



Schlaglicht Israel Nr. 15/24
Aktuelles aus israelischen Tageszeitungen
1.-15. September

Die Themen dieser Ausgabe

| | |
|--|---|
| 1. Noch immer kein Durchbruch bei den Verhandlungen um die Geiseln | 1 |
| 2. Israels Gesellschaft zunehmend gespalten | 5 |
| 3. Eskalation an Israels Nordgrenze | 6 |
| 4. Weitere Themen | 8 |

1. Noch immer kein Durchbruch bei den Verhandlungen um die Geiseln

Die indirekten Verhandlungen zwischen Israel und der Hamas über eine erneute Waffenruhe und den Austausch von den im Gazastreifen festgehaltenen israelischen Geiseln im Gegenzug für palästinensische Häftlinge stecken unverändert in einer Sackgasse. Und das, obschon US-amerikanische Vermittler 90 Prozent der Konfliktpunkte für geklärt halten. In einer ersten Phase sollten demnach alle Frauen, alle Verletzten und alle Männer über 50 Jahren freigelassen werden. Vorgesehen sei auch eine Regelung für eine geschützte Ausreise verwundeter Hamas-Kämpfer aus dem Gazastreifen. Knackpunkt bleibt hingegen der sogenannte Philadelphi-Korridor, der rund 14 Kilometer lange Grenzstreifen zwischen dem Gazastreifen und Ägypten. Israels Verteidigungsminister Yoav Gallant steht mit seiner Haltung, den Forderungen der Hamas hier nachzugeben, konträr zu Regierungschef Benjamin Netanyahu, der sogar die Entlassung des Ministers in Aussicht stellte. Zuvor hatte der Fund der Leichen von sechs Geiseln im Gazastreifen den Druck auf die Regierung noch einmal massiv verstärkt. Die Leichen waren in einem unterirdischen Tunnel im Süden des Gazastreifens entdeckt worden, nachdem sie kurz davor von Hamas-Terroristen ermordet worden waren.

Reject Netanyahu's Vision of Conquest and Death. Choose Life

Netanyahu's new obsession – a permanent Israeli presence on the Philadelphi route on the Gaza-Egypt border, at the cost of abandoning the surviving hostages held by Hamas in Gaza, is a particularly cruel spin (...) Israel's military control of the Philadelphi route (...) is not a security necessity at all. (...) Netanyahu seeks to present his political base with a shocking populist equation, according to which the only options now on the table are either a deal to release the hostages and end the war – or the personal security of all the rest of Israel's citizens. (...) But this is a completely false equation. (...) In reality, a deal to release the hostages and to end the Gaza war is one key component of the only way to ensure sustainable security for Israel in the longer term. Fighting forever is not a solution. After ten months of fighting, it is already clear that there is no such thing as "total victory" and the "elimination" of the enemy, two of the prime minister's favorite phrases; it is impossible to control another nation by force forever and that we will never convince the international community of the legitimacy of such a policy either. The "Philadelphi route" slogan is just another populist fiction, like "total victory." (...) A deal to save the hostages and to end the war is critical first step for Israel's security. (...)
 Noa Landau, HAA, 01.09.24

IDF should be discussing response to execution of 6 hostages

In the aftermath of recovering the bodies of six murdered hostages, public discourse naturally gravitates toward immense grief, the troubling question of whether their lives could have been saved, and what measures must be taken to prevent such horrors in the future. Yet (...) it is puzzling that there is little focus on how IDF should respond to such a heinous crime as the execution of hostages. (...) This is an extraordinarily severe incident, yet an immediate response seems absent. (...) Following autopsies, IDF estimates the hostages were killed within 48 to 72 hours of their recovery. The neglect was apparent on their bodies, and it is difficult not to succumb to sorrow and horror when imagining what they endured over the past 11 months, up to the moment they realized the worst was imminent. (...) As part of the lessons learned, IDF is expected to adjust its operational policy within tunnels and exercise extreme caution. (...)

