

## IN THE NEWS

**Israeli airstrike kills 4 terrorists**

Four Palestinian terrorists were killed in an Israeli airstrike in the Gaza Strip.

Wednesday's operation east of Gaza City targeted a car carrying a cell from the Popular Resistance Committees.

Four members of the cell were killed and another wounded.

Israeli security sources said the terrorists were en route to fire rockets into the Jewish state.

**Holocaust denial could affect Iran talks**

The Iranian president's latest Holocaust denial drew international condemnation and led the United States and Germany to call Iran's nuclear plans into question.

"Today, they have created a myth in the name of the Holocaust and consider it to be above God, religion and the prophets," Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said Wednesday.

Germany, one of three European nations trying to work out a compromise that would allow Iran to continue its nuclear research, said those talks were now in question.

**Bush defends Israel on the Iraq invasion**

Blaming the Iraq war on U.S. support for Israel is irresponsible, President Bush said.

"One of the blessings of our free society is that we can debate these issues openly, even in a time of war," Bush said Wednesday in an address to the Woodrow Wilson Center in Washington.

"Most of the debate has been a credit to our democracy, but some have launched irresponsible charges. They say that we act because of oil, that we act in Iraq because of Israel, or because we misled the American people."

Such charges "hurt the morale of our troops," Bush said.

# JTA WORLD REPORT

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

## Father of terrorist victim seeks further legal action against Fla. man

By RON KAMPEAS

**W**ASHINGTON (JTA) — Stephen Flatow is hoping for further legal action against the Florida professor acquitted of charges that he helped lead Islamic Jihad, the same terrorist organization that murdered his daughter.

"I was frustrated he wasn't convicted," Flatow, a New Jersey attorney, said of Sami al-Arian.

Jurors in a Tampa federal court last week acquitted the former University of South Florida engineering professor of eight charges relating to allegations that he helped lead the terrorist group. They also deadlocked on nine charges that he supported the group financially.

Two other men who faced charges in the case were acquitted of all charges, and the jury acquitted a fourth man on some charges and deadlocked on others.

Flatow, whose 20-year-old daughter, Alisa, was murdered in a 1995 Islamic Jihad attack on a bus in the Gaza Strip, said he asked his lawyers to see whether al-Arian could be tried under international or local Florida laws.

Flatow, the chairman of the MetroWest New Jersey Jewish Relations Committee, is one of several Jewish organizational officials and lawyers hoping the case is not dead.

The American Jewish Committee immediately called on the government to retry al-Arian.

"We expect the government will move expeditiously to retry al-Arian on the nine remaining charges," said David Harris, the AJCommittee's executive director.

Experts say the case against al-Arian was dogged by the remoteness of the crimes and the complexities of using evidence gathered abroad.

But they say it should not affect efforts to pursue other individuals with alleged ties to terrorism.

Flatow said he understood the difficulties the prosecutors faced. "It was a long trial, there were a lot of counts with four defendants and there was a tremendous amount of evidence that had to be produced," he said.

However, he dismissed front-page reports in *The New York Times* and other newspapers that the case undermined the effectiveness of post-Sept. 11, 2001, legal reforms aimed at making it easier to prosecute terrorists.

Those reforms, written into the USA Patriot Act of 2001, make it easier for U.S. spy agencies to share evidence with domestic prosecutors and law enforcement.

Flatow, who had been interviewed by the FBI during its investigation of al-Arian, said the Patriot Act had little effect on the case because it began before the Sept. 11 attacks.

The Patriot Act "made a couple of things easier, but the wheels were already turning."

Prosecutors in the federal court in Tampa tried to link al-Arian to Islamic Jihad attacks in a trial that lasted more than five months and that plowed through 20,000 hours of tapped phone calls and hundreds of pages of faxes dating back to 1993.

Prosecutors are still considering whether to retry al-Arian, although the government

*Continued on page 2*

BEHIND  
THE  
HEADLINES

## Some hope for more legal action against a Florida professor cleared of terrorism charges

*Continued from page 1*

rarely retries deadlocked cases.

The U.S. government could also deport Al-Arian, who is not a citizen.

Al-Arian's lawyers, who say he was guilty of nothing but supporting an unpopular cause and raising money for charitable work, are trying to get him released, pending a government decision on whether to retry the case.

■

Alyza Lewin, a Washington lawyer, said the verdict would not affect the kind of civil lawsuits she has led against those who raise money for Palestinian terrorists.

Last year Lewin won a \$156 million verdict against three charities and an individual on behalf of the family of David Boim, a 17-year-old Israeli killed in 1996 by Hamas terrorists.

