


IN THE NEWS
Israel cracks down after Gaza attacks

The Israeli army arrested more than 200 suspected Palestinian terrorists in a crackdown following Gaza Strip rocket attacks.

Most of the fugitives detained in the West Bank on Sunday were from Hamas and Islamic Jihad. [Story, Pg. 2]

Israel withdraws its U.S. aid request

Israel's request for additional assistance from the United States to resettle evacuees from the Gaza Strip pullout is off the table for now, a senior Israeli official said.

President Bush had expressed interest in assisting Israel following the withdrawal, but "with one disaster after another, the momentum we had before the disengagement" has been lost, Yossi Bachar, the director general of Israel's Finance Ministry, said Sunday. He cited the massive costs the United States faces this hurricane season.

AIPAC must fund ex-staffers' defense

AIPAC is paying for the legal defense of two former employees indicted on espionage charges because of an indemnification clause in employee contracts, JTA has learned.

Employees of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee sign an agreement that protects them from legal harm until all appeals are exhausted, according to a source close to the defense of Steve Rosen and Keith Weissman who has firsthand knowledge of the clause.

JTA previously had learned that AIPAC's bill for the pair's defense had topped \$1 million although AIPAC fired Rosen and Weissman in April, allegedly because of information arising out of an FBI investigation into the two former staffers' handling of classified information.

AIPAC declined to comment on the news, as did Abbe Lowell, Rosen's attorney.

WORLD REPORT

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

Venezuelan Jews fleeing instability find sunny stability in South Florida

By LARRY LUXNER

WESTON, Fla. (JTA) — On the edge of the Florida Everglades, in an upscale suburb known for its golf courses, towering coconut palms and shady bicycle paths, Vivian Goshen has found her land of milk and honey.

For a Jew fleeing economic and political chaos, Weston isn't such a bad place to be.

The Venezuela-born Goshen, her Israeli husband and their three children live in a sprawling, five-bedroom home purchased six months ago for \$740,000. With South Florida real-estate prices spiraling out of control, their property already is worth close to \$1 million.

But it still doesn't come close to Colinas de los Ruices, the upscale Caracas neighborhood that the family left behind.

"When you want to start something new, you have to break with the past," Goshen said in Spanish over a glass of passion fruit juice. "There, we had two maids and traveled four times a year. We lived in a big house, but the kids couldn't go out at night. Everything was behind bars. Here we have less, but we enjoy security and quality of life. The children are happier. We will never go back."

The Goshens are part of an increasing flow of wealthy and not-so-wealthy Latin American Jews who are "making aliyah" to Broward County, Fla.

A 1997 study found that Broward had around 270,000 Jews, of which only 5,300, or about 2.2 percent, considered themselves Latino or Hispanic. In contrast, there are nearly 10,000 Hispanic Jews currently living in Miami-Dade County, just to the south.

But the Broward study appeared just before the Argentine economy imploded, hitting thousands of middle-class Jewish families and leading to massive emigration. It also was a year before the populist leader Hugo Chavez was elected president of Venezuela, sparking an exodus of wealthy Venezuelan Jews that continues to this day.

In fact, so many Venezuelans have settled in Weston that some have nicknamed the recently incorporated municipality "Westonzuela."

One of those newcomers is Anita Lapco. Earlier this year she was hired as the full-time coordinator of Latin American affairs at the United Jewish Community of Broward County.

"My job is to reach out to Latin Jews living in Broward, informing them about what the federation does and the agencies it supports and making them feel part of the Jewish community," said Lapco, who spent 16 years as principal of the Jewish school in Caracas and later served as the director general of ORT in Venezuela.

Lapco's office is cluttered with photographs of her grandchildren, posters of Israel and bilingual fliers for events such as a Fiesta Latina at the Hebraica/Soref Jewish Community Center in nearby Plantation, featuring a DJ, Israeli dancing, salsa music and kosher food.

In fact, a recent Purim party at the JCC attracted more than 300 people, most of them Jews of Latin origin.

Lapco told JTA that unlike Miami-Dade, Broward has no synagogues catering specifically to Latin American Jews, though Span-

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FOCUS ON ISSUES

■ Latin American Jews are changing the flavor of Jewish Florida

Continued from page 1

ish-speaking Jews tend to join Chabad congregations in Hollywood, Plantation and Weston.

They also tend to have very little in common culturally with the thousands of elderly Jews from the New York area who live at Kings Point, Wynmoor and other huge condominium developments found throughout Broward County.

"Most of the shuls here are Reform or Conservative and very different from the style of Judaism we practice in Latin countries," Lapco said. "Also, in Venezuela, Colombia and Mexico, we do communal bat-mitzvah ceremonies. A few ladies have told me they'd like to have this in Broward too."

