


IN THE NEWS
**Disengagement
to get under way?**

Ariel Sharon's plan for Israeli disengagement from the Palestinians is slated for a Knesset vote Oct. 25.

The Israeli prime minister told the Knesset on Monday that he hoped the date was early enough to allow for withdrawals from the Gaza Strip and parts of the West Bank in 2005.

**Congress passes
money for security**

The U.S. Congress approved \$25 million to protect synagogues and other high-risk non-profit institutions from terrorism.

Both houses of Congress passed the money as part of the Homeland Security Appropriations Act, which awaits President Bush's signature.

Jewish groups, including the United Jewish Communities and the Orthodox Union, led an effort to gain a separate security fund for nonprofit groups.

Several other Jewish groups were concerned that security aid for synagogues and churches would cross the line separating church and state.

**U.S. Congress passes
anti-Semitism office bill**

A bill to create a State Department office to monitor international anti-Semitism passed the U.S. Congress.

The Global Anti-Semitism Awareness/Review Act passed the House of Representatives on Sunday, five months after the bill was cleared by the Senate.

The act, which awaits President Bush's approval, requires the State Department to create an office to monitor and combat anti-Semitism, and to file a report on anti-Semitic incidents around the world.

The government also would be required to include information about anti-Semitic acts in its annual reports on human rights practices and international religious freedom.

WORLD REPORT

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As part of his 'charm offensive,' Gadhafi courts former Libyan Jews

By RACHEL POMERANCE

NEW YORK (JTA) — In Libya, a land that at times has shown as little hospitality to Jews as its Sahara Desert does to travelers, a visiting Jewish delegation is getting the royal treatment.

A group of Libyan Jews who now live in Italy met early Monday afternoon with Libyan leader Muammar Gadhafi in Tripoli, according to a statement obtained by JTA from an Italian P.R. firm working on behalf of Gadhafi's son.

According to the statement, Saadi Gadhafi, a professional soccer player living in Italy, made the initial contact with representatives of Italy's Libyan Jewish community during a recent meeting in an Italian hotel.

Shalom Naim, chairman of the American Libyan Jewry Association, described the encounter as "a handshake and a photo opportunity" during which no negotiations were undertaken regarding compensation for the Libyan Jewish community, which was expelled from the North African country after the 1967 Six-Day War.

"We had agreed that no negotiations were supposed to take place," said Naim, adding that he had been trying, unsuccessfully, to reach the Jewish delegation by phone. "We believe that a better environment for negotiating will be in Italy. Plus, this is not the right delegation for negotiating."

The group, Naim said, comprised six representatives of Italy's Libyan Jewish community and was being led by Shalom Teshuba, vice president of the Jewish community of Rome.

Six months after Libya indicated it would compensate Jews forced to flee the country, the government invited the Jewish group to forge ties and determine compensation for communal property left behind, said Stanley Urman, executive director of Justice for Jews from Arab Countries.

Gadhafi welcomed the delegation with full honors, calling them "brothers of Libya," said Leone Paserman, president of the

Rome Jewish community and a participant on the trip, in advance of the actual meeting with the Libyan leader.

The visit is "an important opening," Paserman said.

"The Jewish community of Libya is one of the most ancient, with 2,300 years of history," he said. "I hope that the resumption of relations can lead to the restoration of some synagogues and the recovery of the traces that bear witness to a culture that marked the history" of Libya.

Advocates have been fighting for the rights of an estimated 800,000 Jews who fled Arab countries in the wake of Israel's creation in 1948. The visit to Libya is seen as a potentially precedent-setting step for other Arab countries, Jewish officials say.

Arab countries adamantly demand redress for Palestinian refugees who fled Israel in 1948, but only a few have acknowledged the issue of Jewish refugees as well.

The 1978 Camp David Accord between Egypt and Israel referred vaguely to the "refugee problem," without specifying Jews or Palestinians. A member of the Iraqi Governing Council reportedly said recently that the country would return properties stolen

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**BEHIND
THE
HEADLINES**

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from Iraqi Jews.

