

AS UNREST IN TERRITORIES SUBSIDES, ISRAEL MULLS RELATIONS WITH ARABS

By Gil Sedan and David Landau

JERUSALEM, Dec. 22 (JTA) -- Relative calm descended on Israel Tuesday as Arab rioting subsided and Arab shops, businesses, factories and schools reopened and municipalities again provided public services following a general strike Monday by Israel's Arab citizens.

But Israelis are clearly disturbed by the almost total shut-down of the Arab sector for 24 hours and the scattered incidents of violence that accompanied the strike. Politicians and political analysts here were assessing the effects of the strike and considering the increasingly strained relations with Egypt after almost two weeks of Palestinian rioting in the administered territories.

The relative calm was attributed partly to bad weather and partly to Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin's declaration that the security forces will use "every available legal means" to enforce law and order in Israel and the administered territories.

Rabin, who returned from a visit to the United States late Monday night, Tuesday visited the Gaza Strip, where disturbances continued. The Israel Defense Force reportedly killed another Palestinian in Gaza and two more died in hospitals from wounds received in earlier clashes with soldiers. The unofficial death toll of Palestinians in the administered territories is now 22.

The IDF chief of staff, Gen. Dan Shomron, told the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Security Committee Tuesday that 19 Arabs were killed and 164 wounded in clashes with security forces since Dec. 9.

Some See Radicalization

Israeli Jews are troubled mainly by the powerful demonstration of solidarity with the Palestinians in the territories by the 750,000 Israeli Arab citizens. According to some analysts, Monday's events indicated the radicalization of Israeli Arabs and a trend toward greater involvement in the struggle of the Arabs in the territories against the Israeli occupation.

Some saw the calm as an indication that the strike was a singular event expressing the frustrations of Israeli Arabs, after which the local population returned to business as usual.

This seemed to be borne out by the chairman of the National Committee of Arab Mayors, Ibrahim Nimer Hussein, who said the strike should not be seen as an indication of growing alienation among Israeli Arabs. He said the violent demonstrations Monday in Nazareth and Umm El-Fahm were marginal and "under the circumstances, understandable."

Rabin told reporters at Ben Gurion Airport Monday night that the spread of unrest to Jaffa, Ramle and Lod in the heart of Israel created problems for the future.

"We have to cope with it, and every legal measure -- legal from Israel's point of view -- is justified to put an end to it," he said.

The unrest also spread Monday to the Bedouin population in the Negev. Druze on the Golan Heights, for the first time, expressed solidarity

with the Palestinians.

Israel meanwhile has come under strong international criticism from friends and foes alike for its handling of the disturbances in the territories.

"We have to make clear to friendly countries such as the U.S., the European countries and to Egypt that violence cannot be tolerated -- the way the Egyptians will not tolerate violence by their students or by mobs when it takes place in Egypt," Rabin told reporters.

His emphasis on 'Egypt reflected Israelis' growing concern over serious new strains in their relations with the only Arab nation that has a peace treaty with Israel.

Five Egyptian Protests

Egypt has delivered five formal, and successively more forceful, diplomatic protests to Israel since the disturbances in the territories began more than two weeks ago. The Israeli ambassador, Moshe Sasson, has been repeatedly summoned to the Foreign Ministry in Giza, outside Cairo, to receive admonitions over Israel's behavior. He has informed Jerusalem that feelings are running high in Egypt and relations with Israel are growing increasingly tense.

Abdel Wahab Darousha, an Arab member of the Knesset for the Labor Party who is currently in Cairo, told the Israeli newspaper Davar Tuesday that he does not think Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak will be able much longer to resist pressure by the hard-line Arab states and the Palestine Liberation Organization to recall his ambassador in Tel Aviv for "consultations" or make some other symbolic demonstration of displeasure toward Israel.

Egypt recalled its Israeli envoy in September 1982, following the Sabra and Shatila refugee-camp massacres, and relations between Israel and Cairo remained frozen for more than three years. Israeli officials fear a serious deterioration if Mubarak takes the same action now.

