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# **POLICE SAY ALFEI MENASHE DEATH CAUSED BY GAS LEAK, NOT FIREBOMB**

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Feb. 21 (JTA) — The police, investigating two recent Israeli fatalities widely attributed to terrorists, reported Monday that one was definitely an accident and the other not part of an organized attack.

The police found that Albert Jerassi, a 38-year-old resident of Alfei Menashe in the West Bank, was not the victim of a firebomb attack, but burned to death in his van on the night of Feb. 8, when gasoline leaking from the vehicle exploded.

The police also said the stabbing death Saturday afternoon of Israeli soldier Shlomi Cohen, just outside the Old City walls in Jerusalem, was a random act.

Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin was swift to blame the Palestine Liberation Organization "or one of the terrorist organizations linked to it" for the assault.

The 20-year-old victim, wearing civilian clothes, was on his way with a friend to pray at the Western Wall.

Rabin spoke out on Sunday, after police had five suspects in custody but were not sure they had the perpetrator.

The police inspector general, David Kraus, told the Knesset Interior Committee Tuesday that although five assailants were involved in the assault on Cohen, it was apparently not organized.

## Settlers Are Skeptical

Both incidents underlined the confusion and dilemmas facing Israelis as they are confronted by the Palestinian uprising. They also indicated that utmost care must be taken in assessing events.

After Jerassi died, Jewish settlers in the West Bank were convinced he was a firebomb victim, the third from Alfei Menashe since 1987.

Their fury reached a high pitch when police officials noted that the usual evidence of a firebombing was missing from the scene and they would have to investigate all possibilities, including accident.

There was an angry confrontation after Jerassi's funeral between settlers and Maj. Gen. Amram Mitzna, commander of the central sector.

The settlers accused the Israel Defense Force of ineptness and lack of zeal in protecting Jews. They threatened to take matters into their own hands.

After two weeks of forensic tests, the police announced that Jerassi's van caught fire from a gasoline leak. They said it was obvious the gasoline found in the driver's compartment did not get there from outside the vehicle.

But many West Bank settlers still refuse to accept the evidence.

Shlomo Katan, mayor of Alfei Menashe, called it just another guess, no better than previous guesses. He asked to meet with the police inspector to examine the evidence.

Whether or not they eventually accept the police conclusions, the settlers have definitely not ended their feud with the IDF. They still accuse the security forces of not doing their utmost to curb the Palestinian uprising.

The settlers' attitude brought an angry rejoinder from Rabin Tuesday. He told them to weigh all the aspects of life in the territories and if they are not willing to draw the necessary conclusions, they have no business living there.

"There is no hocus-pokus to solve the problem," Rabin told the Knesset. He said the army cannot end the uprising by "one-blow tactics."

Meanwhile, Police Inspector General Kraus complained bitterly to the Knesset committee that his Jerusalem police lack the authority and means to maintain law and order in East Jerusalem.

He said the situation there is no different from the administered territories, but the police have no authority to act to break the frequent commercial strikes called by Palestinian militants, which invariably result in violence.

The situation is that "the PLO is in control of the streets of East Jerusalem," he said.

But Police Minister Haim Bar-Lev is not backing up his law enforcement chief. He told the Knesset Tuesday that conditions in East Jerusalem are better than they appear to be.

He invited the public to visit the "many historic and religious sites" there, saying the place is "open and safe."

## **ARENS-MUBARAK TALKS ARE CORDIAL, BUT SAID TO BREAK NO NEW GROUND**

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Feb. 21 (JTA) — Israeli Foreign Minister Moshe Arens had a longer-than-scheduled meeting with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in Cairo Monday night.

By all accounts, their 75-minute conversation, much of it without the presence of their respective aides, resulted in no breakthroughs in the Middle East peace process.

But it appeared to herald an improvement in the sorely strained Israeli-Egyptian relations.

Arens himself took pains to lower the level of expectations.

He told reporters it would be unrealistic to expect substantive breakthroughs at one meeting. He hoped, however, that this meeting would be the first of many others in the future.