But the Libyan effort at redress appears to be the most significant — and particularly striking, considering the source.

Gadhafi reportedly financed Black September, the Palestinian terrorist group that kidnapped and killed Israeli athletes at the 1972 Olympic Games in Munich. The Libyan dictator still refuses to recognize Israel.

The invitation to the Jewish delegation comes as Gadhafi has made a political about-face in an effort to gain economic and diplomatic benefits. Observers say his Jewish outreach should be seen as part of that process.

Libya has seen its international standing improve steadily since it compensated victims of terrorist bombings it sponsored — of a 1986 bombing of a Berlin discotheque; a 1988 Pan Am flight over Lockerbie, Scotland, and a 1989 UTA flight over Africa.

Libya also was rewarded for opening its weapons of mass destruction programs for inspection and elimination. President Bush lifted the final U.S. sanctions on Libya last month, and the European Union lifted its sanctions against Libya on Monday.

Seif Gadhafi, another of Gadhafi's sons who is also his likely successor, may have something to do with the movement. He told CBS' "60 Minutes" that Libya wants to be "the spearhead of all positive changes in the Middle East."

According to a recent report in Israel's Ma'ariv newspaper, Seif Gadhafi welcomed Jews back to Libya, but did so in a way that was sure to raise questions.

"They are Libyans and are therefore entitled for compensation," he said, according to Ma'ariv. "I call on the 30,000 Libyan Jews, including those in Israel, to come back to the land of their ancestors as citizens and leave the land they took from the Palestinians."

While Jewish officials have welcomed Gadhafi's moves, they say many questions remain.

Gadhafi is "trying to gain brownie points in America," said Arye Mekel, Israel's consul general in New York.

"If he just invites the delegation and speaks nicely to them and puts them up in a nice hotel — and then he basically gives nothing — then it's just a ploy," Mekel said.

Mekel was referring to a report in Israel's Yediot Achronot newspaper that delegation members were hosted in a Tripoli hotel's presidential suites.

Malcolm Hoenlein, executive vice chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, also took a wait-and-see approach.

Gadhafi sees Jews as an important part of "this charm offensive in trying to trade and other things that he is interested in of the West," Hoenlein said. But "we don't just give him a blank check if he maintains the hostile position toward Israel."

Anti-Semitic riots in Libya began during Israel's 1948 War of Independence, and the vast majority of Libya's 40,000-strong Jewish community left for Israel shortly after the birth of the Jewish state.

By 1967, only 6,000 Jews remained in Libya, most in Tripoli. All but about 200 had left by the time Gadhafi took power in 1969, according to Urman. Only a single, elderly Jewish woman is believed to remain there today.

Urman could not assign a financial value to the communal assets the Libyan Jews left behind, but said they included more than 50 synagogues, more than 20 cemeteries, two Jewish community centers, a Jewish hospital, more than 10

Jewish schools, a retirement home and two mikvahs, or ritual baths.

It's unclear what course compensation might take — from reconstructing run-down synagogues and cemeteries to financial remuneration to erecting a museum about Libyan Jewish history.

Raffaello Fellah, a Libyan Jewish leader in Rome, claims to have Gadhafi's authority to restore the Jewish ghetto in Tripoli, including an old synagogue.

In any case, the move marks a major development in recognizing the claims of Jewish refugees, Urman said.

When Justice for Jews from Arab Countries, a coalition of

several groups, was born two-and-a-half years ago, "this issue wasn't even on the map," he said.

Since then, Israel has stepped up its efforts to record the histories of displaced Jewish refugees, and the U.S. Congress has two resolutions pending on the topic, Urman said.

"Our objective is to get it on the international agenda," Urman said. "The way to deal with it is direct negotiations between the parties," and "in the context of the Middle East peace process."

