

## IN THE NEWS

**Report: Hate up in France**

Attacks on French Jews and Muslims and their institutions doubled last year, according to a new report.

There were 1,565 recorded threats and violent attacks in 2004, up from 833 a year earlier, according to the National Consultative Commission of Human Rights' annual report.

The number of attacks was the highest in at least a decade.

There were 970 anti-Semitic acts in 2004, compared to 601 in 2003, the report said.

The report also pointed out that the number of attacks decreased in the last few months of 2004.

**Israel hands over Tulkarm**

Israel handed over a second West Bank city to Palestinian Authority security control.

The handover of Tulkarm took place Monday night after a dispute over a roadblock was ironed out.

Tulkarm is the second of five West Bank cities that Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon agreed to transfer under last month's cease-fire declaration with P.A. President Mahmoud Abbas.

**Abdullah to meet with American Jews**

King Abdullah II of Jordan is slated to meet Tuesday with U.S. Jewish leaders.

The meeting, to take place in Washington, comes after Abdullah's efforts this weekend at an Arab summit to modify a pan-Arab peace proposal to make it more palatable to Israelis.

Jordan's version, which was rejected at the summit, would not have predicated peace on the return of territory.

The accepted proposal instead repeats a two-year-old offer that demands Israel return to the borders it had before the 1967 Six Day War.

Israel rejected that offer because it was considered insincere.

Like Egypt, Jordan is heavily invested in nurturing renewed Palestinian-Israeli peace negotiations.



# WORLD REPORT

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## In quiet, some see signs of hope — but obstacles to peace remain acute

By LESLIE SUSSER

**J**ERUSALEM (JTA) — With Palestinian militias generally committed to a lull in the fighting with Israel and Arab countries debating normalizing ties with the Jewish state, some here see signs that the 57-year-old Arab-Israeli conflict finally may be winding down.

But despite a hesitant optimism, certain factors suggest that an end to the conflict still appears far off.

The current cease-fire is fragile and could unravel at any moment; the radical Palestinian organization Hamas, which opposes peace with Israel, is getting stronger; most Arab countries still oppose normalization until Israel withdraws from all of what the Arabs consider "occupied territory";

and Israel insists that the Palestinians fulfill their promise to disband terrorist groups before the peace process advances, a commitment the Palestinians show no inclination to meet.

And on the Israeli side, opponents of withdrawal, both within Sharon's own party and further to the right, are trying to torpedo the disengagement plan.

The lull — or "tahdiya," as the Palestinians call it — was announced March 17 in Cairo after a meeting under Egyptian aegis of all the main Palestinian militias with Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas.

The bottom line: The terrorist groups say there will be no more terror attacks against Israel at least until the end of 2005.

But the truce is heavily conditional. For the quiet to continue, the Palestinians demand that Israel meet a number of conditions: Not

assassinate or arrest wanted terrorists; release Palestinian prisoners; refrain from building in Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip; and stop "Judaizing" eastern Jerusalem.

A six-point document released after the Cairo parley also reiterated the Palestinians' strategic goals: Establishing a Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital and securing a right for Palestinian refugees to return to homes and property they abandoned in Israel more than half a century ago. The document makes no mention of a Palestinian state coexisting peacefully next to Israel and offers no hint of compromise over the return of Palestinian refugees to Israel.

If the strong, heavily conditional wording was designed to get Hamas and Islamic Jihad to come aboard, it succeeded. But it also gives the militias a range of pretexts for returning to violence whenever they see fit.

The Israeli assessment is that the lull probably will hold until after this summer's planned Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and northern West Bank, despite the possibility of intermittent rogue attacks.

What happens next is anybody's guess, Israeli analysts say. It will depend to a large extent on how the new relationship being forged between Abbas' secular Fatah movement and the powerful fundamentalist groups plays out.

In the long term, Israeli analysts say, the fact that the radicals have decided to join the political process is even more significant than the lull in violence. Hamas boycotted the last Palestinian parliamentary elections in 1996,

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NEWS ANALYSIS

## ■ Quiet may mean peace is at hand — or it may not

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but now the group says it will run in elections slated for July.

Hamas already has had some significant successes in municipal and university ballots. In local elections in January, it won 70 percent of the councils it contested. Last week it won 25 of 41 seats in student elections at Hebron University.

Both Israeli and Palestinian pundits predict a strong showing by Hamas in July parliamentary elections. They say Hamas never has been stronger, and that the election could well be fought over socioeconomic rather than political issues, with Hamas picking up a strong anti-establishment vote that works against Fatah.

Writing in the mass circulation newspaper Yediot Achronot, Alex Fishman maintained that Hamas could win enough seats to virtually dictate the Palestinian political agenda.

