


IN THE NEWS
British faith leaders unite against terrorism

Britain's leading rabbi and other faith leaders issued a joint statement of condemnation of the London terrorist attacks.

Speaking Monday at the Church of England's Lambeth Palace, Jonathan Sacks, the country's chief Orthodox rabbi, said they had come together "to express our shared commitment to resisting and overcoming the evil of terrorism," adding, "It is an evil that cannot be justified and that we utterly condemn and reject."

Amid fears that the multiple attacks would inflame racial and religious tensions, the joint statement pledged mutual respect and understanding. [Story, Pg. 3]

Fence plans upset both sides

Final details on the Jerusalem security barrier drew protests from Palestinians and Israelis.

Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's Cabinet on Sunday approved a barrier route that separates 55,000 Palestinian residents of eastern Jerusalem from the city center. Although the plan calls for 12 crossings to be built to ease movement, Palestinian Authority Prime Minister Ahmed Qurei said Israel is jeopardizing the peace process.

Haim Ramon, the Israeli minister in charge of Jerusalem affairs, shot back by saying the barrier was a necessary precaution after Palestinian suicide bombings that have killed some 250 people in the capital.

Maccabiah Games are launched in Israel

The Opening Ceremonies of the 17th Maccabiah Games were held in Israel.

Relatives of Australian athletes killed when a bridge collapsed during the Opening Ceremonies of the 1997 Games led Monday's parade of about 7,000 athletes.

Some 40,000 people, including Israeli President Moshe Katsav and Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, attended the ceremonies in Ramat Gan.

WORLD REPORT

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Fearful but still resolute, Jews in Britain carry on after blasts

By DANIELLA PELED

LONDON (JTA) — Rabbi Barry Marcus spent many years living in Israel, but he never came as close to a terrorist atrocity as he did in London

Marcus, the rabbi of the Central Synagogue on Great Portland Street, was cycling across Tavistock Square on the morning of July 7 when he heard and felt "an incredible blast." Just yards away, a bomb on the No. 30 bus had exploded.

"I saw the roof of the bus go up in a plume of white smoke and all the windows of the building nearby go through," said the South African-born Marcus, who holds the Israel portfolio in Orthodox Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks' Cabinet. "I knew in my gut it was a bomb."

The tranquil central London square — a place devoted to peace, with a Holocaust memorial standing near a statue of Mahatma Gandhi and a cherry tree from Hiroshima — had turned into a vision of hell strewn with broken glass and severed body parts.

Blood was splashed high up against the wall of the nearby headquarters of the British Medical Association.

"There was an incredible amount of glass and massive lumps of human flesh all over the place," Marcus recalled. "People were almost glued to the back part of the bus, the seats in front blown into their chest cavities. There was absolute mayhem. In my mind I saw all the images of Israeli buses blown up and thought, 'It is now here. The barbarians are now at our gates.'"

With most of the United Kingdom's 290,000 Jews living in London, it was with

a sense of inevitability that the community awaited details of possible Jewish casualties, as missing commuters were listed and fatality totals were announced.

At least 49 people are known to have died. With more than 20 still missing and more than 60 still being treated at hospitals, the number of deaths is expected to rise.

The first Jewish death officially confirmed was Susan Levy, 53, a mother of two from Hertfordshire, who was killed on her way to work in the subway-train explosion near King's Cross.

"We are all distraught at her needless loss, and our thoughts and prayers are also with the many other families affected by this horrendous tragedy," said her husband, Harry, a taxi driver, who described Levy as a "much-loved wife and mother."

Other Jewish families face an agonizing wait. Miriam Hyman, 32, a freelance picture editor, called her father, John, from King's Cross Station at 9:45 a.m. Thursday to say she was all right.

That was the last anyone has heard from her.

After a fruitless search of London's hospitals, "we are just waiting," Hyman's mother, Mavis, told JTA.

Hyman, from Hampstead Garden Suburb in north London, was traveling to work at Canary Wharf. It was typical of her character, her mother said, that the attacks didn't deter her.

"She phoned work to say she was going to be late," Hyman's mother said. "She was still obviously determined to get in. I think

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THE LONDON BOMBINGS

■ British Jews carry on after terrorist attacks

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she didn't understand the seriousness of what was going on."

The family of Anat Rosenberg, a 39-year-old Israeli, arrived in the U.K. on Monday morning as hope faded of finding her alive.

The children's charity worker had been a passenger on the doomed No. 30 bus. Rosenberg's British partner, John Falding, said he had been on the phone with her, talking about the travel chaos, when he heard "horrendous screams."

