

IN THE NEWS

Shuls near Paris damaged in riots

Two synagogues were damaged in riots that have raged across Paris' suburbs.

Late last week, a Molotov cocktail blackened the door of a synagogue, and last Friday night a device was detonated outside a second synagogue.

Mofaz backs diplomacy on Iran

Israel is not considering a military strike against Iran's nuclear facilities for now, the Israeli defense minister said.

In an interview in the current issue of Newsweek, Shaul Mofaz said Israel hopes the threat of U.N. sanctions will compel Iran to abandon its quest for nuclear weapons.

"A military option is not on the agenda today," Mofaz told the magazine. "This type of threat can be brought to the Security Council with the leadership of the United States and European countries."

Mofaz also said the *Karine-A*, a weapons ship intercepted by Israel en route to the Gaza Strip in 2002, was dispatched by Iran at the behest of the late Yasser Arafat.

"The goal was to send 50 tons of arms to the hands of the Palestinian Authority. The Palestinians promised the Iranians in return they would give them security for Iranian terror groups coming to Israel," Mofaz said.

Knesset rejects Sharon's appointments

The Knesset rejected three of Ariel Sharon's appointments to his Cabinet.

The Knesset voted 60-54 on Monday to reject Ehud Olmert as permanent finance minister, Roni Bar-On as industry, trade and employment minister and Ze'ev Boim as immigrant absorption minister.

The defeats were blamed on members of the prime minister's Likud Party who had opposed Israel's Gaza withdrawal plan.



WORLD REPORT

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At Yad Vashem, Rwandan survivors of genocide find support and insight

By DINA KRAFT

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Beaten and shot at by a machete-wielding gang, Hilarie Mukamazimraka was left for dead in a pile of bodies during the bloody days of genocide in Rwanda in 1994.

Touring Israel's Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial recently, the photos of Jews marching toward their deaths called to mind her own slaughtered people.

"It reminded me of all we went through," she said. "I cried a lot and could barely stand."

Along with a group of 20 Tutsis, many of them also survivors of the Rwandan killing fields, Mukamazimraka spent eight days at Yad Vashem learning about Israel's experiences in memorializing victims of the Holocaust.

In workshops, lectures, tours and discussions with Holocaust survivors, the group learned how they might begin the process of transferring the horrors they experienced into concrete memorials, testimonials and commemoration rituals.

Yad Vashem can help share "what worked and what did not work" in the Israeli experience of memorializing the Holocaust, said the museum's chairman, Avner Shalem.

Yad Vashem's experience in research, education, marking milestones and "how to rebuild a sense of trust in mankind" could become valuable tools for the visiting Tutsis to take home with them, he said.

Mukamazimraka's husband, parents and five of her eight siblings died as an estimated 800,000 Rwandans were murdered by their fellow countrymen in just 100 days from April-June 1994.

Most of those killed were minority Tutsis and most of the perpetrators were Hutu, the ethnic majority in the central African country. The massacres have become one of the most obvious examples of state-sponsored genocide since the Nazis perpetrated the Holocaust.

Some of the Tutsis at Yad Vashem said they were especially moved by the testimony of Holocaust survivors and how they communicated their tales through writing and art. Mukamazimraka, 37, a lawyer, said she has been inspired to write a book about her experience.

After being left for dead, she eventually opened her eyes and realized she was still alive. She crawled out of the pile of bodies and made her way to the bush, where she hid and survived on fruit she picked.

Tutsis say there is a high level of denial among Hutus about the scope of the killings, and many survivors are ashamed to tell their stories. Among them are women who were raped and now shy away from testifying against their attackers in the community courts set up to try suspected rapists and murderers.

The Tutsi group learned that during Israel's early years, Holocaust survivors also were not encouraged to come forward with their stories in a country that wanted to project an image of Jews as heroes, not victims.

But they were emboldened to hear how survivors went on to forge productive, vital lives and now tell their stories without reservation.

"We feel close to them," said Auschwitz survivor Zvi Michaeli, 88, who met with the

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BEHIND
THE
HEADLINES

■ Israel's Holocaust museum hosts survivors of the Rwandan genocide

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Tutsis. "We experienced the same things, the same killing and discrimination."

At a workshop Sunday, the Tutsi group discussed how to begin the commemoration and education process in their country with educators from Yad Vashem's International School for Holocaust Studies.

One of the educators, Doron Avraham, spoke to the group about answering the nation's need to come to grips with the massacre by spreading awareness of what happened, and how, during those murderous days.

"You are the people who experienced the disaster and now you are the ones responsible for spreading awareness about it," he said to the group, which listened to a French translation of his words.

