

## IN THE NEWS

## Israel to have early elections?

A Knesset defeat for Ariel Sharon raised the prospect of early Israeli elections.

The Knesset voted Monday against three Cabinet appointments submitted by the prime minister, after opponents in his Likud Party joined forces with opposition factions.

Sharon finally managed to win ratification for one of the appointments — Ehud Olmert as finance minister — but the incident signaled the depth of ideological division in the Likud over the recent Gaza Strip withdrawal.

Political analysts said Tuesday that the prime minister, who lacks a clear parliamentary majority, could bring forward elections currently scheduled for November 2006.

"This is not the end of the Sharon government, but it is the beginning of the end," Yediot Achronot political analyst Nahum Barnea wrote.

## Abdullah to visit Israel, Palestinian areas

Jordan's King Abdullah is expected to visit Israel and the Palestinian Authority next week.

Palestinian sources said Tuesday that Abdullah, who canceled a visit last month due to a surge of Israeli-Palestinian violence, is expected to come Nov. 14.

## Saudi terror account may be functioning

An account that funds Palestinian terrorism and that the Saudi government insists is closed shows signs of life, a senior U.S. official said.

Daniel Glaser, deputy assistant secretary for terrorist funding at the U.S. Treasury Department, testified Tuesday at a Senate hearing on Saudi Arabia's role in the war on terrorism.

"Account 98" once was used to fund terrorist groups, but the Saudi government insists it no longer exists.

# WORLD REPORT

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## Calling riots a national problem, French Jews maintain low profile

By LAUREN ELKIN

PARIS (JTA) — Some media are calling it a "suburban intifada," but the rioting that is rocking France is not a Jewish problem, but a national one.

That appears to be the consensus of French Jews, who are simultaneously alarmed at the widespread violence of mostly Muslim youths in suburbs around the country — and relieved that Jews have not been directly targeted, as they were during the height of the Palestinian intifada.

"Anti-Semitism in these neighborhoods has drastically declined over the last six months or so," said Sammy Ghozlan, who heads the Office of Vigilance Against Anti-Semitism. He is also the president of the Council of Jewish Communities of Seine St-Denis, the Paris suburb where much of the violence, which began at the end of October, has taken place.

The earlier violence against Jews "was just a pretext for these groups of people to violently express their dissatisfaction with their lot in life. Now, the anger that was being channeled toward the Jews is instead being directed at the French state. Instead of Jews, they're attacking the police," Ghozlan said.

A former police officer, Ghozlan said that unlike earlier rebellions, "today, there's an element of Islamic fundamentalism in it which is disturbing."

Many of the rioters are descended from North African immigrants. However, local Islamic groups have condemned the violence, and analysts have been quick to point out that some of the perpetrators of the arsons and beatings come from sub-Saharan Africa.

Jewish organizations in France and

abroad are keeping relatively quiet about the situation. CRIF, the umbrella group of secular Jewish organizations, declined to comment on the violence, saying this is a French problem with no link to the Jewish community.

The Jewish community has been affected by some incidents, but these are seen as part of the larger acts of violence, rather than directly targeted at Jews.

Last week, two synagogues were damaged in the riots: On Nov. 3, a Molotov cocktail blackened the door of a synagogue in the suburb of Pierrefitte, and the next evening, a Friday night, a device was detonated outside the synagogue in the suburb of Garges-les-Gonesse.

Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin telephoned the president of the CRIF, Roger Cukierman, after these attacks.

Cars were burned in central Paris, not far from the Rue des Rosiers, a street lined with Jewish merchants, restaurants and synagogues. In Aulnay-sous-Bois, the storefront of a small Jewish rug merchant was burned; in Aubervilliers, a fabric warehouse also believed to be owned by Jews was burned.

Reports that a 56-year-old handicapped woman hospitalized with severe burns last week was Jewish could not be corroborated. According to local officials, the woman was caught in an attack on a bus in Sevran, a suburb north of Paris. The other passengers exited the vehicle but the woman, confined to crutches, was unable to join them, and was consequently sprayed with gas and set afire with the vehicle.