Latin American Jews generally have little trouble blending into the Spanish-speaking culture prevalent not only in Greater Miami but increasingly in Hollywood, Fort Lauderdale and other Broward cities.

Yet they leave behind jobs, traditions and familiar faces.

Goshen arrived in Florida on Christmas Eve 2002. Six days later, she told her husband that she didn't want to go back to Venezuela.

"We came here on vacation, not intending to stay. But we couldn't return because there was a strike, and one of our neighbors was a leading opposition figure," she told JTA. "It's a shame what's happened in Venezuela. If I didn't have teenagers, I wouldn't have left."

The Goshens, who speak Spanish and Hebrew at home, first rented an apart-

ment in Hallandale, eventually settling in nearby Weston Hills.

"Weston has the best schools in Broward County, and I didn't have the money to put my kids in private schools," she said, explaining that her children had always attended private Jewish schools back in Venezuela.

Like Goshen, Lapco said she and her husband, Leon,

a doctor, left Venezuela last year because

the situation under Chavez was becoming too unstable.

"It's a very rich country with very poor people," she said. "It's hard to plan a business if you don't know what's going to happen from one day to the next. They have foreign-exchange controls and insecurity in the judicial system. There's a feeling you don't know what's going to happen next." ■



When you want to start something new, you have to break with the past.

Vivian Goshen

Venezuelan immigrant to Florida

Israel back on Gaza border

By DAN BARON

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Just weeks after Israel's withdrawal from the Gaza Strip, fighting with the Palestinians has resumed with sound and fury — and the potential to evolve into a full-blown border war.

Israeli forces answered Hamas rocket salvos from Gaza with airstrikes, arrest sweeps in the West Bank and, in an unprecedented move, by putting its artillery on standby to fire.

The escalation began with a terrorism-sparked tragedy: At least 15 people were killed last Friday when a munitions truck taking part in a Hamas victory parade in Gaza exploded by accident.

Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, embarrassed by the chaotic display of arms banned under the U.S.-led peace "road map," condemned the Islamist faction as irresponsible.

But with its prestige on the line just months before a January election for the Palestinian Authority Parliament, Hamas put its own spin on the blast, calling it an Israeli airstrike or sabotage.

Vowing to "open the gates of hell" on Israel, Hamas launched at least 35 of its Kassam rockets across the Gaza border at the southern Israeli town of Sderot. At least five Israelis were wounded in the strikes.

Israel has braced for such a scenario ever since completing its Gaza withdrawal on Sept. 12.

But the escalation could not have come

at a worse time for Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, just before the Likud Central Committee was scheduled to vote on a motion by Likud rival Benjamin Netanyahu to hold a primary election in which the prime minister could be unseated as party leader.

Many in the Likud opposed the withdrawal, saying it would both reward and encourage terrorism.

Sharon ordered a counterterrorist offensive on a scale not seen in months. Two suspected Gaza terrorists died and several munitions factories were destroyed in airstrikes. Also, 207 fugitives, including top Hamas officials, were detained in the West Bank.

"I instructed that there are no restrictions on the use of any measures in order to strike at the terrorists, their equipment and where they find shelter. The instructions are unequivocal; we do not mean a one-time action here," Sharon told his Cabinet.

"I am certain that it is within our ability to halt the terrorist organizations' actions against us. The activity will not only be in Gaza but will also be against terrorism in Judea and Samaria," he said.

Sharon received a boost from the United States, with the new U.S. ambassador to Israel, Richard Jones, telling reporters: "We all know that the terrorists are trying to provoke Israel at a very sensitive time and we understand exactly what the government's position is and the response it has taken." ■

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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Campaign for Jews from Arab lands intensifies

By DANIELLA PELED

LONDON (JTA) — Jews who fled Arab countries following the creation of the State of Israel are preparing to launch a new campaign for restitution.

Meeting in London at a forum organized by the World Organization for Jews From Arab Countries and Justice for Jews from Arab Countries, Jewish representatives from 14 nations met earlier this month to create the steering committee for the International Campaign for Rights and Redress.

The group plans to conduct an international advocacy and public education campaign on the rights of former Jewish refugees, documenting human-rights violations against those who fled Arab countries, as well as their lost assets.

The director of the justice group, Stanley Urman, said the summit was a

landmark occasion. "It is a commitment by Jewish communities in 14 countries on five continents to once and for all document the historical injustice perpetrated against Jews in Arab countries," he said. "It is not just a theoretical and educational exercise; it is concrete."

Supported by the Israeli government, the plan also has the backing of Jewish communities in North and South America, Europe and Australia, with organizations such as the Anti-Defamation League, B'nai B'rith International and the World Sephardi Congress involved.

