

IN THE NEWS
Israel suspends strikes for 48 hours

Israel agreed to suspend its airstrikes in southern Lebanon for 48 hours. U.S. State Department spokesman Adam Ereli made the announcement Sunday night in Jerusalem after Israel's prime minister, Ehud Olmert, met with the U.S. secretary of state, Condoleezza Rice.

The suspension came after Israel came under intense international pressure following an airstrike that killed at least 54 civilians in southern Lebanon.

Seattle community discusses security

Jewish leaders in Seattle met with the city's mayor and police chief to discuss security following a deadly shooting at the city's Jewish federation.

Police officials promised an increased security presence at Jewish institutions after last Friday's shooting attack, and said Jewish groups should have local police give them a security assessment.

One person was killed and five wounded in the shooting.

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Security Council nears resolution on Iran

The U.N. Security Council's five permanent members have agreed on a draft resolution that could lead to sanctions against Iran if it does not stop enriching uranium.

The draft resolution, which last Friday was circulated to the entire council, would threaten economic and diplomatic sanctions against the Islamic Republic should it continue its enrichment program. The draft resolution "presents Iran with a choice," the American ambassador to the United Nations, John Bolton, told media last Friday.

"They can take one path and suspend their uranium enrichment activities" by Aug. 31, otherwise "they will face increasing international isolation, economic and political pressure."

WORLD REPORT

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World condemns Israeli attack after strike kills 54 Lebanese

By DAN BARON

JERUSALEM (JTA)—A civilian tragedy in Lebanon caused by an Israeli airstrike has cast doubt on any chance of bringing a quick end to almost three weeks of fighting between Israel and Hezbollah.

An Israeli airstrike against suspected rocket crews Sunday in southern Lebanon killed dozens of civilians in their sleep, shocking the international community just as the U.S. secretary of state, Condoleezza Rice, was trying to secure terms for a cease-fire.

Israel insisted the carnage in the village of Kana was an accident that occurred in the course of its self-defense.

"Nothing is more alien to our spirit, further from our thoughts, or more contrary to our interests, than hurting innocents," Prime Minister Ehud Olmert told his Cabinet.

But he added that Israel's offensive in Lebanon, launched after Hezbollah killed eight soldiers and abducted another two in a July 12 border raid, would continue.

"We will not flinch before Hezbollah and we will not stop the offensive, despite the difficult circumstances. It is the right thing to do," he said.

But Israel agreed Sunday to suspend its airstrikes in southern Lebanon for 48 hours. U.S. State Department spokesman Adam Ereli made the announcement Sunday night in Jerusalem after Olmert met with Rice.

Israel will also coordinate with the United Nations to allow a 24-hour period for residents of southern Lebanon to leave the area, Ereli said.

Earlier Sunday, Lebanese Prime Minis-

ter Fouad Siniora called off Rice's planned shuttle visit to Beirut just days after cautiously endorsing an Anglo-American proposal for removing Hezbollah from the violent Israeli border.

"There is no place on this sad morning for any discussion other than an immediate and unconditional cease-fire as well as an international investigation into the Israeli massacres in Lebanon now," Siniora said.

The criticism was echoed by France and Egypt, countries that had been mentioned as possible candidates for supplying troops for an international peacekeeping force in Lebanon.

"France condemns this unjustifiable action, which shows more than ever the need to move toward an immediate cease-fire, without which other such dramas can only be repeated," the office of French President Jacques Chirac said in a statement.

On Sunday, Kofi Annan urged the U.N. Security Council to condemn the strike.

The U.N. secretary-general said the attack demonstrates the need for an immediate cease-fire.

"Action is needed now before many more children, women and men become casualties of a conflict over which they have no control," Annan said.

Responding to Annan, Israel's ambassador to the United Nations, Dan Gillerman, apologized for the incident, but called the Lebanese casualties the "victims of the Hezbollah."

Gillerman said Hezbollah must be disarmed before any cease-fire occurs. Otherwise, he said, Hezbollah will rise again — "not just against us and not just against

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■ Israel agreed Sunday to suspend its airstrikes in southern Lebanon for 48 hours

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the people of Lebanon, but against the whole region and civilization as we know it."

