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1. Israel auf dem Weg zu diplomatischen Beziehungen mit Marokko und Jerusalemer Fußballclub bekommt einen neuen Eigentümer aus den Emiraten

Nach Bahrain und den Vereinigten Arabischen Emiraten hat Israel binnen weniger Wochen nun auch ein Abkommen über die Aufnahme diplomatischer Beziehungen mit Marokko unterzeichnet. Kurz zuvor kam es bereits zur offiziellen Aufnahme diplomatischer Beziehungen mit dem Königreich Bhutan im östlichen Himalaya. Ministerpräsident Benjamin Netanyahu verkündete, dass Israel mit „weiteren Staaten, die mit uns diplomatische Beziehungen aufnehmen wollen“, in Kontakt stehe. Der noch amtierende US-Präsident Donald Trump, der zwischen Israel und den drei arabischen Staaten vermittelt hatte, freute sich auf Twitter über den „historischen Durchbruch. Unsere zwei großartigen Freunde Israel und das Königreich Marokko haben sich auf volle diplomatische Beziehungen geeinigt.“ Beide Staaten wollten in Kürze wieder Verbindungsbüros eröffnen, hieß es. Danach sei die Einrichtung voller diplomatischer Beziehungen geplant. Auch Direktflüge zwischen Israel und Marokko sollen bald eingerichtet werden. Die diplomatische Annäherung zwischen Israel und den Vereinigten Arabischen Emiraten ebnete den Einstieg von Scheich Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Nahyan, einem Geschäftsmann aus den Emiraten und Spross der Herrscherfamilie, sich in den Jerusalemer Fußballclub Beitar einzukaufen.

Der Verein war in der Vergangenheit aufgrund seiner rechtsextremen Fangruppe „La Familia“ in die Schlagzeilen geraten. Der Club hofft, mit dem Handel den rechtsextremen Fans Paroli zu bieten.

Beitar Jerusalem, the unlikely symbol of Israeli-Arab unity

(...) Perhaps now, Beitar – which is infamous for its refusal to sign an Arab player and the anti-Arab chants of some of its hardcore fans, known as “La Familia” – can shed its racist image and become a sporting model of Jewish-Muslim teammanship. (...) The sheikh’s son, Mohammed bin Hamad bin Khalifa, will in effect control the club from the UAE and become a member of its new board of directors. The funds invested by his father will be used, inter alia, to buy some star players. Foreign ownership of football clubs in England has proved to be enormously successful. (...) We can only hope that Beitar, which has been struggling financially and on the field in recent years, can return to its glory days and flourish after being injected with much-needed funding from the UAE. (...) We understand that some fans may be upset by a quintessentially Israeli team being sold to a foreign investor, but it is time to put an end to unbridled hatred that shames not only the club but the whole of Israel. (...) From now on, “Yalla, Beitar!” should be a chant associated with sportsmanship and coexistence – and the team

should become a proud mascot of the Abraham Accords.

Editorial, JPO, 08.12.20

No longer 'forever pure'

You have to rub your eyes in order to believe that the deal between the Beitar Jerusalem soccer club and Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Nahyan of the United Arab Emirates is real and not some very good joke. The club – which in recent years has become synonymous with hatred of Arabs, in which no Arab player has every played and which has vowed to remain “forever pure” of Arabs – has sold a 50 percent stake to a Muslim, a relative of Abu Dhabi’s royal family. This development is good news for all peace seekers in Israel, the UAE and the Middle East, and its impact goes beyond the realm of sports and the financial rewards for Beitar Jerusalem. (...) There is nothing to be taken for granted about this deal, which wouldn’t have been signed if not for the courage, vision and steadfastness of Beitar Jerusalem’s owner, Moshe Hogeg who, from the moment he bought the club, set himself the goal of routing the racism that is the hallmark of some of its fans. (...) While it’s important to hold a discussion about the proper balance between the economic interests of a soccer team and its identity, it is hard to defend any desire to adhere to the values of racism and nationalism in the spirit of La Familia. It is likely that the fact that Beitar Jerusalem will become less “pure” will also make it healthier, stronger and more legitimate.

