



# Daily News Bulletin

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## TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

### Israel lifts total closure

Israel eased a closure on the territories as part of confidence-building gestures toward the Palestinians.

In accordance with measures announced by Prime Minister Ariel Sharon in his May 29 meeting with his Palestinian counterpart, Israeli Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz on Saturday night ordered the lifting of the total closure on the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

As a result, some 15,000 Palestinian workers and merchants from the territories will be permitted entry into Israel.

The move was criticized Sunday at the weekly Cabinet meeting, where Finance Minister Benjamin Netanyahu recommended that the easing of the closure be reconsidered in light of warnings of terrorist attacks.

Mofaz responded that the decision was made after careful consideration, and if necessary, could be reversed, Army Radio reported. Israel also said it would release some Palestinian prisoners in the coming days.

### Bush visits Auschwitz

President Bush visited the site of the Auschwitz death camp. Bush and his wife, Laura, spent more than an hour and a half last Friday touring the camp in Poland where 1.5 million people were killed by the Nazis, 90 percent of them Jews.

The Bushes walked through a gas chamber and laid wreaths at both Auschwitz and nearby Birkenau.

"The sites are a sobering reminder of the power of evil and the need for people to resist evil," Bush said.

### Sharon: Outposts may come down

Israel may have to evacuate some illegal settlement outposts, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon said Sunday.

Sharon made the remarks at the weekly Cabinet meeting, where he urged ministers to refrain from criticizing the U.S.-backed "road map" before his summit meeting Wednesday in Jordan with President Bush and Palestinian Authority Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas.

Sharon also told ministers that the Palestinians are aware that Israel will have to continue military operations in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

## BEHIND THE HEADLINES

### Three years after Israeli withdrawal, Lebanese refuse to keep border quiet

By Michael J. Jordan

NEW YORK (JTA) — Three years ago last week, Israel fulfilled a key U.N. resolution by withdrawing its last troops from southern Lebanon, bringing an end to a costly 22-year occupation.

But Security Council Resolution 425 didn't stop there.

It also required the Lebanese government to re-establish its authority in the south and have its forces take control from Hezbollah, the Syrian- and Iranian-backed militia that made Israel's occupation so costly.

Three years later, Lebanon has yet to fulfill its end of the bargain: Hezbollah, which has fortified its position with thousands of missiles trained on Israeli cities, continues to strike at Israel's northern border. It also claims that parts of Lebanon remain occupied, a charge the United Nations has investigated and rejected.

Israel says it has recorded 100 "terrorist attacks" by Hezbollah through December 2002 — reportedly killing eight soldiers and five civilians and injuring 50 people — with "dozens of incidents since then," according to Arye Mekeel, Israel's deputy permanent representative to the U.N.

Yet in contrast to the period when Israel's violations of Resolution 425 brought repeated censure, the international community has little to say about Lebanon's flouting of its obligations.

Mekeel says he plans to send a letter to U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan to mark the three-year anniversary of Israel's withdrawal and complain that the world body must put more pressure on the Lebanese and their political masters in Damascus.

"You know our situation at the U.N. is not always fair and balanced," Mekeel said in an interview with JTA, referring to the large bloc of Arab and Muslim states that often dictates the U.N.'s agenda. "And because so much else is going on in the Middle East, this situation pales by comparison."

Hezbollah and Lebanon may soon be back in the spotlight as the Bush administration refocuses attention on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In the wake of its war against Iraq, Washington has warned Syria and Iran to curb support for Hezbollah, which last week was caught sending a boat to the Palestinian territories with weapons and instructions for making suicide bombings more deadly.

As Richard Armitage, U.S. deputy secretary of state recently put it, Hezbollah is on the "A-team" of terror groups.

It was believed to be a Hezbollah suicide bomber who struck the U.S. barracks in Beirut in 1983, killing 241 Marines in the worst anti-American attack prior to Sept. 11.

In a May 3 visit to Beirut, Secretary of State Colin Powell urged officials to crack down on Islamic radicals with alleged ties to Al-Qaida and rein in Hezbollah forces in the south.