Yossi Yehoshua, YED, 02.09.24

Hamas murdered the hostages, not Benjamin Netanyahu

Even before the official announcement identifying the bodies of the returned hostages, the inflammatory rhetoric had already begun. Wild accusations started circulating, blaming Benjamin Netanyahu for nothing less than the direct murder of the six hostages. In response to these absurd claims, the obvious truth emerges: Hamas is responsible for their deaths. Hamas is the terror group that kidnapped, held and murdered them. (...) Sinwar and those orchestrating this conflict, primarily Iran, aim to wear us down in a prolonged war, keeping hostages until the very last moment, partly to ensure that calls for incitement like those heard yesterday continue. (...) at no point, from the first deal onward, were we ever close to signing an agreement for the hostages' return. (...) The only thing that might have advanced the hostages' return would be a surrender agreement, where the war ends, Israel withdraws from Gaza, military achievements are nullified, and Sinwar returns to leadership. Perhaps then we'd get some hostages back, but not all – because that's not in Hamas' interest. Hamas' interest is always to keep some hostages. (...)

Naveh Dromi, YED, 03.09.24

Standstill in hostage talks, Israel should accept withdrawal from Philadelphi

The talks to release the remaining 101 hostages held by Hamas in Gaza seem to be at a stalemate. (...) Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (...) explained the dangers of withdrawing from the strip of land bordering Egypt, citing it as a critical buffer zone between Egypt and Gaza under which Hamas smuggled weapons that allowed it to carry out the October 7 attack and launch rockets against Israel for years. (...) two former IDF chiefs of staff and now Netanyahu rivals, National Unity MKs Benny Gantz and Gadi Eisenkot, also made the case that retaining Philadelphi is not vital to Israel's security and pales in comparison to the chance to bring some hostages home. (...) Israel is now facing two valid approaches to dealing with the current situation in Gaza. The first sees Israel sticking to its guns and not giving an inch to Hamas in the hopes that, in a weakened state, it will eventually concede on its demand of a full Israeli withdrawal from Gaza. The second approach is agreeing to a phased pullout that would see the release of some of the hostages. (...) Given those difficult choices, we believe the country must go with the latter and attempt to save as many of the hostages' lives now as possible. Despite the potential dangers involved, it's the right thing to do. (...)

Editorial, JPO, 05.09.24

Crush Hamas or free hostages? I choose the hostages

(...) Israel's strength and resilience depend on maintaining our deterrence and our solidarity, the two pillars of our national ethos. During the first months of the war, Israelis pretended that we could do both: defeat Hamas, restoring our deterrence, and free the hostages, restoring our faith in our ability to protect each other. Now though, we know that we must choose between those two essential goals. That is the cruelty of our hostage dilemma. Prioritizing the hostages will have consequences for restoring our deterrence; prioritizing victory will have consequences for restoring our solidarity. Proponents of either position need to acknowledge the brutal price their choice entails. (...) allowing the hostages to die in captivity will also have fateful security consequences for Israel, perhaps even more devastating than not destroying Hamas. (...) The consequences for the covenant of trust between the state and a large part of its people will be far-reaching. (...) One of the deepest sources of Israeli resilience is our solidarity. Yet if the hostages are left to die by this

government and this prime minister, something essential will die within many Israelis. (...) Perhaps the greatest sin of this government against Israel was to cause so many who love this country and have devoted their lives to its well-being to feel like outsiders and wonder whether their children have a future here. (...)

Yossi Klein Halevi, TOI, 05.09.24

When Six Israelis Were Mourned, Over 40,000 Palestinians Were Ignored

Israel mourns the six hostages who were killed. The world also mourns them. (...) But our six hostages are only the tip of the story, a tiny fraction of the war's victims. Their becoming a global story is understandable. Less understandable is the unbelievable contrast between the wide coverage of their lives and deaths and the total disregard for the similar fate of people their own age (...) on the Palestinian side. While the world is shocked by the fate of Gaza, it has never paid similar respect to the Palestinian victims. (...) A young Israeli woman who was killed at the Nova festival arouses more sympathy and compassion in the world than a female teenage refugee from Jabalya. The Israeli is more similar to "the world." (...) The 17,000 children killed in the Strip since the war began also had hopes and dreams and families that were destroyed by their deaths. (...) Israelis' hearts are with the Israeli victims. Nothing could be more understandable or human. But national lamentation on such a scale for six hostages, amid total disregard for the tens of thousands of Palestinian victims, is sick and immoral: dehumanization without a hint of humanity for the victims – not even for the children who were killed; for children who are displaced, orphaned, sick, starving or had limbs amputated. (...)