Urman's group believes the issue of Jewish refugees can help resolve one of the most difficult issues in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict — the Palestinian demand for a refugee "right of return" to Israel, considered a means of strangling the Jewish state demographically.

Because there were roughly equal numbers of Jewish and Arab refugees from the 1948 war, Urman's group has argued that the issue of Jewish refugees gives Israel leverage against Palestinian claims.

But will dealing with compensation outside the context of the peace process undermine that tactic?

"If the issue on the agenda were only compensation, then that may lay open this development to that charge, but that's not the only issue on the table. The issue is much broader," Urman says.

Along with recognizing a longstanding injustice, Gadhafi is attempting to re-establish ties with the Jewish world and maybe even with Israel, he said.



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Mother, two young sons among Israeli dead

By DINA KRAFT

TEL AVIV (JTA) — In a recent photograph, Michal Alexander lounges, smiling, in a rope hammock by the Red Sea, her eyes half-closed in a relaxed, dreamy, Sinai state of bliss.

Now, just four months after that picture was taken, Alexander's friends, family and even Prime Minister Ariel Sharon — in whose office she worked for the past four years — are grappling with her violent, untimely death.

Alexander, 27, a woman with a passion for literature and music, was killed instantly while sleeping in a palm-thatch hut when a piece of shrapnel from one of the bombs that targeted Israeli vacationers in Sinai on Oct. 7 crashed through her hut and hit her in the head.

Alexander was buried Sunday, one of at least 12 Israelis killed in the coordinated bomb attacks on two Sinai resort towns.

In all, at least 32 people — among them Egyptians and Russians and Italian tourists — were killed when a truck packed with explosives rammed into the lobby of the Taba Hilton, followed by twin explosions at the Ras Satan beach resort, 30 miles down the coast.

Alexander's friend, who lay asleep next to her when one of the Ras Satan bombs exploded, was injured but alive. She was dragged away, shouting wildly, "Where is Michal? Where is Michal?"

The devastation cut especially deep for the Ziv family of the small Galilee community of Rakefet. When they said goodnight to each other at the Taba Hilton on Oct. 7, they were a family of six — mother, father, twin teenage daughters and two sons.

But then a bomb-packed truck exploded

underneath their ninth-floor hotel rooms, hurtling the parents, Zohar and Tzila, and their two sons downward into the crash of concrete, debris and flames.

Zohar Ziv survived with moderate injuries, but Tzila, 43, a teacher of Arabic, was killed — as were the two boys, Gilad, 11, and Lior, 3.

The twin girls, Yael and Sharon, 18, survived unscathed in the room next door.

"I cannot believe this. It is hard for me to even speak," said Arie Sharon, Tzila Ziv's father.

Because the Egyptians were delaying the bodies' return until they had been positively identified, Lior Ziv's body was smuggled out in a small cardboard box, the Ha'aretz newspaper reported.

Zohar Ziv was told of his wife and sons' deaths while he was recovering in the hospital. His daughters left the hospital weeping and walking with difficulty.

Zohar Ziv's brother Reuben said the family had been inundated with calls from people asking how they could help.

"But there is nothing to help with, no one can help us. The tragedy is terrible and it is ours," he said.

In a recent family photo, the Zivs are seen together smiling, their arms around one another. The Israeli newspaper Yediot Achronot ran the photo on its front page, labeling who was killed and who was injured.

Another family torn apart by the Taba attack was the Paizakovs, immigrants from Kazakhstan.

Ludmilla and Oleg Paizakov, in Sinai to celebrate their 10th wedding anniversary, were both killed in the hotel. Shortly before the explosion, they had called home to Bat Yam to say goodnight to their two young sons, who were being cared for by their grandparents while the couple was on holiday. Ludmilla was 30 and Oleg was 32.

Roommates Assaf Greenwald and Rotem Moriah, both 27, were not even staying at the Taba Hilton, but had stopped to use the bathroom on their way to the border crossing back into Israel when they were killed.

