

# JEWISH SETTLER KILLED WHEN CAR IS FIREBOMBED

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Feb. 8 (JTA) -- A Jewish settler burned to death Wednesday when his Peugeot van was firebombed near the Alfe-Menashe settlement in the Samaria district of the West Bank.

The victim, Albert Jerassi, was dead on arrival at Meir Hospital in Kfar Saba.

Israel Defense Force troops were rushed to the area to set up road blocks and search for the perpetrators. They are also bracing for violent reprisals by Jewish settlers against nearby Arab villages, where curfews have been enforced.

Maj. Gen. Amram Mitzna, commander of the central sector, has taken personal charge of his troops in the area.

Jerassi was the third firebomb victim in the Alfe-Menashe vicinity in two years.

Ofra Moses and her son, Tal, died in a similar incident there in April 1987. Edna and Moshe Regev were injured four months later in a gasoline bomb attack.

Meanwhile, four Palestinians died Wednesday, three as a result of clashes with the IDF and one shot during a riot at Megiddo prison.

Unrest began at the military prison near Afula Wednesday morning, when families came to visit inmates incarcerated for security offenses in the West Bank.

As the visitors waited in long lines for entry permits, impatience grew and tempers flared. One visitor raised the outlawed Palestinian flag and women began to chant nationalist slogans.

Eventually, youths stoned military police guards. Authorities promptly canceled visitors' day. The inmates reacted by storming a fence in the prison compound and the guards opened fire, killing one and wounding 14.

Demonstrations outside the prison spread to nearby Megiddo junction, where the main roads to Haifa, Afula and Hadera converge.

Arabs hurled stones at passing cars and smashed the windshields of parked cars with iron bars. Border police rushed to the scene, ending the riot.

A gasoline bomb was thrown near Herod's Gate in the Old City of Jerusalem Wednesday. No injuries or damage were reported.

(JTA correspondent Gil Sedan contributed to this report.)

# ISRAEL REACTS ANGRILY TO HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Feb. 8 (JTA) -- Israel reacted angrily and defensively to the harsh criticism of the U.S. State Department over Israel's handling of the Palestinian uprising.

A statement issued by the Foreign Ministry Wednesday stressed that all of Israel's actions were "fully in keeping with international law."

The ministry maintained that the allegations of human rights violations by the Israel Defense Force were taken out of context, and did not reflect "the lethal nature of some of the means employed by the Palestinian rioters."

The statement was in response to the State Department's annual "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices," which described the human rights situation in 169 countries during 1988.

The 1,559-page document was released in Washington on Wednesday, though much of it was leaked to the news media a day earlier.

One of Israel's complaints was that "within the context of massive human rights abuses throughout the Arab world, the special focus on Israel takes the issue entirely out of perspective."

"These (Arab) nations do not draw the enormous degree of attention that Israel receives for measures taken in defense of its security needs and in accordance with international law," the statement concluded.

The State Department report emphasized rights abuses in Iraq, Egypt, Iran and Kuwait and in other countries elsewhere in the world.

But the 22 pages on Israel were the most devoted to any country.

The report said that the IDF, "caught by surprise and untrained and inexperienced in riot control, responded in a manner which led to a substantial increase in human rights violations."

## Accused Of Excessive Force

It accused the IDF of excessive use of force, resulting in deaths of civilians that could have been avoided.

The Foreign Ministry's statement insisted that contrary to the State Department's findings, "live bullets are used only as a last resort, in life-threatening situations."

Deputy Foreign Minister Binyamin Netanyahu told a news conference Wednesday that Israel could end the intifada "overnight" if it used draconian means, which it determinedly has refused to do.

The ministry statement took pains to dispel the image of the intifada, or uprising, as a relatively peaceful mass protest.

It noted the lethal nature of some of the weapons employed by rioters -- rocks and other missiles and gasoline bombs.

