



Daily News Bulletin

Vol. 80, No. 165

Wednesday, September 4, 2002

85th Year

TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

Court allows deportations

Israel's High Court of Justice on Tuesday upheld army plans to deport two Palestinians from the West Bank to the Gaza Strip.

The two are accused of aiding a relative who masterminded a double suicide bombing in Tel Aviv. The court blocked the deportation of a third Palestinian, saying there was not enough evidence that he knew of his brother's plans to carry out a separate terror attack.

The court referred to the army's action against them as a "relocation" rather than a deportation, saying the Palestinian areas of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip should be regarded as a single entity. The Palestinian Authority denounced the court ruling, calling it a "black day" for human rights.

Montreal consulate saved

The Israeli consulate in Montreal has been saved from closure, according to local media. Consul-General Shlomo Avital said that pressure from local Jewish groups had led Israel's Foreign Ministry to reverse a decision to close the consulate next month, Montreal's CFCF News reported Tuesday.

The Montreal consulate was one of several embassies and consulates around the world that was slated for closure to save money. At the same time, the Jewish community of Sydney, Australia, said it would be willing to pay to keep Israel's consulate there open.

LAX shooting seen as terrorism

The FBI says it has viewed the July 4 shooting attack at the El Al ticket counter at Los Angeles International Airport as a possible terrorist incident "from day one."

An FBI spokesman said that while the agency refused to make this assessment public after the shooting, which killed two people, the focus within the agency has always been on terrorism as a possible motive for the attack and remains so.

The FBI sent a letter to Rep. Eliot Engel (D-N.Y.) saying the case is being viewed as an open "terrorism investigation." [Page 3]

Because of Rosh Hashanah, the JTA DAILY NEWS BULLETIN will not be published Monday, Sept. 9.

SEPT. 11: ONE YEAR LATER

Victims and families found solace, support from Jewish social services

By Rachel Pomerance

NEW YORK (JTA) — The stench in New York after Sept. 11 reminded Julia Millman of Holocaust-era Europe.

"I have seen it. I know what it's all about," said the 76-year-old survivor of Auschwitz, Buchenwald and Bergen-Belsen.

In addition to losing her 40-year-old son Ben in the terror attack on the World Trade Center — he was a construction worker on the 101st floor of Tower One — Millman said the death and devastation revived gut-wrenching memories of her family's murder in the Holocaust.

As a young girl, Millman was forced to tie a rope around her dead mother's neck and drag her gassed body to a heap of other victims.

Now those old feelings of motherlessness and abandonment have returned.

"If it wasn't for my social worker that tried to console me, that tried to help me in my sorrow, I don't know if I would be here today," Millman said.

Millman is one of hundreds of thousands who have received assistance from Jewish social service agencies for traumas associated with Sept. 11.

For the most part, they praise the aid they received.

The Jewish community launched a massive, coordinated effort to help both Jewish and non-Jewish victims of the attacks. The UJA-Federation of New York raised funds in New York, where two of the planes hit, and the United Jewish Communities, the umbrella group of North American federations, raised funds throughout North America.

In areas affected by the attack, Jewish federations and their affiliated social service agencies also received government grants or private funding from foundations or individual donors.

The funds have been used to provide support groups for victims and those re-traumatized by the incident, including Holocaust survivors or new immigrants.

They also were used to provide cash assistance and job counseling and to help victims navigate the bureaucracy to get financial aid from government and private funds. One of 13 major charities comprising the 9/11 United Services Group, a resource for victims in New York City, the UJA-Federation of New York has been at the center of the Jewish communal response.

As of mid-August, the federation had raised \$7.6 million in special funding for its agencies to expand services for Sept. 11 victims.

Of that sum, \$2.1 million came from the UJC, which plans to add another \$166,000 in the coming weeks, and \$3.5 million came from The New York Times 9/11 Neediest Fund. The UJA-Federation raised the other \$2 million on its own.

On a smaller scale, the American Jewish World Service, an international development organization, distributed more than \$650,000 to community-based organizations providing assistance to undocumented and low-income workers unable to obtain relief from mainstream sources.

