

IN THE NEWS
Hezbollah rocket kills two Israeli children

A Hezbollah rocket killed two people in the northern Israeli city of Nazareth.

Medics said the victims of Wednesday's attack were children from Nazareth's large Israeli Arab community.

The deaths brought to 15 the number of Israeli civilians killed by Hezbollah since the conflict began July 12.

Hezbollah kills two Israeli soldiers

Hezbollah gunmen killed two Israeli commandos in southern Lebanon.

Israel sent special forces to a Lebanese village just over the border from Avivim on Wednesday to flush out a Hezbollah squad that was hiding in the hilly countryside.

Two soldiers, Staff Sgt. Yotam Gilboa, 21, and Staff Sgt. Yonatan Hadasi, were killed in the ensuing clash.

At least seven others were wounded.

There also were unconfirmed reports of some Hezbollah casualties.

Avivim saw a recent infiltration attempt by Hezbollah gunmen at the height of Israel's shelling of southern Lebanon.

Israeli troops kill 12 Palestinians

Israeli forces killed 12 Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Troops surrounded a Palestinian Authority building in Nablus, killing three Al-Aksa Brigade gunmen in a firefight.

Pressing their campaign to free a soldier abducted in the Gaza Strip on June 25, Israeli forces entered the town of Maghazi and came under attack by local gunmen.

Six Palestinians, four of them armed, were killed.

Israel's campaign in Gaza is also aimed at halting Kassam rocket attacks into Israel.

WORLD REPORT

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AIPAC was pressured to cut off embattled analysts, motion charges

By RON KAMPEAS

WASHINGTON (JTA) — A motion to dismiss a classified information case against two former pro-Israel lobbyists alleges that federal prosecutors pressured the American Israel Public Affairs Committee into firing its employees and cutting off their legal fees and health benefits.

The motion filed Tuesday says the prosecutors made the firing of Steve Rosen, AIPAC's former foreign policy director, and Keith Weissman, its former Iran analyst, a condition of dropping an investigation into AIPAC itself.

The motion marks the first time it has been revealed in an unsealed court document that the organization was ever the subject of an investigation.

Prosecutors did not return requests for comment. A spokesman for AIPAC said the motion was "selective" and a "significant distortion" of the facts, and insisted that AIPAC's decisions were its own.

He also said the organization never understood itself to be under any formal investigation. Ever since the August 2005 indictments of Rosen and Weissman, prosecutors repeatedly have made clear that neither AIPAC nor any of its current officers are suspected of any wrongdoing.

The case first came to light in August 2004 when FBI agents raided AIPAC offices. A year later, the eastern Virginia office of the U.S. attorney indicted Rosen and Weissman under a never-used 1917 espionage statute that criminalizes the receipt of classified information.

The indictment alleges that the two men solicited and received information on Iran and terrorists from three government officials and relayed it to journalists and Israeli diplomats.

The only other person charged in the case, Lawrence Franklin, a former midlevel Iran analyst at the Pentagon, pleaded guilty earlier this year.

The new motion comes in the wake of a motion filed in January to dismiss the case. The earlier motion argued that the charges violate the defendants' First Amendment rights to free speech and to petition the government.

Judge T.S. Ellis, the federal judge considering the case in the U.S. District Court in Alexandria, Va., has yet to rule on the earlier motion.

Meanwhile, the trial has been delayed until at least October.

Lawyers decided to file the latest motion to dismiss in the wake of a decision last month in the case against 16 former KPMG LLP partners accused of setting up bogus tax shelters, according to the brief.

In that landmark case, Judge Lewis Kaplan, a federal judge in Manhattan, ruled that forcing a company to abrogate its agreement to pay legal fees for employees violated defendants' constitutional right to a defense. He ordered KPMG to pay the legal fees.

Rosen and Weissman long have asserted similar protections, citing the organization's bylaws, which indemnify employees against legal costs incurred in the course of their employment.

AIPAC fired Weissman and Rosen in March 2005 and cut off their legal fees in ensuing weeks.

The organization said the two were fired "for conduct that was not part of their job and beneath the standards required by AIPAC employees." It would not elaborate except to

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■ *A motion says AIPAC was pressured to fire two of its lobbyists*

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say that the conduct was uncovered in the course of the investigation.

Patrick Dorton, AIPAC's spokesman, repeated that contention Tuesday.

Sworn affidavits by Abbe Lowell and Laura Lester, lawyers for Rosen, and John Nassikas, Weissman's lawyer, allege that prosecutors aggressively adhered to a memo by Larry Thompson, the former U.S. deputy attorney general, outlining factors that could lead to the prosecution of an organization.

"A corporation's promise of support to culpable employees and agents, either through the advancing of attorneys fees" or "through retaining the employees without sanction for their misconduct," would count against the corporation, according to the Thompson memo.

