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84th Year

TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

Israeli merchant slain in Jordan

An Israeli diamond merchant in his 50s was shot to death in unclear circumstances in Amman, Jordan.

The Jordanian information minister, who identified the victim as Yitzhak Shneur, said the slaying could have been a "settling of scores among business associates."

But Abu Dhabi television said a group calling itself the Islamic Jordanian Resistance Movement claimed responsibility, citing what it called Israel's mistreatment of the Palestinians.

A senior official at Israel's Foreign Ministry said all clues indicate that the murder was an act of terror, according to the Jerusalem Post.

Israeli Arab killed in West Bank

An Israeli Arab in his 30s was killed in a shooting attack near the West Bank settlement of Alfei Menashe on Tuesday. Security officials said the man, from Taibe, was driving a car with Israeli license plates, and the gunmen may have thought he was a Jew.

Israel Radio reported the possibility the attack was carried out by the same Arab terror cell responsible for Sunday's shooting that killed an Israeli woman and seriously wounded three other people.

Bush turns down Palestinians

The recommendations of a U.S.-led fact-finding commission cannot be implemented until Israeli-Palestinian violence ends, President Bush said.

"We are still very much engaged in the process," he said Tuesday. "Hopefully, sanity will prevail."

His comments came after Palestinian officials wrote him urging the United States to press Israel to begin implementing confidence-building measures proposed by the Mitchell Commission.

Vatican blasts Jewish historians

Jewish historians on a special Holocaust commission have helped spark a "slandering campaign" against the Catholic Church, according to Vatican officials.

Tuesday's accusation came in response to the recent announcement that a panel of Jewish and Catholic historians investigating the Vatican's actions during the Holocaust had suspended its work because the Vatican has not opened all of its Holocaust-era archives.

NEWS ANALYSIS

World condemns 'assassinations,' but Israelis see them as justified

By David Landau

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Almost universally condemned abroad, Israel's policy of targeting suspected Palestinian terrorists is drawing widespread support at home — though its efficacy is still up for debate.

Even Washington, Israel's closest ally, sharply criticized Jerusalem for a helicopter attack last week that killed a top Hamas leader in Nablus. Two boys who happened to be passing by the building as missiles slammed through the third-floor windows of the Hamas offices also were killed.

Inside Israel, however, government policy and army actions enjoy broad approval.

This comes despite some doubts over whether the policy that Israeli officials call "targeted preventative measures" — and which most of the world condemns as "assassinations" — really is effective.

The operation in Nablus, for instance, was criticized by opposition leader Yossi Sarid as carrying too high a risk of collateral casualties.

But even Sarid agreed that the senior Hamas official killed in the attack, Jamil Mansour, should have been "marked to die" as far as Israel was concerned.

And U.S. Vice President Dick Cheney told Fox News last week that Israel might have "some justification" for the killings if they prevented attacks on Israelis.

Many Israelis, in fact, note the apparent disarray the killings have caused in the Palestinian ranks. Some say Israel's recent success in foiling so many Palestinian terror attacks stems from the fact that the targeted killings have hampered the terrorist organizations, forcing them to send out novices with haphazardly prepared weapons.

Even in Ha'aretz, the most liberal of the Israeli dailies, commentators have lauded the Israel Defense Force actions.

"The leaders of Palestinian terrorism can now be seen through IDF field glasses as they run for their lives and hide in every crevice," Dan Margalit wrote Tuesday.

His colleague Yoel Marcus similarly supported the policy.

"The policy of assassinations is an interim one, which is described by one of Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's 'advisers as 'crisis management.' It intensifies pinpoint attacks, but does not pull out all the stops, and does not close the door to negotiations," Marcus wrote. "In the varied menu of escalation possibilities, the policy of assassinations is the least of all evils."

Among the leading politicians of the left, only Yossi Beilin, justice minister in the former Labor government, consistently has opposed the policy.

Apart from the ethical problem of a government ordering a premeditated killing without judge or jury, Beilin argues, the mounting toll of Palestinian activists eliminated in this way — more than 40 in recent months — carries with it the prospect of future Palestinian reprisals.