Editorial, HAA, 09.12.20

Trump made more Israel-Arab peace than Nobel Peace Prize laureate Obama

It’s very easy to denigrate Israel’s recent agreements with four Arab states, and even easier to discern their immorality. Israel has never been at war with these countries. The agreements are intended chiefly to help these states realize their interests vis-a-vis the United States – especially arms deals with it – and also have to do with the fact that Israel, their new friend, is the enemy of their enemy, Iran. It’s painful and infuriating how the Palestinians were abandoned to their fate by their Arab brethren (...). These are neither peace agreements, nor are they normalization agreements: There’s nothing normal about ties between dictatorships and an apartheid state. (...) Trump and Netanyahu are men neither of peace nor of conscience, and certainly not doers of justice. But you can’t ignore the fact that Trump made more Israel-Arab peace, with or without

quotation marks, than his predecessor, Nobel Peace Prize laureate President Barack Obama. You also can’t ignore the fact that Netanyahu has opened the doors to Israelis in more Arab states than did his predecessors, including Nobel Peace Prize laureates. The present peace agreements deserve no prize, because they required no courage from Netanyahu to sign. (...) honesty requires giving credit where credit is due. They made peace, not war. All of Israel’s enemies have rotten regimes, and Israel’s is far from being clean, but because of this, would you not sign an agreement with Iran? Was Egypt ever a democracy? Is Jordan? The Palestinian Authority? Israel isn’t either. (...) If the sterling character of a country’s government were a condition for diplomatic relations, we could forget half the world and then some. There are crumbs of hope. (...) After years of brainwashing, when Israelis were told that (...) the only good Arab is a dead Arabs, and that all Arabs want to throw us into the sea — suddenly they find Dubai. Boom. It’s not what they were told about Arabs. Of all Israeli soccer teams, the Jerusalem team Beitar, known for its exuberantly anti-Arab fan base, is now jointly Arab-Jewish owned. Direct flights to Morocco will remind Israelis of Moroccan descent that they can be proud of their origins in Israel as well. They are Jewish Arabs and that’s wonderful. (...)

Gideon Levy, HAA, 13.12.20

Morocco-Israel peace deal will benefit everyone

(...) From a historical perspective, close ties between Morocco and the Jewish community and people began developing hundreds of years ago. (...) throughout history, Moroccan kings have had advisers, ministers, and ambassadors from the Jewish community. (...) The Jewish community in Morocco is a source of pride, and so are the Moroccans who moved to Israel and became part of the Israeli society. The Jewish community in Morocco has been thriving for centuries, enjoying the freedom of religion, culture, economy, commerce, and education, all with the encouragement and support of the royal family and the local authorities. Morocco is a tolerant country, known for its hospital and courtesy to its residents. Regardless of whether they come to research their roots or on a tourist trip, a fantastic experience awaits all those Israelis who want to visit our country.

André Azoulay, IHY, 13.12.20

Morocco-Israel ties bound by shared history, made to last

(...) the two states have assisted each other vitally for decades (...) partnerships stem (...) from ties of blood: one million Israelis are of Moroccan origin (...). In recent years, moreover, the Moroccan government has worked proactively to revive the remnants of indigenous Jewish life, as well as promote Jewish-Muslim rapprochement globally.

But the transition to formal relations was not inevitable. A third of Morocco's population currently identifies with Islamist movements and parties that continue to reject Israel's right to exist. "Anti-normalization" activism remains a prominent facet of our culture, which found expression fewer than five years ago in a parliamentary bill that would make it a felony to engage Israeli citizens in any way. In the kingdom's vibrant, multi-party political system, steadfast political leadership will be necessary to see the diplomatic process through and ensure the agreement wins widespread popular support. Thus is not possible to fully understand the kingdom's remarkable new decision without acknowledging a catalyzing shift: the role played by Jared Kushner as "creative disrupter" of decades of diplomatic convention. With Morocco now the fourth Arab country to reach new terms with Israel in as many months, it should be clear that Kushner's strategic vision of a regional approach – so widely derided as "naive" – has born fruit. It behooves policy makers to examine and draw lessons from Kushner's approach in order to build on it in the years to come. (...) Peace between Morocco and Israel will find its discontents, to be sure, both within the kingdom and elsewhere. But its firm foundation – centuries of shared history – will ensure that it outlasts its detractors. (...)

