

IN THE NEWS

Katyushas hit Haifa for first time

Katyusha rockets hit the Israeli city of Haifa.

Thursday's attack is believed to be the farthest south that Hezbollah rockets from Lebanon have ever reached. No injuries were reported.

Israelis, Lebanese die after barrages

Two Israeli civilians and at least 52 Lebanese died in cross-border barrages.

Responding to the killing of eight soldiers and the abduction of two more by Hezbollah gunmen in a frontier ambush Wednesday, Israel shelled Lebanese infrastructure from the air, land and sea Thursday.

Lebanese officials said at least 52 civilians were killed, but Israeli sources described many of the casualties as Hezbollah combatants.

Israeli warplanes bombed the runways of Beirut International Airport. Some 70 Israelis were wounded by the barrage of rockets in the northern part of the country.

U.S. vetoes resolution on Israel

The United States vetoed a U.N. Security Council resolution condemning Israeli actions in Gaza.

Though a harsher, initial version had been amended to call for the release of an abducted Israeli soldier and an end to Palestinian rocket fire on Israel, the resolution vetoed Thursday still demanded that Israel halt its military retaliation. It also accused Israel of "disproportionate use of force" in responding to rocket attacks and the kidnapping of the soldier.

In its statement, the United States said the resolution should condemn Syria and Iran for sponsoring terrorist groups such as Hamas and Hezbollah. The United States also called for the arrest of Khaled Meshaal, a Hamas leader in Damascus.



WORLD REPORT

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Jewish groups launch 'full-court press' to support Israel's retaliatory strikes

By CHANAN TIGAY

PHILADELPHIA (JTA) — The American Jewish community is mobilizing on several fronts to assert Israel's right to defend itself in the face of increasingly bold Arab attacks.

As Hezbollah rockets rained down on northern Israel and the Israel Defense Forces launched fresh attacks in Lebanon, American Jewish organizations were stressing the complicity of both Iran and Syria in the escalation.

They were also urging world leaders to condemn the offensives, praising President Bush for his quick statement of support for Israeli actions, and pointing out that the attacks — both from the Gaza Strip in the South and Lebanon in the North — were emanating from areas Israel has already evacuated.

Within hours of Wednesday's news that the Lebanese militia Hezbollah had killed eight Israeli troops along the northern border and kidnapped two more, a flurry of news releases from American Jewish organizations went out almost simultaneously in support of Israel.

Jewish leaders had consulted privately in recent weeks over how to respond to Israel's military actions in Gaza following the late June abduction of Cpl. Gilad Shalit and the killing of two other soldiers near the Gaza Strip border.

But with Hezbollah's brazen action across the Lebanese border, Jewish groups sprung into action.

"It's important to show solidarity, so that our elected officials see that across the board, American Jews are standing with Israel," said Malcolm Hoenlein, executive vice chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major



Yaakov Hammer

Demonstrators call for the release of kidnapped Israeli soldier, Cpl. Gilad Shalit, at a rally in Washington on July 10.

American Jewish Organizations. "Overall, I'm finding that there is a unanimity in support of Israel."

Immediately, groups began reaching out to international contacts to shore up support for a tough Israeli response. By Thursday morning, the second event this month calling for the release of kidnapped soldiers and asserting Israel's right to self-defense had been scheduled for the streets of midtown Manhattan, this one on July 17.

"We are in a full-court diplomatic press," said David Harris, executive director of the American Jewish Committee. "The entire agency has been mobilized, there have already been individual telephone conversations and face-to-face meetings with several presidents, a couple of foreign ministers and a number of ambassadors" stationed both in

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☛ *The community is mobilizing on several fronts to assert Israel's right to defend itself*

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the United States and abroad.

"The reaction to those conversations has ranged from very supportive and understanding to moderately so," Harris added.

He declined to specify with which nations his group had been in contact, although he said they were in Eastern and Western Europe, South America and sub-Saharan Africa. They were approached, he said, with an eye toward influencing members of key United Nations committees that "might be in a position to vote on matters of the Middle East."

The United States on Thursday vetoed a Qatari-sponsored resolution in the United Nations Security Council calling for an immediate Israeli withdrawal from Gaza as well as the release of Shalit.

Israel had sent a letter to Secretary-General Kofi Annan on Wednesday, and had been in touch with Security Council members, hoping to avoid having to rely on a U.S. veto.

Sources within the United Nations said that France, which currently holds the rotating presidency of the Security Council, had been considering a presidential statement on the conflict, but that the idea went nowhere due to opposition from the United States and Israel, which were concerned the statement would try to achieve balance, equating the actions of both sides to the conflict.

