



# Daily News Bulletin

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86th Year

## TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

### Sharon, Abbas meet

Prisoner releases and disarming terrorist groups were the main subjects of a meeting between Ariel Sharon and Mahmoud Abbas.

Meeting with the Palestinian prime minister in Jerusalem on Sunday, Sharon reportedly said Israel would consider withdrawing from additional Palestinian cities if the Palestinian Authority presents a clear plan for taking control of them.

The Israeli prime minister also demanded that Abbas crack down on factories in the Gaza Strip that manufacture weapons used against Israeli targets in the Negev.

Abbas insisted again on the release of Palestinian security prisoners in Israeli hands. He also asked for lifting of roadblocks in Palestinian cities.

### AMIA bombing marked

Argentine Jews marked the ninth anniversary of the bombing of their main community center in Buenos Aires. [Page 4]

### Kidnapped governor freed

Palestinians briefly held the governor of Jenin on Saturday.

The men, members of an Al-Aksa Brigade cell close to Yasser Arafat's Fatah faction, accused Haider Irsheid of collaborating with Israeli authorities and misusing funds that were directed to the Palestinian Authority. After beating him, they later released him, under order from the Palestinian Authority president, reports said.

According to some Palestinian sources, the abduction and subsequent release was intended by Arafat to show his ongoing influence on the situation on the ground in Jenin, Israel Radio reported.

### Rabbinical court makes threat

An Israeli rabbinical court is threatening an Australian rabbi with excommunication.

The court said Rabbi Joseph Gutnick, whose company successfully sued his brother-in-law Rabbi Pinchus Feldman, head of the Sydney Yeshiva, for payments of outstanding debts exceeding \$10 million, must withdraw his court actions within 48 hours or be ex-communicated. An Australian Supreme Court ruled against Feldman's claim that the money loaned to the yeshiva by Gutnick was a gift.

## ACROSS THE FORMER SOVIET UNION

### Dispute over Babi Yar escalates as Jewish leader declared non grata

By Daniel MacIsaac

KIEV, Ukraine (JTA) — A thorn in the side of the authorities during Soviet days, Jewish community representative Josef Zissels is now pricking Ukrainian Jewish leaders — so much so that they've declared him persona non grata.

Following months of warnings, the Council of Leaders of All-Ukrainian (Major Jewish Organizations on June 24 took the unprecedented step of publicly declaring Zissels "persona non grata," with "no right to represent the Jewish community of Ukraine before Ukrainian, international and foreign governmental, state, public, NGO, national or religious organizations."

"The council unanimously considers that Mr. Zissels' activities have brought irreparable harm to the authority, unity and integrity of the Jewish community of Ukraine, and strongly condemns it," the declaration reads, adding that his activity also "promotes anti-Semitism and interethnic intolerance."

At issue is Zissels' lobbying against a memorial and community center planned for Babi Yar, the ravine on the outskirts of Kiev where 33,000 Jews were slaughtered in September 1941.

Formed at the beginning of 2003, the Council of Leaders is composed of a small number of individuals who wield a big influence in Ukrainian Jewish affairs. They include the chief rabbi of Ukraine, Ya'akov Dov Bleich; the chief rabbi of Kiev, Moshe-Reuven Azman; the president of the Jewish Foundation of Ukraine, Alexander Feldman; and Osik Akselrud, Hillel's regional director in Ukraine.

The council is designed to bring together representatives of the various groups representing Ukraine's Jewish community, which today numbers from 250,000 to 500,000.

The council leaders support the construction of the multimillion-dollar Heritage complex memorial and center, funded by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee.

Zissels has been among the most vocal opponents of the project, arguing that the "mass grave" that is Babi Yar is no place for a community center. He was instrumental in taking the debate public in the spring of 2002.

Since members of other minority groups also were killed at Babi Yar, any memorial should be multiethnic in nature, Zissels and other critics argue.

Protest letters have included signatures of people from a number of ethnic groups, including Armenians and Roma, or gypsies. A number of non-Jewish representatives participated in the inaugural news conference this spring of a committee opposing the memorial, of which Zissels is a member.