Ahmed Charai, JPO, 13.12.20

Donald Trump's strange Mideast legacy

(...) When U.S. President Donald Trump announced the establishment of relations between Morocco and Israel (...), it exposed the true focus of the Moroccan government - Western Sahara. (...) The move gives King Mohammed American permission to declare ownership over the Western Sahara, plus aircraft deals, plus generous economic assistance to overcome the coronavirus pandemic - and in return offers a limited temporary arrangement between Morocco and Israel that is still in its preliminary stages, which will ultimately lead to peace agreements and normalization between the two countries. But Morocco's plans for Western Sahara will not be straightforward in execution. The leaders of the

Polisario Front, which seeks to end Moroccan control over the area, are already warning that Rabat has sold out to gain control of the region and that no country in the world will recognize the Moroccan claim. (...) Moroccan Foreign Minister Nasser Bourita is making sure that he has his priorities in order: First, the Western Sahara, then Morocco's ties with the United States, then the Palestinian issue, and only at the bottom of the list is Israel. But Israel had ties with the Moroccans until the Second intifada, and who honestly cares if this time around it is a little more complicated? After all, the Moroccan Minister of Economy and Trade Moulay Hafiz al-Alami announced (...) that (...) every Israeli businessperson interested in investing in Morocco is welcome to do so. Trump, in his strange way, is leaving behind a positive legacy in the region, and Netanyahu can place another tick on his map of the Arab world. And the wave of rapprochement is far from over.

Smadar Perry, YED, 13.12.20

2. Ex-Likud-Politiker Saar will bei Neuwahlen gegen Netanyahu kandidieren

Gegenwind aus den eigenen Reihen bläst Israels Ministerpräsident Benjamin Netanyahu ins Gesicht, seit sein früherer Parteifreund Gideon Saar die Niederlegung seines Abgeordnetenmandats bekanntgab, um sich seinerseits um das höchste Regierungsamt im Staat zu bewerben. Saar gilt seit Jahren als wichtigster Widersacher von Netanyahu innerhalb des Likud. Ende letzten Jahres kandidierte er für das Amt des Parteivorsitzenden, verlor jedoch die Abstimmung, die erneut für Netanyahu ausging. Nun hat er eine neue Partei gegründet und will bei den für den 23. März 2021 anstehenden Neuwahlen Netanyahu Paroli bieten. Israel steht vor der vierten Parlamentswahl innerhalb von nur zwei Jahren, da die Regierungskoalition es verabsäumt hat, bis zum 23. Dezember 2020 einen Staatshaushalt für die Jahre 2020 und 2021 zu verabschieden.

Israel's government is terrible, elections would be worse

Israel does not have a bad coalition that yielded a bad government. It has a terrible coalition that yielded a terrible government. Even so, dissolving that government and dragging the country into yet another round of elections is far worse. (...) This government has many faults, beginning with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu repeatedly ignoring his coalition partners in matters of national security.

His government has also failed in its handling of the coronavirus pandemic (...). Fresh elections could yield the same inconclusive results achieved in the previous three ballots, but if the public opinion polls are accurate, Netanyahu may be able to form a right-wing government that would grant him the immunity he seeks from his criminal liabilities. (...) a constitutional crisis would be sure to follow, and the ultra-Orthodox parties (...) would extort the country for budgets and legislation at an unimaginable cost. Furthermore, the calls for Netanyahu's removal in the months of demonstrations against him would be silenced by a popular vote in his favor. (...) bringing about the dissolution of the Knesset and an additional election would only grant Netanyahu his fervent wishes. The prime minister has violated his own coalition agreement by preventing a two-year state budget to pass. (...) Blue & White has by its own admission succeeded in blocking draconian laws promoted by Netanyahu and his allies. They prevented the annexation of West Bank land, clearing the way for peace agreements with the UAE and Bahrain. And despite being sidelined by the prime minister, the party still controls the key foreign and defense ministries as well as the Justice Ministry. (...)

