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**ISRAEL EXPELS 383 PALESTINIANS  
IN AFTERMATH OF TERROR INCIDENTS**

By David Landau and Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Dec. 17 (JTA) -- In an unprecedented move, Israel deported 383 Palestinian extremists from the administered territories to Lebanon on Thursday, declaring them a security risk to the state.

Within moments of a go-ahead from the High Court of Justice, buses carrying the Palestinians, most of them members of the Islamic fundamentalist Hamas movement who had been rounded up in recent days, rolled toward the Lebanese border to execute an operation that was expected to draw sharp condemnation from Western governments and the United Nations.

Border police accompanied the convoy of 22 buses as it crossed into the Israeli-controlled security zone of southern Lebanon. There were indications the deportees, who had been each issued \$50, food and blankets, might be spending the night there before being delivered beyond the zone, where Lebanese authorities warned they would be turned back.

The convoy had waited all day near the Israeli border town of Metulla as the High Court reviewed last-minute appeals of the expulsions filed by two human rights groups.

The expulsions, which, contrary to past practice, are for limited duration, were approved unanimously by the Cabinet on Wednesday, with only Justice Minister David Libai of Labor abstaining.

The move followed a spate of attacks on Israeli security officials by Hamas fundamentalists, including the kidnapping and brutal murder earlier this week of border policeman Nissim Toledano.

"Sgt. Toledano had no right of appeal on his death," Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin told a meeting of his Labor Party's Central Committee in Tel Aviv while the High Court was reviewing the expulsion order.

**Broad Support In Israel**

The court, which sat throughout the day in a dramatic special session, decided by a 5-2 majority to permit the expulsions, even though that would mean denying the deportees the right to appear in person before review boards.

In its decision, the court canceled an earlier interim injunction forbidding the Israeli army to proceed with the deportations.

But the court also issued an order requiring the government and the army to explain within 30 days why they had decided to deport the Palestinians without enabling them to appeal to review boards in the usual way.

The expulsion orders, signed by military commanders in the territories, were issued for periods ranging from nine months to two years.

This differed from past practice, in which Israel has deported Palestinian territories from the territories permanently, once all appeals have been exhausted. The Labor government abolished that practice last August, in one of its first moves after taking office.

This week's expulsion orders allow the families or lawyers of the deportees to file appeals with review boards within 60 days of the

deportations. These boards have the right to reverse the deportations or shorten their duration.

Previously, those ordered deported could appeal in person to review boards and then to the High Court of Justice, in a process that could take many months.

The Association for Civil Rights in Israel expressed "disappointment but not surprise" at the court ruling. Attorney Joshua Shoffman said his organization hoped to be able to persuade the court, at the future hearing, that the deportation method had been illegal.

But the Cabinet's move to deport the Palestinians won widespread support across the political spectrum, with the exception of the Arab parties on the left.

Knesset member Moshe Nissim of the opposition Likud bloc probably reflected a broad consensus when he remarked that he felt "a sense of relief" over the government's decision.

Nissim said the situation had required the Cabinet to act the way it did. Not to have done so would have been remiss in terms of the government's national responsibility to the people.

In the Labor Party, only Knesset member Yael Dayan spoke out publicly against the Cabinet's move. She spoke of an "atmosphere of hysteria" in the wake of the border policeman's murder this week and suggested that the government had given in to it.

**Tsomet, NRP May Join Government**

The decision by the three ministers of the left-wing Meretz bloc to support the deportations has come in for massive criticism from the party rank and file. Nevertheless, a majority of the party's Knesset caucus backed the ministers.

Science Minister Amnon Rubinstein of Meretz said he had voted in favor of the expulsions because there was virtually no other alternative. The choice was between doing nothing and harsher measures, such as capital punishment and the demolition of terrorists' homes.

He said the chances for peace with the Palestinians depend on a radical weakening of the Hamas movement.

Sources in Meretz said the party would now redouble its efforts to persuade the government to open a direct dialogue with the Palestine Liberation Organization.

