



NEWS AT A GLANCE

■ **The U.S. Senate voted 95-4 to cut Russia's \$195 million in foreign aid if Russian President Boris Yeltsin signs a bill that would restrict religious freedom in Russia. The proposed bill would place restrictions on all religions that have not been active in Russia for more than 15 years.**

■ **The Maccabiah Games resumed in Israel amid accusations that the bridge that collapsed during the opening ceremony was built by an unlicensed contractor, did not have the required permits and was anchored to the ground only with metal wire. Two people have died from the accident and seven remain in serious condition. [Page 3]**

■ **Palestinians and Israeli soldiers clashed in the West Bank town of Bethlehem after the funeral of a Hamas activist who died when a bomb he was assembling exploded in his hands. Mourners chanted anti-Israeli slogans during the procession.**

■ **Hezbollah rockets landed inside northern Israel for the second consecutive day. No injuries were reported. Israel promised to retaliate.**

■ **Jewish groups are planning a demonstration opposite the Argentine consulate in New York on Friday to express their frustration with the lack of progress in the investigation into the 1994 Buenos Aires bombing of a Jewish community center. The attack left 87 people dead and 200 wounded.**

■ **Lithuania has delayed indefinitely the case against accused Nazi war criminal Alexandras Lileikis because of his poor health. He is accused of handing over Jews to death squads when he headed the Vilnius branch of the Lithuanian security police during World War II. He returned to Lithuania last year after a U.S. court revoked his American citizenship.**

■ **Plans to build a Holocaust memorial in Germany were delayed when officials reopened the search for a design. The memorial has been plagued with problems since 1995, when a proposed model was widely criticized.**

NEWS ANALYSIS

Pattern of Palestinian violence connected to talks, cooperation

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Quiet broke out on the streets of Hebron early this week, raising the question: What accounts for the ebb and flow of recent violence in the territories?

There is a detectable pattern to events in the Gaza Strip and West Bank, where clashes between Israelis and Palestinians during the past several weeks have evoked images of the worst days of the pre-Oslo Palestinian uprising.

Those clashes, in turn, have given way to periods of relative calm.

Whether violence or calm prevails appears to be a direct result of two key factors: the level of cooperation between Israel and the Palestinian Authority and the level of daily contact between Jews and Arabs in the self-rule areas.

Weeks of rioting in Hebron came to a sudden end Monday, when some 200 Palestinian police were deployed for the first time in two weeks along the area that divides the Palestinian- and Israeli-controlled parts of the city.

The move followed talks Sunday night between Palestinian security officials and the commander of Israeli forces in Hebron.

In return for the Palestinian pledge to try to maintain calm, Israel allowed the Palestinian shops located in areas that had been flash points for violence in recent days to reopen.

It is no coincidence that Hebron — the only West Bank town where Palestinians and Jews live side by side — has been the scene of the worst violence since Israeli-Palestinian negotiations came to a halt in mid-March.

Near-daily riots erupted there after fliers depicting the prophet Mohammed as a pig appeared in the town.

A Jerusalem woman has been detained on suspicion of distributing the fliers.

Over the weekend, demonstrators threw bombs and rocks at the Israeli troops, who responded with rubber bullets and tear gas. At least 19 Palestinians were wounded, including Palestinian journalists covering the protests.

Saturday's violent clashes reportedly broke out after a group of Jewish settlers, returning from Sabbath prayers, threw stones at Palestinian youth.

Violence at the tombs

Violence also has erupted recently in Nablus, where the Israeli army protects groups of yeshiva students who go there to pray and study at the Tomb of Joseph.

Rachel's Tomb, another holy site that attracts Jewish worshipers to Bethlehem, has become another place of confrontations and violence.

In contrast, there have been no reported instances of violence in such West Bank towns as Jenin, Tulkarm and Kalkilya, where there is no Jewish presence.

The decreased tensions in Hebron — and Gaza — followed another important development: the first high-level meeting between Israeli and Palestinian negotiators in months.