Ben-Dror Yemini, YED, 02.12.20

Netanyahu is a serial deal-breaker

There is no excuse for Netanyahu not adhering to the coalition agreement he signed with Gantz. (...) For more than 10 years, he has broken promises and forced the country into endless elections, sidelining every coalition partner, taking on numerous ministries rather than governing, and reducing the role of key members of his own party, eroding state institutions and faith in the system. The latest story is yet another attempt by Netanyahu to force Gantz to accept putting off a budget even though Israel desperately needs one. (...) It is time to understand that there will never be a budget. (...) a budget does not interest Israel's current leader. He is focused on staying in office. (...) Despite all the boasting about the greatness of the country, Israel is run on short-term plans for what might happen next week. It's a testimony to the greatness of the people of Israel that the country is as successful as it is. (...) The country deserves (...) more than endless elections designed to keep one man in office. It (...) needs stable leadership to preserve itself as an active and healthy democracy. (...)

Editorial, JPO, 02.12.20

Gantz, this is the only thing you have to tell Netanyahu

(...) There is no shortage of reasons to break up this bad government. Nothing that it has done has absolved it of the sins in its creation, which involved betrayal of the voters, a mass theft of votes and the alteration of Israel's constitutional structure in a way that serves a criminal defendant and bypasses the constitutional limitations barring him from serving as a cabinet minister but not as prime minister. The unity government that was established to promote domestic reconciliation and to fight the coronavirus is a total failure on both counts. (...) The person responsible for the country's grim situation and who is dragging it into a fourth election campaign in two years in the middle of a crisis is Benjamin Netanyahu. Netanyahu deceived Gantz and deceived Israel's president, the Knesset and the public as a whole when he signed a rotation agreement and committed to unity, without any hanky-panky. (...) Now Netanyahu is holding the state budget hostage, and it appears that only a surrender by Gantz to Netanyahu's dictates – either forgoing the rotation or granting him immunity – will make him pass the budget and restore the flow of economic oxygen to the citizens of the country. (...) The only message to Netanyahu is a budget now or an election.

Editorial, HAA, 03.12.20

Pundits are wrong, now is perfect time for an Israeli election

(...) Despite what almost all pundits are bemoaning (...) this is the perfect time for all Israelis to head to their polling station and cast their vote. (...) Those who believe that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is doing a good job in managing the coronavirus crisis (...) can now give him the first full mandate (...). This election will give voters the chance to decide whether they believe Netanyahu is the right prime minister to address this tension or vote for the candidate whom they think will do a better job in making the crucial decisions. Second (...) this election provides us with the opportunity to choose the best candidate to manage Israel's relationship with the Biden/Harris team. (...) Netanyahu's trial is set to start next month, and the public will be privy to detailed information about the charges against him and how the case is going. Here again, citizens are being given another opportunity to either provide Netanyahu with a further mandate and reject the suspicions against him, or it could sway voters away now that he is actually dealing with the ongoing trial. (...) Parties and their leaders will have to present

their plans to deal with the health and economic crisis. (...)

Dov Lipman, JPO, 04.12.20

A fourth election would be a disaster for Israel's left

The Zionist left has made many ideological, political and organizational mistakes in recent decades. These have led it to shrink, atrophy and lose its way. The result was its loss of the country's leadership and the rise of the biggest swindler in the country's history to years in power. But as this adrift bloc drags us to a new election, its chain of errors has reached a peak. (...) if an election is held, the left's declared goal – ousting Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu – would founder on the rocks of reality. According to all the polls of the past half year, Netanyahu would achieve in the next election what he failed to achieve in the three previous ones – the ability to form a rightist government that would let him do as he pleases with the country, and perhaps even get his trial canceled. (...) His continuation in power would cause great despair and loss of hope among the Zionist left. Its resentment would intensify, as would its divisions, and how it would end nobody knows. Therefore, even though this is a terrible government the likes of which we've never seen before and even if the current coalition is intolerable, it's better than what the country could anticipate if it were to be dismantled. After all, it would be replaced by a government in which even the few checks that restrain Netanyahu would disappear. (...) the people who are dragging us into holding a new election must halt the process immediately. (...)

