



# Daily News Bulletin

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86th Year

## TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

### Israel mourns its lost astronaut

The deaths of Col. Ilan Ramon and six NASA astronauts on the space shuttle Columbia on Saturday were not in vain, Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon said. [Page 1]

### Abuse cover-up charged

Critics of convicted sex abuser Rabbi Baruch Lanner charged that a Yeshiva University leader hid evidence of the abuse.

Nineteen of Lanner's alleged victims and their families said Rabbi Mordechai Willig hid evidence of Lanner's abuse for more than a decade, after a rabbinical court that Willig belonged to determined in 1989 that Lanner was abusing youths, the Forward newspaper reported.

An Orthodox Union commission in 2000 received evidence of alleged sexual misconduct involving women and teen-age girls, as well as physical abuse of boys and girls by Lanner, who headed the O.U.'s National Conference of Synagogue Youth.

Willig, now head of the Wexner Kollel Elyon, an arm of Y.U.'s Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary, denied the cover-up allegations.

The Forward also reported that Harvard University law professor Alan Dershowitz has been helping Lanner's defense team.

### JDL member pleads guilty

A member of the Jewish Defense League pleaded guilty to conspiring to blow up a mosque and the offices of a congressman of Lebanese descent.

Under terms of the plea bargain, 60-year-old Earl Krugel faces 10 to 20 years in prison, instead of a mandatory 40 years if he had been convicted.

Krugel was second in command to the JDL's national chairman, Irv Rubin, who was indicted on the same charges, but died last November after apparently committing suicide at a federal detention center in Los Angeles.

If Krugel's trial had gone forward, he was expected to defend himself by claiming entrapment by an FBI informant.

However, in a statement filed in court last Friday, Krugel acknowledged that he and Rubin had recruited the informant to blow up the King Fahd mosque near Los Angeles and the office of Rep. Darrell Issa (R-Calif.).

## Sharon vows more Israelis in space following Columbia shuttle disaster

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM (JTA) — The hero's welcome that Israel planned for its first astronaut has given way to mourning.

But even amid the tragedy involving Ilan Ramon, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon vowed that Israel's space aspirations were not over.

"The day will come when we will launch more Israeli astronauts into space," Sharon said. "I am sure that each and every one of them will carry in his heart the memory of Ilan Ramon, a pioneer in Israeli space travel."

Speaking at the start of Sunday's weekly Cabinet meeting, Sharon also said the deaths Saturday morning of Ramon and six NASA astronauts on the space shuttle Columbia were not in vain.

Sharon expressed the sentiment held by Jews around the world when he also extended condolences to the United States and the families of the six NASA crew members.

On Sunday, flags flew at half-staff, and Israeli schools held special assemblies to remember Ramon, 48. In addition, a memorial ceremony was held for Ramon at his high school in Beersheba. Among those attending the ceremony were Ramon's brother, Gadi, and the astronaut's former classmates.

"Ilan was a hero, and yesterday afternoon, he became a legend," a former classmate, Reuven Segev, told current students at Mekif Gimel High School.

There are plans to name a street, a square or a building in Beersheba after Ramon, said the city's mayor, Ya'acov Turner.

Memorial books were opened for Ramon in Israeli consulates around the world, said Mark Regev, a spokesman for the Israeli Embassy in Washington.

After the disaster, President Bush phoned Sharon to express condolences over the loss of Ramon, a father of four and a former air force fighter pilot.

"The president said he knows that aboard the shuttle was a brave Israeli, Col. Ilan Ramon, and asked that the Ramon family receive the condolences of the entire American people, his personal condolences, and expressed solidarity with them at this difficult time in their lives," Sharon's office said in a statement.

Other world leaders, including Russian President Vladimir Putin and German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer, also expressed their condolences to Sharon.

In Iraq, however, some felt the tragedy was God's retribution.

Iraq's official newspaper noted that one of the astronauts killed was a "Zionist" who had flown in Israel's 1981 raid on an Iraqi nuclear reactor at Osirak.

