



## IN THE NEWS

## No let-up in Hamas barrage

Gaza Strip terrorists continued shelling targets despite a plea for calm by the Palestinian Authority in the Gush Katif settlement bloc Monday.

There were no casualties. Hamas called the salvos "retaliation" for Israel's recent killing of several Hamas members but insisted it was still committed to an internal truce brokered by P.A. President Mahmoud Abbas over the winter.

Abbas, who appealed for calm Sunday, was expected to hold negotiations with Hamas, but refuses to crack down forcefully on the terrorist groups, as the P.A. pledged to do under the "road map" peace plan.

## Right-wingers hit road on protest march

Israeli police blocked dozens of buses ferrying right-wingers to a mass march on the Gaza Strip.

In what legal experts described as an unprecedented law-enforcement move in Israel, police stopped hundreds of activists opposed to the upcoming Gaza withdrawal from taking buses Monday to the southern town of Netivot.

Justice Minister Tzipi Livni said the measure was necessary to prevent the march, which she described as aimed at breaking an army blockade on the Gush Katif settlement bloc in Gaza.

At least 6,000 activists still made it to Netivot and set off on the three-day march.

## London bomber visited Israel in 2003

The suspected ringleader of the July 7 London suicide bombers visited Israel in 2003.

Citing an Israeli official, Reuters reported Monday that Mohammad Sidique Khan arrived in Israel on Feb. 19, 2003, and left the next day.

The revelation gave weight to speculation that Khan may have helped to plan an April 30, 2003, suicide bombing by two fellow British Muslims at a Tel Aviv beach-front bar, which killed three Israelis.

# WORLD REPORT

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

## Fencing in Jerusalem proving to be no easy matter for Israel

By LESLIE SUSSER

**J**ERUSALEM (JTA) — A year after the United Nations-affiliated International Court at The Hague ruled that Israel's West Bank security barrier is illegal, controversy over the section in and around Jerusalem could spark new international pressure on the Jewish state to change the fence route or stop construction altogether.

Palestinian leaders warn that the planned route of the "Jerusalem envelope," which would cut off more than 50,000 Palestinians from the city, could spell the end of any peace initiatives with Israel, and they're threatening to take the case back to the United Nations.

As with the first West Bank security-barrier case, they can count on international support. World leaders have been critical of the Jerusalem barrier for two reasons: Most of it lies outside pre-1967 Israeli territory and, they say, it could cause severe hardship for Palestinians who find themselves outside its limits.

There's criticism of the barrier in Israel too: Hawks in the governing Likud Party castigate the government for putting a barrier, part fence and part wall, through the heart of Jerusalem — which, they say, will divide the city in two and make nonsense of the mantra "Israel's eternal and undivided capital."

On the other side of the political spectrum, the Labor Party doves say the government should admit that the fence is designed not just to keep out terrorists but also to secure a Jewish majority in Jerusalem and in the rest of Israel by creating the basis for a border that serves Israel's demographic needs.

Partly to pre-empt international criticism and to forestall decisions against the government by the country's Supreme Court, Israel is taking measures to ensure that Palestinians cut off from the city suffer as little as possible, promising that they'll continue to receive the full range of municipal services.

Nevertheless, left-wing Israelis, who empathize with Palestinian concerns, argue that no matter how hard Israel tries, the fence will undermine Arab life in the city. That result, they warn, could lead to further Palestinian radicalization.

Rather than prevent terrorism, the barrier might actually spark more Palestinian violence, they maintain.

In July 2004, the International Court ruled in a nonbinding decision that the barrier is illegal, and it called on Israel to dismantle the fence and compensate Palestinians who had suffered from its construction. The world court was especially critical of the fence's route, which in many places dips into territory the Palestinians demand for themselves.

Israel continued building the barrier but, after criticism from its own Supreme Court, rerouted much of it closer to the pre-1967 armistice line between Israel and the West Bank, known as the Green Line.