The deaths in Kana — which reached at least 54 by midday — were doubly damning for the Jewish state, as the village was the site of an errant Israeli artillery shelling against Hezbollah in 1996 that killed almost 100 civilians.

Olmert said the area this year has served as a center for the firing of Katyusha rockets on the Israeli cities of Kiryat Shmona and Afula.

Warren Christopher, who as U.S. secretary of state at the time helped broker a cease-fire, chided Rice for advancing the Bush administration's doctrine that reining in Hezbollah was key to producing a long-term solution to the Israeli-Lebanese crisis.

"My own experience in the region underlies my belief that in the short term we should focus our efforts on stopping the killing," Christopher wrote in *The Washington Post*.

Israel's failure to defeat Hezbollah or seriously stem its cross-border salvos — another 115 landed Sunday — have raised questions about the effectiveness of military force alone.

But offsetting the doubts is anger over the mounting Israeli losses — 51 soldiers and civilians — and the belief that Hezbollah is the vanguard of an Iranian regime that is openly preparing for all-out war with Israel.

"In Iran, they say, 'We are targeting

Israel,' but Israel is the first Western outpost. Their target is the West, period. Their rockets that they're developing in Iran are targeted to you, they already reach us but they are arranging now rockets that will reach London," opposition leader Benjamin Netanyahu, who

in a wartime irony has become Olmert's most eloquent foreign spokesman, said in an interview with Britain's Sky Television.

"Beware, you've been warned. Don't attack the victim, attack the attacker," he said. ■

Russian Jews reticent to rally for Israel

By LEV KRICHEVSKY

MOSCOW (JTA) — Jewish communities across the Disapora are openly expressing their solidarity with Israel in its war with Hezbollah, but Jews in Russia are keeping relatively quiet.

To date, Russia has seen only one small pro-Israel rally that was held July 23 outside the Israeli Embassy in Moscow. That 50-person rally was organized by a fringe pro-democracy group called Russian Radicals, and not by any of Russia's numerous Jewish groups.

How are Jewish organizations in Russia, where so many Jews have relatives and friends in Israel, reacting to the situation in the Jewish state?

The Federation of Jewish Communities, a Chabad-led group and the largest community organization of Russian Jewry, is organizing prayer services in support of Israel, and some of its local communities have organized solidarity with Israel events — all held inside synagogues and Jewish community centers.

The Russian Jewish Congress, the largest secular Jewish group, said it would organize a solidarity event outside the Moscow Choral Synagogue on Aug. 5.

A spokesman for the federation said his group did not plan any rallies because this was not part of the tradition of Russian Jewish life.

"We don't have this culture of street demonstrations," said Boruch Gorin. "Such things are causing a dubious attitude among our people. A street rally can help a group acquire a reputation in the eyes of American Jews but it can also result in a negative reaction here. What can be good in Los Angeles would not work in Moscow."

But Oleg Ulyansky, a Russian-born Israe-

li now living in Moscow who participated in the rally offered a different explanation for the lack of public expression.

"Russian Jews are still pretty much Soviet Jews" and are still afraid to publicly express themselves on Jewish or Israeli issues, he said.

A small group of young Orthodox Jews in Moscow is hoping to attract some pro-Israel voices to the streets.

The group, which is not affiliated with any Jewish organization, hopes to attract some 200 people for its rally to be held on

Monday near the Israeli Embassy.

Members of the group say they feel an urge to publicly fight with what they call one-dimensional coverage of the conflict

dominating the Russian airwaves.

"This will be the first Jewish rally, and then there will be others," said Yehoshua Rappoport, 33, a Moscow designer and co-organizer of the rally. "It takes someone to set an example; people will start to wake up then."

Prior to the July 23 rally, hundreds of Moscow Jews received e-mail announcements about the event.