Car mechanic Mohammed Jaber Tamini told news agencies that Ramon's death was retribution for his role in that raid.

"Israel launched an aggression on us when it raided our nuclear reactor without any reason," Tamini said. "Now time has come and God has retaliated to their aggression."

Security for the mission had been extremely tight, as officials feared that terrorists might target the shuttle because an Israeli was on board. But officials were quick to rule out the possibility of terrorism in Saturday's tragedy.

NASA administrator Sean O'Keefe said there were no immediate indications that the mishap was caused by anything or anyone on the ground.

Ramon's participation in the 16-day scientific research mission had been a boost for Israel's national morale, which has been battered by more than two years of Palestinian terror and a weak economy. "Ilan Ramon took the country to new heights,"

## MIDEAST FOCUS

### Sharon, Mitzna to meet

Prime Minister Ariel Sharon is expected to invite Labor Party leader Amram Mitzna to join a unity government when the two meet Monday. Sources close to the prime minister think it is unlikely Mitzna will agree.

### Powell calls for new leader

Secretary of State Colin Powell reiterated a U.S. call for the Palestinians to replace their leadership. "We all know that the Palestinians must establish a new and different leadership, along with new institutions," Powell told the National Conference of World Affairs Councils of America last Friday.

"For its part, Israel knows that it will have to ease the economic plight of ordinary Palestinians and deal with the issue of settlement construction."

### Israeli parties make demands

Three Israeli political parties are reportedly insisting that Prime Minister Ariel Sharon reject the U.S. "road map" for peace as a condition for their joining the coalition. The National Religious Party, National Union and Yisrael Ba'Aliyah parties, which together hold 15 Knesset seats, are holding talks about presenting Sharon with the ultimatum, according to the Israeli daily Ha'aretz.

The Shinui Party is demanding a tax cut for the middle class and a ban on foreign workers entering the country, unless they work in agriculture or food services, as conditions for joining the coalition, Ha'aretz reported.

### Arafat's wife linked to stolen cars

A company owned by Yasser Arafat's wife, Suha, is reportedly linked to a stolen car operation.

The Albahar company is allegedly involved in issuing fake license plates and ownership papers for cars stolen in Israel, Ma'ariv reported last Friday.



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said former Prime Minister Shimon Peres, who was instrumental in arranging Ramon's participation in the flight.

In addition to the significance of the launch for Israel's space program, the participation of Ramon, the child of Holocaust survivors, symbolized the Jewish people's perseverance.

Though secular, Ramon requested kosher meals for the flight and took on board a variety of ritual and symbolic objects.

Among them was a tiny Torah scroll a 13-year-old boy received in Bergen-Belsen from the rabbi of Amsterdam in order to study for his Bar Mitzvah.

The boy, Yehoyahin Yosef, survived the Holocaust, immigrated to Israel and went on to become a professor of planetary physics — and was the person who oversaw the Israeli experiment on board the shuttle to check the impact of dust on climate conditions.

In a satellite hookup with Sharon during the mission, Ramon said the Torah symbolizes "more than anything the ability of the Jewish people to survive everything, including horrible periods, and go from the darkest of days to days of hope and faith in the future."

Ramon also carried a credit-card sized microfiche of the Bible given to him by Israeli President Moshe Katsav, and some mezuzahs.

Following the Columbia crash, the country was thrust into the grief it has known all too well during more than two years of Palestinian violence.

"Shards of the Dream" was the headline appearing in the Israeli daily Ma'ariv. The paper ran a full-page photo of burning debris from the Columbia, along with a photo of Ramon in his shuttle uniform.

Ha'aretz commentator Ari Shavit described the pride Israelis felt in sending "one of our own" into space, and the hope it gave the nation that it could somehow "defy the gravity of its fate." This is a hope that keeps shattering, he wrote.

In an interview with Ma'ariv last month, Ramon minimized fears about his safety. "The chances an accident would happen in space are very small. As far as safety is concerned, I'm not concerned at all," he said. "In NASA, safety takes precedence over everything else. The shuttle has backup upon backup upon backup."

