


IN THE NEWS
**Israel kills
 Hamas terrorist**

Israel killed a senior Hamas terrorist and wounded several Palestinians in a missile strike.

The man was killed Sunday night when a missile fired either by a drone or helicopter hit his car in the central Gaza Strip.

He was later identified as Khaled Abu Shamiyeh, 30, a resident of a nearby refugee camp.

He was a member of Izz a-Din al-Kassam, Hamas' military wing, The Associated Press reported.

**Israeli soldiers kill
 Palestinian in Gaza**

Israeli forces killed a Palestinian as he planted a mine in the Gaza Strip.

The bomber was one of two Palestinians fired upon by troops Sunday near the Karni junction on the boundary between Israel and the Gaza Strip.

The condition of his partner was not known, nor did any terrorist group immediately claim responsibility.

Also on Sunday, Shin Bet chief Avi Dichter said military sweeps in Gaza last week may have prevented an attack on Israelis vacationing in the Sinai over Rosh Hashanah.

**New Zealand keeps
 Holocaust denier out**

Holocaust denier David Irving plans to challenge the ban on his entry into New Zealand.

Irving was prevented from boarding a flight in Los Angeles on Sept. 16 when an urgent fax was sent by New Zealand officials to the airport, ordering airline officials to bar him from boarding an aircraft headed for New Zealand.

Irving wished to enter the country for the purpose of speaking at the National Press Club in Wellington, but when he announced his intention in late July, officials in New Zealand warned they would block his entry into the country.

WORLD REPORT

PUBLISHED WEEKDAYS BY JTA—THE GLOBAL NEWS SERVICE OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE • WWW.JTA.ORG

As rift at World Jewish Congress goes public, group could suffer

By URIEL HEILMAN

NEW YORK (JTA) — After a decade of unprecedented successes promoting the interests of Jews around the world, the World Jewish Congress now is at risk of being torn apart by the very people behind those accomplishments.

In an internal squabble that has turned ugly and gone public, the president and chairman of the organization's board are pitted against the congress' senior vice president and executive vice president, and charges of corruption and financial irregularities by one side are being met with accusations of blackmail and coercion by the other.

The spat could spell trouble for the future of the 68-year-old congress at a time of major overhaul and uncertainty.

Charges that top officials at the organization may have tried to hide \$1.2 million in a Swiss bank account, that the Jewish Agency for Israel made an unusual \$1.5 million payment to the congress, and that a senior lay leader at the congress is orchestrating a campaign of disinformation, defamation and intimidation in an attempt to seize power that could affect the organization's reputation and future.

People involved with the organization expressed concern that the latest conflict could impair the group in its worldwide fight against anti-Semitism, Holocaust restitution negotiations and Catholic-Jewish ties — all signature issues for the congress.

The feud became public recently when top officials at the congress discussed with the media allegations of financial irregularities at the organization.

Israel Singer, chairman of the WJC's governing board, said he talked publicly about the allegations to refute charges that Isi Leibler, senior vice president of the congress, already had begun peddling to the media and others outside the organization in a lengthy memorandum.

“People were calling me to tell me” about Leibler's memo, Singer said. “Important people in important places that had the document in their hands were calling me.”

Leibler, an Australian who made aliyah in 1999, said he went public with his 12-page memo because the congress had ignored his call for an independent, external audit of the group's finances — and because Singer had gone to the media pre-emptively in an attempt to discredit him.

In his memo, Leibler alleges that Singer has been unilaterally directing the congress' funds and expenses; that there is no detailed annual statement of income and expenditure at the congress, and that Singer was keeping a secret pension fund, totaling more than \$1.2 million, in an undisclosed bank account in Geneva, Switzerland.

Singer, who worked at the WJC for about 30 years and rose to the position of secretary general, retired in 2002 and was elected to his current lay position. He receives an annual pension of about \$226,000, according to WJC officials.

He has also played a lead role in restitution negotiations and is the president of the Claims Conference.

