



FIVE ISRAELI SOLDIERS WOUNDED IN SOUTH LEBANON TRUCK-BOMBING

By Hugh Orgel

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ISRAEL WON'T BARGAIN FOR HOSTAGES UNTIL SOLDIERS ARE PROVEN ALIVE

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Aug. 9 (JTA) -- Five Israeli Defense Force soldiers and a South Lebanon Army militiaman were wounded Wednesday morning, when a truck packed with explosives blew up in the path of a joint IDF-SLA convoy in southern Lebanon.

Two of the Israelis sustained serious injuries and were later reported to be in critical condition. There also appear to have been two people inside the truck that exploded.

Shortly after the attack, which occurred in the border security zone controlled by Israel, the Islamic fundamentalist Hezbollah, or Party of God, claimed responsibility.

In Beirut, Subhi Tufelli, described as commander of Hezbollah's military arm, said the attack had been planned to "speed the release" of Sheikh Abdul Karim Obeid, the Hezbollah leader whom Israeli commandos captured and brought to Israel on July 28.

Tufelli said one of those who perpetrated the attack was a close friend of Obeid's.

The attack occurred near the village of Kleya, just north of the Israeli border town of Metulla.

According to military sources, the perpetrators parked their red pickup truck at the side of a narrow road and joined the convoy in a gap between two of the army vehicles.

The truck, packed with an estimated 550 pounds of explosives, then blew up, killing the attackers and putting a 12-foot-wide crater in the middle of the road.

Retaliation Could Be Risky

Casualties and damage were confined to the truck and the vehicle carrying the six soldiers. Army regulations specify a minimum distance to be maintained between vehicles in a convoy, to minimize casualties from such an attack.

The wounded soldiers were taken by helicopter to Rambam Hospital in Haifa. Sources said their wounds would have been far more serious had they not been wearing flak jackets.

IDF and SLA troops searched the area to try to ascertain how the suicide bombers had managed to drive to the point of the incident without being halted for a routine search.

Military commentators suggested that the quarter-ton of explosives had been smuggled into the security zone in small quantities, since transportation of such a large quantity in one batch would certainly have been discovered.

Commentators also said Israel was now faced with a dilemma about whether to retaliate for the incident, since such a move could adversely impact imminent negotiations for the release of Israeli soldiers and Western hostages being held by Shiite groups in Lebanon.

After a car-bombing last year that caused heavy IDF casualties, Hezbollah warned that any retaliation would endanger the Israeli prisoners.

But after serious deliberation, the defense establishment opted to go ahead anyway, and ordered the Israeli air force to bomb Hezbollah headquarters in Lebanon.

TEL AVIV, Aug. 9 (JTA) -- Israel is demanding proof that its missing soldiers in Lebanon are alive before it engages in negotiations for their release.

Indirect negotiations with the Islamic fundamentalist Hezbollah, or Party of God, would likely take place with the help of the Geneva-based International Committee of the Red Cross, Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin told the Labor Party Central Committee on Tuesday night.

"As long as we don't know who is alive and who isn't, we will discuss no other details," he stressed. "When the Red Cross comes to us -- and it will do so only when it has a partner for negotiations -- we will first demand a sign of life from those to be exchanged by the other side."

In Geneva, Red Cross spokeswoman Marjorie Martin told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, "We are not involved in any contacts concerning the hostages, and the ICRC has not organized a special group to deal with this issue."

"If the affair is solved and an agreement is reached by the parties involved, we will be ready to deal with the exchange itself," she said.

Rabin noted that, during the past seven years, there had been no signs of life from Zechariya Baumel, Zvi Feldman, Yehuda Katz or Samir Abed.

Israel is more hopeful about obtaining the release of Rahamim Alsheikh and Yossi Fink, captured three years ago and not heard from since.

The defense minister said some time ago that Israel would not participate in any negotiations unless it was certain that the Israeli prisoners were indeed alive and that Israel was not being misled by their captors.

U.N. Official's Demand Denounced

Rabin stressed that the Israel Defense Force's abduction of Sheikh Abdel Karim Obeid on July 28 had shaken the world into making an attempt to release the hostages.

"Had we not done what we did, the world would not have woken up, and there would have been no chance of bringing the abducted soldiers and the Western citizens home," he said.

