



Daily News Bulletin

Vol. 80, No. 126

Monday, July 8, 2002

85th Year

TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

Palestinian attack thwarted

Israeli soldiers foiled an attempt Sunday by armed Palestinians to infiltrate from the Gaza Strip into Israel. The soldiers captured two gunmen who were wearing Palestinian police uniforms near the settlement of Alei Sinai in northern Gaza.

During questioning, the two revealed that they had been on their way to carry out a suicide bombing in Israel, according to Israel Radio.

Did gunman meet Al-Qaida aide?

An Egyptian who killed two Israelis July 4 at Los Angeles International Airport may have met with a deputy of Osama bin Laden.

Authorities are investigating whether Hesham Mohamed Hadayet met with Ayman Zawahiri in the United States in 1995 and 1998, the London-based Al-Hayat newspaper reported. U.S. officials say no evidence has been found linking Hadayet to a terrorist group. Israel says it regards the shooting as a terrorist attack.

Israeli envoys approved

Israel's Cabinet approved the country's new ambassadors to the United States, United Nations and France.

As a result of Sunday's Cabinet vote, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's foreign policy adviser, Danny Ayalon, will head to Washington, succeeding David Ivry, who left earlier this year. The head of Israel's Chambers of Commerce, Danny Gillerman, will replace Yehuda Lancry at the United Nations in September. And a former Labor Party secretary-general, Nissim Zvilli, will become Israel's ambassador to France.

Israel: Missile fired near plane

Israel asked Russian and Ukrainian officials to investigate whether a missile was fired near an El Al plane July 4 as it flew over Ukraine. The pilot of the Moscow-bound flight reported sighting an unusual flash near the plane's flight path.

A pilot of a Russian plane reported a similar sighting. Ukraine initially denied launching a missile, saying the flash might have been a natural phenomenon, such as a meteor. Last October, a Sibir Airlines flight was accidentally shot down by a Ukrainian anti-aircraft missile over the Black Sea, killing all 78 people aboard, 66 of whom were Jews.

NEWS ANALYSIS

Does CNN's outreach to Jews mean a new page in Middle East coverage?

By Joe Berkofsky

NEW YORK (JTA) — The head of CNN was on vacation recently, yet once again he found himself defending CNN's coverage of Israel and the Palestinians.

Like other CNN executives have done in past weeks, Walter Isaacson was issuing a mea culpa in part about a controversial CNN International segment following the May 27 suicide bombing in Petach Tikva.

CNN ran a brief snippet of an interview with the mother of one of the victims — and a much longer interview with the mother of the bomber.

The report generated such heat in the Jewish community that CNN broadcast the Israeli interview in full, and issued a statement that it “deeply regrets any extra anguish” the report may have caused.

“Our goal is to be honest and truthful and fair,” Isaacson, chairman and CEO of CNN News Group, said in an e-mail interview with JTA.

“That goes beyond just a simplistic ‘balance’ that assumes there are only two sides and that all players are morally equivalent and playing by the same rules.”

In CNN's coverage of terrorism in the Mideast and around the world, “we are trying to emphasize that, whatever the explanations, the random killing of innocents is, as Christiane Amanpour said recently on our air, a war crime.”

The CNN chief's tough talk is part of an unprecedented public relations blitz the network launched last month with Jewish media, in part to douse a firestorm in the Jewish community that ignited after CNN co-founder Ted Turner told the London Guardian that Israel and the Palestinians are “terrorizing each other.”

But will CNN adjust its focus? And can the media in general turn a new page in covering the Middle East story?

Bret Stephens, editor in chief of the Jerusalem Post and a former Wall Street Journal editor, says he has not seen much evidence of a sea change in media behavior yet.

“This is a genocidal war against the Jews, and the media hasn't recognized that,” he says. “It's not boundaries and policies, but Israel's right to exist.”

Like CNN, other outlets — including the Los Angeles Times, The New York Times, The Washington Post and National Public Radio — have come under a barrage of complaints about their Mideast coverage.

The wave of criticism has intensified in the 21 months since the Palestinian intifada erupted in September 2000, peaking with the furor over Turner's comments. NPR also has gone to the Jewish community to address these concerns. NPR's CEO, Kevin Klose, addressed the recent American Jewish Press Association convention, and is set to join a panel on the media at Hadassah's annual meeting in Florida.