Lowell wrote in the motion filed Tuesday that on March 21, 2005, the day Rosen and Weissman were fired, an assistant U.S. attorney told him that prosecutors had met three days earlier with lawyers for AIPAC and its executive director, Howard Kohr, and had said they wanted AIPAC to dismiss Rosen and Weissman.

Subsequently, Lowell wrote, an AIPAC lawyer outlined the subtle pressure prosecutors brought to bear at the meeting. Prosecutors "were prepared to conclude that AIPAC did not commit any wrongdoing, but that a company that had not done anything wrong would not continue to pay the fees of its wrongdoing employees."

Nassikas recalled similar conversations with AIPAC lawyers describing meetings

with prosecutors. In one instance, Nassikas wrote, he learned that prosecutors wanted to stop AIPAC from paying health benefits and severance pay. Nassikas said he confirmed the reports with prosecutors when he called them to complain.

AIPAC cut health care, but balked at cutting severance pay.

Rosen had two heart operations in 2002. His government-mandated COBRA package is about to end and he is not eligible for Medicare.

Dorton, the AIPAC spokesman, said the accounts distorted the record.

"This brief is selective about how it uses the facts, and the net result is a significant distortion of what really took place," he said. "All the decisions in this case, including decisions about the dismissal and legal fees, were AIPAC decisions alone, made independently and based on the facts and our commitment to doing the right thing in a very difficult situation."

The motion lists AIPAC as a "subject" of investigation. A "subject" is one level below being a "target" of an investigation. "Targets" are likely to be charged; "witnesses" have been cleared; and "subjects" remain under investigation until told otherwise, which AIPAC apparently was told in March 2005.

The brief claims that more than \$4 mil-

lion is owed to lawyers, and that AIPAC had offered only a "deeply discounted" lump sum, which JTA previously had determined was less than \$1 million.

Dorton said AIPAC repeatedly has offered to renegotiate the fees to amounts acceptable to the defense attorneys. Those negotiations have

faltered, he said, because "the two former employees wished to preserve their ability to sue AIPAC."

The defense would not comment. However, in the affidavits filed Tuesday, Lowell and Nassikas say they repeatedly have requested remittance from AIPAC, and that AIPAC never has offered to pay what it owes in full.

Ellis, the judge, granted a separate motion filed this week by Weissman.

The former Iran analyst, a baseball fan seen recently at Baltimore Orioles and Washington Nationals games, sought permission to travel to the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, N.Y., with his young son, to attend an induction at the end of this month. Under the terms of his indictment, he needs court permission to leave the greater Washington area.

Notably, one of the meetings between Weissman and Franklin, the Pentagon analyst, recorded unbeknownst to them by the FBI, was a family outing to Camden Yards in Baltimore for an Orioles game.

The motion marks the first time it has been revealed that AIPAC was the subject of an investigation.

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Jews groups work to legalize migrants

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Jewish groups joined a broad, faith-based coalition lobbying Congress to allow undocumented immigrants legalization opportunities.

Jewish speakers said Jewish history and tradition compel compassion in dealing with illegal immigrants.

"Over and over again the Torah emphasizes that we must treat the stranger decently, with love and with fairness," Steve Gutow, the executive director of the Jewish Council for Public Affairs, told the group of about 150 clerics and faith leaders prior to their lobbying sessions Wednesday.

The coalition, representing dozens of Christian, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh orga-

nizations, lobbied an array of lawmakers from both parties.

JCPA, the umbrella organization for community relations councils; the American Jewish Committee; the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism; the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society and a number of other groups oppose existing U.S. House of Representatives legislation because it focuses almost exclusively on punitive measures.

Sen. Sam Brownback (R-Kan.) said advocacy for undocumented immigrants could use faith-based support to counter the strides made by groups seeking tough measures against illegal immigrants.

Poles say anti-Semitism label unfair

By DINAH SPRITZER

KRAKOW (JTA) — They are despised by many. They face discrimination and stereotyping, and feel overwhelmed by the prejudice against them. They want to be seen as individuals, not as a group, and they want the media to stop slandering them.

No, not Jews, not Israelis. Think Poles, some of whom feel under siege for group allegations of anti-Semitism.

Joanna Owsiana, is a Jewish studies major at Jagiellonian University in Krakow who in May participated in the March of Remembrance and Hope, which brings young people together of all faiths in Poland to promote tolerance. Her counterparts from the United States and Europe were open-minded, but she said a Polish-born Holocaust survivor living in Israel declared “she hated Poles and labeled them all as anti-Semites.

“I told her I was not responsible for what Poland did 60 years ago. My grandfather’s family hid Jews from the Nazis, but she didn’t want to hear about that,” Owsiana said.

