

JEWISH GROUPS EXPRESS OUTRAGE OVER ATROCITIES IN BOSNIA

By Debra Nussbaum Cohen

NEW YORK, Aug. 4 (JTA) -- In language rife with the imagery of the Holocaust, leaders of Jewish organizations are calling on the United States and the United Nations to put an end to the atrocities being perpetrated by Serbian nationalists against Moslem and Croatian residents of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Though the 600 Jews who remain in Sarajevo are not in more danger than any other residents of the besieged Bosnian capital, the brutal attacks on innocent men, women and children throughout the former Yugoslav state are resonating in the collective memory of the Jewish community.

For Jews, the events unfolding in Bosnia eerily echo the Holocaust, when world leaders ignored early reports of the atrocities committed by the Nazis.

The republic's still-functioning government claims that Serbian nationalists have set up 94 concentration camps around the country, have detained approximately 238,000 people and have killed 9,100 of their civilians captives.

The existence of two concentration camps in the northern part of the republic, in which at least 1,350 civilians have been murdered, and in which 11,000 more are being held until they die, was reported Sunday by two men who said they had been held there.

More Than 20,000 Killed So Far

In total, upwards of 20,000 people have reportedly been killed and tens of thousands have been injured by the strife.

In addition, 2.5 million residents of the recently independent republic have fled their homes and become refugees, according to a statement released by the Bosnian government's mission to the United Nations.

The United States confirmed Monday that civilians have been tortured and murdered in Serbian-run concentration camps, but administration spokesman Richard Boucher said Washington has no plans to make an issue of the conditions, such as calling a meeting of the U.N. Security Council.

The camps are part of a policy termed "ethnic cleansing" which Serbian nationalists have instituted since early April in their effort to drive Moslems and Croats from wide areas of the republic.

Representatives of the Bosnian mission to the United Nations compared "ethnic cleansing" to apartheid and Nazi deportations and murders, and on Monday asked the world body to declare the policy a crime against humanity.

Maynard Wishner, chair of the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council, called upon U.N. Secretary Boutros Boutros-Ghali to "begin immediately to mobilize whatever U.N. peacekeeping forces are appropriate" to restore peace.

A "more assertive posture" by the U.S. "is essential to expeditiously ending the wanton violence," said the chair of the organization, which is an umbrella for 13 national agencies and 117 local community relations councils.

"The Western world must not turn its back on this unfolding catastrophe, the most hideous factional bloodletting in Europe in half a century. We must not sit idly by," said the American Jewish Committee in a statement.

Some 500 residents of Sarajevo, most of them Jews, were airlifted to Belgrade, in the neighboring republic of Serbia, in April and June by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, according to sources. Some of the refugees have gone on to Israel, and others to Slovenia, Croatia and Spain.

Excuses Called 'Lame'

Abraham Foxman, national director of the ADL, called the explanations proffered by governments and international agencies to justify their inability to end the carnage "lame" and nothing more than "poppycock."

"If the world felt it important enough to stop Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait, it is certainly important to stop the slaughter of innocent people.

"If we don't, than what we did two years ago is a farce. This is a repeat of history," he said, "and the Serbians are waiting to see if we respond. Every day that we don't, they go further.

"We heard the excuses at Nuremberg, that 'we didn't know, we didn't know! (about the Nazi crimes).' Well, now we know," said Foxman.

The ADL and the American Gathering of Jewish Holocaust Survivors are scheduled to hold a rally they termed a "call to action" near the United Nations on Wednesday.

Malcolm Hoenlein, executive director of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, said that his group has met with Bosnian Foreign Minister Haris Salajdzit three times over the past half-year.

The Conference of Presidents has spoken with U.S. Secretary of State James Baker and "other officials at the White House, State Department and U.N." in recent months, according to Hoenlein.

More Meetings Sought

"They had assured us that actions would be taken, and received the foreign minister thereafter and assured him (as well)" that action would be taken to stop the bloodshed, he said.

More "meetings with administration officials are being sought to underscore our concern," said Hoenlein.