The wounds of the Rwanda massacre are still fresh, and the fears and hatreds that predated the genocide still exist.

Furthermore, thousands of the murderers — who took machetes to their own neighbors and even, in some cases, their own relatives — still live alongside the survivors.

"We live among the murderers of our own families," one young man in the workshop said. "So it's difficult for us to change mind-sets. Your people also took time to rebuild."

Avraham told the group that in some ways it was easier for Holocaust survivors to rebuild their lives because most had relocated far from the killing fields.

As the minority in Rwanda, the Tutsis said they feel alone in their struggle to

recover from the trauma of the genocide. Yad Vashem educators encouraged them to collect testimonies and tell their stories as a way to include the entire society in the reconciliation process.

The seminar was sponsored by Nyamirambo, a Tutsi non-profit based in Belgium and Rwanda, and the French Memorial of the Shoah.

It was Yolande Mukagasana, Nyamirambo's director, who initiated the idea of coming to Yad Vashem. Struggling to come to terms with what happened to her family in Rwanda, she became interested in the Holocaust and began meeting with survivors and visiting Auschwitz.

Mukagasana has published two autobiographical accounts of the Rwandan genocide, in which her husband and three children were killed. One of the books recently was translated into Hebrew.

Michaeli, who survived several concentration camps, including Auschwitz, told the Tutsi survivors he hoped they could find a way out of their violent past toward a safe and productive future.

"I told them that now that they have a new government, they need to find a way to unify together and to forget the past," he said. "We have not been able to do that, but I hope they will have better luck."

'We experienced the same things, the same killing and discrimination.'

Zvi Michaeli
Holocaust survivor

Croatia pressed on restitution

By VLASTA KOVAC

ZAGREB, Croatia (JTA) — The U.S. government is pressing for an agreement with Croatia concerning the restitution of property that was held by Croatian Jews or their descendants who now are American citizens.

On a mid-October visit, Ambassador Edward O'Donnell, the U.S. special envoy for Holocaust issues, informed Croatian officials that the United States is ready to negotiate a bilateral agreement that would allow American citizens access to Croatia's 1996 Restitution Act.

The vast majority of American citizens who lost property under the Yugoslav government were covered under restitution agreements between the United States and the former Yugoslavia, but a number of American citizens of Croatian background have claims that were not covered under those agreements.

Just as Croatian citizens have full access to American laws, the United States seeks to provide access to the Croatian restitution law for American citizens not covered under previous agreements, a U.S. official told JTA.

Croatian Jews had their property seized first in 1941 — when the Ustashe regime, a Nazi puppet state, ruled

Croatia — and again after 1945 by the Communists.

The Globus newspaper reported that the American initiative was sparked by the fact that the Croatian and Austrian governments have been negotiating property restitution with the former German minority in Croatia, the so-called Volksdeutsche, who were forced to leave the country after 1945.

Restitution of the Volksdeutsche's property has been raised in connection with Croatia's future membership in the European Union. The problem is that in many cases, property that the Volksdeutsche acquired between 1941 and 1945 had been owned by Jews.

In his book "The Holocaust in Zagreb," historian Ivo Goldstein cites a case where the family of Imbro Berger, a Jew, was thrown out of its apartment in Zagreb in April 1941. Six days later, an Ustashe lieutenant moved in while Berger was deported to the Jasenovac death camp, where he died a few months later.

In August 1942, Berger's wife, Margaret, was deported to the Stara Gradika camp, where she was killed, while the couple's son, Milan, died in Auschwitz. Descendants of the Ustashe lieutenant still live in Bergers' former apartment and have become its legal owners.

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Argentina moves to right past wrongs

By JOE GOLDMAN

BUENOS AIRES (JTA) — When Diana Wang won the right to change her religious affiliation from Catholic to Jewish on her 1947 entry papers to Argentina, it represented another step forward by the current government to right past wrongs.

And it was an emotionally charged moment for Wang, president of the Generation of the Shoah group in Argentina.

"It has been nice to celebrate the New Year as my real self," she told JTA around the High Holidays.

"It's incredible, but I feel like a more integral person," she said, a month after a September ceremony in which the Argentine Immigration Service, Interior Ministry and Foreign Ministry re-registered Wang as Jewish after she was forced to claim she was Catholic in order to get her papers 58 years ago.

The government announced it would make the revision for Wang; that would set a precedent for others who say they, too, had to lie about their religion to gain entry to Argentina.

The government also will waive the cost of such a change, which is about \$75.

Since President Nestor Kirchner took office just two and a half years ago, his administration has revised a half-century of Argentine policies turning a blind eye to the entry of Nazi war criminals following World War II, when the country had barred entry to Jews trying to escape the Holocaust.

