



# Daily News Bulletin

Vol. 77, No. 141

Thursday, July 29, 1999

82<sup>nd</sup> Year

## TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

### Hillary addresses Jewish groups

First lady Hillary Rodham Clinton used back-to-back speeches to Jewish groups to reiterate her support for Jerusalem as Israel's "eternal and indivisible capital."

She also called on Congress to "make good on the promises the president made at Wye River" to provide billions of dollars in U.S. aid to Israel, the Palestinians and Jordan.

Speaking to Hadassah after addressing the National Jewish Democratic Council, Clinton said Tuesday, "We must do everything in our power to facilitate, not dictate, the peace process." [Page 3]

### Stepashin vows crackdown

The "brutality" of Russian anti-Semitism "will be eradicated," Russian Prime Minister Sergei Stepashin pledged during a meeting in Washington with Jewish officials.

According to representatives from the National Conference on Soviet Jewry and the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, Stepashin pledged Tuesday that "we will not allow these people to take power in Russia." [Page 4]

### Arafat rejects Barak proposal

Yasser Arafat informed President Clinton during a telephone conversation Wednesday that he has rejected Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak's plan to link implementation of the Wye agreement with the start of final-status talks.

The Palestinian Authority chairman conveyed his opposition one day after he agreed to take two weeks to review the Israeli premier's plan. [Page 4]

### Settler-government pact rejected

A Jewish settler leader said an Israeli freeze on grants to factories in the West Bank violates a recent agreement settlers reached with Prime Minister Ehud Barak.

Benny Kashriel made his comments after a meeting Tuesday with Israeli Trade Minister Ran Cohen, who refused to cancel the freeze.

Kashriel, the chairman of the Yesha Council, which represents settlers in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, said he would no longer abide by the agreement, under which the two sides agreed not to take unilateral actions without consulting the other.

## AROUND THE JEWISH WORLD

### Threat to Jewish group in Argentina comes at a time of internal upheaval

By Julia Goldman

NEW YORK (JTA) — A menacing phone call to the Buenos Aires office of an international Jewish organization earlier this month has reaffirmed the Argentine Jewish community's need for enhanced security.

Argentina's estimated 250,000 Jews, however, face more than physical danger.

The seventh largest Jewish community in the world is experiencing growing internal political and social crises in the wake of recent economic upheavals and unsolved anti-Semitic attacks. The July 15 call to the office of the Jewish Agency for Israel came just days before the fifth anniversary of the bombing of Jewish communal offices in the Argentine capital.

That terrorist attack killed 86 people and injured hundreds more. Two years earlier, the Israeli Embassy in Buenos Aires was bombed, killing 29.

Responding to the latest threat, the Jewish Agency, the quasi-governmental body in Israel responsible for immigration, stepped up security at its offices in the Argentine capital. But the Jewish Agency has decided that Argentina's Jewish community should take the lead in addressing its other pressing needs — maintaining an extensive network of social services, cultural programs and day schools.

Last fall the Argentine Israelite Mutual Aid Association appealed to the Jewish Agency for help in shoring up its infrastructure, requesting nearly \$10 million in emergency assistance for specific items.

The Jewish Agency responding by granting \$400,000.

"The explosion did not destroy only the building," but also files and valuables, said AMIA's general secretary, Noe Davidovich.

Constructing a new building by itself, he said, presented the AMIA with "extraordinary" hardship. The building is not yet complete.

The AMIA sponsors cultural activities, such as lectures, exhibits and concerts, administers welfare services and cemeteries, and funds Jewish schools that serve 40 percent of Jewish schoolchildren in Argentina, or about 20,000 students, according to one estimate.

But 1998 saw the second recent wave of economic instability in Argentina.

And the failure of two Jewish-owned banks, Banco Mayo and Patricios Bank, reverberated throughout the Jewish community. The institutions had been the primary funders of Jewish communal activities and lenders to Jewish organizations.