On Tuesday, United Nations Undersecretary-General Marrack Goulding met with Rabin and reportedly urged Israel to release Obeid immediately, saying his capture was a provocation.

Rabin reportedly rejected the plea out of hand.

In New York, the chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations criticized Goulding on Wednesday for making such a request.

Seymour Reich said he was "appalled" by Goulding's proposal, which he said "represents nothing less than the cowardly and abject appeasement of terrorist demands."

He said the unqualified return of Obeid, without the release of Western hostages in return, would only encourage further kidnappings and acts of violence.

Goulding, he said, "has disqualified himself

from any usefulness as a mediator in the region."

In Washington, White House spokesman Marlin Fitzwater was asked whether the United States would back Goulding's appeal. "We don't dictate to Israel," Fitzwater responded.

In Jerusalem, meanwhile, Rabin has complained to Foreign Minister Moshe Arens that his deputy minister, Binyamin Netanyahu, made a point of meeting separately with Goulding on Tuesday.

At present, the prime minister, vice premier, foreign minister and defense minister are the only officials authorized to participate in meetings related to the hostage affair.

Netanyahu reacted angrily by saying his meeting with Goulding had been arranged awhile ago, to discuss UNIFIL and peacekeeping issues in southern Lebanon.

#### ABRAM URGES HUMAN-RIGHTS BODY TO CONDEMN TAKING OF HOSTAGES

By Tamar Levy

GENEVA, Aug. 9 (JTA) -- U.S. Ambassador Morris Abram on Wednesday urged a United Nations subcommittee to denounce the seizure and threatening of hostages by terrorist organizations.

In his first public statement since becoming U.S. ambassador to the United Nations European headquarters here, Abram said that the conduct of terrorist hostage-takers is more reminiscent of a barbaric age than of present-day standards of civilization.

He said the U.N. Subcommittee on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities should condemn hostage-taking.

The subcommittee, which started its annual four-week session here Monday, studies human-rights violations and recommends measures for action to the U.N. Commission on Human Rights.

Abram, who is immediate past chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, served as a human-rights expert on the subcommittee 26 years ago.

In his statement, he urged the subcommittee to adopt a more balanced approach to today's human rights problems and to deal with serious, large-scale human rights problems, not just marginal issues.

#### TRAGEDY ON THE ROAD TO ARIEL AROUSES A MIXTURE OF FEELINGS

By Gil Sedan

ARIEL, West Bank, Aug. 9 (JTA) -- Residents of this large Jewish settlement near Nablus often talk about being nervous when driving on local roads, particularly when they are traveling with children and especially when they take the dangerous highway that cuts across the West Bank, connecting the settlements of Samaria with the coast.

The cost of that fear was played out tragically Tuesday night, in a bizarre incident that left an infant girl dead, her father wounded, and residents and soldiers debating how best to protect Jewish settlers living in the administered territories.

Shortly after 9 p.m. Tuesday, Danny Hamtzani, 31, drove his car past the Palestinian village of Mas'ha, on the winding road toward his home in Ariel.

His two children, Ordan, 4, and Ittay, almost 2, were seated in the back of the car. They had

just visited family in Petach Tikva. The mother, Orly, was not with them. She was due to return home later from her errands across the "Green Line" that divides pre-1967 Israel from the administered territories.

As Hamtzani finished rounding the curve, he spotted suspicious lights on the left side of the road. Judging from the evidence gathered from him at his hospital bed Tuesday night, he thought these were firebombs about to be thrown at him.

But according to an eyewitness and testimony gathered by the army, Hamtzani acted strangely. Instead of halting his car and either waiting for the attack to come or firing toward the suspicious lights, he drove right past the potential danger.

He then put the car in reverse and sped some 90 yards backward toward the flickering lights, pulled out his pistol and fired.

"I was driving just behind him," recounted Yirmiyahu Turjeman, "when I suddenly saw him stopping, reversing and shooting. I couldn't understand why he was doing it, and then fire was returned, and the car fled from the scene."

Unfortunately for Hamtzani and his children, the menacing lights were not those of attackers, but rather of a squad of Israeli soldiers. They were lying in ambush for potential stone-throwers or firebombers.