Rabin told reporters Monday night that Israel is "ready to solve the conflict" between itself and Jordan and "Palestinians who are not declared members of the PLO" at negotiations.

'Suffering Will Be Increased'

"If they believe that through terror and violence they are going to achieve (anything)... we must make it clear to them that they will not achieve (anything)... Their suffering will be increased instead of creating conditions that allow them to live peacefully," Rabin said.

Monday's general strike in the territories paralleled the one in Israel, and it was felt by the construction and textile industries in Israel, which employ Arab workers from the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Production was "slowed" at the Polgat textile plant in Kiryat Gat because several hundred Arabs from Gaza stayed away from their jobs.

Some factory managers in Israel were said to be considering hiring workers from overseas instead of Arabs from the territories.

(Also contributing to this report was Tel Aviv correspondent Hugh Orgel.)

REAGAN SAID TO BE MONITORING SITUATION IN THE TERRITORIES

By Howard Rosenberg

WASHINGTON, Dec. 22 (JTA) -- President Reagan has been "very carefully" monitoring the violence in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, White House spokesman Marlin Fitzwater said Tuesday.

Both the White House and State Department called Tuesday for Israel and Palestinians in the occupied territories to end the violence.

"It is time for both sides to step back from confrontation, before there are more tragic casualties," Fitzwater said.

State Department spokeswoman Phyllis Oakley called for "restraint by all parties and a common commitment to deal with the underlying problems and frustrations, which, in our view, need to be addressed."

Oakley declined to say whether the State Department is satisfied with Israel's handling of the crisis, except to reiterate past statements that the United States has raised concerns at the "highest levels" of the Israeli government and "remains in constant normal contact" with Jerusalem.

Meeting With Shamir

A State Department official said Tuesday that U.S. ambassador to Israel Thomas Pickering met Monday morning with Israeli Premier Yitzhak Shamir to express concern about Israel's "excessive use of force" in quelling the violence.

Fitzwater said that Reagan has discussed the situation with his national security adviser, Lt. Gen. Colin Powell, and "he has been involved in the communications that have been made with Israel and with some of the Arab nations."

He emphasized that despite Reagan's personal involvement, "we think the appropriate channel has been primarily through our various diplomatic means."

The United States criticized Israeli policy in the territories in two respects during meetings last week with Israeli Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin.

Fitzwater emphasized one of the points Tuesday -- Israel's use of "live ammunition" when shooting at rioters. He said that the United States has asked Israel to consider using "rubber bullets."

The other concern raised by the United States was for Israel to consider creating a special police force to handle rioting in the territories, rather than relying on soldiers, who are more apt to shoot, an administration official said Monday.

A State Department official drew the conclusion Tuesday that Israel has apparently not "taken to heart" the U.S. concerns raised with Rabin, since Palestinians were killed again on Monday in the territories.

'Harsh' Measures Deplored

Fitzwater used the phrase "harsh security measures" in describing Israeli actions in the territories, but also criticized the Palestinians for engaging in demonstrations and riots.

The White House spokesman said that "the continuing occupation is exacting a toll on the 1.5 million Palestinians in the territories and on Israel as well." He said the violence "undermines" the peace process and "damages the self-respect and world opinion of Israel."

In her briefing at the State Department,

Oakley said, "We have repeatedly urged restraint; now more than ever we believe that neither further disorder nor harsh security measures can contribute to reconciliation, negotiation and peace."

"It is time for all sides to look beyond their own definitions of the causes of this violence and to commit themselves squarely through the process of negotiations," she said, adding that the United States "stands ready to assist" in that process.

Both Fitzwater and Oakley said the United States has been in contact with other Arab governments and Palestinians. Fitzwater told reporters that the United States has been in contact with Palestinian leaders in the territories, but still refuses to talk with members of the Palestine Liberation Organization.

The State Department on Monday reiterated the travel advisory in effect since March 1982 warning U.S. citizens about traveling to the administered territories. Oakley said there are "no thoughts" about upgrading the warning. She also said there were no plans for U.S. officials to visit the region.

