

IN THE NEWS

Al-Arian acquitted on some charges

Jurors acquitted a Florida professor on eight charges that he helped lead Islamic Jihad, and deadlocked on another nine.

Sami Al-Arian, formerly a computer engineering professor at the University of South Florida, ended his five-month trial on Tuesday crying tears of joy after jurors acquitted him of the most serious charge of conspiring to maim and murder people overseas and deadlocked on charges that he aided terrorists.

Prosecutors must decide whether to retry him on the charges that ended in deadlock.

Syrians delay pact on Magen David Adom

Syrian demands were holding up passage of a measure to smooth Magen David Adom's acceptance into the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

Syria was demanding that the MDA sign an agreement similar to one it signed recently with the Palestinian Red Crescent Society concerning how the agencies would operate in eastern Jerusalem.

With support from Islamic countries, Syria was insisting that Syrian Red Crescent ambulances be allowed to operate in the Golan Heights and were requesting a hospital in the area as well.

The Syrians also want the MDA to agree not to work in the Golan.

Israel arrests 500 in new crackdown

Israeli police arrested 500 illegal Palestinian workers in a new crackdown following a suicide bombing Monday.

Tuesday's dragnet came as Prime Minister Ariel Sharon ordered a no-tolerance policy toward Palestinians who infiltrate Israel from the West Bank.



WORLD REPORT

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Earning reputation for anti-Semitism, university asks U.N. to 'close' Israel

By VLADIMIR MATVEYEV

KIEV (JTA) — Iran's president, who wants to see a world without Israel, has a vociferous ally in Ukraine.

A Kiev-based university that already has gained international notoriety for its anti-Zionist propaganda and anti-Semitic publications now wants the United Nations to "close" Israel.

The call came in November from the Interregional Academy for Personnel Management, known by its Russian acronym MAUP, whose leadership said the United Nations should revoke its 1947 resolution on the creation of a Jewish state.

"Mankind lived without the State of Israel exactly 2,670 years, but after the second of its creation all the world feels a constant aggression of the old 'sons of the devil,'" according to a university statement, published last month in the school newspaper, supporting Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's recent call to destroy Israel.

MAUP in recent months has become a major purveyor of anti-Semitism in Ukraine. But the silence until recently of Ukrainian authorities — many of whom have ties to the university — has led to criticism from the local Jewish community, international Jewish organizations and Israeli officials.

Critics say the issue could seriously compromise Ukraine's hard-earned reputation as a new democracy seeking full acceptance by the international community, including the European Union and NATO.

Stung by growing criticism, Ukrainian officials may finally be taking the issue seriously. President Viktor Yuschenko this week

urged his country's elites to condemn anti-Semitism and xenophobia.

"There can be no ethnicity issue in a European country," Yuschenko was quoted as saying Monday by the Interfax-Ukraine news agency. In his remarks, directed toward artists, journalists and academics, Yuschenko specifically condemned MAUP for the first time.

The anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism of MAUP's leaders run against Ukraine's official policy line, but the school appears to have close ties to leading policymakers, including Foreign Minister Boris Tarasyuk, an expert on Arab countries who only recently gave up his job at MAUP, reportedly under pressure from Yuschenko.

Many of Ukraine's top politicians — including Yuschenko, Tarasyuk, former president Leonid Kravchuk and several members of Parliament — have received honorary degrees or titles from MAUP. Many lesser-known politicians and bureaucrats also call MAUP their alma mater.

These leaders find themselves in good company: The school has bestowed honorary titles and degrees on some internationally renowned hate-mongers, including U.S. white supremacist David Duke, who has a doctorate in history from MAUP and has participated in a number of MAUP-organized anti-Zionist conferences in Kiev.

Zoya Borisova, head of the school's Department of Russian and Ukrainian as Foreign Languages, dismissed accusations of anti-Semitism.

"This is a fight against Zionism, but not against Jews," she said.

MAUP is the country's largest private uni-

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ACROSS THE
FORMER
SOVIET UNION

Ukrainian university calls on U.N. to 'close' Israel

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versity. With a dozen branches throughout Ukraine, MAUP has about 35,000 students, including hundreds of foreigners, mostly from Arab and developing countries.

The university offers degrees in law, economics, business administration, accounting, political science, practical medicine and psychology and claims to have a network of alumni and supporters in 60 countries.

Formerly a state-owned college system that offered post-graduate education for the public sector, MAUP went private after the fall of communism in 1991.

"MAUP was created by prominent representatives of the Ukrainian ruling elite," said Josef Zissels, leader of the Ukrainian Va'ad, a leading Jewish group, and one of MAUP's most vocal critics.

Such influence over government disturbs Ukrainian Jews, especially when the school's name has become synonymous with Ukrainian anti-Semitism today.

