



# Daily News Bulletin

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85th Year

## TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

### Israeli killed in ambush

An Israeli woman was killed in a Palestinian ambush in the West Bank on Monday. Rescue workers tried to resuscitate the woman at the scene of the drive-by shooting near Ramallah.

She was transferred to a hospital in Jerusalem where she died of her wounds, according to Israel Radio. Another Israeli reportedly was wounded in the attack.

### Israeli army hits Gaza HQ

Israeli forces raided the main Palestinian security compound in Gaza City. Israeli helicopters, soldiers and tanks took part in Monday's strike, which targeted the headquarters of the Preventive Security Service.

The operation uncovered dozens of mortar shells and grenades, three rocket-propelled grenades, as well as mines, ammunition and anti-tank missiles.

Israeli Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz said the arms cache proves the "tight connection between the security forces of the Palestinian Authority and Palestinian terror groups."

Israeli forces pulled out after about three hours, leaving several of the compound's 11 buildings in ruins. A few hours after the raid, Palestinians fired two missiles at a Jewish settlement near Gaza City but caused no damage or injuries, the army said.

### Hijacker wanted to hit Tel Aviv

An Israeli Arab who allegedly attempted to hijack an El Al flight on Sunday said he wanted to carry out a Sept. 11-like attack, according to his Turkish interrogators. Citing the interrogation, Turkish TV reported Monday that the man had wanted to crash the plane into a Tel Aviv building.

According to The Associated Press, which cited Israeli officials Monday, the man was not wielding a knife when he allegedly confronted a stewardess before trying to rush the cockpit.

### 10 Commandments statue nixed

A U.S. judge ruled that a monument of the Ten Commandments must be removed within 30 days from the Alabama judicial building.

The judge ruled Monday that the 5,300-pound monument in the state capital of Montgomery violates the U.S. Constitution's ban on government endorsement of religion.

## NEWS ANALYSIS

### Palestinian talks fail to yield truce, and attacks against Israel continue

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Supposed truce talks between Hamas and Fatah representatives in Cairo must leave some Israelis wondering what Palestinians mean when they talk about a cease-fire.

According to early reports, Fatah planned to press Hamas to stop carrying out terrorist attacks.

Later reports said the talks were aimed at limiting attacks to just the West Bank and Gaza Strip, not inside Israel proper.

Then it was reported that any cease-fire would last only for three months, to avoid helping right-wing politicians before Israel's Jan. 28 elections.

Since the meetings ended without any cease-fire declaration — and with, instead, an agreement to cooperate in the fight against Israel — the idea that a truce was even on the agenda seems questionable.

In fact, it was a gunman from Fatah's own Al-Aksa Brigade who crossed into Israel proper and killed five civilians, including two children, in Kibbutz Metzger on Nov. 10, while the Cairo talks were still under way.

Then, on Nov. 15, days after the Cairo talks ended, Islamic Jihad terrorists attacked a group of settlers returning from Sabbath prayers in Hebron.

When Israeli troops and other security personnel responded to the gunfire, the Palestinians ambushed them, killing 12. Another 14 Israelis were wounded.

That brought the tally of Israeli casualties from the Palestinian intifada to 668 dead and 4,755 wounded.

Moderates in the Palestinian camp are well aware that terrorist escalation is likely to strengthen the right in Israel's elections. In fact, just hours before the Hebron attack, Sari Nusseibeh, the top PLO official for Jerusalem, published an article on the front page of the Al-Quds newspaper urging the Palestinians to act more moderately in order to strengthen the Israeli left.

The Hebron ambush symbolizes the general situation of near-anarchy in the Palestinian territories. The Israel Defense Force maintains a strong military presence, but does not have direct control over the Palestinian population.

Many believe that the Palestinian Authority has lost control over the territories, whether because it's unable to master the situation or because it prefers chaos that allows terrorism to flourish while giving the Palestinian government the ability to deny responsibility.

