



# daily news bulletin

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## MISSION INCREDIBLE: 'OPERATION OF REDEMPTION OF HOSTAGES'

Israel Celebrates Unprecedented Rescue Mission of Captives In Uganda; Morale In Israel Highest Since Yom Kippur War; Western World Pays Tribute To Israel Daring, Courage

### RABIN: A REMARKABLE MANIFESTATION OF JEWISH FRATERNITY, ISRAELI VALOR (Combined JTA-Israeli Wire Service)

JERUSALEM, July 5 (JTA) -- "In a bold, resourceful and sophisticated effort, the Israeli Defense Forces have succeeded in carrying out the decision of the government of Israel to save and liberate from captivity the passengers of the Air France plane, who were hijacked by Palestinian terrorists and kept prisoners in Uganda, with their lives in danger."

With these words Premier Yitzhak Rabin began his address yesterday to a jubilant and applauding Knesset on what has been described here and abroad as the most daring and incredible rescue mission in military history. Rabin did not give many details of the operation to the specially convened session attended by President Ephraim Katzir and other Israeli notables as well as by foreign diplomats who crowded the visitors gallery.

"The Israeli Defense Forces have achieved one of their most exemplary victories from both the human and the moral and military operational points of view, a remarkable manifestation of Jewish fraternity and Israeli valor," Rabin declared. Continuing, the Premier stated: "Together with the families who have lost their dear ones, we mourn our dead, uninformed and civilians, victims of the vile Arab terrorism, and send to the wounded our best wishes for their recovery."

#### Worthy Of Pride

"Members of the Knesset, this operation of redemption of captives is worthy of Jewish and Israeli pride and of worldwide acclaim. The decision for this operation of redemption was taken by the government of Israel, and on its sole responsibility. We did not consult with any other government in advance, nor shall we lay responsibility on any other country or government..."

"In the hijacking of the Air France plane to Entebbe, all indications showed that the Uganda ruler (President Idi Amin) was collaborating with the terrorists, while using deceit and false pretenses. This was the situation on the eve of July 1, 1976: The time of expiry of the ultimatum grew increasingly closer. The release of non-Israeli hostages (48 last Wednesday and 100 last Thursday) more and more exposed the malicious conspiracy against Israeli citizens. The political efforts bore no fruit. The sand in the hourglass was about to run out, leaving no possibility for an independent rescue effort."

"Under these conditions, the government of Israel decided unanimously to take the only way left to rescue our people and to announce our willingness to release detained terrorists. Close upon the Cabinet's resolution (last Thursday), we accordingly informed the French government,

through the negotiations were conducted with the terrorists, we were prepared to adopt even this alternative -- in default of any other -- to rescue our people."

"Members of the Knesset, this was not a timesaving tactic, and had only this choice been left, we would have stood by our decision, as a last resort. Throughout the entire time since the capture of the plane, we sought ways and means to foil the terrorists' scheme by our own devices. The I.D.F. and the intelligence community lost not a single hour required for thinking, planning and preparation. When the opportune moment arrived, the plan was submitted for the Cabinet's consideration. The Cabinet approved the operation unanimously..."

#### Achievement Of Great Value

"This rescue operation is an achievement of great value in our struggle against terrorism. This is Israel's contribution to humanity's struggle against terrorism as an international manifestation -- but it should not be viewed as an epilogue. This achievement will help us in the continuation of our efforts -- but the struggle is not over, and new efforts, new methods and unremitting sophistication will be required. Terrorism will not find us static, nor adhering to routine."

Rabin said there was no difference between the government and the opposition on the rescue operation. "We deemed it vital to act out of a united national approach, unifying all sections of the people," he said. He said in every stage of the negotiations and before decisions were made the government consulted with the Knesset Defense and Foreign Affairs Committee and with Likud leaders Menachem Begin and Elimelech Rimalt.