She described the distinction made famous in the O.J. Simpson case: Criminal prosecutors have to prove guilt beyond the shadow of a doubt, but civil plaintiffs have a much lower burden of proof.

"If that were the kind of burden of proof I would have had to meet, I don't know if I would have won," she said.

"We had the gunmen who confessed, who were associated with Hamas, we had the Holy Land Foundation whose assets were frozen based on evidence the U.S. had pulled together that they were knowingly supporting Hamas," Lewis said. The Holy Land Foundation was one of the charities the Boims sued. "Can I show the Holy Land Foundation money went to buy the gun? No."

Lewin said her sense of the al-Arian case is that the government's argument was substantial, and she called the verdict "discouraging."

However, she said establishing complicity in cases involving overseas terrorism is always difficult, because the government is denied the quality of evidence it would have in domestic cases.

Lewin said, that from what she read of the case in press accounts, she believes al-Arian could still be liable in a civil case.

Yehudit Barsky, the director of the AJCommittee's division on the Middle East and International Terrorism, said her group believes a conviction in the case would have expanded the legal definition of terrorism to embrace such recent legal concepts as racketeering, money laundering and conspiracy.

Those are among the charges on which the al-Arian jury deadlocked. Terrorism is not a discrete act, Barsky said, and

convicting al-Arian would send a message that supporting terrorists is as criminal as carrying out any attacks.

"It's important to try and come to a resolution of these charges," she said.

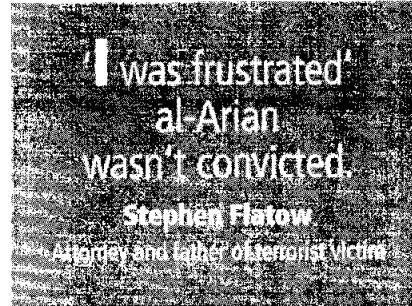
However, she echoed Flatow's sentiment that this was not a defeat for the Patriot Act or other anti-terrorist laws, even if the government decides not to

pursue the case.

She noted government victories in other cases, including against a group of northern Virginia men who had trained overseas with terrorist groups.

"There are some things that are operative in the al-Arian case that might not be in other cases," including the distance of the crimes committed.

"Gaza is so far away, it's hard to relate for jurors if it's not in their neighborhood," she said. "The factor of 'This could have happened around the corner from me' is just not there."



## At odds over U.S. resolution on Hamas

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Jewish groups are at odds over a congressional resolution that threatens repercussions should Hamas join a Palestinian government.

The American Israel Public Affairs Committee has lobbied hard in recent weeks for the bipartisan resolution, initiated by Rep. Eric Cantor (R-Va.), the Republican whip, and Rep. Robert Menendez (D-N.J.), the chairman of the Democratic caucus. Americans for Peace Now is urg-

ing lawmakers to speak out against it.

The resolution calls for barring Hamas and other terrorist groups from participating in Palestinian Authority elections next month and warns that including Hamas in the government "will inevitably raise serious policy considerations for the United States, potentially undermining the continued ability of the United States to provide financial assistance and conduct normal relations with the Palestinian Authority."

## Three Israeli groups recognized as NGOs

NEW YORK (JTA) — The United Nations recognized three Israeli groups as nongovernmental organizations.

The U.N.'s Department of Public Information associated ZAKA, Israel's rescue and recovery organization; the Israeli Women's Network; and the New Israel

Fund's Empowerment and Training Center for Social Change Organizations as NGOs.

The Israeli groups were among 25 new groups recognized as NGOs, advocating on a range of issues from HIV/AIDS to democracy to sustainable development.

**JTA**  
WORLD  
REPORT

**Daniel J. Krifcher**  
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.

# In former Soviet Union, doctors volunteer for elderly

By MICA ROSENBERG

BAKU, Azerbaijan (JTA) — An expanding network of Jewish volunteer doctors is helping Jewish elderly in the former Soviet Union.

"It is quite a big army of volunteers," says Julia Karchevskaya, an ophthalmologist from Saratov, Russia, who began volunteering 15 years ago.

The volunteers, who work at local Hesed welfare organizations sponsored by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee in 12 former Soviet states, focus some of their efforts on preventive medicine — no small task in a region where the average life expectancy of men has declined to 57 and the lifespan for women is not much higher.

The biggest killers are cardiovascular disease, hypertension and complications from smoking and alcoholism — all diseases that can be curtailed with lifestyle changes.

But medicine in the region is hospital-based, with little preventative medicine involved.

"Unfortunately some medical problems cannot be solved by the governmental hospitals," says Karchevskaya, who now coordinates children's programs in the Volga region for the JDC. "To find the drugs they need or to find blood in case of an emergency, the patients ask the Jewish community."