Arens is the first high-ranking Likud minister ever to be received by Mubarak, which in itself made their meeting something of a precedent.

But many consider that the highlight of the Israeli foreign minister's visit to Cairo will occur Wednesday morning, when he meets with Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze.

The Soviet statesman is on the third leg of a diplomatic swing around the Middle East, and it is he who reportedly suggested the get-together with Arens.

Many observers have read implications into his selection of Cairo as the venue.

The Egyptian capital is evocative of the 1979 peace treaty with Israel and the Camp David accords that led up to it.

Moscow heretofore has officially viewed both as separate arrangements that did nothing to advance a comprehensive Middle East peace.

But if the Soviets may now be willing to acknowledge a broader role for Camp David,

Shevardnadze is expected to press Arens on the same issues that Mubarak stressed.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, himself on a three-day visit to Paris, said before his departure Monday that Arens' meetings in Cairo were "highly important."

But neither the prime minister nor his foreign minister seems prepared to give an inch on the scenarios favored by Egypt and the Soviet Union.

#### **Shamir Firm On No PLO Role**

They will not agree to an international conference under U.N. auspices. And as Shamir made abundantly clear in a speech in Jerusalem Monday night, Israel "will not deal with the Palestine Liberation Organization" under any conceivable circumstances.

According to Shamir, "its very essence is an obstacle to peace."

While Mubarak reportedly pressed for the PLO's inclusion in the peace process, citing very significant changes in its policies lately, Egyptian sources suggested unofficially that arrangements more to Israel's liking could be made.

They said there need not be a separate PLO delegation to peace talks. The Palestinians could be incorporated into a Jordanian or all-Arab delegation, provided the PLO selects or approves the Palestinian representatives.

Shevardnadze was scheduled to meet with PLO chief Yasir Arafat in Cairo Wednesday night, by which time Arens will be back in Jerusalem.

Mubarak, for his part, left for Tokyo on Tuesday to attend the funeral of Japanese Emperor Hirohito on Feb. 24.

Arens, meanwhile, told reporters that a "chemistry" had developed between Mubarak and himself.

During a photo opportunity, the Egyptian president joked about Arens' reputation as a "great hawk." Laughing, he said, "I am also a hawk."

#### **SHAMIR, ARRIVING IN PARIS, IS FIRM ON NO ROLE FOR PLO**

By Edwin Eytan

PARIS, Feb. 21 (JTA) -- Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir of Israel arrived here Tuesday for a three-day visit in sharp disagreement with his host, President Francois Mitterrand.

The Israeli leader, on his first trip abroad since the Likud-Labor coalition government took office Dec. 22, seems determined to block any role for the Palestine Liberation Organization and its chairman, Yasir Arafat, in the Middle East peace process.

Mitterrand, and other Western European leaders, consider the PLO a plausible and, in fact, necessary negotiating partner.

But Shamir made clear, in an interview published in Le Figaro on the day of his arrival, that he will not accept, under any conditions whatsoever, negotiations or even indirect contacts with the PLO.

He told the French daily any kind of contacts are "out of the question," adding that he would be "happy if President Mitterrand were to cancel his meeting with" Arafat.

France will be the leader of the 12-nation European Community when it assumes the rotating chairmanship of the E.C. Council of Ministers on July 1.

Israeli diplomats say Shamir wants to con-

vince Mitterrand that peace can be achieved in the Middle East without the PLO and that Israel can and should negotiate with other Palestinian partners.

But Shamir did not specify in his interview who those partners might be. He did not, however, rule out elections for a local Palestinian leadership in the Israeli-administered territories.

Another purpose of Shamir's visit, Israeli diplomats said, is to try to improve Israel's image, which has sagged in Europe during the 15 months since the Palestinian uprising began.

Mitterrand seems to be doing what he can to help. He ordered an exceptionally warm welcome for the visiting Israeli prime minister.

According to observers, Mitterrand ordered the effulgent reception in order to stress his high regard and affection for Israel.

With that established, it will be easier for him to try to convince the Israeli leader to accept an international peace conference and to explain his contacts with the PLO as a means of advancing the peace process, observers here said.

