



# Daily News Bulletin

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86th Year

## TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

### Report faults Barak

The panel probing the police killing of 13 Israeli Arabs in October 2000 riots criticized former Prime Minister Ehud Barak.

The Orr Commission report, released Monday, found that Barak had not been sufficiently aware of the potentially explosive situation in the Arab sector, but did not find that his actions should prevent him from serving again as prime minister.

The report accused the former internal security minister, Shlomo Ben-Ami, of a "significant failure" in not preparing police for wide-scale Arab riots, and recommended that he not serve again in the post.

The report was very critical of the police, including former commander Yehuda Wilk, for their relations with the Arab sector.

The report also criticized Arab Knesset members Azmi Beshara and Abdulmalik Dehamshe and Islamic Movement leader Raed Salah for inciting violence, but did not recommend sanctions against them.

### Hamas man killed

Israel killed at least one Hamas militant Monday in a helicopter strike in the Gaza Strip. Helicopters fired four missiles at a car in Gaza City, killing Hader Al-Huseri, 36. Two others in the car also were hurt, as well as 12 bystanders, according to Palestinians.

The Israeli daily Ha'aretz reported that it was unclear whether Al-Huseri was the target of the attack, or whether there were other Hamas members with him whom Israel was aiming at.

Meanwhile, the Israeli army chief of staff, Lt. Gen. Moshe Ya'alon, said Israel might launch a ground offensive in Gaza if the Palestinians continue firing Kassam rockets into Israel.

### Israeli killed in West Bank

An Israeli man was killed and his pregnant wife injured in a shooting attack in the West Bank last Friday.

Shalom Har-Melech, 25, died after Palestinian gunmen waiting in ambush sprayed his car with bullets near Ramallah. His wife Limor, 24, who was seven months pregnant, was moderately injured and was taken to a hospital, where a baby girl was delivered by Caesarean section. The Al-Aksa Brigade, the terrorist militia of the Palestinians' mainstream Fatah movement, claimed responsibility.

## BEHIND THE HEADLINES

### Israel's stealthy killers employ mixture of speed, skill and silence

By Dan Baron

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Abdullah Kawasme probably never thought that diaper deliverymen could be so lethal.

But when the Hamas mastermind stepped out of a Hebron mosque in June and came face to face with a group of men transporting diapers, he had no way of knowing that they were undercover Israeli agents, members of Israel's crack SWAT team known as the Special Police Unit and by its Hebrew acronym, Yamam.

According to witnesses, the men, who looked like Palestinian laborers, had been lounging around a van packed with diapers outside Kawasme's mosque in Hebron.

When Kawasme, who was responsible for terrorist bombings that had killed 52 people in Israel, emerged amid a crowd of worshippers, the Yamam squad pulled out pistols and ordered him to stop.

Kawasme was shot in the leg but still tried to flee, so the gunmen shot to kill. After the hit, the assassins melted away into the night before dumbfounded onlookers realized what had happened.

Yamam has carried out more than 600 counterterrorist operations alongside Israel's regular military forces during the intifada.

Part of the reason they've been so busy is that diplomatic considerations require that its anti-terror missions be carried out with pinpoint precision.

Recently, Yamam snipers killed a gunman from the Al-Aksa Brigade who had holed up atop a Nablus hospital. Two of the gunman's comrades were wounded.

Earlier this summer, an Islamic Jihad chief blew himself up in his bomb lab after Yamam sent in attack dogs to flush him out. In July, unit commandos helped in the rescue of an abducted Israeli cab driver by tracking down and capturing the kidnapper's fiancée for use in a tradeoff.

At no time were bystanders or friendly forces hurt — a rosy record compared to the casualties that often result from traditional military strikes.

"Yamam is a totally professional unit that can virtually guarantee clean kills or captures," says a source in Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's office. "Avoiding collateral damage is always important — but especially so when there is delicate diplomacy afoot."

Yamam's clandestine warfare skills are a far cry from the group's peacetime duties, which include storming drug dens in southern Tel Aviv and scaling tall buildings to save would-be suicides. But its team — around 120 men in all, according to sources — makes versatility a point of pride.

