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**1. Krieg gegen die Hamas**

*War die internationale Solidarität mit Israel angesichts des schrecklichen Massakers am 7. Oktober zunächst groß, so wird mit jedem weiteren Kampftag die Kritik an der israelischen Kriegsführung lauter. Dessen ungeachtet geht Israels Generalstabschef Herzi Halevi davon aus, dass der Krieg im Gazastreifen noch viele Monate andauern werde. Für das Ziel, die Terrororganisation Hamas zu zerschlagen, gebe es „keine Zaubерlösung“. Die Lage der palästinensischen Zivilbevölkerung wird unterdessen immer auswegloser. Die UN gehen davon aus, dass inzwischen 1,8 der rund 2,4 Millionen Menschen im Gazastreifen auf der Flucht sind, zum Großteil in Zelten leben und ohne medizinische Versorgung, Zugang zu frischem Wasser und ausreichenden Nahrungsmitteln sind. Der UN-Sicherheitsrat hatte in einer Resolution umfassende humanitäre Hilfslieferungen gefordert. In dem Krieg zwischen Israel und der radikalislamischen Hamas müssten alle Seiten die "sichere und ungehinderte Lieferung von humanitärer Hilfe in großem Umfang" ermöglichen. Für die Resolution stimmten 13 der 15 Mitgliedstaaten des mächtigsten UN-Gremiums. Die USA und Russland enthielten sich. Unterdessen ist auch die Not der knapp 218.000 israelischen Evakuierten aus den an den Gazastreifen angrenzenden Siedlungen groß, da völlig unklar ist,*

*ob und wann sie in ihre zum Teil komplett zerstörten Heime werden zurückkehren können.*

**Victory means expelling Hamas' fighters from the Gaza Strip**

(...) The Israeli leadership must make a public decision that the idea of "toppling Hamas" is first and foremost about removing the remaining living members of Hamas' military wing from Gaza. (...) Ending the fighting without removing Hamas' military wing personnel from Gaza will allow contradictory interpretations as to whether there was an Israeli victory. An Israeli victory is a must given the defeat we suffered in the fighting on October 7. It is necessary to create regional deterrence, and so that the Saudis, and other countries in the region after them, will aspire to a regional strategic alliance with Israel. (...) Leaving an organized and trained military force in the Strip will prevent any real possibility of forming an alternative force that will rule Gaza. (...) Hamas retaking control of Gaza will be faster and easier than the Taliban retaking Afghanistan. (...) Israel has no other choice but to remove Hamas from the Strip (...). Removing Hamas' organized military arm from Gaza today will prevent a spiraling humanitarian disaster in the Strip. This should be Israel's declared policy. This should be the American aspiration. This should be the rationale for having America put pressure on Qatar, Egypt, and Turkey to remove Hamas from Gaza. (...)

Zvi Hauser, IHY, 19.12.23

### **Winning the War? Israel Is Stuck**

(...) Anywhere you turn you usually find that we're stuck – with a potential for further deterioration. In the Gaza Strip the army (...) racks up tactical wins such as uncovering tunnels, collecting arms and killing terrorists. But the expectation that this will produce a critical mass and ensure Hamas' defeat may not stand the test of reality, which is a war against a guerrilla organization. (...) The hostage-release process is stuck because Hamas has no interest in a deal. The government's claim that the military pressure actually improves the hostages' chances doesn't stand the test of reality. Israel can oust Hamas from governing Gaza, but then the mess of administering the territory will be the problem. (...) who will rule it? (...) In the north, Hezbollah is continuing with its provocations, and the odds that negotiations will get it to move its forces from the border are low. (...) no measures have been taken to prepare the home front for a war with Hezbollah, which will be incomparably worse than the one with Hamas. This is another failure that will expand until the guaranteed explosion. (...) Israeli politics is also stuck, as is the process of replacing the prime minister, who more than half of Israelis neither believe nor trust. Removing him (...) won't solve Israel's deepest problems. (...) Nothing good threatens us at the moment. We're stuck.

