

IN THE NEWS
Olmert vows to sustain operation

Ehud Olmert said there would be no cease-fire in the next several days.

"Israel is continuing to fight" with Hezbollah despite a 48-hour cessation of airstrikes announced late Sunday night, the Israeli prime minister said Monday in an address to the nation.

Olmert said the Israeli offensive would end when two soldiers kidnapped by Hezbollah are returned and when the threat of Hezbollah rockets on northern Israel is ended.

Lebanese soldier killed in Israeli strike

Israel killed a Lebanese soldier in an air attack aimed at a Hezbollah official.

Israeli officials expressed regret for the death Monday of the soldier, who they said was not the target of the attack.

Israel also carried out other airstrikes against Hezbollah targets in southern Lebanon on Monday.

The attacks came despite Israel's agreement Sunday night not to launch airstrikes for 48 hours, but Israel has stressed that this does not apply to what it terms imminent threats.

Additionally, the air force opened fire to support ground forces operating in southern Lebanon.

Security Council gives Iran sanctions deadline

The U.N. Security Council said it would sanction Iran if it did not suspend uranium enrichment by Aug. 31.

The 14-1 vote Monday was the first time all five veto-wielding permanent members of the council agreed to sanction Iran.

The resolution calls on Iran to suspend "all enrichment-related and reprocessing activities, including research and development" and to allow international nuclear inspectors to verify the suspension.

WORLD REPORT

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Though Israelis mostly support war, Hezbollah conflict has local detractors

By BRENDA GAZZAR

HAIFA (JTA) — Hannah Safran knows her political views are unpopular these days.

The 56-year-old adjunct college professor received numerous telephone threats at her Haifa home, she said, after she recently spoke out against Israel's military operation in Lebanon on a morning television talk show. Undeterred, the longtime peace activist has continued to demonstrate nearly every day for the last two and a half weeks against the conflict.

On July 27, Safran — when she was not hurrying to take shelter from sirens warning of imminent Hezbollah rocket attacks — was busy creating protest signs at a women's center in Haifa for upcoming anti-war demonstrations.

"Our desire, it might sound a bit grandiose, is to stop the war," said Safran, who is a member of the Women's Coalition for Peace, Women in Black and the newly formed Women Against War and teaches courses on women's studies and gender in Netanya and near Afula. "We are really, frankly, doing all we can to stop the war now, this minute. This is crucial for us. It will save lives. Each person's life counts: the civilians in Israel, the soldiers in Israel, the civilians in Lebanon, the Hezbollah people in Lebanon."

Safran was among some 2,000 people estimated to have joined an anti-war march organized by a coalition of women's groups on Saturday evening in Tel Aviv. The protest took place a day before an Israeli airstrike in southern Lebanon killed at least 54 civilians, many of them children.

Yet, Safran is in a distinct minority.

Nearly three weeks into Israel's military operation in Lebanon aimed at bringing home two kidnapped soldiers and removing the threat of Hezbollah from its northern border, many describe Israeli opposition as small and slow-moving. Even normally dovish groups have backed Israel's right to self-defense.

"There is by and large a consensus that Hezbollah should be neutralized, if not eradicated," said Moshe Maoz, a professor in the department of Islamic and Middle Eastern studies at Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

While the majority of the Israeli population supports Israel's operation, there are some arguments and concerns about how the military operation should be carried out.

Meret, a recent dovish Israeli party, abstained in the no-confidence vote held in the Knesset over Israel's military operation. While the party had its reservations, "we kept saying that Israel had the full right to react" to Hezbollah's provocation, said lawmaker Yossi Beilin, the party's chairman.

Since the beginning of the operation, however, the party has opposed sending ground troops into Lebanon, and argued that Israel should consider "innocent civilians," he said.

Now, Meretz is calling for a cease-fire agreement that would include the goals of the Israeli operation such as the release of the two kidnapped Israeli soldiers, pushing Hezbollah away from the southern border and placing Lebanese troops there.

"The fact that Hezbollah uses people as human shields makes it very difficult to get

Continued on page 2

■ Israeli opposition to the Hezbollah conflict is minimal and slow-moving — but vocal

Continued from page 1

to them, which is their goal," said Gadi Wolfsfeld, professor of political science and communications at Hebrew University in Jerusalem, last week. "Israel has no choice."

Peace Now is also not protesting the conflict since it agrees Israel has the right to self-defense.

The group "thinks we have the right to do it," said Yariv Oppenheimer, director general of Peace Now in Israel. "The question is whether it will help Israel or hurt? Some think Israel is doing much more than it should."

Peace Now does not automatically demonstrate against all wars, Oppenheimer said. "Sometimes, you have to use force, unfortunately."