Much has been made since the fall of communism of the persistence of Polish anti-Semitism, and many Poles feel that try as they might, they cannot throw off this label. They argue that the real Poland is represented by young women like Owsiana, and not by marginal hate groups that one could find anywhere.

Working against them is evidence that anti-Semitism is a persistent problem in Poland.

The Polish anti-racism organization Never Again estimated that Poland has hundreds of anti-Semitic Web sites and is home to an increasing number of neo-Nazi groups.

According to a 2005 Anti-Defamation League survey of 12 European countries, Poland ranked between first and third place among nations with negative stereotypes about Jews.

Less known are current intensive efforts by the Polish government to combat anti-Semitism with police training, school programs and public statements in support of Polish Jewry.

Little media attention is paid to the hundreds of grass-roots efforts by Polish Catholics to promote Jewish-Polish dialogue and the perseveration of Jewish heritage.

There are also reportedly more students studying Jewish history and the Holocaust at a university level than anywhere else in Europe.

Instead the press has focused on Education Minister Roman Giertych, the honorary chairman of the xenophobic All Polish Youth, known for its hatred of Jews and other so-called foreign elements.

Making sense of the two extremes in Poland is difficult for Jews and non-Jews alike, as was evident at the recent weeklong Jewish cultural festival in Krakow, a homage by Poles to their former Jewish neighbors whose culture was nearly extinguished by the Nazis and the Communists.

Jan, a 30-something Israeli visitor, said, “I feel confused. It’s like they shot us in head and now they want to dance to our music.”

He was referring to Poles who collaborated with the Nazis, the 1946 pogrom in the city of Kielce and a government-sponsored anti-Semitic wave in 1968.

There were about 14,000 people, mostly Poles, at the festival’s final jam session, where some of the world’s best klezmer bands performed.

Many Poles attend because it’s a free music event. But out of the dozen partyers interviewed by JTA, all said they were there because they wanted to learn more about Jews.

But what about those Poles outside of the touristy Kazmierz district where the festival is held?

In the working-class neighborhood of Podgorze, a group of teenagers who looked liked like poster boys for a skinhead magazine responded amicably to questions about the festival. “Jews are ordinary people,” said one tattooed teen. “We have no problems with Jews,” noted his shirtless friend.

A third shaven-headed young man said that there certainly were anti-Semites in

Poland, but added, “Everyone complains that Poland is the worst country. It’s not fair.”

Further down the main shopping street was Halena Ilinska, 70, who revealed the deep ambivalence of her financially downtrodden generation. “I love the idea of the Jewish festival, I like the songs,” she said. But reflecting on Jews, she said, “Politically I don’t like them. They have money and can do things with it. We are in a poor country and we are made to feel inferior.”

Her displeasure was nothing compared to the man who could be dubbed the Jew-hater of Krakow. Sitting on a bench in Podgorze’s main square, the 79-year-old conspiracy theorist was smartly dressed.

He refused to give his name but was willing to be photographed, while letting go a stream of invective: “Jews are so rich, we are so poor. They take our money. Seventy-five percent of the Communists were Jews. And now, a lot of the government is Jewish. They don’t have Jewish names, but the president, he is really Jewish.”

Regarding the Holocaust he said, “Maybe Hitler killed too many of them, but the Jews should have been taught to live like decent people.”

Back at the festival, Monika, 19, was shaking her booty to the Mick Jagger of klezmer, David Krakauer. She planned to take festival’s tour of the former Nazi Jewish ghetto “so I could learn what happened to all the Jews who used to live here.”

Six decades is a long time for Jews to have to wait for Monika, and not the park bench lunatic, to be the dominant force in Polish-Jewish relations.

But as positive images of Jewish contributions are now more central to Polish education and culture, from the Krakow festival to myriad government-sponsored programs unearthing Jewish history, there is hope that a new generation of Poles will be known for its tolerance instead of its anti-Semitism.

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‘I told her I was not responsible for what Poland did 60 years ago. My grandfather’s family hid Jews from the Nazis, but she didn’t want to hear about that.’

Joanna Owsiana
Polish student

NEWS IN BRIEF

MIDDLE EAST

Assad wants cease-fire

Syria's president called for a cease-fire between Hezbollah and Israel. The official Syrian news agency reported that Bashar Assad made the comments Wednesday in a meeting with the Turkish prime minister, Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

Israel has made the return of its soldiers taken hostage last week by Hezbollah a precondition for a cease-fire. Also Wednesday, Lebanese Prime Minister Fouad Siniora said he would demand compensation from Israel for destruction caused during its military campaign in Lebanon.

Hezbollah damages day-care center

A Hezbollah rocket damaged a day-care center for the elderly supported by Jewish money from abroad. The Katyusha destroyed the front facade of the Ma'alot Day Care Center for the Elderly and much of the interior infrastructure Tuesday.