Council members view Zissels' tactics as a betrayal of trust and tradition.

"The declaration is a statement being made by the Jewish leadership of Kiev to protest the action of someone who considers himself a leader in the community, but who is going against Jewish tradition and the tradition of Jewish leaders throughout our history," Bleich said. "In our opinion, it is inciting non-Jewish organizations against the Jewish community."

Eduard Dolinsky, a council member and executive director of the United Jewish Community of Ukraine, stressed the secular and non-binding nature of the June 24 declaration.

"We are a community council, so this has nothing in common with Jewish religious

## MIDEAST FOCUS

### Jewish terror cells active?

At least two Jewish terror cells are operating in the West Bank and Gaza, Israeli defense sources said.

The sources were quoted by Israel Radio on Sunday as saying the cells have been responsible for planting roadside bombs and carrying out shooting attacks against Palestinians.

The disclosure came on the heels of the weekend arrest for security offenses against Palestinians of Yitzhak Pass, whose infant daughter, Shalhevet, was killed by Palestinian sniper fire in March 2001.

### Israeli car fired on

An Israeli civilian car came under fire near an Israeli Arab town. Military sources were quoted as saying that Palestinians fired on the car near the Taibe checkpoint on Saturday night, the Jerusalem Post reported. There were no injuries.

In Tulkarm, Palestinians detonated a roadside bomb against an Israeli army jeep patrol.

### Saudi prince slams Dore Gold

A Saudi prince blasted recent remarks by former Israeli envoy Dore Gold that Saudi Arabia funds terrorist activity against Israel. Bandar bin Sultan, the Saudi ambassador to the United States, said over the weekend that Gold "has carried on a campaign of lies, and unsubstantiated accusations."

Gold responded to Bandar's accusations by saying Palestinian documents show a direct link between Saudi Arabia and Palestinian terror groups like Hamas and Islamic Jihad.

### Consultant tries to help Labor

An American consultant is helping Israel's Labor Party rebuild its tarnished image.

Party legislators were due to attend Sunday's scheduled workshop with consultant Marc Cayman, the Jerusalem Post reported.

law," Dolinsky said. "It is rather a recommendation to stop relations with Zissels."

In fact, it was Zissels who earlier this year proposed that his actions be judged by a rabbinical court.

"Our community has no tradition of resolving such conflicts and, in such a vacuum, I turned to tradition," Zissels said. "Most rabbis are good and honest people."

The requisite three rabbis were selected, but the rabbinical court has yet to meet because of a lack of precedent for how to proceed.

Zissels is upset and feels betrayed by the Council of Leaders' move.

"I still hope the rabbinical court will hear this case and create a precedent of how to decide such conflicts in our community — and force people to act in a responsible way," he said.

It's not clear what effect, if any, the council's declaration will have on Zissels. In addition to serving as chairman of the Va'ad umbrella group of community organizations, he also serves as the Ukrainian representative of the Kazakhstan-based Euro-Asian Jewish Congress, or EAJC.

Dolinsky said the Council of Leaders is appealing to international donor organizations to sever their ties with Zissels. EAJC executives did not respond to requests for comment from JTA.

Martin Horowitz, director of the Jewish Community Development Fund run by the New York-based American Jewish World Service, said his organization would continue to deal with Zissels and the welfare, education and social programs administered by organizations such as the Va'ad.

"This organization has known and worked with Mr. Zissels for 10 years, and will continue to do so in future," Horowitz wrote in an e-mail interview with JTA. "As someone who knows Mr. Zissels and most of the people associated with this recently created 'Council of Leaders,' I find it very sad to see one small group of Jewish activists attempting to 'excommunicate' another of Josef Zissels' stature."

For his part, Bleich said he sees the declaration more as a warning to Zissels than as an excommunication. Like Dolinsky, Bleich said Zissels had gone so far in his quest to find allies against the Heritage project that at times he associated with groups that council members call anti-Semitic, such as the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists.