In the meantime, Peace Now will continue to monitor the situation in Lebanon.

Oppenheimer added: "We will probably demonstrate against the war if it gets out of control."

There is another kind of criticism in Israel, particularly from the right, which argues that Israel waited too long to react to Hezbollah, allowing the group to arm itself for six years following the country's withdrawal from Lebanon, Maoz said.

In the long term, public opinion will largely be based on how the situation in Lebanon develops, Wolfsfeld said.

"If there is an increasing feeling that we are paying a tremendous price without getting much benefit, or that

there's another way out of it that Israel would gain some strategic advantage, the voices calling for a cease-fire will rise," he said.

However, if Hezbollah continues to at-

tack Israeli citizens with rockets, "there is also going to be a rise in those calling for an all-out war because of the fact that Israel can't continue to have its entire North paralyzed." ■

Mel Gibson's true passion?

By TOM TUGEND

LOS ANGELES (JTA) — "My life is f****d," actor Mel Gibson said repeatedly after delivering an anti-Semitic tirade following his arrest on suspicion of drunk driving, according to a report by the arresting officer.

Los Angeles reserves a special tolerance for celebrity misbehavior, but the self-appraisal by the director of "The Passion of the Christ" may well come to pass.

The Gibson case is expanding into an investigation of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's office to determine whether it censored one of its own deputies to cover up Gibson's misogynistic and anti-Jewish slurs.

The 50-year old actor and director was arrested at 2:30 a.m. last Friday while driving more than 80 miles per hour, nearly twice the posted speed limit, in Malibu.

Sheriff's Deputy James Mee reported that he pulled the car over, found a bottle of tequila inside, and administered tests, which showed Gibson's blood-alcohol level well above the California legal limit. Gibson was booked and released on bail a few hours later.

The incident might have passed as a regrettable but forgivable misstep but for the celebrity and gossip Web site [www.t m z . c o m](http://www.t TMZ.com), which quickly published four pages of a handwritten eight-page report on the case by Mee.

According to the four pages, authenticated independently by the Los Angeles Times, Gibson became belligerent after his arrest, cursed and threatened Mee and then launched "into a barrage of anti-Semitic statements."

"F****g Jews," Gibson alleged shouted.

"The Jews are responsible for all the wars in the world."

He then asked Mee, "Are you a Jew?"

He also allegedly said to a female sergeant, "What do you think you're looking at, sugar t**s?"

The following day, Gibson released a statement: "After drinking alcohol on Thursday night, I did a number of things that were very wrong and for which I am ashamed," he wrote.

"I acted like a person completely out of control when I was arrested, and said things that I do not believe to be true and which are despicable," he continued. "I disgraced myself and my family with my behavior, and for that I am truly sorry."

"Mel Gibson's apology is unremorseful and

insufficient," Abraham Foxman, national director of the Anti-Defamation League, said in a statement Sunday.

Foxman had been a fierce critic of Gibson when his film, "The Passion of the Christ," was released in 2004, charging that the depiction of Jews in the picture could trigger anti-Semitism.

"His tirade finally reveals his true self and shows that his protestations during the debate over his film 'The Passion of the Christ' — that he is such a tolerant, loving person — were a sham," Foxman wrote.

"We would hope that Hollywood now would realize the bigot in their midst and that they will distance themselves from this anti-Semite." ■

After Mee filed his eight-page report, he was told by his superiors that it was too "inflammatory," would incite a lot of "Jewish hatred," according to [t m z . c o m](http://www.t m z . c o m)'s managing editor, Harvey Levin.

Mee then produced a "sanitized" version of his report, after which a spokesman said that Gibson, a longtime supporter of the sheriff's department, had been arrested "without incident." ■

Gibson reportedly blamed the Jews for 'all the wars in the world' and called a female police officer, 'sugar t**s.'

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Congress and Palestinian terrorism

By DAVID J. SILVERMAN

WASHINGTON (JTA) — The U.S. Congress' recent preoccupation with Israel's war in Lebanon could abort what had been this year's signature victory for some pro-Israel lobbyists: The Palestinian Anti-Terrorism Act.

JTA has learned that congressional staffers are in a last-minute rush to reconcile divergences in different versions of a bill that aims to severely restrict assistance to the Palestinians. The Senate version, favored by the White House, is considerably less restrictive.

The principal factor burying what had been an overwhelmingly popular bill in both houses has been a last-minute pre-midterm elections flood of law-making, including resolutions relating to Lebanon.

"The problem is that we were interrupted by Lebanon," a U.S. House of Representatives staffer, who is involved in the negotiations and whose boss supports the House legislation, told JTA last week. "Otherwise we would be further along."