Ravit Hecht, HAA, 22.12.23

### **Netanyahu: When Shame and Pride Meet in Gaza**

(...) As many as 250,000 civilians died from the US wars in Iraq and up to a half-million from US actions in the entire Middle East...conflicts that, unlike Israel's Hamas War, had no direct connection to America's security. (...) civilians overwhelmingly paid the highest price. Yet, there were no worldwide protest marches or daily horror filled TV news bulletins showing the dead and suffering wounded. (...) back then there was no television, no Internet and no social media. (...) for Israel, it's a fight for survival. (...) Yet, there are now two undeniable realities...much of the strip has been destroyed by Israel aerial bombing and artillery and another generation of Palestinian Arabs will grow up hating Israelis more than the previous generation has, even though this entire 100-year-long conflict is largely of their own making. (...) how effective has leveling Gaza been, other than attempting to salvage Netanyahu's career from the unprecedented incompetence that

caused this war? (...) going three months into the war, Israel says it has killed only 7,000 Hamas fighters out of an estimated 30,000-40,000. (...) Hamas is far from being a group of dead men walking as Bibi promised. (...) What Bibi can't be proud of is having such a low opinion of Gazans he never thought them being capable of doing what they did on October 7th. And for that there's only shame. Dan Ehrlich, IHY, 24.12.23

### **Why moving to the Sinai Peninsula is the solution for Gaza's Palestinians**

Since 1948 (...) the Egyptians have been significantly involved in the politics and economy of the Gaza Strip. The Egyptians locked the residents of Gaza and the refugees of the 1948 War in the Gaza Strip, and, with the backing of the United Nations, still deny them the right to rebuild their lives in all Arab countries, including in the adjacent Sinai Peninsula of Egypt. (...) The adjoining Sinai Peninsula, in essence, is (...) one of the most suitable places on Earth to provide the people of Gaza with hope and a peaceful future. Covering 60,000 km<sup>2</sup> (...), its population is barely around one-third of Gaza's, making it one of the emptiest places in the Mediterranean region. Although under Egyptian governance, it is an integral geographic-geological continuation of Israel and the Gaza Strip, with which it shares a 200 km. and 14 km. long border, respectively. (...) Its open areas, along with the existing infrastructure, can easily host large-scale development projects that, if led by the Chinese and supported by local labor, for example, can easily mature in just one to two years. (...) If Egypt bravely chooses to change its rigid, old-fashioned policy of keeping Palestinian Gazans in constant distress and consents to such an endeavor, its geopolitical gains will be threefold: It will be hailed by the international community as the savior of the dire plight of Gazans; it will strengthen its status as a leader of the Arab world; and it will finally fulfill its 30+-year-old plan to settle the Sinai and strengthen its control of this zone. (...)

Joel Roskin, JPO, 25.12.23

### **Netanyahu's New Alliance With Hamas**

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has no idea how to exit from the disaster inflicted on us by his old alliance with the Hamas monsters, but he already has a new alliance with it. Their political enemy continues to sit in Ramallah and to threaten them with an Oslo process. It must not be allowed under any circumstances to rear its head. Even at the price of a confrontation with the president of the

United States, the loss of the Abraham Accords, a blow to relations with Jordan and Egypt, a loss of the chance of peace with Saudi Arabia and the strengthening of Iran. (...) If Netanyahu remains in power, the Israel Defense Forces may be able to push Hamas out of the Gaza Strip, but the organization will plant both feet in Ramallah. In that case, every Israeli civilian or soldier who loses his way and ends up in Tul Karm will disappear into the cellars of Hamas. (...)

Akiva Eldar, HAA, 26.12.23

### **Expulsion is a war crime, not 'the solution'**

(...) The opinion that Israel should drive Palestinians out of their homes at gunpoint is not new: Meir Kahane, the extremist rabbi from Brooklyn (...) advocated this view openly. (...) Egypt (...) has repeatedly and adamantly refused to host Palestinian refugees, even temporarily (...). "Throw them out" is no more a solution today than it was when Meir Kahane was alive. Nor, more importantly, is it any less unjust. The "day after" conversation is a hard one, not least due to radicalization in Palestinian society. But the way to de-radicalize Gaza is not to radicalize ourselves. And while a free society is obliged to hear out even extremist points of view, it is under no obligation to take those views seriously— especially when they are presented in such a fatuous, flippant, and feckless manner as the one proposed here.