Israel Harel, HAA, 04.12.20

It's not too late for Labor to come to its senses

(...) The Meretz party did in fact come out against the (...) "deal of the century" (...). Its realization is of vital interest to Israel in the future, and Jerusalem can act to promote it even if the circumstances in the US are less than optimal. (...) the deal of the century can be seen as inspired by the Allon Plan to partition the West Bank and Jordan and the territorial compromise strategy of some of the Labor party's hawks - foremost among them Yitzhak Rabin (...) however, the deal of the century represents not the continuation of any previous plan but rather a welcome innovation: It revokes the Palestinian veto over the delineation of our eastern border. It allows us to implement the territorial part of the plan whether or not they approve and settle a large population in the Jordan Valley. (...) The existential threat

hanging above the Labor party's and Meretz's heads ahead of the coming elections is the direct result of the collapse of the diplomatic worldview Meretz instilled in the Labor party. Herein lies the solution: a deep shift in the entire diplomatic and settlement strategy of the Zionist Labor camp. The Labor party should expect to see its end if it doesn't come to its senses and see that it must radically change its diplomatic strategy. Some kind of peace with the Palestinians can – possibly – be reached if, and only if, we cut them off from their demographic rear in the east. It would be wrong to see such a change as a change in the Labor movement's identity. It was only in the 1990s that the Labor party underwent a process of Meretzification that saw it adopt the positions that had until that point in time been characteristic only of the party's dovish minority. Up until 1977, a majority of the members of its senior leadership were policy hawks who implemented a settlement policy that would have seen the Golan Heights, the Jordan Valley, and the northern Dead Sea area as under Israeli sovereignty. (...) If the Labor movement's members want to reinvent themselves, they'll need to adopt (...) a new diplomatic plan.

Avi Bareli, IHY, 06.12.20

Gantz should stop Netanyahu at all costs

The coalition agreement signed by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for the Likud and Defense Minister Benny Gantz for the Blue & White Party, will go down in history as one of the most conniving political tricks. Netanyahu promised to vacate the office of prime minister 18 months after the coalition was established and allow Gantz to take the position. But soon after the deal was signed, people close to Netanyahu claimed Gantz could not become prime minister as he no longer represented a substantial part of the electorate - due to his split from the alliance of parties with which he was elected - and now represented no more than 15 Knesset seats. A prime minister who does not honor his commitments hardly exemplifies an acceptable culture of governance, but the head of a Knesset faction with little political support cannot lead the government either. Gantz is an honest politician who kept his word to place the good of the country ahead of his own political future. The coalition agreement he signed in May has thus far succeeded in blocking legislation that would have allowed Netanyahu to escape criminal prosecution for the charges of bribery, fraud and breach of trust. (...) Netanyahu is no doubt aware of the life of a prisoner, as recounted by

former prime minister Ehud Olmert, who was jailed for his own corruption. (...) In his desperation, Netanyahu is leaving no stone unturned in his efforts to avoid a verdict that would place him behind bars. (...) Gantz must determine the best way to stop this dangerous man. For the polls show that the next elections will make the right-wing bloc that Netanyahu heads even stronger. (...) Gantz should not be seeking an election solely because Netanyahu insulted him. Netanyahu has conned members of his own political party many times before - that is just who he is. The prime minister's sole concern is his criminal trial and Gantz and his partners must be cognizant of that fact. (...) Blue & White should compromise. Gantz and his party should let Netanyahu win the budget fight that they say is the reason to bring down the government. (...)
Baruch Leshem, YED, 07.12.20

