



Schlaglicht Israel Nr. 21/24
Aktuelles aus israelischen Tageszeitungen
1.-15. Dezember

Die Themen dieser Ausgabe

1. Der Sturz Assads und Israels Angriffe in Syrien	1
2. Netanyahu stellt sich den Vorwürfen im Korruptionsprozess	5
3. Krieg im Gazastreifen.....	6
4. Weitere Themen	8

1. Der Sturz Assads und Israels Angriffe in Syrien

Seit dem Sturz des Assad-Regimes in Syrien verstärkt die israelische Luftwaffe Angriffe auf Waffenlager im Nachbarstaat. Das Machtvakuum ermöglicht es, gefährliche Rüstungsgüter zu zerstören, ohne Vergeltungsschläge fürchten zu müssen. Israel will vermeiden, dass das Raketenarsenal und Chemiewaffen in die Hände von Islamisten gelangen. Die Bombardierungen sind nicht nur im Ausland verurteilt worden. Auch innerhalb Israels melden sich Stimmen, die auf einen Frieden mit den künftigen Machthabern in Damaskus hoffen und die Chancen auf eine Kooperation durch die israelischen Angriffe gefährdet sehen. Zudem ist die israelische Armee mit Bodentruppen auf syrisches Gebiet vorgedrungen, um möglichen Angriffen islamischer Extremisten vom syrischen Teil der Golanhöhen vorzubeugen.

Fall of Assad regime continues collapse of the Iranian dream

(...) The Shiite axis designed to strangle Israel is collapsing before our eyes. (...) Iran's Supreme Leader, Ali Khamenei, first lost the gifted commander of the Revolutionary Guards, then his favorite ally Hassan Nasrallah, and now the Assad regime has

fallen. (...) Russia and Iran (...) are evacuating civilians from the region, including senior Iranian Revolutionary Guards commanders. In other words, everyone who mobilized a little less than a decade ago to save the Assad regime quickly realized that the game was up. (...) there are problematic factors emerging from the void left by Assad. First, there are jihadist rebels, and now they are closer to Israel's border than ever before. Second, it is estimated that Syria still has stockpiles of strategic weapons, including chemical weapons, that could fall into the hands of hostile groups. (...) Israel must significantly strengthen its defense on the Golan Heights border and focus on the disturbing scenario of terrorists taking over weapons of mass destruction such as chemical weapons. (...)
 Yossi Yehoshua, YED, 08.12.24

Seize the moment and get us a hostage deal!

(...) There are certainly no tears shed in Israel over Assad's demise. In addition to his war crimes against humanity, he was a sworn opponent of Israel's existence and allowed Iran to commandeer his country to funnel weapons to Hezbollah in Lebanon. (...) The likelihood that Syria will emerge as a stable country that doesn't present a threat to Israel is slim, but there is one major benefit of the regime change and its implications. Assad's fall is one more domino

in the crumbling of Iran's influence in the region and in the increasing isolation of Hamas in Gaza. That opens the door a crack for the chances of a deal to be reached to free the remaining 100 hostages held by Hamas. Hamas has already lost its on-the-ground ally, Hezbollah, which left its Gaza comrades out to dry when it agreed to a ceasefire with Israel late last month. (...) Hamas is more alone than ever in its fight against Israel as it struggles to survive. At its lowest point, the time for a hostage deal is ripe, and there appears to be movement from both sides after weeks of inactivity. (...) The recent release of two videos made by Hamas of hostages Eden Alexander and Matan Zangauer further indicate that Hamas is feeling pressure and desperately wants a deal. Now is the time for Jerusalem to grasp the opportunity and push forward for a deal – whether it's a partial release (...) or optimally, a comprehensive package that will release all of the hostages, install a new government in Gaza, and bring our troops home. If Assad's downfall turns out to hasten the return of Israeli hostages, it will be an ironic – and wonderful – twist to the legacy of a man who will go down in history as a bloodthirsty mutation and stain on humanity.

