

NEWS AT A GLANCE

■ **Palestine Liberation Organization Chairman Yasser Arafat broadened his crackdown on Muslim extremists in the wake of Sunday's terror attacks against Israelis. Palestinian officials said they were initiating plans to confiscate weapons from the militants, but Israeli officials remained skeptical. [Page 2]**

■ **Congress began considering measures to halt American donations to terrorist groups. Arab American groups are challenging the legislation on constitutional grounds. Jewish groups see the need to modify some aspects of the bill, but are pushing the legislation. [Page 3]**

■ **The Persian Gulf nation of Qatar officially closed its boycott office, eight months after joining its neighbors in ending the secondary and tertiary boycotts of Israel. The development was reported by American Jewish Committee officials, who said Oman is scheduled to close its boycott office as well.**

■ **Dozens of Bosnian Muslim refugees received permanent status in Israel, two years after they were brought to the Jewish state as part of a humanitarian rescue effort. The ceremony for their new status was held at Kibbutz Ma'agan Michael, south of Haifa, though they live and work at Kibbutz Beit Oren on Mount Carmel. [Page 4]**

■ **A new passenger terminal at the Allenby Bridge crossing between Israel and Jordan was inaugurated. Yisrael Kessar, Israel's transportation minister, participated in the official opening of the terminal.**

■ **Israel and Greece signed a security agreement to combat international terrorism, drug trafficking and other serious crimes. Israeli Police Minister Moshe Shahal and Greek Public Order Minister Sifis Valyrakis signed the accord in Athens.**

BEHIND THE HEADLINES**American student killed in Gaza called 'bright, modest, delightful'**

NEW YORK, April 11 (JTA) — "I picture her in my mind with a smile on her face," said Rabbi Saul Zucker, speaking of Alisa Flatow, his former student at the Frisch High School in Paramus, N.J.

"She had a warmth about her," said the associate principal, "a real inner beauty that surrounded her."

His description of the 20-year-old Brandeis University junior who died Monday from injuries suffered in a terrorist attack in the Gaza Strip was echoed by many who knew her.

Chana Henkin, principal of Nishmat, the women's yeshiva in Jerusalem where Flatow was studying for a semester, called her "an unusually thoughtful person — bright, modest, delightful."

"Alisa was a young Jewish woman of sterling character who came to Israel to study her Jewish heritage," said Henkin.

"She was barbarically cut down," she added, weeping.

Flatow was one of eight people who died in the attack, which took place Sunday near Kfar Darom.

She was on a bus going to a resort in Gaza with her American roommate in Jerusalem, Chavie Levine.

Left with shrapnel in her brain, Flatow lapsed into a coma from which she never awoke. Levine, 22, was treated for injuries and released from the hospital.

Doctors pronounced Flatow brain dead Monday. Her father, Stephen, who had flown to Israel to be at her side, spent hours holding her hand, crying and talking quietly to his daughter.

'Alisa loved the Jewish people'

After consulting with rabbis, the Orthodox West Orange, N.J., attorney decided to remove his daughter's organs and donate them "to the people of Israel."

"Alisa loved the Jewish people, the Torah and the land of Israel," Stephen Flatow said in a statement, referring to the eldest of his five children. "She believed in the good inherent in all people. She believed she was safe in Israel and no one could dissuade her from that belief."

"Her lasting contribution to the people of Israel is that her organs were donated for the saving of lives in need."

Alisa Flatow's heart was successfully transplanted to a 56-year-old man who had been waiting more than a year for one. Her pancreas and one kidney were transplanted to a 42-year-old woman with kidney failure. She was reported to have been waiting 20 years for the organs.

Flatow's lungs, liver and other kidney were transplanted to other patients. Her corneas were donated to the eye bank in Soroka Hospital in Beersheba.

"I think the most important thing is to thank the family that went through this tragedy," said Dr. Bernardo Vidneh, head of cardiac surgery at Beilinson Hospital outside Tel Aviv, who performed the heart transplant.

"Despite their pain, they had the willingness to do this," he said.

The family's approach seemed to fit with the portrait that friends painted of Flatow.

In the letter sent by her high school to prospective colleges, there was only praise for her.