#### Daily Confrontation With Danger

The soldiers, who believed they were being attacked by Arabs, returned fire at the car, having no inkling that their target was a Jewish father and his two children. Ittay was struck in the head and died Wednesday morning after an operation at Sheba Hospital in Tel Hashomer.

Her father suffered moderate wounds in his chest and shoulders, and also underwent an operation, at Belinson Hospital. Ordan came out of the tragic incident with minor scratches.

The army immediately ordered an investigation of the incident, the results of which were still unknown Wednesday.

The key eyewitness, Danny Hamtzani himself, was lying in the hospital, too shocked to recount his version of the incident. He was not told that his daughter was about to be buried at nearby Segula cemetery in Petach Tikva.

Ariel was quiet today, in contrast to the days following other violent incidents of the 20-month-old intifada, which has taken its toll on this West Bank outpost.

There was an air of sadness, but also of uneasiness and frustration. People were talking of an unfortunate tragedy, but no one dared say that perhaps it could have been avoided, had not Hamtzani fired his pistol.

"I don't want to judge his behavior," said Turjeman, the eyewitness. "I don't know if the whole incident could have been avoided. One cannot be smart unless one would find oneself in the same situation."

Neighbors on the quiet Ariel street where the Hamtzanis live complained. "There should be more cooperation," said Kobi Mussan. "The army should notify us when it operates in the area."

Residents of Ariel, like settlers throughout the territories, are caught in a difficult dilemma. The wish to continue business as usual is foundering against a daily confrontation with danger.

"If we have to go to Tel Aviv, should we leave our children at home and go?" asked an angry Mattana Zehava. "Or should we simply close ourselves in Ariel and never leave?"

## ETHIOPIAN JEWRY WAS 'TOP PRIORITY' FOR GROUP ABOARD MISSING AIRCRAFT

By Allison Kaplan

NEW YORK, Aug. 9 (JTA) -- Ethiopian Jewry was "a top priority" on U.S. Rep. Mickey Leland's trip to Ethiopia, the head of an Ethiopian Jewry advocacy group said Wednesday.

Leland, a Democratic congressman from Houston, and eight other Americans, including a prominent Jewish New Yorker, have been missing since Monday, when they set out by plane from Addis Ababa to a refugee camp near Ethiopia's border with Sudan.

Searches hampered by bad weather Tuesday found no clues as to the group's whereabouts. On Wednesday, the United States sent military aircraft and rescue teams to assist in the search operation.

Will Recant, executive director of the American Association for Ethiopian Jews, met with Leland the week before he left for Ethiopia.

He called the 44-year-old congressman, who has worked to strengthen black-Jewish relations, "a very good friend to Ethiopian Jews."

### Longtime Friend Of Israel

He said that Leland, who chairs the House Select Committee on Hunger, had planned to meet with Ethiopian officials, including President Haile Mariam Mengistu, to "raise the issue of family reunification and what it might take to foster a large-scale program."

Recant's organization works to reunite the estimated 15,000 Jews remaining in Ethiopia with relatives now living in Israel.

Recant said Leland was not planning to meet directly with Ethiopian Jews on this trip, though he has done so on past visits.

"Mickey Leland has greater entree to President Mengistu than anyone in the United States," Recant said, "and he has served as an intermediary on this issue, trying to get Ethiopians to allow more Jews to leave."

Leland "was perhaps going to stop in Israel on his way back to give a briefing to Israeli officials and tell them what he learned of the conditions of the Jews," Recant said.

Leland has a warm relationship with the Jewish state. He has visited Israel frequently and particularly enjoys bicycling there.

He also has helped send children from his largely poor district to Israel each summer to spend time on a kibbutz.

### Prominent Jewish Attorney On Board

A board member of another Ethiopian Jewry advocacy group was among those aboard Leland's plane.

Ivan Tillem, an Orthodox Jewish attorney from New York, is also an assistant professor at Yeshiva University and the publisher of an annual Jewish almanac.

Tillem has been a member of the advisory board of the North American Conference on Ethiopian Jewry since 1987.

"Ivan was interested in doing things which would benefit Ethiopia in general and that would also have benefits for the Ethiopian Jews," said Barbara Ribicove Gordon, the group's executive director.

