

IN THE NEWS

Critics slam world court

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon rejected the International Court of Justice's ruling on the West Bank security barrier.

"I want to make it clear that the State of Israel absolutely rejects the ruling of the International Court of Justice in The Hague," Sharon said at the opening of the weekly Cabinet meeting in Jerusalem on Sunday. "It is a one-sided and politically motivated ruling."

U.S. Jewish officials also expressed outrage at the ruling.

White House spokesman Scott McClellan said it was inappropriate to debate a political issue in the world court.

Sen. John Kerry, the Democratic presidential nominee, said he was "deeply disappointed" by the ruling and that "Israel's fence is a legitimate response to terror." [Stories, Pg. 1-3]

Anti-Semitism is up in France

There were more anti-Semitic and racist acts in France during the first half of 2004 than in all of 2003, the government announced last Friday.

Out of a total of 230 racist acts against persons or property so far in 2004, 135 were of an anti-Semitic character. Threats and intimidation against Jews also made up almost three quarters of the total recorded.

The figures are close to 2002 statistics and contradict a 37 percent drop in anti-Semitic acts last year.

NY federation sets fund-raising record

The UJA-Federation of New York set an annual fund-raising record for all Jewish federations of nearly \$203 million.

The New York federation raised \$202.7 million in 2003, a 7 percent increase over the previous year, by focusing on personal meetings with 4,000 donors who gave \$5,000 or more, officials said.

WORLD REPORT

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Tel Aviv bombing adds injury to insult of The Hague's fence ruling

By DAN BARON and LESLIE SUSSER

TEL AVIV (JTA) — The International Court of Justice may have ruled it illegal, but Israel's West Bank security barrier has at least one new supporter.

For Sammy Masrawa, it was more baptism by fire than conversion, after Masrawa witnessed a bombing that killed an Israeli woman and wounded at least 20 others in Tel Aviv on Sunday.

"I am an Arab from Jaffa, a leftist, and I was opposed to the separation fence until today," said Masrawa, who survived the attack at a downtown bus stop with mild injuries. "But the terrorists do not distinguish between Jews and Arabs. After what I saw today, I hope to set up a lobby in favor of the fence."

The Al-Aksa Brigade, the terrorist wing of Yasser Arafat's Fatah faction, said its men planted the bomb, which they detonated by remote control, to avenge Israel's killing of its leaders.

The blast was the first terrorist attack in Tel Aviv in more than six months. It left Bat Yam resident Sgt. Ma'ayan Nayim, 19, dead.

For Israeli government officials, the attack added deadly injury to the insult of last Friday's ruling at The Hague that the fence is illegal and must be dismantled.

"This morning's act of murder is the first to have occurred under the auspices of the opinion of the International Court of Justice in The Hague," Prime Minister Ariel Sharon said in opening remarks at his weekly Cabinet meeting.

"I want to make it clear: The State of Israel completely rejects the International Court's opinion. This is a one-sided opinion

based solely on political considerations. The opinion completely ignores the reason for the construction of the security fence: murderous Palestinian terrorism," Sharon said.

For months, Israel had been bracing for a negative ruling on its West Bank security barrier from the International Court of Justice at The Hague. When it came last Friday, Israeli officials said they would ignore the ruling and continue construction on the fence.

Though it's only partially complete, the fence already has saved thousands of lives, officials said, noting the dramatic decrease in successful Palestinian terrorist attacks since construction of the fence began.

In its non-binding advisory opinion, the International Court of Justice, a U.N. body, ruled that the barrier contravenes international law, that parts of it built on Palestinian land must be dismantled and that Palestinians whose land was confiscated must be compensated.

The court said that the barrier could impede the Palestinians' right to self-rule.

"The Court considers that the construction of the wall and its associate regime creates a 'fait accompli' on the ground that could well become permanent, in which case, and notwithstanding the formal characterization by Israel, it would be tantamount to de facto annexation," the court said.