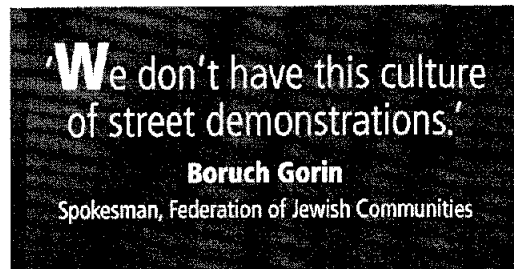
As the organizers said in their e-mail announcement, "Let the TV cameras show a crowd, not a dozen people with Israeli flags."

But the outcome matched the organizers' fears.

Some of the Jews who showed up for the rally said they were extremely disappointed by the small turnout.

"It's such a shame," said Olga Borisovna, a Jewish pensioner. "There are so many Jews in Moscow, so many of them have relatives in Israel. Why didn't people come?" ■

(JTA correspondent Vladimir Matveyev in Kiev, Ukraine, contributed to this report.)



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Seattle Jews reeling after attack at federation

By JOEL MAGALNICK

SEATTLE (JTA) —The sentiment in Seattle's Jewish community is "keep calm, and reassess your security," but Jews and Muslims are both shaky in the wake of last Friday's fatal shooting at the city's Jewish federation.

Leaders of Jewish institutions in the city met Sunday afternoon with Seattle's mayor and police chief at the Jewish Community Center, part of their scramble to determine the next steps for keeping synagogues and service agencies operating and secure.

At the meeting, police officials promised an increased security presence at Jewish institutions, and said Jewish groups should have local police give them a security assessment.

Counseling was also offered to employees at Jewish organizations, particularly those at the federation, where the tragedy struck.

Attendees at the meeting were also told that the federation building is expected to stay closed for another week, pending a police investigation.

The Harborview Trauma Center near downtown Seattle served as a de-facto Shab-

bat gathering place last Friday evening as Jews from around the city met to console each other after that afternoon's shooting at the Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle, which left one person dead and five injured.

The metropolitan area's two Conservative congregations canceled services for that evening, but most other synagogues were determined to hold Shabbat services — though with an added police presence.

"You can't let hatred stop holiness," Rabbi Jonathan Singer of Reform Temple Beth Am told his congregation that night, according to the Seattle Times.

Jews from around the city expressed disbelief and sorrow.

"It was shocking," said David Sabban, a former federation employee. "I remember when we would do our safety discussions there was always this scenario, if this guy came in with a gun and started shooting people, what would you do? It just happened so suddenly, in an instant."

Streets surrounding the Seattle federation's office were closed for hours as police and Seattle's SWAT team searched for a possible accomplice to the gunman, identified as Naveed Afzal Haq, 30, originally of Pasco, Wash., a small city about four hours from Seattle. Haq's last known address was in Everett, another small city 20 miles north of Seattle, though he disappeared from his residence there about two weeks ago, the Seattle Times reported last Friday.

The Arab American Institute condemned the crime.

"There is no room for the kind of despicable action that occurred in Seattle," the institute's president, James Zogby said Saturday. "The tragic conflict raging in the Middle East cannot be used as justification for any criminal act of hate in this country. It is wrong and we reject it."

On Saturday, King County District Court Judge Barbara Linde set Haq's bail at \$50 million.

The shooting began at approximately 4 p.m. last Friday, when a man suspected to be Haq took a teenage girl hostage, forced his way through the first-floor security door and walked upstairs to the federation reception desk, where he began his rampage.

Witnesses in the building said Haq identified himself as an American Muslim upset about America's presence in Iraq and the current Israel-Lebanon conflict.