Since the construction of the fence, the number of suicide bombings in Israel has fallen dramatically — although, remarkably, the International Court did not consider terrorism against Israel relevant to the discussion. Since construction began, bombers have been able to penetrate Israel only in areas where the barrier is still incomplete.

But Jerusalem poses a special problem.

*Continued on page 2*

NEWS  
ANALYSIS

## ■ Jerusalem security barrier sparking controversy

*Continued from page 1*

Some 230,000 Palestinians live in the city, and a fence around it would do nothing to stop terrorists among them from attacking Jewish neighborhoods.

Defending the capital's Jewish neighborhoods, where 250 people were killed during the intifada — most of them by suicide bombers — is a security imperative for Israel. In some areas, however, Arab and Jewish neighborhoods interlock to form intricate tapestries that no fence can follow.

There also are Jewish neighborhoods and settlements outside the city limits that the government wants included as part of Israel in any final peace deal with the Palestinians. Moreover, the Likud leadership wants to retain as much of Jerusalem as it can as Israel's capital.

The compromise is a barrier that runs in and out of the city, including some Arab neighborhoods and excluding others, and adding 30,000 Israelis who live outside the city limits.

That's a tortuous arrangement with no single rationale, which the government could find difficult to defend before the world court.

A mid-July government decision on the fence route highlighted Israeli plans to ease conditions for Palestinians whom the barrier will cut off from the city. There will be 12 crossing points, where residents will be able to move in and out of Jerusalem after passing through a security check.

The municipality and government will provide garbage collection, postal, health, education, transport and other services to

Palestinians on the other side of the fence. The government has allocated about \$5.5 million for those services, and it intends to raise money from the international community for the crossing points.

None of these moves has placated the Palestinian Authority leaders. President Mahmoud Abbas attacked the Israeli plan, saying, "Approving the fence route in Jerusalem could bring about the end to relations between the two sides. Such steps will not serve peace, nor will they serve Israel's security."

Prime Minister Ahmed Qurei called the construction a "theft in broad daylight" of Palestinian land.

"This decision makes a farce of any talk about peace and turns the Gaza withdrawal into a useless initiative," he said.

The European Union's foreign policy chief, Javier Solana, expressed sympathy for the Palestinian position. Because the fence is not in territory recognized as Israeli, it creates legal, political and humanitarian problems, he said.

The Israeli government argues that the barrier is being built for one reason only: to stop terrorism. Therefore, it says, the fence should have no political ramifications.

Left-wing Israelis have mixed feelings. Some, like Labor's Haim Ramon, a minister without a portfolio in the national unity government, argue that the fence should be seen in a positive light, as a first step toward a division of Jerusalem that

will enable the city to serve as the capital of two states: Israel and Palestine.

But others on the left are worried. Danny Seidemann, a lawyer who has petitioned the international court against the route on behalf of Palestinian clients, argues that the fence will radicalize Palestinians on both sides: Palestinians outside the fence will be dragged down to the standard of living in the West Bank, he says, while Palestinians inside the fence will be cut off from cheaper West Bank markets. The end result, he argues, will be greater poverty and more terrorism.

Writing in Ha'aretz, the historian Meron Benvenisti, a former Jerusalem deputy mayor, predicted that "the fence, and the human disaster it will bring about, are liable to turn hundreds of thousands of people into a sullen, hostile community, nurturing a desire for revenge. The Jewish community will not escape the effects of the Palestinian communal breakdown, and the fence will herald Jerusalem's return to the pre-1967 years, when it was a besieged border town."

Much will depend on what transpires after Israel's planned withdrawal from Gaza next month. If that move reinvigorates a peace process, Palestinian criticism of the fence may be put on the back burner. But if the process bogs down, there could be another Palestinian move to put Israel in the dock at The Hague or at U.N. headquarters in New York. ■

**'The fence will herald Jerusalem's return to the pre-1967 years, when it was a besieged border town.'**

**Meron Benvenisti**

Former Jerusalem deputy mayor

## AMIA bombing marked

**BUENOS AIRES (JTA)** — Hundreds of people gathered Monday morning in front of the main Jewish institution in Buenos Aires to mark the 11th anniversary of the 1994 terrorist attack on the center.

