



NEWS AT A GLANCE

■ Israel and the Palestinians agreed to an American request to delay the resumption of negotiations by at least one day. The talks were postponed to allow for informal talks to try to bridge outstanding differences. [Page 2]

■ Jewish groups in New York were set to convene a rally near the United Nations to mark the 10th anniversary of the capture of missing Israeli Air Force Capt. Ron Arad. The rally is intended to call attention to the fate of Arad and three other Israelis who were missing in action in Lebanon.

■ The Israeli High Court of Justice rejected for technical reasons a petition from the right-wing Jewish group Chai Ve'Kayam against the planned opening of a mosque in Solomon's Stables, an underground chamber adjacent to the Temple Mount.

■ A group of reserve soldiers and officers from elite combat units warned Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that his policies were causing declining motivation among reservists. Deputy Education Minister Moshe Peled said the 33 signatories to the letter should be demoted.

■ Israel's High Court of Justice began hearing a petition by Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert against the attorney general's decision to charge him with financial irregularities during his tenure as Likud Party treasurer. Olmert's lawyer argued that the attorney general did not have sufficient evidence.

■ Three of the rabbis who appealed in a newspaper advertisement to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu not to withdraw from Hebron were dead when the ad was published. Rabbi Haim Druckman, another signatory to the ad, told Israel Radio that there was nothing "trefe" about the ad because he was sure that the three rabbis had not changed their opinions since dying.

■ Former Labor Justice Minister David Libai said he would resign from the Knesset to concentrate on his activities as a lawyer and professor.

NEWS ANALYSIS

Israeli-Jordanian ties at nadir two years after signing peace

By Gil Sedan

AMMAN, Jordan (JTA) — In the two years since Israel and Jordan signed their historic peace treaty, relations between the two countries have reached a nadir.

Early last week, Israel's ambassador to Amman, Shimon Shamir, cabled alarming messages to Jerusalem, describing the deteriorating relations with Jordan in the direst of terms.

Only after he was described as virtually begging for a meeting with Jordanian Prime Minister Abdul Karim al-Kabariti was he granted one — and their ensuing discourse was cold, observers said.

Shamir was later quoted as saying that never before had he felt so humiliated as during that session with Kabariti.

Discontent with the October 1994 Israeli-Jordanian peace treaty has spread far beyond government circles in a country that traditionally has been one of Israel's warmest neighbors.

Last weekend, scores of activists, political parties and trade unions in Jordan called on Arab governments to reconsider their ties with Israel as a response to what they view as the intransigence of the government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

And at Hashemiyah Square, located in downtown Amman, almost every Jordanian a recent visitor here encountered sounded bitter about the peace process.

Sa'ad Silawi, bureau chief of the Middle East Broadcasting Center here, questioned whether Netanyahu could safely visit Amman.

"I don't think he can, and I would not advise him to do so, after what he has done," said Silawi, who felt that the burden of proof regarding Israel's intentions in the peace process now rested squarely with Netanyahu.

Others here expressed similar emotions, and on more than one occasion, their anger was aimed directly at the Israeli prime minister.

What makes the criticism voiced on the street particularly disturbing is that it has filtered down directly from the highest levels of government.

Jordan went out on a limb vis-a-vis the more hard-line governments of the Arab world when it signed the peace with Israel two years ago. Jordan justified the move on the basis of the peace moves Israel had made at the time with the Palestinians.

But with recent events all but bringing the Israeli-Palestinian peace process to a grinding halt, Jordanian leaders have felt that the current Israeli leadership pulled the rug out from under them — to the evident satisfaction of the hard-line Arab governments.

Jordan doubly angered

Beyond the peace process with the Palestinians, Jordanian leaders were angered by Israel's recent decision to open another entrance to a tunnel located near Jerusalem's Temple Mount.

The Jordanian government said Israel's unilateral decision to open the entrance deprived Jordan of its special status as guardian of Islamic holy sites in Jerusalem, which was specifically granted under the terms of the 1994 peace accord.

Jordan has long felt that this provision of the accord was in Israel's own interest, because it would undercut Palestinian claims to eastern Jerusalem.

