

## TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

### Bush: Abbas is weak

President Bush told Jewish leaders he believes the Palestinian Authority prime minister is "weak." Bush on Wednesday hosted what is believed to be the first kosher White House dinner, for nearly 100 Jewish officials, to mark the opening of an exhibit of Anne Frank's writings at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum. [Page 4]

### Israel kills 5 in Gaza strike

At least five Palestinians, including two Hamas members, were killed in an Israeli airstrike in Gaza City.

At least 25 people were reported wounded after Israeli missiles hit a car in Gaza City on Thursday. The strike raised the death toll in the last two days of violence to more than 30.

### U.S. defends strike

The White House defended Israel's targeting of Hamas leaders. White House spokesman Ari Fleischer said Thursday that the obstacle to Israeli-Palestinian peace is neither Israel nor the Palestinian Authority.

"The issue are these relatively small but deadly groups of terrorists who are trying to stop Israel and the Palestinian Authority from coming together at a time when they are, indeed, coming together," he said. "That's why they strike now. They strike now because they see peace on the horizon, and Hamas is an enemy to peace."

### Powell to meet 'Quartet'

Secretary of State Colin Powell will meet with leaders of the diplomatic "Quartet" next week in Jordan.

Powell will meet with leaders of the United Nations, European Union and Russia — who helped the United States draft the "road map" plan for Israeli-Palestinian peace — on June 22, when he is in Amman for the World Economic Forum.

"The Quartet principals will review the results of the Red Sea summit meetings in Sharm el-Sheik and Aqaba, and how best to assist Israeli and Palestinian efforts to end terror and violence and make progress toward President Bush's vision of two states — Israel and Palestine — living side by side in peace and security," State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said Thursday.

## BEHIND THE HEADLINES

### As bombing's dead are buried, life goes on as normal in Jerusalem

By Matthew Gutman

JERUSALEM (JTA) — A day after a Hamas bomber blew himself up on a bus here, taking at least 17 people with him, it seemed that everybody had a story to tell about the bombing — but that few people cared.

The rhythm of life flowed as usual in Israel's capital. Flags for an upcoming gay-pride parade fluttered on lampposts on Agrippas Street, just a few yards from the attack near the Mahane Yehuda market.

On Jaffa Road, the scene of more than a dozen attacks over the past two years, Israeli youth with their cell phones hanging from their necks like dog tags strode down the street, sometimes stopping to admire their reflection in shop windows.

A small memorial — a rectangular box studded with sputtering candles — sat in the bombed bus stop, as if waiting for the No. 14 bus. Some bystanders turned their heads for a fleeting glimpse of the memorials and the kipah-clad yeshiva students who came to sing hymns at the site. Others stood and munched their lunchtime falafel sandwiches.

In contrast to cities such as Haifa and Tel Aviv, which have suffered fewer bombings, Jerusalem makes informal affairs of its memorials.

Following a March bus bombing in Haifa, local high school students pasted a nearby wall with 50 yards of memorial placards, and the streets ran with wax from memorial candles. Cracks of the stone wall were stuffed with short notes to the dead.

Not so in Jerusalem. One bystander, Menashe Hamo, spun around in his wheelchair to look at the little memorial in the bus stop.

Hamo, 50, had been waiting near the bus stop at the time of the attack and had been slightly wounded, his wheelchair knocked backward by the force of the blast.

"But who cares anymore?" he asked. "We are being blown up in the streets daily and nothing changes, nothing happens. This is our routine."

In his pudgy hands, Hamo clutched a copy of Thursday's Ma'ariv newspaper. It ran a picture of him being carted off to an ambulance, his mouth gaping.

"I've read the article four times, and still I can't believe that I am here, standing on my own two feet," he said. It was an unfortunate choice of words for a man debilitated by another bus bombing in Jerusalem in 1995.

Many Israeli left wingers indirectly blamed Prime Minister Ariel Sharon for the bombing, as Hamas cited Tuesday's botched assassination attempt on a Hamas leader as the catalyst — though Israeli security officials said the bombing must have been in the works for some time. In Jerusalem, however, many placed the blame elsewhere.