Ironically, Rosenberg had moved to England nearly two decades ago, partly due to her fear of terrorist attacks in Israel.

As the full horror of the London bombings began to sink in and with the perpetrators still at large, the U.K. Jewish community remains all too aware that the danger is far from over. The experience of the recent terror attacks in Madrid — where a second wave of planned attacks was to include a Jewish social club — and Istanbul and Casablanca, where Jewish sites were targeted in the first wave of strikes, makes that clear.

But synagogues were filled to capacity across London on Shabbat, just one day after the bombings, as Jews of all levels

of observance flocked to shul to gain comfort.

"People do certainly come out in the face of tragedy to search for meaning," said Rabbi Yitzak Schochet of the Mill Hill United Synagogue, who pointed out that the experience of terror is nothing new for many Jews.

"A lot of us have visited Israel countless times and lived in this sort of traumatic situation, even if only for a couple of weeks," he said. "It's not

that we have been desensitized, but we can be defiant in the face of it."

That defiance was embodied by Rabbi Michael Harris of the Hampstead Synagogue, in north London, who had his own engagement party planned for the evening of July 7. After discussing it with his fiancée, the couple decided to go ahead.

"It was very poignant and moving," he said, "to be affirming Jewish life as a response to terror and to not let the terrorists stop us."

The following night, his synagogue was packed with people wanting to pray together. Like the "stiff upper lip" approach so characteristic of British society, Harris said, "my sense is that the community is determined to carry on." ■

People 'come out in the face of tragedy to search for meaning.'

Rabbi Yitzak Schochet
Mill Hill United Synagogue

As unrest increases, Bolivian Jews may leave for United States and Israel

By JOE GOLDMAN

BUENOS AIRES (JTA) — The political, social and ethnic crisis in Bolivia is taking a toll on the country's small Jewish community.

The landlocked Andean nation practically ground to a halt last month in the face of nationwide protests that cut off food and gas supplies from the major cities. There have been two presidential resignations in the past 18 months, and the country is awaiting actions from the Supreme Court president — who recently took over as national president — to guide the country to new elections before the end of 2005, though his support in the country's Parliament seems to be faltering.

The indigenous people, who make up the bulk of Bolivia's population of 8 million, are demanding more say in the government and calling for nationalization of natural gas fields. The gas-rich city of Santa Cruz has answered those demands by saying it could secede from the nation and form its own autonomous territory.

"The first major effect of this long situation is the fact that one has to live in a world of great uncertainty," said Gabriel Hercman, institutional director of *Circulo Israelita*, the main Bolivian Jewish organization. "Our children cannot go to school because it isn't safe to travel.

There is no production in the country, no investments, and that is certain to bring major consequences down the line. The lack of being able to plan out anything with any certainty is a terrible situation."

Hercman says there are only about 600 Jews left in Bolivia — half of them in La Paz — down from a high of around 2,000 in the 1950s. The recent protests included a bit of anti-Semitism, but it wasn't a major focus, he said.

"There were demonstrations that, more than anti-Semitic, were against all foreigners. The most vehement and vociferous of these groups against any foreigners was the indigenous groups in El Alto," a huge suburb of La Paz, he said. "There is a group in La Paz called *Unzaguista Falange*, they are an extreme right-wing organization and they have put on their Web site nationalistic and xenophobic diatribes."

The protests could accelerate Jewish emigration, Hercman predicted.

"Many Jews have left the country. Some have gone to Israel but most have immigrated to the United States," he said.

Because of the unrest, Israel evacuated its citizens from Bolivia early last month. Two dozen Israeli trekkers were airlifted to Peru, and approximately 150 Israelis marooned at a hotel in La Paz, the capital, were evacuated. ■

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British Jews fear intolerance after terror

By DANIELLA PELED

LONDON (JTA) — Jewish leaders have vowed they will work to combat any rise in racial tensions following the London bombings amid fears that the attacks may lead to increased anti-Semitism and Islamophobia.

"Certainly when there have been attacks in the past, we've seen a spike in anti-Semitism and vandalism," said Mike Whine of the Community Security Trust, the body that monitors threats to British Jewry. "We've already seen some extremist Web sites blaming Jews for the bombing, and we would be foolish to ignore it."

There are similar concerns over dangers to the United Kingdom's Muslim community, with arson attacks at several mosques around the country over the weekend and Muslim organizations reporting quantities of hate mail.

Imam Abduljalil Sajid, a prominent U.K. interfaith activist, said he had seen Muslims being spat at in the street hours after the bombings. Community leaders have advised Muslims "to keep a low-profile," he added.