In light of Hezbollah's attack, the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, which is organizing the July 17 event, is highlighting Lebanese

non-compliance with U.N. resolution 1559, which calls for Hezbollah's dissolution. The group also has urged its members to write letters to the White House and to members of Congress, pressing both to fully implement the Syria Accountability Act, which mandates imposition of economic sanctions on Damascus should it not halt its sponsorship of terrorist organizations, among other actions.

The group has further suggested that its members lobby the G8 industrial countries, whose leaders are meeting in Russia starting July 15, along with foreign ministers from the European Union, who will convene following the G8 summit.

Both the Conference of Presidents and the AJCommittee have scheduled solidarity missions to Israel for next week.

The Anti-Defamation League has taken out four ads to run this weekend in the International Herald Tribune, targeted at European leaders attending the G8 conference.

Europe is "the soft underbelly of support for Israel to do what it needs to do," said the ADL's national director, Abraham Foxman. "The U.S. is there — Europe is not. Europe is wavering. Europe is talking out of all sides of its mouth. They say the soldiers should be released, but Israel is overreacting."

Foxman said he had just approved another ad to run in an American paper, thanking Bush for his support. On Thursday, Bush said Israel had the right to defend itself, blaming Hezbollah for the violence and calling for Syria to be held accountable for supporting the Lebanese militia.

Several other prominent Jewish groups issued statements in support of Israel, including Hadassah and the Jewish Council for Public Affairs.

Some of the Jewish groups' talking points were echoed on Thursday in a Washington program that included speakers from the U.S. House of Representatives and Israel's ambassador to the United States, Daniel Ayalon.

"The reason we see now this deteriora-

tion is because of a premeditated attack or strategy that, unfortunately, is being concocted in Damascus and in Tehran," Ayalon said at a Israel Project-sponsored forum at the National Press Club.

Iran, he said, is attempting to impose its influence on the Middle East and to divert attention from its "feverish" pursuit of nuclear weapons.

If the Islamic republic is successful, he said, "then no one, but no one on this globe is safe."

AIPAC, the pro-Israel lobby, said it is focusing its efforts on Washington's halls of power. "The U.S. government is galvanized in support of Israel and AIPAC is

working with both Congress and the administration to express and affirm their support for Israel's right to defend itself against these unprovoked acts of aggression," said spokeswoman Jennifer Cannata.

A host of Jewish and non-Jewish members of Congress have issued statements in support of Israel.

Among them are

Jerrold Nadler (D-N.Y.); Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-Fla.); Eliot Engel (D-N.Y.); Gene Green (D-Texas); Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-Fla.); Gary Ackerman (D-N.Y.); Brad Sherman (D-Calif.), and Robert Wexler (D-Fla.).

"I call on the U.N. Security Council to condemn this horrific attack, demand Lebanon's disarmament of Hezbollah, and send a clear message to the Lebanese government that it must fill the security vacuum on its border with Israel," Wexler said in a statement.

The Reform movement, for its part, defended Israel's right to defend itself, while calling on Israel in a statement "to do everything possible to assure that basic civilian needs, including electricity and water, in Gaza and elsewhere, are met."

"Jewishly and politically, that's an important point to note," Rabbi Eric Yoffie, president of the Union for Reform Judaism, told JTA. "Beyond that we, I assume, pretty much stand with the broader community and we want our people to rally to Israel's side."

'The U.S. is there — Europe is not. Europe is wavering. Europe is talking out of all sides of its mouth. They say the soldiers should be released, but Israel is overreacting.'

Abraham Foxman

National director, Anti-Defamation League

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Profiles of Israeli dead, abducted

By BRENDA GAZZAR and DAN BARON

JERUSALEM (JTA) — With its conflict in the North escalating dramatically, Israel began to grieve for eight soldiers killed in surprise attacks by Hezbollah along the Lebanese border.

Sgt. Nimrod Cohen, 19, of Kibbutz Mitzpe Shalem near the Dead Sea, was one of three young soldiers laid to rest Thursday. The emotional ceremony at Mount Herzl National Cemetery drew more than 1,000 people from around the country, including colleagues from Cohen's Nahal infantry unit, his Zionist youth movement and the tight-knit kibbutz, which has some 200 residents.

The eldest of two sons born to Mitzpe Shalem founders, Cohen volunteered to help underprivileged children in his free time. In high school, he participated in the March of the Living in Poland.

Cohen, who had served in the army for less than a year, was remembered Thursday as a thoughtful, patient young man of few but wise words.

Neighbor Omer Cokhavi said she considered Cohen almost a brother.

"A couple of days ago, we sat all together on the grass, recounting experiences and laughing... You would sit quietly, saying the right sentence when needed. It was the kind of quiet that you always had, a nice quiet that penetrates the heart," Cokhavi, 21, said in a tearful but steady voice during the military ceremony.

After the ceremony, Cokhavi and several friends from the kibbutz sat together and comforted each other.

"This is not real," Cokhavi said, her eyes hidden by dark sunglasses. "I'll wake up."

