



# Daily News Bulletin

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84th Year

## TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

### Three dead in Mideast violence

An Israeli was killed and another wounded in a drive-by shooting in Israel, just inside the border with Palestinian-ruled territories of the West Bank.

Palestinians on loudspeakers in the nearby West Bank town of Tulkarm said the attack was in retaliation for an Israeli missile attack earlier in the day that killed two Palestinians.

The target of that attack, local militia leader Ra'ed Karmi, told The Associated Press that he had killed Israelis and planned to kill more.

### Racism compromise rejected

Arab and Muslim delegates rejected a draft resolution at the U.N. World Conference Against Racism that empathizes with the suffering of the Palestinians, but removes language singling out Israel as racist. Efforts continue to find a compromise resolution before the end of the conference Friday.

Israel and the United States walked out of the conference earlier this week because Israel was singled out for harsh criticism.

### Shoah insurance fund delayed

U.S. insurance commissioners are criticizing delays in a German foundation set up to pay out Holocaust-era insurance policies. Members of the National Association of Insurance Commissioners said that, if necessary, it would encourage member states to pursue new lawsuits against the companies until the foundation agrees with an international Holocaust commission on how to handle reimbursement claims.

### Shooter gets death sentence

A U.S. judge imposed five death sentences on a man convicted of killing five minorities, including a Jewish woman, during a shooting spree last year.

In addition to his Jewish neighbor, Richard Scott Baumhammers murdered two Asian men, an Indian man and a black man in his attack in Pittsburgh in April 2000.

### Israel to buy more jets

Israel will purchase 52 additional F-16s from Lockheed Martin to add to the largest fleet of fighter jets outside the United States.

Israel's use of F-16s against the Palestinians earlier this year drew widespread criticism.

## FOCUS ON ISSUES

### As Congress returns from vacation, Jews focus on faith-based initiative

By Sharon Samber

WASHINGTON (JTA) — A year after Sen. Joseph Lieberman made news by being the first Jew to be nominated to a major party's presidential ticket, attention again is focused on the Democratic senator from Connecticut — but for a different reason.

Lieberman is expected to lead the legislative effort in the Senate for an initiative that would allow federal money to go to religious groups that provide social services.

It remains to be seen whether Lieberman will base his proposal for the faith-based initiative on the House bill — which passed in July but met with much opposition from most Jewish groups — or will take a new tack.

"All eyes are on Joe Lieberman and what his proposal will be," said Michael Lieberman, Washington counsel for the Anti-Defamation League.

The Democratic leadership in the Senate has indicated that it is unlikely that faith-based legislation will be a priority this fall, or will make it onto the list of "must-pass" legislation.

Yet the faith-based initiative is the item likely to grab headlines, and the most attention from Jewish groups, as Congress returns this week from its August recess.

In addition to the faith-based issue, Jewish groups are watching the effects of the recent tax cut and a slowed economy, especially whether lawmakers looking to effect budget cuts will trim programs that Jewish groups consider important.

The Bush administration likely will push to appropriate funds for the faith-based initiative — but as part of its attempt to keep spending levels moderate, it probably will try to spread current levels of faith-based funding around, rather than increasing the total pot of money for the initiative.

The part of the faith-based initiative known as charitable choice will continue to be scrutinized by Jewish groups.

First passed as part of the 1996 welfare reform legislation, charitable choice allows religious institutions to bid for government social service contracts.

Many Jewish leaders fear that an expanded partnership between the government and faith-based institutions could break down the constitutional wall separating church and state, infringe on religious liberties and imply toleration of employment discrimination.

Orthodox groups, however, agree with the administration's assessment, bolstered by a recent White House report, that faith-based groups have been excluded from federal funding and that efforts must be made to level the playing field.

The prospect of the Bush's administration charitable choice provisions being enacted suffered recently with the resignation of John DiIulio Jr., the director of the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives, who was respected in the Jewish community.

No replacement has been named, though insiders believe John Bridgeland, director of the White House Domestic Policy Council, is the front-runner.

The ADL agrees that recruitment of faith-based groups ought to be expanded but worries that proper safeguards against proselytizing will not be maintained if federal funding goes directly to religious groups.

ADL and other Jewish groups also will be tracking efforts to advance the initiative through the regulatory process — rather than legislation — which is seen as the administration's preferred way to proceed. That would allow the Bush administration to put the initiative into practice without public scrutiny or lawmaker approval.

As always, federal government spending for social service programs is a priority

## MIDEAST FOCUS

### Report: Closures create poverty

Israeli closures of Palestinian areas have helped plunge half the population of the West Bank and Gaza Strip into poverty, according to a new U.N. report.

Israel says the closures are necessary to keep militants from entering Israel, but Terje Roed-Larsen, the U.N. envoy for the Middle East, said the closures hurt innocent people and encourage suicide bombings.