Indeed, the Palestinian Authority recently prepared a list of 50 Israeli "extremists" it wants arrested, saying it will begin assassinating them if Israel does not crack down.

Palestinians and other Arabs also have put prices on the heads of Israel's Ashkenazi chief Rabbi, Yisrael Meir Lau, and Shas leader Rabbi Ovadia Yosef, and death threats have been made against Sharon and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres.

Moreover, Beilin contends, Israel's policy makes it impossible for Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat to crack down on Hamas and Islamic Jihad.

The targeted killings only serve to radicalize the Palestinian public, Beilin says. Pressure from an inflamed Palestinian public then makes it too dangerous for Arafat to

MIDEAST FOCUS

Israelis warn of Arafat's downfall

Israeli defense officials are advising the government to take steps to prevent the collapse of Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat's regime. The Israeli daily *Ma'ariv* reported Tuesday that the officials are warning that the collapse of the Palestinian Authority could lead to chaos in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

In another development, a Palestinian minister warned that the Palestinian Authority is losing its influence over Hamas and the Islamic Jihad movements because of Israel's policy of targeting suspected Palestinian terrorists.

Ziad Abu Ziad told Israel Radio that the Israeli policy is radicalizing the Palestinian public.

Israel eases open-fire rules

Israel relaxed its rules of engagement for soldiers battling what the army said was increasing Palestinian violence. The changes announced Tuesday give soldiers a freer hand to fire live rounds during clashes with Palestinians.

Russian immigrants back Likud

The Likud Party is the overwhelming favorite among immigrants to Israel from the former Soviet Union, according to a new survey.

Some 30 percent of these immigrants back the Likud, with two immigrant parties, *Yisrael Ba'Aliyah* and *Israel Our Home*, taking about 15 percent each. Only 4 percent back the Labor Party.

Israeli survives ordeal in the wild

A 22-year-old Israeli woman who survived for 12 days after getting lost in a nature reserve along the Mozambique-Zimbabwe border has returned home.

Yifat Madar of Rosh Ha'ayin likened her experience to a movie with a happy ending. After finishing her meager supplies, she survived on plants and water she found in the area.

face down the groups by arresting — in many cases rearresting — men on Israel's most-wanted list.

Even without the killings, however, there is scant evidence that Arafat would contemplate a major effort against the fundamentalist groups. And the logic cited by government officials is precisely the reverse of Beilin's thinking.

Sharon and his advisers say the policy — which they call "active self-defense" — is justified because it targets Palestinian militants planning to strike at Israeli civilians.

In addition, they argue, Israel only eliminates activists when it has concrete information they have been involved in deadly terror attacks or are about to do so, and after the Palestinian Authority has rebuffed Israeli demands to arrest the men.

Moreover, the government believes Arafat still could rein in the violence if he wished.

They contend that by steadily raising the pressure on Arafat, they will eventually force him to face down the extremists in the Palestinian camp.

It was this logic, apparently, that convinced Israeli officials to raise the stakes last week by targeting Mansour and his senior lieutenant, Jamal Selim, in Nablus.

Until that attack, Israel had targeted Palestinians who had masterminded terrorist actions against Israelis.

Mansour and Selim, however, were more than terror masterminds; they were political and religious leaders respected throughout the West Bank. Both had served stints in Israeli and Palestinian jails as men of influence capable of inspiring and directing large-scale operations against Israeli targets.

Targeting Mansour, Israeli analysts said, showed that Israel no longer accepts the distinction the fundamentalist groups sought to make between "military" men who carry out the attacks and the "political" handlers who recruit and indoctrinate them.

The killing of Mansour immediately raised questions about the nature of Israel's "hit list."

Early in the week, Israeli officials read on television the names of seven wanted Palestinians Arafat has refused to arrest.

The unusual announcement raised speculation that Israel had in effect pronounced a death sentence on the men, prompting Egypt's foreign minister to denounce the Sharon government as a "gang of assassins."

Does Israel's list include the leader of the Palestinian militias in the West Bank, Marwan Barghouti? On Saturday, Barghouti's bodyguard was wounded when Israeli helicopters fired on a convoy of cars near Ramallah.