A delegation of representatives of Jewish organizations met Tuesday with Thomas Niles, assistant secretary for European affairs at the State Department.

Niles told them that the Bush administration is unable to take any action against the Serbian nationalists because of "a lack of concurrence on the part of the European Community, especially France, which is apparently unwilling to make sure that measures are vigorously enforced," according to Phil Baum, associat executive director of the American Jewish Congress.

He met with Niles along with representatives of the AJCommittee, ADL, B'nai B'rith International, NJCRAC and the National Council of Jewish Women.

ANALYSIS: FEARS GROW THAT LOAN GUARANTEES WILL COME AT TOO HIGH A PRICE

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Aug. 4 (JTA) -- A week before Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin is scheduled to meet with President Bush, U.S. Ambassador to Israel William Harrop stressed that the Bush administration is anxious to assist Israel's economy.

But many here are concerned that Washington's assistance may come at the expense of Israeli economic independence.

Harrop's remark was made to reporters prior to a get-acquainted session with Israel's new Immigration and Absorption Minister, Yair Tzaban.

His comments were immediately linked to news reports stating that Washington intends to place strenuous economic demands on Israel before granting Jerusalem's request for loan guarantees, as anticipated. These strictures would come on top of political demands for a settlement freeze in the administered territories.

The ambassador, diplomatic as ever, refused to be drawn into these speculations. But Israeli economic sources nonetheless expect tough and detailed discussions between the Israelis and Americans regarding the specific purposes to which the loans will be put.

Earlier this year, Bush had rejected an Israeli request for \$10 billion worth of loan guarantees because of the Likud government's aggressive policy of settling the administered territories.

Rabin has vowed to discontinue that policy and has already frozen much of the construction in those areas. Observers in Washington and Jerusalem say this change will help clear the path for Bush's approval of at least part of the original proposed package.

Frenkel Also Flies To Washington

Scheduled to arrive in New York on Friday, Rabin will spend the weekend privately prior to traveling to Maine for a day-and-a-half of talks with President Bush and top aides at the President's holiday home in Kennebunkport, Maine.

Later in the week, Rabin has scheduled meetings with Defense Secretary Dick Cheney and with key congressional figures in Washington.

Several days prior to the Rabin visit, the Governor of the Bank of Israel, Jacob Frenkel, flew to Washington to hold preliminary talks about the economic aspects of the American-Israeli summit.

Sources in the U.S. Treasury have reportedly said that Frenkel will tell Washington that Israel is going to press ahead with economic reforms, including changes in the foreign exchange and capital markets.

U.S. government economists want to be sure that the new Israeli government has formulated a comprehensive program of economic growth in which new capital will be directed toward investment in infrastructure and industry -- and not to consumer consumption or government spending.

In this way, Washington believes, the problem of job-creation for the new immigrants -- the ultimate goal of the guarantees -- can best be addressed.

In addition, Washington wants to see tangible progress in Israel's "privatization" program and in the liberalization of the Israeli economy.

Israeli economic policy-makers are not at odds with these goals. But there is some natural

apprehension in Jerusalem over the extent of American "supervision" of Israeli policy-making and policy implementation.

One recent headline in an Israeli newspaper complained that the Americans actually seek to "control" the way the loan funds are to be spent.

The influential newspaper Ha'aretz endorsed the broad goals outlined by the Americans, but is nevertheless questioning whether Israel need accept everything that Washington lays down.

The paper even went so far as to ask whether Jerusalem ought not to hold out for more favorable terms for the guarantees themselves and referred obliquely to the issue of "scoring," whereby the Bush administration will set a premium that Israel will have to pay to cover the risk involved in granting the guarantees.

Ha'aretz, echoing the views of many Israelis involved in the process, pointed out that Israel has never missed payments on its international debts and that a high "scoring" will tend to undermine the economic viability of the entire loan process.