Editorial, JPO, 09.12.24

The Downfall of the Assad Regime Is Israel's Victory

(...) With the downfall of Bashar Assad in Syria, the region is facing a new reality. For 54 long years the Assad dynasty – father and sons (...) ruled Syria with an iron fist. They showed no mercy on their own citizens (...). The rapidly unfolding developments in Syria provide new promising opportunities for Israel and its moderate neighbors such as Jordan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the UAE, but also pose challenges and risks. It's clear that Israel is emerging victorious, while Iran, Hezbollah and Russia have been defeated. Syria was a key link in Iran's axis of evil, which includes Hezbollah, pro Shi'ite militias in Iraq, and Houthis in Yemen. All of them are supported by Russia, which destabilized the Middle East. (...) The 30,000-strong rebel force consists of several factions, in which the driving force is Hayat Tahrir A Sham (HTS - the Authority for the Liberation of the Levant). Even if they get closer to the Israeli border, their ill-equipped troops don't pose a real threat to the IDF (...). Israel is ready to protect the Syrian Druze community (...). The Druze and the moderate Sunnis in Syria also fear the possibility of a jihadist regime. If the danger of this increases, there is a high chance that a new round of civil war will break

out. Jordan, which closed its border crossing with Syria, and Iraq are both monitoring the new developments with great concern. (...) The ideal solution for Israel, and indeed for all Arab countries, is that all factions in Syria form a temporary government to stabilize the situation. (...)

Yossi Melman, HAA, 09.12.24

What will Syria become now – Half a century of Assad family rule are over

(...) The crushing blow that the IDF dealt Hezbollah in Lebanon was the straw that broke the camel's back. The rebels understood more than anyone else that security in Syria had been maintained for the past decade by the Shiite militias from Lebanon and Iraq under the command of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards. When Israel severely hit this entire axis, the first shot of the current attack was fired. (...) The current attack by the opposition is called Radaa al-Adwan, meaning the counterattack. It (...) quickly became clear to the rebels, as they themselves say, that the weak spider's webs described by Nasrallah were the Syrian regime, not Israel. They encountered a Syrian army that was tired, heavy, outdated, and, most importantly, unmotivated. (...) The biggest change the opposition has undergone is in its unifying message and moderate Islamism. Its leader, al-Julani (...) issued instructions to his people not to harm minorities, and they did not stop uploading videos about the respect they give to Christians in Aleppo. (...) In recent days, he has increased his efforts and abandoned his aliases from the ISIS era. He even returned to signing all his messages with his original name, Ahmed al-Shara. Assad is gone, and 54 years of his Family dictatorship are over. The Syrian people have created a new opportunity for building a modern and democratic state. The question now is whether the new leaders can keep Syria united and accommodating to the multicultural and multiethnic Syrian society.

Reda Mansour, TOI, 09.12.24

Jordanian leaders fear kingdom could be next to fall

The greatest fear in the corridors of Jordanian power is being next in line after Syria — and this fear is not unfounded. (...) A straight and bitter line runs between Jordan and Syria: Assad's Syria refused to sell or donate drinking water and agricultural products to Jordan. Assad and his aids mocked the Jordanian king, hinting that Syria would open its gates to any Iranian plan to take over Jordan. (...) The growing Iran-Syria connection has kept Jordanian

security and intelligence forces on high alert. (...) Concerns persist that once Syria's new regime — whose true identity remains unclear — stabilizes, it may ally with Jordan's rebellious factions. Jordanian sources repeatedly warned that the intentions of Syria's new leadership remain ambiguous and require close scrutiny, as do its connections with Turkey and President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's preparations, which have yet to be revealed. (...) Iran remains a looming threat. Following its setback with Assad's downfall and the new Syrian regime's disregard for it, Iran is unlikely to give up its efforts to gain influence in Jordan. (...)

Smadar Perry, YED, 10.12.24

A historic chance to dismantle the 'axis of evil'

The fall of the Assad regime, combined with Israel's decisive blows against Hezbollah, Hamas, and the Houthis, presents a historic opportunity. With a bold US president open to innovative initiatives, there is now a chance to fundamentally alter the Middle East. By dismantling the Iranian regime, this moment could pave the way for normalization between Israel and the broader Arab and Muslim world. The key to achieving this transformative change lies in demonstrating strength against surrounding enemies, proving Israel's strategic value to the United States, building a coalition of moderate states, and setting a clear national goal: applying all possible pressure — including a credible military threat — to overthrow the Iranian regime, ultimately consigning it to history alongside Assad's regime. (...) Israel must act decisively to achieve its objectives against its adversaries as swiftly as possible. (...) Israel must operate from a position of strength, courage, and uncompromising dedication to its vital interests. Analysts urging Israel to make concessions to the Palestinians in exchange for US support in normalization agreements risk portraying Israel as weak — a liability, not an asset, to Washington. (...) Today, with Assad's fall, Iran is weaker than ever. (...) Now is the time to complete the task, with US support. This involves launching a maximum-pressure campaign — economically and diplomatically — against Iran. (...) To ensure a bright future for Israel, citizens and the Jewish diaspora must unite around one transformative goal: the fall of Iran's regime. This moment is closer than ever.

