



# Daily News Bulletin

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## TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

### Israel kills 4 Hamas militants

Israeli helicopter gunships killed four Hamas militants in an attack Tuesday in the West Bank city of Bethlehem. Israeli officials said the attack targeted a Hamas leader who was planning to bomb the Closing Ceremonies of the Maccabiah Games on July 23.

Later in the day, Palestinians fired a mortar shell at Jerusalem's Gilo neighborhood to retaliate for the Israeli helicopter attack. It is believed to be the first time since the violence erupted nearly 10 months ago that Palestinians fired mortars at Jerusalem.

### Report: Iran supplies Palestinians

Iran recently transferred hundreds of tons of weapons and ammunition to Hezbollah forces in Lebanon via Syria, according to the Israeli daily Ha'aretz. Israeli security experts believe some of the equipment soon will be smuggled to Palestinian militants in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, the report said.

Hezbollah gunmen also have begun training Palestinian militants at sites in Lebanon's Bekaa Valley, Ha'aretz reported.

### B'nai B'rith raises funds for BBYO

B'nai B'rith International announced it has raised \$1 million to help cover the costs of establishing the B'nai B'rith Youth Organization as an independent organization.

In May, BBYO decided to break from its parent organization and become an independent group.

### Israel warns of more attacks

Israel's police chief warned of more attempted terror attacks by Islamic militants. "Unfortunately the warnings are growing, not getting smaller," Shlomo Aharonishky told Israel Radio. "There is an enormous effort by the terror groups to carry out attacks."

Islamic Jihad militants vowed to continue to carry out attacks against Israel, despite a warning from Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat to halt the terror. Israel Radio reported that Arafat warned Hamas and Islamic Jihad to stop suicide bombings or he would ban their activities.

Meanwhile, the United States called on the Palestinian Authority to bring to justice those responsible for bombings in Israel and urged Israel to show restraint in the face of such attacks.

## BEHIND THE HEADLINES

### Jewish groups fear rights forum could be Israel-bashing session

By Matthew E. Berger

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Lawmakers and Jewish activists are working to block a U.N. panel from bringing back the infamous declaration that "Zionism is racism."

The current draft of a resolution for next month's U.N. Conference Against Racism in Durban, South Africa, notes "with deep concern the increase in racist practices of Zionism."

The conference's proposed declaration also minimizes the importance of the Holocaust by writing it with a small "h," and notes the "ethnic cleansing of the Arab population in historic Palestine."

"It's a sinister attempt to hijack the whole conference," said Malcolm Hoenlein, executive vice chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations.

"They are turning it into a political forum for private agendas."

The Durban conference appears to be not an isolated event but merely one strand in a widening net of Arab attempts to paint Israel as a pariah in the international community.

"This is a watershed event," Hoenlein said of the Durban conference, as the Arab states are trying to build "a body of evidence that says Israelis are war criminals."

Most notably, a group of 28 Palestinians recently filed suit in Belgium accusing Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon of war crimes for his role in the 1982 Sabra and Shatila massacres in Lebanon.

Sharon, who theoretically could be arrested if he sets foot in Belgium, canceled a planned visit during his European trip earlier this month.

Rabbi Andrew Baker, director of international Jewish affairs at the American Jewish Committee, said Arab countries see the United Nations as a place where their voice is as powerful as those of Israel and its allies, and where — given their numerical superiority — they can easily pass anti-Israel resolutions.

Only a U.S. veto in the Security Council, or the threat of such, has forestalled several particularly hostile broadsides against Israel in recent years.

With the breakdown of Israeli-Palestinian peace talks last year and the outbreak of violence, the racism conference "came about at the right time," giving the Arab world an opportunity to bash Israel, Baker said.

Considering the rising hostilities between Israel and the Palestinians, the revival of anti-Israel animus at the United Nations "flows naturally," Baker said. "There is no need for a conspiracy theory."

The resolution equating Zionism with racism first passed in the United Nations in 1975, largely on the strength of the Arab and Soviet voting blocs.

It was repealed in 1991 after President George Bush, riding on the heels of the Persian Gulf War, said reversing the language would enhance the U.N.'s credibility.

"Zionism is not a policy, it is an ideal that led to the creation of a home for the Jewish people, to the State of Israel," Bush said.

"And to equate Zionism with the intolerable sin of racism is to twist history and to forget the terrible plight of Jews in World War II and, indeed, throughout history."

The phrase returned to the international lexicon last year, when Arab states inserted it into a regional draft for the racism conference at around the time the violent Palestinian uprising began in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

In an attempt to chastise Israel, the Asian contingent of the conference, meeting in

## MIDEAST FOCUS

### Barghouti on Israel's wanted list

The leader of Palestinian militias in the West Bank is on Israel's wanted list, according to the head of the Shin Bet domestic security service.