Despite the relative silence, the Jewish community remains wary.

Rabbi Yossi Gorodetsky, an American Chabad representative in Paris, said: "We

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BEHIND  
THE  
HEADLINES

## ■ *The rioters in France are Muslim, but they're not singling out Jewish targets*

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just don't want to see this turn into a problem of anti-Semitism. They're very clear about why they're angry and who they're angry with," but at this point, the Jews are not being targeted.

"The rioters are not distinguishing between hospitals, schools or synagogues," said Philip Carmel, international relations director for the Conference of European Rabbis. The violence has affected mosques and churches as well; at the beginning of the riots, a mosque was damaged when a bomb containing tear gas was thrown through the window.

"The anti-Semitism we've been seeing over the past few years was a warning sign for these events," Carmel said, referring to the rash of incidents that occurred at the height of the Palestinian intifada.

"It's not that the French are anti-Semitic," he said. "It's that there is something deeply wrong with French society in its failure to integrate its North African youth."

"France has alienated 10 percent of its population," he said, "and now the government is finding it has to deal with their needs."

Groups such as SOS-Racisme, which speaks out against anti-Semitism and other forms of racism, have expressed dissatisfaction with the government's response to the violence.

"We are astonished at the insufficiency of the measures taken by the government to curb the violence," SOS-Racisme said.

"For over 20 years SOS-Racisme has warned of the dangers of ghettoization

and of the social and political consequences of racial discrimination," the president of the group, Dominique Sopo, said in a statement last week.

"Words are not enough to change the everyday existence of this part of the population. What they need, what they want, particularly among the adolescents, are strong acts of public power."

Many groups, including SOS-Racisme, have criticized the media's insistence on comparing the riots to the Palestinian uprisings.

Rabbi Gabriel Farhi, with the Liberal Movement of French Jews, wrote on a Jewish community Web site, that while the term "intifada" might seem applicable from a certain point of view, the Palestinian uprisings against Israel are much more "difficult" and "complicated" than those of the French suburbs.

In response to the call for "words of peace" made by the rector of the Mosque of Paris, Farhi wrote, "We know only too well that peace demands not simply words, but actions as well."

The political consequences of the riots

may be grave for Interior Minister Nicolas Sarkozy, who has received much of the blame for the escalation of the violence af-

ter reportedly referring to the rioters as "scum."

Sarkozy and de Villepin are considered to be political rivals for the presidency in 2007.

"If Sarkozy resigns," as many have called on him to do, "the rioters will feel that they have won," Ghozlan said.

The rioting claimed its first fatality on

Monday. Jean-Jacques Le Chenadec, 61, succumbed to injuries he sustained when he was beaten in front of his home while attempting to extinguish a fire in a trash can.

The media, meanwhile, is largely measuring the violence in cars: On Monday, 1,173 cars were burned, down from 1,408 the night before. From this perspective, the violence seems to be calming.

Ghozlan, however, is not hopeful that the violence will subside anytime soon.

"Right now they're just throwing stones and Molotov cocktails, but they're certainly armed," he said, adding that it's "just a matter of time before this becomes even more serious." ■

**The rioters are not distinguishing between hospitals, schools or synagogues.**

**Philip Carmel**  
Conference of European Rabbis

## Statue to Zionist restored in Costa Rica

By BRIAN HARRIS

CORONADO, Costa Rica (JTA) — Workers have begun returning a monument to Latin American Catholicism's leading Zionist advocate to a prominent location in this town, almost a year after it was removed for restoration.

The work on the monument of Father Benjamin Nunez, which was scheduled to finish by Nov. 13 but has been slowed by rains from recent hurricanes, ends months of debate over what to do with the statue to a key figure in recent Costa Rican history.

Nunez served as priest of this dairy town-cum-suburb near the capital of San Jose, in between stints as Costa Rica's ambassador to the United Nations and its ambassador to Israel.