But Israel argues that the fence is a legitimate means of self-defense and that the court had no jurisdiction to rule on what is essentially a political conflict.

The court acknowledged that Israel has a right to self-defense, but ruled that it doesn't

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ISRAEL AND THE FENCE

■ After fence ruling at The Hague, Palestinians detonate a bomb in Tel Aviv

Continued from page 1

include building parts of the fence beyond the Green Line — the armistice line that served as a boundary between Israel and the West Bank from the 1948 War of Independence to the 1967 Six-Day War — or causing the Palestinians humanitarian hardship.

Palestinian Authority officials, who hailed last Friday's ruling as "historic," said they were determined to bring the matter to the United Nations, where they will seek sanctions against Israel. Any such move is almost certain to encounter an American veto in the Security Council.

According to diplomatic sources, the Palestinian representative at the United Nations, Nasser al-Kidwa, also plans to ask the General Assembly to demand the immediate removal of Israeli settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

■
The main focus for Israel now will be limiting damage in the General Assembly and preventing any operative steps by the Security Council.

The challenge will be to get as many Western countries as possible to oppose an anti-Israel resolution in the General Assembly, or action in the Security Council.

Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom discussed the issue with U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell during a recent visit to Washington, and Shalom reportedly was reassured.

In White House comments after the court ruling, spokesman Jim McLelland hinted that the United States did not consider the United Nations an appropriate

forum for resolving the fence issue.

It was, he said, a political problem that should be resolved in an Israeli-Palestinian political process that already exists.

In a statement made last Friday afternoon while the court president was still reading the ruling — the gist of which had been leaked earlier — Israeli Foreign Ministry spokesman Yonatan Peled noted that more than 1,000 Israelis have been killed in more than 20,000 Palestinian terror attacks since the intifada began in September 2000.

"No other country would have acted differently in the face of such a criminal campaign," he said, adding that since the portions of the fence have been built, the number of victims has dropped sharply.

"The fence works," Peled said. "It is a temporary, non-violent security measure and it saves lives."

The General Assembly sent the issue of the separation fence to the court last December, asking it to prepare an advisory opinion on the "legal consequences arising from the construction of the wall in the Occupied Palestinian territory."

■
Israeli officials say the language of the request essentially prejudged its outcome: The Palestinians call the barrier a wall though over 90 percent of it actually is a fence and could be moved.

Israel also does not consider the West Bank "Occupied Palestinian territory" but rather "disputed territory" whose status must be determined in negotiations, as per Security Council Resolution 242, which has guided Israeli-Arab peace talks for the past 25 years.

Considering the way the General Assembly presented the issue to the court, Peled said, it was no surprise that the court ignored the heart of the problem and the very reason for the fence: Palestinian terrorism.

"Without terror there would be no fence," he said.

Peled said there was no need for outside interference on the issue of the fence since Israel's own Supreme Court ruled recently that parts of the fence should be rerouted to better balance Palestinian humanitarian considerations with Israeli security needs.

Dore Gold, a former Israeli envoy to

the United Nations and now an adviser to Sharon, told JTA that while Israel respects international law, it opposes the politicization of international bodies such as the International Court of Justice.

"The terms of reference that the court was given by the U.N. could only result in a decision that was tantamount to the outlawing of the shield, while condoning the continued use of the sword," he said.

Gold pointed out that more than 30 countries, most of them Western democracies, were opposed to having the court deal with the issue.

For its part, Israel refused to appear before the court when it held oral hearings on the issue in February.

Meanwhile, the European Union seemed to endorse the court's ruling, urging Israel to remove those parts of the fence built beyond the Green Line.

Palestinian leaders were overjoyed at the ruling. Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat called it a "victory for justice," while P.A. Prime Minister Ahmed Qurei described the ruling as "historic."

The leader of Hezbollah, the Lebanese militia, called Saturday for Palestinians to step up attacks on Israelis.

