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TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

Israel strikes in Gaza

Israel killed four people in an attack in the Gaza Strip.

Sunday's helicopter attack in Gaza City came after Israeli officials said the anti-terror measures taken over the weekend by the Palestinian Authority were not enough.

Those measures included arresting weapons smugglers and closing down tunnels in Gaza through which arms were smuggled from across the Egyptian border.

Hamas members were among those killed in Israel's missile strike on Sunday night, Hamas officials said. [Page 3]

Israel rejects cease-fire offer

Israel rejected the latest offer for a Palestinian cease-fire.

Over the weekend, Israel turned down the offer to halt its military operations in exchange for a new cessation of violence.

Israel said it cannot afford to suspend its actions against terrorists, particularly after a suicide bomber killed 21 people in a bus bombing in Jerusalem last week.

Israel saw the attack, for which Hamas and Islamic Jihad claimed responsibility, as evidence that the terrorist groups used the cease-fire declared in late June to regroup and re-arm.

Alabama judge suspended

Judges in Alabama suspended a colleague who refused to remove a Ten Commandments statue from a state courthouse.

Last Friday's action was taken after Roy Moore refused to take down the monument despite court orders.

Meanwhile, Moore's supporters are saying they will try to block the removal of the 5,280-pound monument.

A spokesperson for Moore says the judge still plans to file an appeal with the Supreme Court.

Moore says the monument is necessary because the commandments are the foundation of American law.

Courts have ruled that having the monument in a state courthouse violates the constitutional clause against government promotion of religion.

BEHIND THE HEADLINES

After a deadly April terror blast, Mike's Place tries to celebrate life

By Loolwa Khazzoom

TEL AVIV (JTA) — Dominique Haas was in a particularly good mood on the evening of April 29.

The young pastry chef had just closed a deal with a new café, selling them her entire line of cakes.

Best friends with the owner at Mike's Place, a Tel Aviv pub where she once had worked her way up from waitress to manager, Haas volunteered to help out that evening, knowing the bar was short of workers.

"She was dancing around the place all night," recalls Gal Ganzman, Mike's Place's owner. "She was exceptionally happy on that day."

Haas was not the only one who had just hit her stride that afternoon: Ran Baron, a regular at Mike's Place, had just finished recording a song.

The words were still in Baron's pocket when, just after midnight, a suicide bomber tried to enter the bar.

Avi Tabib, the security guard, stopped him, and the bomber blew himself up at the entrance.

Baron was killed instantly. Haas lost her arm and, hours later at the hospital, her life.

Yanai Weiss — a guitarist and, according to Ganzman, "the spiritual father of the Tuesday-night jam program" — also was killed.

Despite the terror, trauma and property damage, Mike's Place was up and running exactly one week later, on Israel's Independence Day.

"They came and blew up in the doorway of our house, in the place where we were at our peak, enjoying life, having a drink, listening to live music," Ganzman says.

"They came and killed us. To prove they didn't achieve anything, we opened on Independence Day — to show the world, to show the terrorists, that terror will not achieve anything."

"It will not destroy Israel," he continues. "It won't even destroy Mike's Place."

Today, nearly four months later, Mike's Place is alive and well.

Even on a Monday night the bar was nearly full, with customers clapping, singing and dancing to live music.

Memory of the tragedy, however, also is alive and well: Right in front of the entrance is a huge glass jar full of change with a sign that reads, "The Life After Terror Fund."

The fund was created immediately after the attack to support victims of the bombing. Staff and patrons also held memorial ceremonies around the world — in Tel Aviv, London, Toronto, New York and Chicago — some of which were broadcast on the Internet for those who couldn't be there.

A tree was planted in Haas' memory in Tel Aviv's Hayarkon Park.

Ganzman submitted a request to erect a statue in front of Mike's Place in honor of the victims. Approval is still pending from the Tel Aviv municipality.

