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# U.S. TO INVESTIGATE ISRAEL'S TREATMENT OF PALESTINIAN WORKERS

By Howard Rosenberg

WASHINGTON, Aug. 28 (JTA) -- The Israeli government and pro-Israel groups have expressed dismay at U.S. Trade Representative Clayton Yeutter's decision last week to accept an American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee petition urging him to investigate Israel's treatment of Palestinian laborers.

If Israel is found to have violated recognized standards for workers by mistreating Palestinians, it could lose its ability to export products duty-free to the United States under the 12-year-old Generalized System of Preferences program.

Five other countries are also being investigated following other petitions filed with the trade office. They are Syria, Haiti, Burma, Malaysia and Liberia. The Central African Republic will again be investigated this year, as in 1987.

"This is the first step in determining whether these countries should be denied special access to the U.S. market on the basis of their labor practices," Yeutter said Thursday in making the announcement.

Hearings are set for Oct. 3 to 5, with a final decision to be announced April 1.

Israeli Embassy spokesman Yosef Gal said Israel "regrets" the U.S. decision and that the two principal charges against Israel were not summarily dismissed. He termed the accusations "baseless."

But he said he does not "see this as a major issue" that could damage American ties with Israel. "U.S.-Israeli relations are too strong and too deep for this attempt by the ADC to disrupt us," Gal said.

A trade representative source said that Israeli exports to the United States in 1987 totaled \$486 million.

## Other Petitions Rejected

In the past, the only countries whose U.S. duty-free status has been rescinded are Nicaragua and Romania, while the trade statuses of Paraguay and Chile are under suspension.

This year, Yeutter rejected petitions to investigate El Salvador, Guatemala, Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand and Turkey.

The trade representative source said the 1974 Trade Act, as amended, sets a "low threshold for accepting petitions for review" and allows the public to request an inquiry.

The American-Arab committee petition was accepted, the source said, because the trade representative "could not refute the charges as either irrelevant or factually wrong."

The source said that for a formal review to be granted, "charges have to be relevant to the criteria we look at it."

Those criteria include the right of labor to organize; the right to have collective bargaining arrangements; the right to protection for child labor; the right to health and safety standards, as well as to a minimum wage; and the right to protection from compulsory or forced labor.

The American-Arab committee elected to accuse Israel of impinging on the rights of Palestinian workers to organize; to work under basic

standards of health and safety; and to a minimum wage.

The source added that "all levels" of the trade representative's review process, leading to the formal inquiry, found the 12-page petition acceptable.

In addition to the American-Arab committee petition, 10 members of Congress had written Yeutter urging him to investigate the treatment of workers in about 13 countries, including Israel. Among them were Rep. John Dingell (D-Mich.), chairman of the powerful House Energy and Commerce Committee.

## AFL-CIO Protests Move

Harsh reaction from pro-Israel groups, including the AFL-CIO, followed Yeutter's decision to accept the petition.

The labor group supported petitions to probe four of the countries, but not Liberia and Israel.

"If you have a country that is facing terrorism, annihilation of your own country, and despite these conditions you maintain a multiracial trade union, and allow 38 unions and union organizations to form over 21 years of jurisdiction over the Gaza Strip and the West Bank . . . that country is not massively violating workers' rights," said Adrian Karatnycky, a spokesman for the AFL-CIO's international affairs department.

"By the standards of the Middle East, it is preposterous for the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee to criticize Israel," Karatnycky said.

He urged Yeutter to "investigate the Arab dictatorships which totally control workers and thoroughly deny freedom of association."

U.S. Jewish leaders generally criticized the American-Arab committee petition as politically motivated.

Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, director of international relations for the American Jewish Committee, termed it "propaganda warfare."

He said his group released a study in 1987 that assessed rights of Palestinian women in Israel and the territories, and concluded that Israel's treatment of them was "far superior to the conditions (for them) in all of the surrounding Arab countries."

"If this is to be an objective inquiry . . . then let them study what is going on in the Arab countries," Tanenbaum argued.