Also on the panel are New York Daily News columnist Zev Chafets and Columbia University Journalism School professor Samuel Freedman. Hadassah spokeswoman Roberta Elliott says the panel will examine the “balance or lack of balance” in media coverage of Israel. They'll be certain to debate if journalists can — or even should — be balanced in working this story.

Stephens says the answer is clear: Journalists should strive to be “as truthful” as possible. Yet that throws normal ideas of journalistic balance out the window: In this conflict, he says, being truthful “at some level means you have to make moral judgments.”

“This is a conflict that cannot be understood properly unless one is making a moral

MIDEAST FOCUS

Shabbat landing angers legislator

An Israeli legislator said he is considering filing a no-confidence motion in the government after El Al flight 106 from Los Angeles was permitted to land in Israel on the Sabbath. Transportation Minister Ephraim Sneh gave the plane clearance to land in Tel Aviv on Saturday, saying Israelis who witnessed the July 4 shooting attack at the airline's check-in counter at Los Angeles International Airport should be able to reunite with their families without delay.

Legislator Moshe Gafni, of the United Torah Judaism bloc, told Army Radio there was no reason to allow the plane to land on the Sabbath because the situation did not involve life or death.

Arafat appointee criticized

Palestinian security officials are unhappy with the person Yasser Arafat appointed to head security forces in the West Bank.

Six officials told Arafat on Saturday that they would not work with Zuhair Manasreh, whom Arafat named last week to replace Jibril Rajoub.

Flight attendant sparks protest

A cabin steward on an Air France flight to Tel Aviv welcomed passengers to Palestine. Prior to landing at Ben-Gurion Airport, the crew member said "Welcome to Israel, welcome to Palestine" over the plane's public address system, the Israeli daily Ma'ariv reported.

According to Israel's Transportation Ministry, Air France apologized for the incident and said the remarks did not represent the airline.

American aliyah en masse

Nearly 400 people will be immigrating to Israel this week. What is believed to be the largest-ever American group making aliyah to Israel will fill an El Al jumbo jet leaving New York on Monday.



Daily News Bulletin

Norman H. Lipoff, *President*

Mark J. Joffe, *Executive Editor and Publisher*

Lisa Hostein, *Editor*

Michael S. Arnold, *Managing Editor*

Lenore A. Silverstein, *Finance and Administration Director*

Paula Simmonds, *Marketing and Development Director*

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

judgment, because this is a moral conflict" between wanton Palestinian violence aimed at civilians and military responses, Stephens says.

Yet the media often falls back on balance as "a proxy for truthfulness, and it's a very bad proxy for it," he says.

In covering a suicide bomb attack in Israel, reporters typically include news about Israel army blockades of the West Bank, military reprisals or targeted assassinations of terrorists. Boilerplate language such as the "cycle of violence" neatly sum it all up.

While the top brass at organizations such as CNN may have good intentions, Stephens says, many of the foreign correspondents covering Israel and the Mideast lack the historical knowledge to put the story in proper context.

These reporters "come to the situation with cliched views, they get some sources, and they persuade themselves that they're conducting journalism," he says.

Chafets, who headed Israel's Government Press Office under the late Prime Minister Menachem Begin, wrote a book about skewed coverage of the 1982 Lebanon War, "Double Vision."

CNN's coverage is especially unbalanced in the Mideast, where CNN International and not the U.S. version gets shown, Chafets says.

On a recent trip to Israel, Chafets said he was aghast at the difference in tone between the two versions of CNN.

"CNN International looked like Al-Jazeera compared to CNN in the United States," he says, referring to the Arab-language network. "It was crudely propagandistic."

The contrast arises largely out of a business calculation on CNN's part, Chafets adds. CNN International can reach an Arab audience of 100 million, "who hate Israel," he says, but only a few million Israelis.

It was CNN International's segment on a suicide bombing in Petach Tikva in May that touched off widespread Jewish outrage.

The CNN piece briefly featured Israeli Chen Kenan, the woman whose 14-month-old daughter Sinai was killed, along with her mother, Ruth Peled, 56.

Isaacson acknowledged some mistakes, including "not airing the interview of a victim's family when we said we would."

Isaacson, however, says that as the suicide bombings multiplied, CNN's coverage "was very vigorous in showing the victims of terror."

Isaacson's words are being accompanied by other CNN actions.