Organizing the memorials and rebuilding Mike's Place were a kind of "work therapy" for Ganzman.

For a week after the bombing, he says, "the whole staff and all the regulars crashed at my place."

"Everyone was together, trying to get ourselves better, mourning our friends, taking

MIDEAST FOCUS

Barghouti case reaching end

Israeli prosecutors offered closing statements in the trial of Marwan Barghouti, the Palestinian leader accused of murder.

Barghouti, the former leader of Fatah in the West Bank and founder of Fatah's offshoot the Al-Aksa Brigade, was arrested in April 2002 on 26 counts of murder, involvement in terrorist organizations and attempted murder, among other charges.

The Al-Aksa Brigade has claimed responsibility for numerous terrorist attacks conducted against Israeli civilians.

But Barghouti, a popular Palestinian leader, has denied complicity in the attacks while calling them legitimate "resistance" against Israel.

Bus bombing toll rises to 21

The death toll in the Aug. 19 suicide bus bombing in Jerusalem has reached 21.

On Saturday, Fruma Rachel Weitz, 73, of Jerusalem, died of wounds sustained in the bombing.

Will pipeline be revived?

The U.S. reportedly wants to revive an old Iraq-Israel oil pipeline.

Ha'aretz reported Sunday that a senior Pentagon official has asked Israel's Foreign Ministry to check the feasibility of the historic Mosul-Haifa line.

The Iraq Pipeline Corporation shipped oil from Iraq to oil refineries in Haifa until the Iraqis stopped it during Israel's 1948 War of Independence.

Yosef Paritzky, Israel's minister of energy and infrastructure, will explore the issue on a visit to the United States in two weeks.

However, Paritzky said that there is still a long way to go before the project could be revived because of instability in the region.

The original pipeline ran from Mosul to Haifa through Syria.

trips to the hospital, helping our injured friends get better, rebuilding the bar, restocking, planning the opening ceremony — all in one week," he says. "It was just insane."

"And I think," he ventures, "that's what actually kept us sane: Being so focused, working 22-hour days right from the day after the explosion, helping each other, crying together, laughing together, having this goal of reopening quickly and having a big impressive ceremony."

For the ceremony, which drew 1,000 patrons and journalists from around the world, the pub printed T-shirts saying "Still Here." The shirts sold out immediately.

The regulars say they're happy the bar is still around.

"This is the best place to play in Israel," says guitarist Koby Bardougo, who has been performing at Mike's Place for a year. "Our music gets loved and appreciated the way we want it to be."

Eli Ben Yosef, who at 77 is perhaps the oldest regular at Mike's Place, calls it "my home away from home."

Ben Yosef was at the bar the night of the explosion.

"My friend Zohar — I dance with her a lot — she was injured in her knee," he recalls. "I stayed and talked with her until the ambulance came."

Patrons emphatically reject the notion that memories of the tragedy have made people afraid of returning.

"I'm not at all afraid coming after the attack," says Clil Ata — who, seated at the pub's entrance, received hugs from numerous patrons going in and out.

"It's even more important to show that nobody can beat us or scare us," Ata says. "We come here, this is our home, this is where we live, we deserve to be here. Nobody will take me away from my friends and family here."

Sar Fouqs agrees.

"I am not afraid to be here," he says. "I fought in Lebanon. This is nothing."

"Half the state already had terrorist attacks," Yonatan Shlomi points out. "If I was afraid after a terrorist attack, I would never go out."

"Aside from which," he adds with a grin, "if you're going to die, best to go out listening to good music."

The night of the bombing, a videographer was filming patrons for a documentary on the bar.

The filmmaker, Jack Baxter, a New Yorker and a regular at the bar during his Tel Aviv visit, was making the movie "to show the world that there is a different kind of Israel: a blues bar, people dancing on the tables, having a great time — Israel," Ganzman says with a touch of irony.

Haas, who generally hated being filmed, was in such an upbeat mood that she let the camera follow her around that night for half an hour.