Some Palestinian sources said Barghouti, leader of Fatah's Tanzim militias, was in the convoy, while others said he was in his office at the time. It was unclear whether Barghouti was the intended target, though the Palestinians sought to milk the incident for its full propaganda benefit.

Israel security sources said they were aiming for Barghouti's aide, whom they accuse of being involved in numerous terror attacks during the past 10 months of violence.

Just the same, the sources did not rule out that the operation could serve as a warning to Barghouti.

Does the hit list also include Sheik Ahmed Yassin, the disabled cleric who leads Hamas and was Mansour's immediate superior?

Does it include Palestinian ministers? Perhaps even Arafat himself?

Last week, Finance Minister Silvan Shalom told TV viewers that Arafat was not a target — though he speculated that, "if the deterioration continues," there could come a time when Israel's Cabinet might consider barring Arafat from the West Bank and Gaza Strip. On Monday, however, Defense Minister Benjamin Ben-Eliezer stated that he was personally responsible for the Palestinian leader's safety, and that "no harm would come to" Arafat.

While the policy of targeting militants enjoys unanimous approval within the Cabinet, there have been signs of discord this week between the prime minister and his top Labor lieutenants — Peres and Ben-Eliezer — over Sharon's refusal to engage in political dialogue with the Palestinian Authority as long as violence continues.

The Labor ministers say they are not advocating "talks under fire," but rather "talks about a cease-fire," which need not be seen as a sop to Arafat.

But Sharon is adamant, and tensions are said to be mounting within Israel's innermost policymaking circle. □



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JEWISH WORLD

Austrian, German funds pay out, but some Jews may have to wait

By Toby Axelrod

BERLIN (JTA) — Thousands of former Nazi-era slave and forced laborers have begun to receive payments from Austrian and German compensation funds.

But some Jewish survivors may have to wait a bit longer for their money because of confusion over which fund will pay them.

Payments totaling about \$36 million began to go out last week to some 20,000 former slave and forced laborers — most of them non-Jews — from an approximately \$400 million fund created by the Austrian government and Austrian industry.

But Jews who survived slave labor in concentration camps in Austria are not eligible for monies from the Austrian fund, and must apply instead to the \$4.7 billion German compensation fund, which began making payments this week.

This has led to some confusion among survivors, according to Erika Jakubovits, executive director of the presidium of the Jewish Community of Austria.

"When it comes to people who have been in concentration camps, Germany is responsible for payment," said Jakubovits.

"We are not very happy, because people think they have to apply here and then their papers are sent to Germany."

Claims forwarded to Germany involve survivors of such concentration camps as Mauthausen and satellite camps of Dachau, which were located on Austrian soil.

"It's like hitting your head against a wall," said Bernard Mueller, who has been working for 20 years to receive compensation for his slave labor.

In addition, the funds have different deadlines.

The Austrian deadline is Nov. 27, 2002.

The German deadline was to expire in August, but the German compensation foundation is planning to extend this to the end of this year, according to Karen Heilig, director of international relations for the New York-based Claims Conference.

Under the terms of an agreement reached in March 2000, some 240,000 slave laborers — about 140,000 of whom are Jewish — would receive up to \$7,500 each from the German fund.

More than 1 million forced laborers — mostly non-Jews — would get up to \$2,500 each.

Of the estimated 150,000 survivors eligible for payments from Austria, fewer than 10,000 are Jewish, said Heilig.

"The main Jewish beneficiaries" are Hungarian Jews "brought over by the Germans to build fortifications when the Germans were retreating in 1944," she said.

About 6,000 live in Hungary and the rest live in Israel, the United States, France, Australia and other countries.

Their payments will be administered by the Foundation for Jewish Heritage in Hungary.

The final obstacle to the payments from the Austrian fund came July 31, when Austrian Chancellor Wolfgang Schussel formally released the funds after U.S. Judge Shirley Wohl Kram dismissed the last class-action suits against Austria.

Gideon Taylor, executive vice president of the Claims Conference, said he is pleased that "the payments are starting, even though most of them will be for non-Jews."

