



Daily News Bulletin

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84th Year

TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

Israel kills Hamas officials

Eight Palestinians, including at least two senior Hamas officials and two children, were killed in an Israeli helicopter attack on an office of the terrorist group in the West Bank city of Nablus.

Israeli sources said the Hamas members were planning attacks in the Jerusalem area, according to the Israeli daily Ha'aretz. [Page 1]

McCain to work for hostages

Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.), a former POW, agreed to be a member of an international committee working to free three Israeli soldiers kidnapped by Hezbollah last October, JTA has learned.

According to the World Jewish Congress, which is organizing the effort, McCain may travel to Syria and Lebanon on behalf of the soldiers, who are believed to be in Lebanon.

"Given his personal stature and his position here in the United States, I think" McCain "can open doors — whether it be in the Middle East, the United Nations or other fora — which would be closed to others," WJC Executive Director Elan Steinberg told JTA on Tuesday.

The rest of the committee membership is not finalized.

U.K.'s Farrakhan ban overturned

Lawyers for Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan succeeded in overturning a ban on his visiting Britain.

Jewish groups had been instrumental in getting Farrakhan barred from the U.K. in 1986 on the grounds that his presence there could stir up racial tension.

Farrakhan will not be able to enter Britain until October, when the judge outlines the reasons for his decision.

Sharon meets Reform leaders

Israel needs the Diaspora's support now more than ever, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon told a North American Reform movement solidarity mission Monday night.

Some 60 percent of affiliated Reform Jews support Sharon's policies and leadership, according to a study presented to Sharon during the meeting, the Jerusalem Post reported.

NEWS ANALYSIS

Arafat plays the 'religion card' in effort to drum up Arab support

By David Landau

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat is making Jerusalem the focus of intensified terror in order to accentuate the religious dimension of the 10-month-old violence against Israel.

This was the accusation leveled at Arafat this week by top Israeli government analysts following a spate of attacks — shootings, bombings, stabbings and rioting — that have brought a new level of fear to Jerusalem residents.

The analysts believe Arafat's immediate aim is to use the "religion card" in order to convene yet another Arab summit meeting.

Though several meetings of the Arab world's leadership since the Palestinian uprising began failed to result in significant economic aid for the Palestinian Authority, Arafat hopes that focusing on the religious overtones of the conflict with the Jewish state will convince the Arab League to provide tangible economic support, according to this view.

This week, violence continued at some of the highest levels since the Palestinians began their uprising last September.

Erupting across the West Bank and Gaza Strip and in Jerusalem, the violence threw into sharp relief just how thoroughly the U.S.-mediated cease-fire, which Israel and the Palestinian Authority agreed to just six weeks ago, has failed.

Some might argue — as the Palestinians contend — that the violence makes the need for international peacekeepers in the region more necessary than ever.

In practice, however, it appeared less likely that such monitors would arrive anytime soon.

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon insisted that he would not discuss the composition of an observer force with Washington until an effective cease-fire truly takes hold.

Arafat reiterated his demand — rejected by Israel — that such a force include other countries than just the United States.

If the Palestinian leader's latest goal is to cast the conflict in a religious mold, then events Sunday dealt him something of a setback, as Israeli security officials did not fall into his trap.

After days of belligerent statements from Palestinian and Israeli Arab leaders had stoked their passions, Palestinians on the Temple Mount rained rocks down on Jewish worshippers marking Tisha B'Av on Sunday at the Western Wall.

Israeli police subsequently entered the Temple Mount compound, firing tear gas and stun grenades in skirmishes with dozens of Palestinians.

During the confrontations, 15 policemen and 20 Palestinians were hurt.

The disturbances forced the evacuation of Jewish worshippers from the Western Wall Plaza.

Just the same, the police action did not lead to any Palestinian deaths — something Arafat could have milked for propaganda value in Arab capitals.

Observers of Sunday's events could only recall the panicky deployment of Israeli police on the Temple Mount the morning of Sept. 29, 2000, the day after then-opposition leader Ariel Sharon paid a high-profile visit to the site.

