

**IN THE NEWS**
**Supreme Court rules against U.S. survivors**

The U.S. Supreme Court rejected an appeal from Holocaust survivors who claimed they had been cheated out of money from the Swiss banks settlement.

On Monday, the court rejected the claim that survivors in the United States should get more money from the \$1.25 billion settlement agreed to in 1998.

The judge overseeing distribution of the money previously ruled that more should go to survivors in the former Soviet Union because they're needier.

**Peretz eyes West Bank fence**

Israel's defense minister ordered a review of the West Bank security fence route.

Amir Peretz on Monday asked planners of the 370-mile-long project to make sure that its role is purely defensive, and if not, to prepare for possible rerouting of sections located on land where Palestinians want a state.

The order follows a series of High Court petitions, some successful, by Palestinians against the fence.

**Israeli prime ministers discuss Iranian nukes**

Ehud Olmert met with three former Israeli prime ministers to discuss the Iranian nuclear threat.

The "Premier Forum" — Olmert, Shimon Peres, Benjamin Netanyahu and Ehud Barak — met Monday, signaling a desire for consensus on an issue that Israel considers its primary strategic threat.

Olmert and Peres, currently Israel's vice premier, have endorsed U.S.-led efforts to curb Iran's nuclear program through diplomacy, while Netanyahu, the opposition leader, has called for pre-emptive military action like the 1981 strike on the Iraqi reactor at Osirak.

Barak, a former military chief, has counseled caution.

# WORLD REPORT

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## Western freeze on Hamas-led P.A. is hindering aid work, nonprofits say

By URIEL HEILMAN

**J**ERUSALEM (JTA) — Nearly three months after Hamas took control of the Palestinian Authority, Western governments aren't the only ones trying to figure out how to deliver aid to the increasingly needy Palestinian population without inadvertently supporting its extremist government.

Nongovernmental organizations — which Western governments opposed to ties with Hamas view as the most viable medium for delivering aid to the Palestinians — are themselves running into problems trying to maintain their operations in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

With the Palestinian Authority in disarray and Western governments still in the process of defining what is permissible vis-a-vis links to the Hamas-run government, many nonprofit groups operating in Palestinian areas are facing serious funding problems, confusion about whom they are allowed to talk to and work with, and the challenge of having to establish ties with a completely new — and far less institutionalized — Palestinian bureaucracy.

The situation is nothing short of a crisis, many officials with these groups, sometimes known as NGOs, here say.

"I have never seen as much policy confusion in government as I have seen when Hamas was elected in the Palestinian Authority," said John Bell, director of the Jerusalem office of Search for Common Ground in the Middle East.

"Who can we have contact with? Can we be in the same room as a Hamas person? There are many legal issues for us to con-

sider," Bell said. "Unfortunately, we're a bit in the realm of the absurd."

A variety of officials from nonprofits operating in Israel, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip discussed the challenges of operating in Hamas-run territory at a conference last week on nonprofits, human rights

and the Arab-Israeli conflict. The forum, hosted by NGO Monitor, was held June 14 at the Menachem Begin Heritage Center in Jerusalem.

Many officials from nonprofit groups complained that American, European and Israeli restrictions on contacts with the Hamas government are too far-reaching, threatening non-political and even pro-peace activities, such as the teaching of coexistence curricula in Palestinian schools. Because those schools are now under the aegis of Hamas, coordination with officials from the Palestinian Education Ministry is now banned by Western governments.

"It's virtually impossible to fund Palestinian society today in the West Bank without encountering Hamas," said Daniel Seideman, legal adviser to Ir Amim, an Israeli group that advocates for a binational Jerusalem and promotes services to Palestinian residents of the city.

But many Western observers argue that the funding crisis in the Palestinian Authority — precipitated by Western sanctions — is a necessary part of getting the Hamas-run government to abandon terrorism.

"This crisis is necessary and overdue," said Saul Singer, an Israeli newspaper columnist who spoke at the conference. The idea, Singer explained, is to use the crisis to

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**FOCUS  
ON  
ISSUES**

## ■ Nonprofits want to aid the Palestinian population without supporting Hamas

*Continued from page 1*

force Hamas to accept the principle of a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

"We're talking about a game of chicken here," Singer said, between the principles of Hamas, a terrorist group which mandates Israel's destruction, on the one hand, and the principles of the international community — abandonment of terrorism, recognition of Israel and acceptance of existing Israeli-Palestinian peace agreements — on the other.

"I think Hamas should give in," Singer said.

While this game is played, however, groups funded by Western governments must figure out how to adjust to the new reality of maintaining their activities in a territory where cooperation with the local government is restricted.