Some of the government's major actions include:

- opening long-closed Immigration Ser-

vice records to promote the search for Nazi war criminals. The government of Carlos

Menem had promised such a step in the 1990s, but strict control and bureaucratic snags over the dissemination of files and documents made the promise a farce.

- ordering the removal of a plaque in the Foreign Ministry honoring Argentine diplomats who supposedly saved Jewish lives during the war. Historians argued that several of the diplomats had consistently refused to give Jews visas, essentially dooming them to death during the Holocaust.

AROUND THE JEWISH WORLD

- finding and annulling a 1938 Foreign Ministry order, sent to diplomats around the world, ordering them to bar entry to Jews.

- disbanding or revamping CEANA, the Foreign Ministry commission set up during the Menem years to clear up the skeletons of the country's Nazi past. The commission seemed to hide more than it revealed, and was riven by internal strife. The Kirchner government says it's looking at revamping the commission so that it can do a major historical documentation. A final decision on that project is expected by December.

Even though she was only 2 years old at the time, Wang remembers arriving in the port of Buenos Aires on July 4, 1947, with her mother, a 34-year-old concentration camp survivor. She recalls her mother carrying rosary beads and a Catholic prayer

object, both purchased in Europe so she could pass as a Catholic.

Argentina's president has promoted the search for Nazi war criminals.

"We knew in Europe that Jews could not enter Argentina," Wang says. "We arrived frightened to the port, but the uncertainty diminished right away when we realized all one had to do was say you were a Catholic and you entered. It was quite a change from Poland, where authorities would

sniff you out as Jewish. They would insult you in Poland and do it with glee."

Wang said it became obvious that such deceptions were practiced on a large scale when Argentine immigration records were opened and all the people who entered the country with typically Jewish names in the postwar years were listed as Catholics.

"If it weren't pathetic, it would have seemed almost comical. Names like Levy, Epelboim, Moiselewicz, first names like Sheine, Rivka, Isaac, Shmuel — all with the word Catholic alongside their names on their records," she said.

Wang said she now will try to get the word out in the Jewish community, so others can make the same change on their documents.

The attitude of the Kirchner administration has surprised many local observers.

In a personal letter to Wang, Foreign Minister Rafael Bielsa said the September ceremony was "far more than an administrative action and clearly symbolized the decision by the government to amend a serious injustice and a historical error." ■

Palestinian boy's death leads to hope for organ recipients

By DAN BARON

JERUSALEM (JTA) — For one Palestinian family, tragedy born of five years of fighting with Israel has provided an opportunity to appeal for peace.

Israeli troops scouring the West Bank city of Jenin for terrorists on Nov. 3 shot 11-year-old Ahmed Khatib after mistaking the toy gun he was carrying for a real weapon.

The boy, who has Israeli Arab relatives, was rushed to Rambam Hospital in Haifa for treatment, but succumbed to his head injury over the weekend.

After consulting with Muslim authorities, Khatib's relatives announced that his organs would be donated to anyone who needs them — Arab or Jew.

"The truth is that since Thursday we have been sitting in the

hospital and discussing this pain, how a boy can leave home and get shot and wind up dead. We began talking about how we have to put an end to this cycle of bloodshed," Khatib's uncle, Mustafa, told Israel Radio on Sunday.

"The doctor there asked us to donate his organs. We sat and discussed it, and decided that yes, we want to bring more people, more children to life. Perhaps in the future they will be decision makers who will put an end to the bloodshed."

Officials at Schneider and Beilinson hospitals said Monday that the organs are expected to save the lives of six Israelis, among them Jews and a Bedouin.

The Israeli army voiced regret at Khatib's shooting, and Deputy Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said he would seek a meeting with the bereaved family to offer his condolences. ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

WORLD

Bush meets Jews in Brazil

President Bush heard from Jewish leaders about Latin America's Jewish community.

In a meeting Sunday in Brazil, leaders of the World Jewish Congress and the region's Jewish community stressed to Bush, who has been promoting democracy in the area, that the way Jews are treated can be "a kind of barometer, a bellwether of when things are going badly in South America," said Rabbi Israel Singer, the WJC's chairman.

"We gave him a picture of what Latin American Jewish life is," said Singer, who took part in the meeting along with Jack Terpins, president of the Latin American Jewish Congress, and Rabbi Henry Sobel, leader of Sao Paulo's Congregacao Israelita Paulista, the largest synagogue in Latin America. "He said it's a subject that we need to discuss and discuss in great depth, and he looks forward to discussing it stateside."