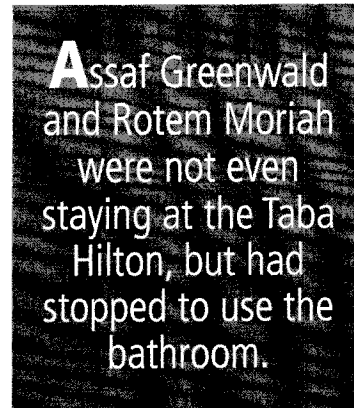
"It was a case of complete bad luck," said Ya'ara Ben-Shlomo, who played in a rock band

with Greenwald.

Greenwald played electric guitar and worked in advertising. Moriah worked in computers but was saving money to pursue his true passion: film directing.

"For us, Rotem has no substitute," one of his friends told the Ma'ariv newspaper. "He was totally unique. He loved music, he loved to travel abroad. Most of all, he loved life."

The other Israelis killed were Khalil Zeitounya, 10, of Jaffa, whose father died on the same day 10 years ago; Hafez al-Hafi, 39, from Lod, who was on holiday with his family; Roy Avisaf, 28, who had gone for a vacation with his girlfriend before the university year began; and Einat Naor, 28, from Kibbutz Zakim, whose father had to identify her by the palm of her hand and the soles of her feet.



Collection of rare Hebraica could fetch up to \$11 million

By DANIELLA PELED

LONDON (JTA) — Prayer books with commentary are plentiful today, but in medieval times they were more difficult to obtain.

Hand lettered by master craftsmen and often boasting exquisite illuminations, prayer books were then only produced for the very rich. The precious few that survive are expensive to purchase.

But for those who can afford it, some rare and unusual Hebraica treasures will be up for grabs in New York on Oct. 27-28, when more than 450 items from Britain's Montefiore Endowment are due to be sold.

Auctioneers at Sotheby's expect the collection, spanning eight cen-

turies and diverse parts of the Diaspora, to fetch up to \$11 million.

A 15th-century Hebrew Bible from Spain could bring in up to \$350,000, and an illuminated Italian manuscript from around 1460, containing prayers and poems on life-cycle events such as marriage, circumcision and death, is expected to go for up to \$200,000.

Other treasures include Sefer Ha'assufot, a 14th-century work by the scholar Elijah ben Isaac of Carcassone, full of unpublished responsa and legal documents, that is estimated at between \$120,000 and \$150,000.

It's a collection that Camilla Previte, head of Judaica at Sotheby's in London, describes as "fantastic" both in quality and scope. "It gives an example of every area a collector could possibly want," she says.

NEWS IN BRIEF

NORTH AMERICA

Hate crimes provision removed

Republicans removed a measure that would have expanded federal involvement in prosecuting hate crimes. The Republican leadership in the U.S. House of Representatives removed the provision from a pending defense bill, even though it had passed both houses.

The Anti-Defamation League said it was "disappointed" by the decision, which would have enabled the Department of Justice to expand its involvement in local prosecutions of hate crimes.

ADL had lobbied for the legislation. "We will carry this forward into the next administration and the next Congress," the ADL said Monday in a statement.

Civil liberties groups aid Pollard

The American Civil Liberties Union and several other groups have filed briefs supporting Jonathan Pollard.

The brief supports Pollard in his appeal of a U.S. District Court ruling denying his attorneys access to classified information that was used in determining the former U.S. Navy intelligence officer's life sentence for spying for Israel. The brief also was supported by the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers, the American Association of Jewish Lawyers and Jurists and several New York officials, including U.S. Rep. Anthony Weiner, a Democrat, and former state Attorney General Robert Abrams.

A hearing on the appeal is set for January before a three-judge panel.

Cincy cemetery desecrated

More than 100 tombstones were knocked over at a Jewish cemetery in suburban Cincinnati. The weekend desecration at the United Jewish Cemeteries in Walnut Hills, Ohio, was the second incident at the cemetery in the past few months.