Other factors taking up congressional time in recent weeks included an abortive effort to reverse presidential policy banning embryonic stem-cell research; a failed effort to pass a constitutional amendment banning gay marriage; the Iraq war; immigration issues; and debate over the minimum wage.

But it is specifically the Lebanon issue that has preoccupied the same staffers whose job it was to reconcile the U.S. Senate version of the anti-terror act, passed in June, and the House version, passed in May.

Lawmakers in both houses tinkered for a week in mid-July with a resolution supporting Israel in its war against Hezbollah in Lebanon, while addressing concerns that both sides protect civilian lives. And now that those resolutions have passed, both houses are considering resolutions that call for a cease-fire.

Lawmakers who backed the act said that if anything, the events in Lebanon made it even more urgent to get a version of the bill to Bush for a signature.

"I think the whole advent of this two-front war Israel is engaging in has created a greater sense of urgency for passage," Rep. Robert Wexler (D-Fla.)

said July 26 from Israel, where he was on a solidarity tour. "I think there's a growing awareness in both houses that that needs to be accomplished."

Procedure would have each house consider and then vote on the other's bill; then both bills would go to a conference of lawmakers from the Senate and the House.

It's too late for the House to consider the Senate's bill, because the House launched its August break last Friday. The Senate is convening for another week, however, and staffers from both bodies hope to get a Senate vote on the House version this week, allowing at least one bill to go to conference.

Both houses could then have a quick vote on a conferenced version in September, when Congress reconvenes for its last five weeks.

The concern is that leaving the pre-conference negotiations until September — with just five weeks of work before Congress breaks up for elections — will likely kill the bill for this session of Congress.

The congressional staffer, who spoke on condition of anonymity because the bill is still in negotiations, was confident that the bill could clear hurdles and reach a Senate vote by the end of this week.

"I don't see a real problem," the staffer said. "There's a difference between the two versions, but they're not unbridgeable."

Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-Fla.), the chairwoman of the House Middle East subcommittee who sponsored the House version of the bill, is known to be leading efforts to get her bill to the Senate floor.

Both bills ensue from January's electoral victory by Hamas, a terrorist group that does not recognize Israel. Each conditions U.S. assistance to the Palestinian Authority on renouncing terrorism, abiding by existing agreements and recognizing Israel.

But the differences are substantial. The Senate bill, for instance, focuses restrictions on a " Hamas-led Palestinian Authority" while the House bill focuses generally on the Palestinian Authority. Mahmoud Abbas, the relatively moderate P.A. president elected separately, is believed to be machinating the ouster of Hamas and its replacement with moderates.

Should he succeed, the Senate version would immediately be moot, while the House's stringent restrictions would still be in place and could hinder any Bush administration efforts to prop up the moderates.

Additionally, the Senate bill allows broader funding for Abbas' security requirements, which would help bolster him should Hamas challenge his authority; imposes fewer reporting requirements on the

president, should he waive any of the bill's provisions; and is much less restrictive on aid transferred to non-governmental organizations.

The American Israel Public Affairs Committee, which pushed

both bills strongly, said the main thing now was passage of one or the other.

"Congress has repeatedly made it clear that no American taxpayer money should go to support a terrorist-run government and recent events only further underscore that fundamental point," said Jennifer Cannata, AIPAC's spokeswoman. " Hamas, like its similarly Iranian-sponsored cousin Hezbollah, remains committed to a violent, terrorist agenda that rejects Israel's right to exist and undermines America's policies in pursuit of peace in the Middle East."

The bills split the Jewish community. On one side, a coalition of three smaller, dovish pro-Israel groups defied AIPAC and opposed the more restrictive House version. They were joined by the Reform movement, which threw its weight behind the more moderate Senate version. On the other side, the Orthodox Union pressed for increased restrictions in both bills.

The Lebanon issue has preoccupied the same staffers whose job it was to reconcile the U.S. Senate and House versions of the anti-terror act.

NEWS IN BRIEF

WORLD

Security Council 'shocked' at Israeli attack

The U.N. Security Council issued a statement expressing "extreme shock and distress" at Israel's killing of Lebanese civilians in a weekend airstrike. But the United States blocked a call for an immediate cease-fire in the statement issued Sunday.

In its statement, the council deplored the loss of innocent lives, called for an end to violence and noted the need for "securing a lasting, permanent and sustainable cease-fire."

Independent probe of tragedy wanted

A U.N. official demanded an independent probe into an Israeli airstrike that killed 54 civilians in southern Lebanon.

Louise Arbour, the U.N. high commissioner for human rights, said "international expertise" is needed to look into Sunday's incident. Israel says it will conduct its own investigation of the tragedy in Kana.