At 9:53 a.m., the moment of the bombing, a siren was sounded at the AMIA Jewish community center.

The names of the 85 people killed in the attack were read aloud and 85 candles were lit.

An additional candle then was lit by the British ambassador to Argentina, in memory of the victims of this month's London terror attacks.

Argentine President Nestor Kirchner and his wife, Senator Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner, attended, as did government ministers. Kirchner recently said that the state must take responsibility for the failure to solve the case, adding that previous Argentine governments had covered up evidence. ■

### JTA WORLD REPORT

Howard E. Friedman  
President

Mark J. Joffe  
Executive Editor and Publisher

Lisa Hostein  
Editor

Michael S. Arnold  
Managing Editor

Lenore A. Silverstein  
Finance and Administration Director

Noa Artzi-Weill  
Marketing Director

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](http://www.jta.org).  
© JTA. Reproduction only with permission.

# Conferences abound, but are they effective?

By RACHEL POMERANCE

NEW YORK (JTA) — A Jewish conference focused on a looming crisis might strike some as more of the same.

But a wave of recent gatherings has tackled the existential questions facing world Jewry, and many are aimed at or driven by new actors.

The slew of new forums focusing on the future of the Jewish people reveals a certain angst about today's challenges and raises questions about how much faith Jews have in existing institutions to address those challenges.

The conferences reflect a "recognition that the Jewish world is in decline, particularly the non-Orthodox Diaspora, and the organizations are incapable of dealing with that decline" — and may even be partially responsible for it, philanthropist Michael Steinhardt told JTA.

Dan Mariaschin, the executive vice president of B'nai Brith International, said the conferences were spurred by a "kind of a convergence of issues all coming together at one time," such as the spread of anti-Semitism and a dwindling U.S. Jewish population.

Mariaschin attended a June 22-23 conference in Israel hosted by Israeli President Moshe Katsav. Heads of major Israeli and Diaspora groups who came together decided to establish a World Jewish Forum — based on the model of the World Economic Forum — to tackle the challenges facing world Jewry.

A key question at the meeting was how to attract a cross section of influential Jews beyond the ranks of Jewish organizations.

In May, the Jewish People Policy Planning Institute, a think tank associated with the Jewish Agency for Israel, took a similar approach at the Wye River Conference Center, in Maryland.

The meeting drew luminaries such as Steinhardt, Harvard President Lawrence Summers and Brandeis President Jehuda Reinharz to address a range of issues, including Diaspora Jews' decreasing affiliation.

Other conferences are focused on distilling Jewish identity. KolDor, a new Israel-based group that serves as a think tank of prominent young Jews around the world, met June 23-27 in Israel.

The group is "seeking to articulate a

positive, inclusive platform for the Jewish people," from defining Jewish values and "peoplehood" to the role of Diaspora Jewry vis-a-vis Israel.

And this fall, New York City's Jewish Week newspaper will host "The Conversation: Jewish in America," in Aspen, Colo.

Despite the number of annual conferences already held by Jewish organizations, some say the new conferences are filling a void.

According to Mark Charendoff, the president of the Jewish Funders Network, the gatherings are motivated partly by what is lacking at the General Assembly, the annual conference of the North American Jewish federation system.

"I think there was once the hope that the G.A. would serve as that meeting ground for Jewish leadership to discuss the larger issues of Jewish life, and I think there was a point in the history of the G.A. when that was the case, and I think a lot of people are disappointed that it's no longer the case," Charendoff said. People are seeing that "all of the organized Jewish community is missing the boat."

At President Katsav's meeting, "it was pointed out that the collective efforts of organized Jewish life are reaching about 30 percent of the American Jewish community," said Charendoff, who attended the meeting and expressed his hope that a World Jewish Forum would attract the most talented Jews — from the business world to Hollywood.