As Israel said it would accelerate the addition of the Fox News Channel to its satellite package — and some Israeli politicians hinted that CNN would be dropped — CNN's news-gathering chief, Eason Jordan, flew to Israel to meet with Israeli editors.

CNN anchor and star reporter Wolf Blitzer — who once worked as the Jerusalem Post's correspondent in Washington — was sent to Jerusalem, where he broadcast a series of reports on Israeli victims of Palestinian terror.

CNN.com also posted an entire companion section on Israeli terror victims (www.cnn.com/victimsofterror/).

And in June, Isaacson met separately with editors from JTA, The New York Jewish Week, the Forward and The Jewish Journal of Los Angeles, among others.

As Isaacson said, "There is a commitment at CNN to get this story right."

Media critics, though, are waiting to see the results in pictures.

Andrea Levin, executive director of the watchdog group CAMERA, lauds CNN's attempts to redress "cursory coverage" of terror victims.

"They're not bending over to satisfy the critics in the wrong way, but they're making an effort to give adequate coverage to the context" of Israel's story, she says.

Marvin Kalb, executive director of the Washington office of Harvard's Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy, says CNN's problem does not stem from journalistic laziness or bias, but from the demands of the business.

"CNN has the same problem most other cable news operations and 24/7 cable news operations have: They have to fill time," Kalb says.

Kalb does agree that there is "an appearance of bias" in coverage of Israel and the Palestinians, in part because the media has reversed its onetime approach to Mideast coverage and decided that Israel is Goliath and the Palestinians are David.

He singles out coverage of the April battle in the Jenin refugee camp.

"There were stories all over the world that there were war crimes, massacres had taken place," Kalb says. "But nobody has followed up with evidence." □

JEWISH WORLD

'Butcher of Genoa' gets prison

A former Nazi SS officer was sentenced to seven years in prison for his role in the massacre of 59 Italian prisoners in World War II. Friedrich Engel, also known as the "Butcher of Genoa," was found guilty in a German court last week of ordering the murders in 1944.

Engel, 93, maintained he was a passive observer and did not supervise the executions. Engel expressed regret for the massacre, but insisted the killings were justified by the rules of war.

Oklahoma rabbi to face trial

An Oklahoma judge ruled that a rabbi must stand trial on 11 criminal sex charges. Rabbi Richard Marcovitz, 65, is accused of groping two girls and two young women at a Jewish day school.

The judge ruled July 3 that there is enough evidence to warrant a trial for Marcovitz, who faces six charges of sexual battery and five counts of lewd acts with a minor.

Anti-Semitic sign on Russian road

An anti-Semitic sign appeared July 4 on a road-side in Russia. Attached to the sign found on a road near the Pacific port of Vladivostok were three bags that were later found to contain fake bombs carved out of wood. The sign was painted with the words "Death to Jews."

In May, a Russian woman was severely injured by a booby-trapped sign on a highway near Moscow. Since then, several copycat signs with dummy packages resembling explosives have been found on Russian roads.

ADL to present findings

The Anti-Defamation League will present findings on anti-Semitism to an international regional security organization. Abraham Foxman, ADL's national director, will discuss anti-Semitism in America and Europe on Monday at the Parliamentary Assembly for the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, a group of 55 states from Europe, Central Asia and North America.

Foxman plans to discuss how classical anti-Semitism, when coupled with anti-Israel sentiment, has become dangerous in European countries with large communities of Muslims and Arabs.

Israeli designers coming to Rome

Young Israeli fashion designers will be bringing their creations to Rome this month.

At the invitation of Rome's Chamber of Fashion, fashion design graduates from Tel Aviv's Shenkar College will present their creations alongside those of Italian designers during a July 14 fashion show.

One of LAX shooting victims was to receive marriage proposal

By Tom Tugend

LOS ANGELES (JTA) — The attack at the Los Angeles International Airport that killed two Israelis had an added tragic dimension — one of the victims was slated to receive a marriage proposal the next day.

Victoria Hen's parents revealed that they had planned a surprise party for last Friday, at which Hen's fiance would formally ask for her hand in marriage.

Instead her parents, Avinoam and Rachel Hen, and her younger brothers Nimrod and Udi, spent the day planning Victoria's funeral service, which took place Sunday afternoon.

Hen, 25, an El Al ticket agent, and Yaakov Aminov, 46, were gunned down July 4 by Egyptian national Hesham Mohamed Hadayet, 41.

