



# Daily News Bulletin

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86th Year

## TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

### Another person missing in Israel

A yeshiva student from the United States is missing in Israel.

Israeli officials fear that the 19-year-old yeshiva student from Jerusalem may be the latest victim of what appears to be a wave of kidnappings.

The student was last seen in the Galilee on Sunday afternoon.

This is the second disappearance of a young Jew in the Galilee in the past five days. Police are still looking for Dana Bennet, 18, from Tiberias, who was last seen after work July 31.

An Israeli soldier was recently kidnapped in the Galilee and killed in what police believe was a terrorist attack. [Page 3]

### Palestinians blast release

Israel unveiled a list of 443 Palestinian prisoners it plans to release this week. But Palestinians criticized the release as insufficient and a distraction from the real issues.

"This is a complete deception, a trick," Palestinian security chief Mohammed Dahlan said. The list reportedly includes 183 prisoners convicted of aiding terrorist groups or taking part in violent acts against Israel and 139 "administrative detainees" held without charge on security grounds.

Israel's justice minister, Yosef "Tommy" Lapid, said Sunday that a further 97 criminal offenders also would be released. Israel is not required to make the move under the "road map" for peace, but it had intended it as a goodwill gesture and to accede to new Palestinian demands.

### N.Y. Times report denied

An aide to Israel's prime minister denied that the United States had relaxed its demand that the Palestinian Authority crack down on terrorist groups.

The comments by Dov Weisglass came after The New York Times reported Saturday that U.S. officials had concluded that P.A. Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas is too weak to enforce a crackdown on terrorist groups like Hamas and Islamic Jihad.

Because of Tisha B'Av, the JTA DAILY NEWS BULLETIN will not be published Friday, Aug. 8.

## FOCUS ON ISSUES

### Immigration reform proposed, but some wonder, is it a Jewish issue?

By E.B. Solomont

NEW YORK (JTA) — A recent call for immigration reform from the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society is sparking debate over whether the issue, historically an important one for American Jewry, is still a priority for the community.

The call, issued in a June 3 resolution, has galvanized advocates who say that the Jewish community should support easier access to the United States, as well as opponents who say that — especially post-Sept. 11 — looser immigration standards may result in security threats to the Jewish community.

HIAS' recent resolution laid out what the group considers a comprehensive plan, according to Gideon Aronoff, HIAS' Washington representative.

HIAS called on the U.S. government to give undocumented workers the opportunity to earn legal status; to create temporary worker programs that protect immigrants' labor rights; to expand existing preference systems for reunifying immigrant family members; and to screen and deport immigrants who pose a threat to national security.

But some critics who agree that immigration policy should be reformed say HIAS' solution could put the American Jewish community in jeopardy by letting in potentially dangerous immigrants.

"We are enabling our enemies through this," said Stephen Steinlight, former national affairs director at the American Jewish Committee and currently a fellow at the Center for Immigration Studies and at the U.S. Institute for Strategic Study of South Asia.

"If the current immigration policy remains unreformed," Jews "would be outnumbered by Muslims by the next census," he said.

"The number one danger facing the Jewish community is the present open immigration" — meaning lax oversight at borders — "because it will see to it that a community that hates us will outnumber us in the U.S. in numbers and money."

Steinlight's concern also extends to the Jewish state.

"When we lose America, Israel will lose its only friend," he said.

The common perception is that the immigrant crisis is predominantly a Latino issue, but many in the Jewish community see immigration standards as a vital Jewish concern as well.

Jews' interest in immigration law is based mainly on historical gratitude for their own entry into the United States and is informed by biblical and ethical motivations.

Post-Sept. 11, though, most discussion centers on whether lax immigration standards pose a threat to national security.

The latter was a strong impetus for HIAS' resolution. The group felt "that it is in the long-term U.S. interest to address these issues with an additional emphasis on security," Aronoff said.

