

## IN THE NEWS

## Dispute emerges over Gaza deaths

Israeli forces hunting Gaza Strip mortar crews killed seven Palestinian youths.

Palestinians described the dead in Tuesday's incident as strawberry farmers felled by Israeli tank fire in the north Gaza town of Beit Lahiya.

But Israeli military sources said the tank fired at terrorists who had fired mortars at the nearby Israeli settlement of Nisanit, wounding two people.

Palestinian Authority presidential hopeful Mahmoud Abbas reacted furiously to the Beit Lahiya killings, referring to Israel as the "Zionist enemy" — a term used by Arab groups that reject Israel's existence.

Incensed Israeli officials hoped the comment was merely campaign rhetoric.

## Israeli planes help search for victims

India has been using Israeli unmanned aerial vehicles to search for victims of the Southeast Asian tsunami.

The Searcher and Heron drones' performance could hasten an estimated \$200 million deal now pending between Israel and India for another 50 Heron/Eagle unmanned planes, an Israeli official told DefenseNews.com.

## Armitage, Assad meet

The U.S. deputy secretary of state discussed terrorism with the president of Syria.

Richard Armitage stopped in Damascus on Monday and met with Bashar Assad.

He discussed Syria's support for Palestinian terrorist groups and support from within Syria for the anti-American insurgency in Iraq, as well as the presence of Syrian troops in Lebanon.

The Bush administration placed sanctions on Syria last year because of its support for terrorism, and has threatened to introduce further sanctions unless it changes course.

# WORLD REPORT

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## As extent of tragedy emerges, Jews pitch in for tsunami victims

By RACHEL POMERANCE and PETER EPHROSS

**N**EW YORK (JTA) — When it comes to helping victims of the Southeast Asian tsunami, the American Jewish World Service is taking the adage "teach a man how to fish" quite literally.

As part of its long-term relief efforts for victims of the Dec. 26 tragedy, the group is working with partner organizations in the region, including the Sanghamitra Service Society in Andhra Pradesh, India, which helps local fishing communities with sustainable development and disaster preparedness.

The philosophy behind the group's post-tsunami effort is the same as that behind general AJWS operations — long-term efforts through collaboration with groups in the region.

"We don't just go in and leave. We go in and we develop," said Ronni Strongin, a spokeswoman for AJWS, which already has raised more than \$2 million in online contributions for tsunami victims.

The AJWS isn't alone in its approach: While not ignoring immediate needs, other Jewish groups also are planning aid that addresses the long-range needs of areas affected by the tsunami, which is believed to have claimed at least 130,000 lives.

The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee has raised more than \$1.7 million.

"Everybody comes in to provide emergency relief, and then they all leave and there's nobody left behind to help rebuild the infrastructure," said JDC's executive vice president, Steven Schwager. "While a portion of our money will go for short-term emergency relief, a larger part of our money

will go for infrastructure to leave something behind that the Jewish community can get credit for."

That approach is likely to influence the Jewish Coalition for Disaster Relief, an umbrella of North American Jewish organizations, expected to convene next week at the JDC's request.

The group provides a central address and decision-making process for disbursement of Jewish relief aid.

Until then, the JDC plans to allocate funds it has raised to local agencies on the ground like the International Rescue Committee in Indonesia. In India, it will send funds to the local Jewish community.

Nearly 40 Jewish federations are soliciting funds for tsunami victims — UJA Federation of New York has raised some \$500,000 — and plan to donate the money directly to JDC, according to the United Jewish Communities, the coordinating body of the federation system. The JDC is an overseas partner of the federation system.

Like other groups collecting relief money, Jewish organizations report that donors have responded quickly.

"The response has been very good," said Kenneth Bandler, a spokesman for the American Jewish Committee, which has collected more than \$200,000 so far.

For its part, the Union for Reform Judaism announced that it is donating \$100,000 to organizations helping tsunami victims. Further allocations from the union's aid fund, which so far has taken in more than \$300,000, will be made in coming weeks, the union announced.

Israel also is pitching in. The Israeli

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BEHIND  
THE  
HEADLINES

## ■ Jews contributing to relief effort in aftermath of tsunami's devastation

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government sent aid to Thailand and Sri Lanka that included medicine, medical equipment, doctors, nurses and body bags.

In addition, volunteers with Zaka, the Israeli organization that collects victims' body parts after terrorist attacks, have been identifying bodies in Thailand.

The aftermath of the disaster has allowed for a breakthrough of sorts for Israel's chief relief agency.

Magen David Adom officials have been involved in discussions with the International Red Cross on providing aid. That's a first for the Israeli group, according to Daniel Allen, executive vice president of American Red Magen David for Israel, which raises funds for the Israeli group.

