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1. Parlamentspräsident Yuli Edelstein zurückgetreten

Israels Parlamentspräsident Yuli Edelstein ist zurückgetreten, nachdem er zuvor die Einberufung der Wahl seines Nachfolgers vor der Bildung einer neuen Regierung abgelehnt hatte und das Oberste Gericht daraufhin eine Frist für die Abstimmung über den künftigen Parlamentspräsidenten setzte. Edelstein, der Mitglied von Benjamin Netanyahus Likud-Partei ist, umging so die Entscheidung der Richter, gegen die er aufgrund ihrer aus seiner Sicht „grobe und arrogante Einmischung“ in parlamentarische Angelegenheiten öffentlich wetterte. Der Rechtswissenschaftler Amir Fuchs vom Israel Democracy Institute kritisierte dagegen Edelstein, er habe seine Autorität missbraucht und die Anweisung des Obersten Gerichts missachtet – ein noch nie da gewesener höchst problematischer Präzedenzfall. Edelsteins Rücktritt ebnete den Weg für Benny Gantz, der mit Stimmen des Likud zum neuen Parlamentspräsidenten gewählt wurde. Der frühere Militärführer führte mit seinem Kurswechsel und seiner Entscheidung, einer Koalition mit dem Likud unter der Führung von Benjamin Netanyahu beizutreten, zur Auflösung des Mitte-Bündnisses Blau-Weiß. In seiner ersten Rede als Parlamentspräsident rechtfertigte Gantz seinen Schritt mit der Corona-Krise und appellierte zur nationalen Einheit.

It's time for a new Knesset speaker

(...) Knesset Speaker Yuli Edelstein announced that he would not permit the Knesset to choose a replacement for him. Edelstein (...) wouldn't facilitate "a consensus-breaking move whose aim is to make opportunistic grabs in the legislature." It's hard to think of a more obvious grab in the legislature. (...) It's not the first time Edelstein has used his authority for decidedly unstatesmanlike reasons, directly connected to Netanyahu's legal troubles. (...) Kahol Lavan has decided to focus on trying to replace Edelstein with one of its own MKs so it can advance bills prohibiting a criminal defendant from serving as prime minister and imposing term limits on the office of prime minister. But Edelstein, who is fulfilling a state position, decided to exploit his position and pimp out his authority, and to hell with propriety. All this to prevent regime change at any price and to block legislation that would stop the corruption that has become the hallmark of the ruling party and the man who heads it. (...) The Knesset has dragged the public through three elections in a year and 61 MKs told President Reuven Rivlin they preferred that Kahol Lavan Chairman Benny Gantz be asked to form the next government, but Edelstein has decided that the order of the day is a broad government, so he is barricading himself into his seat and refusing to be replaced. The strength of a state is measured by how it conducts itself during emergencies, when its principles are put to the test. The coronavirus crisis makes it even more important to respect

the clear majority in the Knesset that recommended Gantz and is seeking a new speaker.

Editorial, HAA, 16.03.20

Edelstein's dangerous High Court game

(...) A majority of MKs demand their right to vote in a new speaker while he persists in his refusal to allow a vote. This is the kind of rare occasion that demands judiciary intervention. We have seen cases in which the courts have inserted themselves in political matters in order to protect the minority. Now they must step in and protect the majority. (...) Edelstein has been trying at the behest of his master Benjamin Netanyahu to trample over a parliamentary majority. The court was quick to react and within minutes ruled that the speaker must allow the vote to take place. This was not an act of judicial overreach. It was the necessary response to attempts to circumvent the will of the voters and the elected parliamentary majority. (...) The speaker's authority must not be used in a manner that compromises Israel's democracy. Edelstein tried to do just that and the court stopped him. (...) We are on the verge of a constitutional crisis. Edelstein may persist in his refusal despite the ruling. For all our sakes, I hope he does not. Despite many valid arguments against it, a unity government may be the only solution to the danger caused by the speaker and his political allies. (...) Behind the scenes, Netanyahu is running the show; he alone is navigating his people towards a collision with the judicial system. Even so, a narrow government that banishes him to the opposition and leaves him naked to face his own criminal charges will certainly unleash worse scenarios than a unity government ever could.