The seriousness with which the British government regards the threat of racial violence could be judged by its rapid reaction. The morning after the July 7 bombings, which claimed the lives of at least 49 people and injured some 700, the Orthodox chief rabbi, Sir Jonathan Sacks, was among religious leaders called to the Home Office, the government body responsible for domestic security policy, for an emergency meeting to discuss a joint response.

On Monday, Sacks joined Sheikh Zaki Badawi and church representatives to pledge they would "strengthen those things we hold in common and to resist all that seeks to drive us apart."

A spokesman for the Board of Deputies, the representative body of U.K. Jewry, said that it recognized the concerns and would take up the challenge to "develop tighter bonds and increase dialogue."

Ironically, the terror attacks came only days after a new report released by Alif-Aleph, a Jewish-Muslim dialogue group, highlighted positive contacts between the two communities throughout the U.K..

The study, which was welcomed by Prime Minister Tony Blair, revealed that both religious groups increasingly understand the benefits of addressing Islamophobia and anti-Semitism together, with informal, grass-roots exchanges leading to significant and lasting relations, based on mutual trust.

Now is the time to build on those initiatives, said Richard Stone, Alif-Aleph's Jewish co-chair, who expects an imminent rise in Islamophobia.

"If we know any Muslims or work with any Muslims, we have a responsibility to ask if they are all right," he said. "Because we know what it's like to be a persecuted minority, we should reach out to others."

"We have to support each other," Imam Sajid agreed. "Wherever there is anti-Semitism, Islamophobia is not far behind.

And where there is Islamophobia, anti-Semitism is not far behind. The public perception is about 'otherness' — that puts Jews and Muslims together."

But however strong the willingness may be to work together to combat racial hatred, Whine

warns that there are still fundamental challenges to overcome.

"The Muslim community needs to issue a universal condemnation of violence," he adds. "They can't say, 'We condemn violence in the U.K. but not in Iraq or Israel.'"

Jewish leaders fear the London bombings may also spur a wider anti-Israel backlash that could affect U.K. government policy.

In a BBC Radio interview on Saturday, Blair announced that it was vital to address what he called the deep-seated causes of terrorism, pointing to the situation in the Middle East as the key to understanding the roots of the violence.

"Ultimately what we now know, if we didn't before, is that where there is extremism, fanaticism or acute and appalling forms of poverty in one continent, the consequences no longer stay fixed in that continent," he said.

"We need to create the circumstances in which some of the critical issues in the Middle East are dealt with and sorted out and where people can see out there in the Middle East that there is a perfectly good path to democracy if people want to take it," Blair added.

Though Blair didn't mention the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by name, many concluded that was his intended focus. His comments

were welcomed by pro-Arab lobbyists.

"Once things calm down, there has to be a debate about how British policies relate to the rest of the world," said Chris Doyle, director of the Council for Arab-British Understanding, a London-based lobby. "I agree that resolving this conflict will help."

But any connection to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was immediately refuted by Israel, with Deputy Prime Minister Ehud Olmert insisting that the London attacks, like past terrorist attacks in America and Spain, were part of a "comprehensive terrorist war against the Western civilization."

But that idea has already gained wide currency in the U.K., mostly due to the efforts of campaigners against the Iraq conflict who adopted "Freedom for Palestine" as one of their rallying cries, deriding Blair as President Bush's "poodle" in the war on terror.

The situation in the Middle East was soon being cited by newspaper pundits as the reason that terror hit London.

"The real solution lies in immediately ending the occupation of Iraq, Afghanistan and Palestine," claimed commentator Tariq Ali in the left-wing Guardian, insisting that "the principal cause of this violence is the violence being inflicted on the people of the Muslim world. And unless this is recognized, the horrors will continue."

This phenomenon is something that the Jewish community — which has a long experience of anti-Israel sentiment blending into anti-Semitism — fears will impact them in coming months.

"People blame the Jews, whatever the circumstances," Whine said.

'People blame the Jews, whatever the circumstances.'

Mike Whine

London Jewish official

THE
LONDON
BOMBINGS

NEWS IN BRIEF

WORLD

E.U.: Hamas to stay on terror list

Hamas will remain on the European Union's list of terrorist organizations, the E.U.'s foreign policy chief said.

Javier Solana made the comments in a meeting Monday with Israeli Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom, the Jerusalem Post reported.

Israeli and U.S. officials were upset by recent revelations that E.U. officials have held talks with lower-level members of Hamas.

French journalist kept out of West Bank

A French reporter was banned by Israeli troops from crossing into the West Bank from Jordan.

Houda Ibrahim, a journalist with Radio France Internationale, was stopped and searched by the Israel Defense Forces last week.