"We are delighted to play a key role in this crucial project," said Henry Grunwald, who is the president of British Jewry's umbrella group, the Board of Deputies. "The plight of Jews from Arab countries is all too often a cause that we in the wider Jewish community forget, and we must act to educate and raise awareness of this important issue."

Organizers long have been unhappy that the issue of Palestinian refugees largely has eclipsed the question of the nearly 900,000 Jews displaced from Arab countries during and after the 1948 creation of the State of Israel. They want the Jewish refugees' fate addressed as well in any peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinians.

Some 600,000 of these refugees settled in Israel; by 2001, fewer than 8,000 Jews remained in Arab countries.

The displaced Jews were recognized as refugees by the United Nations, but there was virtually no international response to their plight.

The only way that the rights of former Jewish refugees can be asserted, organizers believe, is through an international campaign. They will launch the campaign in March with a special month of commemoration to highlight the torture, detention, loss of citizenship and seizure of property suffered by many Jewish refugees.

"This is a milestone in the effort to address the historic injustice to the Jewish communities in Arab countries," said Malcolm Hoenlein, executive vice chairman

of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations. "We hope that this renewed, unified campaign will not only succeed in creating a comprehensive data bank, but will also put this issue on the agenda of the international community, which has neglected it for so long."

Data on the communal and individual assets lost in the displacements — incorporating public education, the collection of testimonies and programs to lobby media and governments — will be collected and preserved in a unit established in Israel's Ministry of Justice.

Urman declined to speculate on the value of the Jewish refugees' assets,

insisting that the fundamental issue is justice rather than compensation. Redress might come in many forms, he said, from a commitment to protect and preserve historical Jewish sites in Arab lands to the endowment of chairs at universities to preserve Middle Eastern

The plight of Jews from Arab countries is all too often a cause that we in the wider Jewish community forget.

Henry Grunwald

British Jewish official

Jewish culture.

In Iraq the Jewish community numbered around 140,000 before being mostly dispersed in the 1950s. Like many others in his community, Maurice Shohet, president of Bene Naharayim, the Iraqi Jewish community in New York, abandoned his possessions when he fled Iraq with his family in 1970, at age 21.

"We left everything; we just wanted to save our lives," he said.

The combined assets that Iraqi Jewry left behind now could be worth billions of dollars. When the U.S.-led war on Iraq began in 2003, the prospect of an elected, post-Saddam government offered some hope of restitution for the community.

But "so far all we are hearing is the voice of the insurgents," Shohet said.

Shohet visited his hometown of Baghdad last year, but he cut short his trip because of violence. With divisions rampant within Iraq society and the government still going through a transition period, compensation seems far away.

Yet that makes the issue more urgent, Urman said. ■

THIS WEEK

MONDAY

■ A Torah is dedicated at the site where American Airlines Flight 77 hit the Pentagon on Sept. 11. The scroll was donated by real estate developer Jacob Hank Sopher in conjunction with the Shul of Bal Harbour in Florida and the Aleph Institute.

■ The final hearing in the Gold Train case takes place in a U.S. court. The court considers any final appeals against its earlier decision to allocate \$25 million in the case of a train full of goods looted by Nazis from Hungarian Jews and then confiscated by U.S. troops in 1945. Under the deal, \$21 million will go to Hungarian Holocaust survivors in need. The remainder will go to legal fees, extra compensation for the individuals who brought the suit and an archive documenting the case.

■ Natan Sharansky, the former Soviet refusenik who resigned earlier this year from Israel's Cabinet to protest Israel's withdrawal from the Gaza Strip, speaks at the National Press Club in Washington.

TUESDAY

■ Top members of Congress from both parties join leading evangelical Christians in addressing Stand for Israel, a two-day event in Washington sponsored by the International Fellowship of Christians and Jews, an organization bringing together Jews and evangelicals.

THURSDAY

■ Members of the Israeli Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee meet with Bush administration and congressional officials.

NEWS IN BRIEF

NORTH AMERICA

Israel aid unscathed in GOP group's proposal

Funding for Israel would remain untouched in cuts proposed by conservative Republicans in the wake of recent hurricanes. Funding for Egypt, Africa, the AIDS initiative and the Peace Corps would take hits under a Republican Study Committee document, obtained by JTA, that breaks down offsets into several categories, including foreign aid.

Israel is the single largest recipient of U.S. aid, receiving more than \$2.5 billion a year, but is not on the list for cuts.

House votes for religious Head Start

The U.S. House of Representatives extended funding for Head Start programs to religious institutions, legislation opposed by some Jewish groups.

The Reform movement strongly condemned the Sept. 22 vote, saying it would lower standards by allowing institutions to use federal funds to hire early-childhood teachers based on religion, not qualifications.

