

IN THE NEWS

Two killed in Gaza rocket attack

A Palestinian and a Chinese worker were killed in a Palestinian rocket attack on an Israeli settlement in the Gaza Strip.

Five others, all non-Israelis, were wounded in Tuesday's attack on the Gush Katif settlement bloc. Hamas claimed responsibility for the attack.

In an almost simultaneous attack, Palestinian terrorists in Gaza rocketed an Israeli border town.

There were no serious casualties from the salvo against Sderot.

Hamas said it fired five rockets across the Gaza boundary in response to Israeli police's dispersal of a Palestinian riot on Jerusalem's Temple Mount on Monday.

Sharansky runs for Zionist post

Natan Sharansky is challenging Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's candidate to run the Jewish Agency for Israel.

The former Soviet dissident and Israeli Cabinet minister announced Tuesday that he would run as a candidate to head the World Zionist Organization.

The head of WZO also serves as chairman of the Jewish Agency. Sharon's candidate to head the Jewish Agency is Ze'ev Bielski, mayor of Ra'anana.

Decision on the position are expected at the Zionist General Council, which meets in Jerusalem on June 21, and at the Jewish Agency's Assembly, which meets June 26.

Israelis kill 2 in West Bank raid

Israeli troops killed two Palestinian terrorists in the West Bank. An Islamic Jihad leader in Kabatiya was shot dead during a clash with soldiers who surrounded his hideout in the village Tuesday.

A second gunman died in ensuing exchanges of fire. Israel said the raid on Kabatiya was aimed at preventing an imminent Islamic Jihad suicide bombing.



WORLD REPORT

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

UJC moves to raise \$160 million for Falash Mura and Jews in FSU

By RACHEL POMERANCE

NEW YORK (JTA) — The Jewish federation system has launched a major fund-raising campaign to assist the Jews of Ethiopia and the former Soviet Union.

At a meeting Sunday in New York, the board of trustees of the United Jewish Communities, the umbrella group for the North American federation system, approved a motion to raise \$160 million for the two initiatives.

Criticisms and doubts were raised about the proposal, but the final vote was unanimous.

Most of the money, \$100 million, will go toward expediting aliyah and absorption in Israel of some 20,000 Falash Mura, Ethiopian Jews whose ancestors converted to Christianity, and for the integration of Ethiopians already in Israel. The funds will be raised over three to five years.

The remaining \$60 million, to be raised within three years, will go to help Jews in the former Soviet Union through identity-building programs for youth and caring for the elderly poor.

The campaign comes as Israel prepares to double the monthly rate of Falash Mura immigration, from 300 to 600.

Transportation, initial education and welfare costs will run to some \$23 million over three years, and will be managed by the UJC's overseas partners, the Jewish Agency for Israel and the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee. About \$40 million will go toward absorbing the Falash Mura, and \$37 million to integrate Ethiopians in Israel through improved education.

The Ethiopian initiative was framed as the completion of previous mass immigrations from Ethiopia, namely Operation Moses in 1984-85 and Operation Solomon in 1991.

"Fourteen years ago, I was privileged to stand on the airport tarmac in Israel and be an eyewitness to a miracle and welcome more than 14,000 Ethiopian Jews rescued in Operation Solomon," said Susan Stern, chairwoman of the board of directors of UJA-

Federation of New York and outgoing chair of the UJC National Women's Philanthropy. "What an extraordinary experience that was, seeing the great pride of the Jewish community and feeling the great hope of that day. We

have accomplished much since then, but we have not yet completed the promise."

The new campaign was met with praise but also some consternation at the UJC's board meeting Sunday, as the group became momentarily gridlocked over whether to place binding terms on the proposal, requiring federations to allocate a "fair share" of funds based on the overall funds each federation raises.

Binding language ultimately was left out of the resolution, but the debate underscored the urgency of effectively funding Falash Mura aliyah.

Shortly after the initiative was raised, Batia Eyob, executive director of the Israel Association for Ethiopian Jews, sent an angry letter to UJC officials, claiming the association wasn't consulted about the project.

"You know very well how hard we all have worked to have the Ethiopian community be seen as part of the solution and not only the problem. You can, then, understand why we are so alarmed about this 'Ethiopian Initia-

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■ Federation system launches initiative for Ethiopian Jews and those in the FSU

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ative' carried out by one of our partners excluding us," she wrote.

Ethiopian-Israeli representatives in Israel "provided a portrait of the community that is not made of misery and despair but of strength and success. This effort of ensuring to have a balanced portrayal of the Ethiopian community in Israel, which we believe is extremely crucial in any campaign, does not seem to be conveyed in the initial material presented to us by UJC's 'Ethiopian Initiative,'" she wrote.