In that situation, many Israeli officials believe that even if the Palestinians do decide on a cease-fire, it will be nearly impossible to enforce. While Hamas and Islamic Jihad maintain tight control over their military cadres, Fatah — P.A. President Yasser Arafat's mainstream movement — has become a collection of small gangs that often do not respect any central authority.

The Hebron attack also illustrates the conundrum facing Israeli decision-makers. Israel repeatedly is pressed to ease up on the Palestinians, both to improve the lot of the general population and to give Palestinian officials an incentive to work toward moderation. Yet the terror groups invariably take advantage of any easing of restrictions to launch new attacks.

The IDF stopped patrolling most Palestinian areas of Hebron on Oct. 25 as part of a plan promoted by then-Defense Minister Benjamin Ben-Eliezer. Under the plan, Israeli

## MIDEAST FOCUS

### Abba Eban laid to rest

Abba Eban was buried Monday in Israel's Kfar Shmaryahu Cemetery. Israeli President Moshe Katsav, Foreign Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and former Prime Minister Shimon Peres delivered eulogies at the funeral. Eban, a former foreign minister and ambassador to the United States and United Nations, died Monday at 87.

### Reports: 'Road map' being revised

The U.S. plan for an Israeli-Palestinian peace accord reportedly is being revised. The latest draft, obtained by The Associated Press, contains some answers to Palestinian concerns, including a softening of a demand to name a prime minister to relieve Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat of some of his duties.

The changes in the draft are apparent in its new title, according to the Israeli daily Ha'aretz. The original draft was called a "performance-based road map," and reflected the Israeli demand that all progress be contingent on Palestinian compliance. Now it's being called "a performance-based, goal-oriented road map," apparently a reflection of the Palestinian demand for a clear timetable for progress.

### Red Cross, Magen David sign pact

Israel's Magen David Adom was to sign its first-ever cooperation agreement Monday with the American Red Cross. The accord calls for coordination and cooperation between the two relief organizations in case of disaster.

### Report: Syria rejects U.S. call

Syria reportedly rejected a call from the United States to close the Damascus offices of Islamic Jihad. Israel's Ilim news agency reported that the message was delivered Monday by the U.S. ambassador in Damascus following a directive from the White House.

troops would pull out of West Bank areas where relative quiet prevailed, giving the Palestinian Authority a chance to prove that it could maintain order.

It now turns out that the Islamic Jihad cell that carried out the attack had returned to Hebron after Israeli troops departed.

Islamic Jihad is a much smaller organization than Hamas in terms of organization, membership, military potential and popular backing.

Islamic Jihad does not receive its orders from Cairo, Gaza or Ramallah; its headquarters are in Damascus and it operates with Syrian backing and Iranian military and financial support.

The Damascus operation is run by Ramadan Shalah. Locally, the group's power base is in Gaza, and its leaders are well-known: Sheikh Abdullah Shami is its religious leader, Nafez Azzam and Mohammad Hindi its political figures.

However, the group's terrorist network is highly clandestine and smaller than those of Hamas and Fatah. That is a disadvantage in terms of popular support, but allows the group to more easily elude Israeli military thrusts.

In the past, when Arafat felt his reign threatened by the radical Islamic organizations, he imposed temporary crackdowns, imprisoning their activists for several months.

He did so in 1996, following a series of suicide attacks inside Israel that threatened to — and ultimately did — throw the Israeli elections to Likud's Benjamin Netanyahu over Labor's Shimon Peres.

There still are occasional confrontations between Fatah and the Islamic groups, such as the arrest last summer of Hamas activists over a blood feud in Gaza. But with the outbreak of the intifada more than two years ago, Fatah has cooperated with Hamas and Islamic Jihad in a number of terrorist attacks.

With no peace talks under way, Arafat might be too weak to oppose the Islamist organizations even if he wanted to. Thus he gave the green light for the Cairo talks — though many analysts believe he effectively torpedoed them by refusing to send his top aides.

Still, the talks were important because they marked the first time that delegations from Hamas and Fatah met to coordinate their activities since a November 1995 agreement, which was also hammered down in Cairo.