Moreover, Jordan was doubly angered when Netanyahu's foreign policy adviser, Dore Gold, failed to mention Israel's plans when he visited Amman days before the Sept. 23 opening of the tunnel entrance.

Gold has since stated that he did not know about the decision to open the entrance when he visited Amman.

But this excuse scored no points with the Jordanian leadership.

Marwan Muashar, the Jordanian information minister and a former ambassador to Israel, said in an interview that there had previously been an exchange of correspondence "in which the Israeli government expressed desire to open the tunnel."

But Jordan rejected the idea time and again, pointing to the potential

dangers involved in opening the tunnel, he said. Indeed, days after the entrance was opened, the move sparked three days of Israeli-Palestinian bloodshed that left 76 dead on both sides.

When King Hussein met Netanyahu at the Oct. 1-2 emergency summit convened in Washington to discuss the eruption of violence, the king reportedly expressed his deep disappointment with the Israeli premier.

On Sunday, Hussein went further, publicly warning that Israel's current policies were putting the entire region "on the brink of an abyss."

"His Majesty feels that Netanyahu should have seized the moment in Washington. He should have taken a courageous decision to lead this peace process forward," Muashar said in the interview.

"His Majesty felt that forces opposing the peace process should not be given ammunition."

With Palestinians making up two-thirds of Jordan's 3.5 million population, and with a strong Islamic fundamentalist opposition in the country's Parliament, the Jordanian leadership has become increasingly aggressive in its stance toward Israel.

Flurry of meetings planned

In Israel, meanwhile, there were growing indications that the government was taking the Jordanian criticisms seriously.

A flurry of meetings was planned for this week in an effort to repair Israel's damaged relationship with the Hashemite kingdom.

Gold met Sunday with the Jordanian ambassador to Israel, Omar Abdul-Monem Rifai, to plan a higher-level meeting later this week involving Netanyahu; Foreign Minister David Levy was slated to visit Jordan during the week, as was President Ezer Weizman.

Hussein said Sunday that he expected "to hear some good news soon."

He did not elaborate, but it appeared clear that he expected some movement to emerge from this week's meetings with the Israeli leaders — as well as from the resumed Israeli-Palestinian negotiations.

Meanwhile, on the streets of Amman, many Jordanians made a distinction between the Israeli people as a whole and the Israeli government.

"Most Israelis want peace," said Sa'id, the owner of a clothing store at Hashemiyah Square. "It's Netanyahu who doesn't."

Another man standing there harked back to bygone days.

The late Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, who signed the peace accord with King Hussein, "was very good," he said.

"He was our darling. Had he lived today, the situation would have been much better. We trusted him, there was understanding between him and His Majesty."

But another man, Mohammad al-Mughrabi, had a far less sanguine viewpoint.

"The peace process was a flop from the beginning. Both Rabin and Netanyahu followed the same guidelines. Rabin was more pragmatic and diplomatic, but they are both the same."

The Jordanian government, for all its recent criticisms of Israel, does not appear ready to abandon the peace process.

"We have to make one thing clear," Muashar said in the interview. "We respect our agreements, and we will still respect them till eternity. We signed a peace treaty with Israel, a treaty Jordan will always respect."

"There is no need and no will to cut off relations. On the contrary, the alarm bell that His Majesty is sounding should drive the peace process forward." □

Israel, Palestinians differ on progress in negotiations

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Hoping to make headway in their negotiations on the Israeli redeployment in Hebron, Israel and the Palestinians this week agreed to an American proposal to delay by at least a day resuming formal talks to give more time for informal contacts.

The postponement was announced as Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat met Sunday with opposition leader Shimon Peres in an attempt to bolster the Israeli-Palestinian peace process.

The formal negotiations were scheduled to open Monday at the Egyptian resort of Taba, moving later in the week to Eilat.

But U.S. Middle East envoy Dennis Ross, who has been mediating the talks, said Sunday that informal discussions between working groups on various issues related to Hebron appeared to be making progress, and suggested allowing them to continue.