Gilad Erdan, IHY, 10.12.24

Syria's Fragile Hope Is Being Battered by Israel's Predatory Campaign of Destruction

(...) Israel has found another opportunity in the multitude of options appearing on its path lately, destroying Syria's army and taking territory as this beaten and bruised country awakens from the nightmare of the previous regime, facing an unknown future. Ostensibly, there is some logic to Israel's move. The circumstances are favorable for destroying the military capabilities of another enemy. (...) But one should not ignore the fateful damage which this ugly pillage could entail in the long run. (...) Israel has come in aggressively and forcefully, as is its wont, bombing and taking territory, a real hero against the weak and bleeding. It may benefit from its actions, but it's possible that Syria will recover and not forget who attacked it in its difficult hour, without pretext, without legitimacy. An opponent in a time of weakness is ostensibly an opportunity for attacking, but it could also be an opportunity for extending a hand. This may turn out to be futile, possibly rejected with disgust. But when events unfold so quickly and dramatically, no one can tell what lies in store. Israel should at least have tried. (...)

Gideon Levy, HAA, 11.12.24

Assad's fall is a turning point for Israel

The collapse of Bashar Assad's regime in Syria marks the end of an era. For over five decades, the Assad dynasty ruled Syria, positioning it as a critical ally for Iran and a cornerstone of the so-called "Axis of Resistance." Now, with the Syrian regime's fall, the Middle East is entering uncharted territory — one that presents both significant challenges and opportunities, particularly for Israel. (...) For Iran, Syria under Assad was far more than an ally; it was a lifeline. The land corridor connecting Tehran to Damascus and Beirut enabled the seamless transfer of advanced weapons systems to Hezbollah and the deployment of Iranian fighters and advisers. This axis gave Iran the capacity to project power across the Levant, encircling Israel and bolstering Hezbollah's arsenal. Now, the fall of Damascus leaves Hezbollah isolated. Without Syria's logistical and strategic depth, the group's ability to replenish its weapons stockpiles, already degraded by Israeli airstrikes, will be severely constrained. (...) The timing of this shift couldn't be more significant. Hezbollah's aggression on Israel's northern border was part of a broader Iranian strategy to pressure Israel from multiple fronts during its war with Hamas. That strategy now faces a formidable obstacle. A weakened Hezbollah, cut off from its supply lines, will struggle to maintain its current level of hostility to-

ward Israel. (...) For Israel, Assad's fall is both a strategic win and a cautionary tale. The immediate benefit is clear: the disruption of Iran's weapons pipeline to Hezbollah weakens a primary threat to Israeli security. But the collapse of Syria also introduces new uncertainties. The rise of Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) and other Sunni rebel groups in Syria could lead to further destabilization along Israel's northern border. While these groups are hostile to Iran, they are no allies of Israel either. The power vacuum in Syria may attract extremist factions eager to exploit the chaos, forcing Israel to prepare for threats from new, unpredictable actors. (...)

Karen Amouyal, JPO, 12.12.24

Israel's Intense Military Campaign in Syria

Israel has used the downfall of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad to strengthen its defences along the border with Syria and to ensure that Syria's arsenal of strategic weapons do not fall into the hands of hostile jihadist forces. (...) These have been Israel's boldest military moves against Syria, an arch enemy, since the 1973 Yom Kippur War. (...) Netanyahu, who has claimed credit for setting off the historic chain reaction that resulted in Assad's removal, added that the Israeli army took possession of the buffer zone to ensure that enemies do not entrench themselves so close to Israel. Clearly, Netanyahu suspects the rebels may be unfriendly to Israel. (...) Netanyahu compared the attacks to the British Royal Navy's bombing of the French fleet at Mers-el-Kébir in Algeria in 1940 to keep it from being seized by Nazi Germany. (...) Egypt and Qatar accused Israel of taking advantage of the turmoil in Syria and violating Syria's sovereignty. (...) Saudi Arabia condemned Israel's seizure of the buffer zone as a "violation of the rules of international law" and a deliberate act of sabotage to undermine Syria's "chances of restoring its security, stability and territorial integrity." Iran claimed that Israeli "aggression" was a "flagrant violation of the United Nations charter." Intent on beefing up its defences and weakening Syria, Israel has ignored these condemnations.

