



Daily News Bulletin

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86th Year

TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

Reports: Arafat appoints Karia

Yasser Arafat apparently has chosen Ahmed Karia to be the next prime minister of the Palestinian Authority.

Arafat's selection of the current speaker of the Palestinian legislative council comes after Mahmoud Abbas, prime minister until Saturday, said his resignation was final.

Karia, who is considered a relative moderate, was one of the architects of the Oslo accords. [Page 1]

Israel targets Hamas leader

An Israeli airstrike narrowly missed killing Hamas' spiritual leader, Sheik Ahmed Yassin.

Hamas vowed revenge after Saturday's failed strike, which came during a meeting between Yassin and his top echelon at the Islamic group. The strike reportedly wounded Yassin, a blind paraplegic, and 15 others.

Israel has sealed off the West Bank and Gaza Strip to prevent additional terrorist attacks. [Page 1]

E.U.: All of Hamas is terrorist

The European Union will designate all branches of Hamas as parts of a terrorist organization, including its political wing.

The decision was taken Saturday at a two-day meeting of E.U. foreign ministers in northern Italy.

The move will block funding to Hamas-run political organizations, charities and social welfare associations, in addition to its military wing, which the European Union already had branded as terrorist.

"A consensus emerged to decide on putting Hamas on the list of terrorist organizations," French Foreign Minister Dominique de Villepin told reporters.

The ministers also deplored the resignation of Palestinian Authority Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas.

The E.U.'s foreign affairs chief, Javier Solana, arrived in Israel on Saturday for scheduled meetings with Israeli and Palestinian leaders.

Billboard goes down

A missionary billboard in Toronto was taken down following complaints from the city's Jews.

The billboard taken down last Friday was posted by Jews for Jesus and was set up in a Jewish section of the Canadian city. The posting was part of an aggressive campaign in Toronto by the group. [Page 4]

Airstrike on Hamas founder, Abbas resignation escalate tensions

By Dan Baron

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Israel stepped up its defenses this week against terrorist attacks after its failed airstrike against Hamas founder Sheik Ahmed Yassin and the resignation of Palestinian Authority Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas.

Taken together, the weekend's events threatened to leave the U.S.-backed "road map" peace plan in tatters.

The Bush administration urged calm as it struggled simultaneously to keep the plan alive and to join Israel in efforts to sideline Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat.

U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell voiced hope that a new Palestinian prime minister would steer Palestinian security forces and diplomacy in the direction outlined by the road map.

"Whoever becomes head of the Palestinian Authority must have under his control all of the security forces and he must have a solid political mandate" from the Palestinian Parliament "to go after these terrorist organizations," Powell told ABC's "This Week" program on Sunday.

Powell also praised a decision by the European Union to declare Hamas' political wing a terrorist entity.

Abbas' resignation on Saturday came amid an ongoing power struggle with Arafat, who grudgingly appointed him prime minister in April under heavy diplomatic pressure, primarily from the United States.

In his short-lived tenure as prime minister, Abbas repeatedly clashed with Arafat over Palestinian Authority policy, particularly regarding control of the Palestinian security services.

But in his resignation speech before Palestinian lawmakers, Abbas placed the blame on Israel and the United States for undermining his government.

"The fundamental problem was Israel's unwillingness to implement its commitments in the road map," he said.

He also indirectly criticized Arafat and other Palestinian leaders, emphasizing "harsh and dangerous domestic incitement against his government."

Abbas could yet return to the post of prime minister, but it might require new obedience to Arafat, who outstrips him in terms of power and popularity among Palestinians.

On Sunday, Arafat apparently chose Ahmed Karia to be the next prime minister of the Palestinian Authority. Karia, who is considered a relative moderate, was one of the architects of the Oslo accords.

Others that have been mentioned for the job include Palestinian Finance Minister Salam Fayyad and West Bank multimillionaire Munib Al-Masri. All three are considered relative moderates.