## Labor Committee To Testify

Robert Lifton, president of the American Jewish Congress, called the Arab committee's charges "spurious" and pointed to the fact that aside from European Community member states, Israel is the "only country" that has a Free Trade Area agreement with the United States.

Lifton added that "most Palestinian residents of the territories are represented by the Histadrut," Israel's main trades union.

Jewish Labor Committee President Herb Magidson termed the Arab group's petition "a thinly veiled political attack on the State of Israel and the Office of the Trade Representative should have recognized it."

Magidson wrote a letter Aug. 12 to Hiram Lawrence, General System of Preference executive director, asking him to reject the petition. His

organization, founded in 1934 as the Jewish liaison to the trades union movement, plans to testify at the October hearings.

Pointing out that there are 31 independent trade unions on the West Bank and seven on the Gaza Strip, Magidson termed Israel "the only democratic country in the Middle East and the only state with a free trade union movement."

#### PALESTINIANS USING ALL LEGAL MEANS TO FIGHT NEWLY ORDERED DEPORTATIONS

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Aug. 28 (JTA) -- Speculation that the Palestine Liberation Organization may declare an independent state and establish a government in exile appears to have raised the expectations of Palestinians and emboldened them to challenge Israel's military administration of the territories.

Palestinian lawyers are pursuing all legal means to prevent the deportation of 25 Palestinian activists, apparently following outside instructions.

The unprecedented legal campaign is fueled by the apparent success of the Palestinians at winning political points on the issue abroad. The U.S. government's angry reaction to the planned deportations is the latest victory in the propaganda war.

Israel's political echelons have rejected the American protests against what would be the largest deportation of Palestinians since 1967. Israeli leaders have reiterated their conviction that the deportations are justified and in accordance with all national and international laws.

But Palestinian lawyers have vowed to take authorities to the mat over the deportations. Whereas in the past potential deportees refrained from appeals, or withdrew them in the middle of the process, now all 25 of them have decided to exhaust all legal means.

The reason for this change of approach, according to Palestinian sources, is an awareness that never before has the Palestinian uprising enjoyed such widespread international popularity.

According to this school of thought, the declaration of an independent Palestinian state that would recognize Israel would create an international atmosphere that would make it more difficult for the Israelis to go ahead with the deportations.

#### Appeals Process Delayed

For the moment, the appeals process against the deportations has been delayed, because Arab lawyers refuse to travel to the central prison in Nablus, where some of the potential deportees are being detained, while the city is under curfew.

But even if the military advisory boards in Gaza and Nablus reject the appeals of the accused, as they have in almost all previous deportation cases, the potential deportees still have the option of appealing to the High Court of Justice, Israel's supreme court.

Israeli Cabinet ministers exchanged accusations at their weekly session Sunday over who leaked news of the deportations in the first place. Likud Minister Moshe Arens accused Foreign Minister Shimon Peres' office for the leak, while Peres blamed Arens.

Despite the threat of deportations, the situation in the territories has changed little. A quarter of the residents of the West Bank and Gaza Strip spent the weekend under curfew.

Security forces on Sunday closed down the offices of the Union of Welfare Societies, as well as a journalists club in East Jerusalem.

#### Importing Foreign Workers

On Friday they closed down the offices of the trade unions in East Jerusalem. These measures were taken in line with a general offensive by the authorities aimed at the organizers of the uprising.

On Sunday, the Cabinet added to these tactics yet another in the fight against the so-called "intifada": the importation of thousands of foreign workers to replace Palestinians in the work force.

Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin backed the idea of bringing some 3,000 foreign laborers "to break the monopoly of Arab workers."

Labor and Social Affairs Minister Moshe Katsav suggested that importing 500 workers would be sufficient. He warned against flooding the economy with foreign workers, particularly at a time when unemployment among Jewish laborers is on the rise.