Some commentators argue, however, that the mass deportations will make it hard, if not impossible, for the PLO to respond to such a change in attitude. That would be tantamount, they say, to allowing Israel to drive a wedge between the PLO and the Islamic fundamentalists.

A member of the Palestinian delegation to the peace talks, Sameh Can'an, said the conflict between Hamas and the PLO is an internal Palestinian affair in which the government of Israel should not interfere.

Knesset Member Taleb A-Sanaa of the Arab Democratic Party said the deportations were a "death penalty" to the peace process and warned his party would cease giving its tacit support to the Labor government.

But the expulsion orders had the opposite effect on the right-wing Tsomet party, which said it would now consider joining the government coalition. A similar sentiment was expressed by

National Religious Party Knesset member Zevulun Hammer.

Earlier in the day, the Israel Defense Force chief of staff, Lt. Gen. Ehud Barak, had been summoned by the High Court to explain why the deportations were necessary.

Barak described the situation as an emergency and listed a series of deadly attacks carried out by Moslem fundamentalists against both civilians and soldiers. Of the 29 soldiers killed by terror groups in the last nine years, he said, six had been murdered in the past week.

This, he said, was a completely new situation, forcing the army and security forces to take new measures.

#### Jewish Groups Express Understanding

In New York, American Jewish organizations issued statements saying the Israeli government's move was understandable in light of the recent terrorist attacks, though few of them endorsed the move outright.

Typical of the statements was one from the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, which said, "Hamas has declared war on Israel. Israel must defend itself."

It added: "We believe that all Americans who support the cause of peace in the Middle East and reconciliation between Arab and Jew will understand the reasons for Israel's action."

One of the few to back the move explicitly was Rabbi Alexander Schindler, president of the Reform movement's Union of American Hebrew Congregations, who in the past has criticized Israel's treatment of the Palestinians.

"Israel was right to act as it did -- forcefully yet legally," he said.

*(Contributing to this report was JTA correspondent Hugh Orgel in Tel Aviv.)*

#### **ARABS BOYCOTT PEACE TALKS IN PROTEST OVER EXPULSIONS**

**By Cynthia Mann  
States News Service**

WASHINGTON, Dec. 17 (JTA) -- The eighth round of the Middle East peace talks was dealt a harsh blow Thursday as the Arab delegations protested Israel's decision to expel roughly 400 Islamic fundamentalists from the administered territories.

The expulsion orders were issued in response to a series of attacks on Israeli security officers and were cleared by a ruling from Israel's High Court of Justice after an appeal by a human rights group seeking to block them.

In protest, the Arab delegations boycotted Thursday's sessions of the bilateral peace talks, scheduled to be the last before a recess. But they did go to the White House, where President Bush met with each of the parties to the peace talks.

The Palestinians said they were "appalled and outraged" at the expulsion decision and would head to Tunis for emergency consultations with the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization, to "decide the fate of Palestinian participation in the peace process."

They said that at the White House they had alerted Bush to the "extreme gravity of the situation and its consequences for the peace process and regional stability."

The Israelis decried the Arab negotiators' decision to boycott the talks, saying they were using the deportations as a pretext to waste time.

"The action was taken against those wishing

to physically eliminate the Jews, those responsible for the brutal, cowardly slaying of Israelis and murderers of Palestinians wishing to make peace with us," said Yossi Gal, spokesman for the Israeli delegation.

The Israeli government "will spare no effort to move the peace process forward and at the same time will take every possible measure, under the law, to fight terror and to protect our citizens," said Gal.

The Labor government has been careful to distinguish these expulsions, slated for a maximum of two years' duration, from the permanent deportations ordered by previous governments.

But the Israeli move was expected, nevertheless, to bring sharp condemnation from Western governments and from the U.N. Security Council, which planned to debate a strongly worded draft resolution on the matter Friday.