"Such violence is meant to kill, and 12 Israelis have lost their lives as a result," the statement said.

"More than 1,280 Israelis -- about 830 soldiers and 450 civilians -- have been injured, some of them critically."

The ministry also charged that "66 Palestinians were murdered and more than 100 wounded because they did not comply with the Palestine Liberation Organization and Islamic fundamentalist demands."

The Ministry insisted that soldiers who violate standing orders of conduct are "subject to military trial and punishment."

The statement detailed the legal procedures available to residents of the administered territories, including access to the High Court of Justice, Israel's supreme court.

It defended deportations and house demolitions, which were some of the rights violations cited by the State Department.

The Foreign Ministry said such actions were applied sparingly, and were in accordance with international law that included recourse available to the supreme court.

The State Department document was defended by some on the Israeli left, notably Yossi Sarid, a member of the Citizens Rights Movement.

Sarid said it was sad but necessary that the State Department held up a "distant mirror" to show Israelis the true face of their behavior in the territories.

He clashed in the Knesset with Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin, author of IDF policy in the territories.

But by and large, Israelis rallied behind the IDF and their government's policies. They were supported by the American Jewish leadership.

Seymour Reich, chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, an umbrella body considered to represent mainstream American Jewry, issued a strong statement in rebuttal of the State Department.

"In fulfilling its responsibilities under international law to maintain order, Israel has made every effort to act decently and fairly and with restraint toward those who have committed these violent and provocative acts," Reich said.

#### STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL SAYS ISRAEL NEEDS RIOT-CONTROL FORCE

By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, Feb. 8 (JTA) — The United States believes that if Israel had a trained riot-control force, it could have prevented human rights violations in dealing with the Palestinian uprising on the West Bank and Gaza Strip, a senior State Department official said Wednesday.

Richard Schifter, assistant secretary of state for human rights and humanitarian affairs, was commenting on the State Department's annual "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices" in which Israel was accused of "a substantial increase in human rights violations" in the territories last year.

But Schifter acknowledged that the situation in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip was unique and "not the typical setting for gross human rights violations as would be mass killings or total repressions."

Schifter drew a contrast between Israel and what he identified as the world's top human rights violators, including North Korea, Cuba and Iran.

"The situation in the Israeli occupied territories is sui generis," Schifter said. He explained that Israel faces a situation in which the "occupying army responds to serious disorder" by an "excessive" use of force.

This is largely due to the fact that the Israeli army is untrained for such a situation, Schifter said.

He contrasted this to South Korea, where security forces were able to contain riots against the government without any loss of life in 1988.

The State Department's human rights report found that 366 Palestinians were killed in 1988, mostly by the Israeli army, but some also by Jewish settlers.

Schifter said the situation was also better in Jerusalem, where Palestinian rioting is contained by the police force, rather than the army.

But Yossi Gal, the Israel Embassy's spokesman, rejected the analogy with South Korea.

He said there is a basic difference between students demonstrating on a specific issue in South Korea and the situation in the territories, where young people and women and others throw rocks at Israelis.

The real solution in the territories, Gal said, is negotiations and a peaceful solution. In the meantime, the Palestinians must learn that "Israel will not ignore violent acts. Violence will not get them anywhere."

While the report contains the harshest criticism of Israel since the uprising began in December 1987, it cites improvements in human rights practices by the Soviet Union.

Schifter said the two countries with the worst record of human rights abuses continue to be Cuba and North Korea.

Schifter also cited Iraq for the use of chemical weapons against the Kurds, and the forced relocation of a half-million people.

He said Syria continues to be a repressive society, but that in the Middle East, Egypt and Tunisia have made the most gains toward a more open society.

#### U.S. RAPS TERRORIST ATTEMPT DURING MEETING WITH PLO

By Howard Rosenberg

WASHINGTON, Feb. 8 (JTA) — The U.S. diplomat authorized to talk to the Palestine Liberation Organization expressed "serious concern" Tuesday to the group's representative in Tunis over Sunday's raid in southern Israel, the State Department said Wednesday.