### Burg's Labor victory questioned

Israeli Knesset Speaker Avraham Burg's apparent victory in Israel's Labor Party election stemmed from a deal between Druse Cabinet minister Saleh Tarif and regional Druse leaders, according to the campaign of Defense Minister Benjamin Ben-Eliezer, Burg's rival.

Burg's campaign headquarters dismissed the charge and called on Ben-Eliezer to accept defeat.

### Israel arrest alleged terrorists

Israel arrested Palestinians near the West Bank town of Ramallah who allegedly are members of terrorist groups.

The cells are believed to be responsible for a May shooting that killed an Israeli soldier and seriously wounded his mother.

### Pipe bomb found in car

A pipe bomb was discovered Thursday planted in the car of an Israeli Arab man planning to take his children to school in central Israel. Police, who think it was an attempted terror attack, neutralized the device.

### Egypt bans Jewish festival

An Egyptian court banned a Jewish festival that takes place at a pilgrimage site, saying it endangers public morals.

In the past two decades, thousands of Jews have visited the tomb of a 19th-century Moroccan Jew for an eight-day pilgrimage.

for many Jewish groups. The United Jewish Communities, the central fund-raising and social services agency for the Jewish community, will be looking to maintain current funding levels for programs it supports.

The UJC is hopeful that funding for Medicare and Medicaid programs, social service block grants, aid for refugees and long-term care programs will stay the same. However, money simply is not available for new initiatives, such as UJC's push for funds to create retirement communities in places with aging populations.

"This is a very tough period," said Diana Aviv, UJC's vice president of public policy. "I'd say forget about it."

The tax cut and smaller budget will impact every appropriations bill, said Mark Pelavin, associate director of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism.

An evergreen issue that may see some new life is hate crimes. Prospects for passing hate crimes legislation might be better than in years past since a Senate committee passed a free-standing hate crimes bill — rather than an amendment — and the issue has broad bipartisan support in the full Senate.

There also is support for the bill in the House of Representatives, albeit less than in the Senate.

The Senate Judiciary Committee passed a bill in July that would authorize federal prosecution of crimes motivated by sexual orientation, gender, or disability, expanding current laws that protect victims of crimes motivated by race, color, religion or ethnicity.

Many Jewish groups support national hate crimes legislation. In recent years hate crimes targeted at Jews caught the national spotlight, such as the April 2000 Pittsburgh shooting that killed a Jewish woman, a white supremacist's shooting rampage in July 2000 in Illinois and the 1999 shooting at the North Valley Jewish Community Center in Los Angeles.

As for the House, the lower body went on record in support of hate crimes legislation last September, but the hate crimes provisions added to the defense spending bill ultimately were taken out of the final version.

Groups also will watch federal funding for education.

The American Jewish Committee is fighting against any voucher-like programs and a provision in the House bill that will deny federal funding to a school if the school does not allow "constitutionally protected prayer in public schools."

Richard Foltin, legislative director for the AJCommittee, says the provision would encourage school administrators to become more lax in enforcing church-state separation and jeopardize the right of public school students not to be proselytized.

The Orthodox Union, meanwhile, wants to make sure that parochial school teachers are allowed to participate in programs for teacher development.

On a different issue, both the AJCommittee and the Orthodox Union are hoping that the Workplace Religious Freedom Act will get some notice this fall. The bill, which would strengthen provisions for religious accommodation, may get more attention since it is the only major piece of religious liberty legislation that would be considered at this time.

While domestic concerns once again will be at the fore, Jewish groups say that issues pertaining to Israel will not be neglected.

As always, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee is pushing for full funding for assistance to Israel. This session, however, it also is supporting legislation that calls on the president to impose sanctions on the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority if the groups do not end or prevent terrorism and stop anti-Israel incitement.

Such language is included in the House foreign aid bill and is expected to be included as an amendment to the Senate bill introduced by Sens. Dianne Feinstein (D-Cal.) and Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.).

That would require the president to select at least one of three sanctions — closing the Palestinian information office in the United States, designating the PLO and its constituent groups as foreign terrorist organizations or restricting assistance to the West Bank and Gaza Strip — should he determine that the PLO and Palestinian Authority are not upholding their peace commitments.

There also are efforts to include the language in a free-standing bill, so that the measures would become law and not expire after one year.

"There's a feeling on the Hill that it's time to do more and to crack down on terrorism," AIPAC spokesperson Rebecca Needler said. □



## Daily News Bulletin

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## JEWISH WORLD

### Judge: Nazi art lawsuit OK

A lawsuit can proceed against an art dealer accused of possessing some \$15 million worth of paintings, sculptures and illuminated manuscripts stolen by the Nazis, a U.S. judge ruled Wednesday.