Other reasons have less of a direct connection with Jewish issues, such as the more than 2,000 migrant workers who have died attempting to enter the United States from Mexico since 1998.

HIAS also cited a backlog of immigrants' family members waiting to enter the United States, and the eight to 10 million immigrants at risk of exploitation in workplaces that pay them in cash and offer no benefits.

Steinlight acknowledges the historical reasons for allowing open immigration but

## MIDEAST FOCUS

### Sharon cancels Abbas meeting

Ariel Sharon canceled a meeting with Mahmoud Abbas. The Israeli prime minister reportedly canceled Wednesday's meeting with his Palestinian counterpart because of Sunday night's shooting attack, which injured an Israeli mother and her daughter.

### Israeli law criticized

An Israeli human rights group is asking the country's highest court to overturn a law that makes it difficult for Palestinians to get Israeli citizenship.

The law, which passed the Knesset on July 31, prevents Palestinians who marry Israelis from receiving automatic Israeli citizenship.

Adala, an Israeli Arab group, says the law violates Israel's legal guarantee of equality.

Israel says the law is needed because of Palestinians who marry Israeli Arabs, gain citizenship and then use their privileges to aid terrorists.

### One Palestinian killed

Israeli soldiers killed a Palestinian man who allegedly was planning to set off a bomb.

Sunday night's incident occurred near the West Bank city of Tulkarm, according to the Jerusalem Post.

During Sunday's raid, Israeli soldiers also arrested three Palestinians suspected of involvement in terrorism.

### Tel Aviv awards gays benefits

The Tel Aviv municipality awarded marriage benefits to gay couples.

Under new city regulations, same-sex couples will be eligible for traditional marriage benefits such as discounts at sports and other facilities in the city, the Israeli daily Ha'aretz reported.

The law applies not only to gays but to anyone declaring a shared domicile, and to those who cannot marry according to Jewish law.



## Daily News Bulletin

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denies their relevance today — and accuses Jewish communal leaders of failing to recognize the change.

"They operate by old standards that tell them that the most politically correct positions are the ones to take," he said. "They are stuck in an unthinking response to this issue."

Jewish organizations — including HIAS, the American Jewish Committee and B'nai Brith International — say they are attempting to balance the desire for a generous immigration policy with the need for heightened national security.

The goal is to "have a system in place that remains welcoming," while allowing the United States "to police its borders and assure that those who come do not include those who want to do us harm," said Richard Foltin, legislative director and counsel for the American Jewish Committee.

Finding the balance is difficult, Foltin admitted, because "when you set up structures that are intended to protect us, you run the risk of overreacting."

"On the other hand," he said, "if the security structures aren't strong enough, then there's the risk of letting people in who shouldn't be allowed in."

With that risk in mind, HIAS moved to begin a renewed discussion of immigration reform some six months ago, culminating in the June resolution.

"How do you find the terrorist in a mass of people? Comprehensive immigration reform is a way to focus our security efforts on those who are most dangerous to us," Aronoff said.

"If enforcement resources are used to round up and deport illegal migrant workers, those resources can't be used to target Al-Qaida terrorists who may be threatening to the U.S."

But it's not a simple issue.

"Fear drives the debate in many respects, and sometimes it's a justified fear," said Dina Siegel Vann, director of U.N. and Latin American Affairs at B'nai Brith International.

But "we have to remember we are a society built by immigrants, and immigrants continue to play an important part in strengthening our society," Siegel Vann said, so the United States "should transcend that fear and try to look for practical solutions to this dilemma."

For the Jewish groups, coordination with the Latino community has become an important part of a solution that includes improving conditions in immigrants' home countries, so they don't feel they have to come to the United States to find work, Siegel Vann said.

"We have common experience — and we also have Latino Jews, like myself, who are part of both communities," she said.

Working with like-minded organizations — such as labor unions and service industries — as well as Latino, Asian and other ethnic organizations fits the kind of collaborative solution HIAS called for in June.