"We have to invade Gaza. We have to boot Arafat and Hamas from here," Hamo said.

A few curious men leaned closer, clapping Hamo on the back in encouragement.

"Hell, we know we need two states, an Arab and Jewish one," he said. "That's why theirs has to be on the other side of the Jordan river" — that is to say, in place of Jordan.

Beside Hamo, a group of yeshiva students sat playing guitar and looking generally forlorn. On the metal construction girder behind them they had put up a placard, reading, "An eternal people is undaunted by the long road."

Pasted to the cardboard was an Israeli flag and front-page photographs of the bomb site from Israel's daily papers.

"This scene is even sadder than it might be otherwise," said Idan Tzemach, who was wearing an Israeli flag knotted around his neck like a cape. "Everybody seems to have

## MIDEAST FOCUS

### Israeli killed in shooting attack

The body of an Israeli who was shot to death was found in the northern West Bank on Thursday night. The Israeli's car, with his body inside, was found near the village of Yabed.

The Israeli was identified as a resident of central Israel in his 30s, Israel Radio reported.

The report said he had entered a village in the area earlier in the day to make some purchases, despite a ban on Israeli civilians going into Palestinian areas.

### Bombing victims named

The names were released of most of the 17 Israelis killed in Wednesday's suicide bombing in Jerusalem.

They were Zipora Levy, 70, of Jerusalem; Yaniv Abayad, 22, of Herzliya; Sgt. Tamar Ben Eliahu, 20, of Moshav Paran; Ogenya Berman, 50, of Jerusalem; Alan Beer, 47 of Jerusalem; Elza Cohen, 70, of Jerusalem; Zvi Cohen, 39 of Jerusalem; Roi Eliraz, 22, of Mevasseret Zion; Alexander Kazaris, 77, of Jerusalem; Tita Martin, 75, of Jerusalem; Yaffa Mualem, 65, of Jerusalem; Bet-El Ohana, 21, of Kiryat Ata; Tzipporah Pesachovitch, 54, of Tsur Hadassah; and Rene Malka Sultan, 67, of Jerusalem.

### Bombing victims buried

Funerals were held for some of the 17 victims of Wednesday's suicide bus bombing in Jerusalem. Twenty-eight people wounded in the attack remained hospitalized on Thursday, including six in serious condition.

Among the dead was Alan Beer, an immigrant from Cleveland.

Among the wounded was Sarri Singer, daughter of New Jersey State Sen. Robert Singer.

She stayed in Israel after participating in the birthright Israel program.

forgotten the terrible deed that happened here yesterday. Life continues and bodies are buried."

Tzemach and 15 schoolmates had taken the day off from yeshiva because "it would have been hard to study on a day like this," he said. "We thought it important to identify with the people of Jerusalem."

About 30 yards from the bus stop, Nissim Mizrahi sat in Ilan Kalimi's bourekas shop. Asked if he was well, Mizrahi, 74, did not reply. A voice came from the kitchen: "Yeah, Nissim is suffering from post-traumatic stress. He's in shock from the bombing."

Kalimi explained that he had invited Mizrahi — who was 50 yards away when the bus exploded — to sit in his shop in order to "cheer him up."

"I was saved by God, you know," Mizrahi said, lifting up his shiny domed head and tapping his gnarled knuckles three times on the table.

A man named Yossi, who said he nearly had been killed in a bus bombing in May, strode to the bourekas counter.

"You see," Kalimi said, "almost everyone in this city suffers from a near-death experience. This is how we live. It's not good, but it's reality."

Aside from the yeshiva students and a few stunned survivors like Hamo, the scene was given over to prowling journalists. Even some of the more cynical among them were stunned by the sparseness of emotion.

"Things here seem so normal, it's kind of weird," said one photojournalist, who had arrived in Israel just two months ago.

Meanwhile, funerals were held Wednesday for several of the victims, who represented a cross section of Israel.

Alan Beer, 47, a 1974 graduate of the Hebrew Academy of Cleveland Mesifita, had immigrated to Israel from Cleveland five years ago with a masters degree in physical chemistry. Even when he had trouble finding work in Israel, Beer kept his spirits up, friends said.