Pinchas Shapiro, deputy director at the WJC, said Leibler's memo is “fraught with factual inaccuracies;” that Leibler knows

Continued on page 2

**BEHIND
 THE
 HEADLINES**

■ *The WJC could be hurt by public squabble*

Continued from page 1

there is nothing nefarious about the \$1.2 million account; that the organization undergoes an external audit every year, and that Leibler's purpose in raising the questions is an attempt to discredit the stewardship of Singer and the group's president of 24 years, Edgar Bronfman, and seize power at the organization.

"This is not a fight about the 12-page memo. Leibler's memo is only a vehicle he wanted to use to seize the World Jewish Congress," Shapiro said. "He's attempting to hijack what I consider the most venerable Jewish organization in the world."

Leibler denies that.

"I have no interest in the presidency of the World Jewish Congress. I'm interested simply in restructuring and creating a democratic body," Leibler said.

Bronfman, 75, whose financial support helped revive the organization in the 1980s, has said he will step down as president in 2006. The congress has not yet begun considering successor candidates.

Liebler, who has sparred with Bronfman before, mostly over political differences, said those donors "have a right to fiscal transparency."

"I'm dealing with a series of issues that certainly raise the question that there may have been financial irregularities of an extraordinarily serious nature," he said. "There's an absolute imperative for the World Jewish Congress to have an independent, external audit."

But confidential e-mails obtained by JTA, which were sent in late August by

Leibler to Yoram Dinstein, the chairman of the group's task force on reform and restructuring and a former president of Tel Aviv University, seem to show that Leibler was willing to forego his demand for "a comprehensive full investigation and audit of the past five years" if the congress complied with several other demands: making Leibler a member of the board of a WJC institute, creating a budget for Leibler's international activities and giving him control over certain personnel decisions in the congress' Israel office.

Leibler says those e-mails were "purloined" from his computer, but he did not deny their veracity.

Also in late August, Leibler met with Israel's minister of Diaspora affairs, Natan Sharansky, to raise his questions about the congress' operations. A Sharansky adviser called the meeting "inappropriate," and some Jewish officials point to that meeting as evidence of Leibler's alleged intent to bully Bronfman and Singer into giving him more power in the organization.

Not long after this meeting, Bronfman rendered powerless the three-person operations committee that ran the congress's day-to-day affairs — consisting of Singer, Leibler and Elan Steinberg, executive vice president of the congress — and replaced it with a nine-person steering committee headed by Stephen Herbits, whom Bronfman described as his right-hand man at the Seagram Company, where Bronfman was chairman.

Steinberg, who left his post as executive vice president at the congress two years ago but returned a year later as a senior adviser, declined JTA's requests for comment.

Minutes of a WJC Operations Committee meeting of July 18 demonstrate Leibler's awareness of the bank account in Geneva and its subsequent transfer to New York. Congress officials say the account was in Geneva because that was the one place the congress had a pension plan in place for its Geneva office employees, and that nobody was trying to cover up existence of the account.

But Avi Beker, former secretary-general of the congress, told JTA he was never told about the account when he was at the congress.

"I was never aware that the money existed," Beker said. "I heard rumors only after I left. I never saw anything about it."

In his memo, Leibler says the \$1.2 million account previously had not been disclosed, and that he only found out about it after Daniel Lack, a lawyer and longtime congress staff member in Geneva, wrote to him about its existence. Leibler also says that Singer said that the money was ear-

marked for his pension and came from the Jewish Agency.

Once questions were raised about the account, the money was transferred to New York so WJC officials in New York could keep a closer eye on the money.

Singer denies that the money was ear-

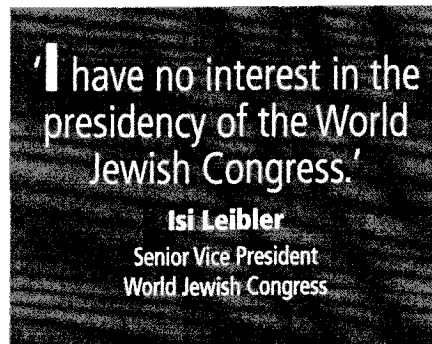
marked for anything specific, though he says there was consideration for using it to make pension payments to a couple of people at the congress.