Roi Dror, also of Mitzpe Shalem, said Cohen "often would talk with his eyes" rather than with words. Cohen weighed his words carefully before speaking and had a full, expressive smile that said a lot, Dror said.

Cpl. Ido Avrahamov, who served with Cohen in Nahal Battalion No. 50, was with Cohen when he was severely injured in the Hezbollah attack Wednesday. He described his friend as a quiet, smart man who won over the hearts of all he met.

"There wasn't one person who didn't love him," said Avrahamov, 20.

Cohen is survived by his father, Arie, his mother, Este, and his brother Doron, 8.

Scores of uniformed soldiers, some with

weapons, stood still during the funeral, tears streaming down their faces. Some embraced tightly while listening to the eulogies.

For several minutes after the ceremony, a penetrating silence hung in the air.

The other soldiers killed were:

- Reserve Sgt. Eyal Benin, 22, from Rehovot.

An only son, Benin fought to win his parents' approval to serve in a combat unit. He was killed on the last day of a two-week reserve tour. He was planning to study law at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem this year.

- Reserve Sgt. Shani Turgeman, 24, from Beit Shean.

Turgeman recently had returned from a trek across South America and was planning to study design in Tel Aviv. He is survived by his parents, a brother and a sister.

- Reserve Maj. Wassim Nazal, 26, from Yanuch-Jatt.

Nazal came from a Druse family that saw distinguished service in the Israeli military. His father lost a leg to a land mine on a tour of duty, and an uncle was a career officer in the Border Police. Nazal is survived by a wife and child.

- Sgt. Yaniv Bar-On, 20, from Maccabim.

Born to a South African father and Canadian mother, Bar-On was remembered by friends as a devoted Zionist. When he first joined the military he wanted to be a fighter pilot, but settled for the role of tank crewman.

- Sgt. Alex Kushnirsky, 21, from Ness Ziona.

Kushnirsky moved to Israel from the former Soviet Union with his family in 1990. He recently got engaged, and sent his fiancé an SMS message — "I love you" — minutes before he was killed. He is survived by his parents and younger sister.

- Sgt. Shlomi Yirmiyahu, 20, from Rishon le-Zion.

Yirmiyahu enjoyed his military service, refusing to seek a medical waiver despite persistent back problems. He is survived by his parents and two younger brothers.

- Sgt. Gadi Musayeb, 20, from Acre.



Brian Hendler

Friends of Nimrod Cohen, 19, grieve during his funeral in Jerusalem.

A champion basketball player in high school, Musayeb saw his service in the armored corps as part of a family tradition. His elder sister recently finished a tour of active duty in Gaza. His father works in the

arms industry and his mother is a caregiver for the elderly.

- There was no word on the fates of Eldad Regev, 26, of Kiryat Motzkin, or Ehud Goldwasser, 31, of Nahariya, who were injured and abducted by Hezbollah during the attack. On Thurs-

day, Israeli officials said they feared that the two could be taken to Iran.

Both Regev and Goldwasser were on reserve duty. Goldwasser is a student at the Haifa Technion. His parents and brother were abroad when news came of his abduction.

In Kiryat Motzkin, dozens of friends and relatives have flocked to the Regev family home to hold prayers for his safe return. He lost his mother to cancer several years ago and lives with one of his siblings.

Kushnirsky sent his fiancé an SMS message — 'I love you' — minutes before he was killed.

Reforming Europe

By DINAH SPRITZER

HANOVER, Germany (JTA) — Sarah Rubenstein, an American fashion designer living in Florence, recalls with bemusement an incident she feels conveys the perception of Reform Judaism in Italy.

A rabbi from her adopted synagogue, Shir Hadash, one of only three Reform congregations in Italy, was attending a Chanukah party incognito at the Great Synagogue of Florence last year. The 19th-century landmark, like all synagogues in the country, must be Orthodox in order to be recognized by a state-sanctioned body as a legitimate religious organization.

"The people at the party told our rabbi we were holding Catholic mass on Sunday," recounts Rubenstein, an effervescent 32-year-old from Oklahoma who laughs without apparent bitterness at the obvious misrepresentation.

"This is the message they were getting from their leaders. And secular Jews in Italy, they think we're doing who knows what, something really strange; they have no idea what progressive Judaism is in the first place."

That mindset appears to be the norm throughout much of Europe, which ironically is the birthplace of the Reform movement. Unlike in America, where Reform Judaism now predominates, the progressive religious streams in much of Europe have long been virtual non-entities.

Their proponents contend they have been institutionally marginalized to the point of disenfranchisement. Their critics argue that they are a U.S.-style import without mass appeal that goes too far in welcoming non-Jews into the fold.

"We are the largest international group of Jews, but we seldom get a seat at the table in Europe," Steve Bauman, chairman of the World Union for Progressive Judaism, lamented during a recent speech here before a gathering of Reform Jews from across Europe. "We remain the best-kept secret in the world."

