

IN THE NEWS
**Gaza captors
issue deadline**

Gaza gunmen holding an Israeli soldier set a Tuesday morning deadline for their demands to be met. Hamas' armed wing and two other terrorist groups issued the ultimatum Monday, but did not say in their statement what would happen to Cpl. Gilad Shalit if it goes unmet.

The captors have called on Israel to free hundreds of jailed Palestinian terrorists in exchange for information on Shalit, who was abducted on June 25 in a raid on an Israeli army post outside the southern Gaza Strip. Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert has ruled out the proposed prisoner swap as "extortion."

**Troops, bombers
clash in Gaza Strip**

Israeli soldiers killed three Palestinian gunmen in the southern Gaza Strip.

Sunday night's clash near Rafah was the fiercest since Israeli tanks and troops swept into southern Gaza last week in a bid to free a kidnapped soldier.

**Iran faces
new deadline**

Iran was given an extension to respond to an international incentives package to open up its nuclear facilities or face sanctions.

The Associated Press quoted senior diplomats in Vienna as saying that the major powers behind the proposal — the United States, Britain, France, Germany, Russia and China — extended the deadline by a week to July 12.

The diplomats also said the powers are closer than ever to agreeing on sanctions if Iran turns down the package, the AP said. Russia and China had resisted sanctions.

Reminder:
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WORLD REPORT

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Israel raises the stakes in battle to fight terror — but will it work?

By LESLIE SUSSER

JERUSALEM (JTA) — By sending ground forces into the Gaza Strip, making sweeping arrests of Hamas Cabinet ministers and legislators and bombing the offices of Palestinian Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh, Israel has significantly raised the stakes in its Sisyphean struggle against fundamentalist Palestinian terror.

As the military response to the kidnapping of Cpl. Gilad Shalit along the Gaza border unfolded, it became clear that Israel's war aims went far beyond the return of the abducted soldier. Dubbed Summer Rains, the first major military operation since Israel's withdrawal from Gaza last year was intended to secure the soldier's release, stop Kassam rocket fire on Israeli civilians, restore Israel's deterrent capacity, topple the Hamas-led government and create conditions for an effective cease-fire.

Israeli leaders spoke about effecting a "strategic change" in Gaza and instituting new rules of the game, under which Palestinian leaders and terrorists would know that they would be made to pay a painful price for any violence against Israel.

But the Israeli media were highly skeptical. They pointed to contradictory war aims and suggested that the massive military operation may do more harm than good. For example, they asked: Will escalating Israel's military response help save the captured soldier or put his life at risk? How does shelling empty fields create deterrence? And will removal of the Hamas government ensure the rule of the moderates or simply bring more extreme Palestinians to power?

The government was under strong domes-

tic pressure to take tough action. The soldier's abduction came after months of incessant rocket fire on the border town of Sderot, where residents went on a hunger strike to protest the government's failure to protect them.

But that was not the only reason for the government's new hard line. Prime Minister

Ehud Olmert also wanted to restore dwindling public confidence in his plan for a large-scale unilateral withdrawal from the West Bank. By launching a major military operation, he was testing the government's

thesis that withdrawal from territory gives Israel considerable freedom of action if terror continues from the areas handed back. If that equation is seen to work in Gaza, Olmert believes the public will be more amenable to a similar pullback from the West Bank.

Olmert exploited favorable political conditions for a strong military response, especially the fact that Hamas is isolated internationally and, to a large extent, in the Arab world as well. Western-leaning Arab leaders were worried about kidnapping becoming a tool that could be used by local radicals against their regimes and tried to help defuse the crisis rather than criticize Israel.

But it is by no means clear that Israel's use of force and regional pressure will have the desired effect. Israeli critics on the left argue that it could simply spawn more violence and terror.

What will happen in Gaza when Israel leaves, they ask. Will Palestinian forces loyal to moderate President Mahmoud Abbas impose order and cross-border quiet, or will chaos reign, with more terror against Israel? Already Palestinian radicals are threatening

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NEWS
ANALYSIS

■ *Olmert exploited favorable political conditions for a strong military response*

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mega-terror attacks in Israel or on Israeli targets abroad.

Israeli pundits almost universally denigrated the government's new hard-line position.

"Pressure on Hamas is a good idea. But bringing it down will only hand over power to gangs over which there is no control," wrote Gadi Taub in the Ma'ariv daily. In the same paper, Ben Dror Yemini called the arrest of the Hamas leaders "an own goal" from a public-relations point of view, arguing that winning the image war was as important as winning the war on the ground.

But the most scathing criticism came from the normally middle-of-the-road Sever Plotzker in the mass circulation Yediot Achronot. Plotzker accused the government of making two major strategic blunders — withdrawing unilaterally from Gaza and then allowing the radical Hamas to participate in elections.