Rabin said they both endorsed the decision last Thursday to negotiate and later the decision to use force. "The unity thus revealed is of inestimable value in a time of struggle and stress," Rabin said after praising the two Likud leaders. Begin rose in the Knesset to praise Rabin for his leadership and the army for its brilliant action. The Knesset adopted a resolution praising the army. The sole dissenting voice came from the Rakah Communist faction.

In a statement to foreign newsmen later, Rabin called on the United Nations "to realize who the so-called PLO is. You cannot fight terrorism and at the same time give honor and respect to terrorists," he said.

#### HOW THE RESCUE TOOK PLACE

By Yitzhak Shargil

TEL AVIV, July 5 (JTA) -- Details of the spectacular rescue of 102 hijack victims from

their terrorist captors at Entebbe Airport in Uganda were unfolded at a press conference here yesterday by the officer who commanded the operation, Brig. Gen. Dan Shomron.

Flanked by Defense Minister Shimon Peres and Chief of Staff Gen. Mordechai Gur, the youngish tough-looking soldier wearing a paratrooper's beret, said the fighting to extricate the hostages -- passengers and crew members of the Air France air bus -- was easier than the decision by the Cabinet to mount the rescue mission against a target in a hostile country 2,500 miles distant and with very little time for advance planning.

Addressing the Knesset earlier in the day, Premier Yitzhak Rabin officially confirmed that three of the hostages and one Israeli army officer had lost their lives in the rescue operation. Only two of the civilians were immediately identified. They were Ida Borowitz, 56, who was going to Paris to visit her son, and Jean Jacques Maimoni, 19, en route to Paris to continue his studies. There, the third civilian succumbed to wounds at a Nairobi hospital.

The officer killed in the Entebbe Airport action was Lt. Col. Jonathan Nethanyahu, 30, who was born in the United States and brought to Israel at age two. He was the commander of the strike force that freed the hostages. Funeral services will be held tomorrow at the military cemetery on Mt. Herzl in Jerusalem. Rabin expressed his grief to the families of the victims and the Knesset rose for one minute's silence. Ten wounded persons were returned to Israel and transferred to Tel Hashomer Sheba Hospital.

#### One Hostage Still In Uganda

One hostage, Mrs. Dora Bloch, 75, a holder of both a British and an Israeli passport, was left behind in Uganda when the rest of the hostages were freed because she had been taken earlier to a hospital in Kampala. Mrs. Bloch, an Israeli resident, was travelling with her son. He was among those rescued. It is understood that Israel and Britain are working closely together to try to ensure her release from Uganda. She is reportedly now well enough to be moved from the hospital.

Shomron estimated that there were fewer than 20 casualties among the Ugandan troops at the airport. He confirmed reports by the returned hostages that the Ugandans were actually helping the hijackers to guard the hostages while Ugandan President Idi Amin was posing in the role of a neutral mediator. Shomron also disclosed that seven terrorists were killed. Only four terrorists actually participated in the hijack of the Air France "air bus" after it left Athens Airport June 27. Several more were apparently brought in with the consent of Ugandan authorities to reinforce the original hijackers.

Gur said the Ugandans were guarding the entrance to the hangar where the hostages were held. They had watch posts on the gallery that overlooked the hangar, they were on the roof of the hangar, and they were around the hangar, he said.

#### Most Daring Operation Ever

Last Wednesday and Thursday, the hijackers released 148 hostages, most of them Jews of various nationalities. They held 102 persons -- about 80 of them Israelis and a number of suspected Israelis plus the flight crew of the seized French airliner. The hijackers demanded the release of 53 Palestinian or pro-Palestinian terrorists -- 40 of them serving prison sentences in

Israel and 13 imprisoned in West Germany, Switzerland, France and Kenya.

Israel agreed on Thursday to negotiate for their release and asked the French government to conduct the negotiations. The hijackers set a deadline of 8 a.m. Sunday (Uganda time) at which time they threatened to kill the hostages if their demands were not met.

Peres told the press conference that it became apparent that the negotiations were getting nowhere and that the possibility existed to rescue the hostages. The decision to carry out this action was taken in view of the grave danger to their lives, he said. He noted that the operation was the most daring one ever undertaken by the Israeli army because of the distance involved and the short time left for planning. He said that to the best of his knowledge, the Israeli rescue party did not request permission to land at Entebbe Airport.

