

IN THE NEWS

U.N. approves new human rights group

The U.N. General Assembly voted to create a new human rights organization, despite opposition from the United States and Israel.

The measure to create a Human Rights Council to replace the Human Rights Commission passed Wednesday by a vote of 170-4, with three abstentions.

Israel and America were in favor of replacing the old human rights body, which had included some of the world's worst rights offenders among its ranks, but felt the resolution did not go far enough.

'Jericho Six' to stand trial

Israel plans to prosecute six Palestinian terrorists it seized from a West Bank prison.

"They were brought to an Israeli jail. They will be indicted according to Israeli law and they will be punished as they deserve," interim Prime Minister Ehud Olmert told reporters Wednesday, referring to Ahmed Sa'adat and five comrades captured a day earlier in a raid on Jericho.

Sa'adat, leader of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, was wanted for masterminding the 2001 assassination of Israeli Tourism Minister Rehavam Ze'evi.

Iran bill going to House

A U.S. House of Representatives committee passed legislation expanding sanctions against Iran.

The Iran Freedom Support Act passed 37-3 Wednesday in the International Relations Committee and now goes to the full House — where, with more than 340 sponsors, it's virtually guaranteed passage.

A similar bill is circulating in the Senate. The bill expands existing sanctions against Iran by targeting foreign companies and countries doing more than \$20 million worth of business in Iran.



WORLD REPORT

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Ukrainian Jewish voters could back party headed by former Communist

By VLADIMIR MATVEYEV

KIEV, Ukraine (JTA) — Fifteen months after pro-democracy protests in Ukraine reversed a rigged presidential election, the political party that eventually lost that battle appears likely to make a comeback — and Jewish voters may help the party do so.

A record 45 political parties and blocs are running in Ukraine's parliamentary election on March 26 amid the country's economic decline and disillusionment in the wake of the "Orange Revolution" that propelled President Viktor Yushenko to power.

But only six to eight parties are expected to pass the 3 percent threshold required to win representation in the 450-seat unicameral Rada, or Parliament.

The election will have a major impact on Ukraine's future because of constitutional changes that went into effect earlier this year: The new Rada will be the first in post-Communist Ukraine to name the prime minister and appoint key Cabinet members — both previously prerogatives of the president.

In a broader sense, the choice Ukrainians will make this month is between the pro-Western course of Yushenko, who wants to see his country as part of NATO and the European Union, and the more Russia-oriented course of former Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovich, an ex-Communist who lost to Yushenko in last year's presidential election.

Ukrainian Jews are always sensitive to issues of civil society and democracy that are associated with Yushenko and his coalition of parties. But Jews — similar to other Ukrainians — are unhappy with the lack of economic

improvement and soaring prices during the Yushenko era.

"Like other citizens, Jews will vote for those who can make their life really better," says Georgy Tseitlin, a Jewish scientist from Kiev.

ACROSS
THE FORMER
SOVIET
UNION

Jews have an additional reason that may compel them to vote against the Orange parties: the dramatic rise of anti-Semitic attacks and publications that have taken place since Yushenko came to power.

"The situation with xenophobia and anti-Semitism has become worse, and Jews feel this very strongly," said Mikhail Frenkel, chairman of the Association of Jewish Media in Ukraine.

But no matter which party wins the election, Jewish leaders say the community will feel safe.

"No matter who wins, there will not be big changes" for the Jewish community, said Rabbi Meir Stambler, a leader of the Federation of Jewish Communities of Ukraine, a Chabad-led group.

Jews are among the supporters and activists in all leading blocs, and there are Jewish candidates on virtually every party slate.

And despite specific Jewish concerns, the choices of Jewish voters mostly mirror those of the general population.

Many Jews in western and central Ukraine — Kiev included — are likely to support the pro-Western Orange parties. And similar to what occurred during the presidential vote of 2004, those living in eastern Ukraine are likely to support the opposition and its leader, Yanukovich.

"Jews and non-Jews in the East prefer"

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■ Many Jews believe Yushenko has not done enough to combat anti-Semitism

Continued from page 1

Yanukovich's Party of Regions. And in Kiev most of the Jews support Yushenko, Stambler said.

The Orange forces centered around Yushenko include the president's own party, Our Ukraine; the party of Yulia Timoshenko, the president's charismatic former ally and ex-prime minister; Pora-Reforms and Order headed by the former boxing champion Vitali Klitschko; and the Socialists.

According to the recent opinion polls, the Party of Regions is expected to receive about 30 percent of the vote, the Timoshenko bloc will receive 19 percent, Yushenko's about 18 percent, the centrists of the current Parliament speaker Vladimir Litvin 7 percent, and the Socialists 6 percent.

Since no party is expected to have enough votes to form a majority in Parliament and elect a Cabinet, analysts predict that Ukrainians will witness a major political battle after the election when parties will vie to form coalitions.