Leon Kraiem, JPO, 28.12.23

### **Genocide?**

The world, and the left, have been throwing around the charge of genocide\* against Israel for a long time. (...) Israel has this very week been bombing a town where it had urged Gazans to flee to. The Gaza health system is collapsing. Food remains scarce. For sure, bombing a city where you have told civilians to flee is a war crime. It is also a crime against Torah. But does all this add up to genocide? Over 20,000 Gazans have died because of this war. The ratio of civilians to combatants, and the ratio of children to adults, are unbearable, almost unthinkable. (...) Until the war ends, the charge of genocide will only become louder. (...) There are powerful reasons for resisting such rhetoric. (...) Too often, charging Israel with genocide has at its roots the intention of equating Israel with the Nazis. That's minimizing the Holocaust, and that is inherently antisemitic. (...) Nevertheless, Israel is creating conditions which will lead to indiscriminate mass death if they go on too long. That means if a lot of people begin to starve to death because food cannot

reach them, or if they die because a cholera epidemic is spread by the lack of clean water, that is genocide. (...) Even in a just war, it is incumbent on all to pay attention to the terrible consequences of war for civilians, for the innocent, for the land itself. And it is equally incumbent on all to pay attention to the moment when a justified war could cross the line into what is defined as genocide. (...)

David Seidenberg, TOI, 28.12.23

### **Israel must stay the course on Gaza war**

(...) The massive gains made by the IDF, with over 8,000 Hamas operatives reportedly killed, numerous tunnels exposed and destroyed, and the terrorists' capabilities severely compromised, have been muted by the high cost of casualties – both on the Israeli side (...) and on the Palestinian side (...) efforts to reach another pause in the fighting and a deal like last month's, which enabled the release of dozens of hostages, have been stymied by Hamas intransigence. (...) IDF Chief of Staff Herzl Halevi said (...) that it could take months to arrest or kill Hamas's top leaders and "many months" to finish fighting Hamas. Halevi implied that he recognized the broader diplomatic and political context, which would allow only a partial all-out war for that long. (...) Halevi's sober assessments are a refreshing change from the macho statements regularly issued by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defense Minister Yoav Gallant during their frequent evening addresses to the nation, in which they blindly ensure total Israeli victory in a transparent attempt to boost morale. The going is slow and painstaking, and as Halevi hinted, the international community's pressure to agree to a ceasefire without achieving our goals is growing stronger all the time. (...) Israel needs to remain firm (...). Even if the road ahead is long and difficult, we must carry on, hoping that a future generation of Israelis can one day live in peace.

Editorial, JPO, 28.12.23

### **Israel's Deliberate Starvation of Gaza's Civilian Population Is a War Crime**

About a week ago, a 7-year-old girl was brought in dead to the pediatric emergency room at Shamir Medical Center in central Israel. She suffered from extreme underweight and her body showed signs of neglect and physical injuries. Her parents were detained by the police for questioning, and every reasonable person who learned about the story was left stunned, angry and speechless. (...) We were raised on stories of the Holocaust; about people who stole moldy bread, who tried to assuage their hunger

with potato peelings; about mothers who starved, literally, so that their children could eat. (...) Here on the home front, at the height of the war, people continue to dine in restaurants, to order lavish deliveries through Wolt; extravagant food packages with branding from celebrity chefs and restaurants are sent to soldiers at the front; soldiers' families are generously dined, if not wined, at the state's expense. And just over the border, about half of the population of the Gaza Strip suffers from severe or extreme hunger (...). The deliberate starvation of civilians during wartime is a war crime. (...) The State of Israel (...) must now allow the introduction of immediate humanitarian aid into the Strip, including food, water, electricity, gasoline, medicine and medical equipment. If it does not, Ka-Tzetnik's graphic descriptions will be on our conscience forever and ever.