Zacharia Agha, a member of Fatah's Central Committee, headed one delegation, while Hamas was represented by Mousa Mohammed Abu Marzook, deputy head of its political department. The dialogue was held under the auspices of the Egyptian government, with European involvement.

The talks dealt not only with attacks on Israel, but with the entire scope of relations between the two major groups in the Palestinian political camp.

The talks produced nothing in the direction of ending attacks on Israel. In fact, though Arafat has committed himself in various peace agreements to disarm Hamas, the talks ended with a statement pledging that Fatah and Hamas would cooperate in the fight against Israel and work to preserve Palestinian unity.

Osama Hamdan, a Hamas representative in Lebanon, brought up Fatah's attack in Kibbutz Metzger as a sign that Fatah itself was not interested in ending attacks inside Israel.

"The dialogue is not based on the cessation of resistance but rather on the unity of the Palestinian ranks," he said.

So far the talks have produced the type of results Arafat seems to specialize in: favorable media reports and statements of intent, but no real decisions.

Unofficially, Fatah spokesmen said an understanding was reached that if Israel stopped all military activities against the Palestinians, Hamas also would lay down its weapons.

Hamas, however, denied any such understandings.

Though the Palestinian Authority is not a representative democracy, results of the latest poll by the Palestinian Center for Public Opinion may explain why the Cairo talks ended the way they did, and why cheering crowds in Gaza celebrated the Hebron attack.

According to the poll, some 45 percent of Palestinians support the continuation of suicide attacks, and 50 percent support the continuation of the armed intifada. Other recent Palestinian polls have shown even much higher support for attacks.

If there's a silver lining in the poll, it's that another 45 percent support, to varying degrees, the American "road map" for peace. □



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## JEWISH WORLD

### 3 more held for shul attack

French officials detained three more people Monday in connection with a deadly terror attack earlier this year on a Tunisian synagogue.

One of the detained was an alleged specialist in providing false documents, police said. Under France's anti-terrorism law, they can be held for questioning without charges for up to four days.

Last week, French authorities charged three people with involvement in the attack.

One of the men, Walid Naouar — the brother of a man killed allegedly carrying out the attack — was charged with complicity to commit murder and attempted murder.

The two others were charged with complicity in terrorist activity.

Nineteen people, including 14 German tourists, were killed in April after a gas truck exploded when it rammed a wall protecting the Ghriba Synagogue on the Tunisian island of Jerba. Al-Qaida claimed responsibility for the attack.

### Senators blast Egyptian TV series

U.S. Senators are expected to introduce a bill Monday that would condemn an Egyptian TV mini-series based on an anti-Semitic tract, "The Protocols of the Elders of Zion."

The resolution, sponsored by Sens. Bill Nelson (D-Fla.) and Gordon Smith (R-Ore.), urges the government of Egypt to halt the broadcast of the mini-series and to "speak out against such incitement by vigorously and publicly condemning anti-Semitism as a form of bigotry." In a broadcast timed to coincide with the Islamic holy month of Ramadan, "Horseman Without a Horse" began airing on Egyptian television earlier this month.

### Ad proclaims hope for peace

A Jewish group ran an ad in Monday's New York Times arguing that an Israeli-Palestinian peace accord is possible.

Signed by 64 women and sponsored by the Israel Policy Forum, the ad expresses gratitude toward the United States and its "Quarter" partners — the United Nations, European Union and Russia — for seeking an end to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The ad also calls for U.S. action on the conflict that is "refreshed and renewed, infused with new energy."

### 'Bomb' dress-up leads to sentence

Germany sentenced a Palestinian man to five months' probation for dressing his children in suicide bomber costumes at a Berlin demonstration.

The man was sentenced for fitting mock explosive belts to his children for the pro-Palestinian rally in April.

## Effort launched to create network of Russian emigres on national level

By Sharon Samber

WASHINGTON (JTA) — More than a half-million immigrants and refugees from the former Soviet Union have flowed into the United States during the last few decades, but there has been no effort to organize them into a nationwide body — until now.