Along with Ramon, the shuttle — which was on its 28th mission — carried commander Rick Husband, pilot Willie McCool, mission specialists Dave Brown, Laurel Clark, Kalpana Chawla, and payload commander Mike Anderson.

When news of the disaster broke Saturday, members of Ramon's family — who were waiting at Cape Canaveral — were taken to a private location by NASA officials.

Members of the family who were still in Israel were flown to the United States on Saturday night. Prior to their departure, they expressed disbelief over the disaster.

"I would never have believed this could happen," Ramon's father, Eliezer Wolferman, said from his home near Beersheba.

In an interview earlier Saturday, Wolferman said he had exchanged e-mails with his son, and had last spoken to him via video conference when he was still in Houston.

"It was very emotional. Our family saw him, and the children asked their dad to do somersaults in the air," Wolferman said.

Last Friday, Ramon sent his final e-mail to his wife, Rona.

"Even though everything here is amazing, I cannot wait until I can see you," he wrote, according to the Israeli daily Yediot Achronot. "A big hug for you and kisses to the kids." □

*The Israel Defense Force has set up an e-mail address for the public to send condolence messages to Ramon's family. The address is [ilanfamily@mail.idf.il](mailto:ilanfamily@mail.idf.il).*

## ADL condemns Mandela comments

NEW YORK (JTA) — The Anti-Defamation League called recent criticism of the United States by Nobel Peace Prize winner Nelson Mandela "offensive, prejudicial and simply wrong."

Mandela said the United States cannot be a moral leader because it has committed "unspeakable atrocities in the world," and suggested that the United States does not support the United Nations because the current U.N. leader is black. □

## JEWISH WORLD

### Sharon could stand trial

Amendments to Belgium's war crimes law may make it easier to prosecute world leaders, including Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon. The amendments, ratified last Friday by the Belgian Senate, would allow Belgian prosecutors to investigate suspected war criminals even if they are not in Belgium.

They also would grant Belgian courts jurisdiction over cases that cannot be brought in front of the International Criminal Court. To take effect, the amendments must be approved by the Belgian House of Representatives by May 18. Palestinians and their supporters have tried to prosecute Sharon for the killing of Palestinians by Lebanese Christian militias in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps during the 1982 Lebanon War, when Sharon was defense minister.

Belgian courts rejected the case last June, saying current Belgian law does not allow for the prosecution of defendants who aren't in Belgium.

### Berlin embassies on alert

The Israeli and U.S. embassies in Berlin were placed on alert following threats passed on via Israeli intelligence sources.

Security, already increased after Sept. 11, has been beefed up with extra police, metal fences and police vans forming a barricade. Germany's *Die Welt* newspaper reported that police at both embassies have been advised to wear bulletproof vests.

### Russian protesters blast Jews

Some 200 people demonstrated in Russia to support a journalist accused of inciting anti-Semitism, according to the Moscow office of the Anti-Defamation League.

Some of the protesters at Sunday's rally in Ulyanovsk, more than 400 miles east of Moscow, held anti-Semitic signs. Sergei Seryubin is charged with inciting anti-Semitic tensions in articles he wrote last year in *Pravoslavny Simbirsk*, a local Russian Orthodox newspaper.

### Umpire suspended for slur

A Major League Baseball umpire was suspended for using an anti-Semitic slur against a league official.

Bruce Froemming reportedly called umpires administrator Cathy Davis a "stupid Jew bitch" after Froemming was chastised for not allowing the league to handle his travel arrangements for an umpiring trip to Japan.

Froemming was pulled from the Japan assignment and will be suspended for 10 days at the beginning of next season.

Froemming later apologized. "I'm sincerely sorry," Froemming said last Friday. "I made a stupid remark, and I accept my punishment."

## Parliament may investigate whether E.U. funds back Palestinian terrorism

By Jonathan Fisk

BRUSSELS (JTA) — The European Union has taken an important step toward investigating whether its donations to the Palestinian Authority are being used to fund terrorism.