Michal Feldon, HAA, 28.12.23

## 2. Verschleppte im Gazastreifen

*Die komplexe Lage auf dem Schlachtfeld, schlechte Sicht und der Lärm israelischer Panzer haben dazu geführt, dass die Soldaten, die versehentlich drei Geiseln töteten, die Befehle ihres Kommandanten nicht gehört hätten. Das ergab ein Untersuchungsbericht zu der Tragödie. Die Soldaten seien davon ausgegangen, es handelte sich um einen Täuschungsversuch, als die drei Geiseln mit bloßem Oberkörper und improvisierter weißer Fahne auf sie zukamen. Der Vorfall verschärft die Debatte um die Befreiung der noch rund 130 im Gazastreifen festgehaltenen Geiseln. Angehörige und Freund\_innen der Verschleppten fordern die sofortige Befreiung aller Geiseln – koste es, was es wolle. Sehr viele Israelis sind mit den Geiseln und ihren Familien solidarisch, doch Israels Regierungschef Benjamin Netanyahu hält unverändert an der Offensive im Gazastreifen fest und kündigte sogar eine weitere Intensivierung der Kämpfe an. Eine erneute Feuerpause und ein weiterer Geisel- und Häftlingsaustausch scheinen derzeit nicht realistisch.*

### **After hostage tragedy, IDF must be transparent, but also take responsibility**

One can understand the physical and psychological challenges facing IDF soldiers in Shijaiyah. (...) Yet, it's impossible to comprehend how some of the soldier soldiers violated the most basic rules of engagement. (...) the shooting that caused the death of three Israeli hostages was done against

orders. It's forbidden to shoot at someone raising a white flag and surrendering. (...) Unfortunately, bodies of captives were already recovered from the northern part of the Strip, and it was expected that the soldiers would be further cautioned. But as we can see, that didn't happen. (...) To prove that they weren't carrying explosive charges, the hostages walked without their shirts for several dozen meters away from the structure where the soldiers were, including the shooter. (...) Soldiers who risked their lives for the mission of rescuing hostages inadvertently killed them on the field. The responsibility lies heavily on their commanders since it turns out they didn't consider the possibility of encountering living hostages in this area, and how the force should act in such a case. (...)

Yossi Yehoshua, YED, 18.12.23

### **Israel's potential risks in negotiating a new hostage release deal**

(...) Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defense Minister Yoav Gallant said that military pressure is the only thing that can pressure Hamas, while the terror organization claims there will be no negotiation as long as the fighting continues. (...) Israel was (...) motivated to pursue a deal, in light of the tragic incident that took place last week, after three Israeli captives were accidentally killed by IDF soldiers in Gaza. This decision was influenced by the significant number of hostages who were killed in captivity, with some of their bodies having been recovered by the military. (...) It seems likely that Israel will escalate the military pressure on Hamas in the coming days, out of recognition that only such pressure will bring Hamas to engage in another negotiation for a release deal. (...)

Itamar Eichner, YED, 19.12.23

### **Put the Israeli Soldiers Who Killed the Hostages on Trial**

The three hostages in Gaza – Yotam Haim, Alon Shamriz and Samer Talalka – were mistakenly shot to death by Israeli soldiers whose actions completely violated the orders for opening fire. (...) They are authorized to shoot only when facing mortal danger, and that evidently was not what happened here. (...) Obviously, they did not recognize that they were Israeli hostages (...). They could have made several other assumptions: that these were Palestinian civilians who got caught in a combat zone; that they were Hamas terrorists who decided to surrender; or Hamas terrorists who were laying a trap. In any such case, they were still not authorized to fire at them,

because the soldiers' lives were not in actual or theoretical danger. (...) They blatantly violated orders. (...) Had the victims not been hostages, we probably would never have heard anything about the incident. (...) In today's Israel, there is excessive caution in accusing soldiers who shoot in violation of orders, because they are risking their lives for Israeli civilians at every moment. (...) with all due sorrow and understanding of the dangers with which soldiers must contend, the IDF command has a duty to inculcate the open-fire orders unequivocally, including by means of sanctions on violators. (...) Showing forgiveness to a soldier by not having him stand trial at a disciplinary hearing (...) in the wake of a violation of the orders, with such tragic consequences, means the next incident will not be prevented. (...) Talia Sasson, HAA, 20.12.23