Gail Hyman, the senior vice president of communications for the United Jewish Communities, the federation system's umbrella organization, said Charendoff was "correct that there certainly was a feeling that something had to be injected into G.A. thinking and planning to bring it back to a place of excitement and energy and purpose."

But, she said, UJC has been doing just that — moving to make its annual assembly more relevant, interactive and provocative. The organization is also instituting changes designed to attract younger Jews.

The G.A. is a "unique place on the calendar and a unique event," she said, one that tries "to marry those big global discus-

sions" — on issues such as anti-Semitism, the Gaza-withdrawal plan or Jewish ethics

— "with the very real needs of local federations" and other UJC constituents.

According to Yosef Abramowitz, a KolDor member and the CEO of the Newton, Mass.-based Jewish Family and Life, a publisher of Jewish content online, the recent con-

ferences reflect distress over the 2000-2001 National Jewish Population Survey, which revealed a lack of progress toward meeting challenges identified in a prior study a decade earlier.

The 2000-2001 survey found an estimated 5.2 million Jews living in America, down from 5.5 million in 1990. Forty-seven percent of Jews who had married in the prior five years had wed non-Jews, up from 43 percent in 1990.

Several have found the conferences invigorating.

"While many of the people invited to the president's meeting started off skeptical, my sense was that by the end they felt that something significant could be accomplished and were pleased to be part of the effort," said Rabbi Eric Yoffie, the president of the Union for Reform Judaism, who participated in the Katsav conference in June.

But Yoffie warned against conferences that focus on crises while ignoring the vibrancy of modern Jewish life.

"That fact is that we pretty much know what we need," he said. "And there are times when we require less talk and more action, more mitzvot, more focusing on the joys, the satisfactions and the holiness of Jewish life and less on the sword of extinction that hangs over our head."

According to the Harvard law professor Alan Dershowitz, who attended the Wye conference, the new discussions may help overhaul a hierarchy of Jewish leadership that seems to reward wealth over aptitude.

"All these conferences reflect a deep feeling that the time has come to broaden the base of Jewish leadership beyond the 'gelt-givers,'" he said, adding that donors should remain leaders, but not the exclusive shareholders, of Jewish organizations.

"We are too mature a community to have our leadership based entirely on wealth," he said.

There are times  
when we require less  
talk and more action.

Rabbi Eric Yoffie

President of the Union for Reform Judaism

BEHIND  
THE  
HEADLINES

# NEWS IN BRIEF

## MIDDLE EAST

### Bomb-scare arrests

Two Israeli soldiers are under arrest on suspicion of planting a fake bomb in a bus terminal.

Police said Monday that the soldiers, members of an infantry regiment that caters to fervently Orthodox conscripts, were arrested but had not confessed to the charges.

They are suspected of smuggling a gas canister into the Jerusalem Central Bus Station last week, rigging it up to look like a bomb and leaving a note denouncing Israel's plan to withdraw from the Gaza Strip and northern West Bank.

### Evacuation pact signed

Israeli right-wing leaders signed a pact promising only nonviolent resistance to the upcoming Gaza Strip withdrawal.

Twenty-one lawmakers from right-wing Israeli political parties, along with leading Zionist rabbis, signed the "Struggle Covenant" in the Knesset on Monday. Knesset Speaker Reuven Rivlin oversaw the ceremony.

The signatories called on settlers slated for evacuation next month from Gaza and the northern West Bank to resist passively, without resorting to violence.

### Non-Jew first in Maccabiah Games

An Iranian-born Muslim wrestler won a Maccabiah medal after he entered the Jewish sports competition through a series of errors.

Mohammad Babulfath, who holds Swedish citizenship, took first place in his weight class Sunday at the Maccabiah Games' Greco-Roman wrestling competition.

Babulfath and his coach and teammate arrived at the Maccabiah not knowing that it is open only to Jews and Israelis.