"The issue is what is permissible for a Jewish leader to do in the community," Bleich said. "All I expect is that Zissels should understand that there are limits to everything, and that he went over the limit."

In the meantime, almost two years after the Babi Yar ground-breaking ceremony, the Heritage steering committee held a news conference on July 9 to announce the final concept design by Pelzner Architects of Israel.

The JDC's representative for central and western Ukraine, Volodymyr Glozman, said plans are going forward, and committee member Arkady Monastirsky, general director of the Jewish Foundation of Ukraine, said construction could begin in the fall.

Vitaly Nakmanovich disagrees. As spokesman for the Community Committee for the Immortalization of the Memory of the Victims of Babi Yar, the anti-Heritage group, Nakmanovich said the government has yet to approve the project because of zoning laws and the integrity of the existing Babi Yar reserve.

He produced a copy of an April 24 letter in which Kiev's deputy mayor, Mikola Pozhnanov, sought to pass responsibility for a decision to his counterparts in the federal administration.

"The city administration is not authorized to make such a decision," Pozhnanov wrote. "In order to clarify the matter, we ask you to consider the situation and decide whether it is legal to build the Heritage cultural center on the territory of Babi Yar."

Council members like Dolinsky warn that the delays and infighting could ultimately sink the project. That would be fine with Zissels, who argues that the community center portion of the complex should be located in another part of Kiev.

He continues to claim that those who back the project are blinded by its monetary value.

"I think we should remind ourselves of the case from Jewish history when the Jews created an idol for themselves," he said. "This center is also kind of like a golden calf."

Such sentiments are unlikely to win Zissels reconciliation with the Council of Leaders any time soon. □



## Daily News Bulletin

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## JEWISH WORLD

### Judge: Iran must pay

Iran must pay \$313 million to the children of an American woman killed in a 1997 bombing in Jerusalem, a federal judge ruled July 17. Leah Stern, 69, was killed in an explosion at the Mahane Yehuda produce market on July 30, 1997.

The decision for Stern's family came the same day that the State Department pressed Congress to limit compensation in such cases to a few hundred thousand dollars, The Washington Post reported.

### Morocco to try 700

Morocco will put 700 people on trial next week in connection with May suicide bombings. The scale of the trials for the May 16 bombings surprised human rights groups. The bombings primarily targeted Jewish institutions, though no Jews were among the 44 people killed.

### Young terror victims visit U.S.

Young Israeli terror victims are visiting the United States. About 20 Israelis and one American — Sarri Singer, the daughter of New Jersey's Senate majority leader — will tour New York and Washington for political meetings and a vacation.

The July 18-Aug. 3 tour includes high-profile meetings with leaders of Congress and with New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg. The trip is sponsored by the One Family Fund.

### Russian Jews to make mission

Russian Jewish groups in the United States are planning a mission to Israel.

The New York-based Council of Jewish Emigre Organizations and Russian American Jews for Israel announced plans for a Nov. 11-19 mission for Russian-speaking Jews from North America.

### Market crash kills 10

The Iranian Jewish and Russian Jewish communities in Los Angeles are mourning the deaths of three victims in last week's farmers market car crash.

Ten people died in the July 16 crash, which occurred when an out-of-control car plowed through the outdoor farmers market in Santa Monica.

According to interviews in the Los Angeles Times, Molok Ghouljian Nabatian was a grandmother of 11, who was wheeling her seven-month-old grandson, Brandon Esfahani Davidi by the vegetable and fruit stalls when both were hit by the errant car.

The baby's mother, Janet Davidi, had just crossed the street to get better reception for her cell phone. Movsha (Michael) Hoffman left Lithuania while it was under Soviet rule and was known in his Russian-Jewish neighborhood as a helpful man, "who could fix anything that was busted," a friend said.

## Single mothers hike, camp out to protest budget cuts in Israel

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM (JTA) — A single mother's 120-mile hike to protest government cuts to social welfare benefits has captivated public and media attention and spawned similar treks around the country.