The Jewish Agency says it made a \$1.5 million payment to the congress in 2001. The payment followed negotiations between the organizations after the agency had earlier ceased its annual contribution of \$500,000. The Jewish Agency says the \$1.5 million payment was not for anything specific and it was up to the congress to determine how to use it.

Bronfman did not return JTA's calls requesting comment, but Yoram Dori, an Israeli public relations executive who is representing Bronfman and Singer, said Bronfman "doesn't think that every day, again and again, he has to defend himself against a man who wants power and only power."

Mati Droblas, chairman of the Israel branch of the WJC and a member of the group's executive committee, said the congress' executive committee would meet Monday and likely will consider ways to eject Leibler from the congress. Steinberg, who is seen as an ally of Leibler, also could be at risk of ejection from the congress, where he has a salaried position.

"I think that the executive has to meet and decide if there is room for a person like this on the executive," Droblas said of Leibler.



JTA WORLD REPORT

Howard E. Friedman
President

Mark J. Joffe
Executive Editor and Publisher

Lisa Hostein
Editor

Michael S. Arnold
Managing Editor

Lenore A. Silverstein
Finance and Administration Director

Paula Simmonds
Marketing and Development Director

JTA WORLD REPORT is published five days a week, except holidays, by the Jewish Telegraphic Agency Inc., 330 Seventh Ave., New York, N.Y. 10001-5010. For more information about how to subscribe by e-mail, fax or regular mail, call (212) 643-1890, or visit our Web site at www.jta.org.
© JTA. Reproduction only with permission.

Push for more U.S. attention to anti-Semitism

By MATTHEW E. BERGER

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Politicians looking at what the United States can do to help quash a rise in global anti-Semitism are arriving at different conclusions.

Republicans in the U.S. Senate are leading an effort to raise awareness of the rise of anti-Semitic and anti-Zionist attacks in Europe and elsewhere.

At the same time, a bipartisan group of intellectuals is criticizing the Bush administration for not backing efforts to monitor and combat anti-Semitism abroad.

While the increase in anti-Semitism is a phenomenon virtually no one in Washington disputes, opinions differ as to how to tackle it from here.

Rep. Tom Lantos (D-Calif.) is pushing legislation that would mandate an annual State Department report on anti-Semitism and what countries are doing to combat it.

MONDAY

■ "Pioneers, Superstars, and Journey-men: American Jewish Baseball Players, 1882-2004," opens in New York City. The exhibit, sponsored by the American Jewish Historical Society, will be at the Center for Jewish History in New York until Dec. 26.

■ New York City's police department celebrates "350 Years of Jews in Law Enforcement." The event also will commemorate the 80th anniversary of the Shomrim Society, a Jewish fraternal organization of Jewish police officers.

TUESDAY

■ A Jewish literary symposium is the first in a series of Jewish cultural video conferences offered by the Center for Jewish History. Institutions interested in participating in the series should contact the center at rchodorov@cjh.org. A fee of \$250 and a T-1 line are required.

■ The U.N. general debate begins. The two weeks mark the beginning of the general assembly and draws the world's leaders and foreign ministers to address the international body. Israel is scheduled to speak Thursday.

SUNDAY

■ A two-day conference of the Federation of Jewish Communities of Ukraine begins in Kiev. The forum is aimed at reviewing 15 years of Jewish renaissance in Ukraine and at defining the strategy for the development of Ukrainian Jewry in the near future. It is expected that the forum will bring together some 3,500 participants.

It also would create an office within the State Department to handle the issue.

"Unfortunately, anti-Semitism has had an appalling upsurge in many countries across the globe," Lantos told JTA. "It is my judgement, as the only Holocaust survivor in this Congress, that anti-Semitism deserves special attention."

The State Department opposes the legislation, arguing it already monitors anti-Semitism in other annual reports.

A group of 104 "prominent Americans," coordinated by the David S. Wyman Institute for Holocaust Studies, sent a letter last week to Secretary of State Colin Powell suggesting that the fight against anti-Semitism deserves "specific, focused attention," and expressing disappointment that the State Department opposes Lantos' legislation.

"This is, unfortunately, a historic and worldwide phenomenon," former Rep. Steve Solarz (D-N.Y.), a coordinator of the effort, told JTA. "We know what the consequences of anti-Semitism are."