The JDC began supporting Jewish medical volunteers in the mid-1980s during perestroika, when the organization re-entered the Soviet Union after 50 years of exile.

At each of the 198 Hesed centers in the former Soviet Union, volunteer doctors provide consulting services and cheap drugs. In 2004, more than 49,000 people received medical consultations through Heseds, says JDC spokeswoman Rina Edelstein.

Many of the volunteers are retired physicians, living on the same tiny state pensions as their patients. Others, like Karchevskaya, are still working in the field.

Doctors in the region typically make \$200 a month and are overloaded with patients, says Karchevskaya, pointing out that a single pediatrician can be assigned as many as 2,000 children.

"A lot of work is done for a very low

salary, which is one reason the doctors want to get the benefits of their profession in the context of the Jewish communities," she says. When they can spend more time with each individual patient at the Hesed, "people are thankful and the doctors can really see the results of their work."

The Hesed doctors attend an annual conference funded by the JDC, held this fall in Baku, Azerbaijan, where they

learn from international medical experts and network with colleagues from St. Petersburg, Moscow and more remote cities in Siberia or Georgia.

Dr. Ted Myers and his wife, Peggy, founded the conference 11 years ago as a way to improve the medical education of the volunteers.

"Up until the time of the collapse, if you were a Jewish doctor, or a Jewish anybody, you were isolated in your own community and we felt that it was important for these Jewish doctors to know each other," said Ted Myers, 81, who began doing humanitarian work in Sudan and Ethiopia after leaving his San Francisco psychiatry practice in 1983.

"When we first started" in the former Soviet Union, "there was no opportunity to get the latest medical literature," Peggy Myers said. "They were practicing medicine in Russia as we in the U.S. were practicing it in the 1930s."

Due to the prevalence of drug resistant tuberculosis strains in former Soviet states, the 70 doctors at the Baku conference took a particular interest in a lecture

on TB given by Dr. Gary Schoolnik, an infectious disease specialist from Stanford University. Eighty percent of the world's TB cases are found in just 22 countries, according to the World Health Organization. Russia is 11th on that list.

"Look around the room and you will most likely see someone who has been exposed to TB," Schoolnik said.

The dangers of HIV and TB co-infection are especially

serious in the former Soviet Union, which, together with the rest of Eastern Europe, has the fastest growing HIV epidemic in the world, according to the U.S. Agency for International Development.

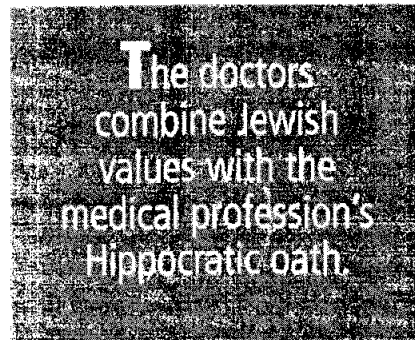
"We are facing a public health catastrophe," said Schoolnik, "unless we can contain it before the catastrophe unfolds."

Containing that catastrophe is just one of the many problems faced by doctors in the former Soviet Union, one Azerbaijani doctor says.

"As a doctor or scientist, you can't make a living," said Fakhriya Mehdiyeva, a 31-year-old physician who attended the conference in Baku. "But you also feel bad charging your patients for care."

Those who cannot pay can go to the three-story Jewish community center in Baku. It houses a Hesed to dispense drugs, crutches and wheelchairs, a dining room where the elderly come for meals, a children's center and an event hall where the conference was held.

Karchevskaya says working at the Hesed is a "good mixture of two values: the Jewish value of helping each other and the Hippocratic value of the occupation of a doctor."



ACROSS THE  
FORMER  
SOVIET UNION

## Russian Jewish students to visit Egypt

MOSCOW (JTA) — Jewish students from the former Soviet Union are going to Egypt on a Jewish-interest tour.

The Birthright Egypt tour is a brainchild of two Moscow college students who will lead a group of fellow students early next year.

Organizers say they want to introduce students to biblical Jewish history and to show them Jewish sites.

Organizers hope to raise some funds to lower the cost of the trip for the participants.

# NEWS IN BRIEF

## WORLD

### JTA correspondent beaten

JTA's correspondent in Ukraine was severely beaten.

The incident occurred Monday evening, when unidentified men attacked Vladimir Matveyev in the entrance of his apartment building in Kiev.

Matveyev suffered head injuries and a broken clavicle.

The attackers also took some valuables, Matveyev's press cards and some of his recent JTA articles.

The incident happened days after the translation of his recent JTA story on anti-Semitic activities of a university in Kiev was widely circulated in Ukraine. Police have opened an investigation into the incident.

### Latin Jews condemn Ahmadinejad's comments

Latin American Jewish officials condemned anti-Semitic comments by Iran's president.