Rights group to accuse Israel of war crimes

Human Rights Watch plans to accuse Israel of war crimes. The accusation will be in a report the group plans to release Thursday summarizing its findings.

Representatives of the organization have been in Lebanon since the outbreak of fighting and have documented "dozens of cases in which Israeli forces have carried out indiscriminate attacks against civilians while in their homes or traveling on roads to flee the fighting," according to a release issued Monday.

Israel has said it regrets and tries to minimize civilian deaths, but that Hezbollah fighters and missiles are often hidden in civilian areas.

Reservist refuses Lebanon service

An Israeli army reservist was jailed for refusing to serve in Lebanon. The 32-year-old reserve captain received a 28-day stockade sentence this week after disregarding an emergency call-up to reinforce troops taking part in the offensive against Hezbollah.

Yesh Gvul, a left-wing Israeli group for military conscientious objectors, said it had been in touch with a dozen other reservists who plan similar protest actions.

NORTH AMERICA

Bush: Israel defending itself

President Bush said Israel was defending itself in Lebanon and held back from calling for an immediate cease-fire.

Bush's remarks Monday were his first since an Israeli attack on Kana in southern Lebanon killed more than 50 civilians, many of them children.

Addressing supporters in southern Florida, he said it was important to remember that Hezbollah, a Lebanon-based terrorist group, launched hostilities.

Without addressing Kana directly, he said, "Israel is exercising the right to defend itself and we mourn the loss of innocent life both in Lebanon and in Israel." He said Condoleezza Rice, his secretary of state, was "working urgently to get a sustainable cease-fire."

Senator wants immediate cease-fire

A leading Republican senator said President Bush should call for an immediate Israel-Hezbollah cease-fire.

"The sickening slaughter on both sides must stop," Sen. Chuck Hagel (R-Neb.) said Monday on the Senate floor. Hagel said the U.S.-Israel link is special, but said that the link should not come at the expense of relationships with the Arab and Muslim worlds.

Ad demands immediate cease-fire

A U.S. Jewish group sponsored a full-page ad in The New York Times demanding an immediate end to the violence in the Middle East.

Monday's advertisement, organized by the Tikkun Community, along with the Network of Spiritual Progressives and the Shalom Center, demands that the Israeli government, the leaderships of Hezbollah and Hamas, the U.S. government, the international community and the United Nations "stop the slaughter in Lebanon, Israel and the occupied territories!"

The ad calls on Israel to immediately halt attacks on Lebanon, which it says are "utterly disproportionate to the initial provocation by Hezbollah."

It also calls on Hezbollah and Hamas to immediately stop shelling or attacking Israel, and on the international community to join a conference to provide security on the Israel-Lebanon border.

Students take Israel petition to Annan

A pro-Israel student petition was delivered to Kofi Annan on Monday. The petition, which garnered more than 43,000 signatures, was organized by Hillel: The Foundation for Jewish Campus Life.

The document asks the U.N. secretary-general to "join us in clearly and immediately reaffirming the right of Israel to defend its citizens and ensure its security in the face of relentless attacks, killings and kidnappings by Hezbollah."

Hate graffiti in Florida

Anti-Semitic graffiti was spray-painted on two synagogues and two Jewish community businesses in southern Florida.

Congregation Shaaray Tefila, Young Israel of Greater Miami, Kosher World and Judaica Enterprises were vandalized Sunday morning, the Miami Herald reported.

MIDDLE EAST

Israel depletes Hezbollah missiles

Israel claimed it had destroyed two-thirds of Hezbollah's strategic missile capability.

Israeli officials said Monday that two-thirds of the several dozen Zelzal-2 missiles believed to be held by the Lebanese militia have been destroyed during the past 20 days of fighting.

The Iranian-supplied missiles have a maximum range of 125 miles and are believed capable of carrying biological or chemical warheads.

Israel denies ship hit

Israel denied Hezbollah's claim that it struck an Israeli warship off the Lebanese coast.

The denials from Israeli officials came after Al-Manar, Hezbollah's television channel, said Monday that the militia had hit a ship near the southern Lebanese city of Tyre in retaliation for an Israeli airstrike over the weekend that killed 54 Lebanese civilians.

Hamas leader: Israeli soldier is in Gaza

An Israeli soldier kidnapped by Palestinians in a late June cross-border raid is in the Gaza Strip, a Hamas leader said.

In an interview published Saturday in the Egyptian daily Al-Ahram, Khaled Meshaal said it's impossible for Cpl. Gilad Shalit to be smuggled out of Gaza because of Israel's siege.

Mshaal, believed to be in Syria, also called for a prisoner exchange between Israel and Hamas. Israel so far has publicly ruled out such an exchange.