. (...) Iran is determined to achieve nuclear capability, but at the same time it also balances this with caution and moderation – in order not to lapse into situations of conflict with the world powers. (...) Three years after Trump, with the encouragement of then-Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, abandoned the nuclear treaty, there is almost total security consensus that this precipitous step was a terrible strategic mistake. The "commitment" of the Mossad chief is likely to turn into a similar mistake. It is ignorant, foolish and lacking in credibility, and not only that, but its outcome is likely to be the opposite of its intentions.

Avner Cohen, HAA, 09.12.21

Look who's fighting the last war

(...) World nuclear powers have never succeeded in preventing another country from obtaining nuclear weapons if it wants them. Not India. Not Pakistan. Not North Korea. Not, according to foreign reports, Israel. The clear conclusion: If Iran wants nuclear weapons, it will get them. But that doesn't mean it

will use them. Only one power has ever used a nuclear weapon. That would be the United States, the leader of the free world, which dropped two atomic bombs on Japan to end World War II. (...) it's clear that an exchange of nuclear attacks would leave the aggressor and the victim in ashes. Both of them. In the 1960s, that reality was called MAD – mutually assured destruction. As a policy, MAD no longer exists, but the concept is in the back of everyone's minds. Including Iran's. (...) Israel protects itself from nuclear attacks with its own promise of destructive retaliation; Israel cannot eliminate Iran's nuclear program by military means. (...)

Mark Lavie, YED, 11.12.21

The Peres doctrine against Iran is still relevant

(...) The doctrine of Peres of 20 years ago was true then and is true even today and was based on several basic principles. Before his diplomatic interlocutors, Peres reiterated his approach that Iran's nuclear aspirations are not a purely Israeli problem, but a global problem. (...) it is difficult to stop Iran's ability to reach a nuclear threshold because "knowledge cannot be stopped," but he demanded that the international community focus on launching capabilities and of preventing Iran from building an arsenal of nuclear-capable missiles that could reach anywhere in the world: to Tel Aviv, Washington and Moscow. According to Peres, the imperialist aspirations of the Iranian government did not amount to a desire to rule Jerusalem, but to a desire for global hegemony and to have Khomeini Shi'ite Islam rule over the entire universe. (...) Israel's focus on Iran's enrichment capability rather than launch capability (...) does not contribute to the prevention effort. Even in the language of laymen, it is easy to explain that a country that enriches uranium, it claims for civilian purposes, should not develop missiles (...) capable of carrying nuclear warheads. (...) Coordination must be bilateral, and a political and security umbrella requires us to consider American interests. (...) You do not always have to reinvent the wheel. Sometimes there is a wheel that travels well, and you just have to keep it from getting a puncture.

Yoram Dori, JPO, 14.12.21

3. Einreiseverbot für Tourist_innen verlängert

Israel verlängert das jüngst erneuerte Einreiseverbot für Tourist_innen wegen der Omikron-Variante des Coronavirus bis Ende Dezember. Die Grenzen bleiben für Ausländer_innen auch über Weihnachten geschlossen. Einheimische, die aus dem Ausland

heimkehren, müssen sich für mindestens drei Tage in Quarantäne begeben. Die Ende November begonnene Impfkampagne von 5- bis 11-Jährigen läuft unterdessen deutlich zäher an als erwartet. Viele Eltern zögern mit der Impfung ihrer Kinder, davon ausgehend, dass ein eventueller Krankheitsverlauf harmloser verlaufen würde als bei Erwachsenen. Besonders große Skepsis herrscht – wie bereits bei den anderen Altersgruppen nun auch bei Kinderimpfungen – in der orthodoxen und in der arabischen Bevölkerung Israels. Ausgerechnet die Gruppe der 5- bis 11-Jährigen ist von der Omikron-Variante besonders stark betroffen.

Israel will pay a price for dismissing the Omicron threat

While Israel is preoccupied with the Iranian nuclear program and a wave of lone terrorist attacks, one threat is being ignored - the Omicron variant of COVID-19. (...) Among reasons for concern are the indications that despite efforts to slow the spread of the new variant, it has already been detected in 45 countries, mostly in Europe and in 17 states in the U.S. since the start of December. (...) this data points to the Omicron variant's ability to infect people who have already recovered from the virus and perhaps those who have been vaccinated as well. (...) every individual country has been trying by different means, to slow the spread of the variant. Despite outward optimism and efforts to prevent unnecessary panic, their actions prove their increasing concern. (...) Only Israel appears to be sleeping on the job. (...) Israelis insist on ignoring basic health regulations, including the use of masks; crowding restrictions; quarantines after travel abroad and many others. (...) This is a race against time. One third of the Israeli population is unprotected, should a new wave of morbidity begin. Winter is upon us and people spend more time indoors in poorly ventilated classrooms and offices than outside. Even if the Omicron variant causes only a mild disease – as South African health authorities claim - its ability to spread quickly will surely cause a surge in cases and a rise in hospitalizations as well as an increase in those suffering from post-COVID symptoms. (...)