Ben-Dror Yemini, YED, 24.03.20

Edelstein sacrificed himself for the Knesset

(...) When the High Court required Knesset Speaker Yuli Edelstein to convene the plenum to discuss his replacement, he was faced with two bad options: disobey, or obey. It's unclear which is worse. On one hand, the time has come for the legislative branch to show the judicial branch that its days of unlawfully appropriating authority are over. To this end, Edelstein should have declared he has no intention of honoring the High Court's ruling and stayed the course. But Edelstein is more stately than people think. Doing this would have been out of character. He can argue with the judges, criticize them, but he will always follow their rulings. This time, however, there is a second issue, no less critical than the first. Respecting the High Court's decision, from Edel-

stein's perspective, would have been crossing a red line. Obedience would have created a dangerous precedent, allowing the High Court to complete its takeover of the Knesset. Appointing a Speaker or any other position in the government or Knesset is part of the normal political give and take which occurs in the Knesset on a daily basis. Political arm-twisting between the coalition and opposition, parliamentary games, muscle-flexing by committee leaders – are an inseparable part of the political experience. (...) Obeying the High Court this time (...): The court would be running the country's democratic house, not the elected officials. Edelstein, therefore, took the middle path. He didn't obey the ruling, but also won't be continuing as Knesset Speaker. He is taking personal responsibility and resigning. And while he won't be able to save himself anymore from the boot of the High Court, he will likely save the Knesset. (...)

Mati Tuchfeld, IHY, 26.03.20

My Hero, Yuli

(...) Last week's politics might lead us to believe that the hero we are looking for is Benny Gantz. (...) But, no, (...) joining a unity government when the only real alternative would be forming a minority government with support from the Joint List and then facing elections shortly afterward was far from appealing. Common sense, not heroics, was Gantz's motivation. (...) the real hero of last week is the past Speaker of the Knesset, Yuli Edelstein, who, with much fortitude and conviction stood up to tremendous pressure to convene the Knesset so that a new Speaker could be chosen before the formation of a new government. Not even the High Court in Israel could budge him. (...) He stood, much by himself and when there was no other choice, resigned, rather than to violate his conscience. (...) Edelstein believed that predetermining the speaker before the formation of a new government would prevent any possibility of forming a broader unity government and sought to delay the move. (...) The Speaker, historically, has almost always belonged to a coalition that forms the government. (...) As for the High Court, there was no necessity for the Court to intervene when petitioned. It could have delayed its ruling, or it could have decided not to intervene in the workings of the Knesset. Unfortunately, the High Court in many instances has chosen to play an activist role and to strike down Knesset laws. (...) it seems as if the High Court almost relishes the political instability that its interference has caused (...). Political instability means, for the High Court, no

Amir Ohana or Ayelet Shaked to confront when appointing judges or setting policies. Faced with the High Court's ruling Edelstein didn't waiver or falter. He stood his ground. (...) Given an ultimatum by the High Court to convene the Knesset, Edelstein opted to resign rather than acquiesce to what he saw as a gross violation of the sovereignty of the Knesset. In other words, knowing if he put himself first it would be a worthless act, so he put himself behind, as a support of the Knesset's independence. (...) at this stage, it appears that Israel will have some type of stable government and will avoid going back to elections for the fourth time. And Edelstein? (...) Perhaps in time, his personal sacrifice will be seen as that of a person in the right place, doing the right thing at the right time. And that is what counts. (...) Shlomo Toren, TOI, 29.03.20