Solarz is joined by Jack Kemp, a former secretary of Housing and Urban Development; Jeane Kirkpatrick, a former U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, and James Woolsey, a former CIA director.

In its official comments on the Global Anti-Semitism Awareness Act, the State Department said that other department reports already touch on anti-Semitism, and that a report devoted solely to anti-Semitism "could erode our credibility by being interpreted as favoritism in human rights reporting."

The department also said that anti-Semitism issues already are coordinated out of the Office of the Special Envoy for Holocaust Issues in the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs.

Lantos said Powell told him he agrees with the department's position. A State Department spokesman was unavailable for comment.

Solarz and Lantos said they think global anti-Semitism warrants the same treatment as international human trafficking and the situation in Tibet, which are dealt with in specific State Department reports.

"The notion that Jews are singled out

for special and preferential treatment is sort of insane," Lantos said. "Jews are singled out for persecution, and we need to prevent that."

The State Department has said it does not oppose a similar bill sponsored by Sen. George Voinovich (R-Ohio), which passed the Senate in May and which calls for a one-time report on global anti-Semitism. It also requires the department to document anti-Semitic acts

in its annual reports on international religious freedom and human rights.

Lantos said he is close to a deal with Rep. Chris Smith (R-N.J.), who is expected to sponsor the House of Representatives' version of the Voinovich

legislation, to amend it and make it similar to Lantos' vision.

Lantos said he believed the bill could be voted on this year and receive unanimous support if he can come to an agreement with Smith.

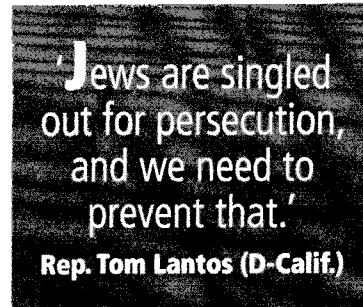
Support for increased monitoring of anti-Semitic acts is popular on Capitol Hill. Sen. Rick Santorum (R-Pa.) said last week that he supports the Lantos legislation in principle, but believes the State Department is impeding progress.

"My feeling is this is an important enough issue that we should be taking note of it and documenting it," he told reporters. "The general concept is one we should be paying attention to."

Republicans have been touting their efforts against anti-Semitism as part of a larger election strategy to court the American Jewish vote.

A recent White House booklet, "President George W. Bush: A Friend of the American Jewish Community," focused on Bush's condemnation of anti-Semitic comments by the former prime minister of Malaysia and his decision to send high-level delegations to anti-Semitism conferences sponsored by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

Warren Miller, chairman of the U.S. Commission for the Preservation of America's Heritage Abroad, also praised Bush's efforts last week, suggesting that since taking office Bush has made priorities of Holocaust remembrance and action against anti-Semitism.



NEWS IN BRIEF

WORLD

Islamic organizer deported

Germany deported the organizer of an Islamic conference slated for October because of his alleged anti-Israel and anti-U.S. views.

Fadi Madi, a spokesman for the International Movement Against American and Zionist Globalization and Supremacy, was sent back to Lebanon on Saturday.

A Web site for the Arab Islamic Congress, to be held Oct. 1-3 in Berlin, calls for the "liberation of all the occupied territories and countries in struggle against the American-Zionist hegemony and occupation," according to news agencies.

Arrest at Israeli Embassy in Baku

Security forces in Azerbaijan arrested an Iranian citizen caught videotaping the Israeli Embassy in Baku.

Israeli officials believe the man was collecting information for Iranian intelligence. The man was arrested Sept. 1, but the arrest was only made public on Sunday.

Russian Jew treated in Israeli hospital

A Russian Jewish man injured in a Chechen terrorist attack was brought to an Israeli hospital for treatment.

Igor Leib, who injured in his chest and shoulder in a Chechen terror attack on a Moscow subway on Aug. 31, has been brought for treatment to Hadassah University Medical Center in Jerusalem along with his mother, Zoya Budman, who was injured in her leg, the Jerusalem Post reported. Lev Leviev, the Uzbek-born Jewish businessman, paid for the trip.