"Central Fatah people are really concerned about the Hamas momentum: They say that 'unless something dramatic happens, 70 percent of the delegates Gaza sends to parliament will be Hamas people. Abu Mazen will have to dance to their tune,'" he wrote, using Abbas' nom de guerre.

Danny Rubinstein, chief Arab-affairs analyst for Ha'aretz, takes a similar view.

"East Jerusalem people say the public is angry at Fatah activists who have not been serving the public but rather handing out perks to cronies. The way to punish Fatah, they say, is by voting Hamas," Rubinstein wrote.

If Hamas does gain a good measure of political power, the question is how it will use it. Will it become more moderate and responsible, accepting the need for a two-state solution with coexistence with Israel and a practical solution to the refugee issue? Or will it radicalize the entire Palestinian movement, rendering peacemaking virtually impossible? That could be the key question in Israeli-Palestinian politics for years to come.

Israeli generals and politicians envisage more immediate problems. The military chief of staff, Lt. Gen. Moshe Ya'alon, is suspicious of the motives behind the Palestinian lull.

"The militias want the lull, but see it as a time to regroup and rearm before the fighting resumes, without waiving their strategic goals," he recently told businessmen in northern Israel.

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon has described the lull as a "positive first step," but added that for "progress in the diplomatic process, the terrorist organizations will not be able to continue existing as armed militias."

In other words, Sharon insists that Abbas fulfill the Palestinian commitment to disarm terrorist groups, while Abbas prefers to try to co-opt them politically. The result could be deadlock.

In an attempt to break the looming logjam, Jordan's King Abdullah is proposing some bold, out-of-the-box thinking. The normal Arab sequencing in peacemaking with

Israel should be reversed, Abdullah says.

Until now, Arab proposals have insisted that Israel withdraw from occupied territory before the Arabs normalize ties, but Abdullah argues that if the Arabs first normalized ties, Israel would feel secure enough to withdraw from territory. Not only that: If the Arabs made such a collective gesture, there would be enormous international pressure on Israel to pullout of Arab territory.

Behind the scenes,

some Arab and Muslim countries appeared ready to buy into Abdullah's ideas. But Egypt, Syria and the Palestinians were instrumental in preventing the proposal from being raised at an Arab League summit in Algiers in late March.

The key to a breakthrough in peacemaking therefore remains what it always has been: progress on the Palestinian track. And despite the lull in violence, political differences between Israelis and Palestinians seem as acute as ever.

For example, where Sharon sees the "road map" peace plan leading to an interim Palestinian state, Abbas wants to move straight to full-fledged Palestinian statehood and a final territorial settlement with Israel.

And even if Sharon were ready to make that leap, would an empowered Hamas allow Abbas to make the offer?

Sharon and Abbas are due to meet separately with President Bush in the United States next month. After those talks, perhaps the way forward will become a little clearer.

**The militias want the lull, but see it as a time to regroup and rearm before the fighting resumes.'**

**Lt. Gen. Moshe Ya'alon**  
Israel's chief of staff

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## Spies among us

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Israel plans to absorb hundreds of Palestinians who worked with its security forces in the Gaza Strip.

Security sources said Monday that Dahaniya, a southern Gaza village where hundreds of Palestinian informants for Israel and their families live under army guard, will be dismantled during this summer's Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip.

The town's residents will be relocated to Israel, but their status — as permanent residents or as citizens — hasn't yet been decided, sources said.

Along with the informers, who face death sentences in Palestinian Authority areas, Dahaniya is home to hundreds of Egyptians who worked with Israel when it occupied the Sinai peninsula.

# Civil rights complaint filed against Calif. school

By TOM TUGEND

LOS ANGELES (JTA) — The U.S. Office of Civil Rights has opened an investigation into charges that officials on the University of California's Irvine campus have been turning a blind eye to intimidation and harassment of Jewish students for the last four years.

In an 11-page letter of complaint, the Zionist Organization of America listed incident after incident in which, it alleges, Muslim and Arab student groups and extremist Muslim religious speakers vilified Jews and incited against "Zionists" and Israel.

The university is the latest U.S. campus to be hit with allegations of anti-Semitic and anti-Zionist harassment.

Jewish students wearing T-shirts with a Star of David or pro-Israel slogans have been insulted and threatened with violence, said Susan Tuchman, director of the ZOA's Center for Law and Justice in New York, who drew up the complaint.

In the latest incident, in early February, Muslim cleric Amir-Abdel Malik-Ali talked before a campus audience for an hour about "the apartheid state of Israel" and its "Nazi behavior," as well as "American imperialism" and the "Zionist-controlled media."

The federal investigation is being conducted in San Francisco by the Office of Civil Rights, which is part of the U.S. Department of Education. Spokeswomen in San Francisco and Washington said they could not comment on an ongoing probe.