#### U.S. 'Strongly Condemns' Move

The State Department issued a statement Thursday saying the United States "strongly condemns" the expulsions as well as the recent violence in the region. It acknowledged Israel's right to protect its citizens but said it should do so in compliance with international law.

The White House issued a statement urging the parties to the peace talks to call for an end to "all forms of violence" and to "avoid reactions such as deportations that risk complicating the search for peace."

"Making peace a reality through these negotiations is the only way to frustrate those who would sabotage the peace process by violence," the statement said.

Sources said the meeting between Bush and the Israelis was an amicable one that focused on ways to further the talks and touched only marginally on the deportations.

The attacks on Israeli security officers, combined with escalating violence in the territories which saw scores of Palestinians wounded by Israeli troops, had sorely strained the current round of peace talks.

The parties had also gotten bogged down by the uncertainty and instability triggered by the U.S. presidential transition. No date had been set for the next round of talks, and there was little expectation that one would be set before the Jan. 20 inauguration of President-elect Bill Clinton.

Bush met with the delegations precisely in an attempt to inject momentum into the flagging process he had been instrumental in orchestrating.

The president "commended the parties for their sustained commitment to his process and for the progress they have achieved," according to a White House statement.

"Substantial achievements are within reach if the parties make additional efforts to address the legitimate concerns of their negotiating partners," it said.

Thursday's meetings came a day after the president met at the White House with Jordan's King Hussein, who was in the country for cancer treatment.

After the meeting, Hussein issued an upbeat assessment of the talks, observing that the parties appeared to be committed to seizing the opportunity to make peace in the region.

In fact, the negotiations between the Jordanians and Israelis stand out as the only track that has made substantial progress, largely at the insistence of Hussein, who appears anxious for some conflict resolution.

## COURT PAVES WAY FOR TRIAL OF ALLEGED NAZI IN AUSTRALIA

By Jeremy Jones

SYDNEY, Australia, Dec. 17 (JTA) -- An Australian court has rejected the last appeal by alleged Nazi Ivan Polyukhovich, paving the way for him to stand trial for war crimes.

Polyukhovich is accused of a role in the deaths of 850 Jewish people in the Ukraine between August and September 1942. He was charged under Australia's War Crimes Act with 24 counts of murder.

His lawyer told the Adelaide court that a trial would be an abuse of process, due partly to allegedly "unreliable" witnesses and partly because of the long time which elapsed between the alleged crimes and the filing of charges.

All evidence and argument during the last hearing was suppressed on the grounds that it might affect a jury in the criminal trial.

Australia has a judicial process in which an accused first stands before a judge in a committal hearing to see if there is probable cause for a jury trial. The committal hearing can be as long as the regular trial and hear the same evidence.

Polyukhovich's committal hearing opened in October 1991 after months of delay.

The judge at this latest hearing accepted the defense's appeal relating to a charge that Polyukhovich murdered two Jewish youths.

He also ruled that a charge that Polyukhovich murdered three other Jewish adults should be dealt with at a different trial than the one considering the mass murder and other charges.

Justice Brian Cox criticized the quality of interpretation of evidence at Polyukhovich's committal hearing, but accepted that the accused had still to answer charges on the mass killing and six individual murders.

Polyukhovich will appear in court Dec. 21 for preliminary discussions of evidence.

Meanwhile, the former head of Australia's Nazi war crimes investigatory unit has accused the government of "treacherous nonsense" in its decision not to complete a case against a former Latvian officer alleged to have headed a murder squad.

"The historical importance (of this case) was potentially enormous because, just like economic sanctions, criminal sanctions have got a role in international politics," he said.

The case, which was almost completed, would have involved far more victims than that involving the two men whose cases have successfully reached the courts, he added.

## ITALIAN CABINET BACKS HATE LAW

By Ruth E. Gruber

ROME, Dec. 17 (JTA) -- Italy's coalition government has approved a tough bill against racism and discrimination that, if approved by Parliament, would impose stiff penalties for skinheads and anyone else fostering racial or religious hatred.