He also was a founding member of the National Liberation Party, the country's largest, and played a key role in getting Costa Rica in 1982 to become the first country to place its Israel embassy in Jerusalem.

The country's main synagogue, the 2,500-

member Orthodox Israeli-Zionist Center, donated the \$20,000 monument in 1999, five years after Nunez died at 79, though none of the synagogue's members are believed to live full-time in town. A street in Jerusalem bears Nunez's name, and dirt flown in from Jerusalem was used to bury him.

The monument was removed from its pedestal across the street from the church in November 2004. It languished for several months in a municipal warehouse while politicians wrangled over its future.

Citing fear of vandalism, Mayor Rolando Mendez had wanted to move the monument to the fenced-in gardens of the town church, where the priest is buried. But community activists, the Nunez family and members of the synagogue who selected the site in the main square balked at the idea.

The restoration work was paid for by the municipality and will include the addition of a small reflecting pool around the monument, which Mendez hopes will deter potential vandals. ■



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# For now, Israel backs diplomacy on Iran

By LESLIE SUSSER

JERUSALEM (JTA) — When the International Atomic Energy Agency convenes in Vienna later this month, it will be under intense pressure to take action against Iran's nuclear program.

Since the last IAEA meeting in September, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has called for Israel to be "wiped off the map," his scientists are threatening to produce weapons-grade uranium and Tehran's talks with E.U. representatives on the nuclear issue remain deadlocked.

All this has led to international calls for steps to stop Iran going nuclear.

The most likely IAEA action will be to refer Iran's violations of its nuclear commitments to the U.N. Security Council, a move that could result in stringent economic sanctions. But for that to happen, China and Russia, as permanent members of the Security Council with veto powers, would have to go along. So far, it's not clear that they would.

In Israel, there have been calls for a more assertive anti-Iranian policy in the wake of Ahmadinejad's call for Israel's destruction. And while Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz is careful to say Israel is not considering any military option "today," he does not rule out a military strike in the future if diplomacy fails.

"I believe we should make our best effort to achieve the maximum we could achieve by diplomatic channels, before thinking about other channels," Mofaz said in a recent interview with Newsweek.

Calling Iran to account for its nuclear plans will not be easy.

Battered and bruised by the war in Iraq, the Bush administration has no stomach for a direct confrontation with another huge Muslim state. Moreover, it's relying on Shi'ite Iran to help set up a Shi'ite-dominated democracy in Iraq.

The United States therefore would prefer to sit back and watch the three main players in the European Union — Britain, Germany and France — negotiate an agreement on the nuclear issue with Iran.

The trouble is that with only two weeks to go before the next IAEA board meeting in Vienna, the Iranians and the E.U.-3 aren't on speaking terms. In the absence of a diplomatic agreement, the United States and Europeans are likely to push

for a strong IAEA resolution, referring the issue to the Security Council.

What happens then depends largely on Russia and China. Either could veto a move to impose economic sanctions on Iran: Russia, because of the hard currency it earns from sales of sophisticated technology to Iran, China, because it's a large customer for Iranian oil.

But they will be under pressure from the United States and European Union to help curb Iran's

nuclear ambitions. The Europeans are showing increasing signs of impatience with Iran, especially after Ahmadinejad's statement on Israel, with the Italians playing a leading role. Italian Foreign Minister Gianfranco Fini accused Ahmadinejad of fueling terrorism against Israel.

"Not recognizing Israel's right to exist is an incentive for terrorism because the moment you don't recognize a state's right to exist, you don't recognize a people's right to exist," he declared in a recent interview with *Corriere della Sera*.

Fini urged Iran to be fully transparent about its nuclear plans, because no one wants to isolate Iran or take military action. In Israel last week, Fini said Italy would like to see the Iranian nuclear issue referred to the Security Council.

The IAEA board of governors is scheduled to meet in Vienna on Nov. 24.