"Alisa is alive and there is a sparkle in her eyes always. She becomes passionately involved in what she does. Because of this quality, Alisa is a leader among her friends, often setting the pace and standard of particular activities," the letter said.

"She volunteered her time at a community day school for Soviet emigre children and helped enrich the program. She taught the children how to play softball as well as how to read and write Hebrew.

"She is energetic, intelligent and highly motivated. Alisa is an ideal student and her greatest strength is her positive attitude toward all challenges and her willingness to do things that are difficult."

Rabbi Menahem Meier, the principal of Frisch, said Flatow "was like the sun that rises in the morning," adding that, "She radiated warmth and

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to the people in her environment. She was a wonderful kid."

At Brandeis, she was majoring in sociology and reportedly wanted to work as a physical therapist.

Word of Flatow's death spread slowly across the Brandeis campus in Waltham, Mass., on Monday.

Professor Thomas Doherty said he read about the attack in the Monday morning newspapers, but he had not heard of his former student's death until he met another professor while walking across the campus.

"She was a sweet girl," said Doherty, in whose "News on Film" class Flatow was enrolled last year. "There's a pall over the campus."

"She died?" an incredulous Brian Kalmaer asked a reporter talking with students in a cafeteria about lunch time. "She died? No — this is terrible. She was such a nice, sweet girl."

Kalmaer said a mutual friend had seen Flatow's picture in the newspaper after she was hurt.

"She said she never felt as sad as she did at that moment," he said.

Jehuda Reinharz, who was inaugurated as president of the school on Sunday, said, "The reaction is shock, disbelief."

"It's not that people don't know that such things can happen," he said, "but it's a terrible shock when it happens to you."

Flatow's funeral was scheduled for Wednesday in her hometown. At least one busload of Brandeis students were planning to attend. A campus memorial service will held after Passover. □

(Contributing to this report were Marion Kwartler of MetroWest Jewish News; Michael Sinert of the Boston Jewish Advocate; Shulamit Kustanowitz of the Jewish Standard in Teaneck, N.J.; and JTA correspondent Naomi Segal in Jerusalem.)

Arafat confronts militants, but Israelis remain skeptical

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM, April 11 (JTA) — The confrontation between the Palestinian Authority and Islamic fundamentalists intensified this week, as Palestinian officials initiated plans to confiscate unlicensed weapons and continued to round up militant activists.

Palestine Liberation Organization Chairman Yasser Arafat's decision to broaden his crackdown came in the wake of two terrorist suicide attacks on Israelis in the Gaza Strip on Sunday.

Reacting to the Palestinian crackdown, some Israeli leaders said it was too early to tell whether the new security measures would be sufficient.

Others called on Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin to send Israeli troops into Gaza, which has been under self-rule since last May.

In the wake of Sunday's terror attacks near the Jewish settlements of Kfar Darom and Netzarim, Palestinian police on Tuesday arrested some 50 supporters of fundamentalist extremist groups, bringing the number of activists detained since the terror bombings to more than 250.

At the same time, a newly established Palestinian military court sentenced Omar Shalah, a Muslim cleric who is a leading figure in the Islamic Jihad fundamentalist movement, to life imprisonment on charges of inciting civil strife.

A day earlier, the court sentenced another Islamic Jihad militant to 15 years in jail for recruiting children to stage suicide bombings.

Islamic Jihad claimed responsibility for Sunday's

attack near Kfar Darom, which resulted in eight deaths, including that of one American student.

The fundamentalist Hamas movement said it carried out a separate suicide bombing near Netzarim. More than 50 people were wounded in both attacks.

Both fundamentalist groups warned Tuesday that the Palestinian Authority was "crossing a red line" in its crackdown on supporters of the extremist groups.

The Hamas movement said it would kill Israeli soldiers and settlers in retaliation for the Palestinian police crackdown.

The Islamic Jihad also warned the Palestinian Authority against "going too far," saying it would resist any attempts to disarm the group.

In Cairo, Arafat held talks about the crackdown with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak.

Mubarak adviser Osama el-Baz later said that Arafat was confident that the crackdown would not lead to a Palestinian civil war.

Baz added that the PLO chief was determined to disarm Islamic militants opposed to the peace accord with Israel.