Gideon Levy, HAA, 05.09.24

Netanyahu hasn't cared about Philadelphi Corridor for 16 years

(...) when Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, after months of silence, finally addressed the nation (...) he laid out his war strategy. The problem, though, was that his speech was riddled with half-truths, deflections, and a disturbing lack of accountability. (...) he explained how Israel's withdrawal from Gaza had empowered Hamas to grow into the formidable force it is today, armed with advanced weaponry from Iran and capable of wreaking havoc on the Jewish state. In his view, Israel's future survival now hinges on the 14-kilometer strip known as the Philadelphi Corridor, a narrow piece of land separating

Gaza from Egypt. (...) Netanyahu's attempt to shift blame for the October 7 massacre onto the 2005 Gaza disengagement – and by extension, Ariel Sharon, who fell into a coma in January 2006 – is deeply misleading. What he conveniently left out is his role in that decision. (...) ignoring the fact that Netanyahu has been prime minister for almost 16 years since then, is disingenuous at best – and dangerous at worst. It illustrates a refusal to take responsibility for the policies he personally shaped over the better part of two decades. (...) Under his leadership, the IDF launched three major operations against Hamas (...) but in none of them did Netanyahu prioritize the Philadelphi Corridor, the so-called "oxygen pipeline" that feeds Hamas's smuggling network. If this narrow strip of land is so critical to Israel's survival, why wasn't it dealt with during any of these operations? This inaction allowed Hamas to build up the confidence to launch the October 7 attack. Netanyahu's failure to act on the Philadelphi Corridor over the last decade directly contributed to the attacks. (...) That said, Netanyahu's warnings about the future aren't entirely wrong. If the Philadelphi Corridor remains unchecked, Hamas will rebuild, rearm, and eventually pose a renewed threat to Israel. (...)

Jaakov Katz, JPO, 06.09.24

Hamas's hostage homicide is a long-war strategy

Hamas's cold-blooded execution of six Israeli hostages (...) has underscored the urgency of freeing the remaining 101 kidnapped victims. The question is: at what price? (...) As Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu noted (...) the last two American bridging proposals noted Israel's flexibility and Hamas's refusal to budge. Why? Because Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar doesn't want a deal. He plans to cause Israel to bleed profusely, divide Israeli society, create civil strife (...) and trigger a regional Iran-driven war on Israel. (...) Hamas made sure to record each of the hostages on video to galvanize Israeli and international public opinion to attempt to force Israel to capitulate to Hamas's demands. When Israel refused, Sinwar ordered the execution of six innocent victims, depicting the Israeli government as intransigent. This win-win situation for Hamas reflects its "total warfare." (...) Israel has drawn local and international ire for refusing to leave the strategically vital Philadelphi Corridor, the 14 km. passage that separates Gaza from Egypt. The issue is one of the highest of importance to secure Israel and prevent the massive flow of arms and ammuni-

tion through scores of tunnels that have been discovered in the past months from Egypt into Gaza.

An Israeli pullout from the Philadelphi Corridor would leave this vital passage in the hands of Hamas, enabling the terror group to maintain power, rearm, and resupply. (...) Retreating from the corridor and merely depending on technological means to monitor it, as some in the defense establishment have suggested, would be a strategic disaster that Israel cannot afford to risk. (...) Israel would be committing strategic suicide by negotiating with the executioners. (...) Israel is facing a broader ideological, religious war for its existence, led by the Iranian regime and executed by its proxies – Hezbollah, Hamas, Syria, the Houthis, and radical Shi'ite militias in Iraq. (...)

Dan Diker, JPO, 09.09.24

Hamas' Psychological Warfare? Nothing New

(...) Hamas released fresh videos of their Israeli hostages. Each clip had its own contrived message from the terrorist group. (...) it is important to put these devices in the context of how Torah perceives them. That way, we can continue to strive in the opposite direction and fortify ourselves, our communities, and our nation in this prolonged war. (...) Hersh Goldberg-Polin (...) is made out to slam his beloved nation: "...and worst of all is my own country Israel has been trying to bomb me nonstop so they don't have to take responsibility and make a deal for their mistake of leaving me behind!" Naturally, the claim that Israel's Air Force was trying to kill Hersh is ludicrous (...). But it does little good to dwell on this. Telling everyone how callous Israel's enemies are does not seem to achieve a great deal, so let us instead use the opportunity to better understand how they operate. Hamas deploy psychological warfare as a matter of course. (...) Seeing Hersh castigate Israel is supposed to bring us to our knees. (...) Hopefully we know better. Psychological warfare is not a new phenomenon, and the Torah warns us to be on our guard: (...) "Do not fear and do not panic and do not dread them [the adversary]" -Deuteronomy 20:3. (...) Whilst war can be a time of compromises, the Torah is quite clear that ceding to fear is not one of them. (...) Psychological warfare and fear creation has destructive potential. It is important to push back with full strength. (...)