Such organizations included the Arab-American Family Support Center, Chinese Staff and Workers Association and American Pan-African Relief Agencies.

For its part, the UJC has raised \$5.28 million, dispersing \$3.9 million of it for immediate needs. It plans to disperse the rest by the end of the year for long-term services such as tuition assistance and additional trauma counseling.

Other recipients of UJC funds have included the Jewish Federation of Greater Washington — where the third plane hit — which received \$100,500. Funds also went

MIDEAST FOCUS

Three Palestinians killed

Two Palestinians were killed by Israeli tank fire near Nablus on Monday night. The army said the two were spotted in an off-limits area near the settlement of Bracha, and soldiers suspected they were armed. No weapons were found, however.

In the Gaza Strip, an armed Palestinian was killed and an Israeli soldier lightly wounded in an exchange of fire.

Israeli wounded in ambush

An Israeli was wounded in a West Bank shooting attack Tuesday. According to initial reports, the man was listed in fair condition after sustaining injuries to his head and hand. The man, who was not identified, was wounded in a similar ambush a year ago, his employer was quoted as saying.

Groups reject call to halt attacks

Palestinian terror groups rejected a call by the Palestinian Authority interior minister to end attacks on Israel. In a series of interviews in recent days, Abdel Razek Yehiyeh called on Palestinians to choose non-violent resistance instead of violence.

But the Palestinian groups, including the military wing of Yasser Arafat's Fatah faction, said they would not halt their attacks as long as Israel continues killing Palestinians and the "occupation" persists.

Group cancels Peres speech

A South African think tank canceled a planned speech by Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres. The South African Institute of International Affairs said Tuesday the step was "for the best," but refused to link its decision to Palestinian demonstrations a day earlier that were broken up by riot police.

On Tuesday, Peres addressed the World Summit for Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, calling for peace in the Middle East. [Page 4]

Washington — where the third plane hit — which received \$100,500. Funds also went to hard-hit New Jersey commuter areas like Monmouth County, which received \$210,600, and Bergen County, which received \$133,121.

Barry Swartz, vice president of UJC consulting, said the federation system did a "remarkable" job of quickly coordinating a response to the crisis.

"We told federations right away, if families need money, they're to disburse the funds and we would reimburse" them, Swartz said.

Several direct service providers told JTA they were pleased with the response from the organized Jewish community.

There wasn't "one second that we felt that we were out there alone," said Jeff Lampl, executive director of Jewish Family Services of Bergen County.

That was mainly due to the federation system and the local federation, "which immediately supplied us with a small amount of money to get going," he said.

The agency's client pool "doubled almost overnight" after Sept. 11, Lampl said, and "almost to this day, taking care of these families has become the central concern of this agency."

Many of those who received services praise the response.

Robin Wiener, who lost her brother, Jeff, 33, in the attack on the World Trade Center, said the sibling support group she attended — sponsored by the Jewish Social Service Agency of Greater Washington, the primary Jewish organization responding to local victims there — was "amazing."

The sibling support group formed after a gathering of friends and family members of Sept. 11 victims that the agency sponsored in February.

The "emotions you go through and the loss that you feel is a loss that is unique to the relationship you had," said Wiener, 38. "My brother and I were very close and very similar in many ways, and I just always assumed he'd be there."

Jeff, a senior financial executive, had been about to leave on a vacation in Spain with his wife and had been planning a family, Wiener said.

It "breaks my heart for him, what we lost together. I never realized how small our family was until now," Wiener said. "To know there are other people out there going through the exact same thing" is "kind of eerie, but it's also extremely helpful."

Robert Alonso praises the Jewish Child Care Association, which helped his family.

When the planes hit, Alonso's wife, Janet, 41, managed to make a quick phone call from the 97th floor of Tower One to tell her husband that she loved him.

The call was their last conversation. The sudden death of his wife, the family's primary breadwinner, left Alonso and his two young children — one of whom has Down syndrome — reeling.

The Jewish Child Care Association has provided weekly meetings with a psychologist for Alonso's children Robbie, 2, and Victoria, 3. It also has helped him obtain the maximum government funds for the family.