With the help of a government grant, the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society is setting up a national network to strengthen and connect local organizations serving Russian Jews.

The technical assistance will teach local groups how to apply for federal funding and form social service organizations.

The grant will also help local groups share information, conduct training and develop program ideas.

The \$176,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Refugee Resettlement will help phase in a project called LOREO — for Local Russian Emigre Organizations — over the next three years.

Project coordinators will be put in place this year in New York, Atlanta, San Francisco and Minneapolis.

HIAS will provide training and teach the local leaders how to launch advocacy programs and work together with Jewish federations. HIAS also will develop a bilingual civic participation guide to increase voter registration and help Russian emigres become U.S. citizens.

An interactive LOREO Web site is also in the works. Planners expect that its message board, monthly calendar and links will help facilitate grass-roots organizing efforts.

Since the mid-1970s, HIAS has helped more than 300,000 Jewish refugees from the former Soviet Union and its successor states escape persecution and rebuild new lives in the United States.

Getting the Russian-speaking population to organize and develop political skills is long overdue, according to Leonard Glickman, president of HIAS.

"They should be much further along than they are," he said.

A number of factors have prevented the community from organizing on a national scale. They include a lack of funding, language barriers and a mistrust of government left over from the immigrants' days in the Soviet Union.

Wariness of political organizations has likewise given Russian-speakers little incentive to get involved in American politics.

But now it seems the timing is right: Many immigrants and refugees who came to the United States in the late 1980s and early 1990s have established themselves financially.

In the Los Angeles area, for example, people are settled and more willing to become involved on a community level, said Helen Levin, the executive director of the Russian community center in West Hollywood.

Hundreds of thousands of Russian-speakers live in the Los Angeles area. While most are well-educated and professional, they have to be "more organized and more active in American life," Levin said.

"How to unite them all and interest them all is the crucial question, and that's what we have to work on."

Some of the most pressing issues for Los Angeles and other communities are after-school programming for immigrant youths, access to Jewish education and care for the elderly.

HIAS primarily wants to act as a facilitator and allow the local organizations to team up with federations to become part of the larger American Jewish community, said Marina Belotserkovsky, herself an immigrant from the former Soviet Union and now the director of HIAS' office of Russian Community Outreach.

The small advocacy efforts of volunteer organizations can coalesce into something more forceful and helpful, Belotserkovsky said.

"The community now is very ready," she added. □

## FOCUS ON ISSUES

**In modern Orthodox circles, idea of female Torah readers spreading***By Rachel Pomerance*

NEW YORK (JTA)—For most of her 78 years, Eva Oles has struggled to square her Orthodoxy and her feminism.

"I want to prove and show that halachah," or Jewish law, "is humane," and stretch it to empower women, Oles said at last week's conference on Orthodox feminism, through tears that reflected a life of spiritual turmoil.

Oles finally can consider herself validated as a new interpretation of halachah is breaking barriers for Orthodox women.

Female Torah readers are standard in non-Orthodox congregations, of course, and most Orthodox long have accepted that women can read from the Torah in women-only prayer groups.

But Jerusalem Rabbi Mendel Shapiro helped pave the way for one Israeli synagogue, an Israeli minyan and three New York prayer groups to adopt a new model of Orthodoxy that permits women to read and bless the Torah in mixed services.

In a controversial article published last year on the Web site of the modern Orthodox group Edah, Shapiro debunked the traditional Orthodox position that Torah reading by women would diminish the community's dignity because it is improper for women to assume a public role.

Given women's equality in modern secular society and their growing role in Orthodox life, female Torah readers and community dignity can be reconciled in many modern Orthodox communities, Shapiro said.

Various halachic concepts have barred women from Torah reading, such as the idea of "kol isha," which holds that the supposedly seductive nature of a woman's voice could compromise the integrity of the prayer service.