On Jan. 30, Francois Zimeray, a French member of the European Parliament, announced he had gathered enough signatures for the body to debate whether to form a commission of inquiry.

Zimeray succeeded in convincing 170 Parliament members to put an inquiry on the agenda. However, a majority of the 626-person Parliament is necessary to actually form such a commission.

Still, the petition marks a significant step for backers of an inquiry, who want the European Union to investigate Israeli allegations that the Palestinian Authority is using donor funds to finance terrorism.

Since the Oslo accords of the mid-1990s, the European Union has provided about \$1.4 billion in various forms of aid to the Palestinian Authority. Since the intifada began more than two years ago, the European Union has been providing about \$10 million a month in special assistance to help the Palestinian Authority meet its budgetary obligations.

Israeli officials have been especially adamant about the issue since an invasion of the West Bank last spring uncovered documentation that Palestinian Authority President Yasser Ararat had authorized payments to known terrorists.

Even if the E.U. money doesn't go directly for terrorism, Israeli officials have argued, it frees up other funds that Arafat can funnel to terrorists on the payroll of the P.A. security services or in the various militias of Arafat's Fatah movement.

"It is the Parliament's job to supervise the executive," David Sumberg, a member of the European Parliament from England, told Chris Patten, the E.U.'s commissioner for external relations. "If we cannot inquire on how the money is spent, we might just as well close our shop up."

Patten has resisted the request, saying last fall that the European Union needs an investigation like it needs "a hole in the head."

Though the inquiry demand is couched in the language of good government, Patten sees it as a veiled attack on the E.U.'s policy of supporting the Palestinian Authority, which Patten considers the only credible negotiating partner for Israel. In addition, supporting the Palestinian Authority allows the European Union to exercise influence in Mideast affairs.

"Do you want to uncover the wrongdoings of me and my staff or to make it impossible for the" European Commission, the E.U.'s executive arm, to support the Palestinian Authority, Patten asked last November. "If the Parliament decides that the E.U. should not assist the Palestinians, it should say so and the commission would comply."

Calls for an inquiry began last summer after Thomas Dawson, an official with the International Monetary Fund, indicated that the IMF doesn't monitor foreign assistance the European Union provides.

"The IMF simply provides the E.U. with information about broad developments related to its budget," Dawson told *The Wall Street Journal* last June. "It does not monitor or control every item in the budget."

The petition was begun by Ilka Schroeder, a German member from the Green Party. But Schroeder wanted to keep a low profile, so most of the lobbying was done by Zimeray and Charles Tannock, a British conservative.

Zimeray and Tannock are known as friends of Israel, leading opponents to argue that the petition masked a pro-Israel agenda.

The petition's success seemed in doubt until the last minute, but Zimeray ultimately managed to secure more than the 157 signatures necessary to put the item on Parliament's agenda.

"Every single one is the result of much lobbying within the corridors of the European Parliament," he said. □

## BEHIND THE HEADLINES

**Affirmative action again an issue, but Jews quiet this time around**By *Eli Kintisch*

WASHINGTON (JTA) — In the 25 years since the Supreme Court outlawed racial quotas for university admissions, Jewish groups have largely tempered their opposition to affirmative action.

On April 1, the Supreme Court will hear arguments in two of the biggest affirmative action cases in a generation.

The cases involve white students who contend that the University of Michigan's law school and undergraduate schools' affirmative action programs amount to reverse discrimination. In the Supreme Court's landmark 1978 decision against affirmative action in *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke*, Jewish groups lined up in vocal opposition to affirmative programs.

In that decision, the court banned quotas but allowed racial criteria to be used in admissions decisions. This time around, the positions of Jewish groups are more muted, as well as more diverse.

Only the Anti-Defamation League, one of the then-staunchest leaders of the national fight against affirmative action, has filed a brief opposing Michigan's program.

"The Jewish community is less concerned about affirmative action than it was 25 years ago," said Marc Stern, legal director of the American Jewish Congress. "We've all shifted."

Leaders of Jewish groups said the rejection of quotas for affirmative action came largely in light of numerical limits on Jewish enrollment in European and American universities in the 1920s.