#### No Details Disclosed

No details were disclosed as to the number of troops or planes used in the operation. It was carried out with giant American-built Hercules transports. Some foreign press reports said there was one Hercules and two Boeing 707 military cargo jets.

Peres had high praise for the behavior of the Air France flight crew. He said they treated the other hostages as their passengers throughout the ordeal. He reiterated that Israel had consulted with no other government before it undertook the operation and bore sole responsibility.

According to the accounts of Shomron, Gur and Peres, the soldiers in the rescue party shouted to the hostages to keep their heads down as they ran to the rescue plane but some of the civilians did not hear or could not obey that order. The Israeli soldiers were ordered to fire on anyone who fired on them. They were fired on by Ugandan troops, some of whom were in the airport control tower. They fired back and some of their bullets hit and damaged 6-10 Soviet-made MIG planes of various types belonging to the Ugandan Air Force. Gur said the airport was not put out of operation by the battle.

#### ISRAEL GLOWING WITH PRIDE

TEL AVIV, July 5 (JTA) -- All of Israel is glowing with pride over the spectacular rescue of most of the hijack victims from Uganda during the late hours of Saturday night and early Sunday morning. There was joyful near-hysteria at Ben Gurion Airport yesterday where thousands joined the families and friends of the hostages to welcome them home after their week-long ordeal. Chief of Staff Gen. Mordechai Gur declared, "We have raised once again the morale of Israel. Once again the security network can stand up and look anyone in the face." A private plane flew over Tel Aviv yesterday skywriting a "salute to the Israel Army."

The daring rescue operation and its success in saving the lives of most of the hostages, was indeed the biggest morale booster Israel has had since the slough of despair that followed the Yom Kippur War, the first reports of the rescue were broadcast at about 3 a.m. local time Sunday morning when the planes were already on their way back to Israel. The operation had been kept a guarded secret, known only to Cabinet ministers, Knesset leaders and

the security forces. Defense Minister Shimon Peres attended a bar mitzvah Saturday night. He gave no hint to newsmen who spoke to him of what was taking place. The families of the hostages were notified privately before news of the operation and its results were broadcast. Scores of them converged on Ben Gurion Airport before dawn, carrying flowers and bottles of champagne. The rescue planes did not arrive until 11 a.m. local time. A hush descended over the airport as they landed. Then there was a rush to the gates. Relatives embraced shedding tears of joy. Policemen wept as families were reunited.

#### Returnees Recount Event

One of the rescued hostages, Uri Davidson, 17, said they were awakened by shots at the Entebbe Airport and a few minutes later, to the astonishment of all, Israeli soldiers entered the hangar and whispered to follow them and keep heads down. He said the Ugandans had cooperated and collaborated with the hijackers. Ugandan army officers came and went as they pleased. The night before the rescue, President Idi Amin made one of his frequent appearances to tell the hostages that Israel had agreed to release terrorists for their safety, Davidson said.

Another young hostage, Michael Livni, 15, confirmed that the hostages were guarded by Ugandan troops and by the hijackers. Another freed hostage said one of the hijackers, a German, had told him he was wanted by the West German authorities for the past three years and that Uganda and Libya were the only safe havens he could find.

#### Comments On The Rescue

Commenting on the rescue, Yosef Almogi, chairman of the World Zionist Organization and Jewish Agency Executives, told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency that the action had international implications. He expressed hope that the world will now understand that Israel is determined not to submit to blackmail and to overcome its enemies.

Dr. Nahum Goldmann, President of the World Jewish Congress, who is presently in Israel, told the JTA yesterday that he hoped the rescue operation's success would weaken the will of the terrorists. But, he added, "This may be over optimistic." He warned that Israel must be extremely careful now because its enemies might engage in acts of reprisal. But he described the rescue as "an historic event in the glorious history of Israel. It was done wisely and courageously. I am happy, just like everyone else," Goldmann said.

