

**IN THE NEWS**
**Kofi Annan: U.N. to broker prisoner talks**

The United Nations will act as a mediator between Israel and Hezbollah on a possible prisoner exchange, Kofi Annan said.

The U.N. secretary-general made the comments Monday as he continued his trip through the Middle East, The New York Times reported.

Annan said all three sides had already chosen their respective representatives for the talks. Israeli officials were not cited in the report.

Reservists Ehud Goldwasser and Eldad Regev were kidnapped by Hezbollah on July 12.

Meanwhile, there were reports that Israel is engaged in Egyptian-mediated talks aimed at freeing Cpl. Gilad Shalit, who was abducted by Palestinian gunmen in a deadly June 25 cross-border raid.

**Olmert's West Bank pullout plan on hold**

Ehud Olmert said his plan for a West Bank withdrawal was on hold.

"What I thought several months ago would be the right thing to do on the Palestinian front has now changed," Army Radio quoted the Israeli prime minister as telling the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee on Monday.

Under the plan, Israel would unilaterally cede large areas of the West Bank to the Palestinians while annexing others. [Story, Pg. 3]

**Arson at Montreal Jewish school probed**

Canadian police are investigating the firebombing of a Jewish school in Montreal.

Damage was minimal in Saturday's attack on the Taldos Yakov Yosef school.

A video that captured the attack showed a masked man throwing a Molotov cocktail through the window of the school.

# WORLD REPORT

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## Israeli children take violent summer back to school with them this year

By DINA KRAFT

**K**IRYAT YAM, Israel (JTA) — The children of Hamiflasim Elementary School cheered as they released hundreds of white balloons into a blue sky, ushering in their first day of school Sunday from the same blacktop where a Katyusha rocket had crashed three weeks ago.

The rocket toppled a basketball hoop and sent chunks of debris into the nearby science lab.

The balloons were soon swallowed up by the sky and the children turned their attention to the ground under a wall that had been riddled with holes from the flying shrapnel.

They scooped up handfuls of ball bearings and metal shards, trading some of the war souvenirs and deciding how much they needed to keep for themselves.

"We feel like we know what war is after hearing all the sirens going off but now we know it could hit anywhere," said Yulia, 11, as she scooped up about a dozen ball bearings the size of small metal beads.

Yulia, a sixth-grader with a long, light-brown ponytail, has a bleak view of the future.

"The Holocaust is returning," she said matter-of-factly. "They are trying to kill us with Katyushas, missiles, war."

Assessing what kind of psychological effect living through the war has taken on children is a top priority for educators in northern Israel, who are dealing with an unprecedented number of students exposed to the trauma of living under attack.

Children across the country, however, were affected by the war.

Most children watched war footage on television, and many had siblings or relatives in the army.

"It reached children because they are children," said Chava Friedman, chief psychologist for the Ministry of Education.

Friedman said the ministry is trying to reach out to all Israeli schoolchildren, explaining that children observe and absorb everything around them.

Hamiflasim Elementary School is located in Kiryat Yam, a suburb

of Haifa.

About 40 Hezbollah rockets fell in the city during the war. The Katyusha that hit the school fell the day before a U.N.-brokered cease-fire came into effect.

Many of the school's pupils stayed at home for most of the monthlong war, often with no parent or babysitter.

They spent the time moving between bomb shelters and their homes while their parents, most of them immigrants afraid to lose their jobs, continued to go to work.

Teachers at the school worked with a team of psychologists and counselors to both decompress themselves from the stress they endured and also to learn how to deal with and identify pupils who might be suffering from emotional distress or post-traumatic symptoms.

In the classroom, the children were encouraged to discuss their summer vacations — from stories of vacations to what it felt like to be in a bomb shelter.

The government is spending about \$1.4 million to repair schools like Hamiflasim that suffered physical damage from rocket

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**FOCUS  
ON  
ISSUES**

## ■ *Many Israeli kids returned to school with the war fresh in their minds*

*Continued from page 1*

attacks and to bolster psychological counseling.