The confusion apparently began after an Israeli wrestling official posted an open invitation to the quadrennial "Jewish Olympics" on an international wrestling Web site, without explaining the competition's restrictions, according to the Jerusalem Post.

Unsure if Babulfath deserved a medal, Maccabiah officials ultimately awarded him an improvised title but gave the gold medal to someone else.

### Iraq may not recognize its Jews

Iraq's new government may not recognize the country's few Jews as a minority. A month away from creating a new Iraqi constitution, the National Assembly in Baghdad is debating whether some 20 Jews remaining in the country should qualify as a minority with rights guaranteed by the state, the Jerusalem Post reported Monday.

The Jews remaining in Iraq "should not be included as a minority because their number is too small," Shi'ite lawmaker Saad Jawad Qindeel said. But the Post quoted an international law expert as saying that there is no size requirement for an ethnic minority to be recognized as such, especially when its numbers dwindled as a result of persecution.

### Bobbitt surgeon attached to Israel

The surgeon who reattached John Wayne Bobbitt's severed penis has moved to the Jewish state.

Dr. David Berman of Potomac, Md., made aliyah last week with his wife and four sons as part of the large-scale Nefesh B'Nefesh immigration, the Jerusalem Post reported.

Lorena Bobbitt made national headlines in 1993 when she emasculated her husband, accusing him of infidelity and abuse.

Bobbitt subsequently proved Berman's skill as a doctor when he performed in pornographic films after his surgery.

## NORTH AMERICA

### Wiener: Shut down Arab Bank

A New York congressman called on the Treasury Department to expel the Arab Bank from the United States.

At a press conference Sunday in Manhattan, Rep. Anthony Weiner (D-N.Y.) cited the Jordanian bank's alleged ties to terrorism, noting that it handles transactions with groups such as the Holy Land Foundation, a front group for Hamas, and may work with the Global Relief Foundation, which some contend supports Al-Qaida.

### Lawmaker to back insurance bill

Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-Fla.) told the Hadassah national convention Sunday in Washington that she would introduce legislation to prevent insurance companies from rejecting applicants who plan to travel to Israel.

She recently had been denied life insurance because of possible travel to the Jewish state.

The first-term lawmaker said she'll introduce the Life Insurance Fairness for Travelers Act this summer.

Several states have enacted similar legislation.

### Bill would create Jewish history month

A congresswoman garnered over 200 sponsors from both parties for legislation that would create American Jewish History Month.

"Ignorance about Jews, our history, culture and contributions to American society remains widespread in the U.S.," Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-Fla.) said Monday at Hadassah's annual Washington convention. "Ignorance leads to hatred and bigotry, and one way to stop it is through education."

### Senate approves nonprofit protection

The U.S. Senate approved a Homeland Security bill that includes \$25 million for at-risk nonprofit organizations.

The United Jewish Communities federation umbrella group led lobbying efforts to include the money designated for institutions that are more likely to face a terrorist attack.

The Senate approved the overall spending bill last week, which now goes to conference with the U.S. House of Representatives, most likely before the congressional break in August.

## WORLD

### United Nations defends itself

A United Nations spokesman defended a pro-Palestinian meeting that drew the ire of Jewish groups.

Both B'nai B'rith and the Anti-Defamation League objected to the recent Paris-based International Conference of Civil Society, sponsored by the U.N. Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

Abraham Foxman, the ADL's national director, said the committee is biased against Israel and that Secretary-General Kofi Annan, who has pledged to lessen antagonism to Israel at the world body, should not have sent representatives.

Edward Mortimer, Annan's communications director, wrote to Foxman last Friday that Annan had sent a message of reconciliation.

### Belgrade shul wall falls

Jews in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, are scrambling to raise funds to rebuild the wall surrounding the city's synagogue complex.

The brick-and-stone wall collapsed Sunday, not long after a large post-Shabbat celebration on Saturday night.

Community officials said the wall had been in bad condition and that the collapse wasn't the result of foul play.