The negotiations have been stalled since March of this year, when Israel began construction at Har Homa, a neighborhood in southeastern Jerusalem.

The Palestinians viewed the move as pre-empting final-status talks on Jerusalem.

They claim the eastern half of the capital for a future Palestinian state.

At the meeting last week, officials discussed the opening of a Palestinian airport in Gaza and the creation of a safe passage route for Palestinians traveling between the West Bank and Gaza.

The head of the Palestinian Civil Aviation Authority said Monday that negotiators had agreed on landing and takeoff procedures at the airport as well as a name: the Gaza International Airport.

While security procedures at the airport still have to be worked out,

progress was also reported in the discussions regarding the safe passage route and the opening of a seaport in Gaza.

All three topics are unresolved issues from the Interim Agreement that Israel and the Palestinian Authority signed in Washington in September 1995.

Progress on these issues may well have prompted Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat to seek a calming of the situation.

Indeed, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu repeatedly had held the Palestinian Authority responsible for the unrest, accusing the self-rule police of purposely not intervening to quell the riots.

"Their Palestinian police could easily restore order on the streets. It has chosen not to," he said, prior to the police deployment in Hebron.

He also warned that if violence continues, Israel would take firm steps, "including measures that I don't want to elaborate on now."

In the Gaza Strip, meanwhile, cooperation — and concessions — also contributed to the cooling of hot tempers.

At the Jewish settlement of Morag, for example, Palestinians recently sought control over a piece of land between Morag and the settlements' hothouses, claiming that they had legal rights to the land.

In reaction, the settlers fenced off the area, which, in turn, triggered violent Palestinian demonstrations at the site.

One Palestinian youth died in clashes with Israeli security forces last week.

The violence was quelled after the Israeli army assured Palestinian landowners that they would have free passage over the land they claimed as theirs until the Israeli Supreme Court decided the issue.

And at Gush Katif, an Israeli enclave within Gaza, a dispute over a Jewish memorial to a Jewish soldier was resolved — this time, Israel gave in.

Protests in Gush Katif

At the Gush Katif junction — an area under Israeli security control and Palestinian civilian control — Palestinians protested the erection of a monument in memory of Yehuda Levy.

Levy was killed in the three days of bloody rioting that erupted last September after Israel opened a new entrance to an archaeological tunnel located near Jerusalem's Temple Mount.

The Palestinians objected to the monument on land they claimed as their own.

The army admitted that no one had the authority to erect the monument on the site without the approval of the Palestinian Authority.

The monument was removed, despite angry protests by the settlers.

In addition, the family of the fallen soldier protested.

In another instance in Gaza, the Israeli army had stopped the municipality from projects on the beach of Khan Yunis.

This move that prompted Palestinian demonstrations.

This time, it was the Palestinian Authority that made the concession, bowing to Israeli control of the area and halting the demonstrations.

In each case, it was cooperation between the two sides, along with concessions, that saved each situation from spinning out of control.

It remains unclear whether these halting steps toward security cooperation will bear fruit with a return to the bargaining table and progress toward the final-status talks.

Equally unclear is whether the proximity of Jews and Palestinians in certain portions of the self-rule areas will prove an insurmountable barrier in achieving full peace. □

(JTA correspondent Naomi Segal in Jerusalem contributed to this report.)

BEHIND THE HEADLINES

Australians grieve for team in wake of Maccabiah tragedy

By Jeremy Jones

SYDNEY, Australia (JTA) — Members of the Australian Jewish community were devastated by the news of the tragedy at the opening ceremony of the Maccabiah Games.

Two members of the Australian team died and dozens of others were injured when a pedestrian bridge collapsed at the Ramat Gan stadium, plunging scores into the river below.

Two of the fatalities were Gregory Small, 37, and Yetty Bennett, 50, both of Sydney and both members of the 10-pin bowling team.

Seven of the injured remain in critical condition.