After Abbas' resignation, members of Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's Cabinet reiterated their calls for harsh measures against Arafat for undermining peace efforts.

The Palestinian leader should "not be immune from anything," Cabinet minister Uzi Landau told Israel's Army Radio. Other ministers called for exiling Arafat.

Meanwhile, Israel continued its campaign against Hamas leaders with an airstrike Saturday aimed at the group's founder and spiritual leader. The Gaza airstrike lightly wounded Yassin, a blind, paraplegic cleric, along with 15 others in an apartment

MIDEAST FOCUS

Hamas bomb maker dies

Palestinians found the body of a Hamas member in Gaza who apparently was killed while working on a bomb to be used in a terrorist attack.

Abu Al-Hasmi's body was found Sunday near the Jabalya refugee camp in Gaza, Israel Radio reported.

Palestinians launch attacks

Three Israeli soldiers were wounded Sunday by a roadside bomb near the Gaza Strip fence, and mortars were fired at a settlement.

Earlier Sunday, shots were fired at an Israeli car traveling in the Gaza Strip. No injuries were reported in the shooting or the mortar attacks on the Israeli settlement of Neveh Dekalim.

Indian Muslims criticize Sharon

Indian opposition and Muslim groups are criticizing Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's planned visit this week to India.

Sharon and his 150-strong delegation are now set to leave Monday after the trip was postponed for a day due to security concerns.

Sharon's visit will be the first by an Israeli premier to India since the two countries established full diplomatic ties 11 years ago.

Bombing toll at 22

The death toll from the Aug. 19 suicide bus bombing in Jerusalem climbed to 22.

Mordechai Laufer, 27, succumbed to his wounds and was buried over the weekend. His wife and two children were also wounded in the attack.

Netanyahu presents budget

Israeli Finance Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has presented a draft of Israel's 2004 budget.

About \$2.25 billion in spending cuts are expected, and reports say the deficit target will be 4 percent.

building where Yassin was meeting with other Hamas leaders.

"It's us or them," Sharon told Israel's daily Yediot Achronot, referring to the leaders of Hamas. "They are dead men. We won't give them any rest since they have just one goal, our destruction."

Hamas responded with fierce vows of revenge, prompting Israeli authorities to seal the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Hamas has been on the defensive ever since perpetrating a suicide bus bombing in Jerusalem on Aug. 19 that killed 22.

Another victim of that attack, Mordechai Laufer, 27, died late last week of his wounds.

The weekend's strike was the latest in a series of Israeli moves against the group's leaders.

Hamas also was put on the diplomatic defensive over the weekend with the declaration by the European Union that the group's political wing would be considered a terrorist entity. That move was a turnaround from the European Union's previous stance, and it came after calls by President Bush to outlaw all branches of the terrorist group. The European Union already had outlawed Hamas' military wing.

The ministers at that meeting also deplored Abbas' resignation.

With Abbas gone and Arafat again in sole control of Palestinian Authority diplomacy, calls in Israel are mounting for Arafat's removal. Israel and the United States accuse Arafat of supporting terrorist attacks and of blocking Abbas' efforts to implement the road map.

The idea of deporting Arafat appeals to many Israelis who, a decade after the Oslo peace accords, have learned to distrust the Palestinian Authority president.

Some Israeli officials have even suggested that Arafat be killed.

But Palestinians warn that any successor to Arafat in the West Bank and Gaza would be marked from the outset as an Israeli patsy and that exile would amplify Arafat's power. □

Deadline extended for insurance claims as time runs out for Holocaust survivors

By Matthew E. Berger

WASHINGTON (JTA) — A deadline for making Holocaust-era insurance claims is being extended until the end of the year because additional policyholder names recently were made public.

Lawrence Eagleburger, the chairman of the International Commission on Holocaust Era Insurance Claims, said 120,000 names will be added within the next two months to a Web site that now has 450,000 names on a list of unpaid insurance policies from Nazi-era Germany.