While many victims praise the Jewish communal response, some have complaints.

Several family members of victims in Washington said there was no outreach from the organized Jewish community except for their synagogues, according to the Washington Jewish Week. The federation defended its work, saying it was the first agency in Washington to hold a memorial service for victims and that the Jewish chaplaincy immediately called the families of Jewish victims to offer help.

The federation has dispersed the nearly half-million dollars it raised in its Sept. 11 fund to Jewish and non-Jewish agencies, according to a federation official. UJC funds were earmarked for Jewish needs, the official said.

Wiener, of the sibling support group, sees it differently.

There was "plenty of comfort, but not a lot of information," she said.

Louise Greilsheimer, vice president of agency and external relations for the UJA-Federation of New York, who coordinated its response to Sept. 11, said complaints are inevitable. "You are always, with this quantity of people, going to find issues," she said.

But, she added, "I haven't heard one horror story in the Jewish community."

"I truly believe the agencies came together and put together not only a coordinated approach," but one that was thoughtful, caring and ongoing, Greilsheimer said. "We're staying here to follow up and to be able to work with communities that need the support." □



Daily News Bulletin

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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.

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JEWISH WORLD

U.S.: Drug ring supported terror

An illegal drug operation was funneling profits to Middle East terror groups, U.S. officials say.

The ring, which was run by men of Middle Eastern descent, was smashed by U.S. officials eight months ago.

Since that time, the investigation showed that "for the first time, alleged drug sales in the United States are going in part to support terrorist organizations in the Middle East," said Asa Hutchinson, director of the Drug Enforcement Administration.

Booby-trapped sign in Moscow

Russian police removed a booby-trapped anti-Semitic sign near a synagogue in Moscow. White powder found Monday in a jar near the poster turned out to be harmless.

The incident — the latest in a series that has swept across Russia in recent months — is believed to be the first time that a Jewish facility has been targeted.

German's charity decision on trial

A German club owner went on trial Monday for canceling a Jewish charity event in Munich that was to have featured the granddaughter of former Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin.

Rudolf Fischer was charged with inciting hatred and anti-Semitism.

Fischer says he canceled the March 2001 event because he didn't want political events at his club. But an attorney for Keren Hayesod says Fischer told one of the charity's members that he canceled the fund-raiser because he didn't want to host a Jewish event. Keren Hayesod held its event at another Munich club, and the city's mayor apologized to Rabin's granddaughter, Noa Ben-Artzi.

S. Americans in Israel to get more

Uruguayan immigrants to Israel will receive extra benefits. The special package, similar to that offered to Argentine immigrants, comes as the economic situation deteriorates across South America.

The decision by the Israeli government comes after a request by Jewish Agency Chairman Sallai Meridor. Uruguay is home to 20,000 Jews.

Brazilian Jewish hero dies

Salomao Malina, a Brazilian Jewish World War II hero, died last week at the age of 78.

Malina, known as "The Captain," served in Brazil's forces in southern Italy during the war. Malina dedicated much of his life to communism.

In 1967, he lost a hand when a grenade exploded in his hands at a clandestine meeting of Brazil's Communist Party.

As FBI nears end to probe of El Al attack, officials say terror has always been a focus

By Matthew E. Berger

WASHINGTON (JTA) — The FBI has viewed the July 4 shooting at the El Al ticket counter of the Los Angeles International Airport as a possible act of terrorism from day one, according to a letter sent to a New York congressman last month.

In an Aug. 16 letter, John Collinwood, assistant director of public and congressional affairs at the FBI, says that the agency's Los Angeles office treated the shooting — in which two people were killed — as a terrorist investigation immediately, even though the agency did not publicly acknowledge this.

"Perhaps confusion resulted when our representatives declined to make an immediate public assessment that this tragic shooting was an act of terrorism, opting instead to explain that the FBI would collect more information and evidence prior to reaching a more definitive conclusion," Collingwood said in a letter to Rep. Eliot Engel (D-N.Y.).