Shapiro began researching the subject before his youngest daughter's Bat Mitzvah three years ago, and came away confident that the event "was on a halachically sound footing."

At the Jewish Orthodox Feminist Alliance's annual conference in New York last weekend, plenaries on the topic proved popular.

"The impact has been quite extraordinary," said Blu Greenberg, president of the alliance.

Women's Torah reading "will be increasingly adopted not because there are pockets here and there within communities" who do it, "but because of the reports by people who have experienced it," Greenberg said.

"Everyone who has participated in such a minyan reports on the experience of how natural it feels and how continuous with the tradition it feels rather than violating traditional sensibilities," she said.

About a decade ago, a group in Israel known as the Leader Minyan was apparently the first Orthodox service to allow women to read from the Torah in a mixed setting. Now, several other Orthodox institutions have followed suit, including Shira Chadasha, an Israeli synagogue that allows women to read from the Torah and three minyanim in New York.

Those in New York are the Drisha Institute for Jewish Education, a women's center of Jewish learning; a new group called Darkhei Noam in Manhattan; and a minyan that began last weekend in Yonkers. A group in Teaneck, N.J., also is discussing

starting a service that permits women to read from the Torah.

An Orthodox congregation in Manhattan, Kehilat Orach Eliezer, currently is considering a resolution to accept women as Torah readers. If it accepts, the synagogue would become the first in the United States to do so. According to Shapiro, the decision by Shira Chadasha to let women read from the Torah has "not created any antagonism" in Israel.

In U.S. Orthodox circles, however, resistance appears stiff.

"I'm truthfully not aware of any acceptable halachic authority who has granted permission" for women to read from the Torah during a mixed service, said Rabbi Steven Dworken, executive vice president of the Rabbinical Council of America, the rabbinical arm of mainstream Orthodoxy.

Since those behind the movement "do not represent a significant proportion of the mainstream Orthodox community," Dworken said, he doesn't expect the issue to make much headway.

That's precisely the problem Sarah Meyers faces at the predominantly male Orthodox services she attends at the University of Maryland Hillel.

"I could rebut these arguments but it would get me nowhere. There's more of them, they're bigger than me, and they're at the bima already," said Meyers, 17, who began a women's prayer service this year in her Orthodox neighborhood of Potomac, Md.

The group of 15 to 20 women meets each month. Ages range from less than 13 to more than 50, Meyers said.

"I don't see a problem with aliyot" for women, Meyers said. "The problem is in people's heads."

Others say it's old-fashioned to seek a rabbinical imprimatur.

Tali Aronsky, 27, a CBS producer who studied at the Yeshiva of Flatbush in Brooklyn, said she doesn't "need a rabbi in his 60s to give us approval."

Women can simply sample from the new services that give them more participation, said Aronsky, who attends a new Manhattan minyan called Kehilat Hadar that is fully egalitarian and runs a traditional service.

Lisa Schlaff, a doctoral student in Talmud at New York University and one of the founders of the Darkhei Noam minyan, backs the grassroots initiatives but calls on rabbis to incorporate such changes into their own services.

It "pains me" that the drive for women Torah readers had to develop outside established synagogues, Schlaff, 28, said in a speech at the Jewish feminist conference.

When the rabbis of the Talmud were stumped on a subject, they would employ a Hebrew expression meaning, "Let us go out and see what the people are saying," she said.

"Go out and see the exuberance of a 50-year old woman who received her first aliyah two weeks ago," Schlaff said. "Go out and see the pride of an 8-year old girl after she leads the Anim Zemirot," a hymn of glory to God.

Yet changing established norms will be difficult, said Rabbi Adam Mintz of Manhattan's Lincoln Square Synagogue, who spoke at the conference of the competing congregational needs that rabbis must balance. Mintz said he respects the new movement, but added, "The only way these services will in any way be accepted is" with the approval and support of at least a segment of the rabbinic community.

Such acceptance is Greenberg's goal. "I don't believe it's going to be universal, but I hope it won't separate communities that do and communities that don't," she said. □