Aside from Yushenko's Orange coalition and Yanukovich's Party of Regions, some of Ukraine's estimated 200,000 to 300,000 Jews will vote for a third force, the centrists.

Josef Zissels, a longtime Jewish leader who supported Yushenko during the days of the Orange Revolution, says that some Jews may vote for parties like the bloc of Litvin, the parliamentary speaker, or the Socialists.

Many Jews believe Yushenko has not shown enough willingness or ability to stop

anti-Semitic incitement associated with the Interregional Academy of Personnel Management, or MAUP, a Kiev-based university that regularly publishes anti-Jewish articles and organizes anti-Semitic and anti-Zionist activities.

"President Yushenko has lost his credibility. It is rather difficult to say who really supports him now," said Rabbi Ya'akov Dov Bleich, one of Ukraine's three chief rabbis.

Frenkel of the Association of Jewish Media echoed the widespread Jewish disappointment in Yushenko.

"The authorities have only been making declarations" but not acted to combat anti-Semitism in the country, he said.

And yet, Zissels said, many Jews will support Our Ukraine, simply because "life in the Diaspora has taught Jews to be loyal to the authorities."

The last option left for voters is none of the above — and a Kiev Jewish pensioner said he is going to check this box on his ballot.

"Like many other people I'm so tired of all this," Gilariy Lyapitsky said of Ukraine's political and economic turmoil of the last year. "I don't believe these leading parties, I will vote against all."

By various estimates, there are between 25-35 Jewish members in the Rada, and ob-

servers agree that number will not change dramatically after the elections.

No political party is specifically courting Jewish votes, although Klitschko, the boxer, attended this week a Purim celebration in the Kiev community.

But what worried Jewish observers more is the fact that none of the parties included combating anti-Semitism in their platforms.

"This upsets the Jewish community very much," Stambler said.

Apparently to dispel these feelings and to show a better face of Ukraine in the West,

Ukrainian Foreign Minister Boris Tarasyuk said earlier this month in a meeting in Washington that "any attempts to destroy the harmonious co-existence in Ukraine of numerous minorities and faiths will be strongly prosecuted."

Despite that promise, parties with a history of anti-Semitism have been allowed to run in the election.

Two of the parties have officials known as leaders in anti-Semitic propaganda. Yet, neither the Conservative Party of Georgy Schokin, head of the MAUP school, nor the Freedom Party of Oleg Tyagnibok, a former lawmaker expelled from his parliamentary group over anti-Semitic statements he made, are expected to win any seats. ■

'President Yushenko has lost his credibility. It is rather difficult to say who really supports him now.'
Ya'akov Dov Bleich
 One of Ukraine's chief rabbis

Jews quiet as Lukashenko set to win

By LEV KRICHEVSKY

MOSCOW (JTA) — Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko, a former Soviet collective farm manager, has been tightening the screws on dissent before a presidential vote in his country next week.

Lukashenko's regime, routinely referred to in the West as Europe's last dictatorship, is facing two opposition candidates as he campaigns for his third term in office.

Support for the opposition among Belarusian Jews is especially strong among younger and more educated voters, as well as in the capital of Minsk, home to many of the country's estimated 20,000 to 30,000 Jews.

Jewish leaders in the past have shown

a certain degree of independence from the authorities and have at times criticized the official line on issues of concern for the community.

But the leaders of the community are refraining from making any predictions regarding Sunday's vote — apparently fearing a possible backlash.

The authorities are afraid of a repeat of what happened in Ukraine and Georgia, where regime changes occurred as a result of pro-democracy protests that took place after rigged elections.

As a result, opposition activists are being detained in Belarus and even one of the two opposition candidates was briefly arrested for holding a rally that had not been sanctioned. ■

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As interest in day schools grows, funders emerge

By CHANAN TIGAY

NEW YORK (JTA) — News that a matching grant program has pulled in \$26 million for Jewish day schools is giving those involved with Jewish education in North America reason for optimism.

Organizers announced this week that the Match program would be funneling donor money to Jewish day schools and education projects, and would be supplementing those funds with matching grants of 50 cents on the dollar, bringing the total raised through the initiative to \$26 million.

"I think there is certainly a renewed interest in day schools as a mechanism for meeting the challenges of ensuring a positive Jewish identity in the next generation," said Mark Charendoff, president of the Jewish Funders Network, which sponsored the program along with the Partnership for Excellence in Jewish Education and funding from The Avi Chai Foundation and a host of other philanthropists.

"I think the question was always, is that interest deep or wide?"

"We saw in the past that it was definitely deep," he continued. "What this initiative points to for the first time is that it's wide as well."

That, sponsors say, is highlighted by the fact that Match not only exceeded its sponsors' fund-raising goals, but attracted some 300 donors who had not previously allocated funds to day schools.