"In any case, terrorism has certainly not been ruled out in this case, and we do not intend this interim period of information gathering to imply that it has been," the letter continued. "It is, in fact, being investigated as such."

He was responding to Engel's letter, sent in late July, expressing concern that the FBI's Los Angeles field office said just hours after the attack that there was no evidence to indicate terrorism.

This view contrasted sharply with that of Israel, which immediately classified the shooting as a terrorist incident. It also prompted outrage among many American Jewish leaders, who said they were puzzled by the FBI's response, given that the gunman was of Egyptian origin and had reportedly made anti-Semitic and anti-Israel statements in the past.

"The presumption that this was an act of terror on United States soil is not hard to reach," Engel said.

"I'm outraged at this flip-flop," Engel told JTA on Tuesday. "They're almost like the gang that couldn't shoot straight."

Engel's office said the FBI's response only surfaced recently because mail being sent to the Capitol is being delayed by anthrax searches.

At 11:30 a.m. on July 4, Hesham Mohammed Hadayat, an Egyptian man, opened fire at the ticket counter of the Israeli national airline, killing Ya'akov Aminov, 46, and El Al ticket agent Victoria Hen, 25. Hadayat sprayed bullets around the area before being shot and killed by El Al security guards.

At a news conference hours after the attack, Richard Garcia, a Los Angeles field office official, said, "There's nothing to indicate terrorism," saying the presumption was that the shooting was an isolated incident.

FBI spokesman Matt McLaughlin in Los Angeles said Garcia's comments were "right on the money," but that evidence in the immediate aftermath led the FBI to view the shooting as a possible terrorist act, and that it was not asked about its designation.

The FBI defines terrorism as the "unlawful use of force and violence" to further "social or political objectives." At the time, McLaughlin told JTA that the FBI is waiting until there is "clear evidence indicating motive or until the investigation is concluded" before labeling the incident.

"It's not a new designation of this case," he said Tuesday. "It was declared a possible terrorist incident on July 4; common sense dictated that."

American Jewish leaders almost immediately raised concerns that the FBI was not investigating the terrorism angle sufficiently. A group of rabbis threatened to sue the FBI unless it called the shooting a terrorist act.

Abraham Foxman, national director of the Anti-Defamation League, met with FBI Director Robert Mueller shortly thereafter and said he was told that the terrorism angle was being reviewed. Foxman said Jewish leaders were concerned because terrorism also had been ruled out quickly in investigations of other attacks against prominent Jews, citing the assassination of Kach movement founder Rabbi Meir Kahane in 1995.

McLaughlin said the investigation is close to a conclusion and that a final report should be issued in the next few weeks. □

BEHIND THE HEADLINES**At summit, Palestinians focus on propaganda, not on development***By Michael Belling*

JOHANNESBURG (JTA) — The focus of Palestinian efforts at the U.N. World Summit on Sustainable Development is clear from a quick visit to the booth reserved for Palestinian nongovernmental organizations.

A visitor can find plenty of material on the Israeli "occupation" of land the Palestinians claim, as well as the anti-Israel tirades that the Palestinians have made a staple of international conferences in recent years.

What the visitor can not find is any material related to the ostensible purposes of the conference — environmental affairs and sustainable development. Unless, that is, you include the materials detailing Israel's alleged assault on the Palestinian environment.

According to Palestinian propaganda, Israel uproots some 700,000 trees per year in Palestinian areas, or an average of about one tree a minute.

Another handout carries unsubstantiated charges against Israel for environmental destruction, while a third accuses Israel of destroying a "forest" to build the Har Homa neighborhood in southern Jerusalem — referring to the patch of trees that Israel leveled to clear the hilltop for development.

Tzachi Hanegbi, Israel's environment minister, dismissed the Palestinian allegations as absurd. One local Jewish observer said it appears the Palestinians simply tagged a few environmental details onto their existing political material.

But if the Palestinians had hoped to reprise their "success" in turning last year's U.N. World Conference Against Racism in Durban into an anti-Israel fair, they haven't succeeded in Johannesburg. Their protests at this year's summit have been peripheral to the main business of the conference, which is seeking solutions to issues such as global warming and overuse of natural resources.