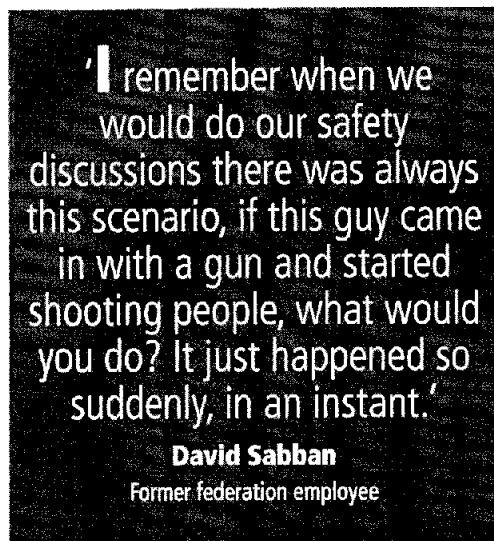
Citing a statement of probable cause, The Associated Press reported that Haq had told a 911 dispatcher, "These are Jews and I'm tired of getting pushed around and our people getting pushed around by the situation in the Middle East."

Pam Waechter, 58, the director of the federation's community campaign, died at the scene. Waechter had worked in various capacities at the Seattle federation for nearly a decade, and at Seattle's Jewish Family Service social service agency for seven years before that. She was also president of her congregation and a board member of the Union for Reform Judaism.

Waechter was "really sort of a model for everybody else," Sabban said. "Pam was one of the sweetest people I ever worked with." Messages of condolence and support have been coming in from Seattle's Muslim community. A delegation of Muslim leaders is expected to visit the remaining shooting victims in hospital today, and two Muslim women helped lay flowers last Friday at B'nai Torah, Waechter's synagogue.

Muslim leaders have told local reporters they fear a backlash similar to what they experienced after the 9/11 attacks. A march scheduled for Saturday calling for a cease-fire in the Middle East was canceled, as were events slated for last Friday at a city mosque.

(JTA correspondent Sue Fishkoff in Oakland, Calif., contributed to this report.)



THIS WEEK

MONDAY

■ The United States hosts a number of nations, including France and Turkey, at the United Nations to discuss establishing a multinational buffer force in southern Lebanon.

Israel's deputy prime minister, Shimon Peres, addressed the Council on Foreign Relations. The talk is part of Peres' trip abroad aimed at explaining Israel's military operations in Lebanon.

TUESDAY

■ The U.N. Security Council is slated to convene to discuss a cease-fire between Israel and Hezbollah; and the prospects of sanctioning Iran for its nuclear capabilities.

SUNDAY

■ The 31st annual Conference on Alternatives in Jewish Education begins at Duke University in Durham, N.C.

■ The 2006 JCC Maccabi Games begin in Phoenix. The games there feature 14 events, including baseball, basketball, bowling, dance and golf, and run through Aug. 11. Games are also being held this summer in Stamford, Conn., and Vancouver from Aug. 13-18.

NEWS IN BRIEF

MIDDLE EAST

Israel in new Lebanon incursion

Israeli forces killed five Hezbollah combatants during a new incursion into southern Lebanon.

Israeli tanks and troops crossed the border at Metulla on Sunday, spreading out to suspected Hezbollah rocket launch sites and gun nests. Five gunmen were killed in clashes.

Israelis wounded in attacks

One Israeli was moderately wounded and 11 more lightly wounded in Katyusha rocket attacks.

The injuries came as Israel reported 115 rocket attacks from Hezbollah fired into northern Israel on Sunday.

Access restricted to Al-Aksa

Israel kept people under 45 from attending Friday prayers at Jerusalem's holiest mosque. Police used stun grenades last Friday to keep younger Muslims from entering the Al-Aksa mosque compound adjacent to the Western Wall, Judaism's holiest site, but otherwise there was no violence.

Tensions in the region have escalated since July 12, when the Lebanese-based Hezbollah terrorist group launched hostilities against Israel. In past tense periods, Aksa supplicants have stoned Jewish worshippers at the Western Wall after the prayers.

U.N. observers to leave posts

The United Nations will remove unarmed observers from their posts in southern Lebanon. Last Friday's decision to incorporate the unarmed observers into UNIFIL, an armed peacekeeping force, follows the deaths earlier last week of four observers in an Israeli airstrike.

"These are unarmed people and this is for their protection," said Milos Struger, a spokesman for the U.N. Interim Force in Lebanon. The U.N. Truce Supervision Organization unit had made multiple requests to Israel to stop the bombing.