There are pitfalls and obstacles everywhere, officials with these groups say.

Other organizations report that donors' targeted gifts are harder to use because of the new bans. Some say they have been forced to return funds to donors.

■  
Gershon Baskin, co-CEO of the Israel Palestine Center for Research and Information, says his group does not accept funding from the Palestinian or Israeli governments in order to steer clear of restrictions and conflicts of interest. But his reliance on other governments, such as that of the United States, has come at a cost.

According to Bell, the United States is

more stringent than Israel when it comes to restrictions on nonprofits' activity in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The United States "is putting out extremely stringent demands and conditions," Bell said. "The Israelis are a lot more practical about it. They know things have to be done, and they're trying to get them done while at the same time the U.S. government is prohibiting very common-sense activities."

Many officials with nonprofit groups say Western bans on contacts with Hamas should be more nuanced — both to facilitate easier aid to the Palestinians and to help bring Hamas around to a

more moderate point of view.

"I understand the logic behind a government boycotting Hamas," Baskin said. "I don't think that has to limit non-governmental actors in trying to effect change."

"I would like to see the international community looking for ways that can help us to move the Hamas from where it is to a different place, to a better place, to a reformed

political platform, which I believe is inevitable," Baskin said.

"We have to be very careful about both boycotts against Israel and boycotts against Palestine that prevent peaceful NGOs from doing their work." ■

**We're talking about a game of chicken here.**

**Saul Singer**

Columnist, Israeli newspaper

## Argentina sports Jewish coach, player

By JOE GOLDMAN

BUENOS AIRES (JTA) — A Jewish player is trying to help kick Argentina's national team to a triumph in soccer's World Cup, with help from the team's Jewish coach.

Both the coach, Jose Pekerman, 56, and the player, Juan Pablo Sorin, 30, have their roots in the Buenos Aires-based club Argentinos Juniors, best known as the team where superstar Diego Maradona first honed his talent.

Adrian Stoppelman, an Argentine Jewish sportswriter, said, "In the past, Argentina has had a sprinkling of Jewish players in its local league. But to have two such key people like the coach and team captain being Jewish is truly an achievement to be proud of."

Pekerman, 56, was born in Villa Dominguez — otherwise known as Moisesville, the center of where the "Jewish gauchos," or cowboys, lived — in Entre Rios province but has lived much of his life in the Jewish neighborhood of Villa Crespo in Buenos Aires.

He was a solid midfielder who played from 1970-1974 in the first division of Argentine soccer for Argentinos Juniors. He then spent a short stint playing for Colombia's Independiente Medellin be-

fore becoming a coach.

At first, he worked as a youth division coach, jobs that barely paid the rent. In fact Pekerman, for a number of years, drove a taxi at night. So it was a real surprise when he was named coach of the national youth teams in 1994. Under his guidance, the Argentine under-23 teams won three world championships. In 2004, he was promoted to coach the national team.

Sorin, 30, is a defender-midfielder whose dynamic blend of spirit and intelligence made him an obvious choice as team captain. All the other players describe him as a natural leader off the field. During the game, he is, in many ways, the player who sets the rhythm and tone for the Argentines.

Sorin has also played for teams around the world, and this year led his small Spanish league team, Villareal, into the European UEFA Cup semifinals.

In Argentina, Sorin had his own radio show, and last year edited a children's book whose proceeds went to a foundation for children with health and nutritional problems.

Argentina has already qualified for the second round of the World Cup, which will crown its winner on July 9. ■



### WORLD REPORT

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# Orthodox school takes non-halachic Jews

By VANESSA BULKACZ

LONDON (JTA) — The decision by a London-area Orthodox day school to admit students with only a Jewish father is provoking outrage in parts of the community.

King Solomon High School's move brought a vehement reaction from some members of the local community, including Rabbi Alex Chapper, who said the policy "effectively recognizes the liberal definition of who is a Jew."

The school's action also has re-opened a debate about the future of publicly funded Jewish schooling in the face of shifting Jewish demographics in London and surrounding areas.

Rabbi James Kennard, King Solomon's headmaster, defended the move. With a 2003 English law prohibiting state-funded religious schools from holding empty places for members of their own faith, the school had to seek solutions to fill the spaces or admit students with no Jewish ancestry.

Under the law, all schools must have 30 students in each classroom.

"It wasn't our decision. The law dictates what we must do to fill our spots," said Spencer Lewis, the school's director of Jewish studies.

Government funding covers 100 percent of secular studies and staffing costs and 90 percent of capital costs for the building and facilities. Jewish studies are funded by contributions, usually from students' parents.