Aaron Seitler, TOI, 12.09.24

I Was a Hostage in Gaza. Netanyahu Is Prepared to Sacrifice Those Israelis Still Held Captive

(...) October 7 was so horrifying that even now we forget to some extent that the abandonment of the Western Negev did not begin that day – it was a long-standing policy. The failures of that day, and the failures that followed, are all the fruits of the Netanyahu governments and their conduct. The worst crime of all is avoiding a deal that would bring all the hostages home. This is not fate, but the policy of a government lacking basic moral and humanitarian values, a government that is ready to sacrifice its citizens on the altar of its continued rule. (...) The fundamental obligation of a state is to protect its citizens. No one has the right to sacrifice their lives, not for hypothetical security reasons and certainly not for personal political calculations. A government that does not celebrate human life and does not accept its responsibility for the welfare of the residents of the state is a government that no longer has the legitimacy to remain in office. (...)

Liat Atzili, HAA, 12.09.24

Maximum pressure on Gaza – now

The disturbing details of how Hamas terrorists held and murdered six hostages intensify the frustration with the prolonged situation in Gaza and the seemingly slow progress in the war against Hamas. Despite significant achievements, the conditions for either Hamas' defeat or its willingness to agree to a hostage deal still seem far off. To change this situation, we must recapture the moral clarity of the war's early days, speak plainly, and act decisively: Those who deliberately starve hostages, despite the world's humanitarian aid, deserve nothing less than a total blockade, forcing them to choose: surrender unconditionally or face the consequences. (...) Israel owes Gazans nothing but "blood, fire, and pillars of smoke." We must worsen their situation in every way possible until Gaza capitulates and Hamas is destroyed. (...) Revenge is not a dirty word, and retribution for Oct. 7 should be of biblical proportions. (...) After a decade and a half of Hamas rule, Hamas and Gaza have become inseparable. Therefore, to destroy Hamas, we must break Gaza's spirit. (...) If Hamas persists in refusing to lay down arms and return hostages, Israel must create a situation where the danger to Gazans from Hamas' continued rule becomes so palpable, and the suffering so severe, that they conclude it's better to risk overthrowing Hamas because the alternative is hell. (...) Until now, Hamas has tried to force Israel to accept

a deal at any cost. It's time for them to pay the full price.

Roni Eitan, IHY, 13.09.24

2. Israels Gesellschaft zunehmend gespalten

Die Bergung der Leichen von sechs jungen Geiseln, die brutal hingerichtet worden waren, als sich das israelische Militär dem Versteck näherte, erschütterte die Menschen in Israel einmal mehr und ließ die Demonstrationen für ein baldiges Abkommen und die Befreiung der noch im Gazastreifen festgehaltenen Verschleppten zusätzlich anwachsen. Auch die Gewerkschaften erhöhten mit Streiks den Druck auf die Regierung, alles zu unternehmen, um die noch lebenden Geiseln aus den Händen der Hamas zu befreien. Regierungskritiker_innen werfen Benjamin Netanyahu vor, den Krieg willentlich in die Länge zu ziehen, um seine Macht zu erhalten. Das Vertrauen in das Kabinett hat in der breiten Bevölkerung einen Tiefpunkt erreicht. Auch in den Reihen der Sicherheitsdienste wächst offenbar der Unmut über den Ministerpräsidenten, der sich in den Verhandlungen zur Befreiung der Geiseln noch immer hartnäckig gibt. Allerdings hat Netanjahus harte Linie auch viele Anhänger: In einer Umfrage des Israel Democracy Institutes im August gaben 78% der Wähler_innen rechter Parteien an, dass das Beharren Netanjahus auf die Kontrolle des Philadelphi-Korridors sicherheitspolitisch begründet sei.

The essence of Israel's identity: Why Israelis are taking to the streets

(...) Israel has witnessed the largest demonstrations since the horrific events of October 7. The leadership of the Workers' Union has announced a general strike (...). Now friends and observers from abroad are asking why Israelis would direct their anger toward their own government.