The Australian Jewish community of 105,000 had been anticipating good news from the Maccabiah Games, where the 370-member Australian team was expected to improve on the 16 gold medals it won four years ago.

Instead, at 3:30 a.m. local time Tuesday, Jewish families were awakened by relatives and friends in Israel with news of the tragedy.

Throughout the day, Jewish community organizations' phones were flooded with calls from the families and friends of the competitors, as well from as many other Australians sending their sympathies and condolences.

Family members interviewed in the Australian media choked back tears in efforts to convey their feelings of loss and despair. Jewish welfare organizations organized counseling sessions for those who were close to the victims and for students at Jewish day schools.

Peter Wertheim, president of the New South Wales Jewish Board of Deputies, the umbrella organization for 40,000 Jews, said, "It is extremely difficult and painful to come to terms with the fact that such a joyous international sporting event should have been marred by a devastating tragedy of this magnitude."

The premier of New South Wales, Bob Carr, was among the first callers to the Jewish community, sending his condolences to the families of the deceased, who came from his home state.

The organizing committee for the Olympic Games that are slated to be held in Sydney in the year 2000, also sent its sympathies to the Australian team. Prayer services are being organized in synagogues throughout Australia.

Some Jewish organizations are holding special services to allow community members to express their grief and feelings of sympathy. □

Easing traffic with free bikes

JERUSALEM (JTA) — The Ramat Hasharon town council has come up with a novel way to try to cut down on traffic jams: make bicycles available to residents for free.

Taking the lead from Amsterdam, the municipality, near Tel Aviv, has purchased a fleet of bicycles, which will be painted white and placed around the city.

The town hopes that residents will use them to move through the center of town and then leave them for others to use. A town official said he hopes no one will steal the new transportation system. □

Maccabiah Games get started amid flap over bridge collapse*By Naomi Segal*

JERUSALEM (JTA) — The Maccabiah Games got under way Wednesday, as investigators questioned the contractors responsible for building the bridge whose collapse brought tragedy to the competition.

The games had been called off for 24 hours, as mourning was observed for the two Australian athletes who died after the bridge collapsed Monday during the opening ceremonies.

Athletes wore black ribbons in memory of the two when the competition began Wednesday.

Scores of other athletes, many of them from Australia, were injured when the bridge collapsed.

Having decided to remain in Israel and participate in the games, the Australian delegation took part in the opening day's competition, which included basketball, volleyball, soccer — and bridge.

"When we told people what category we are competing in, we thought they might think it was a sick joke," said one member of Australia's bridge team, which tied with Britain.

The Maccabiah organizing committee decided to let four members of Israel's national squad play on the Australian soccer team to fill in for athletes who were injured Monday.

As the investigation into the collapse got under way, attention focused on the officials involved in the construction of the temporary wood and aluminum metal bridge.

A lawyer for the two contractors who built the bridge said his clients were only following the directions given by the engineer who approved the project.

The engineer, in turn, told police that when he inspected the bridge and gave the go-ahead, he made it clear that no more than 100 people should be on the bridge at a time and that someone should stand at the end of the bridge to control the flow of athletes.

The police and organizers of the Maccabiah said they never received any such directive.

A video shot just before the bridge collapsed showed the athletes crossing from a parking lot over the Yarkon River, heading toward the opening-night parade in the stadium.

It showed that there was no one on hand to count the number of people crossing over the bridge. □

Ex-Swiss bank guard moves closer to obtaining asylum*By Daniel Kurtzman*

WASHINGTON (JTA) — The fate of the Swiss bank guard who rescued Holocaust-era documents from the shredder now lies in the hands of President Clinton.

The House of Representatives voted Tuesday to grant asylum to Christoph Meili and his family.

The Senate already approved legislation that would provide him and his family with permanent U.S. residency status.

The bill now awaits Clinton's signature.