Avi Dichter told a Knesset committee Tuesday that Marwan Barghouti is involved in the financing and directing of terror attacks against Israelis.

In a related development, the Jerusalem Post reported that Barghouti was invited to attend the July 4 celebration at the U.S. Consulate in Jerusalem.

Barghouti confirmed the invitation, but said he couldn't attend because of an Israeli closure on his home city of Ramallah.

### Israel bans memorial procession

Palestinians and Israeli police scuffled in eastern Jerusalem after Israel banned a memorial procession to the grave of Faisal Hussein, the former top Palestinian official in Jerusalem.

Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert defended the order.

Olmert told Army Radio the gathering was meant to be a "political, provocative demonstration."

### Ben-Eliezer cancels U.S. trip

Israeli Defense Minister Benjamin Ben-Eliezer canceled a scheduled trip to the United States because of the tense security situation in Israel.

Ben-Eliezer was due to leave for the United States on Wednesday for talks with senior officials, including U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell and U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan.

### Stray bullet hits girl

A 10-year-old Palestinian girl was reported to be in critical condition after she was struck in the head by a stray bullet while sleeping in her bed in the West Bank village of Dura, according to the girl's aunt.

Israeli soldiers and Palestinian gunmen had exchanged gunfire in the area.

Tehran, also added language expressing concern about "the practices of racial discrimination against the Palestinians" and "Zionist practices against Semitism."

The offending paragraphs have been bracketed by the conference's steering committee, indicating that they are not consensual and require further debate. A preparatory conference is scheduled for Geneva later this month to tackle the divisive issues in the declaration, but they are not expected to be resolved before the Durban conference begins Aug. 31.

Jewish officials say there is a significant chance that the "Zionism is racism" sentiment could make it into the report's final version. If so, it would be a "rocket booster" to those who wish to delegitimize Israel and justify violence and terror against the Jewish state, Hoenlein said.

"We're hopeful that we'll be able to forestall this, but it's by no means a closed question," Hoenlein said. "The results of" the Geneva "pre-conference are going to be critical."

Hoenlein said the Conference of Presidents has been trying to build European support against the anti-Israel clauses, with uncertain success.

On Tuesday, however, German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer told the Simon Wiesenthal Center that "anti-Zionism inevitably leads to anti-Semitism."

American Jewish groups had been looking forward to the conference because, for the first time, a declaration is on the agenda that would condemn anti-Semitic practices.

Now, however, they are focusing on controlling the damage from anti-Israeli sentiments.

"It casts an obscene notion on the meaning of Zionism," said Baker.

Baker is part of a team of American Jewish officials who are working to cut the offending references from the proclamation, and who will be part of a large delegation in Durban.

"The fate of the document really relies on the countries that have been silent until now," said Stacey Burdett, associate director of government and national affairs for the Anti-Defamation League.

"Our success will depend on getting governments who support our position to stand up and be counted," said Burdett, who is scheduled to attend the Geneva preparatory conference.

The ADL has sent a letter to foreign ministers urging them to participate in the conference, but to "assert that divisive language driven by hatred has no place in a conference against racism."

A similar letter was sent to President Bush. American Jewish leaders have been impressed by the White House's support for their stance.

Greg Sullivan, spokesman for the State Department's Near Eastern Affairs division, said the administration supports the goals of the racism conference, but is concerned the focus could be moved away from the key issues.

"Serious work has to be done to get away from unbalanced and inflammatory language on the Middle East," Sullivan said.

The White House also is concerned about the conference's call for reparations from the United States for the trans-Atlantic slave trade.

Secretary of State Colin Powell is believed to be eager to attend the conference because of his personal interest in race issues, and because the American civil rights community sees the conference as an important event.

But Sullivan said the level of U.S. participation has not been determined and will depend on the final language on the topics of Israel and the slave trade.

Rep. Joseph Crowley (D-N.Y.) is asking colleagues to sign a letter to Powell and U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan, asking them to intercede and prevent the "Zionism is racism" language from passing.

"Language, when it is almost institutionalized within the United Nations and international diplomacy, is a tool that will be used against the Israeli people," Crowley told JTA.

The topic is divisive and doesn't belong in a conference that is supposed "to bring people together and build a foundation for peace and reconciliation," Crowley said.

But he added that the United States should not boycott the conference.

The United States did not participate in the first two racism conferences in 1978 and 1983, partially to protest the "Zionism is racism" philosophy. □

(JTA Managing Editor Michael S. Arnold in New York contributed to this report.)



## Daily News Bulletin

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## JEWISH WORLD

### Farrakhan awaits court ruling

Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan must wait to see if a British court will overturn a government order that has banned him from visiting the country since 1986.

After a hearing that lasted two days last week, a judge said he hopes to issue a ruling by the end of the month.

Successive British governments have barred Farrakhan on the grounds that anti-Semitic comments he has made could provoke racial tensions.