While the growing tent encampment set up by Mitzpe Ramon resident Vicky Knafo and her comrades on the sidewalk across from the Finance Ministry building in Jerusalem is becoming a pilgrimage site for supporters and well-wishers, some observers question whether the single mothers will be able to translate their campaign into a political force capable of affecting economic policy.

The protests come in response to budget cuts pushed by Finance Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, aimed at liberalizing and jump-starting Israel's economy.

Israel's economy — hurt by nearly three years of violence with the Palestinians — has shrunk by 1 percent each of the last two years, and unemployment is approaching an all-time high of 11 percent.

Knafo, a 43-year-old mother of three, embarked on her weeklong trek from the Negev town of Mitzpe Ramon to Jerusalem to protest government cuts to income supplements, which she said represent the difference between subsistence and starvation for single mothers.

The gravelly-voiced, curly-headed Knafo said she was propelled by her personal need. But her undertaking inspired other women — and some men — to set off on similar treks from around the country. They include Ilana Azulai, an Arad resident who was accompanied by her 17-year-old wheelchair-bound son, as well as Aliza Ezra, a mother of three who walked from Shlomi in the Upper Galilee. Describing the economic hardships the women face, Ezra said that her National Insurance Institute allowance last month was cut from less than \$800 to less than \$600.

"I don't know what to pay first," she told the daily Ha'aretz. "Food, electricity, water or the telephone."

Knafo and the other single parents cut heroic figures, social activist and former legislator Tamar Gozansky told Israel Radio. Unless their protest evolves into a "mass" campaign, however, nothing will change, she said.

But Zahara Antavi, a founder of the Four Mothers group that lobbied for an Israeli army withdrawal from southern Lebanon, said the protests could succeed.

The number of families who will be affected by the cuts is not insignificant.

According to the National Insurance Institute, 112,000 single-parent families, with children up to age 21, live in Israel. About 64 percent receive some form of state support. According to Ha'aretz, 87,000 single-parent mothers with children up to age 17 live in Israel. About 76 percent of them work outside the home.

As the grass-roots movement gathers steam, the Treasury has tried to stress that the aim of the measures is to shift the emphasis on income support away from welfare and toward job incentives.

Netanyahu recently unveiled a plan that he said is aimed at helping single mothers go back to work. The proposal included providing grants for up to one year for women who work at least one-third of the time. The plan also calls for generating employment for the single mothers through public works projects.

In a related development, a public committee has been formed to review extraordinary cases of single parents. And certain sectors in the economy have pledged to try to help find work for the single mothers. These included the Israel Hotel Association, which pledged to find 2,500 jobs for them during the summer and Jewish holiday season, Ha'aretz reported.

Knafo, who is employed, rejected what she said were efforts by the Treasury to paint the single mothers as parasites who prefer welfare support to work. According to the plan, some of the most severe austerity measures will be cuts in income supplements for working mothers earning the minimum wage.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon on Sunday gave his backing to Netanyahu's efforts and did not open a Cabinet discussion on the protest. □

## AROUND THE JEWISH WORLD

**At Argentine bombing memorial,  
Jews have hope for new president***By Florencia Arbiser*

BUENOS AIRES (JTA) — For the first time since the 1994 bombing of Argentine Jewry's main community center, Jews distraught over the investigation say they have some reason to hope.

"There is a small flame of hope surprising us," Sergio Burstein, a relative of one of the 85 people killed in the July 18, 1994 bombing of the AMIA building, told JTA during last Friday morning's annual commemoration. "We haven't had this feeling in nine years."

The country's new president, Nestor Kirchner, attended the large outdoor gathering.

In an impromptu news conference after the ceremony, Kirchner pledged that he would not rest until the issue was resolved.

In office less than two months, Kirchner already has decided to release secret evidence from Argentina's intelligence services related to the bombing.

Argentine authorities have said they believe Hezbollah and Iranian intelligence agents were behind the attack, which followed a 1992 bombing — also unsolved — at the Israeli Embassy in Buenos Aires.