"Preparation is the key to Yamam's success," says Assaf Heffetz, who founded the unit in 1975 and went on to become Israel's chief of police.

Yamam has its own intelligence apparatus, from spotters trained to set up clandestine rooftop perches within minutes of a "situation," to wiretapping technicians, to Arabic-speaking Druse who intercept and quickly analyze enemy communications. Some of Yamam's attack dogs even double as bomb sniffers.

Like many special forces, Yamam was born of tragedy, after a particularly bloody incident showed the need to upgrade Israel's counterterrorist capabilities. In May 1974, Palestinian gunmen based in Lebanon took over a school in the northern Israeli town of Ma'alot, demanding the release of comrades from Israeli jails in exchange for their hostages. In line with Israel's long-standing policy of not negotiating with terrorists,

## MIDEAST FOCUS

### Israeli, Moroccans talk

Morocco wants to play a role in fostering peace between Israel and the Palestinians. Moroccan Foreign Minister Mohammed Benaissa reportedly conveyed this sentiment in a meeting Monday with his Israeli counterpart, Silvan Shalom, who also was expected to meet with Moroccan King Mohammed VI.

### Omri Sharon questioned

Ariel Sharon's son was questioned about his involvement in a scandal involving his father's election campaign.

Knesset member Omri Sharon said Monday that he would not invoke his right to silence in the Cyril Kern affair, as his brother, Gilad, has done.

The ongoing scandal involves a \$1.5 million loan Sharon's sons took from Cyril Kern, a family friend in South Africa. It is believed the Sharon family received the money from Kern as collateral for a loan they took to pay back a company through which Sharon had received illegal campaign contributions in his 1999 bid for the Likud Party leadership.

### Scuffling on Temple Mount

A Palestinian was arrested for allegedly attacking a Jewish visitor on Jerusalem's Temple Mount.

The Palestinian arrested Sunday night allegedly shoved the visitor to the ground earlier in the day.

Earlier Sunday, Israeli police arrested four Jews who prostrated themselves on the mount, Judaism's holiest site, and then refused to get up when ordered to by police.

### Bombing victim dies

A man died of injuries suffered in an Aug. 12 suicide bombing near the settlement of Ariel. Amatzia Nisanovitz, 22, from the settlement of Nofim, became the bombing's second fatality when he died Aug. 28 of his wounds.

Prime Minister Golda Meir ordered in the military. In the resulting bedlam, 23 children and five adults were killed along with the hostage-takers. Many of the Israelis died from Israeli bullets.

Heffetz, an army special-forces commander, was tapped to set up a quick-response civilian unit that could specialize in hostage situations.

At first, Yamam suffered from a lack of funds and manpower.

Because it was formally part of the border police — a roughneck force that recruits youths from the working-class segments of Israeli society — Heffetz fought to recruit old friends from the military to form an officer core that would refine the team.

Heffetz also established warm ties with foreign counterparts.

Then came the mission that sealed Yamam's reputation for excellence.

In March 1988, three terrorists seized a bus carrying employees of the Israeli nuclear plant of Dimona. Yamam got to the scene first and took operational command before its main military competitor — the Sayeret Matkal, Israel's Delta Force — arrived. When the terrorists broke off negotiations and turned their guns on the passengers, Yamam launched a three-pronged assault.

Each squad rushed a different section of the bus. The men who arrived first gave their comrades a hoist to shoot through the windows. Snipers kept the terrorists' heads down until the Uzi-wielding entry team killed them.

In all, the "Mothers Bus" operation took slightly more than a minute, with only three Israeli fatalities — hostages shot by the terrorists.

Yamam rose further into favor six years later when Matkal botched the rescue of abducted Israeli soldier Nachshon Wachsman. Wachsman and the Matkal team commander were killed in the operation. After the failure, Heffetz arranged a demonstration to show that Yamam could have succeeded where Matkal failed.

"It was important for me to prove, once and for all, that we were a life-saving asset beyond compare," Heffetz says. "But by then we had established our prominence and had won the necessary resources, and pretty much had our pick of the top talent."