Word of Match's success follows on the heels of several large gifts to Jewish education.

It also comes on the eve of PEJE's March 19-21 Assembly for Jewish Day School Education — bringing more than 900 supporters, professionals and leaders from hundreds of day schools to Boston to explore the opportunities and challenges facing day schools today, including how to raise funds as enrollments grow — and ahead of the funders network international conference in Denver.

"The day-school movement is growing stronger each year, thanks to new donors who are stepping up to give unprecedented support, and lay and professional leaders who are increasing their skills in fund-raising, marketing and educational excellence," said PEJE's executive director, Rabbi Joshua Elkin.

Last month, news broke that the Jim

Joseph Foundation, recently incorporated as a private foundation following its namesake's untimely death, would give some \$25 million annually to Jewish education.

In January, the Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School in Rockville, Md., received a \$15 million gift. In late 2004, a group of anonymous families made a \$45 million donation to three Boston-area day

schools.

In 2001, the Sidney Kimmel Foundation announced a \$20 million gift to The Raymond and Ruth Perelman Jewish Day School, a Solomon Schechter school in Wynnewood, Pa. that is affiliated with the Conservative movement.

"There has been building enthusiasm for the day-school enterprise that initially expressed itself through a dramatic increase in enrollment in the 1990s, which then led to greater funding needs," said Yossi Prager, Avi Chai's executive director. "The success of Match suggests that there are resources that can be tapped to meet those needs."

In addition to Avi Chai, the program is funded by Ingeborg and Ira Leon Rennert, The Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation, The Alan B. Slifka Foundation and Jewish Life Network/Steinhardt Foundation.

The money will go to 159 Jewish day schools in North America, along with eight day-school programs. Most of the day schools solicited their own donors, and applications then were filed through the Match sponsors.

Nearly 300 applications were accepted for matching funds and schools in 25 states and two Canadian provinces, representing all Jewish denominations. Community schools not representing a particular stream also will get support.

Matching funds for individual gifts were capped at \$50,000, and schools receiving multiple gifts were not given match funds over a total of \$100,000.

It's the third in a series of matching grant programs run through the funders network beginning in 2004. One of the initiatives, also run with Avi Chai, raised \$6.8 million for Jewish education generally,

rather than day schools alone; the other, run with the French Sacta-Rashi Foundation, raised \$2.2 million for Israel.

The combined annual operating budgets of North American day schools is somewhere in the vicinity of \$2 billion, Prager said. Most of that has to be covered by tuition, in addition to about \$65 million provided annually by Jewish federations. The balance has to be raised from private funds,

he said.

Schools say the Match program has been a fund-raising boon.

"There was tremendous enthusiasm in knowing that people were going to have their dollar leveraged by a foundation," said

Simcha Herring, director of development at the SAR Academy, a modern Orthodox day school in Riverdale, N.Y.

Program funders originally allocated \$5 million to match \$10 million in new gifts. But when applications totaled more than \$18 million, they increased their own contributions and recruited additional philanthropists to match the \$15.5 million that was eligible for matching funds.

The largest gift in conjunction with the program was \$1 million, followed by another gift of \$300,000, the funders network said.

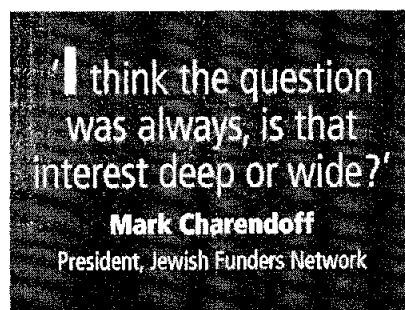
"The story is these brand new donors to the scene," Charendoff said. "It's not about spending 50 cents to get a dollar. The point was identifying people who could keep giving year after year into the future. So it's 50 cents hopefully to get \$10."

Funding professionals were reluctant to describe the Match program's success as part of a larger trend. Still, large gifts like those in Boston and Maryland, and the collection of relatively small ones that drove the Match program, are manifestations of a similar belief, Elkin said.

"The large gifts were coming from people who were very invested in the day-school enterprise and have been for some time," Elkin said. The Match funds represent "the beginning of a next generation of new donors that can be brought into the day-school enterprise."

"The common thread between the two groups is the belief that day schools work," he said. ■

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ON
ISSUES**



NEWS IN BRIEF

MIDDLE EAST

Abbas blasts Israeli raid

Mahmoud Abbas called Israel's raid of a West Bank prison an "unforgivable crime."

The Palestinian Authority president made his comments Wednesday, during a tour of the prison in Jericho.

At least two Palestinians were killed in shootouts during Tuesday's raid that transferred PFLP leader Ahmed Sa'adat and five of his comrades to Israeli custody.