Not the High Court's place

The High Court of Justice's aid in ousting Knesset Speaker Yuli Edelstein will bring the Netanyahu haters temporary gains, such as a speaker of their choosing, but it won't bring about the ouster of the one they truly despise. If their real concern were the country's future, as they profess, particularly at this time of emergency, they would be ready to join a government of national salvation. This is what the situation calls for. The question of who is the Knesset speaker (...) the High Court, which often completely ignores the Knesset, staked out a position to an even greater degree. (...) Edelstein sought to give an opportunity for negotiations to form an emergency government. He hoped, legitimately, that during the negotiations it would be agreed that he would be reelected as Knesset speaker. What was all the fuss about then? (...) Chief Justice Hayut has made a point of emphasizing that the composition of a High Court panel is not related to the substance of the petition before it. How then, the skeptic may wonder, did it so happen that for such a politically sensitive hearing, all five justices on the panel can be said to belong to the leftist, "activist wing"? Why wasn't it possible, at least for show, to insert two "conservative" justices? (...) That would have been the smarter move. (...) Israel Harel, HAA, 29.03.20

2. Ende des politischen Patts

Die seit Ende 2018 andauernde Regierungskrise scheint überstanden. Benjamin Netanyahu, Israels amtierender Ministerpräsident, und Oppositionsführer Benny Gantz wollen nun doch gemeinsame

Wege gehen. Grund für Gantz, der sich stets gegen ein Zusammengehen mit Netanyahu aussprach und der sich nun überraschend mit Stimmen des Likud zum neuen Parlamentspräsidenten wählen ließ, ist erklärtermaßen die aktuelle Corona-Krise. Sein Mitte-Bündnis Blau-Weiß spaltete sich infolge der Einigung zwischen Gantz und Netanyahu. Die Partei des früheren Generalstabchefs soll den Namen Blau-Weiß behalten. Die Abspaltung werde fortan als Yesh Atid-Telem geführt, verlautete aus der Pressestelle der Knesset. Die neue Gruppierung kritisierte Gantz dafür, vor dem konservativen Netanyahu, der wegen Korruption, Betrug und Untreue in drei Fällen angeklagt ist, kapituliert zu haben. Anders die beiden Sozialdemokraten Amir Peretz, Vorsitzender der israelischen Arbeitspartei, und sein Parteifreund Itzik Shmuli, die einem Beitritt der neuen Koalition nicht abgeneigt sind. Dabei hatte sich Peretz während der Wahlkampagne im Sommer 2019 eigens seines mächtigen Oberlippenbarts entledigt – vor laufenden Kameras und als Zeichen, dass er niemals einer Regierung unter Netanyahu beitreten werde. Bei der dritten und vorerst letzten Parlamentswahl Anfang März hatte das Lager um Gantz mit 62 Mandaten einen hauchdünnen Vorsprung in der Knesset vor Netanyahus Likud und seine rechten Verbündeten erreicht. Israels Präsident Reuven Rivlin beauftragte daraufhin Gantz mit der Regierungsbildung.

Gantz abandoned the camp

(...) most Israelis believed that Kahol Lavan Chairman Benny Gantz ran for prime minister in order to replace Benjamin Netanyahu. (...) Instead of Netanyahu's successor, Gantz emerged as the successor of Yuli Edelstein and of Yisrael Katz. It's hard to think of a more humiliating scenario for a party that began as an alternative to the corrupt and corrupting regime of Netanyahu and for its leader, a former military chief of staff, who was the first person in more than a decade to successfully challenge Netanyahu's rule. (...) Gantz chose to degrade himself and to crawl into Netanyahu's government. The claim that this is only a necessary stage, a merely technical matter along the way to equal partnership in the government, cannot stand. Gantz's very willingness to enter Netanyahu's government as part of a deal with Likud and in opposition to the position of his main partner in leading Kahol Lavan, Yair Lapid, is an exemplar of political ham-handedness. Gantz was a source of hope to millions of Israelis yearning to put an end to Netanyahu's rule, which is crushing democracy while tearing the population to shreds.

(...) their hope was shattered, to the laughter of the opposing camp, the one that led the country into moral corruption and that has now added another soldier to its ranks and bought about the disintegration of the alternative. Gantz (...) knows full well that Netanyahu and his colleagues in the "right-wing bloc" will do everything they possibly can to continue to chip away at the rule of law, out of their belief that democracy does not go beyond "majority rule" and that civil equality and the rights of minorities are hollow and meaningless slogans. The fact that Gantz was voted in by the legislature as speaker of the Knesset with the support of Netanyahu's bloc and against the will of the bloc that stood behind his candidacy demonstrates the magnitude of the farce. While Netanyahu is keeping his bloc close to his chest, Gantz abandoned his political partners and put an end to the only alternative possible to Netanyahu's terrible regime.