AMERICAN JEWISH LEADERS EXPRESS RANGE OF VIEWS ON UNREST IN GAZA

By Andrew Silow Carroll

NEW YORK, Dec. 21 (JTA) -- Reactions by American Jewish organizations to unrest in Gaza and East Jerusalem have so far ranged from a call on Israel to achieve a political settlement of the Palestinian problem to harsh criticism of Jews and others outside of Israel who attempt to "dictate" Israeli policy.

A third, more centrist position is being taken by groups, such as the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, who are urging Arab leaders to meet the Israelis on their continued appeal for direct negotiations.

In local communities, meanwhile, Jewish leaders are faced with a growing uneasiness over the image of Israel and the way it is being portrayed by the news media, to a degree not seen since Israel's invasion of Lebanon in 1982.

In a strongly-worded statement, Rabbi Alexander Schindler, president of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, said the outbreak of Arab-Israeli violence in Judaea, Samaria and Gaza "should shock Israel's government" into ending the status quo in the administered territories.

"I fervently hope that the unity government in Jerusalem will act to defuse the violence, to restore order and to actively seek and find appropriate partners for the process of negotiation," said Schindler.

The UAHC is the congregational body of the Reform movement.

A similar call for peace negotiations came from the American Committee for Israel Peace Center, the U.S. support group of the Tel Aviv-based International Center for Peace in the Middle East.

In a statement issued Monday, the committee urged Israel to strive for a political settlement, while at the same time refraining "from acts of force that will aggravate the present situation and increase friction within the local Palestinian population."

Signers of the statement include Leonard Fein, former editor of Moment magazine; Philip Klutznick, honorary president of B'nai B'rith;

Letty Cottin Pogrebin, an editor of Ms. magazine; and Menachem Rosensaft, founding chairperson of the International Network of Children of Jewish Holocaust Survivors.

PLO Blamed For Unrest

Following a special meeting Monday with Moshe Arad, Israel's ambassador to the United States, Presidents Conference Chairman Morris Abram issued a statement saying that the unrest in the territories has "been planned, instigated and incited by Palestinian terrorists led by the PLO and Moslem fundamentalist groups."

But Abram repeated a call for "dialogue and negotiations" between Israel and "Palestinian representatives who are prepared to live in peace with Israel."

Abram also said that in the face of a continuing series of "provocations," Israel has "sought to react with restraint."

Also meeting Monday was the executive committee of the American Jewish Congress. According to Henry Siegman, the group's executive director, the committee decided to stick by the position put forth in September by AJCongress, which supported Israel Foreign Minister Shimon Peres' call for an international peace conference and warned of the potential for violence in the territories.

Siegman said in a telephone interview, however, that "Israel cannot be expected to yield to violence or come forward with proposals while this unrest continues. But that does not diminish the need to deal with those root causes once the violence is under control."

Seymour Reich, president of B'nai B'rith International, said in a statement, "The answer to the unrest is the same as it always has been: face-to-face negotiations" between Israel and either neighboring Arab countries or Palestinian moderates.

But Reich urged caution and said that Israel "should not be panicked into hasty actions that will serve neither peace nor security."

'Arab Intransigence'

The Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith also blamed the unrest on "Arab intransigence" in negotiating with Israel. In a statement issued by its national chairman, Burton Levinson, and its national director, Abraham Foxman, the group said that "peace in the Middle East would be better served if those who are condemning the violence would also press the Arab states and the PLO to recognize Israel's existence."

The Zionist Organization of America said it would not be drawn into the debate over Israel's political options.

"We will resist falling into the trap of being critical of Israel because of Jewish super-sensitivity," Paul Flacks, executive vice president of the ZOA, said in a telephone interview.

Flacks continued, however, that "the onus (for the violence) cannot be placed on Israel." The roots of the unrest, he said, go back at least as far as 1974, when Palestine Liberation Organization chairman Yasser Arafat appeared before the United Nations and "the world community legitimized terrorism."