Federation leaders say the plan to expedite Falash Mura immigration has been public for a long time.

The resolution states that UJC's executive committee, a body of lay leaders, will develop a campaign plan. But some community leaders raised concerns about separating the initiative from the annual federation campaign.

"How is this going to resonate with the donors?" asked Etta Zimmerman, general campaign chair for the Jewish Federation of South Palm Beach County, Fla. She told the board that the campaign sends a mixed message to donors, who assume such services already are addressed through the annual campaign.

"It shows the failure of what ONAD was meant to do," Gary Weinstein, executive vice president of the Jewish Federation of Greater Dallas, told JTA. Weinstein was referring to UJC's Overseas Needs Assessment and Distribution committee, which is being revamped due to complaints that

the committee was plagued by politics and red tape. "ONAD was meant to prioritize overseas needs for us."

Combining both initiatives into one campaign could confuse donors, Weinstein said.

While the Ethiopian issue may motivate donors, additional funding for identity building in the former Soviet Union will compete with fund-raising efforts for local identity-building programs, he said.

"If they want to be successful, I think they are going to have to prioritize these appeals and have different strategies for us," Weinstein said. "You put it all together, the three appeals are going to be diluted."

But many are optimistic.

"I don't think this is any more complicated or difficult than any other challenge that the federation system has met," said Andy Groveman, a member UJC's board of trustees from Memphis who also chairs the Jewish Agency's finance and administration committee. "In the end, we all came together, voted and recognized that there was an unmet need and responsibility that we're all going to step up to the plate and try to meet."

Stephen Hoffman, president of the

Jewish Community Federation of Cleveland and former CEO of the UJC, agrees.

"We have a great historic opportunity to participate in this next stage of bringing the Ethiopian Jewish community home, as well as providing some really essential extra help in the former Soviet Union, and I'm pretty confident that people will rally to this," he said.

Hoffman was involved in the creation of the Ethiopian National Project, a

UJC initiative begun five years ago in partnership with the Jewish Agency, JDC and Ethiopian Israelis, to help integrate Ethiopian Jews in Israel.

According to Hoffman, that project was stymied by technical challenges and then was overwhelmed by the need to respond to the Palestinian intifada, which began in late 2000.

By contrast, the newest initiative "has a historical turning point. It is the doubling of the flow of people from Ethiopia, so there's a very clear marker. If UJC does what it should, which is to rapidly develop an approach that communities can adapt for their own responses to this challenge, this call for action, I think we have a very good chance of succeeding," he said. ■

'I'm pretty confident that people will rally to this.'

Stephen Hoffman

President, Jewish Community Federation of Cleveland

German Scientologists launch campaign

By TOBY AXELROD

BERLIN (JTA) — The Church of Scientology has launched a campaign against psychiatry throughout Germany, irritating Jewish groups by using Holocaust imagery to drive home its point.

In an outdoor traveling exhibit in Berlin displayed June 2, the movement lays blame for the Holocaust on psychiatrists and refers to one of the founders of modern psychiatry, Sigmund Freud, as a drug-abusing promoter of promiscuity whose theories "have been largely disproved."

Ute Ehrhardt, Berlin spokesperson for the Scientology-linked "Commission on the Human Rights Abuses of Psychiatry," told JTA the exhibit would be in Berlin for several days before traveling to other cities across Germany.

One panel, titled "The Men Behind Hit-

ler," includes a gruesome photo of a hand hanging out of a crematorium oven, as well as images of the Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp in Poland.

The panel explains that psychiatrists were behind the Nazi drive to exterminate "worthless lives."

Other panels refer to methods such as electric shock therapy and lobotomy as "mind destroyers" and to psychiatric drugs as "poison" that benefit only drug companies.

There is no obvious reference on the panels to Scientology, which is not a recognized religion in Germany, but Ehrhardt confirmed that it was a Scientology project.

In 2003, the animal-rights group PETA ran ads compared treatment of chickens and other animals with that of Jews in concentration camps. Under criticism, PETA halted its campaign in Germany. ■

JTA WORLD REPORT

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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.
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Event shows importance of Orthodox vote

By TZVI KAHN

NEW YORK (JTA)— Anecdotal evidence has suggested that an increased number of Orthodox Jews supported President Bush in 2004 — and that more members of this constituency may lean Republican in the future.

That burgeoning relationship was on display this week in New York, when the U.S. attorney general, Alberto Gonzales, spoke at the Orthodox Union's annual dinner.

Addressing issues such as religious liberties and the U.S. government's fight against terrorism, Gonzales received a warm reception from the 1,000 people in attendance at Sunday night's event.

The event marked Gonzales's first address to a Jewish organization since he became attorney general in February.