Editorial, HAA, 27.03.20

Gantz deal leaves Netanyahu allies in the cold

The agreement on unity government between Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Israel Resilience party leader Benny Gantz, which is taking shape and promises the right-wing bloc only 15 ministerial portfolios, may bode ill for Netanyahu's alleged natural partners. While the ultra-Orthodox parties will keep the government offices they have held so far, the Health Ministry in the hands of United Torah Judaism and the ministries of interior affairs and religious services in the hands of Shas, the situation remains unclear for the Yamina alliance. (...) Likud sources say that Netanyahu is yet to determine whether Bennett's party is going to be part of his government at all. During negotiation talks, the option that Naftali Bennett would leave the Defense Ministry and move to the Ministry of Education was brought up, but Bennett has yet to give his consent to such a move. Another spoke in the current agreement's wheel is a previous agreement between Bennett and Shaked which determines both lawmakers will receive ministerial positions of equal importance – a task that may prove problematic with the number of portfolios currently left available for the right-wing bloc and especially when taking into account a large number of portfolios Netanyahu will keep for his own Likud ranks. (...)

Moran Azulay, YED, 27.03.20

Lieberman is no longer relevant

The glue that held the parts of the "Anyone but Bibi" coalition is finally drying up and peeling off. For a

year and three months, Avigdor Lieberman controlled Israeli politics, leading the system into an unbelievable state of collapse and ongoing uncertainty. Through three elections, he managed to destabilize things and tip the scales with the goal being to topple Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, or regrettably, to make him superfluous through personalized legislation that would limit his activity. (...) Every election poster Lieberman put up was emblazoned with a slogan demanding that the haredim be removed from the coalition. Supposedly, that was the only way Israel could return to the straight and narrow, to progress, to liberalism, to rationalism and enlightenment. Lies were piled on top of lies. The move to cut the Likud off from the haredim never got off the ground; Lieberman was unable to get the right-wing bloc to change its colors. The boon he thought he would bring to the Left, making himself necessary to them, vanished. Litzman and Deri, along with Bennett and Shaked, were unwilling to meet with Gantz. In the Likud, Gideon Sa'ar and his group showed responsibility and united around Netanyahu as party leader. (...) Lieberman's story is now that of Yair Lapid. They bound their fates together. There is a chance that they might form a political bond based on speeches of hate for Netanyahu, loathing for the haredim, and excoriating Gantz and Ashkenazi. It's possible that Lapid might save Lieberman from falling below the minimum electoral threshold in the next election. But it's more likely that Lapid will soon realize the significance of his new asset, and the package will fall apart.

Uri Cohen, IHY, 29.03.20

A unity government, but at what cost?

(...) Gantz, the former IDF chief of staff, (...) understood that Israel is at war. (...) It is rare to find this kind of mamlachtiut (statesmanship) in Israel, and Gantz got it right. It is time to end this crisis as soon as possible and get Israel back on its feet with a stable, solid and wide-as-possible government. But what is the cost of this union between Gantz and Netanyahu? (...) when the government is sworn in, both Netanyahu and Gantz will be presented as prime minister. This move is intended to show Gantz that "there are no tricks and no shticks," as Netanyahu himself said last week. (...) Another way to pull Gantz into a unity government was to split the cabinet portfolios 50-50 between the "Gantz bloc" and the "Right bloc" led by Netanyahu. In order to do so it seems that Netanyahu and Gantz are expanding their joint cabinet to be not less than 34 ministers.