Study: MRIs detect BRCA cancer better

MRIs detect breast cancer caused by gene mutations occurring in some 2 percent of Ashkenazi women better than mammographies, according to a new study.

The study involving the mutation to the BRCA genes, which have been linked to breast and ovarian cancers in Ashkenazi Jewish women, was published last week in the Journal of the American Medical Association.

According to the Human Genome Project in Washington, some 2 percent of Ashkenazi Jews carry one of the BRCA-1 and BRCA-2 mutations that have been linked to the cancers.

A 1997 study into the risk of breast and ovarian cancers among Ashkenazi Jews found that, by the age of 70, a woman with the mutations has a 56 percent chance of getting breast cancer and a 17 percent chance of getting ovarian cancer.

Nothing mystical about this

Two Israeli photographers were injured in a scrap with Madonna's bodyguards.

The melee broke out last Friday after the cameramen tried to photograph Madonna, who is in Israel for a Kabbalah conference.

NORTH AMERICA

Report looks at U.N. Israel resolutions

A report by the American Jewish Committee blasts the United Nations for its anti-Israel bias.

The annual report, "One-Sided: The Relentless Campaign Against Israel in the United Nations," provides a detailed look at the U.N.'s Israel-related resolutions and country-by-country voting records on the topic.

"The U.N. General Assembly has an obsession with Israel that consistently poisons the climate for bilateral negotiations by the parties themselves," Jason Isaacson, director of the AJCommittee's Office of

Government and International Affairs, said in a statement. The General Assembly's new session opens Tuesday.

The report is available at www.ajc.org.

Mayim, mayim

The Jewish National Fund received a U.S. Forest Service grant.

The grant, the second the JNF has received from the forest service, will provide water-monitoring kits to U.S. Jewish schools and schools in Israel to participate in World Water Monitoring Day.

The program encourages students to test water in areas around them for pollution between Sept. 18 and Oct. 18.

The information then will be entered in a global database.

MIDDLE EAST

Israeli Arabs to strike

Israeli Arabs are planning a strike on the fourth anniversary of riots in which 13 of their community were killed by Israeli police.

On Sunday, community leaders voted to approve an Oct. 1 strike.

The Orr Commission has criticized both the Israeli government of Ehud Barak and the police for their responses to the October 2000 riots.

Israeli population nears 7 million

Israel's population grew by 1.6 percent last year.

The country's population stands at 6.8 million, according to Central Bureau of Statistics census figures released last week ahead of Rosh Hashanah. Of that number, 5.5 million Israelis are Jews, and the remainder Arabs, whether Muslim, Christian or Druse.

The 1.6 percent population growth over the past year is a dip from the previous year's growth rate of 1.8 percent.

Of 22,000 new immigrants to Israel, half were from the former Soviet Union, 15 percent from Ethiopia and 9 percent from France.

Salad days

Paul Newman has given half a million dollars to launch a camp for Israeli and Palestinian children suffering from life-threatening diseases.

The groundbreaking ceremony for the camp, to be called the Jordan River Village, was held earlier this month.

It will be the eighth camp in the Hole in the Wall Camps association for ill children that Newman founded.

The plan is to host Israeli and Arab children from Israel and neighboring countries at the Galilee camp, which will be open year-round.

Magazine under investigation

A fervently Orthodox magazine in Israel is suspected of inciting violence against Muslims.

Attorney General Menachem Mazuz ordered police last week to open an investigation against Sha'a Tova magazine after an Israeli Arab lawmaker, Ahmed Tibi, complained about one of its columnists.

Commenting on 251 pilgrims killed in a stampede in the Muslim holy city of Mecca in February, the columnist wrote: "This time the Haj," the pilgrimage to Mecca, "can really be described as the 'festival of sacrifice,' because there were a good few hundred sacrificed there, which was festive for us, at least."

Sha'a Tova did not immediately return calls for comment.

Back to Athens

Twenty-four disabled Israelis are taking part in the 2004 Paralympics in Athens.

The Games opened in Athens on Saturday, with seven Israelis taking part in rowing, shooting and table tennis matches.

Expectations are high for Israel at the 11-day event, after the national delegation took six medals in 2000 at Sydney.