The International Red Cross has excluded Magen David Adom from such discussions in the past, and has forced the Israeli group to wear different uniforms. But Magen David Adom intends to build a self-standing field clinic in the disaster zone, and this time its workers will be able to wear their uniforms, adorned with a red Jewish star, when they arrive in the region next week.

In addition to increased collaboration between the American Red Cross and its Israeli counterpart, and pressure by the American Red Cross on Israel's behalf, "no one was going to deny anybody the opportunity to help," Allen said.

Hadassah, the Women's Zionist Organization of America, also is soliciting

funds to allow Hadassah medical staff in Israel to travel to the region to offer their services.

Chabad has provided a wealth of services in Thailand. Among its efforts, the local branch of Chabad paid for Zaka volunteers to come to the resort town of Phuket to identify both Jewish and non-Jewish victims, and the three Chabad Houses in Thailand have served as crisis centers for Israeli survivors of the disaster.

On New Year's Day, Chabad also sent five victims — four to Israel and one to Britain — home for burial.

Smaller Jewish institutions and individuals also are stepping up to the plate.

Five children in New York City are raising money for the victims the old fashioned way — through a bake sale. The children, aged 3-12, have raised close to \$500 by selling chocolate chip and sugar cookies.

"We think that this will make them happy, and it makes us happy, too," said Dassi Hirschfeld, 10.

The money raised through the bake sale is being given to the JDC and the AJWS.

The Rambam Mesivta yeshiva in Lawrence, N.Y., has raised nearly \$5,000 from students and parents in the past few days.

Students were reminded of their obligation under Jewish law to help victims, and the group decided to give the money to Sri Lankan Airlines, which is helping

child victims.

According to the school principal, Rabbi Yotav Eliach, this approach puts a face behind the dollars and gives students a feeling of connection.

It's "one thing when you get something from a large corporate entity," Eliach said. It's "another thing when you know you're getting it from kids."

Eliach planned to bring a handful of class representatives Thursday to deliver the funds to the Sri Lankan ambassador in New York.

Some synagogues have included special commemorations for the victims.

For example, the Jan. 1 Shabbat service at Manhattan's Park East synagogue brought together high-level diplomats from Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Thailand, India, Sweden, Indonesia, India and the United States.

"The theme was we walk through the valley of the shadow of death, and don't remain in it," Rabbi Arthur Schneier said.

Schneier talked about the story of Noah — which recounts a biblical flood that destroyed civilization — and how the rainbow signaled the time when people would come together again.

In Washington, Ohev Sholom Talmud Torah Congregation held a Jan. 1 prayer service attended by Ambassador H.K.J.R. Bandara of Sri Lanka and Reuven Azar, counselor of political affairs for the Israeli Embassy.

**'We don't just go in and leave. We go in and we develop.'**

**Ronni Strongin**  
American Jewish World Service

**JTA**  
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## Peace message from Ankara

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Turkey urged Israel and the Palestinian Authority to resume peace talks.

"We don't want to see any terrorist attacks, any suicide bombings, and on the other side, there are so many people lost on the Palestinian side," Turkish Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul told Israel's Channel Two television Monday during a visit to Jerusalem, the highest-level contact between the two countries in a year.

"It is time to talk about peace. It is time to talk about how we contribute to

peace," Gul said.

"Turkey has a traditional link with both sides."

Turkey is Israel's closest Middle East ally, a link that has cost Turkey support in the Arab world.

The current government in Ankara has Islamist roots and last year angered Jerusalem by accusing it of "state terrorism" toward the Palestinians.

Gul's visit was seen as a Turkish bid to restore ties with Israel and, by extension, with the United States.

# State's anti-Semitism report praises, prods Europe

By MATTHEW E. BERGER

WASHINGTON, Jan. 4 (JTA) — The U.S. State Department's first report on global anti-Semitism finds increased governmental action in Europe to combat bias against Jews, but an uneven track record among law enforcement agencies responding to anti-Semitic incidents.

The report, slated for release Wednesday and obtained in advance by JTA, comes after Jewish lawmakers and community officials pushed Congress last year to pass a law requiring the State Department to step up monitoring of anti-Semitic incidents around the world. The report is expected to be released annually.

The law, and the report, are part of an effort to pressure European governments to do more to stop a wave of anti-Semitic incidents across the continent since the Palestinian intifada began more than four years ago. Jewish organizations have been strong advocates for forums on anti-Semitism held by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and others.