At her family's home in suburban Chatsworth, Calif., Hen, who had been born in Rishon le-Zion and raised in Beersheba, was remembered by her uncle, Yaron Ochana, as a "princess who only wanted to do good."

She eventually hoped to attend college, but worked in the meantime as an office manager and in public relations, before taking a position with a firm supplying ground services to El Al. At the airline, said family spokesman Joseph Knoller, "her main job was to actually smile at people, to actually make them feel comfortable when they come up the line, and she definitely did that."

Aminov, the second victim, was a man known in the community as "exceptionally giving and generous, one who would always help a friend or a stranger," noted Rabbi Aron Tendler, a family friend.

So it was in line with his character that Aminov offered to drive a friend to the airport on July 4, despite warnings of possible terrorist attacks on America's Independence Day.

His family was also worried and his son begged Aminov, "Don't go. It's dangerous," reported Aminov's brother-in-law, Mark Ezerzer. While standing with his friend in the El Al check-in line, Aminov was hit in the chest by the gunman's bullets and, despite frantic efforts to save him, died one hour later.

Aminov, 46, moved 14 years ago from Tel Aviv to Los Angeles, where he became a diamond importer and owned a jewelry distribution company in the city's downtown center.

He was deeply devoted to his family, which included his wife, who runs a hat shop, and five children, ranging in age from two to nine years. There are three additional children, living in Israel, from Aminov's first marriage.

His body was to be flown Sunday aboard El Al to Israel for burial, preceded by a hesped, or eulogy service, at Congregation Yad Avraham in North Hollywood, Calif., one of a number of Orthodox synagogues where the devout Aminov prayed.

Sarah Philips, a 61-year-old Canadian, was shot in the right ankle during the attack and underwent surgery at a local hospital.

FBI officials said Hadayet was carrying a 45-caliber semiautomatic Glock pistol, a 9-millimeter handgun and a 6-inch knife. When police searched his apartment after the attack, they found a sign taped to his door saying, "Read the Koran."

According to several reports, Hadayet pulled out a gun, shot Hen, then began firing at 80 to 90 people who were waiting in line for El Al's single outbound flight, to Toronto and ultimately to Tel Aviv.

The bystanders immediately threw themselves to the floor, but Hadayet hit Aminov.

As Hadayet began shooting, an El Al security guard reportedly tackled him to the ground, trying to wrestle the gun away. Hadayet, who is said to have been powerfully built, around 5-foot-10 and between 200 and 250 pounds, reportedly struggled, and pistol-whipped the security guard in the forehead.

El Al's security chief, Haim Sapir, then reportedly jumped over the El Al ticket counter, and also tried to stop Hadayet, who stabbed him in the back. Sapir then shot Hadayet, killing him, according to Israel's deputy consul general in Los Angeles, Zvi Vapni. □

(JTA Staff Writer Joe Berkofsky in New York contributed to this report.)

BEHIND THE HEADLINES**Arabs humiliated at checkpoints so Israelis can live without terror***By Gil Sedan*

KAFER AKEB, West Bank (JTA) — This is a story about car keys, a blue identity card and a lose-lose situation.

This is the story of the 15,000 residents of Kafer Akeb and their fellow Palestinian residents of Jerusalem — and the price they pay for ongoing Palestinian terrorism.

They are Israeli residents on paper, Palestinians in real life and caught in the middle of a war, though they are neither soldiers nor terrorists.

Geographically, Kafer Akeb is a wealthy suburb of Ramallah, the de facto capital of the Palestinian Authority. But on the map it is part of the long, narrow finger of Jerusalem's municipal boundaries running some 12 miles to the north of Mount Scopus, to the southern edge of Ramallah.

For all intents and purposes, Kafer Akeb is part of Israel. Its residents hold blue Israeli identity cards, like all Israelis, though they are not Israeli citizens. They pay city taxes and receive social insurance, they are entitled to Israeli medical services, and the Jerusalem municipality should collect their garbage — if its workers are brave enough to venture so close to Ramallah.

For years, Kafer Akeb residents have commuted to Jerusalem for work. Many became wealthy and the suburb grew bigger and richer, with spacious housing, wide roads and well-educated, well-dressed children.

The residents enjoyed all the benefits of being Israeli — yet they continued to identify proudly as Palestinians.