Almost all of the more than 500,000 unpaid insurance policies belonged to Jews in Nazi Germany.

The new names come from portfolios in Eastern Europe, Italy and Switzerland.

"I'm confident that we have as close to a complete list as you are likely to get," said Eagleburger, a former U.S. secretary of state.

Eagleburger said extending the deadline would "allow ample time for as many eligible claimants as we can alert to file claims."

More than 2,600 offers have been made so far to benefactors and their families, amounting to \$35 million.

In addition, more than \$7.5 million has been distributed directly from insurance companies, based on contacts descendants have made through ICHEIC.

The complete list includes anyone who may have had a life-insurance policy of any kind between 1920 and 1945 and who is thought to have suffered any form of racial, religious or political persecution during the Holocaust.

The deadline for applications has already been extended several times. Eagleburger said he hoped that the commission's work would be finished within a year.

Eagleburger stressed that many of the policies already have been claimed, but he said the commission chose to include all possible names and investigate any inquiries. Names may also be duplicates with minor differences in spelling, he noted. □



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JEWISH WORLD

Terrorists target Australia's Jews

Terrorists are planning attacks on Australia's Jewish community, intelligence reports say.

"We have been told that there have been attacks planned against Jewish targets in Australia," the president of the New South Wales Jewish Board of Deputies, Stephen Rothman, said in a weekend television interview, according to the Jerusalem Post.

Australia has received intelligence information about attacks planned against Jewish targets since the arrest in March of a senior Al-Qaida figure in Pakistan who allegedly masterminded the Sept. 11 attacks.

Australian police are stepping up security at Jewish sites in the country.

Impolitic French diplomat to stay

A French diplomat who reportedly called Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon a "thug" will soon become the ambassador to Israel.

The diplomat, Gerard Araud, referred to Sharon as a "thug" and called the State of Israel "paranoid" during a recent function at the French Foreign Ministry, the Israeli daily Yediot Achronot reported.

Following the report, Israeli Education Minister Limor Livnat said that Israel might refuse to accept Araud's credentials.

However, a French Foreign Ministry spokesman said last Friday that Araud, who has denied the published claims, "would take up his functions on the previously assigned date."

Banks excuse restitution fees

More than a hundred of California's largest financial institutions said they would waive wire-transfer fees for Holocaust-related restitution payments.

The payments, which come mainly from Germany, average \$350 per month.

With banks generally charging per-transfer handling fees of \$10-\$40, such fees can add up to 10 percent of the monthly checks to Holocaust survivors and their families.

California is home to the nation's second-largest Holocaust-survivor community, according to Bet Tzedek, which provides free legal services to indigent survivors.

A list of cooperating financial institutions can be found at www.treasurer.ca.gov/holocaust.

Award for Jewish-themed film

German actress Katja Riemann won the Venice Film Festival's award for best actress for her role as the Aryan wife of a Jew in Nazi Germany.

The film, "Rosenstrasse," tells the story of a group of non-Jewish women who demanded that the Nazi regime release their Jewish husbands.

ACROSS THE FORMER SOVIET UNION

Jewish Agency deepens involvement in both Jewish day and Hebrew schools

By Lev Krichevsky

MOSCOW (JTA) — For the first time in post-Soviet history, the Jewish Agency for Israel is helping to operate Jewish schools in the former Soviet Union.

Last month, the Jewish Agency announced that it had reached an agreement with Israel's Ministry of Education to work in most Jewish day schools and Hebrew schools in the region. The program began Sept. 1.

The move comes amid deep budget cuts in the Israeli government, which has provided Jewish curricula and staff to a growing number of Jewish institutions in the former Soviet Union since the fall of communism.

More than half of the Jewish Agency's money comes from the North American Jewish federation system.