Sen. Alfonse D'Amato (R-N.Y.), who has hailed Meili as a hero and sponsored the legislation, said in a statement that Congress' action "demonstrates that America understands the courage exhibited by Christoph Meili was extraordinary and worthy of our support."

Meili, 29, was making his rounds as a night watchman at Union Bank of Switzerland in January when he discovered carts of Holocaust-era documents headed for the paper shredder.

He secretly turned over some of them to a Jewish organization in Zurich.

A Swiss law enacted just prior to Meili's discovery made it illegal to destroy documents relating to Switzerland's probe of its dealings with Nazi Germany and the search for missing Jewish assets.

Union Bank of Switzerland acknowledged that an employee had destroyed records and called it "a regrettable incident." But the bank's chairman, Robert Studer, and others accused Meili of acting out of ulterior motives when he turned over the documents.

Swiss prosecutors, meanwhile, say Meili may have violated the country's bank secrecy laws and could be jailed.

Meili has said he simply did what he thought was right. At a congressional hearing in May, he said he decided to act after seeing the film "Schindler's List."

Meili lost his job after the incident and said he and his family received death threats. They fled to the United States in April. "My family's life has been turned into a living hell," Meili said in an appeal for help at the congressional hearing.

"Christoph Meili is a noble man whose actions ennobled all of us," D'Amato said following the House's action. "He has suffered greatly for his courage in exposing the truth and now simply desires to live in freedom here in America with his family. Now he can." □

Swiss court rules in struggle over use of Anne Frank's name*By Fredy Rom*

ZURICH (JTA) — One of the most noted names of the Holocaust stands at the center of a protracted legal dispute here.

Switzerland's highest court ruled last week that an Amsterdam-based Anne Frank Foundation holds the commercial rights in Switzerland to use the name of Anne Frank.

In its ruling, the court rejected the request of the Anne Frank Fund of Basel, saying that the Amsterdam group's trademark registration application had been submitted first.

The ruling of the Federal Tribunal upheld a 1993 Zurich court's decision.

The Basel fund owns the copyright to "The Diary of Anne Frank" — which has sold more than 25 million copies in 60 languages — and to film and theatrical productions based on the diary.

The Amsterdam-based foundation operates a museum in the home where the Frank family hid for two years before they were betrayed — and subsequently rounded up by the Nazis.

The foundation has held the rights to her name in other parts of Europe since the 1980s.

Anne and her sister, Margot, died at Bergen-Belsen in 1945 shortly before the death camp was liberated by British forces. Their mother, Edith, died at Auschwitz.

Both groups were created with the support of Anne's father, Otto, who survived the war and moved to Basel. He died in 1980.

Reacting to last week's court decision, the only surviving member of the family charged that the Amsterdam-based foundation plans to exploit the Anne Frank name commercially.

"We will never allow that Anne Frank's name is used as a marketing brand," Bernhard "Buddy" Elias, a first cousin of Anne Frank who serves as a director of the Basel fund, said in an interview.

Officials from the Amsterdam foundation denied the charge. □

Jews join coalition to bring Bosnian war criminals to justice

By Matthew Dorf

WASHINGTON (JTA) — It was December 1992 when Jewish activists gathered across from the site of the future Holocaust museum here for the first of many calls for U.S. intervention in Bosnia.

Eyewitnesses were coming forward with stories of war crimes, mass murders and systematic rapes in the war-torn former Yugoslavia.

This week, a coalition of groups, including 19 Jewish organizations, again gathered on the lawn across from the now-completed U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, this time to call for the arrest of Bosnian war criminals.

The two events could not have been more different.

In 1992, a freezing rain soaked the almost all-Jewish crowd as organizers dedicated Chanukah to the people of Bosnia.

This week, the mercury soared toward 100 degrees and a broad coalition of ethnic, religious and secular groups joined Jewish organizations in making a call to action.

No longer were activists talking about arms embargoes and truces.

This time they were speaking of justice and war criminals.