Beer's niece described her uncle as a movie buff who frequented the Jerusalem Cinematheque. Roommate Heidi Friedman described Beer as having a "happy, infectious laugh."

Alan was returning from a condolence visit in Hadera at the time of the bombing. He is survived by his mother and three siblings.

Yaniv Obayed, 22, of Herzliya and Bat-El Ohana, 21, of Kiryat Ata, were planning to marry. Instead, the young couple were killed on the bus as Obayed was on his way to a job interview as a security guard, the daily Yediot Achronot reported.

As an albino, Ohana suffered vision problems. After graduating high school, she had spent the past two years at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem in a special preparatory course for the visually impaired.

Ohana's aunt told Yediot that after every terrorist attack in Jerusalem, Ohana would phone her parents to let them know she was okay.

After Wednesday's "attack, the whole family waited for her phone call," her aunt said. "We tried to reach her, but only her voice mail picked up."

Ohana is survived by her parents. Obayed is survived by his parents and two siblings.

The family of Tamar Ben-Eliahu, 19, of Moshav Paran in the south of Israel, told Yediot that the army sergeant usually fell asleep on the bus, often waking to find love notes from other passengers. The notes often said Tamar looked like an angel, and included the phone numbers of her hopeful suitors, Yediot reported.

Tamar was doing her army service as an educational guide for soldiers in Jerusalem's Old City.

After the attack, Tamar's parents drove to Jerusalem to scour the hospitals for a sign of their daughter. At Shaare Zedek Hospital, they were informed by army representatives and doctors that Tamar had been brought to the hospital in critical condition and had died of her injuries. She is survived by her parents and three siblings.

Eugenia Berman, 50, was born in Lvov, Ukraine and moved to Israel at age 7.

Berman taught English, art and art history at a Jerusalem high school. She was on her way to a professional meeting when the attack occurred. Family members described Berman as a happy person with a good heart who enjoyed traveling and hiking.

She is survived by her husband, five children, her father and a brother. □

(JTA correspondent Naomi Segal contributed to this story.)



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## JEWISH WORLD

### Burying Jewish dead in Belarus a problem after cemetery dispute

By Lev Krichevsky

MOSCOW (JTA) — The Jewish cemetery in the Belarussian city of Mogilev has been closed — but Jews are still being buried there. The issue involving the cemetery began last year, after local authorities decided to open the burial grounds to non-Jews.

"Each day, new burial places are made over old Jewish bones," said Naum Ioffe, chairman of the Mogilev Jewish community. "No one can stop this barbarity but us."

Orthodox Christian crosses recently appeared on the cemetery gate, and graves marked with crosses now can be seen throughout the cemetery.

Authorities deny any wrongdoing, saying Belarus' legislation allows graves that have been abandoned for more than 40 years to be used for new burials.

Jewish activists say this is not true and that the law allows only trees to be planted on abandoned plots of cemetery land.

Last month, Ioffe wrote a letter to Belarussian President Alexander Lukashenko, urging him to help restore order at the cemetery, established in the mid-18th century.

In response, the local mayor ordered the town's only Jewish cemetery temporarily closed to new burials. That hasn't solved the problem.

Recently "an old man died and we couldn't bury him properly," Ioffe told JTA last week in a telephone interview from Belarus. "We buried him anyway, despite the mayor's ban, and will continue using the cemetery for what it is intended — whatever it takes."

This isn't the first time the cemetery has been opened to non-Jews.

Twenty-five years ago, the city's Soviet authorities did just that after the town's main Christian cemetery outgrew its limits.

Ioffe says some Jews, his father among them, tried to protest, but were told that "all Soviet people are equal" and therefore can be laid to rest in any cemetery.

After years of this "mixed use," many of the older graves were destroyed, bones dug up and stones discarded to make room for new burials.

Jewish activists say more than 1,000 graves were damaged or destroyed in that way.

With the help of a small group of U.S. donors, Ioffe said, he and members of his community cleared up much of the old part of the cemetery and last year reburied "four bags of bones that we found scattered all over" the cemetery.

The inscription on the tombstone erected over the reburied remains says: "Here lie the remains of the Mogilev Jews, once buried in this cemetery, whose rest was barbarically disturbed."