The school has found itself in hot water in recent weeks, but its leaders appear unrepentant. Neighboring Poland said it may not recognize MAUP degrees because of the school's controversial stand on international issues. The Israeli Foreign Ministry and the Simon Wiesenthal Center have urged Ukraine to open a probe into the school's anti-Semitic activities.

Yet the criticism seems to have had little effect on the school and its president, Georgy Schokin. Schokin earlier this year founded a political party, the Conservative Party of Ukraine, that's preparing for parliamentary elections in the spring.

Besides his friendship with figures such as Duke, Schokin and his school are said to maintain close ties to a number of Muslim countries, particularly Saudi Arabia and Iran. According to some press reports, a substantial portion of the school's funding comes from these two countries, as well as a number of public groups in the Arab world.

University officials would not confirm these reports, but said the school did have good ties with the Arab world.

In fact, the school's reputation is precisely what appeals to some of MAUP's foreign students. In an interview with JTA, a first-year student from Iran acknowledged that it was the university's anti-Zionism that attracted her and many Arab students.

The student, who gave her name as Ilda, said she had wanted to study medicine in Ukraine but instead studied Russian at MAUP because the school "struggles against the evil of world Zionism."

Other students who don't agree seem afraid to speak openly about the situation.

Liana Musatova, who graduated from MAUP last year with a master's degree in

political science, said the school is permeated with the political views of its leadership, which she said could be "dangerous for the students."

Like other current and former students, Musatova receives a free copy of MAUP's newspaper, *Personal Plus*. Almost every issue of the newspaper carries anti-Semitic and anti-Israel articles.

According to Zissels, 70 percent of all anti-

Semitic publications today in Ukraine are published by MAUP, including "Mein Kampf" and "The Protocols of the Elders of Zion."

Ukraine's Education Ministry recently demanded that the school change its name to indicate that it is privately run. MAUP's rector responded to the request by accusing the ministry of political persecution.

The ministry "wants to close MAUP because of our political activities," rector Nikolay Golovaty told JTA.

But Ukraine's science and education minister, Stanislav Nikolayenko, told JTA that his agency was going to close several MAUP branches because they did not meet ministry criteria.



Bias remains E.U. report finds

By TOBY AXELROD

BERLIN (JTA) — A new report on discrimination in Europe says some countries are too slow to integrate minorities and combat xenophobia.

The report, issued by the European Union Monitoring Center on Racism and Xenophobia also urges the E.U.'s 25 member countries to improve their reporting of bias crimes.

The latest annual report of the Vienna-based center, released Nov. 22, indicates widespread discrimination in housing, jobs and education for minority groups in parts of Europe. The report is an overview of racist, xenophobic, anti-Semitic and anti-Muslim discrimination in Europe in 2004, and the responses to it.

The report "clearly shows that much work is still ahead of us," Anastasia Crickley, chairwoman of the Vienna-based

agency's management board, said in a news release.

While some E.U. member states are setting good examples of how to combat discrimination, others "are very slow at implementing key directives. We need to speed up the process of integration of minority communities — and we can do so," Crickley said.

The director of the center, Beate Winkler, said a chief obstacle is the lack of adequate data collection that would allow member countries to "assess how far they have come in breaking the vicious circle of deprivation, prejudice and discrimination."

According to the annual report, the most vulnerable groups in the European Union are ethnic and religious minorities, including Jews, Muslims, North Africans, immigrants from the former Soviet Union and the former Yugoslavia, refugees in general and Roma/Sinti, or Gypsies.

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Guard and mother are among Netanya victims

By DINA KRAFT

NETANYA, Israel (JTA) — A pregnant policewoman came running after a tall young man heading toward the Sharon Mall carrying a large black bag and she shouted out, "Terrorist! Terrorist!"

Chaim Amram, the security guard on duty, took the suspect aside and pushed him against the wall, but it was too late — the bomber triggered his explosives, killing Amram and four others. Dozens more were wounded.

The victims had little in common except for the fatal timing of their visit to the Sharon Mall, the major shopping center in the seaside city of Netanya.

Amram, 26, knew the dangers of his job: He had been at work there during two previous suicide bombings at the mall.

"He was gentle, but a person who was not scared of anything," his friend Rami Tamam told the Ma'ariv newspaper.

Amram, who planned to study psychology, had been saving money for a trip to Thailand, where friends say he planned to surprise his girlfriend with a marriage proposal.

A few feet away from Amram, Iliya Rosen, 38, a psychologist and mother of three, was just leaving the mall after a shopping expedition for clothes for the job she was scheduled to begin next week. She, too, was killed instantly by the blast, which poured thick gray smoke onto the sidewalk and sent bodies and glass flying.