Another round of Israeli elections would be a waste of money

(...) Oh, that Bibi. What are we going to do with him? How does he pull it off time after time? (...) Netanyahu succeeded - again - to live like this place was heaven on earth. (...) The man doesn't give in, doesn't bend, doesn't get scratched, doesn't even sneeze. What, hasn't he heard that the Netanyahu era is over? (...) there's something in the love Netanyahu manages to generate in his supporters - that is heartwarming in itself. It's hard to remain indifferent to it. Give me another politician in Israel who could take part in the video with Ben Zaken and come out in one piece. Go to YouTube and see the comments: It's a love story. Never mind why they vote for him - why do they love him so much? Netanyahu has that ingredient that some people have. It can't be imitated, so it's futile to even try. I watched Gideon Sa'ar's performance and hid my face with shame. For him. Not because of what he said - what does it even matter, everyone says the same thing. He was simply so shrunken with effort to remember his body language choreography. Who was his instructor for standing in front of a camera (...)? It's not body language they taught you Gideon, it's pantomime. What persuaded Sa'ar into thinking that if he doesn't fold his arms when he talks about the nation's unity, we won't get what he means, and that if he doesn't beat his chest with his fist, we won't think he's speaking from the heart? Yes, it's true, Netanyahu studied all these tricks in the United States. We heard. So what? He did it before we knew he was doing it. And when we understood, it was too late - he's as fluent in body language as in

his mother tongue. The overall cost of another election campaign is estimated at 3.8 billion shekels. After the past week, I admit the thought crossed my mind that it's a waste of money.

Carolina Landsmann, HAA, 13.12.20

It's all up for grabs in the next election

Elections in Israel are once again in the offing, with the political map as fluid as everything else since the three previous rounds in less than two years. (...) much has changed since Israelis last went to the polls in early March of this year. In more respects than are currently acknowledged, almost everything is up for grabs. (...) The forthcoming elections are, first (...), about personalities. Gideon Sa'ar's departure from his political home in the Likud (...) is a gamechanger. (...) The struggle for the country's leadership has now penetrated the right (...). It is already clear that should the pro-Netanyahu forces fail to garner a majority of the vote - a very likely scenario - the incoming coalition will be made up of right-center parties that exclude the Likud and probably the ultra-orthodox. This in itself constitutes a significant shift from the Netanyahu-led right-wing hegemony that has prevailed in Israel in recent years, suggesting significant changes in Israel's political landscape in the coming months. (...) The 2021 elections also deal (...) governance. The (...) government's totally erratic handling of the coronavirus pandemic and its socioeconomic byproducts has sowed constant confusion and augmented insecurity, giving rise to severe problems of governability. The widespread uncertainty that is still the order of the day (...) has fueled a quest for a modicum of competence in the management of the affairs of state that spans all parties. (...) The traditional distinctions between the right, center and left (...) that have dominated Israeli party politics for decades have undergone intriguing shifts recently. The political collapse of the Labor party since the last elections has intensified a notable trend to the right during the past two decades. At the same time, the normalization agreements with a growing number of Arab countries suggests a new regional openness (...) these sentiments have yet to be extended to the Palestinians (...). Here the parties of the left have moved ahead more creatively and hold more cards than their more numerous counterparts on the center and the right. Although their electoral appeal currently appears limited, the promise of Israeli-Palestinian reconciliation that they foster has a direct bearing on the reconstitution of democratic viability as well as on the type of leadership that can

make this happen. (...) every voter will determine what is more important to them at this juncture – the leader, the sustainability of the system or the values that underlie their vision of tomorrow. Fluidity is the name of the game: the right is not on the ascendance; the center is not imploding; and the left is not yet dead. That's what these elections are all about. Naomi Chazan, TOI, 14.12.20

3. Impfkampagne gegen Covid-19

Seit dem 20. Dezember wird in Israel gegen Covid-19 geimpft. Ministerpräsident Benjamin Netanyahu ließ sich bereits am 19. Dezember als erster impfen, auch um ein Zeichen an die Mitbürger_innen zu setzen. Geimpfte sollen einen „grünen Pass“ erhalten. Ziel ist, möglichst rasch „zur Normalität zurückzukehren“, erklärte Netanyahu. Täglich sollen 100.000 Impfdosen verabreicht werden. Israel reservierte sich als einer der ersten Staaten weltweit den von Biontech/Pfizer entwickelten Impfstoff im Umfang von acht Millionen Dosen. Außerdem gibt es eine Vereinbarung über weitere sechs Millionen Impfdosen der Firma Moderna. Nach Lockerung strenger Corona-Maßnahmen nahmen die Zahlen der Neuinfektionen mit Covid-19 jüngst wieder zu, weshalb ab dem 27. Dezember ein neuerlicher Lockdown gilt.