The ZOA filed the complaint under a section of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, religion or national origin. If found in violation of the act, the university could be deprived of all federal grants.

In their defense, university administrators cited the First Amendment rights of free speech and assembly for Muslim and all other students and said they preferred to settle grievances through mediation and campus forums.

"Your views are going to be challenged at any great university," said Manuel Gomez, vice chancellor for student affairs.

But even granting these arguments, Tuchman noted that officials had a duty both to protect Jewish students and to condemn hate speech and incitement on campus.

In interviews, some Jewish professionals described the ZOA complaint as a misguided

effort by outsiders and emphasized recent improvements in the campus atmosphere.

Joyce Greenspan, director of the Anti-Defamation League office in Orange County, Calif., where the university is located, said the situation is best assessed by those who are in daily contact with students and faculty.

"It is disconcerting when an outside group comes in with all guns blazing," Greenspan said. "Changes occur not through lawsuits but by education on campus and by working toward better communications."

She added, however, that there is a widespread perception that "Jewish students don't receive the same attention from the administration as Muslim students."

Greenspan cited an instance in which university officials remained silent when a Holocaust exhibit put up by Jewish students was vandalized, but spoke out vehemently against the burning of a Muslim cardboard replica of Israel's security fence.

Jeffrey Rips, the Orange County Hillel director for the last nine years, described the university campus as "not a terrible place, and while the administration could be doing more, it is trying harder this year."

During a recent display of an Israeli bus blown up by terrorists, "campus police and administrators made sure that we had a safe environment," he said. When Hillel students put up a sukkah on campus for a week, there were no incidents.

About 57 percent of the campus's 23,000 students are of Asian descent and most of them are not interested in the problems in the Middle East, Rips said. Even among Jewish students, "the majority have no clue about what's going on" on campus.

Rips said that of roughly 1,000 Jewish students on campus, 340 had some contact with Hillel throughout the year. Between 15 and 20 of them are committed pro-Israel activists, he said.

Rips added, however, that several worried parents had questioned him about the campus situation in recent years and that a few had decided to enroll their children elsewhere.

Jewish students appear slightly outnumbered by Arab and Muslim students, the most passionate of whom form the Muslim Students Association.

Rips also said that among the incidents in the ZOA report claiming intimidation of Jewish students, a number remain unconfirmed or never were reported to officials.

In contrast, a veteran Jewish professor, who asked not to be identified, charged that the campus administration, if not actively biased, was "at least extremely insensitive, and probably anti-Israel."

Muslim students have exploited the administration's attitude to make it appear that the university endorsed their activities, and the campus-funded Muslim newspaper, founded as a "cultural" organ, consistently published inflammatory anti-Israel articles, the professor said.

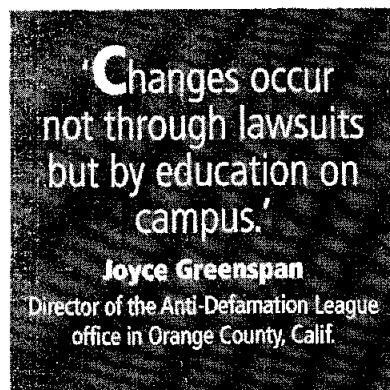
To explain the administration's attitude, the professor hypothesized that contributing factors were the absence of any Jewish representation among senior officials and the lack of a strong local Jewish community to take up the issue.

Perceptions differ on whether Jewish students are being intimidated and harassed on campus. Graduate student Sarah Becker said that she had stopped wearing her Star of David ornament on campus for fear of attracting unwanted attention. But junior Maya Salter observed that she had felt little, if any, anti-Semitism on campus and proudly displays her Star of David tattoo.

Tuchman of the ZOA said that the anti-Israel atmosphere at the university is not unique — she mentioned the ongoing situation at New York's Columbia University — but that the complaint was the first she had filed against any American campus.

Kenneth Marcus, a former head of the U.S. Office of Civil Rights, said that given the climate on a number of American campuses, he expected that formal complaints of anti-Semitism, similar to the one pending against the university, will be filed against other universities in the future. ■

(Marc Ballon of the Jewish Journal of Greater Los Angeles contributed to this report.)



# NEWS IN BRIEF

## WORLD

### Annun calls for reform

Kofi Annan's recommendations for U.N. reform urge a definition of terrorism that would reject attacks in the name of "national resistance."

The secretary-general released his report Sunday, based on a recent report on reform by a high-level panel, and as a five-year update on the Millennium Declaration in which world leaders committed to building a safer world.