"The unilateralism of the Israeli withdrawal was not seen by the Palestinian public as a punishment for terror, but, surprise, surprise, as a prize for terror," paving the way for the Hamas victory, Plotzker wrote. And, he continued, Israel's confused military policy is likely to further empower the most extreme Hamas leader, Damascus-based Khaled Meshaal.

"Through its contradictory responses, brandishing verbal threats, shelling empty real estate and arresting Hamas ministers who only yesterday were considered moderate, Israel is crowning the new Palestinian national hero, the partially poisoned

(by Mossad agents in 1997) Hamas leader Khaled Meshaal, who, with our generous help, is rising like a phoenix," Plotzker wrote.

His sentiments reflected a growing feeling in Israel that withdrawing from Gaza without agreement was a mistake. And so far the military operation, rather than changing this doubt, has actually entrenched it.

Much could depend on the outcome of a complex power struggle on the Palestinian side.

For months, Abbas has been stymied by the more radical Hamas-led government under Haniyeh, some of whose more hard-line members owe allegiance to the Damascus-based Meshaal, who also controls most of the Hamas militias. Israeli leaders believe the escalation in Palestinian violence is part of an effort by Meshaal to embarrass Abbas and Haniyeh and to show who really rules Gaza.

By arresting Hamas government ministers and legislators, Israel was trying to stack the internal Palestinian deck in Abbas' favor. It was also trying to send a clear

message to Meshaal: Israel will not tolerate a bogus distinction between the political and military echelons, and if Meshaal and his allies continue to promote terror, Hamas could lose its hold on power.

Meshaal faces a difficult choice: seeking a compromise with Israel and probably losing face, or escalating the violence and risking even harsher Israeli measures against Hamas and becoming a target for assassination himself.

In describing the Israeli military operation, Defense Minister

Amir Peretz called it "one of the most significant moments in setting the rules of the game between Israel and Palestinian terror."

Indeed, one of the main objects of Summer Rains was to signal to the Palestinians that the rules have changed and that Israel will not hesitate to use overwhelming force if terrorism from Gaza continues. Now it remains to be seen whether the Palestinians accept the new rules as a basis for more peaceful coexistence, or whether the very attempt to change the rules leads to greater anarchy and even worse violence. ■

'Israel is crowning the new Palestinian national hero, the partially poisoned Hamas leader Khaled Meshaal, who, with our generous help, is rising like a phoenix.'

Sever Plotzker

Yediot Achronot

Pakistani-Americans find Israel peaceful

TEL AVIV (JTA) — Visiting Israel for the first time, Dr. Omar Atiq, a Pakistani-American, marveled at what he found — calm in Jerusalem's Old City and the majority of Palestinians and Israelis trying to live normal, peaceful lives.

"We've been extremely impressed at what we have seen because the news we get just shows us the killings and bombings and the blowing up of houses and other miseries on both sides, but nobody really shows us the normal life," said Atiq, president of the American Muslim Peace Initiative. He traveled to Israel with six other members of the organization on a three-day trip that ended Wednesday.

At the end of the trip, the initiative, described as an effort by American Muslims to encourage interfaith tolerance, released a

statement calling on Palestinians and Israelis to act with restraint toward each other to build confidence and, eventually, peace.

"In that vein, we urge our Palestinian brothers to immediately release the abducted Israeli soldier since such acts are counterproductive," the group said in the statement, referring to Cpl. Gilad Shalit, 19, who was kidnapped on Sunday and taken into Gaza.

The trip was organized by the American Jewish Congress' Council for World Jewry.

For Atiq, a Pakistani-born oncologist who has befriended many Jewish doctors through his work, reaching out to the Jewish community was a natural step.

"We wanted to break the taboo of Muslims and Jews talking to each other," he said. ■



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Ukrainian town may celebrate Cossacks

By VLADIMIR MATVEYEV

KIEV, Ukraine (JTA) — A Ukrainian town may soon receive a monument to two men whom many Ukrainians regard as national heroes, but who historians say organized a revolt that led to the mass murders of Jews.

The town of Uman is considering putting up a monument to Cossack leaders Ivan Gonta and Maksim Zaliznyak, leaders of an 18th-century anti-Polish uprising that led to the massacre of 20,000 of Jews and Poles.

The proposed monument is even more controversial because Uman attracts thousands of fervently Orthodox Jewish pilgrims each year because it is home to the grave of a Chasidic rabbi.

Some Jewish leaders fear that the plan for the monument in Uman reflects a bigger trend in contemporary Ukraine that is looking for heroic and self-asserting moments in its own history, and quite often at the expense of minorities that have long called Ukraine home.

"Every nation chooses and is worthy of its own national heroes," said Igor Kuperberg, a longtime Jewish leader from Kiev. "This tendency reflects the point of view of part of the Ukrainian national elite. But it also can lead to the increase of anti-Semitism in the country."