Days after Powell's visit, Lebanon began rounding up alleged Islamic extremists. Some four dozen are now detained, though critics deride it as a trumped-up move to appease the United States.

As for Hezbollah, some media had speculated that Lebanon might send 2,000 more troops to bolster the 1,000 stationed in the south since Israel's withdrawal.

Instead, Lebanese President Emile Lahoud praised Hezbollah as a legitimate political party and resistance movement against Israel — and said Lebanon would not take responsibility for the border region. "We are not concerned in securing any interests

## MIDEAST FOCUS

### Americans in Israel alerted

U.S. officials warned of possible plans to kidnap Americans in the Gaza Strip.

In a security alert posted to the Web site of the U.S. Embassy in Tel Aviv, the United States urged Americans on Friday to defer travel plans to Israel, the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The alert also said there was a strong potential for further terror attacks in the region and urged U.S. citizens to contact local American authorities and consider "relocating to a safe location." Embassy and consulate personnel have been barred from using public buses in the area, the advisory said.

In response, Hamas told The Associated Press that it would target only Israelis. "We are battling with the Zionist enemy and not with the United States," Hamas leader Abdel Aziz Rantisi said.

### Arrests made in Casablanca

Morocco charged 16 men in connection with last month's suicide bombings in Casablanca, many of them at Jewish sites.

A government spokesman said several of the men charged last week are believed to have been backups to the bombers in the May 16 attacks, which killed 31 people.

### Family of jailed Druse on strike

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon reportedly refused to hold this week's Mideast summit in Egypt because of Egypt's refusal to release an Israeli Druse who has been jailed in Egypt for seven years on espionage charges.

Meanwhile, the family of the prisoner, Azzam Azzam, launched a hunger strike Sunday outside the prime minister's residence in Jerusalem. The family called on the government to renew efforts to release him, Army Radio reported. Azzam Azzam and Israel have denied the allegations.

for Israel as long as it rejects such a peace that guarantees the liberation of occupied territories and the return of Palestinian refugees to their country," Lahoud reportedly said on a visit to southern Lebanon to mark the three-year anniversary.

For its part, Hezbollah said it would not lay down its arms and urged other Arabs to emulate its fight against Israel. On this issue, all roads seem to pass through Damascus. Syria has up to 25,000 troops in Lebanon, and U.S. analysts say little of significance is decided there without Syrian approval.

Since a 1974 cease-fire, Syria has kept its own border with Israel quiet, perhaps out of fear of Israeli reprisals. Instead, observers say Syria uses Hezbollah as a proxy to apply pressure on Israel to return the Golan Heights, which it captured from Syria in the 1967 Six-Day War.

Hezbollah, the "Party of God," was formed soon after Israel's 1978 invasion of Lebanon, ostensibly to liberate Lebanese soil.

Analysts say that its weaponry, much of it reportedly financed by Tehran, could only have made its way to Lebanon through Syria.

The U.N. Security Council passed Resolution 425 after the Israeli invasion, which was designed to stop the frequent cross-border terrorist attacks the PLO was carrying out from southern Lebanon.

The resolution, which carries the weight of international law, demanded that Israel cease military action and withdraw from Lebanon immediately.

The Security Council also created a small peacekeeping contingent, the U.N. Interim Force in Lebanon, or UNIFIL. Its mission included assisting "the Government of Lebanon in ensuring the return of its effective authority in the area."

Tired of the slow bloodletting in its security zone and under intense international pressure, Israel completed its withdrawal from southern Lebanon on May 25, 2000.

U.N. surveyors painstakingly checked the Israeli withdrawal against the 1949 armistice "Blue Line" between Israel and Lebanon and the 1924 border the French and British drew between Le Grand Liban and Mandatory Palestine. In some cases, the United Nations ordered Israel to correct its positions by a matter of several feet to correspond to the line exactly.

Within weeks, the United Nations certified Israel's withdrawal as complete — but declined to recognize the border as permanent, leaving that for a final peace agreement between Israel and its neighbors.

Critics say that allowed Hezbollah a small opening.