#### **BAKER REJECTS CALLS FOR U.S. TO SPEED MIDEAST PEACE PROCESS**

By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, Feb. 21 (JTA) -- Secretary of State James Baker rejected European suggestions, during his recent visit to 15 NATO countries, that the United States move quickly to achieve a Middle East peace settlement.

"If you had to balance risks here, the risk would be greater in taking precipitous action than it would in waiting a while," Baker said Sunday in an appearance on NBC-TV's "Meet the Press" news program.

He said the situation requires analysis and "working on the ground carefully, tilling the ground and making sure that when you do go in there, you have some reasonable prospect of success."

During Baker's visit to The Hague last Thursday, Dutch Foreign Minister Hans van den Broek urged the secretary of state to undertake a Middle East peace mission as soon as possible.

The Dutch official said that the foreign ministers of Spain, Greece and France believed there were good prospects for a negotiating breakthrough. The three had just concluded a fact-finding mission to the Middle East on behalf of the European Community.

Baker said Sunday that he told the Europeans, "Look, we understand the importance of the United States involvement if we are ever to achieve peace in the Middle East."

"We understand that. But we're not sure that the process is best served by a big, high-level, high-visibility international conference begun too early."

After the meeting in The Hague, a senior American official accompanying Baker told reporters "there is a need for us to sit down and work with the Israelis and others in the area" to "see what the traffic will bear."

Meanwhile, Baker is scheduled to accompany President Bush to Tokyo later this week for the funeral of Japanese Emperor Hirohito. Bush is scheduled to meet there with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and King Hussein of Jordan.

It is not known if Bush or Baker will meet with any Israeli officials in Tokyo. Baker is scheduled to meet with Israeli Foreign Minister Moshe Arens in Washington on March 13.

**NJCRC NARROWLY REJECTS STATEMENT OF CONCERN ABOUT THE TERRITORIES****By Howard Rosenberg**

WASHINGTON, Feb. 21 (JTA) -- Delegates to the annual plenum of the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council here narrowly defeated Tuesday an amendment expressing "deep concern" to Israel about the continuation of the status quo on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

The amendment to NJCRAC's statement on the Middle East peace process was offered by Theodore Mann, former president of the American Jewish Congress, who represented the organization at the four-day meeting.

The proposal was defeated by a 157-151 vote of the umbrella group, whose members include 11 national Jewish organizations and more than 100 local community relations councils.

Mann's amendment would have had NJCRAC "express to the Israeli leadership and to the Israeli people our unalterable commitment to their security, as well as our continuing deep concern over the profound consequences of a continuation of the status quo in the territories."

Mann, a former chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, said he was given assurances the amendment would be considered by NJCRAC's Israel Task Force later this year.

However, the proposition as adopted by NJCRAC pledges the organization to interpret to the general community Israel's complex challenges to restore order in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

NJCRC will also continue to monitor the impact of the extended violence in the territories on the Jewish community and U.S. public opinion, and will seek appropriate ways of communicating these findings to Israeli leaders.

The administration is urged to push for more constructive Soviet policies in the Middle East, including the restoration of full diplomatic relations with Israel.

NJCRC will monitor and publicize the actions and statements of the Palestine Liberation Organization that bear upon the PLO's professed renunciation of terrorism and recognition of Israel's right to exist.

The administration is urged to continually examine the efficacy of the dialogue the United States has begun with the PLO.

The statement calls on the administration to urge the PLO to abrogate sections of the Palestine National Covenant calling for Israel's destruction and to contribute to the ending of the uprising in the territories.

**BAKER CAUTIOUS ON JACKSON-VANIK, HAS NO SOLUTION TO REFUGEE PROBLEM**  
**By David Friedman**

WASHINGTON, Feb. 21 (JTA) -- The Bush administration will consider more than just increased emigration from the Soviet Union in deciding whether to recommend a waiver of the Jackson-Vanik Amendment, Secretary of State James Baker said Tuesday.