Remember that number – 34 ministers, ministries, staff, drivers, offices and budgets. In comparison, the cabinet (...) in 2015 had 21. (...) Are we out of our minds? Is this what Israel needs in the middle of what could turn out to be the greatest economic crisis the country has ever known? Over 20% of Israelis are unemployed these days due to the coronavirus. This is almost a million people. A new government should be working to help them find jobs, not working to find jobs for itself. (...) The country doesn't need 34 politicians driving in fancy cars. It needs elected representatives working around the clock to battle this pandemic. (...) This is the time to establish a slim, efficient cabinet that will focus on ending this crisis. (...)

Editorial, JPO, 30.03.20

On their knees to Netanyahu

The third round of elections is starting to look like the greatest fraud perpetrated on the public in the history of the state. The latest pair – at least as of this writing – to join the shameful march into the warm bosom of the criminally indicted Benjamin Netanyahu are the chairman of the Labor Party himself, Amir Peretz, and the second MK on his slate, Itzik Shmuli. It's hard to describe the shock and disappointment that the heads of the "Just not Bibi" camp, those who were elected based on one promise – to put an end to Netanyahu's corrupt and corrupting government – have deserted their voters, their promises and their values and hooked up with the king of corruption. The coronavirus and the state of emergency cannot explain the deception of masses of voters. (...) the anti-Netanyahu camp was mourning its abandonment by the man who stood at its head, Kahol Lavan chairman Benny Gantz, who thus dismantled the only possible governing alternative. Then Labor voters, who were still trying to recover from the bolting of Geshet chairwoman Orli Levi-Abekasis, had to digest the total turnabout performed by the leader of the left, and absorb the news that Amir Peretz, who shaved off his mustache on live TV as an oath that he wouldn't join up with Netanyahu, plans to attach himself to this individual. Peretz and Shmuli agreed with Gantz that the former would be appointed economic affairs minister and the latter social affairs minister under the quota of portfolios Netanyahu allocated to Gantz's party. But how can one be consoled with the seizing of these important centers of power by members of the anti-Netanyahu movement, when this was accomplished by the abandonment of that movement? (...) it's hard to understand how an experienced politician

like Peretz is falling into the hole that so many have fallen into before him. Adding to Peretz and Shmuli's farce, nearly a million people have been forced into unemployment because of the coronavirus – yet the "socially oriented" MKs aren't ashamed to be part of the most corpulent government one can imagine (...).

Editorial, HAA, 31.03.20

3. Ultraorthodoxe trifft Covid-19 Virus am schlimmsten

Israel hat wegen der Ausbreitung von Corona noch strengere Ausgangsbeschränkungen verhängt sowie die Nutzung von Handydaten über Infizierte und deren Kontaktpersonen genehmigt. An der Klage-mauer in Jerusalem dürfen nur noch bis zu zehn Menschen beten und müssen dabei mindestens zwei Meter Abstand halten. Andersorts sind öffentliche Gebete sowie Hochzeiten verboten. Benjamin Netanyahu begab sich selbst in Quarantäne, nachdem eine Mitarbeiterin an einer Coronavirus-Infektion erkrankt war. Die Geschwindigkeit, mit der die Zahl der Neuinfizierten steigt, ist laut Information des Gesundheitsministeriums leicht gesunken. Ausnahme sind Israels Ultraorthodoxe. Etwa zwölf Prozent der rund neun Millionen Einwohner sind nach Angaben des Israel Democracy Institute ultraorthodox. Grund für die hohe Zahl der Krankheitsfälle ist unter anderem die Wohnsituation in den ultraorthodoxen Vierteln, wo oft sehr viele Menschen auf kleinem Raum zusammenleben. Auch in den Synagogen kam es offensichtlich zu zahlreichen Übertragungen. Dazu kommt, dass die staatlichen Anweisungen nicht befolgt wurden. Rabbiner, deren Wort in ihrer jeweiligen Gemeinde mehr wiegt als das jeder weltlichen Autorität, tragen einen großen Teil der Verantwortung. Manche hatten sich wochenlang der Anweisung widersetzt, Synagogen und religiöse Schulen zu schließen. Kritik kam auf am zögerlichen Vorgehen der Polizei gegenüber ultraorthodoxen Bürger_innen. In Bnei Brak bei Tel Aviv hatte zuvor eine Beerdigung mit rund 400 Trauergästen stattgefunden. Polizist_innen seien anwesend gewesen, hätten aber nichts dagegen unternommen.