The movement quickly protested what it said was Israel's ongoing occupation of Shebaa Farms, a 9-square-mile tract of land now located at the confluence of Israel, Lebanon and Syria. Israel seized the land from Syria during the 1967 Six Day War.

The U.N. investigated the claim and rejected it, saying the area is part of Syria and must be addressed in peace talks between Israel and Syria.

But Hezbollah insists it won't give up the fight until Israel hands over Shebaa Farms, plus another seven villages it claims as Lebanese.

Some observers suggest Hezbollah will continue to find pretexts to wage an eternal jihad, or holy war, against Israel.

"Those who thought that after Israel's withdrawal Hezbollah would simply fold its guerrilla factions misunderstood the nature of Hezbollah and its Syrian and Iranian sponsorship," says Matthew Levitt, a senior fellow in terrorism studies at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. "Even if Israel were destroyed, I don't think they would give up their larger jihadist agenda. Jihad is central to their agenda, their world view."

Meanwhile, Israel criticizes the U.N. role. First came Hezbollah's October 2000 cross-border kidnapping — while UNIFIL soldiers reportedly watched — of three Israeli soldiers on patrol. The trio is believed to have been killed.

Then there are the U.N.'s assessments of Lebanon's efforts to reassert control.

In January, when UNIFIL's mandate was extended to July 31, the Security Council commended Lebanon "for taking steps to ensure the return of its effective authority throughout the south."

"It's a case of seeing the glass half-full or half-empty," Mekel says. "The U.N. sees a quiet situation with some violations. We believe it's a very volatile situation with some periods of quiet."

A U.N. spokesman could not be reached for comment. □



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## JEWISH WORLD

### Rain dampens parade for Israel

The Salute to Israel parade in New York, held in rainy weather, drew one of its smallest crowds in years.

Sunday's parade down Fifth Avenue in Manhattan drew more than 100,000 participants and spectators, according to estimates.

The small turnout was due to the inclement weather, according to an event organizer.

The parade, which boasted the theme "Courageous Spirit," also drew about 100 anti-Israel protesters, according to police.

### Cemetery in Russia vandalized

A Jewish cemetery in southern Russia was vandalized earlier this month, the Union of Councils for Jews in the Former Soviet Union reported, citing a local newspaper.

Several gravestones were smashed in the cemetery in Astrakhan sometime in early May. According to members of the local Jewish community, attacks on the cemetery take place "no less than once a year," a local newspaper reported.

Nobody was arrested in connection with any of these incidents.

Some members of the community believe the latest attack was motivated by anti-Semitism.

But a local Jewish leader, Yuri Feldman, told the Komsomolets Kaspiya newspaper that it was either youth "with nothing better to do" or common criminals.

### U.S. policemen go to Israel

A U.S. police delegation is visiting Israel.

The officers from Charlotte, N.C., and from Pinellas County in Florida are traveling to Hadera and Jerusalem to learn about terror prevention and Jewish-Arab coexistence efforts.

The visit is part of the Jewish Agency for Israel's Partnership 2000 program, which pairs Israeli and U.S. cities.

### Guide for observant deaf

The Orthodox Union has issued a guide for using hearing devices on Jewish holidays.

The guidebook addresses permissible ways of using electronic hearing devices on the Sabbath and holidays, when it is forbidden to activate electrical flow.

Written by Rabbi Mordechai Shuchatowitz of Baltimore, an authority on Jewish law and the father of deaf children, the guide argues that leniency in specific situations is a mitzvah.

Shuchatowitz is planning a second book on how deaf people can observe commandments related to hearing, such as listening to the shofar on the High Holidays and hearing the megillah read on Purim.

## ARTS & CULTURE

### Film traces Jewish hoopsters, long before Magic or Michael

By Joe Berkofsky

NEW YORK (JTA) — Like millions of New Yorkers, David Vyorst grew up worshipping the Knicks.

His basketball gods were named Dave DeBusschere, Bill Bradley, Earl "The Pearl" Monroe, Walt Frazier and Willis Reed. His temple was Madison Square Garden.

When Vyorst's father spoke reverently of Nat Holman, he "thought it was just some guy my dad was babbling about."