Gonzales called the USA Patriot Act a necessary means of combating terrorism, citing the importance of constant vigilance and determination and rejecting the view that the legislation violates civil liberties.

"There has not been one single verified violation of privacy rights or civil liberties in its three-and-a-half-year history," he said. "We can and we will protect our civil liberties and our citizens from terrorism. The two are not mutually exclusive."

Turning to religious issues, Gonzales noted the importance of the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act of 2000, which protects religious groups from discrimination in zoning and requires the government to make religious accommodations for prisoners. He named several cases the Justice Department has successfully prosecuted under it.

The department is "committed to fighting religious-based discrimination and prosecuting religious-based crimes," he said.

The attorney general also praised the contributions of Jews to American life, comparing their status as immigrants to his own experiences growing up as a poor Mexican American.

In 2004, Bush earned about 24 percent of the Jewish vote, marking a 5 percentage-point increase from the 2000 election. Post-election studies suggest the increase was due in large part to the influence of the Orthodox, who are generally more hawkish in foreign policy and more supportive of the role of religion in domestic policy than other Jews.

A poll released last year by the American Jewish Committee found that 60 percent of Orthodox Jews supported Bush.

According to Brandeis University historian Jonathan Sarna, author most recently of "American Judaism: A History," Orthodox Jews' growing sympathy for the GOP has led the administration to cultivate their support.

"I think it is very telling that the Republicans are making time to see them," Sarna said. "If you were a Republican" trying to nurture Jewish votes, "this wouldn't be a bad group to build on."

Sarna noted that the administration's outreach to the Orthodox Union, the main group of centrist Orthodoxy, reflects a recognition that the Orthodox are a key electoral demographic.

"The party is eager to be grateful to Orthodox Jews to show that they are grateful for these votes, but I don't think they have by any means turned their back on other Jews," he said.

O.U. officials said they appreciate the attention.

"We've developed a close working relationship with the Bush administration and particularly the Justice Department," said Nathan Diament, director of the O.U.'s public policy arm, the Institute for Public Affairs.

So did many of those in attendance.

"I was very impressed by his speech," said Shmulik Rosenberg, a student at Yeshiva University in New York who attended the dinner. "I thought the cases that he brought really showed where the government stands in terms of religious freedom and support for the Jewish community."

In particular, Diament said, the White House has been especially receptive to the Orthodox community's concerns on religious liberty issues.

In March the union issued a statement strongly supporting President Bush's faith-based initiative, which seeks to increase the role of faith-based groups in providing social services.

On other religious issues, the Orthodox Union has supported the display of the Ten Commandments on government property, the intervention of Bush and Congress in the case of Terri Schiavo, and the power of the U.S. attorney general to restrict assisted suicide.

Diament noted, though, that the O.U.'s decision to host Gonzales should not be viewed as an official endorsement of the Republican Party platform. Previous guests of honor at O.U. dinners have

included Sen. Hillary Clinton (D-N.Y.) and former Vice President Al Gore.

At the same time, the Orthodox Union has publicly distanced itself from the administration on the hot-button issue of stem-cell research. In May the group issued a statement hailing passage of a bill that would allow for federal funding of stem-cell research. Bush has vowed to veto the bill.

"We have a very different position, but it's a very respectful disagreement," Diament said.

There are some areas where the administration and the Orthodox community may differ, if Sunday night is any reflection.

Following Gonzales' speech was an address by Malcolm Hoenlein, executive vice chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations.

Hoenlein praised the Bush administration's policies on terrorism and religious liberties. In particular, he praised the administration for designating as a terrorist group the Elehssan Society, a charitable front for Islamic Jihad.

But Hoenlein also pressed Gonzales on the administration's position on Saudi Arabia, which Hoenlein described as a major sponsor of hatred and terrorism.

Saudi influence is "something which we hope will get on the agenda of the attorney general in the near future," he said.

Sarna said Hoenlein's public rebuke may reflect a desire to emphasize that support for the White House depends on certain policies.

"No Jewish community wants the administration to believe that their votes are in the bag," he said.

'We can and we will protect our civil liberties and our citizens from terrorism. The two are not mutually exclusive.'

Alberto Gonzales
U.S. Attorney General

**FOCUS
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NEWS IN BRIEF

NORTH AMERICA

U.S.: Hamas, Hezbollah remain off limits

The United States will not negotiate with Hamas, regardless of its success in Palestinian elections, the State Department said.

Spokesman Sean McCormack said Tuesday that the U.S. position regarding the terrorist group wouldn't change even if Hamas earns seats in Palestinian legislative elections.

Hamas, like Hezbollah in Lebanon, is designated as a terrorist organization. "We do not have dialogue with designated terrorist organizations," McCormack said.