Last Friday's ceremony was held on a small stage close to the rebuilt AMIA building.

At 9.53 a.m. — the time of the bombing — the names of the victims were read, and a minute of silence was observed.

A song, written by Sofia Guterman — whose daughter Andrea was killed in the bombing — was played: "On every 18th the stars shine more, the sun sends more powerful rays," the lyrics read.

At that moment, nothing except the memorial candles was shining: The sky was completely white, with a strong wind whipping spectators' cheeks.

Jose Hercman, president of DAIA, the Jewish community's political umbrella organization, announced plans to initiate legal action against Carlos Ruckauf, Argentina's interior minister at the time of the bombing, for not carrying out his duty as a public employee.

"It was completely clear that the Argentine government knew 48 days before that a terrorist attack was going to happen," AMIA President Abraham Kaul said in a speech at the memorial. "We want authorities to say what they have done with that advice."

Kirchner followed the example of former Argentine President Fernando de la Rúa, who also attended the bombing memorial during his first year in office.

"We thank you for being here today, Mr. President," Kaul said, addressing Kirchner.

"We recognize your positive attitude. But in order to come next year, you will have to continue fulfilling our expectations down this path."

The thousands of people in the crowd included politicians, representatives of the Israeli Embassy and Argentines of all ages.

The trial against former police officers and a car mechanic accused of having a local connection to the bombing has been going on for 22 months.

It is expected to conclude before the end of the year, and Ruckauf and former members of Argentina's intelligence service are expected to testify.

Kaul added that the Jewish community wanted the AMIA case to become a state issue, and demanded that files of the Buenos Aires province police relevant to the attack be opened.

"We don't want to continue living surrounded by security cement fences," as most Argentine Jewish institutions are, "as if we were second class," Kaul said.

Humberto Chiesa, a member of the group Active Memory, which meets in front of the Palace of Justice every Monday, said the annual event feels like a wake.

"I meet people I see only on July 18, we cry together, we feel so close," said Chiesa, who lost his friend Guillermo Galarraga in the bombing. The two owned a printing shop in front of AMIA.

Chiesa exchanged hugs with Salomon Said, the father and uncle of victims.

"I value so much what you do," Chiesa said to Said, who attends every day of the AMIA trial.

"I just want the truth," Said answered.

After the memorial, Kirchner unexpectedly decided to hold a news conference in the AMIA building.

"It's a national shame that after nine years there is no justice yet," he said.

For Interior Minister Anibal Fernandez, it was her first time inside the AMIA building.

The victims "were people that studied, loved, wanted a tomorrow," she told JTA. "When I saw the faces in the commemoration, I felt so strongly their despair, that mixture of hurt and anger."

Also attending the memorial was a five-member delegation from the American Jewish Committee that had come to Argentina to support the community's demand for justice.

Robert Goodkind, chair of the AJCommittee's board of governors, told JTA he is "enormously impressed" with Kirchner.

"I think it was a matter of courage and a statement that he came to the demonstration," Goodkind said.

Goodkind invited Kirchner, who is due to visit the United States on July 23, to a meeting with American Jewish leaders in Washington. Kirchner accepted the invitation.

According to Goodkind, the AMIA case is symbolic.

"Unless the AMIA trial has a successful conclusion and the perpetrators are punished, Argentine citizens cannot have full confidence in their country, and other nations won't have confidence in the Argentine society," he said. □

**Oy ca-rum-ba!**

RIO DE JANIERO (JTA) — A Brazilian company is launching what is believed to be the first kosher Brazilian white rum. When mixed with lemon and ice cubes, the rum makes caipirinha, a popular Brazilian drink.

The rum is being produced in the city of Atibaia under rabbinical supervision. The kosher cachaca, as the rum is called, may already be found in the international airports of Rio de Janeiro, Sao Paulo and Recife, as well as major supermarket chains in Brazil.

"We are negotiating exports to the United States," said Samuel Lebensztajn, director of the company making the alcohol. □