Abbas also downplayed complaints by Britain and the United States that the Palestinians had violated the 2002 arrangement under which Sa'adat and his accomplices were being held by not supervising the prisoners closely.

Jordan's king supports Israeli Arabs

Jordan's king says he will continue to look out for Israel's Arabs.

Abdullah II met with a delegation of Israeli Arab leaders Tuesday, the Jordan Times reported.

"We understand the sensitive conditions under which 1948 Arabs live," Abdullah told the delegation, using a term that long was used by those who refused to acknowledge Israel's existence.

Abdullah pledged that Jordan would support Israeli Arabs, "whom we shall not abandon under any circumstances."

Jordan facilitates study for Israeli Arabs at its universities, and has interceded on their behalf in the past, for instance in brokering passage to Mecca for Israeli Muslim pilgrims.

Hamas 'zine promotes terrorism

The first issue of Hamas' online magazine for kids to be published since the group won Jan. 25 Palestinian legislative elections advocates suicide bombing and hatred of Jews, the Anti-Defamation League says.

The March 1 issue of Al-Fateh, a biweekly, emphasizes the "martyrdom" of a suicide bomber who killed 16 people in an August 2004 attack.

More information is available at http://www.adl.org/main_Terrorism/al_fateh_hamas.htm.

Olmert boosted by Jericho raid

Ehud Olmert's prospects in upcoming Israeli elections improved following the Jericho jail raid.

A Channel 1 television survey late Tuesday predicted that the interim prime minister's Kadima Party will take up to 43 of the Knesset's 120 seats in the March 28 vote, up several seats from recent polls.

Analysts said a successful commando operation in which six Palestinian terrorists were extracted from a prison in the West Bank town of Jericho, to stand trial in Israel, helped improve Olmert's security image.

Kadima's nearest rivals, the Labor and Likud parties, are predicted to take around 20-25 seats each in the election.

Settlement expansion halted

Israel halted the expansion of a West Bank settlement.

State representatives announced Wednesday that construction in the East Mattityahu neighborhood of Modi'in Illit was put on hold after it was challenged in the High Court of Justice.

According to the main petitioner, Peace Now, hundreds of new homes were going up in the settlement without authorization.

Modi'in Illit is part of a settlement bloc that Israel is expected to keep under any peace accord with the Palestinians or after any unilateral withdrawals from the West Bank.

Three Israeli universities ranked on world list

Hebrew University of Jerusalem led three Israeli universities on a list of the 200 best universities in the world.

Hebrew University was ranked 77th in the Times of London Higher Education Supplement, up from 93rd place in 2004. Tel Aviv University finished 188th after not appearing on the list last year, while the Technion in Haifa was 194th, down from 158th last year.

The schools were ranked based on a variety of categories, including academic peer reviews, citations of academic papers written by faculty members, staff-to-student ratios and a survey of global recruiters of graduates.

Harvard finished first on the list, which was dominated by American universities.

Israeli diplomats cast ballots

As many as 800 Israeli diplomats and state employees will vote Thursday at the Israeli Consulate in New York City.

Similar balloting will take place in 92 Israeli missions worldwide, ahead of Israel's March 28 general elections.

The sealed ballot boxes will be returned to Israel for counting.

Israeli union backs British counterpart

An Israeli teachers union sent a message of support to British colleagues who had voted to boycott Israeli academics.

The letter from the Coordinating Council of Israel's Faculty Associations backs the Association of University Teachers' struggle for better pay, and does not mention the boycott controversy.

The AUT voted to boycott Israeli academics last year because of Israeli policy toward the Palestinians, but rescinded the decision in the face of international criticism.

NORTH AMERICA

Study: Lesbian, gay Jews alienated

Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Jews in the Denver area feel alienated from the larger Jewish community, according to a new study. The findings contradict comments from staff of Colorado's Jewish institutions, who generally believe their organizations welcome the LGBT community.

LGBT Jews in Denver and Boulder, most of whom are unaffiliated or minimally involved with Jewish organizations, told interviewers they would not participate in the Jewish community unless they knew their families would be not just tolerated but accepted warmly.

The study, conducted by Mosaic: The National Jewish Center for Sexual and Gender Diversity, interviewed 21 lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Jews and 32 Jewish communal professionals.

New group seeks religious freedom

An Air Force Academy graduate launched an organization to promote religious freedom in the military.

Mikey Weinstein, who filed suit against the Air Force for promoting a Christian environment at the Colorado Springs academy, announced the launch of the Military Religious Freedom Foundation on Wednesday.

Weinstein said the constitutional separation of church and state "must never be compromised, except in the most limited of military circumstances, because of its fundamental importance to the preservation of the American nation and the American way of life."

Delta to fly from Atlanta to Israel

Delta is offering a daily flight between Atlanta and Israel.

The flights will begin March 27. The flight adds to the growing competition on U.S.-Israel routes.