Instead of using tear gas and stun grenades — which proved effective on Sunday — police last September responded to the Palestinians' stones with bullets.

The figures are still in dispute, but as many as seven Palestinians died that day. It

MIDEAST FOCUS

IDF chief blasts Palestinians

The Israel Defense Force chief of staff accused the Palestinian Authority of making no serious effort to implement a U.S.-brokered cease-fire.

Lt. Gen. Shaul Mofaz also said Tuesday that arrests of militants by the Palestinian Authority were only "for the sake of appearances."

Mortars fired at settlements

Palestinians fired mortars at Jewish settlements in the Gaza Strip on Tuesday, but these attacks caused no injuries.

In other violence the night before, an Israeli woman was lightly wounded in a stabbing attack in Jerusalem's Armon Hanatziv neighborhood.

Palestinians fired at U.N. official

Forensic evidence released this week proved that shots fired last November at a convoy carrying the U.N. high commissioner for human rights, Mary Robinson, came from a rifle used by Palestinian forces and from an area under Palestinian control.

Palestinian officials claimed at the time that Israeli settlers had fired at her, and her silence in the face of the accusations generally was seen as an indication that Robinson agreed with the Palestinian view.

Israeli, Arab defense officials met

Israeli and Arab defense officials attended a conference last week that was organized by the U.S. Defense Department and the University of California at Los Angeles.

The conference, held in Garmisch, Germany, focused on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the threat of terrorism to world peace.

Officials came from throughout the Arab world — including Lebanon, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and Egypt, as well as the Palestinian Authority.

marked the beginning of the Palestinians' now 10-month-old Al-Aksa Intifada, named for the mosque on the Temple Mount.

Israeli security officials said Palestinian officials and Israeli Arab legislators were responsible for inciting Sunday's violence because they had overstated the threat posed by the Temple Mount Faithful, a small Jewish extremist group.

As they do every Tisha B'Av, when Jews around the world mourn the destruction of the First and Second Temples in Jerusalem, the Faithful had sought permission to visit the Temple Mount for a symbolic cornerstone-laying ceremony to help build the Third Temple.

As in previous years, the High Court of Justice refused their request. Instead, the group was forced to hold the ceremony outside the Old City walls, and the rock was removed immediately after.

Despite that, Palestinian officials and Israeli Arab lawmakers warned in the days leading up to Tisha B'Av that the ceremony indeed would take place on the Temple Mount and was part of an Israeli attempt to assert control over the sacred complex. They called on Muslims to protect the Mount with their bodies.

These warnings prompted angry crowds of Palestinians to throng into Jerusalem on Sunday, pelting Jews praying at the Western Wall Plaza below with rocks.

Given the number of people involved and the hot tempers, observers said it was a wonder that the clashes with Israeli police did not take a more deadly turn.

But that was only one in a series of incidents in recent days that have put Israelis on edge.

Security forces went on high alert this week following a series of terrorist attacks in Jerusalem, none of which caused serious injuries:

- On Monday, a small bomb exploded in a supermarket in Jerusalem.
- A day earlier, a car bomb exploded in the underground garage of an apartment building in the Jerusalem neighborhood of Pisgat Ze'ev.
- Last Friday, a bus driver found a bomb hidden in a watermelon on his bus, which was parked in a Jerusalem shopping mall.

On Monday, after the series of bombings, Israeli helicopters attacked the main Palestinian police headquarters in Gaza City.

The army said it targeted a building "used to manufacture weapons and mortar bombs."

Tensions were further fueled Monday after an explosion killed six activists from Arafat's Fatah faction near the West Bank city of Jenin.

Palestinian officials said Israel killed the six, who were wanted by Israeli officials for alleged involvement in terrorism.

Israeli security officials denied involvement, saying the blast may have been a "work accident" while the six were assembling a bomb.

On Tuesday, eight Palestinians — including at least two senior Hamas officials and two children — were killed in an Israeli helicopter attack on one of the terrorist group's offices in the West Bank city of Nablus.