The video captures the last minutes of her life, as well as the bombing itself and the aftermath.

Addressing the story of the attack, Ganzman says, "We haven't had control of the story, but we have had some control of the ending."

"If people remember that since the bombing we have done so many nice things — helping people, keeping on partying, getting back on our feet, dancing, and making people happy again — then we have a happy ending," he says. □

Bush cracks down on Hamas

JERUSALEM (JTA) — President Bush is freezing the assets of six Hamas members and five Hamas-linked charities.

Bush announced the move last Friday and urged other countries to do the same. "Hamas has reaffirmed that it is a terrorist organization committed to violence against Israelis and to undermining progress toward peace between Israel and the Palestinian people," Bush said in a White House news statement.

He ordered the U.S. Treasury to freeze the assets after Tuesday's deadly suicide attack in Jerusalem, for which Hamas claimed responsibility. The Hamas members whose assets are being frozen are located in Gaza, Syria and Lebanon, and the charities are located in Lebanon and Europe, a CBS news report said. □



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JEWISH WORLD

Unconvinced by P.A. moves on terror, Israel takes matter into its own hands

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Israel is viewing with skepticism the tentative measures being taken by the Palestinian Authority against terrorism — and is following up by conducting anti-terror operations of its own.

Both Israeli Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz and Israel's army chief of staff, Moshe Ya'alon, said Sunday that measures the Palestinian Authority is taking in the Gaza Strip are not substantial.

Ya'alon and others said that the Palestinian Authority's arrests of weapons smugglers and the closing down of arms-smuggling tunnels from Egypt into the Gaza Strip are not the beginnings of a true crackdown on terrorism.

They said the moves were a tactical ploy to reduce American pressure on the Palestinian Authority and ward off further Israeli military operations.

That move apparently failed, as Israel struck in Gaza again, firing missiles from helicopter gunships at targets in Gaza City on Sunday night.

The attacks killed at least four.

Two of those killed were members of Hamas and two were members of Force 17, P.A. President Yasser Arafat's personal security force, according to reports.

The strike came after Ya'alon blamed Hamas' leadership for last week's attack in Jerusalem that killed 21 people, pointedly referring to the organization's leaders in both Gaza and Syria.

"If we see that the Palestinian Authority does not deal with this core" of terrorism, "we will be forced to do so," Ya'alon said before Sunday's anti-terror strike.

Before the missile strike, Palestinians said the anti-terror operation against arms smuggling was only part of an extensive operation that also would include the collection of illegal arms.

Abdul Razak Majaideh, commander of the Palestinian Authority's General Security Force in Gaza, ordered his forces to prevent any use of arms in the Gaza Strip or smuggling of new arms into the region.

He toured Gaza City and the northern part of the Gaza Strip to make sure that his orders were followed.

The Palestinian commander issued a communique saying that this was part of the efforts of the Palestinian Authority to "restore security order in the Gaza Strip."

But Israeli officials appeared to view the Palestinian actions as "too little, too late," as one government official told Israel's Channel One television.

Under the threat of a massive Israeli operation in Gaza, Palestinian police forces were deployed Saturday night in the Beit Hanoun area in order to prevent the firing of Kassam rockets toward Israeli targets.

However, Hamas nevertheless managed to fire an improved version of a Kassam rocket on Sunday at the Israeli beach south of Ashkelon.

No one was hurt in the rocket attack, which demonstrated a five-mile firing capability.

Previously, the Kassam rockets fired by the Palestinians had a range of about three miles.

Meanwhile, P.A. President Yasser Arafat reportedly is trying to place one of his loyalists in the Palestinian Authority's top security position as part of his ongoing effort to sideline the P.A. security chief, Mohammed Dahlan. □

Foie gras quacked

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Israel's Supreme Court recently outlawed the forced feeding of geese to produce foie gras.

The court ruled that the practice that creates the delicacy constitutes cruelty to animals.