### **Sinwar blocking hostage deal**

(...) Yahya Sinwar and the Hamas's leadership in Gaza, and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) (...) want a complete end to the fighting, withdrawal of IDF troops, and only then, for negotiations to begin on the release of the captives (...). The Hamas demand could not be father from the Israeli proposal, that included a week-long truce, if not a bit longer, and increased humanitarian aid in addition to the release of prisoners, including some heavy hitters convicted of murder. (...) Israel hopes that the intensity of attacks in Khan Younis would impress upon Sinwar the understanding that he cannot bring the fighting to an end, so least because of the U.S. support of the Israeli position and would be more agreeable to negotiations. The government is also hoping that the Qatari and Egyptian pressure on Hamas, brought on by pressure from the U.S., would yield results while forces increase their stronghold on Khan Younis and the Hamas leadership in the Strip. But any results at all would not be seen for the next week or two. The only positive sign is the apparent disagreement with in Hamas, between its leadership abroad and Sinwar. Ron Ben-Yishai, YED, 21.12.23

### **Israel's Choice: Cease-fire Now or Dead Hostages Later**

(...) The expectations our government of doom had manufactured regarding the war's objectives were baseless, unreal and unattainable from the first. (...) Netanyahu (...) should have known that there was no possibility of achieving it. Alas, from the beginning Netanyahu has not been engaged in a war for the citizens of Israel but in his own war. (...) Vanity,

fraud, deception, theater. Bibi – in his essence, in the purest form of his falsehood. (...) there is no chance of fulfilling the expectations that Bibi created. There won't be a "destruction" of Hamas. (...) Hamas will continue as a very weak, battered, bleeding force. But it will continue to exist on the edge of Gaza. Given that this is the true assessment of the situation, we must prepare for a change of direction. (...) The State of Israel now faces the choice between a cease-fire as part of a deal that may bring home the hostages in the hope that most of them are alive, and a cease-fire with no deal, no hostages, no apparent achievement, with a total loss of the remnants of international public support for the State of Israel's right to exist without terror threats from murder organizations. (...) If Israel ends the fighting (...) with a long list of dead hostages, we will not be able to forgive ourselves as a people and as a society. (...) It's decision time. A cease-fire with living hostages, or a forced cessation of hostilities with dead ones. Ehud Olmert, HAA, 22.12.23

### **How to conduct hostage negotiations**

(...) the government should not leave a single stone unturned in striving for the release of hostages. Tremendous efforts must be invested. (...) Negotiating the release of hostages (...) demands knowledge and skill, as the stakes are high: human life. A team of experts must conduct the negotiations. They must be committed and highly experienced people who did their homework and understand with whom they are dealing – the hostage takers' backgrounds, culture, aims, abilities, strengths, vulnerabilities, and the best ways to communicate with them. They also need to be fully aware of their government's priorities, wishes, and red lines. (...) Direct negotiations are preferable to indirect ones. (...) Time is a major factor. (...) The longer the hostages remain in captivity, the less their chance is to return home. (...) The aims of the government and the hostages' families are different. (...) Governments have a broader picture and a large array of interests: political, strategic, and social. (...) The government cannot and should not pay just any price. (...) Twice Israel paid a very high price for its hostages: in the Jibril deal and in the Schalit deal. (...) Some unshakable red lines must be introduced, and these red lines should be known only to the negotiating team. Raphael Cohen-Almagor, JPO, 26.12.23