The United States has linked the infiltrators to a radical group, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, which operates under the PLO umbrella.

Department spokesman Charles Redman said the U.S. ambassador to Tunisia, Robert Pelletreau, "raised our serious concern over the Sunday incident in southern Lebanon."

Pelletreau met with Hakam Balaoui, the PLO's representative in Tunis, whom he has met with previously.

Redman would not divulge other details of the meeting, such as the possibility of a U.S. threat to terminate the two-month-old dialogue should further PLO terrorist incidents occur.

Israel pressed the Bush administration to end the dialogue at a meeting Monday between a high-ranking embassy official and a senior State Department official.

Moshe Arad, the Israeli ambassador, was expected to raise that and other issues at his meeting with Secretary of State James Baker III Wednesday afternoon.

But Arad was not the only Middle Eastern ambassador on Baker's schedule this week. Baker met with Saudi Arabian Ambassador Prince Bandar Bin Sultan on Tuesday, and Egyptian Ambassador El Sayed Abdel Raouf El Reedy on Wednesday.

#### NCSJ REVISES EMIGRATION FIGURES

NEW YORK, Feb. 8 (JTA) — An update by the National Conference on Soviet Jewry now puts the total number of Jews leaving the Soviet Union on Israeli visas in January at 2,796.

Of those emigrants, 205, or 7.3 percent, went to Israel.

The January figure is 24 percent less than December's total of 3,652. However, if the January rate is maintained or increased for the rest of the year, more than 33,000 Jews will leave the Soviet Union in 1989. Nearly 19,000 Jews left the Soviet Union last year.

Last week, the National Conference reported that 2,725 had left the Soviet Union in January.

## EL AL SUSPENDS VIENNA FLIGHTS OVER AUSTRIAN CHANGE IN SECURITY

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Feb. 8 (JTA) -- El Al has suspended flights to Vienna because of changed security and check-in arrangements that effect El Al passengers.

Nahman Kleiman, spokesman for the Israeli air carrier, said the new system -- instituted by the Austrian authorities and taking effect on Wednesday -- "will impose a security threat to our passengers."

Up till now, El Al passengers at Vienna's Schwechat Airport carried their luggage to a security checkpoint, where it is thoroughly searched.

The procedure reduced the possibility that abandoned or unchecked baggage would be put aboard an aircraft though its owner did not board the flight.

The procedure is the same used at Ben-Gurion Airport.

Under the new system in Vienna, all passengers except those of El Al will be able to check their baggage at any of the 40 counters.

El Al passengers will be sent to a separate shed to pick up their baggage and submit it to inspection. The Austrians say there is no room at the terminal to provide El Al with a special check-in hall.

Wednesday's flight to Vienna was canceled while El Al officials flew there to discuss the matter.

The head of Austria's civil aviation administration, Gerhard Stabler, happens to be in Israel attending an international conference on airline security.

He was quoted by the Jerusalem Post on Wednesday as saying the El Al security system calls attention to El Al passengers, increasing chances that terrorists will shoot at them -- as happened in Vienna and at Leonardo Da Vinci Airport in Rome on a single day in 1985.

## HISTADRUT THREATENS STRIKE UNLESS TREASURY MEETS DEMANDS

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Feb. 8 (JTA) -- Histadrut plans to call a general strike Sunday that will idle about one million people, virtually the entire Israeli work force and paralyze the country.

Haim Haberfeld, head of Histadrut's trade unions department, said the strike will take place unless an agreement is reached with the Treasury by Thursday.

The main issue is the amount of cost-of-living payments to compensate for last month's devaluation of the shekel, which sent the prices of most goods and services soaring.

The planned strike will affect government agencies and offices on all levels and the private sector, including industrial plants.