Dozens attend Iraq protest service

Dozens of demonstrators protesting the U.S. presence in Iraq packed a Washington synagogue in a service that affirmed their support for the State of Israel.

Rabbi Arthur Waskow of Philadelphia's Shalom Center organized the packed service Saturday morning at the Sixth & I Historic Synagogue in downtown Washington. Tens of thousands of people participated over the weekend in a protest march organized by United for Peace and Justice, but many Jewish demonstrators were angered by the last-minute inclusion of ANSWER, an anti-Israel group, as an organizer.

"By anti-Israel, we mean not just that it opposes specific Israeli government policies but that it demonizes Israeli society," Waskow said in a statement released before the march.

20 years for JDL bomb blot

A Los Angeles court sentenced a member of the Jewish Defense League to 20 years in prison for plotting to bomb a mosque and the office of an Arab American congressman.

U.S. District Court Judge Ronald Lew handed Earl Krugel the maximum sentence Sept. 22 for his role in the 2001 plot, which targeted the King Fahd Mosque in Culver City, Calif., and a regional office of Rep. Darrell Issa (R-Calif.). Three years that he already has spent in prison will be counted against the sentence of Krugel, 62, who expressed remorse for the plot. JDL leader Irv Rubin, also arrested in the case, died in prison in 2002.

Houston Jew dies fleeing storm

A Jewish woman from Houston died when a bus evacuating residents of an assisted-living community ahead of Hurricane Rita caught fire.

Bessie Kaplan, 92, was among an estimated 24 people killed when a bus chartered by Brighton Gardens of Bellaire burst into flames as it was bringing residents of the assisted-living community to Dallas. Another passenger, Ruby Goldberg, was treated for injuries at Dallas' Parkland Hospital and released.

Survivor gets Medal of Honor

President Bush awarded the nation's highest military honor to a Holocaust survivor who served with U.S. forces in Korea and was a prisoner of war. In a White House ceremony last Friday for Tibor Rubin, Bush alluded to the discrimination the immigrant from Hungary

suffered during his service in the U.S. Army, and which apparently was a factor in the long wait for a Medal of Honor.

"As a Jew and non-citizen serving in uniform, he'd experienced prejudice in the army, and he knew that the America he fought for did not always live up to its highest ideals," Bush said of Rubin.

"Yet he had enough trust in America's promise to see his commitment through. He saw it as his personal duty to live up to our nation's promise, and by doing so, he set an example of what it means to be an American."

Rubin enlisted when he arrived in the United States after surviving the Holocaust. He singlehandedly held off attackers on several occasions, and after his capture he helped as many as 40 U.S. POWs survive by smuggling food and medicine to them.

MIDDLE EAST

Jihad leader slain

The Israeli air force assassinated a senior Palestinian terrorist in the Gaza Strip. The fugitive, a planner for Islamic Jihad, died in a missile strike on his car Sunday. A passenger was also killed.

The incident brought to four the number of Palestinian terrorists killed in targeted Israeli attacks since Prime Minister Ariel Sharon gave the military a green light to stop cross-border rocket attacks from Gaza.

Troops kill 3 in West Bank

Israeli troops killed three gunmen near Tulkarm.

The troops were seeking Islamic Jihad terrorists last Friday when they entered the village of Ilar near the West Bank city. Three gunmen emerged from a building troops had surrounded and died in a shoot-out with the soldiers.

Saudi Arabia: No relations with Israel for now

Saudi Arabia will not follow the lead of other Arab nations in exploring ties with Israel, its foreign minister said. Prince Saud Faisal praised Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon for pulling out of the Gaza Strip this month, but said his follow-up was inconsistent.

Rabbi gives 'reason' for Rita

A former Israeli chief rabbi described the Gulf Coast hurricanes as divine punishment for President Bush's support for the Gaza Strip withdrawal. "Two million Americans have become refugees because the Gush Katif exiles have become refugees," the Israel daily Ma'ariv quoted Rabbi Mordechai Eliahu as saying over the weekend, in reference to the former main Gaza settlement bloc.

The United States may have endured Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, but if it wants to avert further disasters Bush should apologize to the former Gaza settlers, said Eliahu, a former Sephardi chief rabbi.

WORLD

French dictionary recalled

A French dictionary was recalled after a computer virus caused the publication to revert to an edition with anti-Semitic definitions.

Earlier, MRAP, a French anti-racism association, charged that the 2005 edition of Le Petit Littré had reverted to an 1874 edition that contained racist and anti-Semitic definitions for entries such as "yellow," "Negro" and "Jew."

The publisher says a computer bug caused the 19th-century edition to be sent to the printer by mistake. The dictionary's publisher said the 2006 edition will be published with a foreword explaining the evolution of these terms since the 19th century.