### **Protest politics endangers the hostages**

(...) The hostages are our brothers and sisters. Their suffering, especially after the testimonies of the released hostages, stirs us all and makes us want to bring them home as quickly as possible. There is almost no one in Israel, on the street or in the leadership, right or left, who does not feel this way. That includes the activists of the protest movement against the judicial reform, who gathered to protest for 40 weeks, until October 7th interrupted it. Yet the organizers (...) rebranded the protests as a call for the return of the hostages. That was a dangerous move for the country, and dangerous for the hostages themselves. (...) And yet, in view of the fact that there is a unity government, and while the war is still raging in Gaza with bad news is constant, a protest calling for its replacement at this point in time is ill-advised and counterproductive. Conflating the call to change the government with the call to bring the hostages home (...) risks derailing the current consensus that is the desire for their release and relegating it to another skirmish on the political battlefield. It risks reducing the captives to just another issue in the relentless fight between rival political camps, while their loved ones are aching for their return. (...) Bringing them home is the duty of all of us, and any whiff of turning them into yet another political bone of contention must be nipped in the bud. (...)

Shuki Friedman, TOI, 28.12.23

### 3. Kritik an Netanyahu

*Regierungschef Benjamin Netanyahu muss um sein Amt fürchten. Neben deutlicher internationaler Kritik - selbst von US-Präsident Joe Biden - wächst auch der Unmut im eigenen Land. Umfragen zufolge halten rund 80 Prozent der Bevölkerung Netanyahu als zentral verantwortlich für das katastrophale Versagen von Armee und Sicherheitsdiensten am 7. Oktober. Vor allem bei den Angehörigen und Freund\_innen der in den Gazastreifen Verschleppten sowie in den angegriffenen Ortschaften und unter den Menschen, die im Norden Israels aus Sicherheitsgründen ihre Häuser verlassen mussten, ist der Zorn über den Regierungschef groß. Der Verdacht, Netanyahus Handeln sei in erster Linie von seinem eigenen politischen Interesse motiviert, verdichtet sich.*

#### **Netanyahu must announce his departure date**

(...) As soon as Netanyahu looks beyond his future political survival and ceases to deal with it amid the Gaza fighting, we will get a more refined and genu-

ine conduct that best suits a leader, as we continue prosecuting this war, which appears to be far from over. Politics will no longer be part of his calculus because he will no longer need it. (...) Most importantly, from the moment he and the rest of us are no longer preoccupied with Netanyahu's political survival, his positions will be judged on their merits alone. (...) The ideology will finally be separated from the man. (...) he will no longer be front and center. Finally, we will be able to judge things based on pros and cons and not because of how they could impact a certain individual. (...) How right and good it would have been if, after so many years in office, with a track record of tremendous achievements alongside appalling failures, Netanyahu led the war against Hamas free of any political or ego consideration, focused only on the goals of the war: destroying Hamas, freeing the captives and fundamentally changing the situation in Gaza. (...)

Nadav Shragai, IHY, 20.12.23

#### **The Volcano Will Erupt**

There has been a general consensus that, as long as the war continues, criticism of the government, the IDF and the intelligence community should be kept under wraps, because at a time of war the nation, and particularly our soldiers who are fighting on the front, need us to be united. (...) The high death toll of civilians in Gaza and the growing number of our soldiers who are being killed every day will at some point cause people to protest in the same way as when 400,000 Israelis took to the streets following the slaughter of more than 3,000 Palestinian and Lebanese civilians in Sabra and Shatila in September 1982. The so-called unity that currently pervades in our country is paper-thin. (...) It won't wait until the end of a lengthy war. (...) People are angry, and quite rightly so, because our political and military leaders failed us. When people's patience is exhausted, the protests will be huge.