Years later, Vyorst learned that Holman was the legendary "Mr. Basketball," a star college player in the 1920s who coached the City College of New York to an NCAA championship in 1950.

He also learned that the forebears of Frazier and Reed were men named Leo Gottlieb, Ralph Kaplowitz and Ossie Schectman, who were on the nearly-all-Jewish starting team for the Knicks when they debuted in 1946.

"People don't talk about it, but Jewish people played a pivotal role in the development of basketball," Vyorst says.

But they'll soon hear about it if Vyorst, 42, has his way.

A Washington-based communications specialist, Vyorst is producing a new documentary film, "The First Basket."

It's a meditation on Jews' early participation in — and later exodus from — basketball, and how that journey mirrors the American Jewish experience in the 20th century.

"How Jews got involved in basketball is only half the story," says Jeffrey Gurock, a Yeshiva University history professor who appears in the film. "The other part is the conflict of Jewish identity and sports."

The film's executive producer, Vyorst has raised about \$40,000 in private contributions, including a \$10,000 National Endowment for the Humanities grant. He needs \$250,000 to complete the project in time for distribution in the spring of 2004.

Vyorst recently wrapped pre-production, which took him to Inverry Bagel near Ft. Lauderdale, Fla., where every month the South Florida Basketball Fraternity gathers to nosh and kibbitz.

The group includes Schectman, who scored the first basket in professional basketball on Nov. 1, 1946, when the Knicks beat the Toronto Huskies 68-66. The game marked the debut of the Basketball Association of America, the precursor to the National Basketball Association.

The landscape of the floorboards differed vastly from today. There are no Jews in the NBA today, as the Jewish presence in the league ended a few years ago with the retirement of Danny Schayes, son of Hall of Famer Dolph Schayes.

But at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries, the immigrant Jews packed into areas such as New York's Lower East Side had no place to play baseball or football, he says.

Jews played stickball in the streets, attended immigrant aid houses and joined groups such as the Young Men's Hebrew Association.

In the early part of the 20th century, some Jewish leaders such as Rabbi Mordechai Kaplan, founder of the Reconstructionist movement, hoped basketball would effect a kind of "crossover dribble," enticing young Jews from the YMHA and Jewish community centers into the synagogue.

"Did those who came to play ever end up staying to pray? Some did, but the best athletes did not," Gurock says.

Meanwhile, institutions run by Jewish secularists and socialists also competed for basketball talent.

Semi-pro leagues began forming, and teams with a Jewish spin barnstormed the country.

After World War II, however, the game began shifting dramatically. Perhaps the greatest force was the postwar migration of Jews to the suburbs, where they found greater affluence and met growing professional and social acceptance. □

## BEHIND THE HEADLINES

**In shadow of anti-Semitic attack, French Jews discuss their future***By Philip Carmel*

PARIS (JTA) — A little more than 100 yards from where French Jews had gathered to debate the community's future lay the latest reminder of just how precarious that future is.

Participants entering the main synagogue May 29 in Creteil, a southern Paris suburb with a large Jewish population, were greeted with news that has become all too familiar since the Palestinian intifada began in September 2000.

At around 10 o'clock the previous night, a large Jewish grocery store literally a stone's throw from the synagogue had been gutted by an arson attack that police and community leaders believe was motivated by anti-Semitism.

The same evening, in the northeastern Parisian suburb of Rosny, swastikas were sprayed on the walls of the town's synagogue, along with slogans reading "Death to the Jews."

According to Sammy Ghozlan, founder of the Bureau for Vigilance Against Anti-Semitism and head of the Council of Jewish Communities for the region that includes Rosny, there have been more than 250 anti-Semitic incidents in France since the beginning of 2003, and more than 2,000 since the intifada began.

The Creteil conference, titled "The Future of the Jewish Community in France: Concerns, Questions and Perspectives," was organized jointly by the Paris-region Council of Jewish Communities and the Consistoire, an umbrella organization of French Jews.

Sponsored by the United Jewish Social Funds — the umbrella welfare and social organization of French Jewry — the Simon Wiesenthal Center and the European Jewish Congress, it brought together leading Jewish politicians, community leaders and intellectuals.