The answer is rooted in a consensus that has emerged within Israel's security apparatus – an alarming consensus that cuts across the defense minister, the chief of staff and the head of Mossad. They believe that the government, led by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, is jeopardizing a genuine opportunity to bring the hostages home. The demands the government is making, which appear to lack any substantial security value, seem to be driven more by political calculation than by a strategic imperative. (...) The tragedy is that most Israelis no longer trust their government. (...) This is the context in which dozens of thousands of Israelis, including many reservists, have taken to the streets

in protest, even in the midst of war. Their demand is simple: that the government do everything in its power to bring the hostages back home. (...) This demand is about far more than exerting political pressure on the government. It's about the essence of what it means to be Israeli. At the heart of Israeli society is a profound commitment to solidarity (...). The actions of this government, however, have unmoored that identity. The government's failure isn't just in not bringing all the hostages home. (...) The real failure of the government lies in its inability to convince the public (...) that they are acting in good faith and are genuinely committed to upholding the values that define Israeli identity. (...)

Nadav Eyal, YED, 01.09.24

Defense Minister Gallant Is Key to the Next Biggest Protest in Israel's History

(...) Defense Minister Yoav Gallant (...) warned that the security cabinet's decision to maintain a military presence on the Philadelphi route means sacrificing the hostages, while in his eyes the supreme goal of the war should be bringing them back alive. The murder of the six hostages rekindled the flame of the protest, which had dwindled in the course of the war. (...) What is it about Yoav Gallant that made him a focus of solidarity, a "local hero" who played a central role in the two largest protests in Israeli history? Gallant is not a classic Likudnik. He (...) proved that he has principles that take priority over the protection of the "fully right-wing government." So (...) it was when he realized that Netanyahu was forsaking the principle of redeeming hostages. (...) The only one whose resignation might release the tension and lead to the beginning of a dialogue is that of Netanyahu. But they will not rebel against him. They are pawns and have no standing of their own without him. (...) The majority of the public will not accept the removal of a defense minister whose only sin is demonstrating mercy and compassion to hostages who have been abandoned to their fate by the Israeli government.

Uzi Baram, HAA, 05.09.24

To stop growing societal rift: Include centrist, center-right opposition members in gov't

(...) One of Hamas's preconditions for a new hostage deal is that the Gaza war come to a complete end, and that Israel withdraw from the whole of the Gaza Strip, including the Philadelphi Corridor. (...) Eight of the 10 members of the narrow cabinet voted in favor, Gallant voted against, and National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir abstained. (...) As a result

of Netanyahu's current Philadelphi campaign – in addition to the execution of six Israeli hostages who were murdered by their captors (...) the hostages' families have intensified their cries of despair. They argued that time was running out for the hostages, who might soon all perish if not released as soon as possible by means of a deal. Though they pleaded with Netanyahu to reverse the cabinet's resolution about Israel's refusal to depart from the Philadelphi Corridor within the framework of the first stage of a deal with Hamas, he adamantly refused. This strengthened the belief of many of the hostages' families, and sectors of the general public, that Netanyahu does not place the release of the hostages high on his list of priorities, if at all. (...) the position of the hostages' families, and large parts of the general public, on the Philadelphi Corridor is supported by Gallant and most of the security establishment, who do not deny the importance of the Philadelphi Corridor. (...) the chance for a true national-unity government being formed at this time (...) requires a change of attitude by the prime minister on the formation of an authentic national-unity government. Unfortunately, such a change does not appear to be in the cards.

Susan Hattis Rolef, JPO, 09.09.24

How a sand-throwing incident act became a national metaphor for hatred

(...) the sand-throwing incident involving Public Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir has turned into a full-blown storm. (...) Noa Goldenberg, a 27-year-old woman with no criminal record (...) spent the night in Neve Tirtza prison alongside real criminals after throwing sand at Ben-Gvir (...). The harm caused by such an arrest could be considerable. But the core of this sandstorm lies neither on this side nor that side of the conflict. It comes wrapped in drums, colored shirts, ministers' suits, and a multitude of people attributing this alleged act of violence to political agendas on both sides. They tie it to hateful tweets, growing street violence, and factors that are turning Israel into a country increasingly divided among its citizens. The violence in protests – against demonstrators and police alike – has escalated, leading to the arrest of Goldenberg, who had been at the beach and is suspected of throwing sand at the minister. She has become the right wing's enemy, and the officers who arrested her have become enemies of the left. In today's climate, you're either on one side or the other, regardless of your actions or the uniform you wear. (...) it's this hatred, this black-and-white worldview, that we –

especially the keyboard warriors – continue to perpetuate. (...) we must urgently stop before this sandstorm turns into an earthquake that will swallow us all.