The overseas donors also paid to build a fence around the cemetery and to put up a stone over the reburied remains. But Ioffe said the aid was discontinued after last year's decision by authorities to turn the burial grounds into a public cemetery.

"This is a major disgrace to the deceased," Ioffe said. "Those who were laid to rest at a Jewish cemetery should remain in a Jewish cemetery."

Ioffe says he has nothing against non-Jewish burials in a specially assigned section of the cemetery, especially since the relatives of some leading politicians are being buried in the cemetery. The most the Jewish community can hope for, Ioffe said, is to have the authorities ban new burials above older ones.

In the meantime, Jewish activists are photographing all remaining Jewish graves to compile a complete registry. □

### Lubavitch rabbis meet Canadian premier

TORONTO (JTA) — Seven Chabad-Lubavitch rabbis from across Canada met with Prime Minister Jean Chretien to mark the ninth anniversary of the death of the Lubavitch Rebbe, Menachem Mendel Schneerson.

Also on Wednesday, members of Parliament from all five federal parties rose in the House of Commons to pay tribute to the Chabad-Lubavitch organization, which maintains 72 centers across Canada, including 37 in Quebec, 21 in Ontario and 8 in British Columbia. □

### UJC sends \$10 million to Israel

The United Jewish Communities delivered \$10 million from its emergency campaign to help Israel fight terrorism.

The money from the umbrella group for North American federations will help ensure the safety of 100,000 Israeli children at summer camps.

North American Jews have pledged \$358 million to the UJC's Israel Emergency Campaign since September 2001.

### Group wants imam deported

The Simon Wiesenthal Center called on the Italian government to deport the imam of Rome's Grand Mosque after he gave a sermon praising suicide bombers.

In a letter to Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, the Wiesenthal Center noted that Italy was about to take over both the presidency of the European Union and the chairmanship of the International Task Force on Holocaust, Remembrance and Education.

It urged Berlusconi "to immediately repatriate" Abdel-Samie Mahmoud Ibrahim Moussa "to his native Egypt for having abused the hospitality of Italy, and to ensure that his replacement will be a figure known for speaking out against fundamentalism, extremism and anti-Semitism."

### Students join coalition

A coalition of Jewish groups on college campuses will add students to its steering committee.

As part of the Israel on Campus Coalition's new strategic plan for the coming year, "students will become full partners in the process," said Wayne Firestone, director of the 26-group umbrella organization.

Students previously were represented only on an ad hoc basis, he said.

The ICC also is planning an international student summit in Israel in December and is launching a task force to assess faculty disposition on Israel.

However, Firestone said, referring to the outspoken anti-Israel element among faculty, "I don't think there are going to be any quick answers on that."

### Anti-missionary group to Israel

Jews for Judaism plans to send 10 representatives to Israel to fight Christian missionary activities.

The delegation will travel to Israel June 18-29 after what the Baltimore-based group says is an upswing of missionary activity in Israel, including the recent opening of the first office of Jews for Jesus.

In addition, a missionary umbrella group known as the Union of Messianic Jewish Congregations will hold its annual convention in Israel in late June and early July.

## BEHIND THE HEADLINES

**After criticism of Israel, Bush reassures U.S. Jewish leaders**

By Matthew E. Berger

WASHINGTON (JTA) — In a coincidence of timing, President Bush hosted a dinner for Jewish leaders just at the moment he most needed to speak with them.

Bush used a dinner Wednesday for close to 100 American Jewish leaders to repair the damage from comments he made a day earlier, in which he blasted Israel's attempt to assassinate a Hamas leader and said the action did not advance Israel's security.

The comments outraged many Jewish groups, which said Bush was abandoning the principles of his war on terror and his landmark speech of last June 24.

The dinner was timed to mark the opening of a new Anne Frank exhibit at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum. While many established Jewish leaders were not included — overlooked in favor of political contributors, rabbis and Jewish White House staffers — Bush nonetheless used the dinner to make his views clear.