Israel's foie gras industry, which brings in \$25 million a year, ranks third in the world, according to news reports. □

Goussinsky may face extradition

A Russian Jewish media tycoon was arrested in Greece. Vladimir Goussinsky, who fled Russia following a Kremlin-backed campaign against him on allegations of fraud and embezzlement, may face extradition to Russia, Greek officials said.

Goussinsky, a major backer of Russian Jewish life, was arrested Aug. 21 after arriving in Athens on a flight from Tel Aviv.

Bush appoints Pipes

President Bush appointed Middle East scholar Daniel Pipes to the U.S. Institute for Peace.

Last Friday's appointment of Pipes to the government think tank was taken during a congressional recess and will allow Pipes to serve without Senate approval through the end of the current congressional term, which ends in January 2005.

Supporters call Pipes, director of the Philadelphia-based Middle East Forum, a prescient scholar who has helped the world understand Islamic terrorism.

Detractors, including some congressional Democrats and Arab groups, opposed the nomination, calling him anti-Arab and unqualified to serve on the board of an organization that promotes peace.

Pipes has dismissed such accusations as character assassination.

Accused Nazi to leave U.S.

An accused Nazi concentration camp guard is leaving the United States, according to news reports in Ohio. Jakob Miling, 79, also will give up his citizenship. U.S. prosecutors had accused Miling, an ethnic German born in what later became Yugoslavia, of working at two concentration camps during World War II, including Gross Rosen in Poland, and lying about his wartime service when he obtained U.S. citizenship.

Center: Don't honor fascist

A Romanian fascist whose articles helped inspire anti-Semitism should not be honored by a Paris hospital, the Simon Wiesenthal Center said. In a letter sent last Friday to France's health minister, Jean-Francois Mattei, the center's Shimon Samuels said that a ceremony honoring Nicolae Paulescu, a Romanian researcher in the field of diabetes, should not go ahead as planned on Aug. 27.

Paulescu returned to Bucharest after a Paris hospital internship in the 1920s before founding the Romanian fascist National Christian Defense League — a precursor to the Iron Guard, which ruled Romania during World War II.

His articles "contributed to the climate of hate, resulting in the massacre of half a million Jews in Holocaust-period Romania," Samuels wrote.

LATIN AMERICA'S JEWS

A Jewish agency finds work for Mexico's unemployed Jews

By Larry Luxner

MEXICO CITY (JTA)—Last year, Bertha Avimelech landed a job managing Clyvia Boutique, a fancy dress shop fronting Avenida Masaryk in Mexico City's upscale Polanco neighborhood.

Avimelech, 45, earns the equivalent of \$1,000 a month supervising seven salesgirls. That's not even enough to buy any of the imported wedding gowns she sells to her wealthy customers — but in Mexico's uncertain economy, every peso counts.

**The Jews
of Latin America**
 Part of a Series

"My husband and I have a jewelry store, and I used to work with him there," she said. "But our sales went down, and what we were making didn't cover the cost of our children's school. So I went to Fundacion Activa to look for work, and they put me together with the owner of this store. If it weren't for them, I would never have found this job."

Fundacion Activa was established in 1997 by the Comité Central de la Comunidad Judía de México, or CCJM, an umbrella organization representing Mexico's 40,000 Jews. Among the foundation's projects is a job bank that matches businesses that need employees with members of the Jewish community looking for work.

"If you ask me whether I'm poor I'd say no, I don't consider myself poor," Avimelech said. "But I know a lot of people in this same situation."

Indeed, even in suburban Mexico City — amid the glitzy shopping malls of Polanco and the stately mansions of Chapultepec — one can find increasing pockets of Jewish poverty. That's because Mexico, whose economy is linked to the United States through NAFTA, has yet to recover from a recession that caused the country's GDP to grow by only 0.9 percent last year, after it contracted by 0.3 percent in 2001.