Lior Ohana, YED, 09.09.24

Netanyahu's Failure

(...) During these difficult times, when the people need strong and unifying leadership, we are once again confronted with cynical propaganda from Benjamin Netanyahu's camp. Rather than demonstrating responsibility and leading the country with dignity and compassion, Netanyahu focuses on public relations, distracting from the real issues and attempting to mask his ongoing failures with empty rhetoric. (...) Instead of uniting the people during times of crisis, Netanyahu continues to exploit tragic events for political gain, all while neglecting the north and other regions of the country. What Israel needs now is courageous leadership with real managerial competence—qualities Benjamin Netanyahu severely lacks. The country requires leaders who look beyond narrow political interests and act with genuine dedication to the well-being of its citizens and the security of the state. (...) The time has come to end Netanyahu's rule and the destructive government he leads, driven by personal, messianic, extreme right-wing, and non-Zionist agendas. A real government must work tirelessly, day and night, out of a genuine commitment to the security of the state, the well-being of its citizens, and the health of the economy—especially in times of war. This is not the moment for cheap propaganda; it is the moment for courageous leadership that will safeguard our future. It's time to send Netanyahu, his ministers, and the Likud members of Knesset home. (...) Under Netanyahu's leadership, Israel has hit rock bottom. (...)

Shimon Sheves, TOI, 12.09.24

3. Eskalation an Israels Nordgrenze

Die israelische Armee scheint das Augenmerk zu verlagern und konzentriert sich offenbar zunehmend auf die Auseinandersetzungen mit der schiitischen Terrororganisation Hisbollah im Libanon. Erklärtes Ziel ist dabei, den rund 60.000 israelischen Binnenflüchtlingen die Rückkehr in ihre Häuser und Wohnungen im Norden Israels zu ermöglichen. Die Menschen waren mit Beginn des Krieges im Gazastreifen zwischen Israel und der Hamas nach Süden geflohen, da es seither nahezu täglich zu militärischen Konfrontationen mit der Hizbollah kommt. Die Schiiten-Miliz handelt erklärtermaßen aus Solidarität

mit der Hamas und knüpft ein Ende der Kampfhandlungen an die Bedingungen, dass der Krieg im Gazastreifen beendet wird. Auf die gezielten Exekutionen führender Hizbollah-Kommandeure im Libanon sowie die Explosion Tausender Pager und Handfunkgeräte von Hizbollah-Aktivisten (für die Israel jedoch offizielle keine Verantwortung übernommen hat) reagierte die Terrororganisation mit massiven Raketenangriffen auf den Norden Israels bis in die Nähe von Haifa. Im Gegenzug führt die israelische Luftwaffe nun schwere Angriffe gegen Hizbollah-Ziele im Libanon durch. Die Gefahr einer Ausweitung des Krieges steigt.

Does Netanyahu have what it takes to defeat Hezbollah

(...) To have strategic success, one needs a lasting vision and a blueprint to protect the North long-term. (...) The IDF knows what to do to degrade Hezbollah and reconquer southern Lebanon if called upon by the government. But how will Israeli society hold up to massive attacks throughout the country after eleven months of war with a lesser enemy in the South? At present, Hezbollah (...) is winning, creating an unending war of attrition. Unlike Israel, Iran and Hezbollah are acting on their strategy. (...) Israel will have to make a strategic decision on whether to reconquer southern Lebanon to enable citizens of northern Israel to return to their homes. (...) For Israel's long-term survival, it cannot live with Hezbollah hovering over the North with over 200,000 projectiles, many precision-guided and capable of reaching Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, Eilat, and Dimona, the nuclear facility in Israel's South. If Israel does not act against Hezbollah, assuming there is no diplomatic agreement, it will put its northern citizens in continual jeopardy.