Out of 12,000 potential recruits every year, only a dozen or so make it through the grueling six-month course to wear Yamam's signature gray jumpsuits and insignia pin — a medieval citadel with a superimposed Star of David, surrounded by a laurel wreath and paratrooper wings.

Candidates must have completed three years' mandatory military service in a combat unit and have earned high-security clearance.

Yamam is an excellent springboard for a police career, but many veterans go freelance after a few years. The best Israeli security schools are run by Yamam men. The more adventurous Yamam veterans end up in darker areas of the globe, training bodyguard squads and hit teams.

A select few within Yamam are tapped for so-called "black operations" on behalf of the Shin Bet security service and the Mossad. A foreign passport or language skills are an advantage in these missions, but they not crucial: Yamam's professional planning, independent thinking and utter ruthlessness are enough, veterans says.

"When it comes to neutralizing the enemy, we know extreme measures are an option," one Yamam veteran says. "Sometimes it is ideal to get the guy alive — that makes for valuable intelligence. But if there is any sign of him getting away or posing a threat, we put him down."

Some Yamam operatives go undercover in Palestinian territory, disguising themselves as veiled matrons or elderly sheiks, donning traditional Arab garb, darkening their faces with soot and cosmetics and even going on weeklong hummus-and-kebab binges in order not to be betrayed by a "Western" smell to their sweat.

Then they go into Palestinian casabas and refugee camps, stalking their quarry. Miniature microphones installed in sleeves allow for quick communication, and pistols or Uzis are used for maximum compactness.

When the intifada began, Yamam suffered one of its worst failures when unit snipers opened fire on a crowd of Israeli Arab rioters, killing 13. Israel assigned an investigating team to head an inquiry into the episode. Yamam snipers had to testify a special commission — albeit behind screens to protect their identity.

But it did not take long for Yamam to bounce back, taking the lead in countermeasures against what became a bloody campaign by Palestinian terrorist groups. □



## Daily News Bulletin

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## JEWISH WORLD

### Iranian denied bail

An Iranian diplomat arrested in England in connection with the 1994 bombing of Argentina's main Jewish community center was denied bail.

The Iranian government, which denies involvement in the bombing and has threatened sanctions over the arrest of Hadi Soleimanpour, offered nearly \$800,000 in bail, and Soleimanpour's family offered another \$300,000, according to Reuters.

The Argentine government accuses Soleimanpour, 47, of involvement in the car bombing of the AMIA center that killed 85 people, and wants him extradited from Britain.

### Tennis goes kosher

The U.S. Open tennis tournament now has a kosher food cart. Hot dogs, pretzels and knishes are among the items available at the cart run by Jeffrey Striks of Strictly Kosher, who also operates kosher food carts at New York Yankees and Mets baseball games, and at Nassau Coliseum on Long Island. Every evening during the Open, Striks is organizing a minyan of 10 men for evening prayers. "It's my trademark," he said.

### Deportation order upheld

A federal board upheld the deportation to Romania of a former concentration camp guard.

The U.S. Board of Immigration Appeals found that Michael Negele, 82, served as a guard in the Sachsenhausen concentration camp, near Berlin. A native of Romania, Negele had been living near St. Louis since entering the United States in 1950.

### Hidden children gather in D.C.

Jews who were hidden as children during the Holocaust gathered in Washington to share their stories.

The Aug. 26-29 gathering of close to 500 people — including hidden children, their spouses, children and grandchildren — was the first such meeting to take place in almost 10 years. The Hidden Child Foundation/Anti-Defamation League Conference on Child Survivors honored Jews who rescued other Jews during the Holocaust.

### Goussinsky released on bail

Media tycoon and Russian Jewish leader Vladimir Goussinsky was released on bail in Greece.

Goussinsky had been held since Aug. 21 pending an expected extradition request from Russia, where he is wanted on fraud and money laundering charges.

No such request has been filed, despite the fact that Goussinsky's name was listed on an Interpol wanted list. If no request is made by Oct. 1, Goussinsky will be cleared of the charges and allowed to leave Greece.

## BEHIND THE HEADLINES

### Even before he arrives in Israel, French envoy starts on wrong foot

By Philip Carmel

PARIS (JTA) — France's new ambassador has yet to arrive in Tel Aviv, but already he has antagonized Israel's political establishment and France's Jewish community.