"It would be worthwhile not to stop the momentum" of the informal discussions, the head of the Israeli negotiating team, former Israel Defense Force Chief of Staff Dan Shomron, told Israel Radio.

Sources in Jerusalem said Sunday that they believed that an agreement on the Hebron redeployment, which was originally scheduled to have been carried out in March, would be reached by the end of the month.

But this optimism was not shared by the Palestinians, who said that the first round of talks last week failed to resolve any of the disputed issues.

'Peace is not dead'

After his meeting with Peres in the West Bank town of Nablus, Arafat called on the people of Israel to help advance the peace process.

"I am addressing the whole Israeli people, to be faithful to what we have agreed upon and what has been signed," he said.

Labor leader Peres urged the two sides not to lose hope. "In spite of the difficulties and the disappointments, peace is not dead," he said. "We shall overcome this crisis and go ahead."

In what was billed as a confidence-building measure, Israel eased the full closure it imposed on the West Bank and Gaza Strip in the wake of the violence.

Despite an earlier decision by Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai to allow 35,000 Palestinians to return to their jobs in Israel on Sunday, only about 3,300 workers actually entered Israel that day.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu convened the Inner Cabinet for consultations on what is feared might provide another spark for the Israeli-Palestinian tinderbox: the planned opening of a mosque in a vast underground chamber under the Temple Mount complex.

The site, known as Solomon's Stables, was used last winter, with consent from the previous Israeli government, for Ramadan prayers.

The Wakf, which administers Islamic holy sites on the Temple Mount, has been overseeing intensive renovations in the past month to open a permanent mosque at the site. The mosque's inauguration was expected sometime this week.

Legal officials advised the Inner Cabinet that the opening of the mosque did not violate any laws and could not be prevented, Israel Radio reported Sunday.

Foreign Minister David Levy warned Sunday against turning every issue, including the mosque, into a confrontation between Jews and the Islamic world. □

AROUND THE JEWISH WORLD
Jews in Romania, Hungary
cooperate on development*By Ruth E. Gruber*

BUDAPEST (JTA) — A breakthrough in cross-border Jewish cooperation recently took place when a high-level Jewish delegation from Romania visited Hungary to take part in a study program on Jewish community development.

Representatives of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, which organized the weeklong pre-High Holiday trip, called the meetings in Budapest "historic" because it was the first time that any significant Romanian Jewish delegation had visited the Jewish community in Hungary since World War II.

During the Communist era, Jewish life in Eastern Europe was carried on under strictures that discouraged or barred most international contacts. Jews in Hungary and Romania were particularly estranged because relations between their respective countries were long-strained, largely because of claims of Romanian discrimination against Romania's 2 million ethnic Hungarian minority.

Although it had no direct connection with the Romanian Jewish delegation's trip to Hungary, Romanian and Hungarian leaders last month signed a landmark agreement aimed at easing tensions between the two countries.

Jewish communities in both Hungary and Romania must cope with poverty, loneliness, illness and other problems among elderly Holocaust survivors.

But overall, the demographic and social conditions for Jews in the two countries are quite different.

Romania, whose economy has lagged far behind other former Communist states in its transition to a free-market society, has only about 14,000, mainly elderly, Jews. Most of them live in poverty, and the prime concern of community leaders is social welfare.

Hungary, on the other hand, has as many as 80,000 or more Jews, with a broadening base of young people.

Providing social care and welfare relief to elderly survivors is a priority, but stronger community resources have enabled the implementation of innovative programs run by a special Foundation for Jewish Social Support.

The goal of the meetings in Budapest was to stimulate leaders of the Romanian Jewish community to consider new ideas and solutions in the sphere of social welfare and community development by introducing them to some of the programs already in place in Hungary. The groups toured Budapest's Jewish facilities, including the new Balint Jewish Community Center, day-care centers for the elderly and a Jewish kindergarten.

Romanian delegation member Nilu Aronivici said the trip to Budapest was "a deep Jewish experience," adding that he and others in his group looked forward to follow-up meetings and to implementing some of the programs they saw in action.