The idea of a monument to the two peasant leaders — whom many Ukrainians see as the pioneers of the Ukrainian struggle for national independence — is not new for Ukraine, but during communism, it was impossible to erect a monument to the leaders of what the historians call the massacre of Uman.

But in post-Soviet Ukraine, several nationalist groups are advocating the idea of a monument to be erected inside Uman's main landmark, Sofia Park.

Among the supporters of the idea is the Ukrainian Conservative Party and its leader, Georgy Schokin, who is also president of MAUP, a Kiev-based private university whose leaders are known for anti-Zionist and anti-Semitic activities.

Earlier this month, Schokin visited Uman and spoke about the monument with local officials. He also submitted the project of the monument for the approval to the board of the Ukrainian National Parks.

"Ivan Gonta and Maksim Zaliznyak occupy a fitting place in the history of the

national and liberation movement and they are worthy of eternal memory of the people," Schokin said when speaking in Uman last month, according to MAUP's magazine Personnel Plus.

But Jewish activists disagree.

"These two Cossacks — Zaliznyak and Gonta — were not heroes, and this monument shouldn't be erected," said Mikhail Frenkel, chairman

of the Association of Jewish Mass Media in Ukraine.

He blames a group of leaders around Ukraine's president, Viktor Yushenko, for advocating an idea that "Ukraine should bear out its greatness" by honoring what many in Ukraine consider to be a glorious part of their history.

For his part, MAUP's leader does not see any problem.

"The rebels smashed up Russian, Polish and kike country estates, killed their owners. They saw themselves as the masters in their land," Schokin said, according to his school's magazine.

ACROSS
THE FORMER
SOVIET
UNION

'These two Cossacks were not heroes, and this monument shouldn't be erected.'

Mikhail Frenkel

Chairman, Association of Jewish Mass Media in Ukraine

The rebellion of the Gaidamaks, as the Cossack rebels were called, was focused against Polish landowners and was not only a social and political uprising; it also had a religious element against Catholics and Jews.

Uman — a manufacturing center in central Ukraine that is home to some 95,000 people — sees an influx of thousands of Chasidic pilgrims every year from around the world around Rosh Hashanah and Purim to visit the grave of a revered leader. Last fall about 12,000 came to visit the grave of Rabbi Nachman of Breslav, a prominent Chasidic leader who died in Uman in 1810.

There are about 500 Jews in Uman today, and many of them, as well as hundreds of non-Jews, are involved in providing services to pilgrims.

The impact the Jews are playing in today's economy of Uman may help local authorities think twice before they give a final go-ahead to the controversial monument.

"We should take into account that during one year more than 30,000 Jews visit Uman. Svetlana Lipinska, an adviser to the mayor of Uman, told JTA. ■

German board member promotes Israel

BERLIN (JTA) — A new board member of Germany's fund for slave laborers says the Catholic foundation that he worked for should change its tune on Israel.

Martin Salm, 51, outgoing head of the German branch of Caritas International, a worldwide Catholic humanitarian organization, said he had tried to impress the importance of recognizing Israel to colleagues.

In his new position on the board of the Foundation for Remembrance, Responsibility and the Future, he will develop and promote educational and humanitarian programs related to former slave laborers — including in Israel, Eastern and Western Europe and the United States.

Salm said he was looking forward to his new position after 25 years with Caritas.

In the 1960s, when he was a child, "no one ever talked about what had happened

during the Nazi regime," Salm said in a telephone interview with JTA. "So I discovered there was something hidden in the family history, in the lives of my father and grandfathers. And that created in me, personally, I think, a special sensitivity."

"The challenge," he said, "is how to keep that alive for today's youth and the coming generations."

Salm said he would bring his own convictions with him to his new position and not the views of Caritas, whose parent organization in the Vatican has run campaigns calling for an end to the occupation of the West Bank, without mentioning Israel by name. Caritas fails to include Israel in the list of countries that visitors to the Web site may register as their country of origin.

"I think that is a problem," Salm said.

Attempts to reach Caritas in Rome were unsuccessful. ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

WORLD

Switzerland: Israel violating international law

Switzerland accused Israel of violating international law in its military campaign in the Gaza Strip.

In a statement, the Swiss Foreign Ministry said Monday that Israel's actions violate principles of proportionality and endangering civilians set out in the Geneva Conventions.

Israel's actions are aimed at freeing kidnapped Cpl. Gilad Shalit and stopping Kassam rocket fire on Israeli civilians, but many believe that Israel also wants to topple the Hamas-led government and create conditions for an effective cease-fire.

Switzerland has "criticized us even though we are showing restraint," Aviv Shir-On, Israel's ambassador to Switzerland, told The Associated Press. "We are disappointed that the Swiss government did not issue such statements when Israel's civilian population was constantly under attack from the Gaza Strip." Switzerland also called for Shalit's release.