The first 1,200 payments from the Austrian fund were made early last week.

A further 5,000 transfers were expected to be made this week to individuals in about 20 countries worldwide, and to three organizations responsible for disseminating the moneys to survivors in Poland, the Czech Republic and the Ukraine.

In all, only 44 people are slated to receive the highest compensation level of about \$7,000.

These are people who were forced to work in Austrian facilities similar to concentration camps.

Most of the Austrian cases involve agricultural workers.

Some 10,000 people in this category will receive \$1,300 each. Nearly 9,000 former industrial workers will receive \$2,300 each.

And 28 battered women and people who suffered through medical experiments will receive \$350. □

Group wants money for educators

An organization representing 4,500 North American Jewish educators is calling on the American Jewish community to help it solve the personnel shortage in Jewish education.

The Coalition for the Advancement of Jewish Education, meeting this week in Ft. Collins, Colo., is urging the Jewish community to provide competitive salaries and benefits, supportive work environments and mentoring programs for new teachers.

Canada to host Mideast forum

A Canadian parliamentary committee is making preparations for an October meeting of Israeli and Palestinian lawmakers in Halifax, Nova Scotia. The goals of the meeting, slated for Oct. 14-16, are to build a new line of communication between Israelis and Palestinians and discuss how Canada can play a more constructive role in the region, its Canadian organizers say.

Alleged racist runs for mayor

The trial of a former deputy mayor of the Russian city of Samara, charged with racial incitement, was delayed for additional investigation. The delay allows Oleg Kitter to run for mayor in the city's upcoming elections.

Meanwhile, Aleksander Brod, the activist with the Union of Councils for Jews in the FSU whose complaint initiated the case against Kitter, recently was the subject of an anti-Semitic slur in Moscow-based neo-Nazi newspapers.

Shul near Paris is arson target

The basement of a synagogue in a Paris suburb was the target of an arson attack. The fire set Sunday in Clichy sous Bois slightly damaged the basement but did not spread to the synagogue's main prayer hall.

Vandals hit Russian rights group

An anti-fascist organization in the southern Russian city of Novorossiysk received threats, and the walls of its headquarters were covered with anti-Semitic slogans and swastikas, according to the Union of Councils for Jews in the FSU.

The group, known as the School of Peace, recently criticized local officials for not taking adequate steps to stop the activities of right-wing extremists.

Lubavitch group distributes relief

The Lubavitch-affiliated Global Jewish Assistance and Relief Network recently began distributing tons of apples to poverty-stricken regions in Russia's Far East.

The group is distributing the apples, which were provided by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, to child welfare agencies.

FOCUS ON ISSUES**Boy Scouts earn badges — and keep Sabbath at Jamboree**

By Aliza Karp

FORT A.P. HILL, Va. (JTA) — As in past years, scouts at this year's National Boy Scout Jamboree could fish, scuba dive, bike or shoot air rifles.

The scouts could earn merit badges, visit military exhibits, go to an arts and science exposition or explore a disabilities awareness trail.

They also could attend Shabbat services and learn to decorate their leather yarmulkas.

The 12th point in the scout law states: A scout is reverent. And the scouts take reverence very seriously: There were 145 chaplains at the Jamboree, representing 19 religious denominations.

In 1999, Howard Speilman, a scoutmaster from Sharon, Mass., presented a 30-page document to the Jamboree committee specifying the needs of the 120 registered Torah-observant scouts and scout leaders in his group.

Two years and many hours of planning later, members of the Shomer Shabbat scouting contingent fully participated in this year's Jamboree without having to compromise any of their religious observances.

Aside from the Shomer Shabbat group, there were roughly 1,000 Jews among the 40,000 scouts and leaders attending the Jamboree, which was held July 23 through Aug. 1 in Fort A.P. Hill, Va. The 10-day Jamboree takes place every four years.

The Shomer Shabbat group was provided with supervised kosher food, and other details outlined on the document — such as the eruv boundary wire around the Shomer Shabbat campsite that allowed the observant Jews to carry on the Sabbath — were attended to meticulously.