Michael Boyden, TOI, 25.12.23

#### **Netanyahu is living a lie**

(...) The year 2023 is one we would be happy to forget, to erase it forever as if it never came into being. A wicked, difficult, unnecessary year. (...) Netanyahu (...) continued to incite and defame, while trust in him and his government continued to erode. (...) He continued to say that he was strong against Hamas and that only he would safeguard Israel's security, showing arrogance that cost us dearly on October 7. (...) Likud is crashing. Once

being the most qualified to be prime minister, he is now ranked as least qualified. And yet, he continues to incite and divide. (...) This is the most traumatic year in the history of the state and Netanyahu is not the man to repair and heal. Another government must arise, which will regain the people's trust as soon as possible so that it can make decisions about the day after the war. A government that speaks (...) with our Arab neighbors and the United States; a government that will make difficult decisions about the price that will be required to bring all the captives home; a government that will reach solutions either diplomatically, or alternatively militarily, vis-à-vis Hezbollah (...). Netanyahu still believes he is the right man for the job. He is not. He and his government must go. (...)

Nechama Duek, IHY, 24.12.23

### **Dethrone King Bibi Now**

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is the one who bears the greatest blame for the security, diplomatic and social failures that led to the October 7 massacre and the outbreak of war. (...) conditions have matured for the protests to be resumed and to expand the ranks of those taking to the streets. And, there is nothing more warranted than the protests against Netanyahu. (...) Yes, now, during a war – especially during a war. There is nothing more warranted than deposing him. (...) On October 7, "the protector of Israel" was revealed to be completely ineffectual. (...) Israel, under his leadership – the longest in Israel's history, longer even than of David Ben-Gurion – was exposed in its nakedness. Everybody who was present on October 7 in the Gaza border communities described a vacuum: No state, no army, nobody. The state wasn't there because Netanyahu emptied it of content. (...) The time has come to demand from the one who wrought disaster on the State of Israel to vacate his throne and allow others the chance to repair what he has destroyed.

Editorial, HAA, 25.12.23

### **The Netanyahu enigma**

(...) it is inconceivable that Bibi – who educated and intelligent and versed in the history of nations and their leaders – operates a mechanism of denial so strong that it clouds the dialogue between himself and his failures: in stopping the Iranian nuclear program; in his heavy responsibility for the flawed paradigm of bolstering Hamas' rule in Gaza; in the rift he caused in relations with the Democratic Party in the US, whose pro-Palestinian wing further exacerbates President Joe Biden's reluctance to help

Israel; in the disproportionate damage he has inflicted on Israel's rule of law, blindly following Yariv Levin and Simcha Rothman; and in the surrender that is capitulation by inviting Itamar Ben Gvir into his government. He understands full well what history books will write about all this, and in trying to push away the embarrassment – he adds one blunder after another. (...) the demand for his removal from the premiership is the biggest consensus that currently exists in Israeli society, whether openly or for now only in private. All this could lead him to wrong conclusions, chiefly among them – lengthening the war beyond what is necessary. He probably does not feel that the judicial reform protests that preceded the war will pale in comparison to what awaits him on the streets.

Dan Margalit, IHY, 28.12.23

## **4. Weitere Themen**

### **Ruf nach Gerechtigkeit für die Opfer sexualisierter Gewalt der Hamas**

#### **Human rights groups' hypocrisy on Hamas**

Rape during the Rwanda genocide? Outrageous. Rape during the ethnic cleansing in Bosnia? Abhorrent. Rape by Hamas terrorists? Not worthy of comment. That's the troubling position taken by Samantha Power, a senior official in the Obama and Biden administrations who has built her career on her concern for victims of genocide, sexual atrocities, and other human rights abuses. (...) Power's X (Twitter) feed since the October 7 Hamas invasion of Israel has included dozens of posts about the suffering of Arab civilians in Gaza. Oddly, however, she has never tweeted about the numerous Israeli Jewish women who were raped by Hamas terrorists. (...) Power's silence on Hamas rapes is glaring because she presents herself as a champion of human rights. But she is not alone in turning a blind eye to the sexual violence of October 7. Sadly, she is typical of the painfully slow, in some cases non-existent, response of the human rights community on this issue. (...) Amnesty International so far has issued 29 press releases entirely or mostly about Gaza since October 7. They, too, have been filled with baseless allegations about Israeli murders, "apartheid," and the like. To this day, Amnesty still has not issued any statement about the Hamas rapes. (...)