In a July 24 letter to President Bush, HIAS praised the president's efforts to negotiate a migration agreement with Mexican President Vicente Fox.

"All of these groups have come together on this issue because the current status quo is unacceptable and bad for the country," Aronoff said.

"It's bad for the immigrants and it doesn't give us what we need from our immigration system." □

## Israel freezes hand-over

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Following a shooting attack that injured a mother and daughter, Israel is freezing the hand-over of any more West Bank cities to the Palestinian Authority.

Tzila Hayoun, 39, who suffered serious wounds in the Sunday night shooting near Bethlehem, is in intensive care at Hadassah Medical Center in Jerusalem. Her daughter, Hamutal, 9, suffered light wounds.

It was the first attack in the area since the Palestinian Authority took over security control of Bethlehem in recent weeks.

P.A. Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas condemned the shooting, and the Palestinian Authority announced it was conducting a manhunt for the attackers. □

## JEWISH WORLD

### Lieberman targets Jewish donors

The presidential campaign of Sen. Joseph Lieberman (D-Conn.) has launched a Web site for Jewish supporters.

The Web site, "Jewish Americans for Joe," includes an 18-day "1,800 Challenge" to find 1,800 supporters who will each contribute \$18, the Jewish numerical equivalent of "chai," or life.

"We are extremely proud of the support that Joe Lieberman's campaign has received from the Jewish community — which has often been expressed in contributions in multiples of 18 — but we're hoping to take it to a 'chai-er' plane with this challenge," campaign director Craig Smith said in a statement.

The Web page is [www.joe2004.com/1800](http://www.joe2004.com/1800).

### Appeal delayed in rally case

The appeal of a Palestinian man who dressed his daughter in mock explosives at a German rally is being delayed.

New court proceedings were to begin Monday in a Berlin court, but the court ordered a postponement to allow the defense time to consider new legal aspects of the case. The man — a resident of Lebanon who is seeking permanent asylum in Germany — was photographed at a pro-Palestinian demonstration on April 13, 2002 holding his daughter aloft with a fake explosives belt wrapped around her waist.

The photo led to an initial sentence of five months probation and 300 hours of community service work for endorsing criminal acts.

At issue in the appeal may be whether suicide bombers could be considered a "legitimate" part of the Mideast conflict.

### Hate crimes sentence in Estonia

An Estonian court fined a woman and sentenced her to a year in prison for disseminating anti-Semitic materials, an Estonian news agency reported.

Lyudmila Vikentyeva distributed anti-Semitic newspapers and leaflets published by the far-right Russian National Unity group. The organization has been banned in Russia and Estonia. The verdict is believed to be the first prison sentence issued in a hate-crime case in Estonia.

### Damaged shul may reopen

Prague's Pinkas Synagogue, which was seriously damaged by flooding a year ago, could reopen to visitors in October.

Leo Pavlat, director of the Jewish Museum in Prague, told JTA that work will continue after the reopening to reinscribe some of the 80,000 names of Holocaust victims on the synagogue walls. The synagogue is the only Jewish museum site that remains closed to visitors.

## As suicide bombings abate, Israelis worry about kidnappings

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM (JTA) — A month into the cease-fire declared by Palestinian terrorist groups, the fear of suicide bombers has been replaced by fear of kidnappers.

The Israel Defense Forces repeatedly has warned soldiers not to hitchhike, young lovers to avoid isolated places and parents to think twice before letting their children out at night.

As for protecting government officials, the security belt around Cabinet ministers is as tight as ever.

Concern has intensified following the abduction last month of taxi driver Eliahu Gurel — who was rescued from Ramallah in an operation by IDF commandos — and the murder of soldier Oleg Sheichat, who was abducted in the Galilee.

This week, authorities were searching for two missing teenagers: Dana Bennet, 18, a waitress from Tiberias, who disappeared on July 31, and a 19-year-old American yeshiva student studying in Jerusalem, who disappeared Sunday.