Eric L. Mandel, JPO, 10.09.24

The Hezbollah War Is Straining Israel's Patience

(...) Israel's conflict with Hezbollah is bound to continue indefinitely, straining Israeli patience and resources. Israel may therefore try to break the current impasse, with all its deadly consequences. (...) After eleven months of warfare, 20 Israeli soldiers and 26 Israeli civilians have been killed. Hezbollah has lost 436 fighters, including more than a dozen commanders. (...) In addition, one Lebanese soldier, 78 fighters from Palestinian groups, and dozens of Lebanese civilians have been killed. The skirmishes have had a profound effect on civilians on both sides of the border. (...) Israel is open to a diplomatic solution to defuse tensions, but Hezbollah has

shown little interest in one. (...) The situation in the north has led some Israeli politicians to predict that only an all-out war can remove Hezbollah from southern Lebanon. (...) The overarching purpose of an offensive would be to change the calculus on the ground so that the residents of the north can go back to their homes and life can return to normal, he told reservist soldiers. (...) Israel may well launch an offensive in Lebanon. Hezbollah would react fiercely, and casualties and property destruction on both sides would be horrendous. But this is the price Israel may have to pay to secure a modicum of tranquility along its unstable northern border.

Sheldon Kirshner, TOI, 11.09.24

Nasrallah has suffered severe, painful blows in recent days

(...) Netanyahu has many things on his plate right now: a trip to the UN in New York, budget, and trying to navigate the Jewish high holidays without escalating the region into a religious war, as some of his coalition members aim for. The last thing he needs right now is a high-intensity war with Iran's Lebanese branch. On a serious note, Netanyahu is in real trouble. He has become entangled in a political, military, and public quagmire that even a magician like him has found challenging to unravel. Luckily for Netanyahu, Nasrallah is also in a similar problematic situation. He, too, is entangled with himself, the desires of Iran, and internal resistance from Lebanese citizens. (...) Nasrallah has suffered several painful blows in recent days. (...) Thanks to Israel, Hezbollah has gone from a well-organized, trained army to an organization struggling to maintain a structured system. (...) orders from Nasrallah are not being transmitted to the field in an organized and precise manner. (...)

Avi Ashkenazi, YED, 12.09.24

Just Like in Gaza, Israel Is Spiraling Into War With Hezbollah Without a Strategy or Clear Goals

(...) Nasrallah may have promised the residents of his country's south that following the conclusion of "the revenge operation" carried out in response to Israel's assassination of Hezbollah's Fuad Shukur, they could safely return to their homes, but they are having trouble squaring the invitation to go back home with the continuing attacks by Israel Air Force planes. For the time being (...) they understand that it doesn't look like this war is ending soon, and all of the sides involved are beginning to plan for "the wide-scale war." (...) the intensity of the Israeli at-

tacks is growing and the geographic area that has been hit (...) is being interpreted as an Israeli intention to create a "separation strip" between southern Lebanon and the Litani River further north. (...) The Security Council resolution from 2006 requires Hezbollah to withdraw north of the Litani River and in the process to pull back the threat of short-range missiles and of mortar shells, which cause heavy damage, but they don't eliminate the threat of long-range missiles or of drones. The significance of this is that even if miraculously a cease-fire is reached in Gaza that would also be adopted by Hezbollah, that wouldn't be sufficient to provide a sense of security that would enable the residents of Israel's north to return to their homes. Israel's lack of a clear strategy is also apparent here that would clarify what kind of arrangement it is seeking with Lebanon and Hezbollah. Because in contrast with the destruction of Hamas (...) which were stated as among the aims of the war, the elimination of Hezbollah was not set as a goal. (...) Israel is preparing itself for a war in Lebanon without having a strategy or clear policy regarding what it wishes to achieve with it.

Zvi Bar'el, HAA, 12.09.24

A policy of calm for calm did not work in Gaza, Lebanon and will not in Yemen

(...) The last time we experienced a Houthi attack, less than two months ago, Israel reacted forcefully. (...) This retaliation (...) expressed resilience and faith in our ability to act anywhere and at any time. (...) However, it seems our enemies did not get the message (...) the Iran-backed Houthi rebels were not as deterred as we like to think. (...) Not responding to the missile attack would mean that Israel accepts a reality in which millions of Israelis' day-to-day lives can be disrupted, without cost. This has been proven a mistake in the face of Hamas rockets from Gaza and Hezbollah rockets from Lebanon and will be a mistake in the face of Houthi attacks (...).