Plans to confiscate unlicensed weapons

The plan to confiscate weapons was also voiced by Freih Abu Medein, the Palestinian Authority official in charge of judicial affairs.

Medein said Tuesday that the Palestinian Authority would partially disarm the militants, a move he said could begin as early as next week.

Gaza police chief Ghazi Al-Jabali said Palestinian police would require all weapons in the Gaza and Jericho self-rule areas to be registered by May 11. He said unlicensed firearms would be confiscated.

In Jerusalem, Nabil Sha'ath, the Palestinian official in charge of planning, said the self-rule government would do all it could to suppress the militants.

"The Palestinian Authority is arresting people, is taking them to court, is taking away their arms," said Sha'ath. "We are very serious about stopping this violence."

But Israeli leaders remained skeptical.

The head of army intelligence, Gen. Uri Saguy, said Arafat understood that a series of terror attacks on Israelis was jeopardizing the peace process, but that Arafat has not yet implemented any real change in policy aimed at battling extremists.

Appearing before the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, Saguy said the Palestinian police could round up members of Islamic Jihad and Hamas without sparking a civil war in Gaza.

Meanwhile, President Ezer Weizman renewed his call for a halt in negotiations with the Palestinians.

Speaking during a visit to Soroka Hospital in Beersheba, where several of the victims from Sunday's attacks were still hospitalized, Weizman said the talks should be suspended until Arafat proves he can control terror.

A somewhat optimistic note was heard from Deputy Foreign Minister Yossi Beilin.

"I cannot say that the Palestinian Authority does enough," he told reporters in Jerusalem. "But I can say that there are some signs which are positive now, and which may be conducive toward a change of strategy toward their opposition."

But six Knesset members from Rabin's own Labor Party were not as sanguine about Arafat's latest crackdown.

The lawmakers, convinced that Israel cannot rely on the Palestinian Authority to provide real security in Gaza, reportedly sent Rabin a letter Tuesday asking him to send Israeli troops into Gaza. □

Congress ponders legislation halting aid to terrorist groups*By Matthew Dorf*

WASHINGTON, April 11 (JTA) — Amid charges that the U.S. government is launching a war on Arab Americans, Congress has begun to consider measures to halt American donations to terrorist groups.

Among the groups being targeted are Hamas and Islamic Jihad, the Muslim fundamentalist organizations that claimed responsibility for Sunday's suicide bombings in the Gaza Strip.

The long legislative road for the Omnibus Anti-Terrorism Act began last week with hearings before the House Judiciary Committee.

In addition to banning charitable contributions to terrorist groups, the bill would beef up federal anti-terrorism statutes, ban terrorist leaders from traveling to the United States and establish expedited deportation hearings for aliens suspected of terrorism.

The pending legislation is phase two of the U.S. government's war on terrorism. Phase one came in January when President Clinton issued an executive order against terrorist groups.

In addition to Hamas and Islamic Jihad, the order listed 10 other groups, including two Jewish extremist organizations, Kach and Kahane Chai.

The legislative flurry came just four days before the terrorist attacks near two Jewish settlements in the Gaza Strip. Seven Israeli soldiers and an American Jewish university student were killed in one of the explosions.

The latest attacks enhanced the resolve of some legislators to pursue the bill. "This proves more than ever the need for a terrorism bill to quash American fund raising for Hamas and Islamic Jihad," said Rep. Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.), who introduced the bill on behalf of the Clinton administration in January.

Jewish organizations are pushing the bill as one of the central tenets of their agenda in Washington.

"The problem with terrorism is very real and very tangible," said Michael Lieberman, associate director and counsel of the Washington office of the Anti-Defamation League. "The need to enhance American legal capabilities, including law enforcement's ability to prevent terrorist acts, is very clear to us."

Backdrop of an especially violent year

Lieberman and others said the efforts come against the backdrop of an especially violent year of terrorist activity, from attacks on Jewish targets in Buenos Aires and London to the more recent incidents in Israel.

But the legislation is facing stiff opposition.

Civil liberties groups, some lawmakers and especially Arab American groups have attacked the bill as an assault on the constitutional rights of some Americans.

Among the provisions in the proposed legislation most troubling for civil libertarians are expedited deportation hearings for aliens suspected of terrorism and elaborate licensing procedures for organizations seeking to raise funds for organizations deemed by the president to be terrorist groups.