According to a Jewish Agency news release, the new arrangement will affect 21,000 students studying in 223 schools — 180 Hebrew schools and 43 day schools in which 90 teacher emissaries from Israel are employed.

Until now, the agency's educational work in the region focused only on informal education — dozens of ulpan, or Hebrew-language courses, for prospective immigrants to Israel, as well as youth and family clubs and summer camps.

Following the fall of communism in 1991, two Israeli agencies — the Ministry of Education and the Prime Minister's Liaison Office — divided the responsibility for establishing Jewish day and supplementary schools in various parts of the former Soviet Union. The program the two agencies operated in most of the Jewish day schools across the FSU is known as Heftziba, the Hebrew acronym for Formal Jewish Zionist Education in the Former Soviet Union.

The budget for the Jewish Agency's operations in the former Soviet Union has remained relatively stable over the last several years despite the fact that aliyah — the agency's primary mandate — has experienced a drop of 30 percent to 40 percent from this region compared with emigration to Israel during the late 1990s.

The situation forced Jewish Agency officials to seriously rethink the agency's mission in the region and to step up its efforts in the educational sphere.

Some sources in Russia familiar with the situation say it resulted in the Jewish Agency's longtime efforts to gain control over the Jewish day schools in the region.

Not so, said Yehuda Weinraub, a spokesman for the Jewish Agency, who said the Ministry of Education initiated the talks that led to the agreement.

Officials with the Jewish Agency in Russia give the figure of the operational annual budget for the program the agency will take part in at \$5.6 million.

The Education Ministry will continue to pay the salaries of the 90 teaching emissaries employed in the Heftziba program at schools in the former Soviet Union. All other expenses, including the salaries of local employees, books, teacher training and professional development will be covered equally by the Jewish Agency and the Education Ministry.

"The Jewish Agency has very clear priorities in its educational policy, and we will be trying hard to put them into practice," Dima Zicer, director of Beit Agnon, the Moscow-based JAFI Educational Center for Jewish and Israeli Culture. "We want to bring more Israeli Jewish culture to schools."

Jewish Agency officials say the agency's experience in the field of informal education in the region will help it cope successfully with the task of broadening Jewish identity among Jewish students and their families in the region.

Russian Jewish educators expressed cautious optimism about the arrangements. "I would expect this new arrangement to bring serious changes to our schools," said Grigory Lipman, principal of Moscow Jewish Day School No. 1311 and co-chairman of the Association of Jewish School Principals of the Former Soviet Union.

He said his biggest concern was the lack of standardized curricula and textbooks on Jewish history, tradition and Hebrew — the primary subjects that are taught in most Russian schools by Israeli teachers. □

Toronto Jews mount response to Jews for Jesus' latest campaign

By Bill Gladstone

TORONTO (JTA) — A battle for Jewish souls is being waged across Canada's largest city as Jewish activists here work to counter the effects of an aggressive missionary campaign launched by Jews for Jesus.

The multimillion-dollar international Christian missionary group kicked off a three-week missionary campaign on Aug. 25, called Behold Your God, an intensive blitz targeting the city's 175,000 Jews.

The Jesus campaign, which will last through Sept. 14, involves newspaper ads, billboards, leaflets, a telemarketing-style phone campaign and door-to-door canvassing in Jewish neighborhoods.

The missionaries also are distributing free copies of a video produced by their organization that focuses on Holocaust survivors who have converted to Christianity.

Jewish groups have mobilized in response.

The Jewish countermissionary organization Jews for Judaism has mounted a comprehensive campaign to fight the missionaries.

The group designated Saturday as a Stand Up for Judaism Shabbat, urging rabbis across southern Ontario to address the missionary problem from the pulpit.

In conjunction with the Canadian Jewish Congress, the organization also held a Stand Up for Judaism community rally on Sunday. B'nai Brith Canada also launched its own "Proud to Be Jewish" campaign to warn unsuspecting Jewish community members about the missionaries.