She was traveling to the West Bank to spend a week teaching Palestinian journalism students in Ramallah and Bethlehem.

In a statement released last Friday, the French group Reporters Without Borders condemned Israel for the move: "Preventing a French journalist from doing her job, who is moreover representing the French government, is completely unacceptable," the group said.

"This is why we are asking the Israeli government to provide us with an explanation of these arbitrary measures."

Ibrahim was expelled from Israel in 2001 after interviewing Yasser Arafat, allegedly having entered a military zone

French rally against Sharon

Demonstrators in Paris protested Ariel Sharon's pending visit to France. Sources estimated the turnout against the Israeli prime minister to be approximately 2,000 people — considered a low number, though some attributed this to the fact that many Parisians go on vacation during the summer.

According to a statement released by the organizers of the protest, who call themselves the Collective Against the Visit of Sharon to France, inviting "the butcher Sharon" to France "is to insult all those who refuse colonial violence."

Chirac has invited Sharon to Paris on July 27 to discuss Israel's retreat from Gaza as well as to solidify the Franco-Israeli relationship.

Jewish film wins German Oscars

A comedy about German Jewish life was the big winner at the German film awards. Dani Levy's "Go for Zucker" won six Lolas over the weekend, including best film, best actor and best director.

The movie depicts a secular, near-bankrupt German Jew trying to cope with the death of his mother.

Arab wins gold at 'Jewish Olympics'

An Israeli Arab swimmer captured Israel's first gold at the 17th Maccabiah Games.

Asala Shehadeh, 17, finished first in the women's 200-meter breaststroke on Sunday.

The Maccabiah is often called the "Jewish Olympics," but Israeli citizens of any faith are eligible to compete.

The event was held before Monday's Opening Ceremonies.

Italian city gets new top rabbi

Milan named a new chief rabbi.

The council of the 10,000-member Jewish community, Italy's largest after Rome, named Rabbi Alfonso Arbib to the post at a meeting this week.

He replaces Giuseppe Laras, 70, who stepped down unexpectedly earlier this year after 25 years in office. The council named Laras the new president of the community's rabbinical court.

MIDDLE EAST

Dummy bomb found in Jerusalem

Activists opposed to the Gaza withdrawal are suspected of planting a fake bomb in Jerusalem's central bus station.

The station was evacuated Monday night after the gas canister was found, and before police realized the bomb was fake.

Since the beginning of March, opponents of withdrawal have placed six dummy bombs in bus stations in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, the Jerusalem Post reported.

Officer dismissed over Gaza

An Israeli officer was discharged after refusing to help carry out the upcoming Gaza Strip withdrawal.

Military sources said Monday that the second lieutenant, a platoon commander serving in Gaza, was discharged after telling his superiors he could not take part in the evacuation of Israeli settlers.

He was spared a court martial and retained his rank.

Control tower to honor late astronaut

A control tower at Israel's Ben-Gurion Airport is being named after the late astronaut Col. Ilan Ramon.

The naming ceremony is slated for Tuesday.

Ramon was one of seven crew members who died in the 2003 crash of the Columbia space shuttle.

NORTH AMERICA

O.U. slams Boy Scout ruling

The Orthodox Union criticized a U.S. federal court ruling barring Defense Department assistance to a Boy Scout gathering.

The court ruled June 22 that government support of the annual Jamboree was in violation of the Constitution's Establishment Clause because Boy Scouts are required to make a nonsectarian oath of "duty to God."

"The Boy Scouts is clearly a nonsectarian organization which welcomes participants of diverse faiths and backgrounds," the O.U.'s director of public policy, Nathan Diament, said in a statement Monday.

By providing the Jamboree with temporary housing and other logistical support, the Defense Department gains the benefit of training personnel to perform these tasks in other instances and supporting the work of the Boy Scouts, Diament said.

Jewish list compiler to buy team?

A team of investors bidding for the Washington Nationals is led by a Nixon administration official who cracked down on Jewish government employees.

Fred Malek, who leads the Washington Baseball Club, compiled a list of Jews who worked at the Bureau of Labor Statistics at President Nixon's behest.

Nixon believed that Jewish staffers were skewing employment statistics to make him look bad. Some of the staffers later were demoted or transferred.

Malek, then Nixon's personnel chief, says he regrets his role and tried to talk Nixon out of the task.

Malek's Republican-dominated investment bid came to light this week after the revelation that financier George Soros, who is Jewish, was a minority investor in a bid affiliated with prominent Democrats.

Some congressional Republicans, who favor the Malek bid, suggested that Major League Baseball could lose its favorable anti-trust status if Soros becomes a part-owner.