#### U.S. STATEMENT ON DEPORTATIONS PROMPTS PROTEST LETTER TO REAGAN

NEW YORK, Aug. 28 (JTA) -- An influential American Jewish leader has written to President Reagan to express deep concern over the tone of U.S. objections to Israel's policy of expelling Palestinians accused of instigating riots in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

In a telegram sent Friday, Morris Abram, chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, said that the United States should not lose sight of the fact that the individuals being deported are harming their own people.

Copies of the telegram were also sent to Secretary of State George Shultz and Vice President George Bush. The Conference of Presidents represents the heads of 46 major American Jewish Organizations.

Abram's telegram refers to an unusually harsh statement made last week by Deputy Secretary of State John Whitehead that "damage to our bilateral relations will occur" unless Israel reconsiders its recent decision to deport 25 Palestinians.

The statement was made in confidence to Oded Eran, deputy chief of mission at the Israeli Embassy in Washington. U.S. officials later said they regretted that the statement had been made public.

Emphasizing that Israel resorted to deportations in order to quell riots and restore order, Abram said in his message to Reagan:

"No one is being deported to life-threatening situations -- or to Siberia, or even to alien countries. They are being deported to places where they have colleagues and, presumably, freedom -- places where they may even continue to harass Israel.

"All of us know," Abram continued, "that in other countries, including those who are instigating the outcry against Israel, the people deported would be in prison, labor camps or shot."

The Jewish leader affirmed that it is "the right of the United States to criticize Israel and of Israel to differ with the United States." But he said when the two countries differ, it should be done, as is the case among NATO allies, "in an atmosphere of friendship and frankness."

## ARAFAT DISCUSSES STATEHOOD PLAN WITH U.N. CHIEF, BUT NOT THE PRESS

By Tamar Levy

GENEVA, Aug. 28 (JTA) -- Yasir Arafat told United Nations Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar on Saturday that a government in exile is one of the ideas he plans to present when the Palestine National Council meets next month in Algiers.

But the Palestine Liberation Organization chairman appeared to be more cautious than some of his aides in discussing details of the plan for statehood.

The normally publicity-hungry Arafat surprised the Geneva press corps by canceling a news conference scheduled to take place after his 90-minute meeting with the secretary-general. Instead of making a public appearance, the PLO chairman was reportedly whisked out a back door of the European headquarters of the United Nations here.

Perez de Cuellar, for his part, made it clear that the meeting took place at Arafat's request.

A statement issued by the PLO reported that the discussion focused on the secretary-general's efforts to secure compliance with various U.N. declarations. Arafat expressed concern over alleged Israeli acts of aggression against Palestinian refugee camps and villages in southern Lebanon.

The PLO chairman was also said to have expressed his organization's desire to participate in an international peace conference on the Middle East. Israel has opposed PLO participation in such a conference, though the government is split on whether to back a conference that would include a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation.

Arafat was vague in discussing details of PLO plans to declare an independent state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and set up a government in exile. He is apparently wary of the reaction of more militant factions in the PLO, which see the idea as an abandonment of the PLO's armed struggle against Israel.

The outlines of the proposal were described in interviews given by Bassam Abu-Sharif, a close aide to Arafat. Sharif told The New York Times and the Associated Press that the Palestine National Council could pass a resolution, signed by Arafat with the approval of the various PLO factions, that would declare a state and recognize Israel on the basis of the U.N. partition plan of 1947.

Israeli leaders are tensely awaiting the Palestinian decision, which may shake the political firmament on the national and international level.

## 8-YEAR-OLD MURDERED IN KIRYAT TIVON

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Aug. 28 (JTA) -- Police are investigating the brutal murder of 8-year-old Hanan Zagor, whose body was found by neighbors Saturday afternoon near his home in Kiryat Tivon, southeast of Haifa.

Police said they are following contradictory indications that the murder either might have been carried out by nationalist Palestinian Arabs or be a "civilian criminal act carried out by a deranged neighbor of the family."

The boy's body was discovered in a wadi and was later identified by his stepbrother. Zagor's head apparently had been battered by a large stone, which was found nearby along with his skullcap.