Sheldon Kirshner, TOI, 12.12.24

Assad's fall presents dangers and opportunities for Israel

The fall of Bashar Assad's regime in Syria is undoubtedly a welcome strategic shift for Israel. However (...) it's crucial to carefully assess the dangers and opportunities presented by this new reality. (...) Tehran's regime has lost its main foothold in the

region, along with the land bridge to its beleaguered proxies in Lebanon. (...) Yet, Iran retains its nuclear capabilities, as well as its military and political influence in neighboring Iraq. It hasn't abandoned its long-term strategic goals, mainly regional hegemony and a global standing as an Islamic power. The danger is that, in its effort to compensate for recent losses, Iran may accelerate its nuclear weapons program. (...) Turkey, on the other hand, emerges strengthened by the fall of the Damascus regime. Some of the Islamist militias now in power are actively supported and even controlled by Turkey. These groups are ideologically akin to Hamas, espousing a violent, extremist Sunni jihadism. Turkey may push for their deployment along or near Israel's border – a prospect Israel cannot afford to allow, as the lessons of October 2023 have shown. (...) Four power groups in Syria have never been Israel's enemies and some have even had positive relations with Israel in the past: the secular opposition to the Assad regime, the Sunni communities in the south, the Kurds who control a third of northeastern Syria and the Druze in the south. These groups may be open to civil engagement with Israel. Another vital avenue for collaboration must now develop with Jordan. The kingdom has suffered greatly from Iran's attempts to undermine its stability through its proxies in southern Syria. With these efforts likely shifting to the Jordan-Iraq border, regional actors must do everything possible to bolster Jordan at this critical time. (...)

Efraim Sneh, YED, 12.12.24

Wolf in sheep's clothing: Al-Julani poses challenge for Israel

In recent decades, Syria has been a cornerstone in Iran's axis of evil across the Middle East. In fact, Syria wasn't merely a connecting link between Tehran, Baghdad, Gaza, and Beirut (...) it was actually the initiator and driving force behind this axis. This was how Assad's Syria saw its role in our region – as a forward base in the campaign against Israel. (...) Yet Israel chose to ignore Syria's negative role in building a ring of fire around us, preferring instead to take comfort in the quiet along the Golan border while hoping Bashar would remain in power. But last week marked a turning point in Syria. The Levant Liberation Front, led by Abu Mohammad al-Julani – widely dismissed as just another rebel militia in flip-flops driving Toyota trucks – has transformed (...) into a trained and disciplined army of tens of thousands of fighters (...). Al-Julani, a former ISIS operative who was sent to establish a Syrian branch when

civil war erupted there, gradually distanced himself from his dispatchers over the years. Today, he speaks in tones pleasing to Western and even Israeli ears, claiming he shouldn't be judged by his actions as a young man and that his only desire is to build a new Syria and ensure its people can earn a living with dignity. (...) Meanwhile, his vision for Syria is becoming clearer – an Islamic state governed by religious law. (...) The fall of the Assad regime and al-Julani's emergence as Syria's new ruler present Israel with a challenge, and we seem to be making every possible mistake in confronting it. Israel's fears of chaos enabling renewed terror attacks along the Golan border are justified, as are concerns about al-Julani's long-term intentions. (...) It's also justified to try to target the chemical and advanced weapons caches left behind by Assad's disintegrating army (...) but there's a vast difference between this and the burst of activity and energy that has seized us in the past week. (...) We can defend the Golan without penetrating deep into Syrian territory, and we can target the advanced weapons Assad left behind without indiscriminately attacking "anything that moves" across Syria. (...) Eyal Zisser, IHY, 15.12.24

2. Netanyahu stellt sich den Vorwürfen im Korruptionsprozess

Regierungschef Benjamin Netanyahu hat sich seit Beginn seines Korruptionsprozesses vor mehr als vier Jahren erstmals vor Gericht den Vorwürfen gestellt. Der Ministerpräsident muss sich wegen Betrugs, Untreue und Bestechlichkeit verantworten. Netanياهو's Anwälte hatten eine Verschiebung der Befragungen beantragt, die dreimal wöchentlich auf eine Dauer von zwei Monaten angelegt ist. Sie begründeten ihren Antrag mit der aktuellen Sicherheitslage. Unter derartigen Bedingungen könne sich Netanyahu nicht angemessen um die Regierungsgeschäften seines Landes kümmern, das sich im Kriegszustand befindet. Die Richter_innen lehnten den Antrag jedoch ab. Netanyahu wird unter anderem vorgeworfen, als Kommunikationsminister dem Telekom-Riesen Bezeq Vergünstigungen gewährt zu haben. Außerdem soll er von befreundeten Milliardären Luxusgeschenke angenommen haben. Zum ersten Mal in der Geschichte Israels steht ein amtierender Ministerpräsident vor Gericht. Beobachter_innen halten es für möglich, dass sich der Prozess über weitere Jahre hinziehen wird.