While accusations of Israeli apartheid struck a chord with participants at the anti-racism conference, it's a stretch to tie Israeli policy toward the Palestinians to environmental degradation.

In addition, embarrassed by its handling of the Durban conference, South Africa this year has restrained pro-Palestinian demonstrators, removing them by force when they tried to disrupt Israeli events in the conference's first days and blasting them with water cannons on Monday when they tried to prevent a speech by Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres.

In stark contrast to the Palestinian efforts, Israeli officials have taken a mild line, stressing the need to turn away from conflict and toward cooperation. When Palestinian groups sought to shout them down, Israeli officials spoke of resuming the peace process.

The centerpiece of the Israeli presentation at the summit was the joint announcement, with Jordan, of a plan to replenish the Dead Sea with water from the Red Sea — showing how those interested in peace could benefit from cooperation.

A technical team from the Jewish National Fund gave a presentation on the use of scarce water resources, rehabilitation of degraded areas in the Negev, sustainable biodiversity and ecological forest renewal. Governmental representatives from the United States, Germany and Oman — as well as NGOs — expressed an interest in learning more, JNF chairman Yehiel Leket said.

As a pioneer in agricultural advances that have helped make

its deserts bloom, Israel believes an environmental summit is one forum where it can make a unique contribution, Hanegbi told JTA.

Just yards away from the booth of Palestinian propaganda, the JNF booth had detailed material on its contributions over the past century. "Our line here is that we are not involved in politics and do not want to get drawn into politics," Leket told JTA. "Coming here only as a professional body has borne fruit."

Jamal Juma, the leader of the Palestinian NGO delegation, told JTA that the delegation was in Johannesburg to send a message to the world that they are a people under occupation — and thus can not be expected to worry about trifles like sustainable development. The Palestinians have received a lot of sympathy and understanding for their cause at this year's conference, particularly from South Africans who suffered under apartheid, Juma said.

He added that his group had not set out to disrupt a JNF presentation last week, when police had to intervene to remove Palestinians who were interrupting the Israeli speakers.

On Saturday, among thousands of marchers protesting globalization and poverty were many who shouted anti-Israel slogans and pledged support for the Palestinians. Placards at the march included slogans such as "U.S.-Israel-U.K. Axis of Evil," "Stop the Holocaust of Palestinians in Palestine" and others praising suicide bombers.

South African President Thabo Mbeki addressed the demonstrators as they gathered, calling for an independent Palestinian state. He did not join the march.

An Israeli spokesman called Mbeki's pro-Palestinian statement "bland," but took exception to the fact that he would address an audience waving placards praising suicide bombers.

Over the weekend, Peres and other world leaders poured into Johannesburg to attend the main part of the summit, which took place Monday to Wednesday. On Tuesday, a day after police turned water cannons on pro-Palestinian demonstrators trying to prevent Peres from addressing a Jewish group, the South African Institute of International Affairs canceled a Peres speech.

The group denied that its decision was linked to the anti-Peres demonstration, saying only that the cancellation was "for the best."

On Tuesday, Peres addressed the summit, where he made an appeal for peace in the Middle East. He also met with U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan, whom he asked to help rein in Syria and Hezbollah, and some 25 world leaders.

In his speech to the plenum, Peres mentioned several regional projects Israel hopes to help implement. They included creating a "virtual pharmacy" to supply affordable drugs; planting one billion trees over the next decade to effect a change in the climate; establishing a regional water bank to facilitate planning and technological processes for water production, recycling, transportation and conservation; and developing a regional Information Technology system as a base for distance learning, distant medicine and academic research centers.

Aside from the dignitaries, another Israeli made waves at the summit: Orah Tamano, an Israeli student of Ethiopian descent.

People at the summit seemed amazed to learn that Israeli Jews could be black, she said.

"Because Israel appears so much in the headlines, it creates the impression" — particularly in South Africa, with its legacy of apartheid — "that we are dealing with a country of whites who are in control and wronging the Arabs," Tamano said. "It pretty much surprised them that here I am, a black young woman from Israel, and it was quite refreshing." □