Jewish schools, clubs and social institutions "depended heavily on the two major Jewish banks for their daily operations and payrolls," the Argentine journalist Sergio Kiernan wrote in a 1999 report for the American Jewish Committee on the investigation into the AMIA bombing.

As a result of the economic crisis, the AMIA took an unusual step in requesting funds for domestic needs from the Jewish Agency.

The Argentine Jewish community, which is ardently Zionist, has traditionally acted as a donor to Israel, contributing between \$2 and \$3 million to the Jewish state each of the past few years.

Outside of North America, the Jewish Agency "is part of the backbone of world Jewish education," providing teachers, school administrators and classroom curricula, said Rabbi Daniel Allen, the executive vice chairman of the United Israel Appeal, which serves as the conduit for U.S. funds to the Jewish Agency. American Jewry "is much

## MIDEAST FOCUS

### Rights group accuses Israel

Human Rights Watch called on Israel and the Israel-allied South Lebanon Army to halt the alleged practice of expelling Lebanese from their homes.

The New York-based group said hundreds of Lebanese civilians have been expelled for reasons ranging from cooperation with Hezbollah to collective punishment of local populations. An Israeli spokesman refused to comment on the report.

### 'Tarzan' ads draw criticism

Advertisements for the animated Disney film "Tarzan" are too sexually suggestive, according to a fervently Orthodox group in Israel.

The National Committee to Prevent the Publication of Obscenities in the Holy Land is demanding that the loincloth worn by Tarzan in the ad, which is appearing on Israeli billboards and buses, be replaced with something more modest.

The organization monitors billboards to ensure they are not too provocative or revealing in the eyes of fervently Orthodox Jews.

The Israeli firm that is distributing the film locally said it is considering changing the ads.

### Principal accused of abuse

Israeli police arrested a school principal in Netanya who is suspected of abusing Ethiopian students. According to police, the abuse, which allegedly involved other staff, included slapping students and making racist remarks.

### Y2K bugs Palestinians

The Palestinian Authority asked Israel to help in its preparations for the Y2K computer bug, the Israeli daily Ha'aretz reported Wednesday.

According to the paper, the Palestinians are particularly concerned that computer glitches in the year 2000 could disrupt the functioning of hospitals in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

much more internally self-sufficient Jewishly than the rest of the world," which depends on the agency and other international organizations for a variety of communal needs, Allen said.

The Argentine Jewish community already receives between \$4 million and \$5 million a year from the Jewish Agency for Jewish education, outreach and preparation for aliyah, or immigration to Israel. Despite the economic crisis, however, the Jewish Agency has not seen an increase in aliyah from Argentina.

Last year, rather than sending the money requested by the AMIA, the Jewish Agency sent a delegation of its leaders and Israeli government officials to investigate the situation. Led by Daniel Liwerant, world director of Keren Hayesod, the international fund-raising body for the Jewish Agency, and Shimshon Shoshani, the agency's then-director general, the team found a population reeling from the bank failures and from the government's decision to liberalize imports, which left the largely middle-class community struggling.

It also detected what it called a "leadership crisis" among Argentine Jews, "including a basic lack of faith in the present leadership."

The report suggested that any attempt, "even partial, to 'bail out' the community will simply impede a healthy and inevitable process of matching expenditures to income," would set a negative precedent and would create financial dependency.

The report estimates that Argentine Jews spend some \$200 million annually, including membership fees, school tuition and private donations, a sign of the community's vitality. But the delegation found a lack of philanthropic involvement on the part of some of the wealthiest Jews.

"The paternalistic donations" of the two failed banks, the report says, "had partially concealed until now the reality of a significant decrease in individual/local philanthropy in Argentina, which is an essential condition for the survival of Jewish life anywhere in the Diaspora."

The owner of Banco Mayo, Ruben Baraja, was the head of the Delegation of Argentine Israelite Associations, Argentine Jewry's officially recognized political umbrella organization.

Following the bank failure, Baraja stepped down after three years in office.

The election of his replacement and close associate, former DAIA Secretary Rogelio Cichowolsky, exacerbated existing rifts in the community.