“At that time in 1992, we were literally facing the mass murder of thousands and the use of rape as a vehicle of war,” Rabbi David Saperstein, director of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, which co-sponsored the 1992 rally, said in an interview.

“Now we’re facing very different challenges — challenges of justice.”

Fifty years after the Holocaust, the prolonged Bosnian conflict hits a sensitive nerve in the Jewish community.

Once again, issues of genocide and war criminals and tribunals are plaguing the European continent.

Jewish activists have signed on to the latest push for justice, initiated by a group known as the Coalition for International Justice.

Founded two years ago around the time of the Dayton peace accords that ended the armed conflict in Bosnia, the coalition supports the international war crimes tribunal, which is charged with prosecuting suspected war criminals.

‘Living freely and with impunity’

The coalition has gathered the support of dozens of groups, representing tens of millions of Americans, to urge President Clinton to take the lead in arresting accused war criminals from the former Yugoslavia.

In a letter to the president, published in *The New York Times*, the coalition wrote: “We are deeply distressed that indicted war criminals are living freely and with impunity, while American soldiers, the largest contingent of the NATO force, have apparently been denied the authority to make arrests.

“By pursuing such a policy the United States may have been colluding in the protection of individuals charged with war crimes.”

Having assembled broad backing, the coalition now hopes to impress upon the Clinton administration the public support for the use of force, if necessary, to arrest the accused war criminals.

The coalition said that if American allies do not complete the task of arresting indicted war criminals, “the United States must take the lead, accept the potential risk of confrontation, and act on its own.”

While the letter had been planned for months, its release came only days after British forces in Bosnia arrested one Bosnian Serb indicted for war crimes and the tribunal sentenced another to 20 years in jail.

Another Bosnian Serb was killed when he resisted arrest last week.

Clinton had given the nod to the British raid — and as the groups gathered for their news conference near the Holocaust museum, the president was talking about war criminals at the White House.

The Bosnian Serbs “have clearly not complied with that provision of the Dayton agreements — in terms that they have made no effort to help us get any of those people,” the president said, referring to indicted war criminals.

By signing on to the coalition’s effort, the Jewish community broke almost two years of silence on Bosnia following the Dayton accords.

One of the provisions of the agreement is the arrest of war criminals.

While some Jews said they had been waiting to give the 1995 peace accords a chance, others suggested that the Jewish community should have taken action to push for the arrest of war criminals six months or a year ago.

“Why now? Because somebody took the initiative. We did not, I am sorry to say,” said Leonard Fein, director of the commission on social action at the Reform movement’s Union of American Hebrew Congregations.

Fein, a longtime advocate of a strong American role in Bosnia, said that this generation will be “judged on how seriously it views crimes against humanity.”

“How can you talk about international codes if you let the most egregious acts of violence and criminality go unpunished?”

Expressing similar sentiments, former Sen. Bob Dole and Sen. Joseph Lieberman (D-Conn.) urged Clinton to act. Both have recently returned from fact-finding tours of Bosnia.

“We risked our national reputation and the lives of our troops to restore order and to create the conditions for peace,” Lieberman said at a news conference here Tuesday.

“Now we must take the next step to bring justice to Bosnia.”

Virtually all Jewish groups — including Reform, Conservative and Orthodox organizations, women’s groups and defense organizations — signed the letter.

The Jewish Council for Public Affairs, formerly known as the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council, also signed on.

Although the Holocaust museum did not sign the letter to Clinton, its Committee on Conscience has urged the president to take similar action.

In a June 17 resolution, the committee called on Clinton to “take vigorous action to ensure, by all means necessary, that those charged by the Tribunal are apprehended and surrendered to it.” □

Israel’s cost of living increases

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Israel’s June cost of living index rose by 1.1 percent.

The Central Bureau of Statistics attributed the increase to the devaluation of the shekel against the dollar.

The weaker shekel made imports costlier for Israelis.

The bureau said the increase was also due to a 2.4 percent rise in housing prices. The prices of education, entertainment, communications, clothing and food increased as well. □