Rafael Medoff, JPO, 25.12.23

### **Victims of Hamas rapes must have justice**

(...) The exposure of Hamas' sexual crimes is unprecedented and requires a level of work that none of us were prepared for: over two decades of researching sexual violence and legal representation for women and their families didn't prepare me for this moment. (...) systematic sexual violence was employed by Hamas as a tactic, and the materials indicating this were gradually being exposed. (...) Initially, many refused to believe that they might be victims of systematic sexual horror used by terrorists. After the shock and denial stemming from repression, the action phase began, attempting to prove that what happened was indeed true. Mechanisms of censorship and silencing were introduced in these cases by UN organizations, which injected mistrust into the victims' version of events and demanded international evidence – a standard that the global feminist community has fought against for decades to prove or condemn cases of sexual assault. (...) Our role, as the sisters of those who are no longer with us, or those lacking the mental strength to seek justice, is to make their voices and humanity that were violated and taken from them in the attack heard. (...) Our voices are your voices, and justice, even if belated and insufficient, will be carried out for you by our hands.

Yifat Biton, YED, 28.12.23

### **Bedrohung aus dem Libanon**

#### **Israel-Hezbollah war is possible, but not inevitable**

(...) changing circumstances could trigger an escalation of the fighting to encompass Israel's northern border. Such an initiative could come from Iran. An unequivocal defeat of Hamas, known to be funded and equipped by the Islamic Republic, could be the trigger. Israel could not be seen to glory in victory over Iran's proxy, so the baton could be passed to Hezbollah to continue the conflict. The initiative might also come from Nasrallah. If Hamas was about to be destroyed, he might feel that Hezbollah could be the next target, and move to launch a full-scale pre-emptive attack on Israel. (...) the Iranian ayatollahs (...) are unlikely to grieve overmuch at the destruction of Hamas. Although happy to use the terrorist group, to fund, equip and support it, Tehran must always have regarded it as expendable. Hamas is a Sunni organization. (...) Unlike Shi'ite Hezbollah, Hamas could never form part of Iran's Shia Crescent; it would eventually have been cast

aside(...) Seven Israeli soldiers and four civilians have been killed in the North since October 7, as have 121 Hezbollah fighters and 10 Lebanese civilians. (...) the initiative for a full-scale escalation of the Israel-Hezbollah conflict is not restricted to Hezbollah or Iran: It could also come from the Israeli side. (...) Is an Israel-Hezbollah war possible? Certainly. Is it inevitable? Surely not.

Neville Teller, JPO, 27.12.23

### **Israel Should Consider a Ground Invasion of Lebanon**

(...) Israel and Lebanon have been at war since October 8, with Hezbollah once again dragging an unwilling Beirut into Iran's long battle against the Jewish state. (...) We see the Hezbollah aggression in the firing rockets and missiles at civilian homes and army units in northern Israel. The fighting has intensified in recently, leading to a growing death and injury toll on both sides. (...) With Lebanon unwilling and unable to act, Israel must contend alone with the perpetually growing threat on its northern border (...). Hezbollah Secretary-General Hassan Nasrallah hinted to his organization's intention to commit their own series of October 7-style massacres against Israelis (...). An Israeli ground invasion at least pushing Hezbollah north of the Litani River would neutralize this threat. It would also allow Israel to degrade the broader threat posed by Hezbollah's 40,000+ fighting force and diverse arsenal – an array of 150,000+ projectiles of various ranges, degrees of precision, and striking power, coupled with a domestic production capability. (...) it would also irreparably dent Iran's regional expansionism and send a forceful message of deterrence to Tehran. (...) The international community recognized the need to end Hezbollah's threat to Israel almost two decades ago. But time is increasingly proving that silencing Hezbollah's guns, and ending its broader threat, will only be possible through direct Israeli military action broader than the IDF's current limited counterstrikes. (...)

David Daoud, HAA, 28.12.23

HAA = Haaretz  
YED = Yedioth Ahronoth / Ynetnews  
JPO = Jerusalem Post  
IHY = Israel HaYom  
TOI = Times of Israel  
GLO = Globes

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