To erect the eruv, the Boy Scouts bought a power auger, drilled holes into the hardened ground, inserted 80 posts and strung cord around the campsite.

"It's all part of the commitment of the Boy Scouts to support everyone equally," Jamboree camp chief Bob Sirhal said.

At the exhibit of the National Jewish Committee on Scouting, Rabbi Shmuly Gutnick was overwhelmed by the interest from Jewish scouts from across the country.

"One day I helped more than 50 boys put on tefillin, before I lost count," Gutnick said.

If Gutnick learned that a scout had never had an aliyah to the Torah, he would teach the boy the blessings and invite him to the next Torah reading in the shul tent.

As a result, at least half a dozen Bar Mitzvahs were conducted at the Jamboree.

The most moving Bar Mitzvah celebration was that of a 54-year-old man who had been brought up as a Methodist. During his aliyah to the Torah, he began to cry.

Jewish scouts were invited to join the Shomer Shabbat contingent in the shul tent for Shabbat services and meals. More than 350 showed up.

"At the Friday night meal, there were Jewish scouts and scoutmasters from all over the United States, representing the entire spectrum of Jewish identification and observance, eating together, laughing together and singing their hearts out together," Chaplain Rabbi Shlomo Goldfarb said.

"We had prepared song sheets and before long everyone joined

in by singing, then by banging on the tables and then by actually getting up and dancing together."

On Sunday morning, Jamboree activities were suspended to give scouts time for religious services.

"In the past," Schnapp said, "the Jewish boys would be left idle or would accompany their friends to non-Jewish services. This problem was addressed three Jamborees ago by providing a Sunday morning traditions program for Jewish scouts."

Representatives of Tzivos Hashem: Jewish Children International came from Brooklyn to run the traditions program.

This year, the Sunday of the Jamboree coincided with Tisha B'Av.

Despite the fact that the young men of Tzivos Hashem were fasting — and despite a torrential downpour — hundreds of Jewish scouts joined the program.

A play about Ahavat Yisrael, caring for your fellow Jew, was presented in honor of Tisha B'Av.

Then the scouts crafted a Havdalah candle and their own shofar for Rosh Hashanah.

They helped "write" a Torah scroll by purchasing a letter. They had their pictures taken at a large replica of Jerusalem's Western Wall, while giving charity or wearing tefillin.

And they poured their hearts into letters they wrote to God, which would be taken to the Western Wall.

"I had many encounters where kids expressed excitement about their newfound Jewish spark that was ignited at the Jamboree," Chaplain Rabbi Pinny Gniwisch said.

One scout told Gniwisch: "When I get back home, I am definitely going to learn more about who I really am."

Members of the Shomer Shabbat group came from 18 states. They follow different levels of Jewish observance, but for the duration of the Jamboree each committed himself to keeping kosher, keeping Shabbat and setting aside time for praying and learning.

Philip Prousnitzer of Little Rock, Ark., is not from an Orthodox family but always has been proud of his Jewishness.

Philip's scoutmaster, Jeff Lichterman, realized that Philip would do well with the Shomer Shabbat contingent, and encouraged him to join them for the Jamboree. There Philip, now 17, served as a patrol leader.

He also provided a daily Torah commentary for the group. Each morning after prayers, the scouts would linger for a few minutes as Philip spoke about points of Jewish law relevant to the Jamboree experience.

"The combination of scouting and Judaism has been great for Philip," said his father, Chuck Prousnitzer. "He went nuts. He became an Eagle Scout and earned his Ner Tamid" — or Eternal Light — "Award. The reinforcement of Judaism and the scouting have worked hand in hand for our son." □

Israeli court: Two moms OK

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Israel's Interior Ministry has registered a woman's lesbian partner as her son's second mother.

The move was ordered by the nation's High Court of Justice, which had ruled in favor of Ruti and Nicole Berner-Kadish, who were living in California when Ruti's son Mattan was born.

Nicole adopted Mattan under California law, but the Interior Ministry refused to recognize the adoption when the couple returned to Israel.

The ministry had said a child cannot have two mothers. □