Israeli health minister's cure for COVID-19? The Messiah

(...) Is it reasonable for a religious man, a member of the Gur Hasidic community, one of the most conservative Jewish communities in the world, to head the Health Ministry as it faces the biggest crisis Israel has ever known? It goes without saying that

the solution to this crisis will, of necessity, come from science, an area of human knowledge to which Gur Hasidim are less than sympathetic. (...) In normal times, this narrative leads to infuriating nationwide directives: We are subordinate to kashrut laws that raise the cost of living and make us captive to corrupt kashrut supervisors. Two parties prohibit half of the population from running for the Knesset on their slates, and not even the High Court of Justice has been able to force them to do so. For these same religious reasons, civil marriages are prohibited in Israel. Even in times of crisis, religion rules. (...) In Israel today, Jewish collective prayer outweighs even pikuah nefesh, the principle in Jewish law that the preservation of human life overrides virtually any religious rule. Perhaps it is no surprise that Litzman believes relief will come from the Messiah, but it is surprising to find out that the Israel Police also believe this. (...) Now, more than ever, we have an opportunity to challenge religious assumptions and open them up to debate, just as we do with secular activities. These are matters of life and death, as well as intolerable discrimination that has gone on for too long. Unfortunately, the likelihood of this happening is less than that of the Messiah coming to save us from the coronavirus before the start of Passover.

Netta Ahituv, HAA, 26.03.20

Good job, Israel

(...) As a nation, we've never experienced a closure like this, one that has taken away many of the facets of daily freedoms that we take for granted. Although in the general scope of things, being forced to stay inside, with food, shelter, cable TV, PlayStation and books is nothing compared to a real loss of freedom, it's still a shock and difficult adjustment for a huge majority of the country. (...) So far, people have behaved in an exemplary manner in response to the increased demands made upon it by Health Ministry directives. Collectively, we're doing a great job at adjusting to and adhering to the regulations. (...) And, as an unexpected bonus, the crisis has forced us to finally learn how to stand in a line, instead of crowding around each other. (...) In addition, the beautiful side of society is managing to shine through. Grassroots movements have been signing up people to adopt a lone elder or disabled person, making sure they have enough food and being in touch with them on a daily basis. (...) Israelis are taking to their balconies and sharing music, stories and cheering each other up. (...) only through unity and perseverance will we be able to defeat this

invisible enemy. (...) the challenge will be to keep a sense of optimism and a feeling of collective destiny at the forefront. Based on how we've behaved so far, we will face this trying time with dignity for one another, obedience to the rules and we will be more grateful for the liberties that we take for granted. We need to believe there is a light at the end of the tunnel and that it will shine down on us when the time is right. And we will emerge from this crisis and rebuild our lives and our nation.

Editorial, JPO, 27.03.20

Israel must turn to herd immunity to combat coronavirus

(...) We must be one step ahead of the disease. Such an unusual biological event like coronavirus, demands intelligence that would provide new data in real time, an ability which I don't believe Israel has, so the decision makers understand what are the best cost-effective measures. The dramatic difference between the degree of illness from COVID-19 in the young compared to the elderly and those with underlying health conditions, should warrant a drastic change in the overall strategy. (...) The quest to slow transmission of the virus (...) only postpones the inevitable charge on hospitals, while increasing the risk to health providers. (...) The important figures to consider, therefore, are not the number of confirmed cases of coronavirus - which reflect an increase in testing - but rather the number of severe cases and deaths as a result of the disease. (...) The latest tightening of restrictions meant to combat the outbreak should be enforced on the elderly and those with underlying health conditions. The rest of the population, meanwhile, should gradually return to their lives the way they were prior to the health crisis. The systematic testing, however, should continue in order to identify hot spots of the disease and make sure we are protecting medical teams against the infection. Although by allowing the young and healthy to return to work more people would become infected, but they would mostly have mild symptoms, thus creating herd immunity, (...). This will ultimately lower the rate of infections. When the crisis ends, the only two things that would matter are the number of coronavirus-related deaths and the state of Israel's economy. The number of overall cases when you've created herd immunity is irrelevant. (...) It is time to change the goal from minimizing the spread in the general public to isolating the vulnerable, reducing fatalities and minimizing the harm to society. (...)