Gadi Ezra, YED, 15.09.24

4. Weitere Themen

Wahlkampf in den USA

What Donald Trump misses about Jewish voters and Kamala Harris understands

(...) If Republican nominee Donald Trump hoped that new factors this election season – the Israel-Hamas War and rising antisemitism – would sway

the needle, the numbers do not support this. (...) Trump told a gathering of Republican Jews, "You're not going to have an Israel if she [Harris] becomes president... Israel will no longer exist (...). If they win, Israel is gone," he continued. (...) Maybe it's the off-putting tone, or maybe Jewish voters on a broad scale aren't convinced by the message, but this warning marked an escalation in the campaign to draw them in, with Trump frustrated that they haven't been. (...) there may be people on the fence who Trump could sway to gain support. But what he has been doing – shaming Jews for voting Democrat and painting himself as the sole savior for the Middle East – clearly isn't getting him what he wants. He's going to have to do something different. Right now, for those Jews who don't feel properly supported and represented by the Biden administration and the Harris-Walz campaign, there isn't a good alternative (...).

Editorial, JPO, 11.09.24

The Trump/Harris Debate Was A Disappointment

(...) the Democratic and Republican candidates turned in less than stellar performances and attacked each other relentlessly. It all seemed like a verbal wrestling match rather than a reasoned debate focusing on pressing issues. (...) neither candidate answered questions put to them by the moderators and fell back on predictable "talking points" or, in Trump's case, juvenile rants. This was not a debate in the strictest sense of the word. Unfairly enough, the moderators fact-checked Trump, but not Harris, leaving the impression that they were biased. Their relatively brief exchange on the current Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip exemplified the superficiality of the debate. (...) Trump's (...) ill-conceived comments regarding Harris' attitude toward Israel and Israel's future are extreme and cannot be taken seriously. (...) Harris is critical of some aspects of Israeli policy with respect to the Palestinians, as she should be, but she is most definitely not one of Israel's enemies. And what makes Trump believe that Israel's days are numbered? Israel is surrounded by vile enemies that seek its destruction, but thankfully, Israel is a strong and resilient nation and can defend itself. Viewers who watched this unedifying debate came away with precious little. (...)

Sheldon Kirshner, TOI, 12.09.24

Schulstart in Israel 2024

Education in crisis: Strikes, war, and the toll on Israeli children

(...) just a day before the school year was to begin, Israeli teachers announced that they would be going on strike, preventing high schools from starting on time. (...) This happens all the time, and it's not without reason. The teachers have their usual gripes about low salaries and unsatisfactory contracts. But the strikes are only the tip of the iceberg this year. The Israel-Hamas War is still in full force, and both teachers and parents are feeling it. Teachers are overworked and underpaid, and have to cope with the reality of teaching during an ongoing conflict. (...) The agreed-upon salary increases and additional benefits for the previous school year also never came due to the October 7 massacre and ongoing war – a conflict that has seen the Education Ministry budget cut by NIS 38 million. (...) The strikes cut school days shorter and force many parents to have to leave work early. In many cases, this can put their jobs at risk. But it isn't just the parents and teachers who need our support now – it's also the students. These children, especially those now in high school, have been robbed by twists of fate of a normal high school experience. First COVID, then war. Numerous strikes, while for good reason, certainly haven't helped matters. (...) The only educational sector that hasn't been harmed by the war – and in fact has constantly been getting all the support it needs – is the ultra-Orthodox. That's not to say the government is wrong for supporting haredi schools, but that it's wrong to not give the rest of the country that same grace. Education is something everyone should be entitled to (...). The government needs to give education the support it deserves. Israel has already lost a generation to this war – those who are fighting it. It can't afford for the next generation to become yet another casualty.
Editorial, JPO, 08.09.24

Starting School on the Darkest Day of the Year

The first day of school is always a bit of a strange sort of national holiday in Israel. (...) This year, the "holiday" was more starkly paradoxical than ever, marred by the news that six hostages, held since being brutally abducted nearly a year ago, had been murdered in cold blood before being brought back to Israel, just hours before the nation's children returned to the classroom. (...) The ceremony, primarily geared towards those entering first grade, was spirited, meaningful, happy, heartbreaking and poet-

ic. Like every year, attendees and participants were greeted by the blare of Naomi Shemer's classic, "Shalom Kita Alef". (...) The ceremony went on, and I doubt that there was a principal in the country who considered canceling it or even changing it in any significant way. Children should not have to be constantly reminded of the difficult period we are in. They are entitled to the excitement, the joy (...) of their first day of school, just like their older siblings, just like Dana. Celebration of life and children and education is a cornerstone of our faith and our essence as a people. It is who we are, who we strive to be. (...) despite how heavy, depressing and difficult everything feels right now for many – we will not just survive this period, but ultimately flourish.
Zack Rothbart, TOI, 11.09.24

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

Veröffentlicht im: September 2024

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