As it turns out, however, that cloak of obscurity may be lifting if recent developments in Europe are a harbinger of things to come.

In early June, for example, one of two progressive congregations in the Czech Republic, 120-member Bejt Simcha, was tentatively recognized as a legitimate orga-



Dinah A. Spritzer

Sarah Rubenstein makes announcements during Rosh Hashanah services in a space her Florence, Italy, progressive congregation rented.

nization by that country's Jewish umbrella group, the Czech Federation of Jewish Communities.

That watershed decision, to be finalized in September, followed an even more significant development — the wholesale legitimization of Reform Judaism in Germany, where the movement originated in the 19th century.

The Czech ruling effectively ends a decade of contention during which Prague-based Bejt Simcha, because of its non-Orthodox orientation, was denied the political and financial advantages that are critical to the long-term survival of some European congregations.

In contrast to the United States, where self-funded congregations are the building blocks of Jewish life, European Judaism has for centuries been controlled by government-recognized bodies known as "communities" that determine what form of Jewish practice is considered legitimate. These communities, which attempt to speak on behalf of all Jews in a given country, are often allotted money by the state that helps pay for everything from synagogue construction to care for the elderly.

Bejt Simcha will now have access to that funding and the political clout that comes with it. The ruling clearing the way for official recognition of the small congregation is an acknowledgment that some of the Czech Republic's disaffected Jews might now find non-Orthodoxy a preferable route for embracing their faith, according

to Tomas Kraus, the federation's executive director. "After the end of communism, we needed to get back to basics, and followed the Orthodox model, but we have matured enough to offer something more," he says.

The battle over the status of progressive congregations like Bejt Simcha, according to Kraus, could in fact determine the future of Judaism in Europe.

"The Czech situation is a laboratory," he says. "What we are here dealing with on a very small scale, every community is dealing with on a larger scale. By making the conditions not so strict, more Czech Jews will identify as Jews."

• UP FROM THE BASEMENT

Bejt Simcha, which survives in part on grants from various organizations, has been led since 1980 by Sylvie Wittmann, 49, who helps fund the congregation through proceeds from her well-known firm, which books tours of Jewish sites in the Czech Republic and elsewhere in Central Europe.

As a practical matter, official recognition of the congregation means Bejt Simcha can afford a part-time rabbi and move from the basement of an apartment building to one of Prague's majestic synagogues that were built as far back as the Middle Ages.

Moreover, the Bejt Simcha decision, Wittmann says, will help decentralize and democratize rabbinical oversight in the country.

"This position of an Orthodox chief rabbi who decides everything for everyone is something right out of the shtetl that Eastern Europeans brought to Central

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Europe after World War II," she says. "If the federation wants a chief rabbi to eat dinners at the Parliament and speak to politicians on television, fine, but when it comes to recognizing our conversions, he should keep his opinions to himself."

It remains to be seen whether a Czech or German-style endorsement of pluralism will be replicated in other European countries such as Italy, Austria or Hungary, where Reform is still not recognized as a religious movement.

Riccardo Di Segni certainly hopes not. The chief rabbi of Rome and one of Europe's most respected religious leaders, Di Segni says the Czech scenario is exactly what Italy does not need, because, he says, Reform Judaism condones intermarriage and other practices that do "damage to the life of our community."

In contrast to America, progressive Judaism in continental Europe, like Orthodoxy, abides by the halachic rule recognizing matrilineal descent as a proof of Jewish identity. But its more inclusive stance regarding non-Jewish spouses, the ordination of female rabbis and the stringency of conversion practices places it beyond the norm even among the largely secular 1.6 million European Jews who reside outside the former Soviet Union.

As exemplified in Italy, the prevailing European approach to Judaism, Di Segni says, is governed by a longstanding informal compromise that says regardless of an individual Jew's level of religiosity, "the formal institution has to be Orthodox."

• A THROWBACK

Europe today has an estimated 50,000 to 60,000 progressive Jews associated with some 130 congregations scattered through 15 countries located outside the former Soviet Union. The progressives account for roughly 3.6 percent of the total European Jewish population. In comparison, approximately 38 percent of America's estimated 5.2 million to 6 million Jews identify as Reform, the country's chief liberal denomination.

The vast majority of Europe's progressive Jews live in the United Kingdom. The Netherlands, France and Germany also have well-established congregations. Like the British model, they originated in response to congregants' requests for shorter services, the inclusion of an organ or choir and the recitation of prayers — in part, at least — in the country's native language.

Progressive Judaism was growing in popularity in Europe in the early 20th century, but the Holocaust and its aftermath

promptly short-circuited that trend. The Continent's Holocaust survivors, seeing unity as the key to communal survival, chose Orthodoxy as the guiding principle in their re-emerging communities — if it wasn't already.