Davidovich of AMIA said the communal leadership's reaction to the Jewish Agency report was "that its loss had not been sufficiently understood."

References to a "leadership crisis," he said, are "overly broad" and do not accurately describe the complex situation.

As a result of what he calls the Jewish Agency's funding rejection, schools have closed, support for institutions has failed and personnel have been dismissed, Davidovich said, without going into specifics.

The January 1999 report calls for a reorganization of local philanthropy and recommends several active steps to strengthen the Jewish Agency's existing education and immigration activities.

The agency did agree to grant an additional \$200,000 for increased security measures — part of an overall grant of \$400,000 for community needs — even before last week's death threat.

Argentine Jewish institutions have a need for strong security, it reports, "because of the relatively high number of Jewish institutions, and because of the fear of Arab terrorists and neo-Nazi groups." The terrorist organization Hezbollah has been implicated in the two, as-yet-unsolved, bombing incidents.

According to the agency, the death threat came from someone speaking from a public phone who told a local employee of Keren Hayesod, "Five years ago you survived, but this time it won't end as well."

According to agency officials, the employee who took the call had survived the 1994 attack on the AMIA building, and the caller knew the employee by name.

In an interview, the Jewish Agency's newly elected director general, Aharon Abramovich, declined to discuss specifics of the agency's increased security measures, saying simply, "We have to take more precautions" and "be very careful about our activities." □



## Daily News Bulletin

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JTA DAILY NEWS BULLETIN is published five days a week, except holidays, by the Jewish Telegraphic Agency Inc., 330 Seventh Ave., New York, N.Y. 10001-5010. For information about how to subscribe by e-mail, fax or regular mail, call (212) 643-1890, or visit our Web site at [www.jta.org](http://www.jta.org).  
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## JEWISH WORLD

### JDL plans armed patrols

A militant Jewish group said it plans to have armed volunteers patrol a neighborhood near Hollywood, Fla., where hate fliers were recently distributed.

The armed patrols will remain "as long as necessary," an official with the local chapter of the Jewish Defense League was quoted as saying Wednesday. A local police official said the JDL had told him the group would be unarmed.

The fliers were signed by the World Church of the Creator, which made headlines earlier this month when a follower, Benjamin Nathaniel Smith, went on a shooting rampage in Illinois and Indiana before taking his own life.

### Heirs sue for collection's return

The heirs of a Jewish art collector are suing a Jewish-owned Manhattan art gallery for the return of a collection of rare prayer books looted by the Nazis. The eight books, valued at \$15 million, belonged to Alphonse Kann, who fled his home near Paris before the Nazi occupation of France.

The suit filed Tuesday charges that the Wildenstein Gallery has refused to return the collection, known as the "Book of Hours." A statement by the Wildenstein family called the suit "groundless," adding that the collection had been lawfully in its possession when it was looted by the Nazis.

### Panel rules against school prayer

A human rights commission in the Canadian province of Saskatchewan ordered a local school board to stop allowing students to recite the Lord's Prayer or read from the Bible in public schools.

Tuesday's ruling came after Jewish and Unitarian students complained about the practice. B'nai Brith Canada applauded the ruling, saying it was pleased the board found that the practice is "discriminatory in a public school environment."

### Ban sought on Nazis' benefits

A U.S. legislator is cosponsoring a bill to stop the federal government from providing Social Security and other benefits to Nazi persecutors.

Eight people who voluntarily left the United States after being accused of engaging in Nazi war crimes have collected more than \$700,000 in benefits, according to Rep. Steven LaTourette (R-Ohio).

### Shoah sculptures vandalized

Vandals in the eastern German town of Weimar toppled sculptures honoring the victims of Nazi concentration camps on Wednesday, according to German police.

The sculptures were on exhibit in Weimar, which is near the former Buchenwald death camp.

## Hillary Clinton outlines Mideast views in separate speeches to Jewish groups

By Matthew Dorf

WASHINGTON (JTA) — As Hillary Rodham Clinton proceeds with her all-but-certain bid for the Senate, the first lady is continuing to distance herself from controversial statements supporting Palestinian statehood.