"What removes the barrier," said Hezbollah's leader, Sheik Hassan Nasrallah, "is the will, determination and resistance of Palestinians, with the backing of the" Arab people.

In Israel, the political spectrum was divided.

Opposition legislator Yossi Sarid, of the left-wing Meretz-Yahad Party, accused the government of making every conceivable mistake in building the fence.

"It should have been built along the Green Line, and it never would have got to The Hague," he said.

But remarks by Justice Minister Yosef "Tommy" Lapid, of the centrist Shinui Party, seemed to capture the national mood in Israel more accurately.

"It's absurd that when we build a fence to protect our civilians, the people accused in the international court are not the terrorists, not the murderers, not the aggressors — but the victims," he said. ■

(Leslie Susser, the diplomatic correspondent for the Jerusalem Report, reported for this article from Jerusalem.)

'Without terror there would be no fence.'

Yonatan Peled

Israeli Foreign Ministry spokesman

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THIS WEEK**MONDAY**

■ The U.S. Senate opens debate on a constitutional amendment outlawing gay marriage. Republicans are seeking to force lawmakers to vote on the issue before the Democratic national convention at the end of the month. Some Orthodox groups support an amendment, but many other Jewish groups oppose it on ideological and constitutional grounds.

■ A record 161 lay and professional leaders representing 50 Jewish federations are traveling to Israel and Russia through July 19 on the United Jewish Communities' Campaign Chairmen and Directors Mission. Participants will visit programs and beneficiaries supported by UJC and individual Jewish federations. In Israel, participants will meet with Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and immigrant soldiers.

■ A delegation of New York City Council members and community leaders, led by Council Speaker Gifford Miller, visit Israel through Friday on a trip promoting solidarity and tourism and business ties between Israel and New York. The visit is sponsored by New York's UJA-Federation and Jewish Community Relations Council.

TUESDAY

■ The first of three flights full of North American immigrants to Israel leaves New York's Kennedy Airport, sponsored by Nefesh b'Nefesh. Other planes are expected to leave on Aug. 3 and Aug. 10. The flights will bring some 1,500 immigrants to Israel.

■ Cameron Kerry, brother of Sen. John Kerry, arrives in Israel to meet with top officials, including Prime Minister Ariel Sharon. It is the first visit to Israel for Kerry, who converted to Judaism 20 years ago and is one of his brother's closest advisers. Sharon did not meet with Sen. Kerry, the presumptive Democratic nominee for president, when he was in Washington in April.

THURSDAY

■ Palestinians plan to call a special session of the U.N. General Assembly to discuss the International Court of Justice's ruling on Israel's West Bank security barrier. The court called Israel's fence illegal and demanded that it be dismantled. The special session is expected to be held Thursday or Friday.

SUNDAY

■ Argentine Jews mark the 10th anniversary of the 1994 bombing of the AMIA Jewish community center in Buenos Aires, which killed 85 people and wounded hundreds. Investigators have failed to bring those responsible for the bombing to justice. A siren will sound in front of the AMIA building at 9:53 a.m., the exact time of the bombing. Hundreds of Argentines are expected for the ceremony.

U.S. Jews gear up after fence ruling

By RACHEL POMERANCE

NEW YORK (JTA) — U.S. Jewish officials are launching a media and diplomatic offensive to limit damage from the International Court of Justice opinion that Israel's West Bank security barrier is illegal.

Seven months after the U.N. General Assembly called on the U.N. court to judge the legal consequences of Israel's "wall," the International Court of Justice issued a non-binding advisory opinion last Friday that Israel must tear down the barrier and pay reparations to Palestinians affected by its construction.

The only dissenter in the court's 14-1 ruling was the American judge, a Holocaust survivor.

The opinion asks "all states not to recognize the illegal situation resulting from construction of the wall and not to render aid or assistance in maintaining the situation created by such construction."