The looming challenges of COVID-19 vaccines

(...) there is still a way to go before masses of Israelis are inoculated. We must still take every precaution to protect ourselves by wearing masks, adhere to social distancing and wash our hands regularly. This discipline must still be kept because there are questions that should give us cause for concern. The Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine that has only been given emergency authorization thus far in the U.K was produced at record speed and after only seven months of human trials. (...) It would be wrong to ignore the political pressure to get the vaccine approved, or the shortcuts taken to rush the process through. (...) There are also questions that have not been answered about the efficacy of the vaccine. There is no proof that the vaccines developed by Pfizer/BioNTech, Moderna and AstraZeneca prevent contagion and guarantee that those who received them would not infect others. There is also no data on the length of time those who were vaccinated would remain immune to the virus. (...) We are also still in the dark as to which of the soon to be approved vaccines would be the most effective. (...) how willing will the public be to receive the vac-

cines? The first in line should be the medical teams and those charged with the care of the most vulnerable among us (...). Sarit Rosenblum, YED, 06.12.20

What if you were paid to get the COVID-19 vaccine?

(...) providing incentives for those who comply with the rules is in many ways preferable than imposing sanctions against those who violate them. This is especially true with regard to medically related behaviors such as COVID tests or vaccinations where forcing people or imposing penalties create ethical problems for democratic states. (...) Before the government makes a final decision about this idea and prints the lottery tickets, it (...) must identify the target population that need to be tested and take into account the differential impact of lotteries on different groups in the population. (...) At the same time, it must consider the lottery's negative impact on those who view being tested for the coronavirus as an act of civic responsibility. (...) A possible solution that combines a financial incentive or the chance to win a financial reward, with an individual's sense of civic and social responsibility, might be to provide incentives to small groups, such as the tenants of an apartment building or employees in a workplace in which a confirmed COVID-19 patient was identified, making it essential for all those in that building or workplace to be tested for the collective incentives to be paid to the group, building or the workplace. (...) Such a collective incentive approach would stimulate a social norm that would motivate more and more people who must be tested for epidemiological reasons, to step up to the plate and take the test, while still maintaining a sense of solidarity, as people engage in pro-social for the benefit of their workplace, apartment building or school. Using such an approach could enhance the trust needed for voluntary cooperation and social solidarity to flourish.

Prof. Yuval Feldman, TOI, 11.12.20

Go get vaccinated!

(...) Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's (...) boastful and unfeeling conduct has led to needless victims and cumulative damage from the disease, and the economic crisis it brought with it will be felt in Israel for years to come. But now humanity sees the light at the end of the tunnel. The work of scientists the world over has led to the development of innovative vaccines against the virus, only 11 months after cracking its genetic code. (...) the

Pfizer and BioNTech vaccine (...) received approval from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (...). The global scientific community did the unbelievable and in less than a year gave us the means to overcome the pandemic and prevent millions of deaths. But the logistical, social and cultural challenges are still enormous. Until the population is vaccinated, many more people might die because the pandemic is being poorly handled, and because of the irresponsibility of those who refuse to be vaccinated, thus put themselves and those around them at risk. Israel is a small, wealthy and well-connected country with a high-level community health care system. We have the chance to be among the first countries in the world to immunize a significant percentage of residents – and to start to see the end of the pandemic. (...) The government must see to it that the vaccine is properly delivered to health maintenance organizations, which must oversee a well-orchestrated immunization operation the likes of which have never been conducted here before. But the public also has a great responsibility: The day after the pandemic will arrive sooner if everyone does his or her civic duty and gets vaccinated when their turn comes.