Social unrest fanned by Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez raises the specter of anti-Semitism in Venezuela, the Jewish leaders said.

"In these circumstances, the masses are more likely to lend an ear to false Messiahs. Also, the need for a scapegoat is more keenly felt," Sobel said.

Earlier this year, Venezuelan police raided a Jewish school in Caracas, causing an uproar among Jews across Latin America.

Nazi dies behind bars

A jailed Nazi war criminal died in Britain.

Prison authorities said Monday that Anthony Sawoniuk, believed to be the only person convicted of World War II-era war crimes in Britain, died of natural causes while serving a life sentence behind bars.

He was 84.

Sawoniuk was convicted in 1999 of involvement in the massacre of Jews in German-occupied Belarus, where he served as a policeman during the war.

He immigrated to Britain in 1946.

Outsiders in among Prague Jews

Opponents of the ousted leader of Prague's Jewish community won a majority on the community's board.

Eighteen of the 24 representatives elected Sunday are members of a group known as the Platform for a Community for All, which was instrumental in removing Tomas Jelinek from office.

Jelinek and a few of his supporters did win seats on the board.

The new board will hold an election Thursday to determine the community chairman, expected to be Frantisek Banyai, who was chosen as leader last year by opponents of Jelinek.

Petitioners want to revoke Nobel

A petition being circulated protests a Nobel Prize recently awarded to an Israeli academic.

The petition protests the 2006 Nobel in economics given to Robert Aumann because he "uses his analysis to justify Israel's occupation," according to the document.

Aumann is a specialist in game theory, the study of how rival groups — whether business colleagues or warring parties — interact to secure ideal outcomes.

Aumann is pessimistic about the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, believing the Arabs are not yet ready to accept a Jewish state in their midst.

Russian rally protested

A Russian Jewish leader urged city officials to speak out against anti-Semitic banners and chants at a recent Moscow rally.

Last week's march of ultranationalists was "very much like a procession of German Nazis of the 1930s," Mikhail Chlenov, leader of the Va'ad Russian Jewish organization, wrote in an open letter to Moscow Mayor Yuri Luzhkov and the head of the Moscow legislature, Vladimir Platonov.

Neither city nor federal officials have reacted yet to last Friday's march of more than 1,000 extremists marking a new national holiday with a rally calling for Russia to be "cleansed" of immigrants and minorities.

Many marchers were members of skinhead groups and were seen giving Nazi salutes.

The Nov. 4 Day of People's Unity was created last year.

NORTH AMERICA

McCain: Israelis don't torture

Sen. John McCain cited Israel as an example of a nation that successfully combats terrorism without resorting to torture.

A bill by McCain (R-Ariz.) restricting all U.S. government employees to using interrogation techniques in the army manual passed 90-9 last month, but is meeting fierce resistance from the White House, which wants to exempt CIA agents.

In recent TV appearances, McCain said he consulted with Israelis about his initiative.

"The people in this world that suffer more threats from terrorist attacks and get them every day are the Israelis," McCain said Monday on NBC's "Today" show. "The Israeli Supreme Court outlawed torture, outlawed cruel and inhumane treatment. And I have talked to Israeli officials, and they say they do very fine without it."

Rabbi to speak at Muslim school

A leading New York City rabbi will lecture at an Islamic school. Rabbi Marc Schneier, president of the Foundation for Ethnic Understanding, is to speak Nov. 16 at New York City's Razi School.

The speech will be the first in a series of talks by religious leaders to private school students of faiths other than their own.

MIDDLE EAST

Reality bachelor makes his choice

The American star of an Israeli dating show met his match. The producers of "Of All the Girls in the World," a reality program aired on the Israeli cable channel Hot, announced Sunday that Mari Inbar, 21, had won the heart of Jewish bachelor Ari Goldman.

The Canadian-born Inbar, 21, won out over 16 other contestants for prizes that include a \$20,000 ring and a jeep. "I'm happy," she told reporters. "Ari is a charming guy, and I'm looking forward to our first date without cameras."

Goldman, 34, a New York businessman, said he is considering a new career in television in Israel.

Peres rival quits Labor race

A candidate for the leadership of Israel's Labor Party dropped out of the race. Matan Vilnai, Israel's science minister and a former deputy chief of the military, announced his withdrawal Sunday, saying he hoped to boost the re-election chances of the current Labor chairman, Shimon Peres.

Peres' main rival in Wednesday's vote is Amir Peretz, head of the Histadrut labor federation. Lagging behind in party polls is Benjamin Ben-Eliezer, a former Labor chairman.

Another ex-party chief, Ehud Barak, already withdrew from the primary race.