In back-to-back speeches to Jewish groups on Tuesday, Clinton, who had drawn fire from many in the Jewish community, sought to stake out pro-Israel positions. She reiterated her support for Jerusalem as Israel's "eternal and indivisible capital" and announced her opposition to "any unilateral action that circumvents the negotiating table."

In her most extensive remarks on the Middle East since she began campaigning for a Senate seat from New York, Clinton spoke here to the annual convention of Hadassah and the National Jewish Democratic Council.

Together she spent about five hours at the two events, addressing nearly 3,000 Jewish activists.

To a muted chant of "Run, Hillary, Run," the first lady took the podium at NJDC's annual Hubert H. Humphrey awards event.

The United States must continue to support Israel as the Jewish state takes risks for peace, Clinton said.

Pledging continued support for the peace process, Clinton said, "We can never give up" until Israel is "safe, secure and at peace."

Expanding on her views in a 40-minute speech warmly received by some 2,100 Hadassah activists crammed into a hotel ballroom, Clinton listened as Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak, in a videotaped message, offered his "sincere congratulations to the first lady on the Henrietta Szold award," which she received from the women's Zionist movement in recognition of her humanitarian work for children.

Hadassah had drawn protests from a small-but-vocal group of hard-line activists opposed to the award for the first lady because of her remarks last year that it would be in the long-term interest of the Middle East for Palestine to be a state.

The award presented to Clinton detailed much of the first lady's work on behalf of children, women and the underprivileged, but did not mention either Israel or the Middle East.

But from the podium, the Israeli soldier whose jeep intercepted a suicide bomber trying to ram a busload of Israeli children on Oct. 29, 1998, hailed Clinton for her support for Middle East peace as he presented her with a silver dove.

"Your efforts for peace in the Middle East are appreciated by those of us whose lives are at stake," he said.

In a speech heavy on Democratic themes — pro-choice, opposition to a tax cut, support for Medicare — Clinton poked fun at herself for media reports that she speaks to former first lady Eleanor Roosevelt, who was the first recipient of the award named 50 years ago for Hadassah's founder.

"I did not think I could give a speech tonight without talking it over with Mrs. Roosevelt and Mrs. Szold," Clinton said, drawing laughter and applause from the delegates.

She turned serious when talking about Jerusalem.

"Just as Jerusalem is home to your hospital, we all look forward to the day Jerusalem will be home to the embassy of the United States and all other embassies," she said.

Last month Clinton publicly adopted Israel's position that Jerusalem is its "eternal and indivisible" capital and expressed support for eventually moving the embassy.

While short on specifics, Clinton called on Congress to "make good on the promises the president made" during the Wye River accords last fall, to provide more than \$2 billion in U.S. aid to Israel, Jordan and the Palestinians.

"The people of Israel have lived for too long with bombs, they have lived with the awful fear that their children will not come home from school alive," she said, vowing to "do everything in our power to facilitate, not dictate, the peace process." □

## Arafat tells Clinton he rejects linking Wye deal with final status

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Yasser Arafat has rejected a plan by Prime Minister Ehud Barak to link implementation of portions of the Wye agreement with the start of final-status talks.

The Palestinian Authority chairman conveyed his opposition to the plan during a telephone conversation Wednesday with President Clinton, according to an Arafat spokesman.

The night before, during a meeting with Barak at the Erez Crossing between Israel and the Gaza Strip, Arafat agreed to take two weeks to review the Israeli premier's plan.

It now appears that this waiting period will be a mere formality before Arafat officially notifies Barak of the rejection.

In the meantime, both sides are expected to attempt to summon international support for their respective positions.

Barak also conferred with Clinton by telephone on Wednesday to review his positions. Barak is expected to visit Moscow next week, when he will likely take up the issue with his Russian hosts.

He and Arafat met separately with the German foreign minister, Joschka Fischer, who was visiting the Middle East this week.