Rosen had walked speedily out of the mall, telling a friend that she didn't feel comfortable being there.

Her friend, identified by her first name, Orit, in the Israeli media, said she teased her, saying, "I asked her 'Where are you rushing to ... are you scared of being in the next terror attack?'"

A moment later, Rosen was dead.

From her hospital bed, Orit, who suffered light injuries, tried to digest the horror.

"The police said she was dead and they could not treat her, but I refused to leave," she said, bursting into tears and turning her face away from TV cameras and into her pillow, where she was filmed sobbing.

It was the job of Rosen's brother, meanwhile, to help prevent terror attacks. Lt. Col. Shai Zindreiss has been the officer in charge of operations along the West Bank security fence for the past two years. He received word of his sister's death during a meeting with army officials about the attack.

"I lost my sister, my angel," Zindreiss told Ma'ariv.

Dani Golani, 45, who had come from Nahariya to Netanya to explore whether he might open a clothing store in the mall, also was among those killed. Active in Na-

hariya local politics, he was remembered warmly by friends and family.

"It was hard to separate him from his smile. He loved to live, and loved his family," said Tzion Lankari, a Nahariya council member and long-time friend of Golani. "This was a person one could always trust and turn to during difficult times. He was a rock. He wasn't scared of anything."

The attack also took the life of Alexandra Gramitzky, 65, who immigrated to Israel in

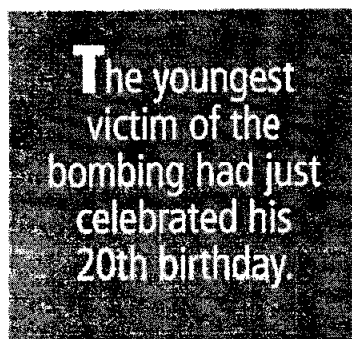
1997 from Ukraine, where she had worked as an accounts manager. She lived in Netanya with her son and his family.

When her son, Andrei Gramitzky, heard about the bombing on the radio, he feared for his mother's life, knowing she would be in the area at around the same time.

"She was an amazing woman ... this is a terrible loss for us," he told the Yediot Achronot newspaper.

The youngest victim of the bombing was Keinan Tzoami, who celebrated his 20th birthday last month. Tzoami was remembered as a good-natured young man with lots of friends. He worked with his father at a family carpentry business.

His grandmother entered the house where he had lived with his parents and wailed, "Bring me my grandson. I just want my grandson." ■



Anti-Semitic attacks, on rise, threaten Jews in Peru

By JOE GOLDMAN

BUENOS AIRES (JTA) — The Peruvian Jewish community is suffering from a rise in anti-Semitic attacks, according to Rabbi Guillermo Bronstein, chief rabbi of the largest and most influential of the capital city's three main synagogues, Lima's Asociacion Judia 1870.

He also believes that divisions within the community are developing as a result of political and social events unfolding in this unstable Andean country.

"It's very rare that one hears of anti-Semitic statements in Lima, but in recent times there has been an obvious increase due to two major causes. Firstly, the increase of neo-Nazi groups, still a tiny minority but very noisy. The Jewish community is keeping a watchful eye on their activities," Bronstein said.

"Secondly, the closeness of certain members of the Jewish community to this government" of President Alejandro Toledo "and apparent heavy influence over government decisions has

exposed us to certain criticisms. At the same time one must say that there are members of this government, like, for example, the vice president, David Waisman — a member of our congregation — who are very popular and esteemed in the public eye."

Adding to the dangers posed by these two situations is a rapidly rising ethnic, indigenous, super-nationalist movement led by two Peruvian ex-military men, the Humala brothers, who have led two small rebellions against the Toledo government.

"They are openly xenophobic and have principally targeted their attacks at Chileans due to longstanding tensions between Peru and Chile, and Jews," Bronstein said.

To further complicate Peru's social and political unrest, the country's severe economic recession between 1997 and 2003 affected many Jews, who saw their wages drop and their savings drained. There have been economic problems for the Jewish institutions, although nothing on the order of the complete collapse that was seen in Argentina, for example. ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

MIDDLE EAST

ElBaradei plays down concerns on Iran

The head of a U.N. watchdog group played down concern over Iran's nuclear program. Mohamed ElBaradei, head of the International Atomic Energy Agency, said Tuesday that while U.N. inspectors had only just picked up on long-undeclared Iranian nuclear plans, there was little reason to believe that the Islamic republic is close to attaining nuclear weapons capability, as Israel and the United States maintain.

"We haven't seen a smoking gun in Iran. We haven't seen an underground production enrichment facility," ElBaradei told The Jerusalem Post. "We try to work on the basis of facts."

Quartet: Syria must close Jihad offices

The diplomatic "Quartet" working for Mideast peace demanded that Syria close Islamic Jihad offices.