"It is a bill, but we may transform it into a decree if Parliament takes too long or if we run up against new, serious episodes of intolerance," Justice Minister Claudio Martelli said after the bill was approved Tuesday night by the Cabinet.

Aimed against anyone who "exhorts, threatens or uses violence as a means to achieve ethnic, national, racial or religious hatred," the bill essentially treats neo-Nazi skinheads and other

extremists in the same way as the law treats terrorists or members of the Mafia.

It would impose one- to five-year prison sentences for inciting racial hatred and also permits such other punishments as internal exile and special surveillance.

The bill also allows the authorities to close down the headquarters of racist groups.

## NEWFOUNDLAND BECOMES NEW HAVEN FOR JEWS, OTHERS FLEEING MOLDOVA

By Gil Kezwer

TORONTO, Dec. 17 (JTA) -- The town of Gander, Newfoundland, has become an unlikely destination for Jews, Ukrainians, Russians and other ethnic minorities fleeing the conflict-ridden former Soviet republic of Moldova.

Those hoping to win asylum in Canada fly from the Moldovan capital of Kishinev to Moscow. There they catch a four-times-a-week Aeroflot flight to Havana, Cuba -- once a popular fun-in-the-sun vacation spot for Russians and other nationals of the erstwhile Soviet bloc.

Arriving almost penniless, the refugees are deported by Cuban authorities on the next Aeroflot flight back to Russia. The plane stops for refueling in Gander, a remote airport carved out of Newfoundland's rugged wilderness to serve as a World War II aerodrome. There the Moldovans file for refugee status.

So far this year, 2,394 refugee claimants have arrived in Gander. It is not clear how many of them are Jewish, since Canada's Immigration Department does not provide statistics based on religion or ethnicity.

Among them is Boris Vaisman, 37, who arrived in Gander recently with his wife and two children. Vaisman, a mining engineer, claimed he faced discrimination in Moldova as a Jew. "A war is going on," he said in an interview with the Toronto Globe and Mail. "Yes, being Jewish was a problem all the time. Among other things, it was very hard for me to find a job."

Vaisman said he considered going to Israel, "but the procedure is very slow, and in Israel I have no friends or relatives."

He wants to settle in Toronto, where 20,000 Jews from the former Soviet Union live, including his aunt and cousin.

## DRIVER FEARED DROWNED IN FLOOD

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Dec. 17 (JTA) -- Navy divers and large police units continued to search for a driver feared drowned in a heavy storm Wednesday when his car plunged 10 feet into a collapsed roadway.

Mark Kaplan, a 57-year-old mechanical engineer who emigrated from the Soviet Union four years ago, apparently was trying to drive over a flooded road near Nes Ziona, north of Rehovot, in disregard of warnings by fellow drivers.

His badly damaged car was found some distance away in waters raging through a normally dry riverbed.

The body of another driver was found Wednesday in the hills northwest of Ramallah. The storm dumped near record rainfall in parts of the country, triggering power blackouts and blanket-ing Jerusalem and the Golan Heights in snow.

The heavy rainfall raised the level of Lake Kinneret by close to 7 inches in less than two days. The rains abated Thursday.

**BEHIND THE HEADLINES:****JEWISH GROUPS JOIN OTHER FAITHS  
IN PARTNERSHIP FOR ENVIRONMENT**  
By Debra Nussbaum Cohen

NEW YORK, Dec. 17 (JTA) -- Religious leaders are going "green." Together, they are working across denominational and ecumenical lines to give environmental concerns new priority.

Jewish groups, in concert with Catholic, Protestant and Evangelical organizations, are kicking off a three-year, \$4 million effort designed to push ecology toward the top of their communities' agendas.

The new interreligious coalition is being called the National Religious Partnership for the Environment, and its goals are ambitious.

The partnership aims to educate and improve the behavior of congregations and congregants toward the ecology; to train clergy and laity in ways of mobilizing resources around environmental efforts; to generate theological study of the relevant issues; and to support public policy initiatives.