Representing the Americans for a Safe Israel, Joseph Puder, its executive director, put the blame for the unrest on the PLO, saying that Arafat is "trying to be heard in the Arab world and in the Western media."

If Israel is to be faulted at all, he said, it is

for a relaxation of law and order in the territories since the days of the "strong hand" policies of one-time territorial governor Ariel Sharon and chief of staff Rafael Eitan.

Puder also had harsh words for critics of Israel within the Jewish community, the State Department and the news media. "Undiplomatic, hostile, if not anti-Semitic" was how Puder characterized statements by Richard Murphy, the assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern and South Asian affairs, who last week voiced the Reagan administration's opposition to many of Israel's actions in the territories.

Puder said the news media have been "celebrating once again the opportunity to preach morality to Israel."

Newspaper accounts and television coverage of confrontations between Israeli soldiers and Arab youths are being received in local Jewish communities with both sadness at the loss of life and concern over Israel's image. Community leaders are monitoring whether news reports seem accurate or biased, and have expressed discomfort about comparisons being made between Israel and South Africa.

ISRAELI OFFICIALS IN THE U.S.

ARE STRESSING ARMY'S 'RESTRAINT'

By Yitzhak Rabi

NEW YORK, Dec. 22 (JTA) -- Israel's chief representatives in the United States are stressing the role of the Palestine Liberation Organization in "inciting" the riots in Gaza and the West Bank, while underscoring the "restraint" of the Israeli troops in confronting the demonstrators.

The Israeli Embassy in Washington and the Israeli Consulate General in New York, as well as other Israeli consulates in the United States, have been receiving many requests from the American news media, as well as Jewish leaders and organizations, for an explanation of what is happening in Gaza, the West Bank and Arab communities in Israel.

Moshe Arad, Israel's ambassador to Washington, was in New York Monday night to brief the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations on the situation. The meeting was closed to the press; but according to a spokesman for the Presidents Conference, the Israeli envoy stressed the restraint Israel is exercising in Gaza and East Jerusalem.

Arad reportedly noted that the police are being instructed not to fire live ammunition unless their lives are threatened and they are using rubber bullets, tear gas and water hoses to defend themselves.

The envoy pointed out that the Israeli government is once again expressing its willingness to meet face to face with Arab leaders to reach a peaceful solution to the Arab Israeli conflict. But Israel's most immediate concern is to pacify the situation in the territories, he stated.

Moshe Yegar, Israel's consul general in New York, said in a telephone interview with the Jewish Telegraphic Agency that the riots are orchestrated by the PLO. "No other government could demonstrate more self-restraint than Israel has been doing in the last two weeks," Yegar claimed.

Yegar said that the PLO-sponsored riots could not be a substitute to real peace negotiations and would lead the Palestinians in the territories nowhere. "The riots and demonstrations will never change the policy of the government of

Israel," he declared.

Asked if, in his view, the American news media have been reporting the events in Gaza and the West Bank accurately, Yegar said he prefers "not to express an opinion on the subject."

IN EUROPEAN CAPITALS, ARABS GROUPS ARE CAMPAIGNING AGAINST ISRAEL **JTA Staff Report**

Dec. 22 (JTA) -- In Paris and Athens, Geneva and Amsterdam, Arab groups and their sympathizers are trying to rally public support for Palestinians in the Israeli-administered territories and are demanding strong condemnation of Israel for the tough measures it has taken to quell rioting in the Gaza Strip and West Bank.

In Paris, a delegation of young Frenchmen of Algerian origin demonstrated Tuesday outside the Israel Embassy, calling for an end to Israeli "violence" and for an international peace conference with the participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization.

Police blocked the embassy premises. They were handed a letter addressed to the Israeli government warning it to "negotiate with the PLO before it is too late." The message claimed that "the conflict is, for the time being, one between Israel and the Palestinians. Do not turn it into an Arab-Jewish clash."

Some of the demonstrators, representing Franco-Algerian organizations, announced they would hold a vigil and hunger strike at the Notre Dame cathedral on Christmas eve for "the Palestinian martyrs" killed in the recent uprising in the territories.