The few exceptions include the airports and seaports, which will operate on a restricted Sabbath schedule. Only military, emergency or perishable cargoes will be handled.

Similarly, skeleton staffs will be maintained at the water supply and electric power corporations.

Radio and television, which are run by the government, will be blacked out. There will be no daily newspapers, and banks, which in the past seldom joined strikes, will be closed.

## SHAMIR URGES WORLD FUND FOR ARAB REFUGEE HOUSING

By Mark Joffe

TEL AVIV, Feb. 8 (JTA) -- Israel will urge the creation of an international fund to provide "adequate housing" for Palestinian refugees, Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir announced Wednesday night.

"There is no reason why Arabs have to be forced in the '90s to live in appalling conditions in refugee camps which they established more than 40 years ago as a temporary measure," the Prime Minister told the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, at the closing dinner of its three-day gathering here.

"The international community, including the rich Arab countries, must provide decent living conditions -- housing, education and medical facilities -- and take the people out of the refugee camps," he said.

Shamir noted that the Palestinian Liberation Organization has not spent "one cent" of the billions of dollars it received from Arab countries on reducing the plight of the Palestinians in the camps.

"This is not the only refugee problem in the world. But it is the only one that has been perpetuated for political reasons for more than four decades," he said.

## ARAB STATES ASK SECURITY COUNCIL TO MEET ON PALESTINIAN UPRISING

By Andrew Silow Carroll

UNITED NATIONS, Feb. 8 (JTA) -- The League of Arab States asked the Security Council Wednesday to hold a meeting to consider the "dangerous situation" in the West Bank.

A spokeswoman for the United Nations said the request was being considered and presumed a meeting would be held soon.

The league's request came after a complaint by the Palestine observer mission contained in a letter Tuesday to Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar.

Nasser al-Kidwa, the acting head of the mission office, wrote that the situation in the "Palestinian territory occupied by Israel" has deteriorated as the result of "additional repressive measures against our people."

Al-Kidwa cited the deaths of three Palestinian teenagers over the weekend and said 55 Palestinians had been killed since December.

The Palestine observer mission, officially recognized as such by the General Assembly after the Palestine National Council declared an independent state Nov. 15, was formerly known as the observer mission of the Palestine Liberation Organization.

The PLO is seeking a statement that would condemn Israeli policies and practices against the Arab residents of the territories.

The formal request from the Arab states caps three weeks of intense diplomacy by the PLO.

Last week, due to U.S. pressure, the PLO was thwarted in an attempt to introduce a statement condemning Israel.

The United States called a draft of the statement one-sided.

The PLO's latest move coincides with a U.S. State Department report on worldwide human rights, released this week, that was highly critical of Israel's handling of the uprising.

# NEW POLL SHOWS MORE ISRAELIS SUPPORTING TALKS WITH PLO By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Feb. 8 (JTA) -- A public opinion poll conducted last month indicates a slight swing toward moderation on the future of the administered territories and the Palestinians.

The survey was conducted by Professor Eliyahu Katz, director of the Institute for Applied Social Research.

It found that 30 percent of Israelis now support negotiations with the Palestine Liberation Organization, up from 13 percent in 1978.

The difference was attributed to PLO chief Yasir Arafat's recognition of Israel and renunciation of terrorism before the United Nations in Geneva Dec. 14.

According to the poll, 35 percent of Israelis are unalterably opposed to relinquishing any part of the administered territories, compared to 45 percent in March 1987.

The number who would support returning part of the territories increased to 48 percent from 36 percent in March 1987.

The number of Israelis who would agree to the establishment of a Palestinian state increased by 10 percent compared with 20 years ago, the survey showed.

# RABIN SAYS IDF SOLDIERS WOULD RATHER SERVE ON LEBANESE BORDER By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Feb. 8 (JTA) -- Practically 100 percent of the soldiers serving in the administered territories would rather do their reserve duty on the Lebanese border than in the administered territories Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin told American visitors Tuesday.