No injuries were reported in the incident, and staff at the center, funded by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, continues to deliver meals to local elderly. The JDC says it will deliver more than 8,000 emergency kits with flashlights, radios, toiletries and other essentials to elderly in northern Israel, which is under daily attack from Hezbollah rockets. On Wednesday, a rocket hit a truck delivering JDC play kits to children.

WORLD

U.N. official: War crimes charges possible

Ongoing fighting in Lebanon, Israel and the Palestinian areas could constitute war crimes, a U.N. official said. Louise Arbour, the U.N. high commissioner for human rights, cited the need to protect non-combatants under international law, which she said "defines war crimes and crimes against humanity."

The "scale of the killings in the region, and their predictability, could engage the personal criminal responsibility of those involved, particularly those in a position of command and control," Reuters quoted Arbour as saying Wednesday in Geneva. Israel says it has been trying to control its bombing raids to limit civilian casualties, but that Hezbollah fighters often hide in civilian areas.

U.N. ups aid appeal for Palestinians

The United Nations doubled its appeal to governments for Palestinian aid. If governments respond, the total package would give the Palestinian \$384 million.

The U.N., which called the outlook in Palestinian areas "extremely bleak," said Palestinian revenues have dropped 75 percent since Hamas took power in March.

Since then, Western funding has dried up and Israel has stopped transferring tax revenue to the Palestinians. The new funding will be used to increase food relief, create temporary jobs, provide cash assistance and replenish medical supplies.

NORTH AMERICA

Republicans introduce school voucher program

Republicans in the U.S. Congress proposed a national school-voucher program. The \$100 million program proposed Tuesday would pay for low-income students in weak public schools to attend private or religious schools.

The money would go for tuition and private tutoring. Politically conservative and Orthodox Jews back vouchers, saying they increase school choice and help Jewish day-school education.

Liberal Jewish groups see vouchers as a breach of church-state separation and say they drain money from the public school system.

Israel supporters rally in Washington

About 1,500 supporters of Israel attended a solidarity rally in Washington. Pro-Israel supporters, including members of the U.S. Congress, braved intense heat Wednesday to express their solidarity with Israel in the current conflict with Hezbollah and call on the U.S. government to support the Jewish state.

Speakers condemned Hezbollah, Iran and Syria and called for the release of three captured Israeli soldiers. Speakers at the rally included Israel's ambassador to the United States, Daniel Ayalon; the Rev. John Hagee, national chairman of Christians United for Israel; Sen. Sam Brownback (R-Kan.) and other members of Congress. The rally was sponsored by several Jewish groups.

Bush vetoes stem cell

President Bush exercised his first-ever veto, on a bill that would federally fund embryonic stem-cell research. The bill, which passed the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate with significant majorities, had a great deal of Jewish support, and some groups said they would work to override the veto once the bill returns to the House.

Hadassah, the lead Jewish group advocating the research, slammed the veto. Bush, echoing Christian conservative groups, said such research is unethical.

Evangelicals unite for Israel

More than 3,400 evangelical Christians converged on Washington to urge stronger support for Israel. Christians United for Israel, with representatives from 50 states, attended a banquet Tuesday night and heard speakers including Sen. Rick Santorum (R-Pa.); Israel's ambassador to the United States, Daniel Ayalon; Sen. Sam Brownback (R-Kan.); and Ken Mehlman, chairman of the Republican National Committee.

The conference was the Christian group's inaugural event. Members of the group met Wednesday with legislators and attended a pro-Israel rally near the White House.

"Israel has been a longtime friend and ally of the United States, and Christians everywhere have a biblical responsibility to support the Jewish people," said the Rev. John Hagee, the organization's founder.

Anti-Israel rally staged near Detroit

An estimated 10,000 people near Detroit rallied against Israel's military actions in Lebanon. Carrying banners that read "Stop Israeli Terrorism," demonstrators in Dearborn, Mich., also criticized the Bush administration for its support of Israel.

Dearborn is home to one of the largest concentrations of Arab Americans in the United States. Detroit's Jewish community scheduled a pro-Israel rally for Wednesday evening.

Campaign to bolster blood services in Israel

American Friends of Magen David Adom is launching a fund-raising drive to support Israel's blood services.

The Code Red Campaign will help Magen David Adom, Israel's emergency services agency, purchase much-needed supplies, as well as house, test and transport blood.

MDA, which provides 97 percent of civilian blood in Israel and 100 percent of blood for the army, has come under added duress since fighting began with Lebanon on July 12. Though there is not currently a shortage of blood donors, there is a lack of funds to support the increased demand for such services. More information is available at <http://www.afmda.org/site/PageServer>.