Extra school psychologists were hired for the year by the Education Ministry, but the Arab school system might suffer because it lacks enough Arabic-speaking psychologists and counselors, Friedman said.

School employees were encouraged to boost children's resilience by radiating a message of both compassion and strength.

"Our school was hit but our spirit has not been broken," said Vered Fisher, the principal of Hamiflasim, during a back-to-school assembly.

The school's 200 pupils are mostly immigrants or children of immigrants from the former Soviet Union or Ethiopia.

■  
The first-graders were welcomed into the school as they paraded under a welcome banner.

Older pupils spoke about the difficulties of summer but were excited to begin the new school year and a routine of classes and activities.

As part of the city's efforts to prepare children for school and a return to normalcy, officials organized a week of leisure activities for the kids during the last week of summer vacation, including field trips and excursions to amusement parks and pools.

Moshe Tatar, head of school counseling at Hebrew University's Department of Education, said one of the most bewildering things for both children and their parents is that suddenly the place they most associate

with safety — their own homes — became dangerous places to be during the war.

He said the best approach for dealing with trauma is a community approach, one that involves not just teachers and students, but parents as well.

"If it is not a joint effort, then the schools will do what they can do but it is not going to be enough," Tatar said.

Although all the schools in the North — including the 30 that suffered physical damage from rocket fire — started classes as scheduled, parents kept about 14,000 home from school on Sunday and Monday in the Sderot region of southern Israel.

They said the schools had not yet been fortified to withstand rocket attacks from the Gaza Strip.

Some parents in the Bedouin community, citing safety problems and a lack of classrooms in their local schools, are also keeping their children home.

■  
In the Palestinian areas, many schools did not open as scheduled on Sunday because of a teachers strike. The teachers said they would not start working until their previous salaries were paid.

The Palestinian Authority has not been able to pay its teachers since March, when Hamas took power and Israel and most of the countries who donate money to the authority cut off funds.

Inside Israel proper, many of the children most affected by the war were from

economically struggling families that did not have the means to seek refuge in other parts of the country.

The Jewish Agency for Israel, together with Office Depot, gave allowances to some 15,000 such children to buy school supplies.

Also, the International Fellowship of Christians and Jews donated some \$2 million to assist in the purchase of school clothes, books and supplies for about 40,000 needy children in the North.

At Hamiflasim, sixth-graders pulled their chairs into a semi-circle and shared what they experienced over the summer.

Their teacher, Shoshi Tsarfati, had to prod many of them to open up.

"I spent the whole time at the pool," said a

boy named Gabi.

"The whole time?" Tsarfati asked.

Gabi then said that actually, he spent most of the war in a bomb shelter with his grandmother and younger sister.

■  
Yulia, who had been collecting Katyusha shrapnel remnants earlier, told the class that she had arranged a surprise birthday party in the bomb shelter for another girl who had been upset her birthday had gone uncelebrated because of the war.

A boy shared that he was walking down the street when the siren rang out just before their school was hit. He quickly sought cover in a nearby bomb shelter.

Another girl admitted she was still scared, fearing another war was sure to happen again — and soon.

The teacher tried to reassure them.

"All your responses are normal. It is the situation that was not," she said. ■

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## Israel denies targeting journalists

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Israel denied charges that its air force deliberately fired on foreign reporters in the Gaza Strip.

Israel's chief military spokeswoman, Brig. Gen. Miri Regev, issued a letter Monday to the Foreign Press Association in Israel regarding an Aug. 27 airstrike that

wounded two Palestinians journalists in Gaza. She said that because the incident happened at night, Israeli forces had no way of seeing the Reuters press markings on the reporters' car, and that furthermore the vehicle was observed moving in a suspicious manner near a combat zone. ■

# Olmert takes West Bank pullout off agenda

By DAN BARON

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Ehud Olmert is reconsidering his West Bank withdrawal plan.