The security forces often have warned that terrorists might try to kidnap Israeli soldiers and civilians in order to try to trade them as pawns for large numbers of Palestinian prisoners held in Israel.

The warnings take on extra weight as Israel and the Palestinians tussle over the release of Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails.

Israel on Monday publicized a list of 443 prisoners to be released this week, but the Palestinian Authority is demanding that Israel release thousands. In addition, the releases will not cover Israeli Arabs involved in terrorism.

The impasse has increased frustration and rage among families of Palestinian terrorists and among Israeli Arabs, creating the motivation for kidnappings, security officials warn.

However, in the cases of Gurel and Sheichat, the kidnappers did not seriously try to negotiate a deal for Palestinian prisoners.

In the case of Gurel, the kidnappers demanded the release of prisoners but soon reverted to demanding ransom — and eventually got nothing.

In the case of Sheichat, no contact was made between kidnappers and authorities — probably because the kidnappers killed the soldier shortly after abducting him.

In the cases still open, Bennet disappeared on Thursday night shortly after leaving work in a cab that drove her home from the restaurant where she works. Police have conducted wide searches near the community of Migdal, north of Tiberias, but they say they're in the dark about her fate.

The yeshiva student disappeared Sunday while visiting Mount Meron, near Safed.

Police searched for him in Safed, Jerusalem and near Netanya, where one person claimed he dropped the student off after giving him a lift.

Police don't know whether Bennet or the yeshiva student were kidnapped, and it remains unclear whether the disappearances have anything to do with terrorism.

However, police have expressed concern that the disappearances in the Galilee region of Sheichat, Bennet and the American student may all be linked to a single gang of terrorists.

This concern intensified following reports last week from an IDF soldier, who said unidentified men tried to force him into a car while he was waiting for a ride. The soldier said he scared the men off at gunpoint.

Security forces on Monday were able to arrest two terrorists responsible for suicide bombings in Jerusalem. The two allegedly confessed that they also had planned to kidnap soldiers, civilians and politicians, including Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and other Cabinet ministers.

Since the assassination of Tourism Minister Rehavam Ze'evi by Palestinian terrorists in October 2001, security forces have warned that terrorists might try to hurt Israeli politicians.

The two suspects reportedly said they also had attempted to kidnap Israeli civilians after making contact with them through the Internet. □

## BEHIND THE HEADLINES

**Activist rabbi in Poland as fight on death camp project gets personal**

By Joe Berkofsky

NEW YORK (JTA) — A dispute over a Nazi death camp memorial pitting a New York activist rabbi against the American Jewish Committee and the Israeli and Polish governments is turning personal and, literally, dirty.

The rabbi, Avi Weiss, went to the Belzec death camp in Poland last week, spending the wee hours of the morning of July 30 blocking construction of the memorial in the camp.

After Weiss and a fellow rabbi delayed the digging into the camp's soil, Weiss went to the presidential palace in Warsaw to demand that the Polish government halt the project.

At issue is a below-ground walkway under construction at the site, which Weiss says disturbs the remains of the dead. The AJCommittee — the main backer of the project, along with the Polish government — denies that charge.

The AJCommittee contends that the memorial not only shores up a site that has fallen into disrepair but will protect Jewish remains by ensuring that pedestrians no longer walk freely around the area.

The group's executive director, David Harris, said the AJCommittee never would have supported the project had it not secured the approval of "the highest rabbinic authorities."

A spokesman for Poland's Foreign Ministry, Boguslaw Majewski, said the government would "not comment on Rabbi Weiss' doings."

Harris suggested that Weiss, president of Amcha-The Coalition for Jewish Concerns, might have ulterior motives for fighting the memorial.

"I can only hope and pray that no one would be motivated by personal issues to do such disservice to such a worthwhile project," Harris said.

He was alluding to the fact that Weiss is the brother-in-law of a former director of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, Walter Reich.