The civil lawsuit was filed against Alec Wildenstein by descendants of Alphonse Kann, a Jewish art collector whose art fell into Nazi hands after Kann fled to England in 1940.

Kann's heirs claim there are Nazi inventory numbers on the art pieces identifying them as belonging to the family.

### Czechs return Jewish property

The Czech Republic will hand over the first batch of up to 100 state-owned properties to Czech Jewish communities as part of its commitment to mitigate losses sustained during the Holocaust.

Twelve plots of land and one building will be returned.

### Group begins work in Argentina

An Israeli commission is slated to begin work this week in Buenos Aires on Jews who "disappeared" during Argentina's military regime between 1976 and 1983.

In total, some 30,000 people went missing during that period.

### Hungary rejects Jews' complaint

Hungary's chief prosecutor is refusing to investigate Jewish claims that spokesmen for a far-right political party incited hatred against Hungarian Jews by denouncing the sale of Hungary's most popular soccer team to a leading Jewish businessman.

The ruling by the country's chief prosecutor upholds an earlier decision by the chief prosecutor in the city of Budapest.

### Yiddish center opens in Vilnius

The first Yiddish center in Vilnius since World War II opened last week.

Participants in the First World Congress of Jews of Lithuanian ancestry took part in the opening ceremony.

### Outfielder hits Jewish home run

A U.S. baseball star says he will sit out a key upcoming game in observance of Yom Kippur because he wants to serve as a role model for young Jews.

Sitting out the Sept. 26 game against the San Francisco Giants is a way of "saying that baseball, or anything, isn't bigger than your religion and your roots," Los Angeles Dodgers outfielder Shawn Green said.

## Jewish community in Croatian town may be small, but proud of its history

By Vlasta Kovac

ZAGREB, Croatia (JTA) — A little more than a century ago, the Jewish community of Osijek was the largest in Croatia, bigger even than Zagreb's.

Now it can barely muster a minyan of 10 young people involved in the community.

Still, that didn't stop Osijek's Jews from participating in the annual European Day of Jewish Culture last weekend, for the second time in two years.

Community facilities were opened to the general public and valuable paintings and sculptures were exhibited.

Among them was the head of a young girl sculpted around 1930 by Osijek native Oscar Nemon, best known for a huge marble bust of Churchill in London, as well as a sculpture of Sigmund Freud.

With hardly 100 Jews left in a city of 100,000 near the Hungarian border, Osijek's Jewish community is only a shadow of its former self.

In 1880, the community had 1,585 members, and in 1910, when the area was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Osijek's Jews represented nearly 9 percent of the town's population.

The Jews' social ascent occurred in less than a century.

Grandparents who had been modest manufacturers raised sons who became affluent industrialists.

Their children, in turn, became doctors, lawyers, bankers, newspaper editors and artists.

The Jewish community then was wealthy and influential. Many members belonged to the elite social class, living in Osijek's most beautiful avenue, which today is called European Avenue.

In 1941, the community numbered 3,500. Most were deported to Auschwitz in July and August 1942.

Yet a small remnant of the community survived. Darko Fischer, 63, a professor at the Osijek Electrotechnical Faculty who is president of the Jewish community, survived in Hungary, together with his mother and his sister. His father, an attorney named Alfred Fischer, was killed.

"What I wish is to show the world that the Jews in Osijek still exist and that they are conscious of their heritage," Fischer said. "I am not so sure whether there is a future for us here in Osijek, because the ambitious young people — including my own son who now lives in Germany — go away in search of better lives and to pursue their own careers."

Despite the dearth of young Jews in the community, "those Jews that still live in Osijek are doing their best to preserve the tradition," Fischer said. "All of our grandchildren have been born in mixed marriages, and it will be up to them to decide which religion to choose — and we shall be more than happy if half of them choose to stay Jewish."

Two years ago Osijek's Jewish community celebrated 150 years, but it's uncertain how far into the 21st century it can continue to exist.

Still, the continent-wide initiative for a Jewish cultural day has "encouraged us all to think of our own Jewish identity and to be proud of it," Fischer said. "Thanks to it, we who still live here in this small Jewish enclave feel a part of the big European community." □

## Germany extends anti-hate law

BERLIN (JTA) — Islamic organizations spreading anti-Semitic propaganda in Germany will be easier to ban under a proposal made by the German government this week.

The new law would remove the protection religious groups currently enjoy under Germany's anti-extremist laws. Certain Islamic groups take advantage of the protection to "agitate and stir against Jews and the State of Israel," Germany's Interior Ministry said in a statement. □

**BEHIND THE HEADLINES****Facing daily gun and bomb attacks, soldiers now face charges of abuse***By Gil Sedan*

JERUSALEM (JTA) — During the more than 11 months of Israeli-Palestinian violence, there have been cases where Israeli soldiers have crossed the line.