Israeli sources said the Hamas members were planning attacks in the Jerusalem area, according to the Israeli daily Ha'aretz. The government expressed regret for the death of the two children.

Sheik Ahmed Yassin, Hamas' spiritual leader, said Tuesday that Israel would pay a heavy price for the attack.

Meanwhile, diplomatic efforts to halt the violence held out little hope of imminent success.

Israeli sources spoke of disagreement within the Bush administration, with Secretary of State Colin Powell anxious for an immediate agreement on observers, while the president and other policymakers are said to be less eager for a debate with Sharon about the composition of the team while violence still rages on the ground.

White House spokesman Ari Fleischer appeared to reflect the latter approach when he said Monday that a lasting cease-fire was the "necessary prerequisite" for the dispatch of monitors.

"Only at that time will the question of monitors possibly come up," he said. "It would have to be agreed to by both sides."

As the week wore on, however, agreement by both Israel and the Palestinian Authority about most anything seemed highly unlikely. □

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



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JEWISH WORLD

House OKs pro-Israel resolutions

The U.S. House of Representatives on Monday overwhelmingly passed a resolution endorsing the aims of an upcoming U.N. conference against racism and denouncing attempts to derail the conference by attacking Israel.

"The effort under way to hijack the conference and introduce hateful rhetoric targeting Israel that equates Zionism with racism must be stopped if the conference is to succeed," said Rep. Tom Lantos (D-Calif.), who sponsored the measure.

The House also passed a resolution calling on the United Nations to turn over to Israel a video made by a U.N. peacekeeper hours after Hezbollah gunmen kidnapped three Israeli soldiers last October.

Federations: We're doing well

North American Jewish federations are reporting a record launch to their 2002 campaigns, which kicked off last week during a mission to Israel and Ukraine.

According to the federations' United Jewish Communities, campaign chairs and directors announced opening gifts totaling \$2.99 million, a 47 percent increase over the gift pledges made at the beginning of the 2001 campaign.

Last year, federation campaigns raised approximately \$826 million from 700,000 people.

Austria begins slave payments

An Austrian fund paid a first installment of \$36 million from a \$450 million fund for Nazi-era slave laborers. Austrian officials on Tuesday transferred the money to organizations in Poland, Ukraine and the Czech Republic, which will forward it to more than 19,000 people.

ADL blasts magazine's name

A new Jewish magazine with the provocative name "Heeb" is drawing criticism from the Anti-Defamation League.

Kenneth Jacobson, the ADL's associate national director, said the magazine's goal of "reaching out to young, disaffected Jews is a very nice idea," but its name is "not very constructive."

The editor of "Heeb," which will debut in the coming months, has said the name is a way of reclaiming an ethnic slur, much like some gays now use the term "queer" to describe themselves.

B'nai B'rith joins elderly coalition

B'nai B'rith International recently became a founding member of the Jewish Coalition for Long Term Care.

Coalition members have agreed to work cooperatively on issues in support of long-term care and supportive services for the frail and elderly.

New Web site to seek ways to reach the lost 'Generation J'

By Julie Wiener

NEW YORK (JTA) — For years, they've been considered a sort of lost generation of Jews.

Out of college, highly mobile and — to a large extent — unmarried, Jews in their 20s and 30s historically have been underserved by an American Jewish community focused on children, students, families and senior citizens.

Now, several key national players are betting that the way to reach out to this cohort — which they are labeling "Generation J" in a play on the familiar "Generation X" — is through the Internet.

The United Jewish Communities, the umbrella for North American Jewish federations, the Charles and Lynn Schusterman Foundation and Jewish Family and Life, a nonprofit Jewish media company, are teaming up to develop an ambitious Web portal for young Jews. Plans are still in the early stages, but the new site aims to "attract large numbers of 20- and 30-somethings to be engaged in Jewish life" and facilitate communication among the range of Jewish groups that reach out to them, according to a mission statement.

According to Yossi Abramowitz, editor, publisher and founder of Jewish Family and Life, "There's not one single endeavor out there for this age group that has the budget, know-how and marketing savvy to get a super-critical mass of young adults and to find them on the Web on a regular basis.