He said it was their preference to serve there despite the fact that 22 soldiers have been killed on the Lebanese front in the past year, compared to three in the West Bank and none in the Gaza Strip.

Rabin was responding to questions from members of the American Jewish Committee's Board of Governors, who are in Israel this week on a fact-finding and policy-review mission.

Rabin noted that only 4 percent of the Israel Defense Force outlay goes to dealing with the uprising. The vast bulk of its resources and efforts are devoted to war-deterrence, he said.

Rabin insisted that regardless of one's belief on the eventual political settlement, it is vital that Israel not allow the violence of the uprising to achieve its goals.

He said in his opinion, those goals are the establishment of a Palestinian state and the right of return for all Palestinians.

# ISRAEL, EGYPT PLAY DOWN LATEST DISCORD OVER TABA By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Feb. 8 (JTA) -- Israel and Egypt seem to have resolved their latest "misunderstanding" and will resume talks on Taba with a good chance that the few remaining issues will be speedily settled.

The talks broke down Tuesday in an explosion of temper by the chief Egyptian delegate, Hassan Issa, who stalked out of the meeting saying the Israelis "insulted" him.

But both governments played down the

incident Wednesday, expressing hope that the talks will be resumed next week.

Israeli officials attributed Issa's outburst to "personal and national differences."

Issa was angered because the Israelis had decided to adjourn Tuesday's afternoon session but failed to inform his delegation.

Up to that point, the two teams had succeeded in formulating a draft document on access procedures for Israeli tourists after Taba reverts to Egyptian sovereignty.

Parallel talks were resumed in Cairo Wednesday on the matter of Egypt's purchase of the Avia Sonesta Hotel and Rafi Nelson Vacation Village from their Israeli owners.

# PALESTINIAN ATTORNEY SAYS ARABS REALLY WANT TO LIVE IN PEACE By Mark Joffe

JERUSALEM, Feb. 8 (JTA) -- The Palestinians are serious about living in peace with Israel and therefore the Israeli government should be prepared to negotiate with the Palestine Liberation Organization, a prominent Arab attorney told a high-level delegation of American Jewish leaders here Wednesday.

"This people has decided that it wants to be free, that it is prepared to pay the price, but that it is also ready for compromise," Jonathan Kuttub told the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations.

"It is in Israel's own interests to jump at this historic opportunity, because if they don't, I'm afraid the consequences are going to be tragic, frankly, for both of our peoples," he said.

Kuttub, who has defended Palestinians in the administered territories and has emerged as a prominent spokesman for the Palestinians, tried to convince the American Jewish leaders that Israel should negotiate with the PLO.

"You must negotiate with a person who has the power of attorney, who has the authority to negotiate," he said. "Like it or not, the reality is that only the PLO speaks for the Palestinian population -- nobody else does."

What the Palestinians are calling for, he said, is a two-state solution: a Palestinian state roughly in the territories that were occupied in 1967, living side by side with the State of Israel.

Members of the Conference of Presidents appeared to be impressed with the Arab attorney's remarks, if not somewhat skeptical.

"If the PLO truly wants to live with Israel, why has it not renounced the Palestine National Covenant, which calls for Israel's destruction?" asked Milton Shapiro, president of the Zionist Organization of America.

"It is true that Palestinians believe and continue to believe that all of Palestine belongs to us," Kuttub responded. But he said that Palestinians had come to realize the need for pragmatic compromise.

"Many Zionists," he noted, "favor Jewish control over all of Biblical Israel, and some are calling for the transfer of the Arab population."

Seymour Reich, chairman of the Conference of Presidents, ended the session by thanking Kuttub for coming, but assailing some of his remarks.

Reich said that Israel cannot whitewash over Yasir Arafat's threat to pump bullets into the chests of Palestinian moderates or ignore the infiltration attempt by members of Habash's group last weekend.