"I think it shocked them to go to the Jewish schools," said Eva Carpati, a Hungarian JDC staff member. In Romania they "lack the young generations, whereas here we can really speak of a Jewish revival." □

Poland adopts plan to aid
preservation of Auschwitz*By Alissa Kaplan*

NEW YORK (JTA) — An Auschwitz Museum Council leader has called for a meeting with Polish officials to discuss how to use the funds Poland approved for better management and care of the former death camp and surrounding area.

The multimillion-dollar plan that Poland adopted Oct. 8 came after groups worldwide bristled at the construction of a shopping complex adjacent to the camp, where nearly 2 million people were killed during World War II.

Many saw the building of a mini-mall on the site as an offense to the memory of the Nazi victims.

Original plans for the ill-fated shopping center — work on the site has since stopped — called for a supermarket, a home and garden center, and a fast-food restaurant, among other businesses.

Now, under the first stage of the new plan, a top Polish official said, about \$21 million will be set aside for the care of the area, with more than half of those funds going to administering a protected zone around the camp, it was reported.

Inappropriate development in the zone around the camp would be prevented or removed, it was reported.

The chairman of the business and finance committee of the Auschwitz Museum Council, Kalman Sultanik, said in a telephone interview here last week that he asked Polish leaders to meet with the committee in January 1997 at Auschwitz.

The museum council is the body charged with protecting the integrity of the grounds of the former death camp.

"We are very pleased," Sultanik, also the vice president of the World Jewish Congress, said of Poland's newly adopted plan.

"We are also not finished" with matters concerning the camp.

Sultanik added that he would contact the president of Poland to thank him for his efforts.

The goal of the new project is to ensure "fitting reverence for the place of the mass extermination of Jews and the martyrdom of the Polish and other nations," Leszek Miller, Poland's Cabinet chief of staff, reportedly said at a news conference there. □

Papon, charged with war crimes,
now accused of Algerian deaths*By Lee Yanowitch*

PARIS (JTA) — Maurice Papon, the former French Cabinet member who faces trial for his role in deporting nearly 1,700 Jews to Nazi death camps, has been accused of causing the deaths of dozens of Algerians during pro-independence protests while he was Paris police chief in 1961.

An Algerian rights group known as The Foundation for May 8, 1945, recently said that Papon was responsible for the deaths of more than 100 people when he ordered the repression of a Paris demonstration in October 1961, during the war for Algerian independence from France.

Algeria was granted independence in 1962.

Three people died and 64 were injured in the protest, according to official reports.

But about 60 bodies were fished out of the Seine River and dozens more were found hanged in the Bois de Vincennes in eastern Paris in the days and weeks that followed.

An aide to then-Prime Minister Michel Debre has since said that about 100 Algerians died during the protests.

A Bordeaux court ruled last month that Papon, who served as budget minister in the French Cabinet during the 1970s, should be tried for crimes against humanity.

Papon, 86, was charged with deporting 1,690 Jews, 223 of them children, while he was secretary general of the Bordeaux region's local government during Germany's wartime occupation of France. □

AROUND THE JEWISH WORLD
Jews leaving South Africa
to flee widespread crime

By Suzanne Belling

JOHANNESBURG (JTA) — For the first time in years, there were High Holiday seats available in South Africa's most popular synagogues.

The reason for the vacancies: Jewish emigres fleeing the country's rampant crime.

Chief Rabbi Cyril Harris, who has repeatedly called on the country's Jews to remain and work toward creating a better future for South Africa, gave sermons at several synagogues over Rosh Hashanah calling on Jews not to "occupy the twilight zone of hesitation and inactivity."

"Those who felt South Africa had a chance — albeit not a good one — should make a contribution toward a successful outcome," he said.

In the 1970s and earlier, Jews emigrated to protest the country's system of apartheid; in the 1980s, they left because they feared a revolution in South Africa's transition to democracy.

But since the 1994 elections in which Nelson Mandela was elected president, the main reason South African Jews are leaving is crime.

During the apartheid years, the country's white population was largely oblivious to the high incidence of crime in the black townships.

But with the end of apartheid, crime has spilled into the affluent suburbs, though the crime rate in the black townships remains higher than in white areas.