The Latin American Jewish Congress' Presidium made the criticism of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's remarks over the weekend at a meeting in Sao Paulo.

"The repeated wish of Iran's president to erase Israel from the map is a threat to world peace as they are about to achieve nuclear technology," said Claudio Epelman, the Latin American Jewish Congress' assistant director.

Iran could be as little as three years away from developing nuclear weapons, Israel's military chief of staff said this week.

### Irish judge dismisses charges

A judge in Ireland dismissed 23 new counts of anti-Semitic harassment against a man convicted earlier on charges of vandalizing Jewish sites in Dublin.

The judge threw out the most recent charges against David Hughes on a technicality.

In September, Hughes was sentenced to 20 months in jail for painting swastikas on the property of Dublin's main synagogue.

He is on release pending an appeal. Hughes also has pleaded guilty to repeatedly vandalizing the Irish Jewish Museum in Dublin and is scheduled to be sentenced for that offense in January.

## MIDDLE EAST

### West Bank settlement to be expanded

Israel plans to build 200 new homes in the largest West Bank settlement.

The construction in Ma'aleh Adumim was approved by Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz this week, despite a call by the U.S.-led "road map" for settlement expansion to be halted.

Yediot Achronot said Mofaz decided to approve the plan before he quit the Likud Party earlier this week in an apparent bid to boost his standing in the party's leadership race.

But Mofaz's office denied there was any political motive to the decision.

### Israel to allow convoys

Israel reversed course and agreed to allow convoys of Palestinians from the Gaza Strip to the West Bank.

Wednesday's reversal came after international pressure.

Earlier this week, Lt. Gen. Dan Halutz, Israel's military chief, told lawmakers that the "safe-passage" deal was on hold pending a Palestinian Authority crackdown on rocket fire from Gaza.

The United States has been urging free Palestinian movement as a key to reviving peace efforts.

### Sharon denies Newsweek report

Ariel Sharon denied a report suggesting he would be willing to cede most of the West Bank and compromise on Jerusalem for peace with the Palestinians.

The remarks in the Dec. 9 issue of Newsweek were attributed to Kalman Gayer, a strategic adviser to the prime minister, and sparked outrage in Israel this week.

Sharon rejected the report as being "in complete opposition to my positions and beliefs." He added: "United Jerusalem will remain the capital of Israel for all eternity. The road map is the diplomatic plan that will guide Israel in the coming years."

"Yet one of Sharon's senior colleague in the new Israeli party Kadima, Haim Ramon, expressed support Wednesday for Israel giving up parts of eastern Jerusalem with Palestinian populations.

The comments by Ramon, a former member of the Labor Party, prompted Likud Party front-runner Benjamin Netanyahu to accuse Sharon of planning to divide Jerusalem should he be re-elected in the March 28 vote.

### Suicide pact for immigrant family?

The death of two North American immigrants to Israel is believed to be part of a family suicide pact.

A car that was struck by a train near Kibbutz Ma'agan Michael on Tuesday was found to contain an 82-year-old woman, who was critically injured.

Police originally assumed the incident was an accident caused by the woman, until they discovered the bodies of her son and daughter, aged 49 and 48 respectively, 150 yards away.

The two children had climbed an electric pylon and received lethal electric shocks.

Police believe they had been in the car with their mother on the train tracks as part of a suicide pact, but that they survived the impact and had to seek death another way.

Friends of the family, described as recent immigrants from North America, said they had complained of economic troubles.

### Sikh leaders work for peace

A delegation of Sikh leaders arrived in Israel on a peacemaking mission. The delegation will meet with Jewish, Christian and Muslim leaders, the Jerusalem Post reported.

## NORTH AMERICA

### Texas Hillel vandalized

The Hillel at the University of Texas at Austin was vandalized.

Police believe that a swastika was painted on the doorway of the building and animal remains left outside the building on Dec. 2.

Two suspects are being sought in the incident.

### Documentary explores Iraq-Nazi link

A documentary exploring the Iraq-Nazi connection will air on a U.S. cable station.

"Saddam and the Third Reich," which will first be broadcast Sunday on the History Channel, will be repeated throughout the Saddam Hussein trial.

The documentary includes rare footage of the mufti of Jerusalem as the nexus between the Nazis and Iraqi fascists and the Ba'ath Party.

One of several featured speakers is investigative author Edwin Black, whose book "Banking on Baghdad" revealed the role of the mufti of Jerusalem and Nazi Arabs in the Holocaust-era Baghdad pogrom known as the Farhud. Production sources say similar documentaries are in the offing due to the wealth of information now being obtained about the connection between Arab regimes and the Nazis.