Tillem, a well-known philanthropist, had plans to assist the Ethiopians in developing kibbutz-style cooperative farms, to help make the poverty-stricken nation more self-sufficient.

## SPECIAL VOLUNTEER ARMY UNIT HANDLED INFILTRATION INCIDENT

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Aug. 9 (JTA) -- The infiltration of Kibbutz Lotan on Tuesday by a lone intruder from Jordan brought to light the existence of a special Israel Defense Force volunteer unit trained in anti-terrorist techniques, including the freeing of hostages.

The unit is based in Eilat because of the geographic distance of Israel's southernmost city from the rest of the country. Lotan is about 12 miles north of Eilat.

The unit's members all serve their normal reserve duties in regular army units. They volunteered for extra service in the Eilat area.

Members of the unit spend much of their free time training for operations such as that to which they were called Tuesday, when an apparently demented Jordanian army soldier crossed over the border and appeared in a date orchard on the kibbutz.

The soldier, identified by Jordanian authorities as Farid Ali Mustafa, shot an American kibbutz volunteer and grabbed a 20-year-old Israeli woman, whom he held hostage in a tool shed.

The commander of the special IDF unit, a merchant in Eilat, negotiated with the infiltrator for some three hours before it was decided that shooting him was the only way likely to win the hostage's release.

## NA'AMAT WOMEN STAGE RALLY SUPPORTING ABORTION RIGHTS

By Todd Winer

CHICAGO, Aug. 9 (JTA) -- More than 500 women from 25 states, delegates to NA'AMAT USA's 31st biennial convention, staged a rally here supporting women's access to safe and legal abortions.

The gathering in downtown Grant Park was a demonstration in support of women "who care about freedom of choice and freedom of conscience for all women," said Gloria Eibling, national president of the women's Labor Zionist organization.

"Reproductive choice must be recognized as a matter of individual conscience," Eibling told the crowd. "Once again, women are being used as political pawns and the worst victim, as always, will be precisely those women who have the fewest options: the very young and the very poor."

NA'AMAT staged the rally to protest a recent Supreme Court decision seen as giving state legislatures greater latitude in restricting access to abortion.

Also speaking at the rally were Sylvia Neil, chairwoman of the Illinois Jewish Alliance for Choice; NA'AMAT Israeli General Secretary Masha Lubelsky; and state Rep. Calvin Sutker (D-Skokie).

In addition to the rally, NA'AMAT passed a resolution at its convention supporting women's access to safe and legal abortions, government aid for abortion procedures and confidentiality of family practice services.

NA'AMAT also resolved to embark on a program to monitor women's rights legislation through its state watch committees; to mobilize support for legislation upholding a women's right to choose an abortion; and to convey to state and federal representatives its "concern for preserving the constitutionally protected rights of all women."

**BIBLICAL SCHOLAR'S BOOKS BANNED BY ULTRA-ORTHODOX RABBIS**

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Aug. 9 (JTA) -- One of Israel's best known and best loved rabbis, Adin Steinsaltz, has become the center of a medieval-type heresy controversy here as a number of ultra-Orthodox rabbis have publicly banned all of his books.

Among the leaders is the venerable Rabbi Eliezer Schach of Bnei Brak, leader of the mitnaged, or non-Hasidic ultra-Orthodoxy in Israel.

Steinsaltz himself has issued a statement promising to amend certain specific passages in some of his books that have offended some people in ultra-Orthodox circles.

But Schach and his followers insisted in their bans that all of Steinsaltz's books must be shunned "regardless of what he says or replies."

Many observers link the controversy to Schach's relentless battle against Chabad-Lubavitch Hasidism, to which the scholarly and prolific Steinsaltz adheres.

(There have even been rumors recently in Orthodox circles that Steinsaltz might be considered as a possible successor to the childless, 87-year-old Lubavitcher rebbe, Menachem Mendel Schneerson.)

The passages that apparently offend ultra-Orthodox circles occur in Steinsaltz's "Dmuyot Bamikra," or Personalities in the Bible, and its companion volume "Nashim Bamikra," or Women in the Bible. These works include psychological studies of some biblical figures.

But Schach and other Bnei Brak rabbis, in their public bans, insist that all of Steinsaltz's works -- especially his monumental and still-uncompleted edition of the Talmud -- are to be considered heretical.