While little new information can be gleaned from the State Department report, Jewish officials said its publication would draw attention to the issue of global anti-Semitism, and pressure foreign countries to work harder to prevent bigotry against Jews.

"The idea of this publication being public can serve as a really good guidepost for other countries," said Daniel Mariaschin, executive vice president of B'nai B'rith International. "They should be aspiring to this level of detail."

Abraham Foxman, national director of the Anti-Defamation League, said a detailed listing of anti-Semitic incidents that comes from the United States government, rather than American Jewish organizations, would have added impact around the world.

The report says recent anti-Semitism has come from traditional anti-Jewish prejudice in Europe, along with anti-Israel sentiment "that crosses the line between objective criticism of Israeli policies and anti-Semitism."

It also cites anti-Jewish sentiment among Muslims in Europe, and spillover criticism of the United States and globalization that is redirected against Jews.

As part of the report, the State Department announced new responsibilities for

overseas embassies, seeking additional monitoring of acts of violence against Jews and Jewish properties and actions taken by governments to prevent anti-Semitism.

It also said efforts have been accelerated to combat anti-Semitism through education, law enforcement and legislation.

"Anti-Semitism is an issue that cannot be ignored by other governments anymore," said Mark Levin, executive director of NCSJ: Advocates on Behalf of Jews in Russia, Ukraine, the Baltic States & Eurasia.

The report defines anti-Semitism as hatred toward Jews because of their religion or ethnicity.

"An important issue is the distinction between legitimate criticism of policies and practices of the State of Israel, and commentary that assumes an anti-Semitic character," the report says. "The demonization of Israel, or vilification of Israeli leaders, sometimes through comparisons with Nazi leaders, and through the use of Nazi symbols to caricature them, indicates an anti-Semitic bias rather than a valid criticism of policy concerning a controversial issue."

The report praises European governments for taking the issue seriously. But it says European law enforcement agencies aren't trained to handle hate crimes, and anti-Semitic acts are often dismissed as petty crimes.

"I concur with the conclusions: The governments, both individually and collectively in Europe, have stopped the denial," Foxman said. "They have accepted the fact

that there is anti-Semitism and moved to the area of combating it."

Twelve European countries had serious incidents of anti-Semitism during the reporting period, which ran from July 1 to Dec. 15, 2004. There was verbal harassment of Jews in 28 countries and desecration of cemeteries and synagogues in 30 countries.

The report also notes a rise of anti-Semitism in Pakistan and Argentina, as well as a significant drop in the number of incidents in Australia.

The report chastises Syria for condoning and supporting media programs that export anti-Semitism.

Foxman said some of the report's documentation was "meager," specifically regarding anti-Semitic media reports in Egypt.

The report is mandated by the Global Anti-Semitism Awareness/Review Act, which passed Congress in October. The act called for the establishment of an office devoted to monitoring global anti-Semitism, and President Bush told Jewish leaders last month that he would soon name someone to fill the post.

The State Department originally had opposed the idea of a separate report on anti-Semitism, suggesting the topic is addressed in other State Department reports. In a memo to Congress, Secretary of State Colin Powell said a separate report on anti-Semitism "could erode our credibility by being interpreted as favoritism in human rights reporting."

The memo also said the legislation establishes an "unworkable precedent." ■

**'The governments, both individually and collectively in Europe, have stopped the denial.'**

**Abraham Foxman**  
Anti-Defamation League

**FOCUS  
ON  
ISSUES**

## Jews try to influence poll

NEW YORK (JTA) — Jewish activists are trying to influence a poll asking whether churches should divest from Israel.

A flurry of e-mails urges Jews to vote no in an online poll of the Christian Science Monitor about a church boycott of companies that do business with Israel.

The poll comes amid heated debate over the issue since the Presbyterian Church USA voted in July to drop its investments

in companies that do business with Israel.

In November, the Episcopal Church's governing board voted to look into the church's corporate investments and take appropriate action with "companies that contribute to the infrastructure of Israel's ongoing occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip" — as well as "companies that have connections to organizations responsible for violence against Israel." ■

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### WORLD

#### Accusations in Ethiopia

A North American Jewish group was accused of abusing Ethiopian Jews waiting to immigrate to Israel.

Some people living and working in Ethiopia accused the North American Conference on Ethiopian Jewry of refusing to distribute food to the Falash Mura at the group's Addis Ababa compound; of treating Ethiopians employed in a sewing facility like slave laborers; of threatening those who cry foul at their treatment; and of dispatching a thug to rough people up, the Jerusalem Post first reported.

NACOEJ denied the accusations, insisting the claims were born of a labor dispute between the organization and some school teachers that NACOEJ fired and who were refused permission to immigrate by Israel.