Every state-aided Jewish school had to devise similar criteria to fill empty spaces, Kennard said, so other schools must have similar rules on their books — but changing demographics in northeast London meant King Solomon had to go ahead and implement them.

Applications last year dropped by about 40 students, to 165. Officials said the school, which has 150 places to fill each year, admitted a "small" number of students with only a Jewish father.

School leaders say a decline in the local northeast London Jewish community, combined with increased competition from new schools in north London, created the conditions that made King Solomon the first United Synagogue affiliate school to implement its next-in-line policy. United Synagogue is a major British Orthodox organization.

"Young families are just not staying in that area," said Simon Goulden, the chief executive of the United Synagogue Agency for Jewish Education.

The demographic challenge does not exist in every part of London: According to Goulden, the rest of the city's Jewish schools can't keep up with demand.

While he refuted a BBC story last week claiming that only one in 12 students applying to Jewish schools is admitted, he agreed that demand was high, citing one of the new

primary schools being opened this fall by parents whose children were rejected from other schools.

It's unclear who made the final decision on the patrilineal policy, and Chapper, spiritual leader of the Ilford Federation Synagogue, blamed school governors as well.

"An Orthodox school shouldn't be giving this message. It's wrong," he told JTA. "If a Jewish man marries a non-Jewish woman, an Orthodox school shouldn't give out the message that it's OK."

As alternatives, Chapper suggested removing a grade, reducing admission num-

bers or admitting students with no Jewish ancestry, adding that accepting Muslim students would be better than the current situation.

Kennard contended that going against the enrollment policy is "not an option" and that, if the school did so, it would lose its funding and have to become private.

Chapper contended that most parents in his congregation condemn the decision.

"A majority of parents chose to send their children to the school in the knowledge that they would be mixing with only Jewish children, and this is now undermined," he said in a recent sermon. "Par-

ents of existing pupils have been betrayed."

Kennard said he hadn't heard any complaints from parents. In addition, a number of opinions in

support of the school's move have appeared on Jewish Web sites and bulletin boards, such as somethingjewish.co.uk.

Discussions between Chapper and the school's governors are ongoing.

"The policy is set for 2007, but I've been having meetings with school leaders and hope we can find alternatives for 2008," Chapper said. "I'm against the decision the governors made, not the school itself." ■

## AROUND THE JEWISH WORLD

'Parents of existing pupils have been betrayed.'  
Rabbi Alex Chapper

## Belarus Jewish school under pressure

MOSCOW (JTA) — A Jewish leader in Belarus has sent a letter to Belarusian officials arguing that a local prosecutor illegally forced a Jewish kindergarten teacher to remove Jewish symbols from classrooms.

Yakov Basin, the deputy leader of the country's Jewish community, sent the letter last month, after the prosecutor said Lyudmila Izakson-Bolotovskaya violated the law by holding Jewish religious celebrations inside the school, which is located in a government-owned building in the city of Mogilev.

But a Jewish official in the Belarusian capital of Minsk said it is unlikely that the development in Mogilev had anti-Semitic overtones.

"There have never been any problems between Jewish organizations and authorities in Mogilev," said Viktoria Brumina, executive director of the Union of Belarusian Jewish Public Organizations and Commu-

nities, an umbrella group. "To the contrary, the city officials always treated the Jewish community extremely well."

The prosecutor's action came after Purim celebrations in the kindergarten, featuring a children's Jewish musical group, were shown on local television news.

Prosecutors argued that Izakson-Bolotovskaya, who also leads the music group, violated the children's rights, and that television coverage of the event illegally propagated Judaism. The teacher was warned that she might be prosecuted if the actions are repeated.

According to local Jewish leaders, menorahs and Stars of David were removed from the school in the wake of the prosecutor's warning and at the request of the local education department. Human rights watchers in the West have described Belarus' law on religion as one of the most restrictive in the former Soviet Union. ■

# NEWS IN BRIEF

## NORTH AMERICA

### Looted painting auctioned off

A Holocaust-era looted painting that recently was returned to its heirs was auctioned for a reported \$135 million.

The Gustav Klimt painting now will be displayed at the Neue Galerie, a New York museum of German and Austrian art owned by Ronald Lauder.

The 1907 portrait of Adele Bloch-Bauer was recently returned to Bloch Bauer's niece, Maria Altmann. Now living in Los Angeles, Altmann, 90, pursued litigation for seven years against Austria to get back the painting, which was first confiscated by Nazis from the Bloch-Bauers, then taken over by the state.