Cleaning up corruption, here too Israelis await Netanyahu's opportunity

(...) The justice (...) system and senior security officials have been accused of working to undermine Netanyahu and his agenda, defying the will of the Israeli majority. In Israel, the senior command of the justice system and the intelligence agencies have been accused of prioritizing ideological or foreign interests over the good of the nation. This has led to a growing distrust among the public, who see their democratically elected leaders being targeted for political reasons. Netanyahu's legal battles, including allegations of bribery, fraud, and breach of trust, have fueled this perception. Many Israelis believe these charges are less about justice and more about blocking Netanyahu from enacting the policies he was elected to deliver. (...) Day by day, the layers of corruption in Israel are being exposed. The justice system, media, and security establishment have all faced growing scrutiny. These institutions, once seen as impartial, are now viewed as tools of political warfare, working against the country's elected leadership. (...) As soon as the time is right, Israelis will look to Netanyahu to not just lead in crisis but to have a vision for who this country will be and can become. That includes taking decisive action to clean houses in the justice system, intelligence agencies, and other entrenched institutions that are seen as acting against the people's interests. (...) Avi Abelow, JPO, 08.12.24

It's Hard to See How Netanyahu's Testimony Will Help His Defense

(...) The prime minister, (...) was questioned with kid gloves. The interrogators were given limited time, the questioning wasn't continuous and many questions were never answered at all. At the end of his first interrogation in the Bezeq-Walla bribery case, for instance, the police officers almost begged Netanyahu to set another date as soon as possible, and estimated that they would need 10 hours for it. Netanyahu waved them off and said that even what he had already given them required a heroic effort. But despite these remarkably beneficial conditions, Netanyahu's testimony was terrible for him. He got tangled up in numerous lies. (...) Regarding his conversations with Yedioth Ahronoth publisher Arnon "Noni" Mozes in another corruption case, Netanyahu changed his story the way Madonna changes clothes. (...) His testimony in the Bezeq-Walla case is almost worthless. Netanyahu answered all the questions with "I don't remember." (...) He wasn't terribly successful at explaining the contradictions

between the time and energy he spent influencing Walla's content (...) and his claim that it was an unimportant website "about dogs and cats". (...) Netanyahu's testimony in court is expected to be a nonstop show of victimhood. The big question is whether the judges will give the prosecution a generous allotment of time for cross-examination – at least as much as the defense was given to cross-examine prosecution witnesses who aren't defendants. If that happens, it's hard to see how Netanyahu's testimony will help his defense.

Raviv Drucker, HAA, 09.12.24

Postpone Netanyahu's trial

The trial, particularly Netanyahu's testimony, should not proceed at this time—not three days a week, not two days, and not even one. (...) It borders on absurdity that while the "war of the seven fronts" is still ongoing (...) and a new Middle East is taking shape before our eyes, the Prime Minister is expected to split his attention, focus, energy, and mental readiness between deliberations over cigar boxes and champagne bottles (...) and high-stakes discussions with Israeli and American defense officials on decisive actions concerning Iran's nuclear threat. (...) Rule of law will not suffer, nor will the principle of equality before the law. The public and national interest, in whose name the prosecution claims to act, actually demand a temporary suspension of this trial. Judges who understand the context of their society should grasp this reality. (...) Instead, the prosecution and judiciary are compelling Netanyahu to dedicate his time to cases that are indisputably not critical (...). These cases pale in comparison to the long list of urgent issues currently on Israel's agenda, which are vital to the country's safety, future, and broader public interest. (...) This trial is not just a weight around Netanyahu's neck; it's a burden on the entire nation. (...) The trial should be postponed—for the good of the country.

Nadav Shragai, IHY, 09.12.24

Netanyahu's Legal Troubles, Governance Gaps, and Leadership in Crisis

As Israel faces unprecedented challenges on multiple fronts, the question of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's ability to fulfill his duties has become increasingly urgent. His ongoing corruption trial, coupled with the pressures of his position during a national crisis, raises serious concerns about his capacity to govern effectively. (...) Netanyahu's personal conduct has also raised concerns beyond his legal complications. His strained relationships

with key officials, such as the Chief of Staff and the head of the Shin Bet, highlight a leadership style that many view as prioritizing personal loyalty over institutional integrity. Reports suggest that Netanyahu has allegedly dismissed or sidelined advice from these security leaders when it conflicted with his own political agenda, raising questions about his commitment to collaborative governance during a time of heightened security threats. (...) Despite these concerns, proponents of Netanyahu's remaining in office offer counterarguments. They emphasize the principle of presumption of innocence, arguing that Netanyahu should not be removed from office until he has been convicted. Prematurely ousting him would undermine this fundamental principle of justice. (...) The situation presents a profound dilemma for Israel. Netanyahu's legal troubles, self-serving conduct, and contentious relations with key officials create a governance gap that the nation cannot afford in such turbulent times. However, removing a leader without due process could weaken democratic principles. (...) Resolving this issue – whether through legal judgments, political decisions, or Netanyahu's voluntary resignation – is crucial for Israel's stability and resilience. (...)