ISRAELI ARAB ADMITS HE MET WITH PLO IN TUNIS, IN DEFIANCE OF ISRAELI LAW

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Aug. 4 (JTA) -- A delegation of six Israeli Arabs returned from Tunis this week after meeting with leaders of the Palestine Liberation Organization in blatant defiance of an Israeli law banning such meetings.

Two weeks ago, before leaving for Tunis -- home to the PLO headquarters -- the group said the purpose of the trip was to attend an annual festival in the ancient Tunisian city of Carthage. The group's spokesman, Dr. Ahmed Tibi, had insisted at the time that the delegation would not violate Israel's law forbidding meetings with representatives of Palestinian terrorist organizations.

On returning to Israel, five members of the group refused to discuss details of their meetings.

But the sixth member of the delegation, Knesset member Hashem Mahamid of the Democratic Front for Peace and Equality, known popularly as the Hadash Communists, openly told reporters that he had met with PLO leader Yasir Arafat and Nayef Hawatmeh of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine.

Mahamid said he realized he had violated the law, but felt no compunction about doing so since, he said, the law was "undemocratic and unjust." He added that it was high time the law be "buried."

The law was passed by the previous Knesset under pressure from Israel's right-wing parties. It was under this law that peace activist Abie Nathan was twice jailed.

Following Mahamid's disclosures to the press regarding his meetings in Tunis, a motion was raised in the Knesset to waive his right to parliamentary immunity.

The Rabin coalition recently won a vote of confidence in the Knesset, partly thanks to the votes of the five members of Hadash and the Arab Democratic Party of Abd el-Wahab Darawshe.

It is therefore unlikely that the coalition will support any parliamentary moves against Mahamid.

Israeli police, moreover, have so far taken no measures against the other five members of the delegation, even though they do not enjoy parliamentary immunity.

**INFILTRATORS FROM JORDAN KILLED
DURING ATTEMPT TO ENTER ISRAEL**
By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Aug. 4 (JTA) -- Three would-be infiltrators from Jordan were killed in the Jordan Valley early Monday morning as they attempted to penetrate into Israel.

They were detected by an Israel Defense Force unit on routine patrol in the area. Two Israeli soldiers were wounded in the ensuing firefight.

The incident was the third such infiltration attempt from Jordan to occur in as many months.

The infiltrators had crossed the Jordan River during the night. They then hid in the thick reeds and undergrowth between the river and the border fence some five miles southeast of Meholah, which is about 10 miles south of Beit She'an.

Armed with automatic weapons, they opened fire at about 7 a.m. on an IDF patrol that was carrying out a routine inspection of the border area. Two of the soldiers were wounded in the first burst of fire, but they did not sustain serious injuries.

Kibbutzim and settlements in the northern section of the Jordan Valley were put on alert as soon as the clash began. Civilian ambulances from the settlements evacuated the wounded, who were then helicoptered to the Hadassah Hospital at Ein Kerem in Jerusalem.

The exchange of fire lasted a short time before the intruders were shot dead.

The commanding officer of the IDF Central Command, who visited the scene of the clash, acknowledged that Jordanian authorities were trying to prevent infiltration into Israel from their territory. But he added that Jordan was nonetheless responsible for any hostile activities originating there and called on Amman to tighten its control of the border.

Monday's incident was a replay of other infiltration attempts from Jordan that have taken place in recent months.

In June, two men swam across the Gulf of Aqaba to Eilat and shot and killed a night watchman at a Hebrew University research institute on the outskirts of Eilat. One of the infiltrators was killed and the other wounded and captured.

Last month, infiltrators at El Hamma -- the point where the borders of Jordan, Syria and Israel meet just south of Lake Kinneret -- opened up with rocket fire on settlements in the area and then escaped back into Jordan. There were no Israeli casualties.

Meholah had been the scene of another infiltration attempt last Passover, when two intruders approached the settlement fence but were discovered and shot dead.

IDF Chief of Staff Ehud Barak said that during the latest operation Israeli forces had acted "speedily and correctly."

He noted that in other operations in recent weeks 27 wanted terrorists had surrendered to Israeli forces and 68 had been captured.