Today that means that although European Jews like Rubenstein can earmark a percentage of their income tax to support the Jewish community, none of that money will find its way to the progressive congregations to which they belong.

The two progressive congregations in Hungary face similar barriers to acceptance.

One of them, Szim Salom in Budapest, has a full-time Hungarian-born rabbi and about 200 members in a country of an estimated 100,000 to 130,000 Jews, most of them unaffiliated.

Szim Salom's congregants meet in a rented apartment bloc where neighbors' complaints about their activities are sometimes tinged with anti-Semitism. The congregation does not have access to the estimated \$15 million the government gives each year to the Association of Jewish Communities in Hungary, the country's main religious umbrella group, which last year rejected the congregation's membership application.

"They are excluded, it's true," acknowledges Peter Feldmajer, president of the Hungarian association. "That is the decision of the rabbinate." The rabbinate's decision, according to Feldmajer, was based on the supposition that "a Reform Jew is not a Jew."

This exclusion prevents Szim Salom from funding programs that might attract some of the area's many disenfranchised Jews, according to Rabbi Joel Oseran, a vice president of the World Union.

Outreach is critical in Hungary and other former Eastern bloc countries, where the Jewish population has been decimated due to the Holocaust, Communist repression of religion and intermarriage rates that now reach 90 percent.

• THE FRENCH PARADOX

France, with the largest number of Jews

on the continent, roughly 600,000 to 700,000, has a lively progressive presence in Paris, although outside the capital, attracting members to progressive congregations has been a challenge. Stephane Beder, president of the Federation of French Liberal Jews, acknowledges that the progressive approach is alien to most French Jews, many of whom are Sephardim with traditional backgrounds.

"If you go to city authorities and ask for land for a synagogue, it's not uncommon for the city to say, 'We were told by the Consistoire that you are not real Jews,'" says Beder, referring to the nearly 200-year-old organization that governs all aspects of religious life in France.

But complaints about exclusion ring false to Manek Weintraub, a Polish-born member of the Representative Council of French Jewish Institutions, or CRIF, the largest social and political Jewish organization in France.

Progressive groups, Weintraub says, now hold prominent positions in his group and

otherwise "play a leading role in French Jewry." He notes, for example, that a progressive-initiated Holocaust Memorial Day ritual involving the public reading of the names of French concentration camp deportees has become widely accepted, despite initial opposition from "the Jewish establishment."

Discussing his own views on religion, the secular Weintraub typifies many Europeans. "I hadn't been to synagogue for about a decade, and I went to a liberal service in Paris," he says. "Hearing all that French, I felt like I was in a church."

• THE STATUS SWEEPSTAKES

As progressive congregations in Europe seek equitable treatment in the form of enhanced political clout and public funding, the World Union is considering adopting aggressive legal and public-awareness tactics, an approach that has proven fruitful in Germany.

A longstanding impasse was resolved recently when the Central Council of Jews in Germany recognized that country's progressive congregations. ■

"If you go to city authorities and ask for land for a synagogue, it's not uncommon for the city to say, 'We were told by the Consistoire that you are not real Jews.'"

Stephane Beder

President, Federation of French Liberal Jews

Controversy rages ahead of gay pride march

By BRENDA GAZZAR

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Rare is the event that can rally devout Jews, Muslims and Christians in Israel toward a common goal. Jerusalem WorldPride 2006 is such an event — but not in the way its organizers intended.

While Jews and Arabs in the Knesset disagree passionately over the fate of a kidnapped Israeli soldier and Israel's incursion into Gaza, many of the same Parliament members are firmly united in opposition to next month's gay pride parade in Jerusalem.

The parade is part of a week-long WorldPride event slated to begin Aug. 6, and which is expected to draw well more than 10,000 lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered people and their supporters from around the world.

WorldPride organizers say they'll proclaim in Jerusalem that love has no borders. Opponents, however, say that love needs borders and that the holy city must not be defiled.

"It is forbidden for us to give legitimacy to this parade," said Knesset Member Nissim Zeev of the Sephardi Orthodox Shas Party, who compares holding the parade in Jerusalem to bringing a pig inside the holy Temple.

"It's cultural terror that wants to take control of society and our youth and wants to change the accepted way of life and the way that" God intended, he said.

Police officials in Jerusalem are considering canceling the Aug. 10 march based on security concerns. A final decision is expected to be made by Jerusalem District Police Chief Ilan Franco and Israeli Police Commissioner Moshe Karadi in the coming weeks, a police spokeswoman said.

The international controversy has sparked grass-roots efforts around the world in favor of and against the event, and has reached the highest echelons of Israeli politics.

An anonymous flyer offering a reward of some \$4,500 for murdering a homosexual was distributed in some Jerusalem mailboxes and is under criminal investigation, Ha'aretz reported Tuesday.