Last month, for example, an Israeli military court indicted four soldiers from the elite Shimshon Brigade on charges of abusing Palestinians residents from the Hebron area.

According to the indictments, on July 23 the soldiers forced nine Palestinian passengers out of two taxis, slapped them around, used a helmet to hit one of them in the face and beat others with their fists. The soldiers also allegedly smashed the cars' windows and slashed their tires.

That case is just the tip of the iceberg, according to Lior Yavneh, an official with the Israeli human rights group B'Tselem.

"The number of cases which are being investigated is very small, and the investigations themselves are very superficial," Yavneh told JTA.

Eleven months after the outbreak of the Palestinian intifada, the Israel Defense Force has investigated 12 cases where soldiers allegedly abused Palestinian civilians.

B'Tselem argues that the actual amount of abuse is much higher.

"The case of the Shimshon soldiers was the only one that received serious treatment by army investigators," said Yavneh, "and that was only because it was exposed in the press."

Accused by many Israelis of pro-Palestinian bias, B'Tselem uses Palestinian investigators to collect evidence in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, but claims that every testimony is cross-checked.

As in the first intifada, which lasted from 1987 to 1993, the media have often brought cases of abuse to public attention.

In 1987, people were shocked by CBS-TV footage that showed Israeli soldiers beating a group of Palestinians near the West Bank city of Nablus.

The incident occurred shortly after then-Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin instructed soldiers to "break the bones" of Palestinian rioters.

It was one of the first times the Israeli public saw that defeating the intifada might have a moral cost.

Unlike the previous uprising — when the Palestinians lacked the machine guns, mortars and grenades they have used in recent months — this time around the Israeli public has given little attention or sympathy to reports of abusive conduct by Israeli soldiers.

This may be because there have been too many Israeli casualties during the past 11 months to leave room for sympathy, or because most Israelis believe the Palestinian leadership consciously chose violence after rejecting an Israeli peace proposal that met virtually all of the Palestinians' demands.

In addition, Palestinian atrocities — like the lynching of two Israeli reservists who wandered into the West Bank city of Ramallah, or the murder and mutilation of two Israeli boys found hiking near their West Bank settlement — have convinced many Israelis that no matter what excesses IDF soldiers might commit, the Palestinians are much worse.

One who doesn't accept that logic is Gideon Levy, who writes

a weekly column for Ha'aretz about the plight of the Palestinian population that is harshly critical of Israeli policy.

Last weekend, the paper published a letter to the editor by one reader who claimed that he skips Levy's column because he does not want to read about the plight of the enemy.

Meanwhile, the IDF is taking steps to prevent abuse of Palestinian civilians, though officials admit they're fighting an uphill battle.

"It's not simple," said Lt. Col. Olivier Rafcowitz, an army spokesman, "because everywhere in the West Bank we are facing terror attacks, car bombs, sometimes suicide bombers."

Rafcowitz said the army does not wait for human rights groups to file a complaint before ordering an investigation. However, according to B'Tselem, this is precisely the case.

B'Tselem investigators likewise contend that Palestinians are not inclined to file complaints with the Israeli authorities because they do not believe there ever will be an investigation.

The case of the Shimshon soldiers is considered the worst case of abuse brought to court since violence began last September. It is also the first in which the IDF has pressed criminal charges against soldiers.

"The IDF reviews such events very seriously and is investigating the incident to the full extent of the military law," according to an IDF communique.

In response to allegations of abuse, Israel's army chief has ordered more supervision at military checkpoints.

Saying that Israeli soldiers must behave morally, Lt. Gen. Shaul Mofaz recently ordered that an army officer, an Arabic-speaking military liaison officer and a police officer be stationed at checkpoints across the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

In addition, IDF officials say they have launched an education campaign aimed at preventing abuse.

The delicate relation between IDF soldiers and the Palestinian population involves far more than the extreme cases of abuse.

At army roadblocks intended to prevent terrorists from infiltrating into Israel, daily confrontations and long delays leave ordinary Palestinians feeling irritated and humiliated.

Maya Blum of Jerusalem belongs to Women in Black, a human rights group that has demonstrated for years against Israeli control of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

She recently joined female volunteers standing watch at roadblocks around Jerusalem to check how soldiers treat Palestinian civilians.

"By and large, I was pleasantly surprised," Blum said. "The soldiers listened to us, and sometimes we served as interpreters between the soldiers and the Arabs, preventing unnecessary confrontations."

But this may be the exception rather than the rule.

Ha'aretz recently quoted high-ranking army officers who said that the publicized incidents of abuse are only "the tip of the iceberg." □

**Tolerance institute wins prize**

JERUSALEM (JTA) — A Jewish-Arab educational institute in Israel has earned a peace prize from the U.N. educational and cultural institute.

Givat Haviva, which sponsors programs that teach both tolerance and coexistence, shared UNESCO's prize with a Ugandan bishop. □