Reich was supervised and later fired by the man, Miles Lerman, who is the Belzec project's chief backer.

Weiss, who has made headlines for crusading against other death-camp projects, such as a Catholic convent at Auschwitz, vehemently rejected any notion that he has a hidden agenda.

"I take second place to no one when it comes to Shoah memory," Weiss, who lost seven relatives at Belzec, said in an interview from Warsaw. "It has nothing to do with a vendetta at all."

Last week Amcha took its protest to a religious court, asking the Beit Din, or religious court, of the Orthodox Rabbinical Council of America to mediate the dispute.

The Beit Din's director, Rabbi Yona Reiss, sent a letter to Harris saying it would be willing to mediate the conflict.

The AJCommittee has yet to respond to the Beit Din.

The new conflict-of-interest charges center around a 1998 controversy at the museum involving Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat.

Lerman forced Reich to resign as museum director for opposing a State Department request that the museum host Arafat.

It was Lerman who first proposed the Belzec memorial, which the museum took on in 1995 under Reich's leadership. Lerman also

has led fund-raising efforts that have netted nearly \$4.5 million for the project.

Lerman refused to comment on any alleged tie between the Arafat matter and the Belzec protest.

Reich, now a professor at George Washington University, said the attempt to link the Arafat snafu to Weiss' Belzec protest was "pitiful."

"It's as if those who make that misattribution can't understand the idea that some people are actually motivated by genuine matters of principle," Reich said.

A spokesman for the museum declined to address the matter. The Belzec conflict took a dirty twist — literally — on July 30 when Weiss visited Belzec along with Rabbi Shmuel Herzfeld, who is one of Amcha's national vice presidents and an associate rabbi at the Hebrew Institute of Riverdale, Weiss' New York pulpit.

The two showed up at 5:30 a.m. to block construction of the 600-foot, 30-foot-deep below-ground ramp through the death camp, where about 600,000 Jews were killed between 1942 and 1943.

Construction for the ramp, which Weiss calls a "trench," is unearthing the remains of Jews whom the Nazis buried at the site to hide their murders, Weiss contends. The AJCommittee denies the charge.

The Nazis ground up and burned corpses and buried the remains at the camp. Test drills the museum conducted at the site in 1997 pinpointed 33 mass graves.

Weiss and his supporters say there are human remains blanketing Belzec, which the AJCommittee denies.

AJCommittee officials said the walkway is a few weeks from completion, and the entire memorial is due to be finished later this year.

Last month, Weiss and a Scottish Jewish woman who believes that some of her relatives died in Belzec also sued the AJCommittee in New York State Supreme Court, seeking an injunction to stop the work.

After going to Belzec, Weiss marched in protest outside the palace of Polish President Aleksander Kwasniewski.

Majewski, the Polish Foreign Ministry spokesman, said that Warsaw Chief Rabbi Michael Schudrich, who is working as a volunteer consultant to the AJCommittee on the project, reflects the government's view of the project.

"There is only one person who feels very deeply opposed to this pathway, and I can't understand why," Schudrich told JTA.

"We have not found any charred bits or bone fragments in the pathway," he said, adding that if any are found they will be buried in the mass graves.

Israel's Foreign Ministry also came down in favor of the project.

The project will enable visitors to "gain an understanding of the terrible events that took place at Belzec," the ministry wrote in a letter to the AJCommittee. "Moreover, it will prevent further desecration of a site that has hitherto been left unattended."

Harris said the AJCommittee already has secured blessings for the Belzec work from Rabbi Elyakim Schlesinger, head of the Committee for the Preservation of Jewish Cemeteries in Europe; Rabbi Israel Meir Lau, the former chief Ashkenazi Rabbi of Israel; Rabbi Schudrich, and Israel's Foreign Ministry.

But Weiss counters that Schlesinger was given incorrect information about the extent of the work, that Schudrich is not a cemetery expert and that Lau since has told him that he never saw any details of the plan and did not make any halachic ruling. □