At a news conference during a break in last week's hearing, Arab American leaders lambasted members of Congress, the Clinton administration and Jewish organizations for pushing "stupid laws like this."

Asserting that the legislation would infringe on the civil rights of Arab Americans, James Zogby, director of the Arab American Institute, said, "This is not a war against terrorism. This is a war against the Constitution and the Bill of Rights of the United States."

Zogby contended that the Arab American commu-

nities "have been seen as the weak link in the civil liberties chain" and that attempts to erode civil rights have often targeted Arabs and Muslims.

Because of civil rights concerns, the American Civil Liberties Union testified in opposition to the bill at last week's hearing.

Some Jewish groups, though instrumental in helping to write the legislation, have agreed that some changes are necessary to ensure civil rights protection.

Both the Anti-Defamation League and the American Jewish Committee say such changes are in the works. "This is a work in progress," said the ADL's Lieberman.

Lieberman said that with "two or three minor modifications," the bill would pass the civil liberties test.

But these changes will not eliminate the fundamental disagreements between the Arab American and Jewish communities over defining a terrorist and the overall need for anti-terrorism legislation. "We will not compromise on our support for a broad anti-terrorism bill," Lieberman said, voicing the views of many in the Jewish community.

Many Arab Americans maintain that Hamas is not a terrorist group. They argue that only small independent factions of the organization carry out deadly attacks such as last Sunday's bombing in Gaza.

'Hamas is not a terrorist organization'

Many Arab Americans were dismayed when President Clinton, in issuing his executive order against terrorist groups in January, included Hamas and Islamic Jihad.

"Hamas is not a terrorist organization," said Abdurahman Alamoudi, executive director of the American Muslim Council. "The issue for us is to be conscious of where to give our money, but not to be dictated to where we send our money."

"If the United Palestinian Appeal will be affected by this legislation," then "the United Jewish Appeal will be affected by this," Alamoudi threatened, referring to the Jewish community's fund-raising apparatus.

"We will ensure that it is," he said.

However, the Clinton administration and Jewish groups disagree that the pending legislation would prevent donations to social service agencies such as orphanages.

Supporters of the bill say support for Hamas-run social service agencies could continue as long as fund-raisers follow a licensing procedure and can certify that money is not going to be siphoned off to fund terrorism.

Estimates on how much American money now flows to Middle East terror groups vary widely, from hundreds of thousands of dollars to the tens of millions a year.

As the Arab American groups have begun to test their political muscle on Capitol Hill in an effort to derail the legislation, Jewish organizations have begun their own campaign to lobby for its passage.

Immediately after the hearing last week, the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council initiated a conference call to inform its members of the bill and to plan lobbying strategies.

Members across the country were encouraged to support the bill when they meet with members of Congress during the current recess.

At the same time, leaders encouraged their members to push for changes to satisfy the civil rights concerns that many in the Jewish community share.

Subcommittees of the House Judiciary Committee have scheduled further hearings on the bill in May. The committee chairman, Rep. Henry Hyde (R-Ill.), could introduce a substitute bill that would address the civil liberty concerns surrounding the legislation, according to Capitol Hill aides. □

BEHIND THE HEADLINES
**Making matzah in Georgia:
Jews persevere amid shortages**

By Deborah Kazis

GORI, Georgia, April 11 (JTA) — In a dark synagogue basement, amid the heat and overpowering smell of kerosene, the Jews of Gori are frantically trying to make enough matzah for Passover.

Making matzah is not a simple matter for the 800 Jews who live in this small rural town in this former Soviet republic.

The electricity is sporadic at best, and there are severe shortages of both food and water.

In the muddy cobblestone courtyard of the once-elegant and now-crumbling synagogue, a long rubber hose leads from a jerrycan of gasoline to a generator, which is pumping and belching smoke. Only the generator keeps the dim lights on in the basement and the matzah machinery cranking along.

Although it is April, a heavy snow is falling, adding to the deep slushy puddles that fill the street of the city that was the birthplace of Stalin.

A mixture is pulled into long strips on an ancient production line. Young boys from the community cut the strips into squares and drape each square over long wooden poles.