A young doctor, who prefers to remain anonymous for professional reasons, said he is immigrating to Australia with his family "because I'm concerned about the crime and violence [and] their toll on the economy."

He said he did not consider making aliyah "because I can't speak Hebrew and Australia is very similar to South Africa."

Uri Bar-Ner, a shaliach based at the South African Zionist Federation, feels that people leaving for countries other than Israel "are making a big mistake. They should go to Israel for ideological reasons — because that is our Jewish homeland."

'Singled out by media'

He called on the 20,000 former South Africans living in Israel "who have made a tremendous success of their lives there" to convey this message to their former compatriots.

"They are not highlighting their achievements, the quality of life in Israel, and are perpetuating the perception that living in Israel is difficult," he said.

The South African Jewish Board of Deputies maintains that the statistics for Jews leaving are exaggerated.

The umbrella group representing South African Jewry is also angry that the Jewish community has been singled out by the secular media when it comes to reporting on emigration.

"The Jewish population is less than half of 1 percent of the South African population," said Seymour Kopelowitz, the board's national director. "Jewish emigration from South Africa is relatively minuscule compared to the total emigration figures."

While Kopelowitz agreed that a "few hundred" Jews have left the country because of crime, he said they are not leaving in the thousands.

"Jewish emigration statistics from South Africa are hard to obtain," he added. "Indications for this year are that figures are low. Nevertheless, the community is always personally affected, as someone always knows of someone

else who is leaving — and that is hard for those who are left behind."

The board's national chairwoman, Marlene Bethlehem, urged Jews to "stay home and make a difference in South Africa or go home and make a difference in the State of Israel — but don't sit on the fence."

She said it is easy to retain a Jewish identity here and cited several factors as proof: the wealth of Jewish institutions in South Africa, the availability of kosher facilities, the extensive network of Jewish schools and the fact that South Africa has one of the lowest rates of anti-Semitism in the world.

Bethlehem, however, expressed concern about the impact of emigration on the funding of communal welfare bodies.

Among the emigres are some of the largest donors to those bodies, she said.

Jewish emigration also has had repercussions on the country's Jewish day school movement.

Jeff Bortz, chairman of the South African Board of Jewish Education, said two principals, several teachers and about 100 students have left the country's King David school system this year.

Because many of the parents who emigrated were able to afford the full school tuition and many of those remaining require financial assistance, the schools are now hurting financially, Bortz said.

Yeshiva College, which serves the most observant segment of the community, has meanwhile been largely unaffected by emigration.

"One or two families have left — but if we lose children, they usually go to Israel," Rabbi Avraham Tanzer, the head of Yeshiva College and spiritual leader of the adjacent Glenhazel Synagogue, said.

"This year our synagogue had the highest attendance ever. If people leave, they are replaced by others."

For those Jews who stay in South Africa, crime remains a chief concern.

'Leave when lives in danger'

Some 93 Jewish residents in the community of Glenhazel, a suburb of Johannesburg with a large number of observant Jews, have helped bring down the level of local crime by joining the police services as reservists, with the full powers accorded to police.

The Jewish Community Security Organization ensures that its volunteers guard every synagogue.

But just the same, they are powerless to protect those walking home — particularly at night — and those who are hijacked in the cars at traffic lights or in the driveways of their homes.

One Jewish leader has been seeking presidential help with the crime problem.

Rabbi Saggi Suchard, spiritual leader of the Beth Hamedrash Hagadol in the community of Sandton, has been seeking a meeting with Mandela to appeal to him to fight crime in South Africa and to encourage Jews to remain in the country. Suchard requested the meeting in a letter he handed to Mandela when the president recently attended a Bar Mitzvah in Johannesburg.

In his letter, Suchard stressed the Jewish contribution to South Africa — as Mandela did when addressing the Bar Mitzvah boy — and stated that Jews bring blessings to the countries in which they live.

"I intend to ask the president to do everything possible to combat crime," said Suchard. "People can live with a lowering of standards, but they leave when their lives are in danger."

"And, from every country which Jews have been forced to leave, they eventually are asked to return. Jews make a difference in the countries in which they live." □