"I think that this whole question of trade with the Soviet Union and the Eastern bloc countries should be looked at in the context of the overall U.S.-Soviet relationship," Baker told the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

Rep. Edward Feighan (D-Ohio) said to Baker that because of the increased Jewish emigration from the Soviet Union, there has been talk of

waiving the Jackson-Vanik Amendment, which links U.S. most-favored-nation trade benefits to the Soviet Union with increased emigration.

Baker agreed that "remarkable strides and changes" in human rights have been made by the Soviet Union, particularly in emigration.

He said the administration is looking into its trade policies with the USSR, but stressed that this does not mean "that we ought to necessarily change it. I think we ought to look at it in the context of other changes that have been made in human rights policies in the Soviet Union and the Eastern bloc countries," where more has to be done, he said.

Baker said the administration has to keep in mind that "the Soviet Union is still a very heavily armed superpower with interests that are adverse to the United States."

He also said that the administration has an obligation to support the decision made in the last days of the Reagan administration to attend a human rights conference in Moscow in 1991.

But he added that this decision is subject to the Soviets' keeping the promises they have made on improving their human rights policies, including revising laws to make it easier to emigrate.

Rep. Benjamin Gilman (R-N.Y.) urged Baker to solve the problem caused by the increased emigration of Jews and others from the Soviet Union, which has exceeded the funds the United States has allocated for refugees. This has resulted in hundreds of Soviet Jews being refused refugee status.

"I don't have an answer to it," Baker said. "We have a budget crunch."

Gilman suggested increasing the budget for refugees to a more "realistic figure."

**EUROPEAN BODY MOVES TO TIGHTEN RESTRICTIONS ON CHEMICAL EXPORTS**  
**By Yossi Lempkowicz**

BRUSSELS, Feb. 21 (JTA) -- The 12 European Community countries decided here Monday to tighten restrictions on the export of substances that could be used to manufacture weapons of chemical warfare.

The joint move stemmed from the scandal in West Germany, which acknowledged belatedly that several of its chemical firms had been supplying technology and equipment to Libya for a chemical plant at Rabta, south of the Libyan capital of Tripoli.

The U.S. government claimed the plant was built to manufacture poison gas, which could then be used by Libyan-supported terrorist groups. Libya says the plant produces only pharmaceuticals.

The E.C. foreign ministers, at their monthly meeting here, listed eight chemicals whose export would be strictly prohibited to countries at war or in areas of tension.

No countries or regions were named. But export licenses will be refused if there is any suspicion that the proscribed chemicals are going to "sensitive" countries.

The community also agreed on measures to detect false documentation by exporters or the rerouting of materials to disguised destinations.

The new rules adopted by the European Community update proposals made in 1984 by the European Executive Commission.

They were not implemented at the time because the community felt the problem was military rather than commercial. The international body has no jurisdiction in defense matters.

## ISRAELI FILM WINS SECOND PLACE AT WEST BERLIN FILM FESTIVAL

By David Kantor

WEST BERLIN, Feb. 21 (JTA) -- An Israeli film, "The Summer of Aviya," won the Silver Bear award, the second highest award of the Berlin International Film Festival here.

Starring Kaipo Cohen, a 10-year-old actress, the film is the first Israeli movie ever to take a prize at the annual film festival, which is considered one of the movie industry's main festivals along with Cannes and Venice.

"The Summer of Aviya" (Hakayetz Shel Aviya), was directed by Eli Cohen and produced by Eytan Even.

It is the story of young Aviya, played by Cohen, and her mother, Henya, a Holocaust survivor played by Gila Almagor.

The top prize, the Berlin Golden Bear, went to the American film "Rain Man," starring Dustin Hoffman as an autistic savant.

## ULTRA-ORTHODOX JOIN MOSLEMS IN PROTESTING 'SATANIC VERSES'

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Feb. 21 (JTA) -- Ultra-Orthodox Jews have joined Moslem clergy in Israel in denouncing Salman Rushdie's novel "The Satanic Verses," which will appear in Israel soon in Hebrew translation.

Rabbi Avraham Ravitz, Knesset member and leader of the Degel HaTorah party, told the Knesset Education Committee on Tuesday that the author had "abused the freedom of expression to hurt religious feelings of hundreds of millions of Moslems throughout the world."