Gerard Araud was sharing his views on his new posting with Foreign Ministry colleagues last week over crudites and cocktails when he failed to notice an Israeli journalist carefully jotting down his reflections on the Middle East.

Waiting patiently for the ambassador to finish his musings, the journalist, Boaz Bismuth, politely introduced himself as the Paris correspondent for the Israeli daily Yediot Achronot, before asking Araud why he had repeatedly referred to Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon as a "thug" and described Israel as a "paranoid country."

"But you don't intend to publish that," Araud said, as reported by Bismuth in Yediot on Sunday.

The comments surprised many of Israel's supporters in France because Araud, unlike many of his predecessors, was considered friendly toward Israel and apparently had been handpicked by Foreign Minister Dominique de Villepin with the aim of improving relations between Paris and Jerusalem.

Moreover, the posting wasn't Araud's first mission in Tel Aviv: The diplomat began his career as a secretary in the embassy, where he was remembered fondly by his Israeli counterparts.

French authorities sought to limit the damage from the remarks.

"Gerard Araud denies in the most formal manner the collection of remarks attributed to him by an Israeli journalist regarding the State of Israel and its prime minister," the Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

The denial and lack of apology failed to satisfy many, including Israeli Education Minister Limor Livnat, who demanded that Israel refuse to accept Araud's credentials.

A similar response came from Michel Darmon, president of the France-Israel Association, who said Araud's comments are "very serious, insulting and undignified for an ambassador, particularly one who is going to Israel."

Araud is not the first French diplomat to suffer from off-the-cuff remarks during what he thought was a private occasion. In December 2001, Daniel Bernard, France's ambassador to England, described Israel as "that shitty little country" during a private dinner party.

Semi-denials and, later, apologies were offered before Bernard was reassigned to France's embassy in Algeria — "certainly not a promotion," as Darmon noted.

Bismuth acknowledged that he might have erred by quoting a private conversation, but said he felt obligated to report it because of the severity of the comments.

On the other hand, Israel's Foreign Ministry and its embassy in Paris were keen to play down the affair. Israeli diplomatic circles in Paris hinted to JTA that the matter could be rectified by a quiet apology. France's Jewish community was less eager to let the incident pass, with the vice president of the Paris Consistoire, Samy Gozlan, writing to the Foreign Ministry asking that Araud be disciplined.

The report comes during a tough time in Franco-Israeli relations, with Paris seen as the main stumbling block to Israeli and U.S. attempts to get the European Union to widen its ban on the military wing of Hamas to include the group's political arm.

There had been some positive movement recently toward support of a total ban on Hamas, Israeli Ambassador to France Nissim Zvilli told Israeli radio after meeting last week with French President Jacques Chirac's principal diplomatic adviser, Maurice Gourdault-Montagne.

Zvilli said the change in the French position had come about following the Aug. 19 suicide bombing in Jerusalem, and had been the result of numerous meetings between embassy and Foreign Ministry officials. De Villepin said this week that the French position would become clearer after he consulted with other European countries at a forthcoming summit of E.U. foreign ministers in Italy. □

FOCUS ON ISSUES**Jews asking for leniency  
in treatment of asylum seekers**

By E.B. Solomont

NEW YORK (JTA) — As it becomes ever more difficult for foreigners to enter a United States wary of terrorism, several Jewish groups are urging immigration authorities to relax rules for asylum seekers.

A coalition of 15 Jewish groups is raising a red flag about the practice of turning away asylum seekers who have used false documents. They argue that refugees fleeing persecution in their home countries are being denied the right to "due process" when they come to the United States.

The groups, including the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, the American Jewish Committee and the Anti-Defamation League, have identified 200 cases in which asylum seekers were arrested before their claims were processed. In some cases, the refugees were carrying fake passports.

For their part, immigration authorities say asylum seekers are afforded due process — though it may be while they're already in detention.

Prosecuting asylum seekers in the United States poses a complicated problem. Using fraudulent documents is illegal, yet many refugees must use illegal means such as fake passports to escape dangerous situations in their home countries.