Haim V. Levy, TOI, 09.12.24

3. Krieg im Gazastreifen

Mit sinkenden Temperaturen und Regenfällen verschärft sich die Lage für die Menschen im Gazastreifen. Die Vereinten Nationen warnen erneut vor einer Hungersnot. Nahrungsmitteltransporte erreichen auch aufgrund von Plünderungen oft nicht ihr Ziel. Derweil setzt die israelische Armee auch im zweiten Kriegswinter ihre Angriffe im Gazastreifen fort. Nahezu täglich kommt es zu Toten und Verletzten. Die Gesamtzahl der Todesopfer soll nach Informationen des Gesundheitsministeriums in Gaza bereits bei über 45.000 liegen. Ein kleiner Hoffnungsschimmer auch für die noch immer von palästinensischen Islamisten festgehaltenen Geiseln sind laufende Verhandlungen über einen Waffenstillstand und einen erneuten Austausch der Verschleppten im Gegenzug für palästinensische Häftlinge. Nach Verlautbarung der Hamas würden aktuell „ernsthafte und positive Gespräche“ geführt. Israels neuer Verteidigungsminister Israel Katz dämpfte die Hoffnungen indes, als er ankündigte, dass die Armee an der Sicherheitskontrolle im Gazastreifen festhalten werde.

When It Comes to the Hostages, Israel's Kippa-wearing Politicians Have No God

The most widely employed cry of protest against the government has been "shame," but that hasn't stopped it from setting new records for shamelessness day after day. The greatest shame of all is the opposition inside the government, and especially of its kippa-wearing members, to a hostage deal. The people who pretend to be moral, ethical and observant despise the basic human value of ransoming captives and the halachic commandment to care for those whose lives are in danger. (...) This is the hypocrisy of "religious Zionism" and "Jewish power": they are high and mighty when it comes to values but when it comes to paying a price for them, they choose land over people. In their eyes, the hostages are a small obstacle on the way to getting Gaza back for the Jews. Hypocrisy is also rampant in the ultra-Orthodox parties. (...) Their threats to quit the government only relate to laws that benefit them – exempt them from army service and ensure that money from the public that works and serves flows into their pockets. But when members of this public are held hostage in Gaza, they suddenly turn passive. It's none of their business. (...) They are not ashamed to abandon the hostages and ignore the basic commandment of caring for those in immediate danger. (...) The greatest shame is that they demand and get government ministers charged with "Jewish identity," "national missions," "tradition" and "heritage." This is Jewish identity? (...) Is this the tradition they are sanctifying? And if the return of soldiers and civilians who were kidnapped and subjected to physical and mental torture is not a supreme national mission, what is the point of this ministry and the other ministries? (...) it was precisely from those who are less directly responsible for the disaster, and who claim to be moral, that one could have expected to advance steps to bring the hostages home and not leave them to their fate. But they have no God.

Sami Peretz, HAA, 03.12.24

Expulsion and Talk of Depopulating Gaza? That's Exactly What Ethnic Cleansing Looks Like

A democratic state has never been dragged to the International Criminal Court, with its leaders being subjected to international arrest warrants. Warrants whose implications will hurt us badly. Such an "honor" is more commonly bestowed on the likes of Gadhafi, Milošević, Putin and other antidemocratic rulers. (...) Two reasons led to the debacle at The Hague: The first is the government's regime coup,

which crushed the protection normally afforded us by our democracy and an independent judiciary. The second is the use by senior government ministers of the language of war crimes. (...) more than one-third of the MKs and ministers in the coalition participated in a conference led by settler leader Daniella Weiss, who declared that all the Arabs in Gaza should be replaced by messianic settlers. This is, after all, the dictionary definition of ethnic cleansing. (...) we must see to the firing of all government ministers who use language that can be interpreted as calls for ethnic cleansing (...). And if the government of ruin doesn't have a majority without these extremists? Then we should immediately hold an election (...) we must restore solidarity within our society, freeing it of the incitement and division sown by the government (...) we must end the war in Gaza. (...) And of course, we must secure the immediate return of our tortured hostages. (...)