Annan commented on the plan Monday. Among the proposals, Annan repeated a call he made earlier this month asking states to endorse a counterterrorism convention that defines terrorism as any action "intended to cause death or serious bodily harm to civilians or noncombatants with the purpose of intimidating a population or compelling a government or an international organization to do or abstain from doing any act."

Arab and Muslim states have fought to avoid criticism of attacks on civilians in the name of "national liberation" struggles, an implicit endorsement of Palestinian terrorist attacks on Israelis.

"If this would work, it's good for Israel," said Hillel Neuer, executive director of U.N. Watch, referring to one proposal to revamp the U.N. Human Rights Commission.

That body criticizes Israel vociferously yet includes as members countries with very poor human rights records.

### Russian Jewish exile speaks out

A major shareholder of a Russian oil firm said legal charges against him are motivated by anti-Semitism.

Leonid Nevzlin, a former deputy of the Yukos oil firm and former Russian Jewish Congress head who now lives in exile in Israel, told *The New York Times* on Monday that charges against him, including allegations of tax evasion, stealing state property and contract murder, are trumped up.

Russian President Vladimir "Putin is surrounded by anti-Semites," Nevzlin told the *Times*, "from the prosecutors all the way to the FSB," the successor to the KGB.

Nevzlin also called Putin a dictator. Putin has spoken of the importance of Jewish life in Russia and said at this year's 60th anniversary commemoration of the liberation of Auschwitz that he is ashamed of anti-Semitism in Russia.

### Survey eyes Argentine Jewish community

Some 244,000 people of Jewish heritage live in Buenos Aires and outlying areas, according to a new survey.

Of those people — including those who have either maternal or paternal Jewish heritage — 67 percent define themselves as Jews, according to the survey, conducted by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee.

Some 61 percent are not affiliated with Jewish institutions, and 30 percent are poor.

The poll, which will be distributed in Argentine Jewish institutions, was intended to help schools, clubs and synagogues develop strategies to bring more Jews to such institutions, JDC officials in Argentina said.

It used survey models developed to count American Jews and was conducted by polling 30,000 homes over the past 15 months.

## NORTH AMERICA

### Court hears prison minorities case

The U.S. Supreme Court heard oral arguments about the rights of religious minorities in prison.

Jewish leaders who listened to the oral arguments Monday were

pleased with the lines of questioning, which suggested that justices support provisions in the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act, which is being challenged by the State of Ohio.

Justices appeared to support a broad law that would allow all religious minorities to enjoy accommodations for their religious practices in prison, unless there is a compelling governmental interest.

The justices specifically said kosher food in prison was an acceptable religious request.

### Bush adviser to Israel

President Bush's top adviser on Israeli-Palestinian issues will meet leaders from both sides this week.

Elliott Abrams, a deputy national security adviser, is traveling to Israel to meet Wednesday with Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas.

U.S. engagement in the region is intensifying ahead of Israel's planned withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and part of the West Bank in July.

Israeli Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz will be in Washington next week, and Sharon is to meet Bush on April 11 at Bush's ranch in Crawford, Texas.

Abbas is to meet Bush in late April or early May.

### OK to remove tube, docs say

U.S. doctors overwhelmingly support removing Terri Schiavo's feeding tube, according to a poll done by the Jewish Theological Seminary.

The poll, from JTS' Finkelstein Institute, which specializes in religion and public affairs, found that 79 percent of the doctors who responded believe it ethical to remove the feeding tube from the Florida woman who is in a persistent vegetative state and whose fate has ignited a welter of legal, political and medical maneuvering.

### Carter Middle East envoy dies

Sol Linowitz, a leading Jewish Democrat who was President Carter's envoy to Middle East peace talks, died at 91. Linowitz died last Friday in Washington.

He served in the Johnson and Carter administrations.

His success in that negotiation led Carter to appoint him as an envoy to the Camp David peace talks between Israel and Egypt, particularly relating to plans for Palestinian autonomy.

### Initiative would honor Anne Frank

A U.S. representative launched an initiative to make the late Anne Frank an honorary U.S. citizen.

Rep. Steve Israel (R-N.Y.) launched the congressional initiative Monday to honor the Jewish teenage diarist from Amsterdam, who died in the Holocaust.

## MIDDLE EAST

### Construction in the capital

Israel plans to build two new neighborhoods in eastern Jerusalem.

The project, approved this month by Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, will consist of 3,500 new housing units and effectively will link the capital with the West Bank settlement of Ma'aleh Adumim, political sources said Monday.

To allow free travel between the nearest Palestinian cities, Ramallah and Bethlehem, Israel intends to pave a bypass road around Jerusalem.

The Palestinian Authority accused the Sharon government of cementing its hold on the holy city despite its requirement under the U.S.-led peace "road map" to halt settlement construction.