The Jewish partner in the group is an unusually broad interdenominational caucus called the Consultation on the Environment and Jewish Life.

Its members are the Conservative movement's Jewish Theological Seminary, the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council and the Reform movement's Religious Action Center.

The partnership's other members are the National Council of Churches, the U.S. Catholic Conference and the Evangelical Environmental Network.

Together, they will reach some 70,000 congregations and potentially hundreds of millions of congregants.

The Jewish perspective on the environment, which in some ways differs markedly from Christianity's, will help inform the orientation and projects of the partnership.

Each of the three Jewish organizations participating in the group is using its particular niche in the Jewish world to promulgate the partnership's agenda.

**'Has Not Been A Priority Issue'**

JTS will be exploring the theological and philosophical aspects of the religious community's approach to environmentalism through a series of conferences now being organized, according to Steven Shaw, director of the seminary's department of community education.

A conference involving theologians, scholars, philosophers and scientists, tentatively slated for 1994, will work to develop a philosophy on Judaism and the natural world, said Shaw, who is a naturalist by avocation and is the Conservative movement's official liaison with the partnership.

Shaw, on behalf of the partnership, is also developing a regular series of seminars for the benefit of the seminary faculties of each of the mainstream Jewish movements.

The seminars will likely be held six times a year, for two years, to develop curriculum materials on the environment based on Jewish sources.

It will be an "attempt to introduce the seminary deans and faculty to a field that most people in the Jewish world know nothing about," said Shaw.

He is also planning a weeklong retreat on the environment for rabbis of all denominations for some time in 1994 or 1995.

And finally, regular in-service training seminars and retreats for Conservative rabbis and rabbinical students will now more intensively focus on environmental issues.

NJCRCAC's contribution to the partnership will be its ability to serve as a liaison between the religious and communal institutions of the Jewish world, particularly the community relations councils, in sensitizing them to the relevant issues.

NJCRCAC may convene a series of regional consultations around the environmental agenda, according to Jerome Chanes, NJCRCAC's co-director for domestic concerns.

"The fact is that within the Jewish community to date, the environment has not been a priority issue," said Chanes.

The environment is an issue perfectly suited to community relations work because it "is truly a universal issue, one which transcends public policy and religion," he added.

The Reform movement's Religious Action Center will be utilizing one of its greatest strengths -- legislative advocacy -- on behalf of the partnership.

"We want to take a more assertive position on environmental legislative issues," said its director, Rabbi David Saperstein.

**Support From Al Gore**

The center will closely follow pertinent congressional and administration efforts, and when legislation is coming up for a vote, will disseminate relevant material to Jewish and other partnership member agencies through NJCRCAC.

The center will also produce a manual instructing synagogues on how to program around environmental issues, said Saperstein.

This is an issue for activism through religious bodies because the environment "is a profoundly religious issue, and on such moral issues the religious community is looked to for guidance," he said. "The voice of conscience of the interreligious community can have a profound effect on the debate."

The partnership has been more than three years in the making.

In 1989, as religious thinkers and leaders began discussing how they could uniquely contribute to the environmental cause, Carl Sagan and 34 other prominent scientists sent a letter to hundreds of religious leaders of all faiths asking them to rally around the issue.

Late in 1990, Sen. Al Gore (D-Tenn.), now the vice president-elect, helped organize a meeting of religious leaders, scientists and senators in Washington, a gathering that gave birth to a new group, the Joint Appeal By Religion and Science for the Environment.

The following June, Jewish religious leaders, from Orthodox to Reconstructionist, gathered with Christian representatives to be briefed by leading scientists on the state of the environment.

Together, they founded a series of initiatives by religious organizations, which led to a consultation of Jewish religious, communal and political leaders in Washington in March 1992.

And in May, an invitation from Gore and a bipartisan committee brought 75 religious leaders and 50 scientists to Washington to testify before Congress and brief politicians.

There, the participants decided to form the National Religious Partnership for the Environment, which still has the enthusiastic support of vice president-elect Gore.