In its last resolution, passed in late September, the IAEA found Iran guilty of "non-compliance," spoke of Iran's "history of concealment" and warned that next time it might well refer the issue to the U.N. Security Council.

The fact that the Iranians have ignored a long list of IAEA demands made in September — for example, that Iran be open about its nuclear plans, suspend uranium enrichment or conversion programs, reconsider plans for a heavy water reactor, ratify and implement a protocol on nuclear non-proliferation, provide for spot checks of nuclear facilities and get back to a negotiating process with the E.U.-3 — makes a move to the Security Council all the more likely.

That's the course of action Israel would like to see, as Mofaz noted with Newsweek.

"I believe today we should make the best effort in the diplomatic channel. And there is a chance that by putting pressure on Iran, a decision in the U.N. Security Council will delay or stop an Iranian nuclear capability," Mofaz said.

According to Mofaz, Iran is still at least a few years away from the point of no return in ura-

nium enrichment, which would enable it to produce a nuclear bomb.

Still, in the wake of the Ahmadinejad statement, some usually sanguine analysts would like to see Israel taking a more overtly activist line. In an article entitled, "Hitler from Tehran," Ha'aretz's veteran military analyst, Ze'ev Schiff, writes that "the call for Israel's annihilation adds a more acute dimension to the nuclear dispute, one that does not exist, for instance, in the nuclear dispute with North Korea."

Short of a declaration of war on Iran, Schiff suggests that Israel reconsider its policy of sitting on the sidelines, waiting for the international community to act.

"Israel has good levers for applying pressure on Iran," he says, "for example, by aiding the Kurds and the mujahedin who oppose the regime."

Schiff says Israel also should continue building a strike force capable of taking out Iranian nuclear installations, even if the wisdom of ever using it is dubious.

Clearly, the prospect of a nuclear bomb in the hands of a regime led by Ahmadinejad and the fundamentalist ayatollahs worries the entire international community, and Israel more than most. The question is whether Iran's nuclear drive can be stopped by anything other than force — and, if it comes to force, will only Israel be ready to use it?

Then again, it's possible that Ahmadinejad's blunt talk simply called the West's bluff. Without effective diplomacy or a genuine military option, will Israel and the world just have to get used to the idea of a new balance of power when it comes to Iran?

'There is a chance that by putting pressure on Iran, a decision in the U.N. Security Council will delay or stop an Iranian nuclear capability.'

**Shaul Mofaz**

Israeli defense minister

NEWS  
ANALYSIS

# NEWS IN BRIEF

## MIDDLE EAST

### Syria blasts Israel

Syria accused Israel of ducking peace talks.

Syrian officials said Tuesday that Israel was using international pressure on Syria following a U.N. report into the assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri, and over the infiltration of anti-U.S. forces into Iraq from Syrian territory, to avoid peace talks with Damascus.

"Israeli officials are trying to exploit the wave of political, media and psychological pressure on Syria in order to express in a rude manner their hostile attitudes toward Syria," said Syria's information minister, Mahdi Dakhllallah. "The Syrians uphold their right to recover and liberate the Golan until the last inch."

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon has ruled out peace talks if Syria maintains preconditions such as the return of all of the Golan Heights, a strategic plateau that Israel captured in the 1967 Six Day War.

### Palestinian terrorist killed

Israeli soldiers killed a teenaged Palestinian terrorist in the West Bank.

The 15-year-old was shot Tuesday as he planted a mine on a road leading to an Israeli army position overlooking Nablus.

Two other Palestinians with him, also minors, were wounded, and one was taken into Israeli custody.

### Sides closer to deal on Rafah

There is movement in negotiations to open the border between the Gaza Strip and Egypt.

Reuters quoted Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas as saying it was a matter of putting the "final touches" on reopening Rafah. Israeli officials were not as definitive, Reuters said, but agreed there was "momentum" on the deal.

The agreement to reopen Rafah would hinge on European Union monitors. All sides have agreed in principle to the deal, but there has been disagreement on how much power the monitors would have.