## COLONEL QUILTS AFTER REPRIMAND FOR KILLING OF AN ARAB YOUTH

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Aug. 28 (JTA) -- An Israeli Defense Force colonel implicated in the killing of an Arab youth during a helicopter search near Hebron has been severely reprimanded by Deputy Chief of Staff Ehud Barak and has retired from the IDF.

The brigade commander, identified only as "Col. G.," was not accused of murder or manslaughter but only of using his weapon illegally and not acting in a manner befitting a senior officer.

In deciding that the colonel be given a disciplinary hearing instead of a court-martial, Chief of Staff Dan Shomron overruled IDF Judge Advocate General Amnon Strashnov.

The family of the dead Palestinian youth is planning to petition the Supreme Court for a full court-martial.

The incident took place April 4, while Col. G. led an extensive helicopter search and ground chase after a demonstration in the West Bank village of Bani Naim, near Hebron.

Col. G. and soldiers under his command opened fire as Hamed Zeidat fled the patrol. The shots, which killed the youth, were directed from the ground and not from a helicopter, as first reported.

It was impossible to establish who killed Zeidat as several soldiers fired shots. The family removed the body and buried it secretly before a post-mortem examination could be carried out.

## LATEST POLLS GIVE LABOR TINY EDGE OVER THE LIKUD

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Aug. 28 (JTA) -- The Labor Alignment has a slight edge over the Likud bloc, according to new polls conducted by the parties, but would not win enough votes to form a government on its own, if elections were held today.

The Likud poll, conducted by the Dahaf organization, gives Labor 42 seats in the 120-seat Knesset versus 40 for Likud. Labor's own poll, conducted by the Dessima organization, puts the breakdown at 43 seats for Labor and 38 for Likud.

Likud conducted its poll among 1,175 Israeli Jews from Aug. 7 to 14. Labor polled 1,503 Jews and 1,200 Israeli Arabs during the first half of August. The results of both surveys were published Friday in the daily Yediot Achronot.

Labor's polling found that the party is likely to lose 40 percent of the backing it has received from Arabs in previous years, Haaretz reported Sunday.

The poll found Labor earning only 19 percent of the Arab vote, down 10 percentage points from previous elections. The Hadash Communist party and the Progressive List for Peace together polled 54 percent of the Arab vote, Knesset member Abd-el Wahab Darousha's new party 6 percent, the Citizens Rights Movement (CRM) 5.5 percent, Likud 5.5 percent and Mapam 2.5 percent.

Meanwhile, a poll conducted by the East Jerusalem weekly Al-Biadir A-Siyasi among 500 Arabs living in the Jerusalem area found that only 6 percent intend to participate in the Jerusalem municipal elections next February. The poll also found that only 15 percent of the respondents support the re-election of Mayor Teddy Kollek.

# **B'NAI B'RITH PRAISES URUGUAY OVER ZIONISM-RACISM RESOLUTION**

STRASBOURG, France, Aug. 28 (JTA) -- The chairman of the International Council of B'nai B'rith had praise this week for the vote in the Congress of Uruguay that denounced United Nations Resolution 3379, which in 1975 declared Zionism a form of racism.

Georges Bloch, speaking from his office here, noted that the Uruguayan Congress overwhelmingly rejected the U.N. resolution as being inimical to international understanding and constituting an obstacle to peaceful relations among nations.

Uruguay's legislature branded the infamous resolution "an expression of the campaign to deny the right of the State of Israel to exist."

Bloch said, "In this impressive bipartisan vote by the Uruguayan Congress, a country that just three years ago returned to the democratic fold has sent a resounding message to the rest of the international community that Resolution 3379 is an abomination and must be repealed."

"B'nai B'rith and world Jewry are profoundly grateful to Uruguay for making this necessary statement about a resolution that has stained the U.N. record for more than a dozen years."

Bloch recently returned from a mission to Latin America, where he met with government officials and journalists as well as leaders of the Jewish community there.

Warren Eisenberg, director of the International Council of B'nai B'rith, told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency in a telephone interview from Washington, "In each country, there were different sets of issues, but in Uruguay, the 'Zionism is racism' issue was discussed."