Moshe Ya'alon, HAA, 06.12.24

Military pressure alone cannot bring an end to the war

(...) When setting a strategy, it's (...) essential to clarify how those goals will be achieved (...): the objective (...), the mission (...), and the method (...) the decision was made to rely on one principle: "military pressure alone" would deliver results. This pressure does achieve one goal – damaging Hamas' military capabilities – but falls short of addressing the other two: recovering hostages and dismantling Hamas' rule. (...) This pressure could have been leveraged to negotiate for hostages with a clear ultimatum: If Hamas fails to return living hostages promptly, its leadership will permanently lose control over Gaza City and its surroundings. Unlike civilian casualties, the loss of territory strikes a deep, symbolic blow to Arab leaders. Instead, the IDF is engaged in intense battles in Jabaliya and other neighborhoods. While tactically successful, these efforts are not advancing the primary objectives of securing the hostages' return and dismantling Hamas' governance. At the same time, allegations about the IDF's ethics in warfare have gained traction. I have never claimed that the IDF is "the most moral army in the world," but I can confidently state that its ethical standards are at least on par with Western militaries. (...) The only area where former Defense Minister Moshe "Bogie" Ya'alon might be correct is in his claim that a covert political agenda in northern Gaza aims to enable the establishment of settlements. However, this criticism falls squarely on the political leadership, not the IDF.

Giora Eiland, YED, 05.12.24

Movement on hostage deals give rays of hope, slipping through the cracks

Hopes for the release of the hostages held by Hamas have been raised and cruelly dashed so often over the last 433 days that it would be irresponsible to think this time will be any different. Still, some recent developments (...) indicate there is some motion. (...) if there is a deal on the table now that will bring any of the hostages home, it is something that should be taken. This is not abandoning those who will remain in cruel captivity, but rather saving those – the elderly and the ill – for whom every additional day in captivity endangers their lives. Israel must insist that the deal is structured in such a way that Hamas will have much to lose if, after releasing the 30 hostages on the list, it does not go forward and free the rest in further stages. The motion regarding the hostages did not come out of nowhere; instead, it was triggered by the shifting sands in the region that were not favorable to Hamas. The ceasefire with Hezbollah in Lebanon, as well as the fall of Bashar al-Assad in Syria, means that Hamas is as isolated and cut off as it has ever been. Looking around the region, the terrorist organization can see no one coming to its rescue. (...)

Editorial, JPO, 12.12.24

4. Weitere Themen

Brüchige Waffenruhe mit der Hizbollah

Why Netanyahu Really Signed the Cease-fire Agreement With Lebanon

(...) Netanyahu knows that this time, the ultra-Orthodox are seriously intending to topple his government if the law exempting all yeshiva students from the draft does not pass. When this happens, he will be ousted from his post as prime minister, his locks will be shorn and he will be compelled to give testimony at his trial like any other citizen, without the endless deferrals. (...) Therefore, despite the fact that residents of Israel's northern border region and Likud voters are vocally opposing the agreement (...) he signed it. He will soon explain (...) that the cease-fire will enable the IDF to demobilize all reservists, which is why there is no longer a need to draft all ultra-Orthodox men of military age. (...) Keeping the coalition intact is also the reason he refuses to sign an agreement to end the war in Gaza. Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich and National

Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir (...) want the army to stay in Gaza and protect the new settlements they're promoting. Thus, he is, with eyes wide open and level-headedly, sacrificing 101 starving and slowly expiring hostages held in tunnels by Hamas. For him, they are but a trivial price to pay to let him remain in power. Another reason he signed the agreement is the surprising declaration by the French foreign minister, indicating that France will not enforce the warrant issued by the International Criminal Court in The Hague. This declaration was made as part of the negotiations over a deal in Lebanon. (...) it's all personal. Everything designed to suit him. (...)