Israeli officials and U.S. Jewish officials were especially chagrined that the court issued no criticism of the thousands of Palestinian terrorist attacks that prompted Israel to build the fence.

"To have the Palestinians once again hijack the system" is "deja vu all over again," said Dan Mariaschin, executive vice president of B'nai B'rith International. "I think we have to go back to those countries who felt this should not have gone to the court in the first place."

Mariaschin said he hopes those nations will tell the United Nations "that this is an issue that belongs in negotiations and is not to be determined in New York City, not to be determined in The Hague, but to be determined in the Middle East between Israelis and Palestinians."

B'nai B'rith International has mobilized chapters around the world to urge government leaders to oppose any U.N. resolution on the court opinion.

The Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations called the campaign its "biggest mobilization" since the fight against a 1975 U.N. resolution that denigrated Zionism as racism.

Jewish groups are gearing up with pro-fence talking points they can use with

government leaders and journalists.

In a conference call last Friday for Jewish community relations councils across North America, activists were told that if they are asked for media comment, they should stress how much the fence already has reduced terrorism.

Many U.S. Jewish organizations issued press releases last Friday blasting the court's decision.

The court was taken over by "narrow political extremist goals," said James Tisch, chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations. "The ruling contradicts the fundamental right of all states to defend their citizens. No other country is judged like Israel — not to higher standards, but double standards."

A slew of U.S. representatives also issued statements rejecting the court opinion. Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-Fla.) has begun a lobbying campaign urging Latin American countries to oppose a U.N. resolution.

Rep. Gary Ackerman (D-N.Y.) sponsored a congressional resolution

condemning the court's opinion.

At a news conference last Friday across from the United Nations attended by New York's two Democratic senators — Charles Schumer and Hillary Clinton — Jewish groups said terrorist attacks had fallen by 90 percent since parts of the fence went up. "It makes no sense for the United Nations to vehemently oppose a fence which is a non-violent response to terrorism rather than opposing terrorism itself," Clinton told the crowd.

Also speaking at the press conference, Israel's U.N. ambassador, Dan Gillerman, called last Friday a "tragic day."

"The U.N. has been hijacked and abused," Gillerman said. The opinion "totally disregards why that fence was put up there."

"This is the Arafat fence. This is the fence that Arafat built," he said, referring to Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat. "This fence will remain and protect Israeli lives. It will remain as long as Arafat's reign of terror remains." ■

(JTA staff in New York and Washington contributed to this report.)

Jewish groups are developing pro-fence talking points to use with government leaders and journalists.

NEWS IN BRIEF

MIDDLE EAST

Four Palestinians die in Gaza explosion

Three Palestinian terrorists and a passerby died when a car exploded in the Gaza Strip.

Palestinian authorities blamed Israel for the blast, which destroyed the vehicle Saturday on Gaza's coastal highway. The three passengers inside — members of the Popular Resistance Committees, a coalition of terrorists and former Palestinian Authority security men — were killed along with a Palestinian motorcyclist riding nearby.

Israel denied any involvement, saying the blast likely was caused by a bomb that exploded prematurely.

Israeli minister fired

Israeli Infrastructure Minister Yosef Paritzky, who was caught conspiring to frame a party colleague for bribery, was fired.

Prime Minister Ariel Sharon stripped Paritzky of his Cabinet portfolio Sunday; it was not immediately clear who would replace him.

Last week, Israel's Channel One Television played a recording of a 2002 phone conversation in which Paritzky discussed having fellow Shinui member Avraham Poraz bribed in order to expose him and end Poraz's political career.

Vanunu asks to leave Israel

Israeli nuclear whistle-blower Mordechai Vanunu asked Israel's high court to let him leave the country.

The Association of Civil Rights in Israel petitioned the High Court of Justice on Sunday with a request to order the government to lift its ban on Vanunu traveling abroad.