Sarit Rosenblum, YED, 08.12.21

Vaccines are our strongest weapon against Omicron

The fifth coronavirus wave is already here, even before the accelerated spread of the recently identified Omicron variant. The infection wave continues

to increase, hundreds of new COVID cases are reported every day, there is a consistent increase in Omicron carriers and a rise in the reproduction rate. (...) We know from previous infection waves that vaccines are the most potent way to protect ourselves and our country as a whole. (...) And yet, 600,000 Israelis have not gotten vaccinated at all, 1.2 million did not receive their booster shots and 900,000 parents did not bring their 5-11-year-old children to be inoculated. (...) the Health Ministry must act more decisively in order to increase the nation's immunity against COVID. Starting with a mass vaccination campaign in each and every one of the schools (...). It is time for the Health Ministry in the HMOs to achieve results, and not just empty slogans.

Ran Reznik, IHY, 12.12.21

Let My People Shop!

(...) during this Covid era, a jaunt to the mall was sometimes the best we could hope for. (...) for Israelis, those days of “shop till you drop” may soon come to an abrupt end for those who are not “fully” vaccinated, as it's been suggested that only the “fully” vaccinated be permitted to enter malls. (...) Does it not occur to our brilliant ministers, including our prime minister, who are making these suggestions, that most of us who wear glasses have optometrists in the mall, that most drugstores are in the mall and that many supermarkets are also in the mall? Will 40-45% of the population be unable to access these services and goods because, all of a sudden, someone thinks that those who have not gotten the third booster shot will become the next Typhoid Mary and turn the malls into a morgue? The present hysteria over a new variant, which everyone says is weaker than the Delta Variant, is not only unjustified, but it is laughable. Hospitalizations have not suddenly spiked nor has the death toll, but after enduring Covid for nearly two full years, perhaps, it's actually safe to say that the worst is behind us. (...) The mall is (...) familiar, it's shiny, and it's one of those magical venues where you can forget your cares for the moment, get lost in the glittery objects and pretend that everything feels right again. Who would want to take that experience away from nearly half of Israel's population at a time when travel is exceptionally difficult, when winter has approached making it impossible to enjoy the beach and when almost every form of entertainment requires one to be “fully” vaccinated with proof of a green pass? (...) After nearly two years, it's certainly safe to say that the continuation of mall shopping won't harm us, but it

will significantly harm our economy if such large numbers are banned from the mall (...).

Cookie Schwaeber-Issan, TOI, 14.12.21

The solution is in our hands

(...) the more time passes, the less effective the vaccine becomes, a process taking place at the same time that the Omicron variant is spreading. (...) the immune response in people who received both vaccine doses and a booster shot is somewhat less effective in neutralizing the Omicron variant, and (...) the immune response to this variant in people who received only two doses or who received the second dose six months ago or more is near zero. Paradoxically, if we find that this strain is highly contagious but does not cause serious cases of COVID-19, it's possible that it could push out other mutations and turn COVID into a minor illness. (...) the question that concerns Israel more than any other is the high number of people who still have to be vaccinated – over 2 million residents if we count the unvaccinated, children who have yet to be vaccinated, and adults who haven't gotten booster shots. (...) we need to convince the anti-vaxxers and the vaccine-hesitant (...) preference should be given to those who got vaccinated and acted on the principle of responsibility for one another, as well as protecting themselves and their families. It's not right to compel all those who return from abroad to quarantine, even if they were exposed to the Omicron variant. This policy is fundamentally wrong for vaccinated citizens. As for those who still haven't gotten vaccinated, it's time the gloves came off and harsher steps were taken. For a start, restrictions should be put on entry to non-essential public places, and we could go as far as increasing their health tax. (...) The bottom line is that the solution is in our hands. If we all enlist, we can live safe lives alongside COVID.

Arnon Ofek, IHY, 15.12.21

Omicron the next disaster, the best solution, or what surprises may it have?