"I say without a doubt that there is heresy and apikorsut (apostasy) in all of them," Schach wrote.

The bans were carried on the front page of Monday's Yated Neeman, the daily paper of the Degel HaTorah party.

**Agrees To Decision**

Among the other rabbis issuing comprehensive bans against Steinsaltz were Yosef Eliashiv, a retired member of the Supreme Religious Court, and Nissim Karelitz and Shmuel Vosner, both of Bnei Brak.

The Beth Din (religious court) of Jerusalem's ultra-Orthodox Eda Haredit community, however, took a less extreme position, singling out only the two Bible studies for criticism.

Steinsaltz, for his part, in a statement in Monday's Hamodia, the organ of the Agudat Yisrael party, undertook to abide by that Beth Din's opinion.

He offered to return the purchase price of these books to any dissatisfied reader, and to amend future editions.

Steinsaltz is a winner of the coveted Israel Prize and recently gained international prominence when he opened a yeshiva in Moscow -- the first officially sanctioned institution of Jewish learning there in decades.

His work in Russia includes research projects in previously unexplored archives and libraries, and is being carried out in cooperation with the Soviet Academy of Sciences.

His edition of the Talmud is a longtime best seller, with each new volume being snapped up by thousands of devotees as it rolls off the presses.

Written in modern Hebrew, and including punctuation and Steinsaltz's original, modern commentary, the revolutionary edition has helped open up the Talmud to first-time students, both religious and unobservant.

He recently concluded a contract with Random House to publish his Talmud in English.

In an open letter to Steinsaltz from the Beth Din of the Gur (Gerer) Hasidim, also carried in Monday's Hamodia, Steinsaltz is referred to as "the Gaon (great scholar) who has given a boon (of Talmud study) to vast masses through his blessed works."

The open letter congratulates him for accepting the amendments required by the Eda Haredit Beth Din regarding passages "which could have been misconstrued." It encourages him to go forward with God's help in his scholarly endeavors.

The mitnaged rabbis' letters banning Steinsaltz works omit even the title "rabbi," and some refer to him as "Mr. Adin Steinsaltz."

**ISRAEL'S POPULATION, NOW 4.47 MILLION, UP 1.6 PERCENT; 82 PERCENT ARE JEWISH**  
By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Aug. 9 (JTA) -- Israel's population now totals 4,477,000 inhabitants, including 3,659,000 Jews, an increase of 1.6 percent in 1988 compared with 1.7 percent in 1987, according to figures recently released by the Central Bureau of Statistics. The Jewish population is 82 percent of the country.

About 45 percent of the population live in 11 cities that have populations greater than 100,000, with the most significant increases occurring in Jerusalem, Rishon le-Zion, Netanya and Holon.

Jerusalem's Jewish population increased by approximately 2.2 percent, or about 8,000 people. Its non-Jewish population increased by 2.3 percent, or some 3,000 people. About 1,400 residents left Jerusalem, and its population was estimated at 493,000, including 354,000 Jews, the same 71.7 percent of the population as in 1987.

The populations of Tel Aviv-Jaffa, Haifa, Beersheba, Givatayim, Dimona, Upper Nazareth and Acre decreased in 1988, as they did in 1987, since the number of those leaving was greater than the natural population growth.

Tel Aviv-Jaffa's population decreased in 1988 by 1,700 residents, a drop of 0.5 percent, compared with 0.2 percent in 1987, and totaled fewer than 318,000 residents.

Haifa's population declined by about 600 residents, or 0.3 percent, compared with 0.1 percent in 1987, and totaled less than 223,000 residents.

The population of Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip increased in 1988 by 10.3 percent, as compared with a 12.8 percent rise in 1987 and a 15.8 percent rise in 1986, and now totals 66,000 residents as of the end of 1988.

The population of 25 "development settlements" was estimated to total 402,000 persons, including 384,000 Jews.

There was a drop of about 1,000 residents in the population of kibbutzim, with an estimated total of 126,000 at the end of 1988.

Davar reports that 10,151 immigrants arrived in Israel during the first seven months of 1989, constituting an increase of 41 percent over the same period last year. In July, 1,780 immigrants arrived, a 48 percent increase over July 1988.