One in three northern Israelis flee

At least 330,000 Israelis have fled their homes due to Hezbollah shelling, officials said.

According to government figures issued Sunday, around one-third of the 1 million residents of northern Israel who live within Hezbollah rocket range have left since the fighting began July 12. The rest have taken to shelters in their homes.

Double bombing foiled

Israeli security forces foiled a Palestinian double suicide bombing. Acting on intelligence, troops captured two Palestinians with bomb belts outside the West Bank city of Nablus on Sunday.

They are believed to have been en route to carry out an attack in Israel. Hamas pledged Sunday to resume terrorist attacks in response to Israel's offensives in the Gaza Strip and Lebanon. A rocket fired by Hamas in Gaza struck the Israeli border town of Sderot, moderately wounding an Israeli woman.

World prayer for Israeli hostages

Israel's Chief Rabbinate called for Jews to unite in a prayer for three soldiers held hostage by Hezbollah and Hamas. Israel's chief Ashkenazi rabbi, Yona Metzger, announced July 27 that he wanted to enlist 1 million Jews worldwide to recite the prayer simultaneously at 7 p.m., Israel time, on Tuesday.

The prayer, composed by Metzger after Cpl. Gilad Shalit was kidnapped by Hamas-led gunmen June 25 and Hezbollah combat-

ants snatched reservists Eldad Regev and Ehud Goldwasser on July 12, is available in both Hebrew and English on the Web site <http://www.tfila.org.il>.

WORLD

Berliners march for Israel

A small but vocal crowd demonstrated for Israel in Berlin. The estimated 1,000 demonstrators marched last Friday through some of the city's busiest streets during rush hour.

Addressing the marchers, both Jews and non-Jews, Gideon Joffe, president of the Berlin Jewish community, said Jews join with Muslims and Christians in mourning the civilian dead and abhorring the suffering of innocent people in Israel and Lebanon. But he called on Muslims in Germany to condemn the terrorist acts of Hezbollah.

Jewish principals in FSU celebrate

Jewish principals in the former Soviet Union gathered to mark 15 years of a formal Jewish education system in the region. Principals of 15 ORT schools and other ORT educators from the former Soviet Union gathered last week in London for a three-day seminar.

Educators from Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, Latvia, Lithuania and Kyrgyzstan spent three days at ORT House in London to share experiences and discuss the expansion of the ORT school network in the former Soviet Union. The ORT network currently includes 15 Jewish day schools in seven former Soviet republics.

Ex-Romanian chief rabbi dies

Alexander Safran, the former chief rabbi of Romania who tried to save Romanian Jews during World War II has died. He was 95. Safran tried to prevent Romania's pro-Nazi regime from deporting Jews to concentration camps. He was later the chief rabbi of Geneva and a professor of philosophy.

NORTH AMERICA

Mel Gibson sorry for anti-Semitic comments

Mel Gibson apologized for making anti-Semitic remarks after he was arrested for driving drunk over the weekend.

The Hollywood actor's apology came after he cursed and then launched into a barrage of anti-Semitic statements on Saturday after he was pulled over, including, "The Jews are responsible for all the wars in the world." Gibson blamed a lifelong battle with alcoholism for the incident.

In a statement, the Anti-Defamation League said the apology by Gibson was "unremorseful and insufficient." Gibson made waves in 2004 when he released a movie on the death of Jesus, "The Passion of the Christ," that many said was anti-Semitic.

N.Y. shul donates synagogues to soldiers

A New York synagogue is donating two mobile shuls to be used by Israeli soldiers fighting in Lebanon and the Gaza Strip.

Rabbi Marc Schneier of the Hampton Synagogue in Westhampton Beach, N.Y., announced the donation July 22.

Study: Most Jewish kids attend non-Jewish camps

About twice as many Jewish children attend non-Jewish camps than Jewish camps, a study found. The study, which polled 1,400 parents in southern California, cited high cost and lack of information as the primary reasons parents do not choose Jewish camps.

It also cited a high correlation between Jewish camping and Jewish engagement.

The study was a project of the Foundation for Jewish Camping.