Despite the potential for violence, WorldPride organizers say they have no intention of relocating or canceling the march.

"Jerusalem is a global symbol and it has an immense depth of meaning for

many people from around the globe, and for many" lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgendered "people from around the world," said Noa Sattath, chairwoman of Jerusalem Open House, which is organizing Jerusalem WorldPride 2006. "Holding the event in Jerusalem in my eyes will not decrease its holiness but increase it, in promoting the values of tolerance and pluralism in Jerusalem that are so valued here."

There's no legal basis for canceling the parade, and legal action would likely be taken if it were canceled, Sattath said.

In a failed effort Monday to pass a no-confidence vote and bring down the government over the issue, Knesset Member Yitzhak Levi of the National Union-National Religious Party urged the government to intervene to prevent the march from taking place in Jerusalem.

Levi collected signatures from 50 legislators who oppose the event, and said he believes a majority of the 120-member Knesset is opposed.

"They don't want it to happen in Jerusalem, for religious reasons, for emotional reasons or because Jerusalem has a certain kind of character," Levi said Monday on the Knesset floor.

"It's very rare that here there are Knesset members from all the parties — religious, secular and Jewish and Arab," who agree on an issue, he added.

Religious people of all faiths are united against holding the parade in Jerusalem, said Ibrahim Sarsur, who heads the United Arab List-Ta'al and is president of the Islamic Movement in Israel.

"Such marches may endanger the morals of the generations of all religions," Sarsur said. "We want our generations to be protected from such a disease, which may deteriorate their way of behavior, their families."

But others argue that precisely because of the opposition, the event must be held in Jerusalem — the capital of all Israeli citizens, not just the religious ones.

"Democracy is about the rights of minorities, and we have to protect the rights of minorities," said lawmaker Shelly Yaci-

movich of the Labor Party. "It's very important that the march happens in Jerusalem because Jerusalem is for everybody, for religious people, for secular people, and for gays and lesbians. It's not about their private lives, but about their right to be seen. It's a political struggle."

Education Minister Yuli Tamir agreed, saying it's up to police to protect the marchers from any threats.

"Otherwise any person that doesn't want something to happen will threaten violence, and that will be dangerous," she said.

According to a survey commissioned by Levi and conducted in June, 69 percent of Jerusalem residents are against hosting the parade, while 12 percent support it.

First celebrated in Rome in 2000, the WorldPride event initially was scheduled for last summer in Jerusalem but was postponed because of the Gaza withdrawal last August.

Jerusalem did host a local gay pride march last June that organizers said attracted about 10,000 people from around the country. Three participants were stabbed by a fervently Orthodox man.

Prominent Jerusalem-based Christian ministries also have weighed in on the debate. Bridges For Peace, Christian Friends of Israel and the International Christian Embassy, Jerusalem issued a joint statement last month claiming that "Jerusalem has been deliberately targeted not because it has any particular significance to the gay and lesbian community, but because of the supreme importance the city holds for those of biblical faith."

Jerusalem City Councilwoman Mina Fenton, along with a group of Orthodox women who call themselves Mothers for the Preservation of Family Values, has helped collect signatures of people opposed to the march in recent weeks.

"We are not approaching this only as a religious issue but as a general societal issue," said Sharon Siegel, a Jerusalem resident and mother of five who is working with Fenton to try to stop the march. "Does Jerusalem want to advocate homosexuality, give it legitimacy, see it as truly an alternate lifestyle that is just as good as anything else? Is this the way to propagate the Jewish people?"

FOCUS
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ISSUES

A flyer offering \$4,500 for murdering a homosexual was distributed in Jerusalem.

ARTS & CULTURE

A funny Holocaust novel

By CHANAN TIGAY

NEW YORK (JTA) — On the second page of Lily Brett's compelling new novel, "You Gotta Have Balls" (easy, the reference is to a meatball recipe), a friend tells the story's protagonist, Ruth Rothwax, that she's got to stop obsessing about the Holocaust.

Never mind that Ruth, like Brett, is the child of Holocaust survivors.

"Grow up," Sonia almost shouted. "So, your mother and father were in Auschwitz. My mother was in Theresienstadt and I can eat fried brains, stewed kidneys, diced liver and assorted legs, heads, necks and feet. You can't be fixated about the Holocaust."

"I'm not fixated," Ruth said quietly.

It's an unusual scene for fiction, particularly Jewish fiction, to call into question someone's concern about the Holocaust, especially when the writer and the character being chastised are survivors' children. And it may seem especially notable coming from the pen of an author like Brett, whose parents were imprisoned in the Lodz Ghetto and, later, at Auschwitz; who was born in Germany in 1946 and left Europe as a displaced child; and who has devoted much of her writing to examining the Holocaust's dark shadow.