NACOEJ said that as a result of some Ethiopian trouble-makers, the group had to shut down its school in Addis Ababa — which also served as its food-distribution hub — for three weeks, and that the group was unable to operate the program during that time.

#### Sri Lanka: We didn't refuse Israeli aid

Sri Lanka denied that it refused Israeli aid for victims of last month's tsunami.

In a statement, the Sri Lankan government said it delayed the arrival of the 150-member Israeli rescue and relief team because it couldn't accommodate team members and because there already was enough manpower on the ground.

The statement also emphasized that food and medical supplies from Israel were accepted, and also noted the "friendly and close diplomatic relations" between the two countries.

Initial reports had said that Sri Lanka rejected the team because it included Israeli military personnel, which might offend Muslims in Sri Lanka.

#### Brits: Israel not jolly good

British newspaper readers ranked Israel as the country least deserving of international respect.

The Jewish state came in among the bottom five of two dozen countries ranked according to various standards of desirability in Tuesday's survey in the Daily Telegraph.

But asked which foreign countries had the least friendly citizens, the poll's 2,000-odd respondents cited the United States, Egypt and Russia ahead of Israel.

Israel also came fifth in the criterion of "least beautiful country," perhaps an indication of the impact of broadcast images of the intifada.

#### Poland wants to extradite Jewish man

Poland again asked Israel to extradite a man accused of retaliatory acts against Nazis after World War II.

Polish prosecutors say they have amassed more evidence against Solomon Morel, a Jew who is accused of brutality at a postwar labor camp in southern Poland.

Israeli officials were examining the request, according to England's Daily Telegraph newspaper. Israel has refused Poland's prior requests.

Morel, who fled to Israel from Poland in 1994 and lives in hiding in Tel Aviv, was imprisoned in Auschwitz as a young man.

#### A friendly warning

An Israeli company plans to distribute free tsunami detectors to poor Asian countries.

The portable, \$170-per-unit system developed by Israeli inven-

tor Meir Gitelis, detects seismic activity and wave motion and sends warnings to affected areas.

Gitelis' company, Avtipus Patents and Inventions Ltd., believes such devices could have saved many of the victims of last week's earthquake and tsunami in the Indian Ocean.

### MIDDLE EAST

#### Danger in the skies

Palestinians have smuggled five anti-aircraft missiles into the Gaza Strip, an Israeli security chief said.

Shin Bet head Avi Dichter told the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee on Tuesday that the terrorists brought the Soviet-era Strella missiles into Gaza through tunnels from Egypt, and warned against giving up control of the flashpoint border zone. With their maximum range of around two miles, the heat-seeking Strellas do not pose a threat to Israeli passenger jets but could endanger military aircraft operating over Gaza.

Last month, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon said some Palestinian terrorist groups were believed to be planning to shoot down Israeli crop-dusters across the Gaza boundary to escalate the conflict.

#### Lawmaker joins protest

An Israeli lawmaker joined settlers in a sit-down strike outside government offices in Jerusalem.

Uri Ariel of the right-wing National Union bloc relocated his office Tuesday to a protest tent set up outside the Knesset by settlers opposed to Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's plan to withdraw from the Gaza Strip and parts of the West Bank.

Meanwhile, the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee urged the attorney general to prosecute public figures who call on settlers and soldiers to resist the planned evacuations.

"The phenomenon of refusing orders in an organized manner contains the seeds of sedition," committee chairman Yuval Steinitz told Ha'aretz.

#### Arabs eye the bomb

Israel suspects one of its Arab neighbors has obtained components for nuclear weapons.

The Jerusalem Post quoted an Israeli military source as saying that either Syria, Egypt or Saudi Arabia has the potential to make a "significant nuclear leap" after dealing with A.Q. Khan, a Pakistani expert on weapons of mass destruction.

The source would not provide further details, but said Arab terrorist groups also are believed to be seeking the bomb.

Khan's international network was exposed last year and linked to the Iranian nuclear program, but there has been no published evidence of Arab regimes also availing themselves of his services.

### NORTH AMERICA

#### Texas Jewish history pioneer dies

Frances Rosenthal Kallison, a co-founder of the Texas Jewish Historical Society, died Dec. 30 in San Antonio at age 96.

Kallison was among the earliest scholars to approach Texas Jewish history as a subject for serious study.

In 1968, she was instrumental in getting the state's Jewish history incorporated into a permanent exhibit at the University of Texas Institute of Texan Cultures.

Her 1977 master's thesis from San Antonio's Trinity University chronicled "100 Years of Jewry in San Antonio."