Nehemia Shtrasler, HAA, 02.12.24

The Hezbollah threat: Weakened, but not gone

(...) Israel has reduced Hezbollah's fighting capabilities to such an extent that many don't understand why it would agree to stop when the terror group has been reduced to a pile of rubble. (...) Any rational observer knows that Israel cannot trust Hezbollah or any international body to control Hezbollah's actions. Indeed, Lebanon has been unsuccessful in binding Hezbollah to its will. So, what is the rationale behind this agreement, and why does Israel believe this is the right move for its security? The reason is simple: Israel's primary goal was to neutralize Hezbollah as a strategic threat, which it has largely accomplished. Demanding that Israel "finish the job" by fully eradicating the terror group would require Israel to take over Lebanon – an outcome Israel does not desire. (...) Israel estimates it has degraded Hezbollah by 80%. (...) Despite these setbacks, Hezbollah still possesses thousands of drones and tens of thousands of rockets, including precision-guided missiles capable of reaching any location in Israel. This agreement cannot, therefore, be seen as a conclusive end to the terror group's threat. (...) Even now, the Israel Defense Forces report that Hezbollah is attempting to smuggle weapons into Lebanon via civilian border crossings with Syria. (...) One of Israel's key war aims in the North was to safely return residents to their homes without the constant fear of rocket bombardments, which have killed so many in these communities. Whether this ceasefire accomplishes that aim remains a significant question. It will take time for northern residents to regain trust in the government and the army's ability to keep them safe. (...) Israel's decision to agree to the ceasefire with Hezbollah is rooted in a complex balance of pragmatism and necessity. While it has successfully neutralized significant

elements of Hezbollah's infrastructure and strategic capabilities, the underlying threats remain unresolved. (...)

Zina Rakhamilova, JPO, 04.12.24

Netanyahu gegen Haaretz und den öffentlichen Rundfunk

Haaretz Will Not Be Silenced by Netanyahu

(...) At Haaretz, we argued that Netanyahu's policy of oppressing the Palestinians into submission would lead to disaster, and that the next surprise attack might be around the corner. Netanyahu wouldn't listen. But when our doom and gloom prophecies materialized on October 7, we were nonetheless shocked and grieved by what happened. (...) Our reporters, rushing to the scene, barely escaped the shooting, helped collect bodies from the massacre at the Nova music festival, or struggled to rescue their loved ones from the attackers. (...) We have never faced such an emotional and professional challenge in the newsroom. But despite the unprecedented difficulty, we had to stand by and fulfill our journalistic mission to report the broadest possible story about the war. This meant that besides recording the loss and grief in Israel (...) we also described what was happening on the other side as Israel's forces regrouped, pushed back the enemy and launched their counteroffensive into Gaza, going after and dismantling Hamas forces while also killing scores of innocent bystanders, depopulating and razing entire neighborhoods and turning the besieged Palestinian population into hopeless, destitute refugees. This was not the first time that Haaretz parted ways with the mainstream Israeli media during wartime. (...) we believe that when you see or suspect war crimes, you must raise your voice as they happen rather than wait until the war is over (...). Our attitude has gotten us into trouble time and again. (...) Netanyahu has never liked our reporting and our strong stance against his policy of occupation and annexation in the occupied territories and his overall denial of Palestinian rights. (...) Netanyahu's henchman Shlomo Karhi, the communications ministers (...) also seeks to close Israel's public broadcaster, which the government sees as too independent. (...) But we are not terrorized or terrified by Netanyahu's threats (...). We will stick to our critical mission to stand for human and civil rights and to expose government wrongdoing and war crimes. This is our duty – even more so when Israel is at war.

Aluf Benn, HAA, 01.12.24

Privatizing public broadcasting, turning the watchdog into a lapdog

Earlier this month, the Knesset passed a preliminary reading of a bill to privatize the Israeli Public Broadcasting Corporation, KAN. This proposal is not merely a technical or administrative matter but a significant move that endangers two fundamental principles of a democratic society: the public's right to diverse and reliable information and the existence of independent journalism free from political or commercial interests. (...) The importance of public broadcasting extends beyond offering representation to diverse groups. KAN is also one of the few journalistic institutions in Israel not subject to considerations of ratings, advertisers, or politicians. Thanks to its independence, it can produce journalism that challenges centers of power, provides critical coverage, and serves as a watchdog. The investigations, reports, and exposés by KAN journalists in recent months underscore the essential role of public broadcasting in safeguarding democracy. (...) KAN acts as a crucial counterbalance, ensuring reliable information and balanced public discourse.

(...) Privatizing KAN is not just an unnecessary step but one that undermines the very foundations of a democratic society. Turning public broadcasting from a watchdog of democracy into the government's lapdog is a dangerous move. This must not happen. Anat Ben-David, JPO, 15.12.24

HAA = Haaretz

YED = Yedioth Ahronoth / Ynetnews

JPO = Jerusalem Post

IHY = Israel HaYom

TOI = Times of Israel

Veröffentlicht im: Dezember 2024

Verantwortlich:

*Dr. Ralf Melzer, Leiter der Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung
Israel*

Redaktion:

Susanne Knaul

Judith Stelmach

Homepage: www.fes.org.il

Email: fes@fes.org.il