Even so, Brett told JTA in an interview in advance of the book's June 27 release, it's a sentiment that exists in the real world.

"I think it's actually quite a common thing," she says. "It's certainly not what I believe, but I think it's a sentiment that's voiced."

And as such, it merits mention, lest recollections of the Holocaust descend into cliché. Another area where this becomes a danger, Brett says, is the sometimes-reductive depiction of Holocaust survivors.

"We've fallen into a world of clichés," she says. "It's all too easy for people to think of survivors as the poor, skinny, skeletal things."

Similarly, Brett says, the depiction of Nazis as monsters is dangerous caricature.

And so the body of her work represents, in part, an effort to combat these clichés, to fill out these narrow portraits — and to come to grips with what members of her family experienced during the Holocaust. ■

Jewish voices of Katrina

By TALIA S. COUTIN

NEW YORK (JTA) — Only in New Orleans would people talk in the same breath about Mardi Gras festivities and rebuilding from the ruins of Hurricane Katrina.

At least, that's how it seemed to Carol Wise.

A board member of the Jewish Women's Archive, Wise returned to her native New Orleans in mid-November after riding out the epic storm in Houston.

"From a storm and flood of biblical proportions we, like Noah, have the ability to land on dry land and re-establish our community two-by-two and, like Noah, our rainbow may be the love and affection of the community, one for the other," she wrote in a November e-mail.

That excerpt will join many others in Katrina's Jewish Voices, an interactive digital archive that the Jewish Women's Archive hopes will galvanize the public when it's released later this month.

For the first part of the project, the archive teamed up with George Mason University's Center for History and New Media. That portion of the project involves sifting through media ranging from news clippings to personal e-mails.

To preserve this history, the Web site is dependent upon people saving these contemporary artifacts and submitting them to the archive, said Jayne Guberman, director of oral history at the Jewish Women's Archive and of the new Katrina project. ■

In the second part of the project, beginning next week, the Jewish Women's Archive and the Goldring/Woldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life will take 100 oral testimonies of Jews from communities affected by Katrina.

"Katrina's Jewish Voices will record the small and heroic acts of kindness performed not only by Jews for other Jews, but also by Jews for their fellow Americans who were displaced and in need," Rosalind Hinton, a professor of religious studies at DePaul University and the project's oral historian, wrote in an e-mail.

Noting that the Jewish experience of

the tragedy scarcely figured in mass media coverage, and wanting to do more than contribute financially, the archive hatched the project in the weeks after the disaster, Guberman said, and after absorbing Wise's experience.

Katrina's Jewish Voices is the first project of its kind to focus on the Jewish experience in an effort to weave it into the larger picture, the archive said in a press release.

"It's more than just, 'Jews were there too,'" explained Stuart Rockoff, head of the Goldring/Woldenberg Institute's history department.

One hallmark of the Southern Jewish experience was that Jews lived comfortably in small towns and often spearheaded philanthropic causes there, Rockoff said. But Hurricane Katrina reversed that equation last August.

"Middle-class Jews found themselves on the receiving end of charity," he noted.

Wise returned to New Orleans in mid-November after a crammed stay at a FEMA-subsidized hotel with her daughter and two granddaughters.

When she returned to New Orleans, Wise said, she found her home almost "embarrassing" because it had suffered only minor damage

compared to structures that had been eviscerated. ■

None of the Katrina-related Web sites includes the Jewish narrative, according to Guberman. That narrative includes not only the \$30 million donated by Jewish groups to both Jews and non-Jews for relief purposes, but also the trauma of displacement and dispossession of the Jewish community, whose roots in New Orleans date from the mid-18th century.

One reason the Jewish narrative may be absent from the overall Katrina story is survivor's guilt, Guberman said.

"We know the almost total devastation that other populations suffered," Guberman said, but "it doesn't diminish the Jewish community's suffering: If you lost your home, you lost your home."

She continued, "We want to have an inclusive story as possible — the poorest, the wealthiest, everyone in between." ■

BEHIND THE HEADLINES

'Middle-class Jews found themselves on the receiving end of charity.'

Stuart Rockoff

Goldring/Woldenberg Institute

NEWS IN BRIEF

MIDDLE EAST

Second Israeli dies after attack

A second Israeli died of wounds suffered in a Hezbollah rocket attack. The man died Thursday of his wounds in a hospital in the northern city of Safed, Israel Radio and Ynet reported. His name was not released.

At least one woman reportedly was in critical condition after the attack on Safed, a city that — like Haifa, which also was hit Thursday — has never before been subject to rocket attacks from Lebanon.

Israel worried Iran may get hostages

Israel is concerned that two soldiers abducted by Hezbollah along the Lebanese border could be taken to Iran.

Many analysts believe Iran is behind the recent escalation in violence between Hezbollah and Israel, which began after Hezbollah kidnapped two soldiers and killed eight others Wednesday.