One participant said no White House officials publicly justified Bush's remarks Tuesday. Instead, Bush and others acknowledged the criticism they had received from the Jewish community and pointed to his comments following Wednesday's suicide bombing in Jerusalem, in which he called on Arab states to aid the fight against terrorism.

Both in his formal remarks and in private conversations with Jewish leaders, Bush emphasized repeatedly that he still believed in the framework of his June 24 speech and that he saw Israel's security as his top priority in the Middle East.

"Everything I heard him say was totally a reinforcement of the security of Israel and that it was not going to falter," said Fred Zeidman, chairman of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council.

Zeidman, who was appointed by Bush, said he believes there was some frustration in the White House because the latest violence came less than a week after Bush traveled to the Middle East for summits with Israeli and Arab leaders. That frustration may have led to the remarks, he said.

Other dinner guests said Bush called Palestinian Authority Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas "weak" and said that Arab support would be key for progress toward peace.

"He was very reassuring," one participant said.

Despite this week's surge in violence, the administration is continuing to push the "road map" peace plan. Administration officials said Thursday that veteran diplomat John Wolf would leave for Jerusalem as early as Saturday to lead an American team charged with monitoring day-to-day progress under the plan. It will be Wolf's first trip to the Middle East since Bush announced his appointment at the summit with Israeli and Palestinian leaders.

An official said Wolf and David Satterfield, deputy assistant secretary of state for Near East affairs, would stay in the Middle East for several days.

Secretary of State Colin Powell also is preparing to meet in Jordan on June 22 with leaders of the United Nations, Russia and the European Union — the Bush administration's partners in drafting the road map — in an attempt to shore up peace efforts.

The discussions Jewish leaders had with Bush and others at the White House Wednesday night seemed to be reflected in White

House spokesman Ari Fleischer's comments Thursday.

Amid a new Israeli airstrike in Gaza, which killed civilians in addition to two Hamas members, Fleischer said the real issue was not Israel or the Palestinian Authority, but the continued violence of Hamas.

"The issue are these relatively small but deadly groups of terrorists who are trying to stop Israel and the Palestinian Authority from coming together at a time when they are, indeed, coming together," Fleischer said. "That's why they strike now. They strike now because they see peace on the horizon, and Hamas is an enemy to peace."

On Wednesday, White House guests were taken by bus to the formal unveiling of the Holocaust Museum's new exhibit on the writings of Anne Frank, which was officially opened by First Lady Laura Bush. They then were transported back to the White House for a reception and dinner.

It was the first time a completely kosher dinner was served at the White House, guests said.

"There was such a sense that everyone should feel comfortable," one guest said.

In his pre-dinner remarks, Bush spoke of anti-Semitism around the world and of his commitment to Holocaust education, participants said.

"People who hate life and God target the people of God," Bush reportedly said.

At the museum, Laura Bush recalled the couple's recent visit to Auschwitz.

"I thought I knew my history," the first lady said. "But I when I visited Auschwitz a few weeks ago, I realized there's some things textbooks can't teach."

She spoke of being moved by the sight of thousands of eyeglasses of Holocaust victims, their lenses still stained from tears and dirt.

The exhibit, "Anne Frank the Writer: An Unfinished Story," includes Frank's photo album, the last of her three diary notebooks and some of her other writings. Most of the artifacts are on loan from the Netherlands Institute for War Documentation and have never been displayed in the United States.

The museum also has an online exhibition on its Web site at [www.ushmm.org](http://www.ushmm.org), including readings from Frank's writings and historical photos and films.

Also on hand for the museum event was Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, who swore in new members of the Holocaust council. □

**Dutch judge freezes funds**

AMSTERDAM (JTA) — A Dutch judge kept the funds of the Al-Aqsa Foundation frozen after viewing an intelligence dossier on the group. A court in The Hague took the decision in late May after the Al-Aqsa Foundation sued the state for freezing the foundation's assets in April.

The government froze the funds after Holland's intelligence service released a report concluding that the Rotterdam-based foundation supported Hamas and other Palestinian terrorist organizations. Al-Aqsa claimed it supports only humanitarian work in the Palestinian territories and southern Lebanon.

The Al-Aqsa Foundation collected nearly \$2 million in Holland in 2002. □