(...) A current worry should be especially Long COVID. We can't know yet what this variant will do in the longer run. And we don't want to find out either. Prevention is still far better than healing. (...) Omicron, in a way, is a whole new virus. (...) Because it seems more contagious, we need to double down on social distancing and mask-wearing. Not because it's more dangerous. (...) When I enter my synagogue now and see 30 men without masks from all over the country for some commemoration, I

go home and pray there. (...) we need to step up vaccinations, social distancing, and mask-wearing—all of us. (...) We have the pandemic, (...) because we live too close to each other and want our autonomy. Sweden has hardly any corona. New York City is a paradise for the virus. China, with giant cities, has no corona anymore because it lacks freedom, also to not wear a mask. (...)
Moshe-Mordechai van Zuiden, TOI, 15.12.21

4. Medienquerschnitt

Unterirdische Mauer entlang der Grenze zum Gazastreifen fertiggestellt

It's official: Gaza is now a ghetto

(...) And now it's official: This is a ghetto. Not a prison. (...) In a prison they incarcerate people for their crimes. In a ghetto they incarcerate people for their genes. Over 2 million human beings are crowded into this ghetto, 99 percent of them innocent of any crime. But that doesn't bother the ghettos and their builders. After all, ghettos have always been designated for the innocent. (...) Anyone who looks at this barbed wire monster, the guard towers, the strip of death, the user-friendly lethal toys, the sensors, the spotlights, the cameras, the sirens, and isn't horrified and isn't reminded and doesn't whisper "ghetto!" to himself, that's a sign that his soul has become calloused and his heart has hardened. And if he is Jewish and in spite of that he doesn't find it hair-raising, that's a sign that his entire history has been wasted on him. He hasn't learned a thing from it. (...) There are 3.5 billion shekels, over a billion dollars, buried in this project. Its main source of pride is the "underground wall" against tunnels. (...) in the face of the most routine threat bursting forth from the Strip, the rockets and the explosive balloons, all these billions are powerless and meaningless. Because rockets, alas, don't fly beneath the ground, and balloons tend to float very far away, above the barrier, to the guard towers, the strip of death and the radar. Together they will view the underground wall and the above-ground wall from above and continue on their way to their destination. In short, the residents of the "Gaza envelope" will gain nothing from all the billions buried around the Strip. (...)
B. Michael, HAA, 14.12.21

Riskante Hetzkampagnen

The toxic discourse that endangers lives

It is no secret that the Israeli center-left blames the aggressive and inciteful discourse of both political and religious leaders from the right, for the assassination of prime minister Yitzhak Rabin on November 4, 1995, against the background of the Oslo Accord (...). Of course, we do not know if assassin Yigal Amir would have refrained from pulling the trigger three times on that fateful Saturday evening (...), had Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu, in the early 1990s, avoided personal attacks on Rabin (...). The Shin Bet (...) apparently believes that the incitement, curses, and declarations that a certain person's life is expendable, are danger signs – as in the case today with Religious Services Minister Matan Kahana (Yamina), who is being attacked by various religious circles because of his policy of opening the religious services for kashrut and Jewish conversions to greater competition, even though these services will still remain under the rabbinate, and in accordance with Orthodox practices. (...) Once again, some rabbis declared *din rodef* (...) on our hapless minister of religious services. (...) persons close to Abbas revealed that he is worried about his personal security, both from Jewish right-wing circles, and from Israeli Arab circles, who are not happy about his membership in a Zionist coalition, and his focus on domestic Arab affairs, rather than Palestinian national issues. (...) Large parts of the Jewish population do not really recognize Israel's Arabs as equal citizens and believe that Israeli democracy should apply to Jews only and not to Arabs. The current situation in which for the first time an Arab party is a member of the coalition, and an active player in the coalition (...), is repulsive in their eyes. (...) And what about Prime Minister Naftali Bennett, who has been bad-mouthed and libeled by the Jewish opposition from the moment he was sworn in as prime minister? There were even calls from certain religious circles to declare a *pulsa denura* against him (...). It is therefore no surprise that Bennett is the most threatened person in Israel today. However, the security around Bennett is as tight as possible – a result of the bitter lesson the Shin Bet learned from the trauma of Rabin's assassination 26 years ago. The chances of a successful attempt on Bennett's life are virtually zero. But this does not do away with the need to get rid of the toxic discourse. (...)

Susan Hattis Rolef, JPO, 12.12.21

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