Israel wants the E.U. officials to have the power to make arrests, something the Palestinians and Europeans are resisting.

## NORTH AMERICA

### Senate considers Saudi anti-Semitism

The Senate Judiciary Committee considered anti-Semitism in Saudi Arabia.

Chaired by Rep. Arlen Specter (R-Pa.), who is Jewish, the committee held an extensive session Tuesday on "Saudi Arabia: friend or foe in the war on terror?"

Nina Shea, director of the Center for Religious Freedom, a neoconservative group, alleged that Saudi textbooks continue to negatively stereotype Jews and Christians.

"Third-year high school textbooks, for example, talk about don't help or imitate the infidel Christians and Jews in any way," Shea said. An "11th-grade textbook in our collection is very anti-Semitic, saying Jews lured women to go to work — that kind of thing."

Anthony Cordesman, director at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, said that he had encountered anti-Semitism on his frequent visits to Saudi Arabia, but didn't see it as pervasive. Cordesman also said the Saudis have initiated substantive campaigns recently to eradicate bigotry.

### House marks papal document

The U.S. House of Representatives unanimously passed a resolution commemorating the 40th anniversary of the Vatican's repudiation of anti-Semitism.

The resolution, moved by Rep. Rush Holt (D-N.J.), marks 40 years since *Nostra Aetate*, the Vatican encyclical that banned "displays of anti-Semitism directed against Jews at any time or from any source." Holt's resolution passed Monday 349-0.

The bill also encourages the United States to take the lead in combating anti-Semitism. The resolution now heads for the Senate.

### House backs Israel's membership in world group

The U.S. House of Representatives unanimously passed a resolution expressing support for Israel's membership in the Organization for Economic Development and Cooperation.

Likened to an economic NATO, the 30-member organization sets standards to promote democracy and the free market. Israel first applied for membership in 2000.

The resolution, introduced by Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-Fla.), chairwoman of the House's Middle East subcommittee, passed Tuesday by 391-0.

Mexico, Britain and the United States are pressing the OECD to accept Israel as a member.

### Legislators introduce Rabin legislation

Seven members of Congress introduced a resolution honoring Yitzhak Rabin on the 10th anniversary of his assassination.

The sponsors of the resolution introduced last Friday include five Jewish Democrats, Reps. Eliot Engel and Gary Ackerman of New York, Henry Waxman and Tom Lantos of California, and Debbie Wasserman Schultz of Florida; Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-Fla.), chairwoman of the House of Representatives' Middle East subcommittee; and Rep. John Lewis (D-Ga.), a leader of the U.S. civil rights movement.

A Jewish extremist opposed to relinquishing territory to the Palestinians killed Rabin, the Israeli prime minister, on Nov. 4, 1995.

The resolution has been referred to the House's International Relations Committee.

## WORLD

### Indonesia appreciates Israeli overture

Indonesia thanked Israel for its support following last month's suicide bombings in Bali.

Diplomatic sources in Jerusalem said Monday that Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom, who wrote a letter of support to his Indonesian counterpart Hassan Wirajuda after the Oct. 1 terror attacks that killed at least 20 people, had received a letter of gratitude in return.

Because there are no formal ties between Jakarta and Jerusalem, the correspondence was conducted through the Israeli envoy in Singapore.

Indonesia, the world's biggest Muslim country, is believed to be among nations with which Israel seeks rapprochement in the post-Gaza-pullout era.

### Holocaust denier on trial

Holocaust denier Ernst Zundel went on trial in Germany on charges of incitement to hatred and insulting and denigrating the memory of the dead.

Zundel, 66, a native of Germany, was deported to Berlin from Canada last March. He had left Germany in 1958, allegedly to avoid military service.

According to the German court, Zundel continues to spread Holocaust denial and anti-Semitic material through the Internet.

He faces a maximum charge of five years in prison for each charge of incitement. A judgment is expected Nov. 24 in the case, which the state has been investigating since 1996.