"It's the quota concept that's anathema," said Jeffrey Sinensky, director of public policy for the American Jewish Committee, which will be submitting a brief in defense of the university.

In the 1970s, the then-head of the ADL, Nathan Perlmutter, was among the national leaders in the fight against affirmative action, calling for a ban on all race-based criteria for admissions.

But this time around, ADL is keeping a low profile.

The group criticizes the University of Michigan in its brief to the court. But it does not go as far as the students' lawyers, who seek to annul the *Bakke* precedent by arguing that race has no place at all in a constitutional effort to maintain diversity.

Taking a position roughly in line with the White House, the ADL's lawyers write in the group's amicus brief to the court: "It is enough to nullify Michigan's systems."

"Diversity must be achieved in a racially neutral way," said the ADL's national director, Abraham Foxman.

The ADL brief says race "may appropriately be considered in the admissions process," so long as it receives no greater weight than other characteristics of applicants.

The difference of opinion on affirmative action between Jewish groups and black organizations was among the sources of tension between the groups in the late 1970s, said Maudine Cooper, president of the Greater Washington Urban League.

In the 1960s, Jewish groups had allied with minority groups to oppose segregation and enact civil rights legislation. But then affirmative action came into the picture, splintering the alliance.

"There was little love lost between blacks and Jews on this issue," said Stern, who has been with the AJCongress for more than 25 years. In 1978, the AJCongress opposed all use of race in university admissions.

This time, internal disagreements within the organization have prevented the group from filing a brief.

Cooper said the moderation of Jewish groups shows that leaders of Jewish as well as black organizations are "older than we were before. We've settled into a reality check that you can't throw it all away. "If we get rid of affirmative action what happens to the diversity we all want?" Cooper said.

In addition, the parameters of the debate have shifted, since quotas have been barred for a quarter century and now the court will decide whether to draw the lines even further.

In both of the University of Michigan's programs, minority students receive special consideration as a part of their applications. In the undergraduate affirmative action program, on a scoring scale in which 100 points generally secures admissions, minority applicants receive 20 points automatically.

Athletes also receive 20 points, and a perfect score on the Scholastic Achievement Test is worth 12 points.

"Like the formal quota in *Bakke*, the dual standard employed by the university insulates members of the preferred racial and ethnic groups from competition," argues the lawyers for the students.

Civil rights groups disagree.

"If the way that Michigan is doing affirmative action is not consistent with the law," then affirmative action cannot be done at all, said Cecilia Munoz, vice president for public policy of the National Council of La Raza.

Which is why the AJCommittee supports the school. "While we have opposed quotas we are, have been and will be in support of a range of programs for affirmative action," Sinensky said.

In 1978, the AJCommittee supported the *Bakke* compromise, Sinensky said. The 1978 case involved Allan Bakke, a white applicant to the University of California Medical School at Davis who charged that a special program which gave 16 out of 100 spots to minority applicants amounted to reverse discrimination.

Since the *Bakke* decision, with racial quotas outlawed for universities and certain employers, different kinds of affirmative action programs remain sanctioned by the Supreme Court.

Opponents attack affirmative action programs by trying to show that they are quotas.

The result has been confusing to say the least.

Depending on their definition of quotas, different federal courts have upheld or struck down various programs for racial preferences at various universities around the country.

The Supreme Court has avoided the issue since *Bakke*.

Munoz said civil rights organizations that have coalesced in favor of Michigan's admissions systems "would be very much encouraged" by any support for their position from the organized Jewish community.

For its part, the White House has been careful about the politically sensitive issue, submitting briefs to the Supreme Court on Jan. 16 denouncing Michigan's system, but not calling for a full reversal of *Bakke*.

In his comments that day, President Bush said the University of Michigan's system "amounts to a quota system" and called for "a quality education to every child from every background."

Foxman suggested that other creative ways could be used to maintain diversity.

"Use economic disability as a criteria and you will help blacks, whites, Latinos, anyone," he said.

A decision by the Supreme Court is expected in late June. □