Editorial, HAA, 12.12.20

A great miracle happened in Kalamazoo

(...) There is hope that eventually we can stamp out the virus that has wreaked havoc on our public health system and economy during what has been a very dark year. It will be a while before the vaccine gets to most of us, but in the near-term, we can protect the healthcare and essential workers (...). If there is a miracle among us this holiday season when we retell the story of how one night's worth of oil was able to light a lamp for eight nights in the rededicated temple, it is how our scientists were able to develop a vaccine using a new technology in under a year. (...) There are many lessons learned from this pandemic (...). We were too slow to respond as a society, we did not close our borders early enough, we were susceptible to a pandemic because we did not pay enough attention to climate change and the destruction of natural habitats, we did not have pandemic-ready plans for an outright national response, and we failed to grasp the enormity of what we were facing. But the overriding lesson from all this is to respect the science. (...) If this past year has been a long journey through a very dark tunnel, there is light at the end (...) in the image of those trucks carrying the vaccine that are on their way to distribution sites. (...)

Penny Cagan, TOI, 14.12.20

When it comes to vaccines, the Health Ministry is asleep at the wheel

It seems the Health Ministry has been (...) left speechless at the prospect of its most critical task: providing trustworthy, serious information about the importance of vaccination (...) while at the same time, allaying Israelis' concerns over the record time in which they were developed and authorizes and standing up to the handful of "anti-vaxxers" and COVID-19 deniers spreading false, misleading, and dangerous information about the vaccines. (...) the ministry (...) has left the media and public arenas completely open to false information and conspiracy theories from a handful of doctors who spread baseless information that severely harms public trust in the vaccine. The Health Ministry has failed not just at providing information to the public but also at producing enough opinion leaders from all populations to convince their sectors to get vaccinated and set a personal example. The personal example set by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, politicians, rabbis, and community leaders is a central means for advocating for vaccination, and the Health Ministry must make extensive efforts to this end. (...) Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's and Health Minister Yuli Edelstein's overwhelming success in bringing the vaccines to Israel as quickly as possible is to be lauded, but it is no less important that we build public trust in the vaccines. (...)

Ran Reznik, IHY, 15.12.20

4. Medienquerschnitt

Kampfansage an Frauenmorde

This female imam may have the solution to the killings of Arab women

(...) following the murder of an Arab Israeli woman (...), a feminist friend posted on Facebook: "Changing the story, preventing the next murder." (...) We would like to change the story. We would like to change the ending, to create a story that doesn't end with the blood of Palestinian women, or any women. But our steps and moves have not been achieving those ends. We demonstrate, we protest, write, promote legislation, and Palestinian and other women are still being murdered. (...) Elham Manea (...) 53, a political science lecturer at the University of Zurich and originally a Yemenite human rights activist, confronted one of the archetypal Islamic

taboos head on. In 2017, she declared herself an imam (...), and even prayed publicly with Muslim men and women and delivered a sermon at a Swiss mosque. (...) Manea's act not only went in the face of an Islamic legal prohibition – Islam bans Muslim women from leading Islamic religious rituals (...) she also violated a social prohibition by presenting an alternative vision, with the revolutionary introduction of new ideas regarding women's roles within current Islamic religious practice. (...) religiosity is the patriarchy's most available and strongest tool, and our use of it as women is to our disadvantage. It is a tool that will lead us to them, because it is their arena, and then we'll again find ourselves trapped within a discourse that replicates the power structures and the gender division. (...) Manea is unilaterally changing the story de facto without relying on religious interpretation or similar precedents. She is basically saying: I am the precedent, and it is taking place within the religious game though not completely surrendering to it. (...) Women changing the story means taking the police out of the picture. Changing the story means creating feminist entities, mechanisms, tools and processes that will put an end to this bloodshed.

Rajaa Natour, HAA, 03.12.20

HAA = Haaretz

YED = Yedioth Ahronoth / Ynetnews

JPO = Jerusalem Post

IHY = Israel HaYom

TOI = Times of Israel

GLO = Globes

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