Rabbi Alexander Schindler, chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, in Israel on Conference matters, declared that the liberation of the hijacked passengers, coming on July 4, was of symbolic significance for Americans "who see Israel as a sister democracy devoted to the prophetic ideals of human dignity and social justice that animates both our nations."

Mrs. Charlotte Jacobson, chairman of the American Section of the WZO Executive, described the rescue operation as "the triumph of a people with a deep sense of responsibility for its citizens. We didn't take it lying down as most nations would," she told the JTA, adding "A tri-

umph of the spirit. Mazal Tov, Mazal Tov."

#### AMIN CRIES, FOUL

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, July 5 (JTA) -- President Idi Amin of Uganda has cried, foul. "You have wronged me, I am counting now the bodies of my soldiers," he told Maariv correspondent Uri Dann who reached him by telephone yesterday at the Presidential office in Kampala. Commenting on the rescue raid, Amin complained that Israel just hadn't played cricket. "Your Hercules planes flew in and my soldiers did not want to shoot them down," he told Dann.

Amin vigorously denied that he had cooperated with the hijackers. He claimed that, on the contrary, he had defended the Israeli hostages. He said he had left the Organization of African Unity meeting on Mauritius to help work for their release without bloodshed. Amin insisted that the hijackers were the only ones holding the hostages and that his soldiers remained some 200 meters distant from the building where they were being held. He said he had allowed the hijacked Air France jet to land at Entebbe last Monday only because it was running out of fuel.

"We really took good care of the hostages," Amin told Dann. "We gave them everything -- food, toilet articles and so on -- and what do we get in return -- you kill my people." Amin claimed that his troops could have given battle to the Israeli commandos but they did not. He said he had control of the situation and, after all, "it was only a small thing."

Dann said he had surprisingly little difficulty reaching Amin by phone. He said he spoke to only one official in Kampala before Amin himself came on the line. He said the conversation lasted a half hour, that Amin sounded in tears some of the time and his feeling was that the Ugandan leader had not really grasped what happened.

#### WALDHEIM CRITICIZES ISRAEL

By Yitzhak Rabi

UNITED NATIONS, July 5 (JTA) -- The United Nations confirmed today that Secretary General Kurt Waldheim had described Israel's rescue operation in Uganda as a violation of Ugandan sovereignty. But a UN spokesman strongly denied that Waldheim had characterized the action as "flagrant aggression."

An account of Waldheim's remarks to reporters in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, and in Cairo yesterday was telephoned to UN headquarters by a UN official accompanying the Secretary General. According to the account released here today, Waldheim was asked if he thought Israel had committed a violation of the national sovereignty of Uganda and replied that it was indeed the case. Waldheim added, according to the account, that the situation created by this incident was likely to have serious international repercussions, especially as far as Africa was concerned.

Asked about the UN role with regard to the release of the Air France hostages held at Entebbe Airport in Uganda, Waldheim recalled that he had instructed his representative in Kampala, the Ugandan capital, to lend every assistance to efforts to obtain the hostages' release. The

account said. Meanwhile, a spokesperson for the United Nations in New York told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, in response to a question today, that no request has been received for a Security Council meeting on the Israeli rescue raid in Uganda. Reports from Uganda had indicated that President Idi Amin was considering a call for a Security Council meeting to condemn Israel.

### FORD CONGRATULATES ISRAEL

WASHINGTON, July 5 (JTA) -- Israel's successful rescue operation in Uganda elicited messages of congratulations from President Ford and other Administration officials and from the leaders of American Jewish organizations. Ford said, in a letter to Premier Yitzhak Rabin, made public by the White House last night, that "The American people join me in expressing our great satisfaction that the passengers of the Air France flight seized earlier this week have been saved and a senseless act of terrorism thwarted."

Avi Pazner, press attache at the Israeli Embassy here reported that the Embassy was flooded with telegrams and telephone calls of congratulation all day Sunday. Israeli diplomatic sources noted, however, that Ford's message was "unprecedented" because "no American President has ever congratulated us on a military action before, not even after the Six-Day War."