### Vandals strike Brooklyn homes

Vandals spray-painted swastikas and anti-Semitic slogans on seven homes and a synagogue in the Midwood section of Brooklyn on Monday.

Police found the tops of paint cans on the roof of an apartment building in the area, and are searching them for fingerprints.

### German ad raises eyebrows

Officials planning a national Holocaust memorial in Berlin are using a controversial ad campaign in an effort to raise funds. "The Holocaust Never Happened" is the controversial slogan that will be plastered on billboards across Germany this week.

The slogan is intended to "shake up the indifferent and motivate the hesitant," the foundation organizing the fund-raising campaign said Tuesday. Smaller text underneath the headline reads: "There are still many people who make this claim. In 20 years there could be even more. Make a donation to the memorial for the murdered Jews of Europe."

### Canada Jews blast cross-burning

Canadian Jewish leaders lashed out at those responsible for a weekend cross-burning on the front lawn of the home of a black family in Moncton, New Brunswick.

"This is one of the most heinous and overtly racist crimes possible — an act that is inextricably linked to white supremacy and intimidation," said Stephen Scheinberg, national chair of the League for Human Rights of B'nai Brith Canada.

### Taiwan party pulls Hitler ad

Taiwan's ruling party said it will halt television ads that include footage of Hitler.

Following criticism from Jewish groups, the Democratic Progressive Party said in a statement Tuesday it will stop airing the ads on Friday "out of respect for the Holocaust victims" and "to avoid further misinterpretations."

Party officials had previously defended the ad, saying it sought to encourage young Taiwanese to participate in politics and speak their minds.

## 'We are returning to our roots,' says group monitoring rights in FSU

By Lev Gorodetsky

MOSCOW (JTA) — A group that monitors human rights in the former Soviet Union is stepping up its activities.

The Union of Councils for Jews in the FSU, formerly known as the Union of Councils for Soviet Jews, is increasing the number of its bureaus in Russia alone to more than 40.

The group also held a two-day seminar in Moscow last week to train 50 human rights activists from across Russia in monitoring anti-Semitism and advocating for human rights.

Officials say the purpose of the increased activity is twofold: to improve the quality of the group's monitoring and to increase local protection of human rights for Jews and others.

Despite Russian President Vladimir Putin's "overtures to the Jews, next to nothing has been done as yet to transfer his words into combating anti-Semitism" in provincial areas, said Micah Naftalin, the organization's national director.

"We are, in fact, returning to our roots," Naftalin said.

In the early 1970s, the group specialized in campaigns to enable thousands of refuseniks to get the necessary emigration papers.

At the time, the Union of Councils stressed that it worked on behalf of all Jews who wanted to leave the Soviet Union — both those who wanted to move to the Jewish state as well as those who wanted eventually to use the Israel documents to move to the United States.

This stance created friction with other, more Zionist-oriented organizations that demanded that invitations and visas for Israel be given only to those who planned to go to Israel.

Even after the Soviet Union opened its doors to Jewish emigration in the late 1980s, the Union of Councils stayed active in the region — in part because anti-Semitism and human rights violations persisted.

Indeed, according to the group's latest report, anti-Semitism and xenophobia remain major issues in Russia.

The number of the most violent incidents declined in 2000, but Jews still face hatred, both at official and grass-roots levels.

In addition, local officials in many places have allied with anti-Semitic Communist, neo-Nazi and Russian Orthodox officials.

The Union's work has included:

- watching the case of Vladimir Soifer, a Jewish scientist falsely accused of disclosing classified information,
- monitoring the case of Dmitry Neverovsky, a Jew jailed for being a conscientious objector;
- helping to acquit Alexander Nikitin, a non-Jewish environmental activist accused of transmitting Russian nuclear U-boat secrets; and
- backing Reform Jewish congregations denied the right to register with local authorities in Minsk, Belarus.

The Union of Councils has the best human rights monitoring system in the former Soviet Union, said Ludmila Alexeeva, a leader of the Moscow Helsinki human rights group.

In Central Asia, for example, the Union today has the only monitoring network, she said.

But some Russian Jewish officials downplay the group's role.

Alexander Axelrod of the Anti-Defamation League's Moscow office — who recently has been lobbying for anti-xenophobic legislation in the State Duma — says the Union focuses too much on monitoring instead of taking action.

The group's latest efforts appear to be geared toward addressing that criticism.

"The idea is that our people go to a local mayor or governor and tell him, Look, do you know what is happening in your city? Do you think they will like it in the Kremlin or abroad?" said Leonid Stonov, the Chicago-based Director of International Bureaus and Activities for the group. □

## PROFILE

**With deals all signed, Bush man continues quiet restitution efforts**

By Sharon Samber

WASHINGTON (JTA) — There are no more agreements to be forged, no last-minute deals to wrap up, but the Bush administration is quietly continuing Holocaust restitution and education efforts.