After a 2004 Supreme Court decision supporting Altmann and subsequent negotiations, the painting was finally returned to her. "It was important for the heirs and for my aunt Adele that her work be displayed in a museum," Altmann said in a statement released by the family.

### Study: Detroit Jews declining

The number of Jews in the Detroit area is declining, according to a new study.

Some 72,000 Jews live in the area, down from 96,000 in 1989, according to the study, conducted by sociologist Ira Sheskin for the Jewish Federation of Detroit.

But Sheskin and federation officials believe the 1989 survey overestimated the number of Jews in the area.

The survey also found that the median age of Jews in the Detroit area is 47, compared with 39 for the U.S. Jewish community as a whole. A complete report on the survey will be issued in October.

### Reform rabbis install leader

The Reform movement's rabbinic association installed a new leader and approved a new prayer book.

Rabbi Steven Fox, a practicing attorney and adjunct rabbi, was installed as the group's new executive vice president at the annual convention of the Central Conference of American Rabbis this week in San Diego.

The conference has been functioning without a full-time leader for some time because of budgetary constraints.

The conference officially approved the movement's new prayer book, *Mishkan T'filah*, which will be ready for distribution Oct. 1.

Other topics of discussion include intermarriage and conversion, social justice advocacy, liturgy and practice, and Israel.

## WORLD

### Apology for Israeli flag-waving at World Cup

Ghana apologized after one of its soccer players waved an Israeli flag at the World Cup.

John Pantsil's gesture during a weekend game against the Czech Republic was aimed at solidarity with the Hapoel Tel Aviv soccer team, which he usually plays for, but it raised eyebrows among Arabs.

A Ghana Football Association spokesman apologized Monday and said Pantsil had been cautioned.

"He is obviously unaware of the implications of what he did. He's unaware of the international politics.

We apologize to anybody who was offended and we promise that it will never happen again," the spokesman said.

"He did not act out of malice for the Arab people or in support of Israel. He was naive." FIFA, the organization overseeing the World Cup in Germany, said it had no problem with Pantsil's gesture.

### London mayor cleared over remarks

London's mayor was cleared of anti-Semitic charges over comments he made regarding two British Jewish businessmen.

A London governmental investigator decided that Ken Livingstone was not guilty of anti-Semitism when he said David and Simon Reuben should "go back to Iran and try their luck with the ayatollahs," because he did not know at the time that the two brothers are Jewish.

The Reubens were born in India to parents of Iraqi Jewish descent.

The investigator also found that Livingstone had reason to be critical of the brothers' conduct regarding the Olympic village for the 2012 Games, which will be held in London.

### Ukraine's president invites Katsav

Ukraine's president invited his Israeli counterpart to Kiev. Viktor Yushchenko invited Moshe Katsav to Kiev in September for a forum marking the 65th anniversary of the Babi Yar massacre.

Yushchenko was scheduled to visit Israel late last year, but the trip was postponed, and it remains unclear when he'll come on a state visit.

Some experts and Jewish leaders believe Yushchenko's visit was canceled not because of a scheduling conflict, but because the Ukrainian Foreign Ministry feared it would harm Kiev's relations with Iran and other Muslim countries that play a key role in Ukraine's foreign trade.

## MIDDLE EAST

### Israel expands residency law

Israel expanded a law granting residency to children of non-Jewish foreign workers.

On Sunday, the Cabinet approved a proposal by Interior Minister Ronnie Bar-On to ease the minimum age requirement for children whose parents work legally in Israel and who want to become citizens themselves.

Previously, only children who were born in Israel or arrived before age 10 were eligible, but the bar has now been raised to 14.

Other requirements for candidates are that they speak Hebrew and have lived in Israel for at least six years.

After completing mandatory military service, they will become eligible for citizenship.

### Three Israeli girls wounded

A Palestinian gunman wounded three Israeli girls Monday in a shooting attack on a bus in the West Bank.

The bus was attacked north of Ramallah, the Israeli army said. Police are looking for the suspect.

### Officer jailed for spying

A senior Israeli army officer was jailed for spying on behalf of Hezbollah.

A Tel Aviv court-martial on Sunday handed Lt. Col. Omar al-Hayeb a 15-year jail sentence after convicting him of passing intelligence on Israeli troop deployments to the Lebanese terrorist group.

He also was found guilty of bringing drugs across the Lebanese border into Israel.

Hayeb, a Bedouin who received service citations after being wounded in earlier clashes with Hezbollah, denied wrongdoing.

His jail term was reduced as he has already served four years behind bars.

He is to be dishonorably discharged from the military.