Jerold C. Hoffberger, president of the Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds, cabled Rabin his warmest congratulations on the rescue operation. "It is the essential demonstration to the world of courage and principle. For Americans it is especially timely on the birthday of this nation's commitment to freedom and independence," Hoffberger stated.

Bertram H. Gold, executive vice president of the American Jewish Committee praised the rescue as promoting an eventual peaceful settlement of the Middle East conflict. "We hope that this all proves also again the bankruptcy of international terrorism and that we can now proceed to the orderly and peaceful settlement of the problems of the Middle East," Gold said.

### Heroic Rescue Applauded

The B'nai B'rith Anti-Defamation League said in a cable to Rabin: "We celebrate the heroic rescues of innocent victims of the Palestinian hijackers and we congratulate you on returning them to safety. Your refusal to capitulate gives the only answer to terrorism."

Chicago's Jewish leadership also sent a message of congratulations to Rabin. It read: "The entire Jewish community joins us in congratulating the people and the State of Israel on the bravery and skill of the Israel Defense Forces in rescuing the hostages. We extend deepest sympathy to the families of those who gave their lives to make possible this fantastic achievement."

The cable was signed by Marvin N. Stone, president of the Jewish Federation and Jewish United Fund of Metropolitan Chicago; Harry Fox, general chairman of the JUF-Israel Emergency Fund Campaign; and James P. Rice, executive vice president of the JUF-Federation.

Joseph P. Sternstein, president of the Zionist Organization of America, sent cables of congratulations to Rabin and other Israeli leaders. Noting

that Americans were celebrating the 200th anniversary of their independence, when the rescue was carried out, he stated that "Freedom-loving people are electrified with hope by the magnificent prowess of Israel's defense forces.... By your valorous accomplishment you have shown the world how to combat international banditry."

State Department sources meanwhile confirmed Rabin's statement to the Knesset yesterday that Israel had mounted the rescue operation entirely on its own responsibility without consulting any other governments beforehand. The U.S., according to a State Department official, first learned of Israel's action when Ambassador Simcha Dinitz phoned Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger in New York where the American official was over the weekend to participate in the Bicentennial celebration and for private reasons. At that time the Israeli planes were already on their way to Uganda.

### FRANCE'S ATTITUDE RESERVED

By Edwin Eytan

PARIS, July 5 (JTA) -- Statesmen and the news media throughout Western Europe today expressed their admiration and joy for the daring and skill of the Israeli rescue mission. The French Foreign Ministry issued a brief statement expressing satisfaction at the outcome of the mission but deplored the casualties. Otherwise, the French government has adopted a more reserved attitude which some observers here describe as "frankly disappointing." The public, however, reacted enthusiastically to the Israeli action.

Sources here confirmed that Israeli Foreign Minister Yigal Allon had informed his French counterpart, Jean Sauvagnargues, of the mission as soon as it was completed. Later, Israeli Premier Yitzhak Rabin called President Valery Giscard d'Estaing to inform him of the mission's successful outcome. However, as of this evening, Giscard had still not responded to Rabin's message nor has Sauvagnargues responded to Allon's message.

Israeli circles are unhappy with the statement read out yesterday by a representative of the Air France crew upon their arrival in Paris. The crew paid tribute to Uganda President Idi Amin and stressed his "constant care to ensure our safety, our material comfort and even our health." These circles believe French officials are behind the statement.

The French, observers here believe, are embarrassed and fear the possible consequences of the Israeli action both in Africa and among the various Arab states. The French press, on the other hand, in its majority warmly approved the mission. In Spain, Italy and Scandinavia the Israeli action was also flashed throughout the day on radio and television stations. A number of African embassies in Western Europe contacted by Jewish Telegraphic Agency correspondents refused to comment on the action. They said the African chiefs of state, now meeting in Mauritania, will probably adopt a common stand on the issue. The Soviet Union denounced the Israeli action as another manifestation of "Zionist aggression" and a violation of Uganda's sovereignty.