Israel hits P.A. ministry

Israel's air force bombed the Palestinian Authority Foreign Ministry in Gaza. Three people were wounded in Thursday's strike on the ministry building in Gaza City, which appeared to be part of an Israeli offensive aimed at pressuring the Hamas-led Palestinian Authority to return an abducted soldier and stop cross-border rocket fire.

Foreign Minister Mahmoud Zahar, a Hamas leader, was not hurt. Israel said Zahar was not a target.

Immigrant dies in rocket attack

A woman killed in a Hezbollah rocket attack on northern Israel was an immigrant from Argentina. Monica Saidman, 47, was killed Thursday when a rocket hit her apartment in Nahariya.

A spokesman for the Jewish Agency for Israel in Argentina told JTA that Saidman immigrated to Israel three years ago with her husband, Dario, and their youngest daughter, a teenager, after Argentina's 2001 economic crisis. Their two oldest daughters, in their early 20s, live in Buenos Aires. The family is deciding whether to bury Saidman in Argentina or Israel.

Amnesty blasts Israel over Lebanon

Amnesty International criticized Israel's military retaliation against Lebanon and called on Hezbollah to treat captured Israeli soldiers humanely.

"Israel must put an end to attacks against civilians and against civilian infrastructure in Lebanon, which constitute collective punishment," the group's Malcolm Smart was quoted as saying.

The group said Hezbollah should allow Red Cross officials to meet with the hostages, as per the Geneva Conventions.

Iraqi: Jews behind violence

The speaker of Iraq's Parliament blamed Jews for the violence in his country. Mahmoud al-Mashhadani, a member of the Sunni Muslim Iraqi Accordance Front, said Jews were driven by a desire to see their "agents" assume leadership positions, according to a report in the Associated Press, and to discredit Islamists. He added that "no one deserves to rule Iraq other than Islamists."

NORTH AMERICA

U.S. endorses Israeli self-defense

Washington voiced cautious empathy for Israel's retaliation against Lebanon.

"We are urging restraint on both sides, recognizing Israel's right to defend itself," a Bush administration official told Reuters on Thurs-

day, when asked about escalating violence that followed Hezbollah's killing and abduction of Israeli soldiers in a border raid. The European Union criticized Israel's "disproportionate" use of force.

\$10 million raised for camps

A matching-grant program for Jewish summer camps raised \$10 million. The Meet your Match program was created by philanthropist Harold Grinspoon and his Grinspoon Institute for Jewish Philanthropy. The money is being used to help Jewish camps across North America.

Claims Conference re-elects leader

Rabbi Israel Singer was re-elected president of the main Holocaust restitution organization. Singer, a longtime World Jewish Congress official, has long been involved in Holocaust restitution issues.

The Claims Conference was founded in New York in 1951 by 23 Jewish organizations and representatives of the State of Israel. Since that time, it has helped obtain and distribute billions of dollars in Holocaust restitution funds.

WORLD

U.N. envoys visit Middle East

Kofi Annan is sending a three-member team to try to defuse the crisis in the Middle East. The U.N. secretary-general's team includes Terje Roed-Larsen, a longtime envoy to the Middle East.

The team is scheduled to visit Egypt, Israel, the West Bank and Gaza Strip, Lebanon and Syria.

Bombing anniversary to be marked in Argentina

Argentina's president decreed a national day of mourning for the anniversary of the bombing of a Jewish center in Buenos Aires.

Flags at federal buildings will fly at half-mast on Tuesday, the 12th anniversary of the bombing of the AMIA center, which killed 85 people. This is the first time since the attack that the anniversary will be marked with a national day of mourning.

Nestor Kirchner is the first Argentine president to openly push the investigations of the still-unsolved case.

Dreyfus' rehabilitation celebrated

France marked the 100th anniversary of the rehabilitation of Capt. Alfred Dreyfus. Wednesday's ceremony was led by President Jacques Chirac at the Ecole Militaire, the site where Dreyfus was stripped of his military honors in 1895.

A high-ranking Jewish officer in the French military, Dreyfus was falsely accused of selling French military secrets to Germany. Dreyfus' trial convinced journalist Theodor Herzl that Jews would never achieve equality in Europe and motivated him to launch the Zionist movement.

Le Pen headed back to court

A French judge ruled that far-right leader Jean-Marie Le Pen must appear in court again. Tuesday's ruling called on the leader of the National Front to appear in court to testify in the ongoing lawsuit against him for allegedly excusing war crimes and questioning crimes against humanity.

The second charge was brought by the Association of Sons and Daughters of Jewish Deportees of France for comments Le Pen made in an interview with Rivarol magazine in January 2005. Le Pen stated, "In France, at least, the German occupation wasn't particularly inhumane, even if there were some blunders, inevitable" in a large country. A date for Le Pen's court appearance has yet to be announced.