**UNDERCOVER SOLDIER DIES OF WOUNDS
AFTER GAZA SHOOTOUT WITH TERRORIST**
By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Aug. 4 (JTA) -- One of the three members of an Israel Defense Force undercover unit who were wounded over the weekend in a shootout with an Arab terrorist died Monday in Beersheba Hospital.

Sgt. Doron Daniel Derzi, 20, was a resident of Jerusalem.

The terrorist who shot him, Osama Mohammad Ali Najar, was shot dead in the operation. He was considered one of the most dangerous terrorists in the administered territories.

Derzi was among the men spearheading the assault on the wanted terrorist, who had been pinpointed by Israeli intelligence and security forces.

Derzi was a member of the undercover Shimshon (Samson) unit that operates in the Gaza Strip disguised as Arabs.

The Duvdevan (Cherry) unit, which has a similar mission, operates in the West Bank.

Another soldier seriously wounded in the attack in the town of Khan Yunis, Cpl. Eyal Shahal, was reported to be in critical condition. A lieutenant was lightly wounded with them while leading the assault.

Derzi was the fourth member of the Shimshon unit killed while on operations in the Gaza Strip this year.

Last month, another member of the unit, Sgt. Baruch Ben-Shimon of Safed, was shot dead in the town of Bani Suheila in the Gaza Strip. One terrorist was killed and seven others captured in that operation. Shortly after, another Shimshon soldier was killed in a road accident in Gaza.

A fourth Shimshon soldier, Ehud Berman of Motza, near Jerusalem, died two months ago as a result of an accident while he was handling his pistol.

A senior officer with the unit said the losses have badly affected the young soldiers in his command. They have been under heavy strains in the past few months as a result of the growing number of clashes with armed terrorists.

According to investigations of the latest incident, Najar had been on the roof of a house when he noticed the men approaching along the street below. He opened fire on them with a Kalachnikov assault rifle.

He then rushed downstairs and took up a position in a corner of a corridor with a clear field of fire toward the front door of the house.

As the Shimshon members burst in, he fired at them, hitting the lead men. Other soldiers returned the fire, shooting him to death.

(JTA correspondent Gil Sedan in Jerusalem contributed to this report.)

ISRAEL AGAIN TARGETS SOUTHERN LEBANON
By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Aug. 4 (JTA) -- The Israeli air force carried out two more raids on terrorist bases in southern Lebanon on Monday, following a similar helicopter assault Sunday.

Monday's air assaults bring to seven the total number of sorties in the past two weeks. There have been 26 sorties so far this year.

Sunday's attack was against Shi'ite Moslem terrorist bases in the village of Qalaylah, just north of the security zone. Monday's raids were against Hezbollah installations in Lebanon's Jabal Safi region, where the extremist Iranian-backed organization has many camps.

Last week, Israeli helicopters also struck Hezbollah targets in the area of Jabal Safi.

Israel has launched a series of air strikes against guerrilla targets in retaliation for attacks on its troops patrolling the security zone in southern Lebanon.

**THE JEWS OF CENTRAL ASIA:
SAMARKAND JEWRY BUSILY BUILDING
A HEIGHTENED SENSE OF COMMUNITY**
[Part 3 Of A Series]
By Gil Sedan

SAMARKAND, Uzbekistan (JTA) -- Deep in the heart of Central Asia stands the city of Samarkand, the legendary crossroads on the trade routes of old between East and West.

The Jewish community here is in a state of transition. Like most of the Jewish communities in the Central Asian republics of the former Soviet Union, it is changing as a result of the profound political repercussions caused by the fall of the Soviet Union. One result is that many Jews are choosing to emigrate to Israel.

Some 12,000 Jews live in Samarkand, which has a total population of about 250,000. The one-time capital of Tamerlane the Great's medieval empire, it is now the Uzbeki republic's second largest city after Tashkent, the capital.

The Jewish community is composed mainly of Bukharians, the so-called mountain Jews, a dark-skinned people who have lived in the area for generations. In the wake of the dissolution of the Soviet Union, they are engaged in the process of redefining themselves as a community.