"This isn't about free speech," said the group's president, Rochelle Wilner. "Targeted missionizing — especially when done in a manner calculated to deceive the unsuspecting — is offensive to our community," she said.

The name Jews for Jesus makes about as much sense as Baptists for Buddha or Catholics for Krishna, she said.

The Toronto arm of the Baltimore-based Jews for Judaism has distributed nationally an eight-page brochure, "Missionary Impossible," to "help inoculate the Jewish community against the missionary threat," said Julius Ciss, executive director of Jews for Judaism in Canada and a former Jews for Jesus member.

Additionally, signs telling the missionaries to get lost have been distributed to Jewish households around the city.

Russian-language brochures were delivered to members of the city's 30,000-strong Russian-speaking Jewish community, which the missionaries specifically target because of their perceived susceptibility.

Countermissionary groups say that because many Russian-speaking Jewish immigrants know little about Judaism, they often mistake Jews for Jesus activists as Jews promoting Judaism.

The countermissionary campaign had its first success late last week, when a missionary billboard in Toronto was taken down from a Jewish section of the Canadian city.

Jewish officials contend that the missionaries consistently blur the distinctions between Judaism and Christianity and practice deception by insisting that accepting the tenets of Christianity essentially makes one a better Jew.

One of the group's slogans is "Be More Jewish, Believe in Jesus."

"We're stressing the need to separately strengthen our homes and our communities against those who would sway us from our faith," Ciss said.

A native Torontonian, Ciss was involved with Jews for Jesus for five years before reconnecting to Judaism and becoming a countermissionary activist some 20 years ago.

Jews for Judaism says its representatives try to counter Jews for Jesus' message with one of their own.

While Jews for Jesus hands out pink fliers urging belief in Jesus, the countermissionary group responds by handing out blue fliers highlighting the message, "You can't believe in Jesus and still be Jewish."

At the same time, the organization is sending rapid-response teams out on patrol and established a hotline for people to call if they spot the Christian missionaries working on the street.

"It's a cat-and-mouse game," Ciss said. "If we don't know where they are, we have to hunt them down, and it's a big city — we have to drive around and look at all the big intersections. But half the time we do find them."

Andrew Barron, director of the Canadian branch of Jews for Jesus, said the Behold Your God campaign is part of a five-year effort by the international group aimed at converting Jews in some 65 cities outside of Israel with Jewish populations of more than 25,000.

Barron, who admitted feeling frustrated by the Jewish community's response to his group's campaign, denied that Jews for Jesus uses deceptive tactics and accused Jewish groups of showing "intolerance and bigotry towards a minority" through their countermissionary activities. To its chagrin, the Canadian Jewish Congress said it learned the hard way that many Christian leaders and churches in southern Ontario seem to support the missionaries' campaign to convert Jews.

The congress sent a letter to 830 evangelical churches across southern Ontario explaining that it considered the Jews for Jesus crusade to be misleading and deceptive. The letter asked the churches "to commit themselves to the principles of respect and honesty in evangelism."

The general response, Rudner said, was disappointing. "They very clearly did not get it," he said. "They felt that we were telling them that they shouldn't engage in missionary activity at all, which was not the case."

Globally, Christian groups that specifically proselytize Jews command an annual budget of about \$300 million and have converted an estimated 275,000 Jews during the last 30 years, according to Ciss. □

Europe honors Jewish culture

ROME (JTA) — Hundreds of Jewish heritage sites in Europe were open to the public for the European Day of Jewish Culture.

Jewish sites, including synagogues and Jewish museums, in more than two dozen European countries opened Sunday for the fourth annual event, which included numerous exhibitions, lectures, guided tours and performances.

The initiative was organized by France's Agency for the Development of Tourism of the Bas-Rhin, B'nai B'rith Europe, the European Council of Jewish Communities and the Red de Juderias de Espana, in Girona, Spain. A list of the day's events is available at www.jewishheritage.org. □