Islamic fundamentalists contend the book blasphemes their faith.

The Indian-born British author has gone into hiding since the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini of Iran offered \$1 million for his murder.

Sheik Mohammad Hubeishi, the kadi or Moslem religious judge of Acre, warned that publication of "The Satanic Verses" in Israel would sour the "delicate relations" between Jews and Arabs.

Keter, one of Israel's largest publishing houses, said Monday it had contracted to publish the book here and was seeking a translator.

Niva Lanir, Keter's chief editor, said the contract was signed on the basis of pre-publication catalogues, long before the controversy over the book erupted.

Sheik Zaki Madladj, the kadi of Jerusalem, admitted to army radio Tuesday that neither he nor any other Moslem clergy in Israel have read Rushdie's book.

He said that while the book could not weaken a Moslem's faith in God and his prophet, Mohammed, he opposed any confrontation with religious beliefs held by the masses, Jewish, Christian or Moslem.

"God is sacred to everyone, and no one has the right to come and shake this belief," Madladj said.

He accused Rushdie of attacking religion "to sell more books and make more money."

But the kadi did not agree the ayatollah should have put a price on Rushdie's head. "No one delegated us with an authority to threaten his life," he said.

Ravitz also protested the threats by the Iranian leader.

## IDF APOLOGIZES FOR SHOOTING TWO NORWEGIAN UNIFIL SOLDIERS

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Feb. 21 (JTA) -- Israel apologized Tuesday for wounding two Norwegian soldiers of the U.N. peacekeeping force in southern Lebanon.

The Israel Defense Force expressed "sincere regrets" over the incident, which occurred Saturday near Blatt village in the eastern sector of the southern Lebanon security zone.

According to the IDF, an Israeli patrol opened fire on suspicious figures moving in the area. They turned out to be Norwegian soldiers of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon on a patrol of their own.

According to UNIFIL headquarters, Israeli tanks near Ayshaya village fired two rounds at a range of less than four miles, which hit the Norwegian soldiers.

Maj. Gen. Yossi Peled, commander of the northern sector, has ordered an inquiry into the incident. It will be headed by an IDF colonel.

Relations have been tense for some time between the IDF and the Norwegian battalion attached to UNIFIL.

A near diplomatic incident developed earlier this month when the Israeli Foreign Ministry demanded that UNIFIL remove the commander of the Norwegian battalion, Col. Jan Carlsson.

Carlsson had been quoted as likening the behavior of IDF troops toward Lebanese villagers to the Nazi occupiers of Norway during World War II.

Prior to that, several Norwegian soldiers had been wounded as a result of actions by the IDF or its allied South Lebanon Army.

Speaking of Saturday night's occurrence, an IDF officer said, "We are sincerely sorry about the incident. We are especially sorry that Norwegian soldiers have been hurt again."

## RFK SPEECH ON ARMS TO ISRAEL TRIGGERED SIRHAN TO ASSASSINATE

By Susan Birnbaum

NEW YORK, Feb. 21 (JTA) -- Robert Kennedy's promise of military aid to Israel was the trigger that led to Sirhan Sirhan's decision to kill the Democratic presidential hopeful, who had just won the California primary election in June 1968.

Sirhan gave that explanation in an interview with television host David Frost on NBC's "Inside Edition" Monday night.

The Jerusalem-born Palestinian, who immigrated to the United States as a child and is now 44, is serving a life sentence at the California Correctional Facility at Soledad.

He will be eligible for parole in May for the 13th time since he began his sentence in 1969.

In the interview, the first with Sirhan since he shot Kennedy at the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles more than 20 years ago, the Palestinian said he hadn't planned the killing because Robert Kennedy "was my hero, my champion," who stood up for the underdog.

Sirhan recalled hearing Kennedy at a rally in Oregon promise warplanes to Israel. It was then that he targeted the senator to die.

"To hear him say he was going to send 50 Phantom jets to Israel . . . to deliver nothing but death and destruction on my countrymen, that seemed like it was a betrayal," Sirhan said.

He said he was "immature" at the time.