But then came the intifada and the growing number of terror attacks on Israel. The security experts looked at the map and decided to place a checkpoint just south of the Kalandiya refugee camp — and its wealthy neighbor, Kafer Akeb.

For many months, Samih Abu-Rmeileh, 35, kept his job as a foreman at a construction site in Jerusalem. He was among a privileged few Palestinians who were able to enjoy the benefit of working for decent pay legally, as a full Israeli citizen.

But the checkpoints between Kafer Akeb and Jerusalem made life impossible for Abu-Rmeileh and his fellow residents. In order to reach his job, Abu-Rmeileh had to pass the newly established checkpoint at Kalandiya, as well as the A-Ram checkpoint farther down the road.

Since terror attacks have escalated in recent months, the scene at the checkpoints has become almost unbearable. Hundreds of cars line up — the average waiting time to pass each checkpoint is at least two hours. Jerusalem now is encircled with 11 such checkpoints in a desperate effort to stop suicide bombers and other terrorists from entering the capital.

Here is how it goes: After two hours, the Palestinian car finally reaches the checkpoint. The car is required to stop about 20 yards from the soldiers, to prevent the possibility of a suicide bombing.

The driver is required to step out of the car and pull up his shirt to show that he isn't wearing an explosive belt. He then walks to the soldiers and hands in his Israeli ID card, as holders of West Bank IDs are banned from entering the city altogether.

Once identified, the driver walks back to his car and drives up to the checkpoint for a security inspection. Each inspection lasts at least 10 minutes, and the line of cars grows longer by the minute.

Abu-Rmeileh ultimately lost his patience. Last month he quit his construction job in Jerusalem, and is trying to start his own business, selling made-in-Ramallah hot dogs to Jerusalem customers. Abu-Rmeileh is a pragmatist. He identifies himself as a member of Peace Now.

"I see the political solution eye-to-eye with my friends in Peace Now, and I want the Israelis to know that they still have friends here," he says. "Just end the occupation."

But in recent weeks, since Israel's current military offensive began in the West Bank, the situation has become even more real and painful, even for the Israeli residents of Kafer Akeb.

It was noon on a Tuesday when Issam Abu-Rmeileh, Samih's cousin, stopped his car at a suspiciously empty street in the heart of Kafer Akeb and ordered his children to go straight home.

Before he knew it, an Israeli army patrol stopped by his car. He was ordered to step out and hand his keys to the soldiers; his ID card was confiscated, he says.

For a Palestinian, it's easier to move around the West Bank without your car keys than without an ID card. A Palestinian without an ID is considered a potential terrorist, and could find himself jailed.

The soldiers explained to Issam Abu-Rmeileh that they took his ID because he violated the curfew imposed on the city, he says.

"Yes, but this is part of Israel," he protested. The soldiers, however, could not tell the difference between Kafer Akeb and the adjacent street, which is part of Ramallah — which indeed was still under full military curfew.

Issam Abu-Rmeileh now began the odyssey of trying to retrieve his car keys and his Israeli ID. He stopped a border police patrol passing through the neighborhood's main street to ask the soldiers what to do.

"Go to the nearest police station and report the loss," the soldiers advised him — though the nearest police station is in Jerusalem. The only way Issam Abu-Rmeileh is likely to get there is as a prisoner.

Issam Abu-Rmeileh was furious.

"How can they do this to me?" he cried, his eyes burning with rage. "No, I have no understanding for Israel's security concerns," he said. "None of the residents of this neighborhood have ever been involved in terrorist attacks, so why do they make us hate you?"

Yet he and others say they don't dare call on their fellow Palestinians to stop terrorism, which likely would result in an easing of the checkpoints.

A similar scene unfolds at the southern tip of the capital, at the Ras Al-Amud checkpoint, where hundreds of cars wait impatiently for hours.

Raja Mukahal, an Israeli Arab from the Galilee town of Shfaram, could not bear the humiliation of being ordered to pull up his shirt before approaching the checkpoint. He tried to protest, but the orders were firm.

Mukahal was forced to make a difficult choice: If he refused, he stood the chance of being stuck there, holding up the queue for hours, or even being shot.

So he obeyed, protesting.

"They don't know what this humiliation is doing to the people, it only increases hatred even more," he said.

"You really think a terrorist would stand in line to be checked by soldiers?" he asked. "A terrorist has 1,001 alternative ways to enter the city, without being checked." □