The Justice Ministry said in response that Vanunu, who was freed in April after an 18-year jail term for treason for revealing some of Israel's nuclear secrets, still threatens national security because he intends to spill more secrets about his past work as a technician at the atomic reactor in Dimona.

Arms smuggler caught

Israeli troops caught a Palestinian trying to smuggle grenades in a barrel of pickles. The smuggler was arrested at a checkpoint in the central Gaza Strip on Sunday after six grenades were discovered in a barrel of pickles he was transporting.

Rabbis to talk cars

Israeli rabbis may use their Sabbath sermons to preach the virtues of auto safety.

The country's chief rabbinical council called on rabbis to discuss Israel's high rate of traffic accidents, The Jerusalem Post reported. Since January 1, 233 people have been killed on the roads in Israel.

WORLD

Anti-Semites attack Paris woman and baby

A young woman and her baby were attacked on a train near Paris by a group of anti-Semites.

Six attackers carrying knives tore off the woman's clothes, cut her hair, drew swastikas on her stomach and overturned a baby carriage holding the woman's 13-month-old child last Friday, police said.

Police said the men, described as being of North African origin, believed incorrectly that the woman was Jewish.

The woman was treated for shock but she and her baby were not seriously hurt.

French President Jacques Chirac said, "I demand that everything should be done to find the perpetrators of this shameful act in order that they should be tried and sentenced with the severity required."

Ukraine's Jews choose Germany over Israel

Ukrainian Jews are concerned about increased Jewish emigration to Germany and declining aliyah to Israel.

At last week's joint conference of the Association of Jewish Communities and Organizations of Ukraine and the Zionist Federation of Ukraine, participants said there was a dearth of Zionist activity in Ukraine, particularly in Jewish communities outside Kiev.

In 2002-2003, 10,400 Ukrainian Jews emigrated to Israel, compared to 15,200 who emigrated to Germany.

Brits want to outlaw racial incitement

The British government is making a fresh attempt to outlaw incitement to religious hatred after the House of Lords blocked an earlier effort.

The Board of Deputies, the umbrella organization representing most British Jews, has backed the proposed law, though Jews are already protected by existing race-hate legislation.

In the spring, the Board signed a joint statement from leaders of British religious communal organizations urging passage of the law.

S. African denies focus on IDF service

South African officials denied that they were investigating South African citizens who serve in the Israeli military.

During a recent U.N.-sponsored conference on Palestinian rights in Cape Town, the minister of intelligence, Ronald Kasrils, a Jew known for his anti-Israel views, pledged to investigate claims that Israel was recruiting "mercenaries" into its army, violating a South African law against citizens serving in foreign armed forces, The Jerusalem Post reported.

But Aziz Pahad, the deputy minister of foreign affairs, called the charge "revolutionary nonsense."

Albert Friedlander dies at 77

Rabbi Albert Friedlander, a former dean of the Leo Baeck College, died in London at the age of 77.

The Berlin-born Progressive rabbi, who died July 8, was a leader in the World Union for Progressive Judaism, the worldwide Reform group.

In 2001, he became the first rabbi born outside of Britain to receive the Order of Merit from Queen Elizabeth II.

Russian Jewish center attacked

Vandals attacked a Russian Jewish center for the second time in less than two months.

Unidentified assailants scrawled swastikas and anti-Semitic slogans on the Jewish community center in the city of Yoskhar-Ola in western Russia, a Russian news agency reported.

The assailants allegedly distracted the building's security guard before defacing the building. The July 7 attack follows a previous attack on the building that occurred about a month ago.

NORTH AMERICA

Jewish sites can seek security dollars

Jewish sites will be able to seek homeland security grants from states and cities.

The U.S. Homeland Security Department ruled last month that non-profit institutions can submit requests for part of the \$2 billion earmarked for grants from the Office of Domestic Preparedness.

Jewish groups are seeking a separate fund in this year's Homeland Security appropriations bill, currently stalled in Congress, to protect high-risk, non-profit institutions.