"Instead of each group trying to do that — what we call making cyber-Shabbos for themselves — because we're acting in concert, this will be a critical mass of people coming in through the main gateway," Abramowitz said.

Jewish Family and Life, which hosts more than 15 Jewish Web sites, already has a site called GenerationJ.com. The site initially was created with the UJC, but has been running independently for the past year.

GenerationJ is said to get 15,000 to 20,000 visitors a month, but is much more limited in scope than the mega-site envisioned, with about eight articles at a time. Current pieces include "Mahjong? At Your Age?" and "Is Affirmative Action Good for the Jews?" It also hosts occasional off-the-Web events, like a recent poetry slam — competitive poetry readings — in New York.

The future portal likely would offer more interactive features than GenJ does and would link users to various programs, events and organizations in the Jewish world.

It is not clear how soon the new site will be up and running.

The site's planners recently held two focus groups, and are now preparing a business plan. Work will not begin on the site until additional funding partners come aboard.

While many established Jewish organizations have long had "young adult" groups or singles events with mixed results, in recent years a number of new groups and projects have emerged that focus more directly on 20- and 30-somethings.

Among them are Makor, a Manhattan cultural center, and GeshCity, a national franchise of outreach groups that link young Jews to each other and to local Jewish activities.

Several Jewish foundations and mainstream Jewish organizations also have come together to support young Jews creating their own innovative projects. For example, the San Francisco-based Joshua Venture is funding eight "fellows," whose projects range from an edgy magazine called "Heeb" to a program training Jewish teens to be filmmakers.

Single Jews also are targeted by a seemingly endless array of Jewish dating Web sites, many of them for-profit enterprises.

Participants at the recent focus groups expressed little interest in more Jewish singles or dating services, said Susan Sherr, assistant director of the UJC's Jewish Renaissance and Renewal pillar, the UJC committee involved in the project.

"Dating was mentioned maybe once in the focus groups," said Sherr, who is 32 and thus a member of the targeted audience. "They were much more interested in arts and culture, social action and information access." □

BEHIND THE HEADLINES

War crimes, racism, arrests? Israel feels the diplomatic heat

By Jessica Steinberg

JERUSALEM (JTA) — With Prime Minister Ariel Sharon facing a potential war crimes lawsuit in Belgium, and Denmark calling for the arrest of Israel's ambassador-designate, Israel is beginning to feel like the most unpopular kid on the block.

After years of improved international standing following the signing of the Oslo peace accord with the PLO in 1993, the Jewish state finds itself on the diplomatic defensive once again as the peace process unravels.

In addition to the charges against Sharon and the uproar in Denmark, Israel's Foreign Ministry is preparing a list of countries where Israeli officials should avoid because they could be put on trial for their roles in defending the country, and an international conference on racism that will begin Aug. 31 may become a forum for some of the most intensely anti-Israel resolutions in years.

The lawsuit in Belgium was filed in June by 23 Palestinian survivors of the 1982 Sabra and Shatila massacre in Lebanon. The massacre was carried out by Lebanese Christian militiamen who were allies of the Israeli army during the Lebanon War.

An Israeli commission of inquiry found Sharon indirectly responsible for Sabra and Shatila because, as defense minister overseeing the Israeli invasion, he failed to foresee and prevent the massacre. Sharon was forced to resign from the Defense Ministry, though he stayed in the Cabinet as a minister without portfolio and served in various posts in subsequent Likud governments.

The lawsuit was brought in Belgium because it has a 1993 law on "universal jurisdiction" — the authority to prosecute foreigners for crimes against humanity, torture or war crimes, even if committed elsewhere. The charges against Sharon are now being investigated by a Belgian court, which will decide whether to press formal charges. In the meantime, the Israeli government has hired a Belgian lawyer for Sharon.

In Denmark, Israel's appointment of Carmi Gillon — a former head of the Shin Bet domestic security service, as well as the Peres Center for Peace — as ambassador has created a diplomatic storm.