The French Socialist Party, headed by President Francois Mitterrand, meanwhile, has expressed its concern over events in the territories.

Rally In Athens

In Athens, the Union of Palestinian Students in Greece staged a rally at the Athens University last Friday to protest the latest "Israeli attacks against the inhabitants of the occupied Arab lands."

The students presented a draft resolution to the United Nations office in Athens denouncing the "Zionist, racist oppression being violently carried out today in the occupied lands, which have resulted in dozens of deaths, hundreds of injuries and thousands of arrests."

The General Confederation of Workers of Greece called on all working people to participate in a 10-minute work stoppage at noon Monday in solidarity with the Palestinian people. They called for an end to "the oppression by Israel in the occupied Arab lands," a settlement of the Palestinian problem through an international conference and peace in the eastern Mediterranean region.

A strong rebuttal by Israel was not broadcast by Greek television even though Moshe Gilboa, Israel's diplomatic representative in Athens, personally intervened with the director of television. Gilboa holds the rank of ambassador, but relations between Greece and Israel are on only the consular level.

The Israeli Mission in Athens issued a statement blaming the PLO for the violence in the territories. It noted that before the riots broke out, the PLO radio station in Baghdad urged the Palestinian population in the territories to "give the enemy an unforgettable lesson." But the statement was ignored by the Greek news

media.

In Holland, the new PLO representative in The Hague, Safie Safieh, sent an open letter to the Dutch people, through the ANP news agency, calling events in the territories "a moral challenge to all of mankind."

Safieh, a Roman Catholic, addressed himself to his "Christian brethren" in the Netherlands. He urged all Dutch Christians to "remember the Palestinians in their Christmas prayers."

The names of 21 Palestinian students alleged to have been killed by Israeli security forces during the first two weeks of the disturbances were published in an advertisement in several Dutch newspapers. It was inserted by the Netherlands Committee of Support to Palestinian Higher Education. The committee raises money for Bir Zeit University near Ramallah in the West Bank.

The Conference of Arab Ambassadors, which met in Switzerland this week, called on the Swiss government and the International Committee of the Red Cross in Geneva to intervene on behalf of the Palestinians.

The Israeli charge d'affaires in Bern, Yigael Antebi, was summoned Monday to the Swiss Foreign Ministry by Alfred Ruegg, its director general. Ruegg requested information about events in the territories and asked to be kept informed of developments.

(Contributing to this report were correspondents Edwin Eytan in Paris, Tamar Levy in Geneva, Henrietta Boas in Amsterdam and Jean Cohen in Athens.)

BARBADOS SYNAGOGUE IS SITE OF COMMONWEALTH CONFERENCE

BRIDGETOWN, Barbados, Dec. 22 (JTA)-- Sabbath eve services were held for the first time in more than 100 years in the synagogue of Congregation Nidhei Israel here last Friday night, the World Jewish Congress reported.

They marked the opening of the four-day biennial conference of the Commonwealth Jewish Council and the reconsecration of what is possibly the oldest Jewish house of worship in the Western hemisphere.

Rabbi Israel Singer, secretary general of the World Jewish Congress, officiated at the rededication and Prime Minister Erskine Sandiford of Barbados was the honored guest.

The Commonwealth Jewish Council represents Jewish communities in 24 countries of the British Commonwealth. Its president, Greville Janner, a Labor member of the British Parliament, formally opened a special exhibition on the history of "Jewish settlement in the Caribbean" at the Barbados Museum, under the auspices of the Barbadian government.

There are about 27 Jewish families in this island nation of a quarter million. Jews arrived here shortly after the first British settlement in 1627. Congregation Nidhei Israel was founded in 1654. The synagogue was partly destroyed by a hurricane in 1831. It is now undergoing restoration, expected to be completed late next year.

The 110 delegates and observers at the conference included representatives from Jewish communities in such Third World countries as India and Zambia. Resolutions adopted at the gathering, which ended Tuesday, include a strong condemnation of apartheid and a call to bring to justice Nazi war criminals still at large and living in Commonwealth countries.