At the end of last year, the Clinton White House's point man on the issue, Stuart Eizenstat, was negotiating major settlements with the German and Austrian governments and charging that the incoming U.S. administration was not paying enough attention to restitution matters.

But as special envoy for Holocaust issues, Ambassador James Bindenagel says the initiatives Eizenstat began have come to fruition, and the State Department office now is focusing on implementing agreements and promoting Holocaust education and research projects in many European countries.

Bindenagel, 52, was a member of Eizenstat's team that helped negotiate the \$5.2 billion German settlement for former World War II slave and forced laborers.

Bindenagel is not the most senior official to deal with Holocaust restitution issues — Deputy Secretary Richard Armitage is also involved in the effort.

He notes the emphasis the Bush administration has placed on Holocaust issues, as evidenced by his "open-ended" mandate.

The career diplomat is quick to say that restitution is just part of his office's duties. While the insurance compensation plans and slave labor agreements grab the headlines, Bindenagel — like Eizenstat — places special importance on education and research projects.

He also works on the 10-country task force on Holocaust education, promoting national memorial days and programming in schools and helping develop teacher training programs.

The issue of financial restitution remains a thorny one, partly because of the need to balance compensation for survivors and heirs with the need for countries to accept moral responsibility for their roles in the Holocaust.

These dual tasks compete for time and attention, but Bindenagel acknowledged that survivors have given their support to both aspects of the State Department's work.

Getting money to survivors is important so they have a sense of justice, Bindenagel said, but getting countries to accept responsibility and ask for forgiveness is also important.

"We want memory to have the priority, not money," he told JTA.

The insurance claims and art restitution command much of Bindenagel's attention, as do survivors and their heirs and Jewish groups. Besides the German settlement, Austria agreed to establish a \$310 million compensation fund for victims of the Holocaust and France has established a \$350 million foundation and an uncapped claims fund. Other countries have restitution plans as well.

So far, at least one group gives fair marks to the Bush White House for its role in the process.

Though early in the scheme of things, the administration is "certainly engaged," says Gideon Taylor, executive vice president of the Claims Conference.

Bindenagel continues pushing the insurance claims process via the International Commission on Holocaust Era Insurance Claims,

which is dealing with charges that European insurers refused payments on policies taken out by Jews who later perished in the Holocaust.

But ICHEIC has encountered a number of implementation difficulties, according to Taylor, and the Claims Conference will be looking to the United States for support and continued pressure on the German insurance companies. A meeting in Washington last week addressed some of those difficulties, and could be the first test of the Bush administration on the issue, Taylor said.

Much of Bindenagel's job requires diplomatic skills, and he is aided by his extensive background in the region: He was deputy American ambassador in the former East Germany during German reunification, and later served as acting American ambassador to the unified country.

Previously, he was State Department director for Central European affairs, responsible for relations with Austria, Switzerland and Germany. Bindenagel said he is trying to create good will and that no agreement should leave the sense that Germany is being "let off the hook." □

**Hungarian Jews threaten action if Holocaust compensation delayed**

By Agnes Bohm

BUDAPEST (JTA) — The president of the Hungarian Jewish community is threatening to hold demonstrations if compensation payments to the relatives of Hungary's Holocaust victims are further delayed.

Peter Tordai, head of the Federation of Jewish Communities in Hungary, said the group is appealing to Prime Minister Viktor Orban regarding the issue of compensation, which isn't on the Cabinet's agenda.

"According to the Jewish organizations, the government should at least set up a timetable as soon as possible for the compensation of the relatives of the Jewish victims of the Holocaust," Tordai said.

Last December, Hungary's Constitutional Court canceled a discriminatory compensation law from 1999 that granted about \$140 to Jews whose relatives were killed in the Holocaust, a fraction of the amount granted victims of communist terror. Relatives of those executed by the Communists — though far fewer in number — have received \$3,300 each.

To protest what they consider a paltry sum, angry recipients have returned the money, some directly to the prime minister.

In 1992, the Hungarian Parliament passed a law giving thousands of dollars in compensation to heirs of communist victims. After opposition from Jewish groups, the law was modified in 1997, adding relatives of those who died between 1938 and 1945 to the list of those entitled to compensation. In 1999, however, Parliament voted to slash the payments to Holocaust victims' relatives to about \$140.

Earlier this week, Laszlo Keller, Eastern European president of the World Jewish Congress, met with Hungarian President Ferenc Madl and urged him to speed up the compensation process.

However, a government spokesman said the matter of Jewish compensation probably would not reach a legislative settlement until after next year's general elections in Hungary.

There are about 100,000 Jews living in Hungary — and an estimated 25,000 Hungarian-born Jews living elsewhere who would likely be eligible for compensation. □