Annan to Israel: Show restraint

Kofi Annan called on Israel to refrain from attacks on Palestinian infrastructure and institutions. The U.N. secretary-general, attending the African Union summit in Gambia on Sunday, took time out to address Israel's recent strikes on the Gaza Strip and its arrests of leading Hamas officials.

"I remain very concerned about the need to preserve Palestinian institutions and infrastructure," Annan said. "They will be the basis for an eventual two-state solution and are thus in the interest of both Israelis and Palestinians.

It would, therefore, seem inadvisable to carry out actions that would have the opposite effect."

NORTH AMERICA

Lieberman could run unaffiliated

U.S. Sen. Joseph Lieberman says he'll run unaffiliated if he loses next month's Connecticut primary. The former Democratic vice presidential candidate, who has represented Connecticut as a Democrat for 18 years, said Monday he will remain a Democrat even if he runs unaffiliated in November.

Lieberman is facing a tight race against millionaire businessman Ned Lamont in the Aug. 8 primary.

Lamont has attacked Lieberman, who is a strong backer of the war in Iraq, as straying from his Democratic roots.

U.S. envoy: Syria must arrest Meshaal

John Bolton called on Syrian authorities to arrest Hamas leader Khaled Meshaal.

The U.S. envoy to the United Nations issued the call last week. Meshaal, based in Damascus, is believed to have ordered the June 25 attack in which Palestinian gunmen killed two Israeli soldiers and kidnapped another. Bolton dismissed comparisons between the kidnapping and Israel's response. "There is no moral equivalency to, on the one hand, deliberate attacking of civilians, taking lives, taking hostages versus the inadvertent and highly unfortunate civilian deaths that occur when a country exercises its right to self-defense," he said last Friday.

"Those are not the same act, they are not motivated for the same reasons, they do not carry the same moral weight."

Poll: Jewish candidate preferred

More U.S. voters would vote for a Jewish presidential candidate than a Muslim, Mormon or evangelical Christian one, according to

a new poll. Fifteen percent of those questioned in the Los Angeles Times/Bloomberg poll said they would not vote for a Jewish candidate, as opposed to 54 percent who said they would not vote for a Muslim candidate, 37 percent who would not vote for a Mormon and 21 percent who would not pull the lever for an evangelical Christian.

The poll of 1,321 adults, conducted in late June, has a margin of error of plus or minus 3 percentage points.

Rabbinical committee bans smoking

A committee of the centrist Orthodox rabbinical organization said Jewish law is opposed to smoking.

The halachah committee of the Rabbinical Council of America said the decision is based on a combination of the value placed by Jewish sources on health and scientific findings on the dangers of tobacco products.

The decision calls on all Jews to avoid or quit smoking.

MIDDLE EAST

Incursion in northern Gaza

A small Israeli armored force rolled into the northern Gaza Strip. Military sources said Monday morning's incursion near the Palestinian town of Beit Hanoun was aimed at uncovering cross-border tunnels dug by terrorists.

Palestinians have been bracing for a large-scale Israeli sweep of northern Gaza since troops and tanks pushed into the southern part of the strip last week in a bid to isolate those who are holding a kidnapped soldier, Cpl. Gilad Shalit.

Outside Beit Hanoun, an Israeli airstrike killed two Hamas gunmen who were believed to be about to attack troops.

Israel turns to Russia

Israel's foreign minister wants Russia's help in defusing the Gaza hostage crisis.

Tzipi Livni traveled Monday for talks in Moscow with her Russian counterpart, Sergei Lavrov, about efforts to retrieve Cpl. Gilad Shalit, an Israeli soldier held by Palestinian gunmen.

Russia is the only member of the "Quartet" of international mediators to have hosted Hamas officials since they took over the Palestinian Authority.

"The main thing now is to have the Israeli soldier freed. We are trying to facilitate this through every channel we have," Lavrov said after the talks.

"We also urge the Israeli leadership to show restraint," Lavrov added.

Livni will also visit Finland, which took over the European Union's rotating presidency on Saturday, to lobby for continued support for Israel's tough stand on Hamas.

Synagogues for Jerusalem skyline

The city of Jerusalem is rebuilding two synagogues in the Old City. Yediot Achronot reported Monday that a \$13 million project was under way to reconstruct the Tiferet Yisrael and Horva synagogues in the Jewish Quarter.

"I believe that rebuilding these synagogues will restore the Old City's unique appearance," Mayor Uri Lupolianski was quoted as saying.

Founded in the early 18th century as a major Ashkenazi synagogue, Horva was razed by the Ottomans and rebuilt, only to be razed again by the Jordanians.

Tiferet Yisrael was built in the 19th century with money from Austrian Jews, but was demolished by Jordanian forces following Israel's War of Independence in 1948.