Presenting his statistics, Ghozlan said the community had been shocked not only by the level of anti-Semitism but also by the authorities' initial silence.

Moreover, he said, during the initial wave of attacks in 2000 and 2001, President Jacques Chirac and the government of then-Prime Minister Lionel Jospin had sought to minimize the problem.

Anti-racist organizations had marched alongside the Jewish community in the 1990s, following attacks by the extreme right and against the threat of right-wing politician Jean-Marie Le Pen. But many of those groups had abandoned the Jewish community this time around, Ghozlan said, though he singled out the group SOS Racisme for its continued support.

One of the founders of SOS Racisme, Julien Draï, said the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was being used as a pretext.

After the initial surge, anti-Semitic incidents had been dropping until they rose again at the start of 2002, Draï said, culminating in April 2002 when a synagogue in the suburbs of Lyon was seriously damaged by a fire-bombing during Israel's operation battle in the Jenin refugee camp.

It is worrisome that Jews in France even had to ask "whether we will still be here in 10 years time," Draï, a Jewish legislator in the French Parliament and a Socialist Party spokesman, said.

For Draï, who said he believes Jews have a future in France, the answer lies in the continued commitment of the Jewish community to France's secular values and a willingness to demand

that politicians address anti-Semitism seriously.

Moreover, he said, the Socialist Party's reaction during recent demonstrations against the U.S.-led war in Iraq had been positive, with a firm directive given to party members to leave anti-war demonstrations at the first whiff of anti-Semitism.

Some left-wing movements were not so scrupulous about anti-Semitism, Draï said.

"When they explain it away they justify it, and when they justify they legitimize," he said.

Shimon Samuels, international director of the Simon Wiesenthal Center, said the growth in anti-Semitic attacks is not restricted to France, but is a problem across Europe.

Samuels detailed the rise in European anti-Semitism, particularly in attacks emanating from the anti-globalization movement since the U.N.'s anti-racism conference in Durban, South Africa, in September 2001 became a showcase for anti-Semitic and anti-Israel sentiment. But while institutions like the Wiesenthal Center can provide statistics, Samuels said, it is governments that must deal with the problem.

According to another key speaker at the conference, Rabbi Gilles Bernheim, the situation of French Jews is symptomatic of a far greater malaise in French society.

Sections of French society are becoming alienated from the state and rejecting its institutions, said Bernheim, who heads the Torah and society department of the Consistoire.

"When France ceases to love itself, that is bad for the Jews," Bernheim said.

Some three hours into the discussion, with statistics and analysis becoming rather dry for the large audience, an audience member demanded that the Jewish Agency for Israel's representative in France, Olivier Rafowicz, be allowed to speak.

A former Israeli military spokesman in France and a regular on radio and television stations, Rafowicz earlier had told JTA that the condition of the French Jewish community is "clinically dead."

Rafowicz asked audience members to raise their hands if they envisaged a future for Jews in France. Three people did so.

He then asked whether there was a long-term future in Israel, and about half the people in the audience raised their hands.

It was left to Marc Knobel, a researcher from the CRIF umbrella organization of secular French Jewry, to defend community leaders, who he said devoted "much time and effort to defending the community."

CRIF leadership's activities in combating anti-Semitism have been protested as too weak — which is one reason that the Bureau for Vigilance Against anti-Semitism was set up by Ghozlan, a retired police commissioner who was recently described by the U.S. magazine *Vanity Fair* as "the Sephardi Columbo." But CRIF has had its critics from the opposite direction as well.

The organization's head in the Lyon region, Alain Jakubowitz, wrote recently in the daily newspaper *Liberation* that CRIF President Roger Cukierman was undermining the battle against anti-Semitism in France by failing to criticize Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's policies. CRIF sometimes acts "like a second Israeli embassy," Jakubowitz wrote.

Last week, in elections for CRIF executive's council, three candidates widely regarded as being to the left of Cukierman topped the poll. Receiving the highest number of votes was Patrick Klugman, president of France's Union of Jewish Students, who has described himself as "a pro-Palestinian Zionist." □