Barak has repeatedly stressed that Israel would not change the U.S.-brokered land-for-security deal without Arafat's approval.

"We intend to uphold the Wye accord," Barak said Tuesday. "It is a signed agreement by the government of Israel."

A day later, Cabinet member Haim Ramon said Israel would begin carrying out the second Israeli withdrawal from portions of the West Bank that is called for in the Wye accord by late August or early September.

It is the third withdrawal that is problematic for Barak, who has said it could leave Jewish settlements isolated within areas under Palestinian control.

He prefers moving directly into the final-status talks, when such issues as the settlements and the borders of the Palestinian entity would be resolved. Arafat, fearing that he has few chips to bargain with in the final-status talks, prefers to have the Wye withdrawals take place first.

The first Israeli withdrawal stipulated under the Wye accord, which was signed last October in Washington, was carried out last November, shortly before former Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu suspended implementation of the accord, charging that the Palestinian Authority was not living up to its part of the agreement.

At the end of Tuesday's session at Erez, the two leaders described their discussions as "frank" and "candid."

But the session ended with only one agreement: Representatives from each side were scheduled to meet Thursday to begin discussing details related to the Wye accord.

During what was their second working meeting since Barak's election in May, Arafat repeated the Palestinian demand for full implementation of Wye, including further withdrawals from the West Bank; opening of a safe-passage route between the West Bank and Gaza Strip; the release of Palestinian prisoners; and the construction of the Gaza seaport.

Arafat also called for implementation of economic accords linked to the Oslo process and a freeze on Jewish settlements. He

added that the two sides had agreed to form a joint committee regarding the third phase of the further redeployment.

Arafat said the Palestinians were ready to fully uphold their commitments under the signed agreements.

"We reiterated our full commitment to implement all our obligations pertaining to agreements signed, including our security commitments," Arafat said. "We will continue with our policy of zero tolerance to violence and terror, whether committed by Palestinians or Israelis." □

## Russian prime minister pledges to 'eradicate' anti-Semitic violence

By Daniel Kurtzman

WASHINGTON (JTA) — In Russia's strongest condemnation to date of an upsurge in anti-Jewish violence, Russian Prime Minister Sergei Stepashin is pledging to "eradicate" anti-Semitic and racist acts.

Speaking with Jewish leaders Tuesday at the conclusion of a two-day visit to Washington, Stepashin condemned "radical politicians" in Russia who he said were using anti-Semitism "for their own purposes," according to those who met with him.

"We will not allow these people to take power in Russia," he said.

After dodging a reporter's question earlier in the day about what the Russian government was doing to counter the rise in anti-Semitic rhetoric and violence, Stepashin spoke forcefully about the need for a government response.

"This brutality will be eradicated — and I am not afraid of this word — eradicated by our security agencies," he told the delegation led by the National Conference on Soviet Jewry and the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations.

"Our country and the Jews suffered too much from racism during [World War II] for modern Russia to permit present-day fascists a free hand," Stepashin said.

The assurances were welcomed by Jewish officials, who had criticized the Russian government for failing to make public declarations against anti-Semitism following recent incidents.

Stepashin said he and Russian President Boris Yeltsin had discussed the problem with Russia's internal security service and that measures were being taken to secure synagogues.

"Overall he responded affirmatively and strongly, and the question now is the deeds," said Malcolm Hoenlein, executive vice chairman of the Conference of Presidents.

"The question is will they sustain the protection of the institutions, will he and others make the same kind of public declarations in Moscow and will we see more arrests," Hoenlein said, adding that "it's the arrest and convictions that really send a message that they're serious."

Mark Levin, executive director of the NCSJ, said the delegation was "encouraged by the message that he gave us," adding, "We tried to impress upon him that this was a message that needed to be heard not in the United States but in Russia."

Jewish leaders were not the only ones to raise concern about the surge in anti-Semitic activity. President Clinton, Vice President Al Gore and members of Congress also raised the issue in meetings with Stepashin this week. □