Eisenberg said that B'nai B'rith has been involved in similar efforts in other countries, including Peru and Australia, "which have taken action on the resolution. It doesn't mean it's going to move," said Eisenberg, referring to the "difficult situation" that Israel is presently in because of the Palestinian uprising.

## **ISRAEL LAUNCHES NATIONWIDE HUNT FOR MURDERER WHO ESCAPED FROM JAIL** By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Aug. 28 (JTA) -- A countrywide search was on Sunday for Herzl Avitan, described as a most dangerous and armed criminal, who used hostages on Saturday to escape from the Beer-sheba prison, where he was serving two life sentences for separate murders.

Avitan reportedly called the army radio station twice Sunday morning, saying he was ready to give himself up to police if prison conditions were improved for himself and two fellow prisoners.

Israeli army radio reporter Yehzekel Aviram said he received two phone calls Sunday morning from Avitan, whose voice he recognized from prior interviews with the convicted murderer.

Avitan also demanded that he be allowed to visit his 6-year-old son, who was reportedly at Neveh Tirza, the women's prison, where he was born to Orit Arbiv, who is Avitan's girl friend.

Arbiv was originally imprisoned in 1982 on suspicion of assisting Avitan in an armed robbery where a guard was killed and of being his accomplice in the murder of the warden of the Ramla prison. She was later acquitted of the murder charge.

Arbiv was sentenced in January 1986 to three years for drug trafficking and possession of illegal weapons. She is currently serving time for trying to slip a revolver to Avitan during a later prison visit.

During the massive manhunt for Avitan, a special watch has been placed at Neveh Tirza, and guards have also been placed around the homes of judges, lawyers, police officers and others implicated in his various trials and investigations.

## **Escaped After Exercise**

Avitan escaped from prison Saturday afternoon when he was taken from his cell for his customary exercise. At the time, he complained of feeling unwell and was returned to his cell by a prison officer. A paramedic was summoned.

When Avitan arrived at the cell with his warder, Avitan leapt at the three men, brandishing a pistol allegedly slipped to him earlier by a prison attendant.

Avitan tied up the officer and warder with rags taken from his cell. He reportedly ordered the medic to bring bandages and iodine, with which Avitan was made to appear injured. The iodine was splashed on him to look like blood.

Avitan then ordered the warder to announce on his walkie-talkie that the prisoner should be rushed to the hospital in a van, which was to be summoned.

Once outside the immediate area of the prison, Avitan reportedly ordered the others out of the van and drove away at top speed.

Avitan has been serving two life sentences for the murder of Roni Nitzan, the warden of the Ramla prison, as well as for the murder of a guard during an armed robbery at the Keren Or jewelry factory in Ramat Gan.

Avitan has also been awaiting a verdict for having brutally murdered a fellow prisoner, Haim Shoshan, by stabbing him hundreds of times with knives held in both hands.

Avitan had previously escaped to France, but was extradited back to Israel to stand retrial.

## **HOLOCAUST MUSEUM DESIGN APPROVED; REAGAN EXPECTED AT GROUND-BREAKING** By Howard Rosenberg

WASHINGTON, Aug. 28 (JTA) -- President Reagan will likely attend the U.S. Holocaust Museum's Oct. 5 cornerstone-laying ceremony, U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council sources told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency on Friday.

The ceremony has been scheduled because the Department of Interior earlier this month approved the design specifications for the museum, which is scheduled to open here in 1990.

"This was the final license we needed" before construction could begin, explained William Lowenberg, vice chairman of the council.

Michael Berenbaum, the museum's acting project manager, said that construction will begin within two weeks.

An informed source at the memorial council said that there is a "superb possibility" that President Reagan will attend the cornerstone ceremony, although it is not final. Reagan attended an October 1985 preliminary ground-breaking ceremony.

Lowenberg said that \$60 million of the museum's \$140 million fund-raising goal has been raised so far. Money is being raised for the museum itself as well as for "perpetual endowment funds" to maintain the building and staffing.