The plight of asylum seekers touches a particular nerve in the Jewish community. During World War II, many Jews fleeing Nazi Germany were saved by Raoul Wallenberg and others who provided them with forged papers and passports to get out of Germany.

"Jews have been refugees themselves. We understand what this is about," said Amy Weiner, assistant legislative director at the AJCommittee. "This issue of prosecuting asylum seekers just because of false documents struck a nerve because during the Holocaust Jews resorted to the use of false documents to get into this country."

Today, she said, asylum seekers use false documents "not out of disrespect, but because they are often fleeing torture, rape, persecution and other dangers."

Refugees in danger are not likely to approach government officials and fill out the appropriate forms, said Gideon Aronoff, Washington representative for HIAS.

That would be like saying, "If you want to come and get me and rape me and kill me, this is where I am," Aronoff said.

In an Aug. 13 letter to Attorney General John Ashcroft and Tom Ridge, secretary of the Department of Homeland Security, the coalition of Jewish groups urged the U.S. government not to "compromise the promise of freedom that our country represents to persecuted people around the world."

According to HIAS, the lead group behind the letter, some U.S. federal attorneys who are prosecuting detained asylum seekers are violating the 1951 U.N. Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, which the U.S. ratified.

The convention requires countries to recognize that refugees sometimes must use false documents, and not to penalize them for illegal entry.

Colombian refugee Olga Quintero, 38, is a case in point. Quintero arrived at Miami International Airport on Nov. 24,

2002, carrying a fake passport. Dangerous conditions had forced her to flee Colombia, and U.S. officials agreed she was eligible to enter the country as an asylum seeker.

Quintero was granted parole in the United States until her asylum hearing in March 2003. When she arrived for the hearing, however, she was arrested at the Fort Lauderdale airport and, ultimately, thrown in a maximum security federal prison.

She subsequently missed her hearing, and an order was issued in absentia for her deportation.

Garrison Courtney, a spokesperson for Immigrations and Customs Enforcement, says detaining asylum seekers is normal procedure and that processing their claims is a "dual process" that takes place while asylum seekers are detained.

In response to the Jewish groups' Aug. 13 letter, Courtney said the Homeland Security Department is looking into other options to afford due process to asylum seekers, including the possibility of using electronic monitoring devices so that they wouldn't have to stay in detention centers.

Advocates of more conservative policies say that despite asylum seekers' unique circumstances, letting people into the country with false documents is a potential threat to U.S. security.

"People have been exploiting our immigration system," said John Keeley, a spokesman at the Center for Immigration Studies in Washington. "That includes the humanitarian category of refugees and asylees," as asylum seekers are called.

Some Islamic terrorists have entered the United States by claiming they need asylum, he said.

Even when refugees are in flight, there must be a security component to all areas of entry to the United States, Keeley said.

"Post-Sept. 11, it's a different world," he said.

So far, HIAS estimates that there have been 200 instances where asylum seekers were arrested and turned away, mostly in Miami and in the Washington area.

In an effort to prevent more cases, Jewish groups decided to appeal to federal officials, calling on them to grant hearings to refugees before they are prosecuted for using false documents. They're not the first to address the issue; federal officials also have been lobbied by non-Jewish groups, including Amnesty International USA.

"Groups signing on are not saying that people should not be charged" for using false papers, Aronoff said. "But if that person is seeking asylum, their asylum should not be put into jeopardy by the timing of the decision to prosecute."

If Wallenberg were doing today what he did for European Jewry more than half a century ago, the AJCommittee's Weiner argued, he would be treated not as a hero but as a criminal. □

**Czech woman honored**

PRAGUE (JTA) — A Czech woman who risked her life to save a Slovak Jewish boy at the Ravensbruck concentration camp was honored by Yad Vashem.

Vera Bruzkova was made a "Righteous Gentile" last Friday. She smuggled Arnost Rosenzweig into the Christian section of the camp and hid him there for two months until the camp was liberated in April 1945.

Bruzkova, now 89, later tracked down his uncle with the help of the Red Cross, and Rosenzweig was reunited with his family. He now lives in Denmark. □