Cemetery officials said more police supervision and media attention is needed to prevent further acts.

WORLD

U.N. bolsters anti-terror work

The U.N. Security Council voted unanimously to ratchet up anti-terrorism efforts.

The 15-0 resolution passed last Friday called on all nations to prosecute or extradite anyone supporting terrorism.

It was introduced weeks ago by Russia after attacks there, including a school hostage crisis in which more than 300 people were killed.

The resolution was adopted the day after coordinated bombings in Egypt targeted Israelis vacationing in the Sinai desert during the Jewish holidays. The resolution creates a Security Council working group to assess possible measures against terrorists.

Sanctions have already been imposed against Al-Qaida and former Taliban leaders in Afghanistan.

The body also will consider creating an international fund to compensate victims of terrorism and their families, possibly financed through voluntary contributions and assets seized from terrorists.

Report: Iraq effort a bad idea

The U.S.-led war in Iraq is a distraction from the war on terrorism, an Israeli think tank said.

But the report, released Monday by Tel Aviv University's Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies, also said Israel is better off strategically in 2004 than a year ago. The report said the U.S. effort in Iraq has deflected attention from other terrorist havens such as Afghanistan, and that it has radicalized Islamists to join the struggle against U.S. occupation.

The report also found that while Palestinian motivation to commit

terror attacks has not been reduced in the past year, Israeli intelligence has prevented many attacks from taking place.

Romania to mark Holocaust

Romania is slated to commemorate its first Holocaust Remembrance Day on Tuesday.

The annual commemoration was one of several measures Romania implemented after government officials got themselves into hot water last year when they denied that the Holocaust had taken place on Romanian soil.

Both houses of Parliament will hold a joint session Tuesday to mark the day. The commemoration normally will be held Oct. 9, but was moved this year because of Shabbat.

MIDEAST

Conspiracy theories thrive

The Muslim Brotherhood accused the Mossad and Jews of planning and carrying out recent terror attacks in the Sinai.

The fundamentalist group said in a statement that the attacks were designed to divert attention from Israel's "brutal massacres" against the Palestinians and the "barbaric attacks by the American occupation forces in Iraq."

Israeli and Egyptian security experts believe Al-Qaida or an associated group carried out the Oct. 7 attacks, which killed 32 people, at least 12 of them Israelis.

Camp David revisited

Egypt proposed posting troops along its border with Israel to prevent more bombings in the Sinai.

Israeli political sources said Monday that Jerusalem was weighing the proposal from Egyptian officials, which would mean revising parts of the 1979 Israeli-Egyptian peace accord that call for the Sinai desert to be demilitarized.

"In principle, any move that would secure the border is welcome," said one Israeli official, referring to last week's bombings in the Sinai resorts of Taba and Ras Satan that killed more than 30 people, many of them Israelis.

But the official said Israel was likely to suggest that the U.N. peacekeeping force in the Sinai be bolstered instead of allowing a new garrison of Egyptian troops on the border.

Gaza sweep continues

Ariel Sharon rejected his top general's advice to curtail an Israeli sweep of the northern Gaza Strip.

Israeli sources said Monday that the Israeli prime minister believes ending Operation Days of Repentance so soon after last week's Sinai bombings could embolden terrorists in Gaza.

On Sunday, Lt. Gen. Moshe Ya'alon, Israel's chief of staff, told the prime minister that the operation launched Sept. 30 should be brought to a close, sources said.

According to the top brass, Days of Repentance largely has achieved its objective of crushing Hamas rocket crews in the northern Gaza Strip.

Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom said Monday that troops would be withdrawn from the area soon.

Settlers arrested for assault

Three West Bank settlers were arrested for assaulting Palestinians. Israeli police took the residents of the Tapuach settlement into custody Sunday after they set fire to an olive grove in Kafr Yussuf and threw rocks at Palestinian farmers there.

The suspects said they acted in self-defense. Police have not yet decided whether to press charges.