Dr. Yoav Yeheskeli, YED, 29.03.20

Coronavirus in Gaza is both a threat and an opportunity for Israel

(...) the coronavirus outbreak in the Gaza Strip might result in another cross-border flare-up. If Hamas officials would become overwhelmed by the number of COVID-19 cases in Gaza, they might lash out on Israel as a way to demand medical and logistical assistance to deal with the epidemic. (...) Another nightmare scenario includes masses of Palestinians rushing the border fence to save themselves from the raging disease in the besieged enclave. These will not be violent demonstrators but frightened and helpless civilians, many of whom might be infected and the military response will have to be a non-violent one because Israel cannot claim it has any legitimacy to open fire on sick civilians. (...) the military wants government officials to act urgently in order facilitate international effort to mobilize aid for Gaza immediately, before the situation deteriorates. At the moment, humanitarian assistance to the Strip is minimal. (...) Israel's relations with Hamas officials could improve on the basis of humanitarian cooperation, which could result in their total dependence on Israeli government as an outcome of this emergency. (...)

Alex Fishman, YED, 29.03.20

Why has Health Ministry failed to prepare for coronavirus?

Among the Health Ministry's extensive list of failures in dealing with the coronavirus crisis, it seems there is one that is most egregious. (...) the Health Ministry has not even done the bare minimum to acquire the main resource needed to treat our own patients - ventilators. It's not only that these live-saving machines weren't ordered soon enough (...) the Health Ministry did not even know how many machines were available in Israel to begin with. Without them, it is impossible to manage the crisis we are now facing. (...) it is not only ventilators that are in short supply in Israel, there is also a shortage of anesthesia and vital equipment for administering intravenous drugs is likely to be lacking in the near future. (...) Israel started its preparations for a coronavirus outbreak on January 20, well before it expected to deal with a wave of patients who require critical respiratory aid. (...) Given that we are just two days away from April, if all of the above are still in the process of being procured, what exactly has the ministry been doing for the Past two and half months?

Sarit Rosenblum, YED, 30.03.20

4. Medienquerschnitt

UN gegen Corona

The UN's time to shine

We are prone to criticizing UN institutions, and justifiably so, given their hypocritical approach toward Israel. But in times like these, we must put our criticisms aside and focus on the world's preeminent international body's advantages. As the nations of the world adapt to life in the shadow of a global pandemic, and as countries lock their gates and their citizens in quarantine, now is the time to capitalize on what the United Nations' can offer. (...) UN institutions, particularly the World Health Organization, are proving that the UN is still the organization the world needs most to fight the coronavirus (...). Naturally, every country is focused first and foremost on protecting its own citizens. The UN, on the other hand, views the world as a global village without barriers. From its headquarters in New York and WHO offices in Geneva, the UN can assess the spread of the virus, allocate resources and issue universal directives to help halt the rate of infection. All these steps fall within the organization's declared reason for existing: To harmonizing the actions of countries to achieve the shared goals of global peace and security. On the diplomatic front, now is the time to utilize our network of ambassadorial connections and relationships, in order to shorten bureaucratic processes and mobilize inter-governmental systems. Sharing knowledge at this juncture is critical. This is the time to focus on the essence, join hands and make progress on the research front. We are all hopeful that the teams of scientists currently laboring to develop a vaccine quickly will deliver good news. The UN must continue helping integrate these international efforts. A global crisis necessitates a global response. (...)

Danny Danon, IHY, 24.03.20

HAA = Haaretz

YED = Yedioth Ahronoth / Ynetnews

JPO = Jerusalem Post

IHY = Israel HaYom

TOI = Times of Israel

GLO = Globes

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