The poles are eased into the oval mouth of a cavernous stone oven where a wood fire roars.

The cramped basement is alive with activity.

People bring their own huge sacks of flour, children grab tastes of the hot matzah as it comes out of the oven and the young boys and old men of the community join forces. They race around, trying to get as much matzah baked as possible before the generator fails or runs out of gas.

A man with an abacus and a scale sits in the entrance to ensure that each family gets its fair share.

Next to him, five turkeys wait in a wire cage; today is also the day for slaughtering kosher meat.

The activity here is not new. Throughout the Communist period, the Jews of Gori managed to make their own matzah.

This year they hope to bake more than three tons of matzah, enough both for themselves and for the neighboring towns of Surami and Kareli, with just 300 and 150 Jews, respectively.

House where Stalin was born

Not far from the synagogue in Gori is a small, well-preserved house in the middle of the town square. This is the house where Stalin was born.

Georgia lies on the Caucasus mountain range, on the eastern coast of the Black Sea. A fertile land once known for its vineyards and orchards, Georgia is today racked by ethnic conflicts, civil war and crime. It has a population of 5 million people, enough for its own branch of Orthodox Christianity.

Jews are believed to have lived in Georgia for 26 centuries, having settled here after the destruction of the First Temple in 586 B.C.E.

About 25,000 Jews live throughout the country today, most in the capital of Tbilisi.

Almost all are Georgian, though some Ashkenazi Jews came here from Russia and the Baltics, fleeing anti-Semitism.

Georgia declared independence from the Soviet Union in 1991, and after 70 years of repressive Communism, the Jewish community is now rebuilding itself.

"Georgians are very proud that there is no anti-Semitism here," says Temuri Yakobashvili, a member

of the Jewish community and a diplomat with the Georgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

"Georgians feel an affinity toward Israel," he said, adding that Georgia is "a small nation surrounded by Muslim countries."

Tbilisi is part village, part city. Colorful stone and wood houses with elaborate balconies scale gentle hills and fill tiny winding alleys.

Two strikingly beautiful brick synagogues are now open in Tbilisi. The community also boasts a small yeshiva plus a Jewish school for boys and girls that has 85 pupils. Several Hebrew immersion programs have recently emerged, and a small kindergarten is just beginning.

A welfare society, supported by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, helps more than 500 elderly Jews who cannot survive on their pensions.

Volunteers deliver tea, oil, sugar, rice, soup mix and candles. But often there is no gas to heat the soup or boil the rice.

The average salary is \$1.50 a month, and the average pension 50 cents. Due to food shortages, prices are high.

"Things are desperate. It is impossible to even buy enough bread with this money," says Rabbi Ariel Levine, the chief — and only — rabbi in Georgia.

During the past few decades, an estimated 40,000 to 50,000 Jews have left Georgia to resettle in Israel, and some are still leaving each month.

Many of the remaining Jews say they are torn between their love for Israel and their feeling that Georgia is their home.

"If the government can bring order, the Jews will stay," says Levine.

For many Jews living under Communism in the Soviet Union, matzah was their only link to Judaism.

And even though Jewish life has developed here in Gori, once home to some 2,000 Jews, that special link continues.

Despite the snow and lack of flour, water and electricity, through sheer determination, the Jews in the birthplace of Stalin will once again have their matzah for Passover. □

**Israel grants permanent status
to 46 Bosnian Muslim refugees**

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM, April 11 (JTA) — A total of 46 Bosnian Muslim refugees received permanent status in Israel this week, two years after they were brought here as part of a humanitarian rescue effort.

The refugees were among a group of about 85 that Israel took in at the end of February 1993, when a full-fledged war was raging in Bosnia. The conflict in that region of the world remains unresolved.

The endeavor was initiated by Yossi Sarid, a Knesset member who serves as Israel's environment minister.

The 46 refugees who remained in Israel moved to Kibbutz Beit Oren on Mount Carmel, where they live and work.

The ceremony for their new status was held at Kibbutz Ma'agan Michael, south of Haifa.

Until now, the refugees have held temporary resident status. When they received permanent status this week, they were issued Israeli identity cards.

Israel Radio reported that some have asked permission to bring relatives, some of whom fled to Croatia, to Israel.

The Israeli government is reportedly considering the request. □