Hezbollah swept a round of Lebanese elections this week, and Hamas has made significant gains in recent Palestinian municipal elections, but the groups refuse to disarm or forswear violence.

Al-Arian accused of 'double life'

Prosecutors accused a former professor at a U.S. university of living a "double life" as a conduit for Islamic Jihad.

The trial of Sami Al-Arian opened Monday in Tampa, and prosecutors alleged that the former University of South Florida professor raised money and organized operations for the terrorist group.

His defense attorney suggested that the case is about Arian's right to free speech, including making aggressively anti-Israel statements.

Arian was fired from the school in 2003, after he was indicted. He has been under investigation for more than a decade, and the case was at the center of last year's Florida Senate race.

Democrat backs president on P.A. aid

A Massachusetts lawmaker sent President Bush a letter in support of direct aid to the Palestinian Authority.

Rep. Barney Frank (D-Mass.) told Bush on Tuesday that he supports direct financial aid to the Palestinian Authority and expressed regret over other lawmakers' failure to stand behind the president's move.

Asserting that U.S. support of P.A. President Mahmoud Abbas is likely to advance peace, Frank condemned congressional restrictions on direct aid, "which seem to be counterproductive and in fact directly in contrast to the best interests of Israel."

Bush offered Abbas \$50 million in direct aid during their May 26 meeting at the White House, despite congressional demands that funds be directed through third parties in order to ensure transparency.

Abrams, Chertoff meet Conservatives

The head of U.S. homeland security told Conservative Jewish leaders that the government must balance security needs with financial and societal costs.

Michael Chertoff, son of a Conservative rabbi, had been invited to speak Monday to leaders of the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism and the Rabbinical Assembly as part of an expanded effort by the movement to influence public policy.

"We in the Conservative movement, for a number of years, had not really taken advantage of the potential to be players in this game," said Rabbi Jerome Epstein, United Synagogue's executive vice president and CEO.

WORLD

Senator wants action against anti-Semitism

The chairman of the U.S. Helsinki Commission told an international conference on anti-Semitism that more decisive action must be taken against racism.

Sen. Sam Brownback (R-Kan.) called Tuesday for stronger action

by national governments in taped remarks before the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe's Conference on Anti-Semitism and Other Forms of Intolerance in Cordoba, Spain.

Studies press Europe on anti-Semitism

Europe needs to do more to counter anti-Semitism, according to two studies released on the eve of a forum on the topic.

Not much has changed in the picture of anti-Semitism in Europe since last year, according to an Anti-Defamation League survey of 6,000 European adults in 12 countries.

Released on the eve of this week's OSCE conference in Spain on anti-Semitism, 43 percent feel Jews are more loyal to Israel than to their home country; approximately 30 percent feel Jews have too much power in business and finance; and 42 percent said it's "probably true" that Jews talk too much about the Holocaust.

At the same time, a report released by the Jacob Blaustein Institute for the Advancement of Human Rights found that European countries have failed to monitor anti-Semitism adequately and failed to institute legal and educational measures to combat anti-Semitism and other hate crimes.

French journalists stiff Hezbollah

Several French journalists stalked out of a Paris news conference when a Hezbollah official refused to answer a question from an Israeli reporter.

Sety Hendler, who writes for Yediot Achronot, asked Ali Daamouch, Hezbollah's head of exterior relations, about the status of prisoner-exchange talks with Israel.

Daamouch asked Hendler his nationality, and upon hearing that he was Israeli, refused to respond to the question.

Hendler left the room in protest, and several other reporters joined him in solidarity.

On her way out, a French journalist chastised those who remained behind. "He refuses to respond to a Jewish Israeli journalist and you stay! It's scandalous, it's shameful!"

Religious leaders meet and greet

Religious leaders and academics from some 30 countries gathered in Moscow on Tuesday for a two-day interfaith forum.

The participants are addressing globalization, tolerance and countering terrorism.

The event is organized by the Eurasia Dialogue Platform, an Istanbul-based Muslim initiative that focuses on building a positive image of Islam and creating ties between moderate Islam and other faiths.

Providing a Jewish perspective on interfaith coexistence at the forum are representatives of the Congress of Jewish Religious Organizations and Communities of Russia, and Rabbi Brad Hirschfield, vice president of CLAL-The National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership.

MIDDLE EAST

Britain admits Hamas contacts

Britain's foreign secretary said his staff had met with officials linked to Hamas.

Ahead of a visit to Israel and the Palestinian Authority, Foreign Secretary Jack Straw told BBC Radio on Tuesday that his diplomats had held two meetings with officials linked to the "nonmilitary" wing of the Islamic terrorist group.

"On each of those occasions our staff have spelt out to the elected official" the British position that it will not deal with Hamas as an organization as long as it continues to support violence, Straw said.