The fall of communism brought the Jews here to a new starting point. The previous Jewish leaders, those who were also active members of the Communist Party, are no longer accepted by the community. But a new leadership has not yet emerged.

In the meantime, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee has been quite active in the area, providing religious books published in Russian and parcels of food for the needy, and helping local synagogues organize committees to tackle the problems confronting the community.

JDC Representative Brings Food To Needy

The JDC's representative in Uzbekistan and Azerbaijan is Israel Szyf, an elderly religious man who has spent the past 22 years helping remote Jewish communities throughout the world.

His primary focus here recently has been on providing support to the needy. Szyf works closely with local charity committees, which help some 200 people in Tashkent and Samarkand who cannot support themselves.

"In Samarkand, just before Passover, I personally visited families and gave them the food parcels. Had it not been for our help, they would have starved," said Szyf. Each parcel contained sugar, flour, oil, nuts and other basic goods.

In addition to providing community organizations with much-needed office equipment, such as Xerox machines and audiovisual equipment, the JDC also gives monthly financial support to the local Jewish centers here and in Tashkent.

Szyf does not feel that his efforts at establishing community life are in conflict with the work of the Jewish Agency, which is helping Jews in the area make aliyah.

"It is in our interest that the local Jewish communities operate, so that the Jewish Agency will have the infrastructure within which to work. It has always been my belief that if I set up a Jewish school in a community, the parents of the children will have stronger motivation to make aliyah," says Szyf.

The relatively stable current political situation in Uzbekistan, he feels, has taken away the urgency of making aliyah.

"Unless there are pogroms," he says, "there will be no mass exodus. It will be a trickle of an aliyah."

A visit to the Jewish youth club of Samarkand, however, makes it clear that aliyah is on the minds of many here.

"We do not feel any anti-Semitism, but our country is there, not here," said Reuven Pasilov, 23. "When we say 'next year in Jerusalem,' we mean it."

They meet in the club twice a week, spending hours studying Jewish tradition and the history of the Jewish people. They sing Hebrew songs, they learn the language. The younger children study at a school operated by the Lubavitch Hasidim and headed by Rabbi Emmanuel Shimonov. There are 13 teachers and 250 students.

Shimonov thinks big. He is no longer satisfied with the school's temporary headquarters and is working to build a new school with capital provided jointly by the Israeli and Uzbeki governments.

He is confident that his plan will work out because, he believes, the Uzbekis are eager to develop cordial relations with Israel. They, like many in the Third World, believe that the shortest route to Washington is through Jerusalem.

U.S., ISRAEL TO AID ASIAN REPUBLICS
By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Aug. 4 (JTA) -- A joint Israeli-American delegation will visit the Central Asian republics of the former Soviet Union in September to discuss technological assistance and joint projects.

The decision was reached Tuesday between Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and special American envoy Richard Armitage. The two discussed the possibility of extending agricultural, medical and other forms of aid to the predominantly Moslem republics.

Israel has a special interest in increasing its involvement with the six republics -- Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan. The region, which both Israel and the United States view as strategically important, has a population of some 170,000 Jews.

AMSTERDAM SHUL WINS CASE
By Henriette Boas

AMSTERDAM, Aug. 4 (JTA) -- The Amsterdam Ashkenazi congregation has won its case against the Jewish Historical Museum of Amsterdam over possession of three valuable items of Judaica.

The Dutch Ministry of Culture had previously ruled that the three items could not be removed from the building by their owner without the express permission of the museum.

But the Dutch Council of State, the country's highest legal authority, agreed with the synagogue, which had argued that the ruling ran contrary to the principles of religious freedom. The council overturned the ministry's decision.

The objects are a 17th-century Torah shrine in the Great Synagogue, which is now part of the museum, a large silver menorah donated to the congregation in 1753, and a 13th-century holiday prayerbook that was donated to the congregation in 1669.

The Culture Ministry had ruled that these objects were so important to Dutch culture that they must never be moved, not even temporarily.