The Quartet, which issued a statement Monday after the Palestinian terrorist group claimed responsibility for a deadly bombing in Netanya, reiterated "its demand that the Syrian government take immediate action to close the offices of Palestinian Islamic Jihad and to prevent the use of its territory by armed groups engaged in terrorist acts."

Israel wants different 'brand'

Israel established a "Brand Israel Group" to broaden public understanding of the Jewish state beyond the conflict with the Palestinians.

Initiated by Israel's Foreign Ministry, the group plans to work in North America and Europe with leading Israeli advertising firms and businesses and Diaspora Jewish communities to "brand" Israel as more than just a country at war.

One goal will be to spread the word about Israeli advances in technology and medicine.

Poverty spreads in Israel

The number of Israelis living on handouts is increasing rapidly, a survey found.

According to a poll issued Tuesday by the Latet lobby, 17 percent of Israelis take charity, including food given out at soup kitchens, up from 11 percent last year.

One in two Israelis cites poverty as the country's No. 1 problem, ahead of education and terrorism.

NORTH AMERICA

Bush meets with Jewish educators

President Bush met with 13 rabbis and Jewish educational administrators Tuesday to highlight his support for school choice.

Bush touted his support for school vouchers and other initiatives that aid parochial education.

The conversation also touched on foreign policy and efforts to rebuild the Gulf Coast following Hurricane Katrina.

The event came before the White House's annual Chanukah party Tuesday night.

Reform, Conservatives endorse letter to Rice

Leaders of the Reform and Conservative movements endorsed a congressional letter urging Condoleezza Rice to remain involved in Israeli-Palestinian peacemaking.

Reps. Henry Hyde (R-Ill.), chairman of the U.S. House of Representatives' International Relations Committee, and Lois Capps (D-Calif.) are circulating a letter commending the secretary of state for her role in brokering a recent agreement between Israel and the Palestinians that opened the Gaza Strip-Egypt border.

WORLD

Goldschmidt gets Russia visa

Moscow's chief rabbi received a visa to return to Russia after being barred from the country for nine weeks.

The one-month visa, which he hopes to extend, was finally issued Tuesday, Pinchas Goldschmidt told JTA by phone from Israel.

Goldschmidt, a Swiss citizen who has been a Russian resident for 15 years, was denied entry to Russia when he arrived Sept. 26 on a flight from Israel.

Goldschmidt told JTA he may return to Moscow this week, joining his wife and five children.

Jewish woman voted Miss France

A Jewish woman was chosen as Miss France by a jury of French celebrities.

Alexandra Rosenfeld, 19, who won Saturday night's contest, is a university student studying tourism and hospitality.

Attacks fall Down Under

Anti-Jewish attacks fell in Australia last year, but remain well above average.

The 322 recorded incidents remain 10 percent above the average for the past 16 years, according to the Executive Council of Australian Jewry.

Recorded incidents include arson attacks on synagogues, Nazi graffiti on Jewish-owned property, physical assaults on Jews and anti-Semitic content used in the vandalization of synagogues and Jewish schools.

Nobel arbiter who protested Arafat dies

The Norwegian politician who quit the Nobel Peace Prize committee to protest its award to Yasser Arafat died Saturday at age 85.

Kaare Kristiansen was appointed to the Nobel committee in 1989, but quit after Arafat shared the peace prize with Israelis Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres, saying the Palestinian leader was "tainted with violence, terrorism and bloodshed."

Dutchman who saved Jews dies

A Dutch light-bulb magnate who helped save hundreds of Jews during the Holocaust died at age 100.

Frederik Jacques Philips — who helped oversee Philips Electronics' growth into a multinational giant — died Monday of pneumonia and complications from a recent fall, The New York Times reported.

When workers at the company's factory went on strike during the Nazi occupation of the Netherlands, Philips was put in jail for five months.

The Germans forced him to open a workshop at a concentration camp, the Times said, and he was able to help hundreds of Jews survive the war. Yad Vashem recognized him for his efforts.

Candidate worries Peru's Jews

A Peruvian presidential candidate is raising concerns in the country's small Jewish community with his nationalist and anti-Semitic rhetoric.

Ollanta Humala is a retired lieutenant colonel who, together with his brother, led an army rebellion in a southern Peruvian compound two years ago.

Humala is among the top three candidates in the nation's April 9 presidential elections.

Isaac Mekler, president of the Peruvian Jewish Association, called Humala "a wolf dressed in sheep's clothing," claiming that he is hiding his anti-Semitism as part of his electoral strategy.

Mekler said Humala and his brother, who are trying to organize an indigenous nationalist movement, utilized anti-Semitic language and showed a "deep-rooted hatred toward Jews" at the start of their campaign.