Last week, the Danish justice minister, Frank Jensen, threatened to arrest Gillon if he sets foot in Denmark.

Israel's nomination of Gillon sparked outrage in Denmark because he has admitted authorizing the torture of Palestinian suspects when he led Israel's Shin Bet domestic security service between 1994 and 1996. Gillon later went on to become president of Foreign Minister Shimon Peres' Tel Aviv peace center, which fosters cooperation between Jews and Arabs.

Jensen later backtracked, saying Gillon could not be arrested because he would have diplomatic immunity in Denmark.

Now, most Danish political parties are calling for Gillon's resignation. That includes two Danish politicians — one of them Arne Melchior, a relative of Israel's deputy foreign minister, Michael Melchior. It was an Israeli human rights organization, B'Tselem, that appealed initially to the Israeli and Danish foreign ministries to cancel Gillon's appointment.

As Sharon and Gillon deal with their respective troubles, Israel's Foreign Ministry is drawing up a list of countries that have universal jurisdiction laws on their books.

"The concept of universal jurisdiction is a very noble, honorable concept," said Alan Baker, a legal adviser to the Foreign

Ministry. "The danger is in the fact that Arabs have decided to abuse the concept and utilize the perhaps naivete of European countries."

According to Foreign Ministry officials, Arab interests may lead to more lawsuits against Israeli officials. As the 10-month-old Palestinian uprising continues, Arab nations are trying to delegitimize Israel and "carry out its warfare in a different field," attempting to gain favor among European nations, Baker said.

"We support universal jurisdiction," he said. "But this whole thing has been blown out of proportion."

The challenges in Belgium and Denmark — along with the upcoming World Conference Against Racism in Durban, South Africa — have made government officials and Israel supporters extremely uncomfortable.

There has been widespread concern in government circles about the racism conference, whose tentative agenda includes discussion of "racist Zionist practices" and equates the Holocaust with "ethnic cleansing of the Arab population in historic Palestine."

Arab delegates to the conference, which runs until Sept. 7, were the source of the anti-Israel moves. This week, Mary Robinson, the U.N. high commissioner for human rights, said Arab delegates preparing for the conference should drop wording from a draft document seeking to equate Zionism with racism.

The United States has threatened to boycott the conference over the issue. To Abraham Foxman, national director of the Anti-Defamation League, the situation smells suspiciously like a double — or even triple — standard applied against Israel.

"This permits a lot of people to act out against Israel under the guise of international law and under the guise of morality and humanitarian action," Foxman told JTA during a recent visit in Israel. "Arafat isn't on those lists" of people who could be arrested, "and neither are the Belgian officers who once acted in a brutal colonial manner," he said. "This is a one-sided, triple standard against Israel and the Jewish people."

Foxman spent a good portion of his recent trip to Israel talking about the upcoming conference.

Last week, Foxman and Michael Melchior met with a large contingent of foreign diplomats to discuss the Durban conference and the growing anti-Semitism in the Arab world.

"Events in the Arab world are making me nervous," Melchior — the son and grandson of former chief rabbis of Denmark — told the diplomats. "There has been a strengthening of anti-Semitism since the intifada began last year," he said. "You have to take notice and act accordingly."

By tracking those countries with universal jurisdiction laws, Foxman said, the Foreign Ministry is playing it safe, perhaps to avoid being sorry later. The Foreign Ministry also is preparing for the Durban conference. It has a human rights lawyer in Geneva drafting a statement that will "hopefully get rid of all the offensive language," Baker said.

While Israel is feeling the heat, several countries are coming out against the potential witch hunt, Baker said, citing Germany, Canada and the United States.

The ministry hopes these nations will have enough influence with the Arabs to block future anti-Israel moves.

In the meantime, Baker and his staff are asking officials in various Israeli embassies to obtain copies of their host countries' legislation in order to be prepared for potential lawsuits.

"Our job as advisers to the government is to be prepared," Baker said. "We don't want anyone to ever say, 'You didn't warn us.'" □