"About 85 percent of our exports go to the U.S. market," said CCJM's director general, Mauricio Lulka. "When the Americans aren't buying, we're not selling."

A chemical engineer by profession, Lulka explained that Mexico in the past was very protectionist.

"But then we opened our borders to imports," he said. "Many businesses, including Jewish-owned businesses, weren't prepared for competition, so they closed."

While a handful of Mexican Jews — like Moises Saba, the billionaire owner of TV Azteca — are extremely rich, most community members are middle to upper-middle class, Lulka said.

In fact, he said, "between 8 percent and 10 percent of Mexican Jewish families are considered poor by Jewish standards," and receive some type of official assistance.

"There's definitely poverty in the Jewish community," said Fundacion Activa's director, Miriam de Picazo. "The middle class hasn't disappeared, but every day it's getting smaller. Our objective is to help people who, because of the economic crisis in this country, have lost their jobs or their businesses."

In the beginning, the service was free. Since June 2002, however, employers who hire job candidates listed in the founda-

tion's Bolsa de Trabajo monthly bulletin are asked to make a tax-deductible donation equivalent to one-fourth of the applicant's first-month salary.

Between 1998 and 2002, about 65 percent of the 1,092 applicants interviewed by Picazo eventually were matched with Jewish employers. One of them was Benjamin Alfie. The father of two manages Mykonos, a discount apparel store in the heart of Mexico City's historic district.

Here, surrounded by noisy pushcart peddlers and taco vendors, Alfie sells blue jeans, underwear and T-shirts to the Mexican working class.

A descendant of Syrian Jews from Damascus, Alfie, 38, speaks Spanish and Hebrew but never made it past high school. Instead, he went into the retail business and eventually opened his own clothing store. Sales dropped, and last year Alfie went to Fundacion Activa in search of employment.

"Now I'm taking a course in business administration," Alfie told JTA. He explained that the \$1,800 monthly salary he receives isn't enough to pay for his children's school — even though the community picks up 40 percent of the tuition. Alfie could send them to public school, which is free, but says that's not an option.

"It's very important that my kids get a Jewish education," Alfie said.

That attitude, prevalent in the community, may explain why only one in 10 Mexican Jews marries out of the faith — one of the lowest intermarriage rates in Latin America.

According to CCJM estimates, around 95 percent of the country's Jews live in sprawling Mexico City and its environs, mainly Polanco and the newer suburbs of Huixquilucan, Las Lomas and Cuajimalpa. The remaining 5 percent reside mainly in the cities of Guadalajara and Monterrey.

More significantly, 95 percent of Jewish families in Mexico belong to one of the country's 25 or so synagogues, and 91 percent of Jewish children attend Jewish school — making for very strong religious identity and little assimilation.

Anti-Israel demonstrations have increased somewhat in the last 12 months, but anti-Semitism generally is not a problem in this overwhelmingly Catholic society.

"Mexico is a very poor country, with 40 percent of the population living below the poverty line," said Renee Dayan-Shabot, director of Tribuna Israelita, a Jewish think tank. "So there is resentment against wealthy people here, but not because they're Jews."

In early June, President Vicente Fox signed into law a landmark bill that forbids religious, racial, sexual or cultural discrimination of any kind, including anti-Semitism.

Despite Mexico's current economic slowdown, Jews there are far better off than their brethren in Argentina and Uruguay. In fact, Mexico has attracted at least 200 Argentine Jewish families since Argentina's economic crisis spiraled out of control in 1999.

"Most of these newcomers are university graduates," said Rabbi Palti Somerstein, a Buenos Aires-born rabbi who did a six-year stint in Bolivia before being hired by Mexico City's Beth Israel Community Center several years ago.

The Argentines come here, he said, thanks to Mexico's relative prosperity and its Spanish-speaking culture. It's also easier to get residency in Mexico than in the United States — especially since February 2002, when U.S. immigration authorities began requiring visas for Argentine visitors. □