The Israeli prime minister announced Sunday that his proposal for selective West Bank withdrawals is “not on the agenda for now,” raising hope among rightists and leftists alike.

Olmert told the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee: “What I thought several months ago would be the right thing to do on the Palestinian front has now changed.

“I must assess reality, not because I made a mistake, but because you must reassess priorities when they have changed,” he said. “We have no intention of running away from the Palestinian issue. We cannot afford to do so. We must deal with the

Palestinian issue, but consider other ways of doing so.”

Cast as a stopgap measure in the absence of peace with the Palestinians, the “realignment plan” helped bring Olmert to power in May. But events have since undermined the idea.

There was the resurgence of fighting around the Gaza Strip, which Israel had quit last year in a bid to forestall violence. Cross-border rocket fire was stepped up, ignored or abetted by the Hamas-led Palestinian Authority government. A soldier was abducted by Gaza gunmen, among them members of Hamas.

Then there was the bloody, month-long war against Hezbollah, a Shi'ite militia that many analysts believe was bolstered by Israel's unilateral withdrawal from Lebanon in 2000. That conflict, triggered by Hezbollah's kidnapping of two soldiers on the Lebanese border, ended with an Aug. 14 cease-fire. The hostages have yet to be recovered.

“The notion of trading territory for peace was successful in two instances — Egypt and Jordan. It failed in two other cases — Lebanon and the Palestinian Authority,” Israel's deputy prime minister, Shimon Peres, wrote in Britain's Guardian newspaper.

“The initiative to withdraw unilaterally from the West Bank has lost its attraction in the eyes of the Israeli public due to the aftereffects of withdrawal from the Gaza Strip,” Peres added. “I cannot envisage a situation today in which the majority of Israelis will support such a withdrawal.”

Many on Israel's left, including even some members of the Labor Party that is the junior partner in Olmert's government, long opposed unilateralism on territorial issues, fearing that it spurred the radical elements of Palestinian society. This was echoed by some on the Israeli right, many of whom also distrusted the perceived moderation of Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas.

“It seems that Olmert has repented,” said Limor Livnat of the Likud Party, which heads the political opposition.

Just what Olmert plans to do now, with his centerpiece plan shelved, remains in doubt.

The most immediate option is to adopt an economic platform, especially when it comes to areas of northern Israel battered by thousands of Hezbollah rockets.

Analysts say the war cost Israel around \$5.3 billion, and there are the added hefty expenses of rehabilitating the defense establishment.

Israel's military and intelligence services are widely seen as having tackled Hezbollah poorly. With wars potentially looming against Syria and a nuclear-armed Iran, Israelis want to know all steps are being taken to protect them.

With his popularity sapped and Defense Minister Amir Peretz facing challenges from within his Labor Party, Olmert must also deal with the prospect of his government collapsing. That means reaching out to right-wing factions that could potentially join the coalition. These factions would be encouraged by the news that the West Bank plan is on hold, but would likely demand it be scrapped altogether.

Peres proposed that Israel turn its economic plans into an alternative peacemaking platform.

“We were prepared to enter into bilateral negotiations on the basis of the road map, but to date Hamas has prevented the Palestinian side from following through,” he wrote.

“An alternative could take the form of a partnership involving Israel, Jordan and the Palestinians, following an economic route rather than a political one.”

Peres proposed that the sides build on a deal already in place to turn the border region linking the Red Sea and Jordan River, via the West Bank, into a trading zone.

“This approach has worked elsewhere; most of the important changes that have occurred around the globe since the end of the second world war have been the outcome not of military interventions but of economic advances,” he wrote, adding that expanded trade zones would attract international investment and goodwill.

“If we can privatize part of the economy, why not privatize part of peace?” ■

The 'realignment plan' helped bring Olmert to power. But events have since undermined the idea.

## THIS WEEK

### TUESDAY

- Congress reconvenes for a five-week session before midterm elections in November. On the agenda, in both houses: Homeland Security funds for nonprofits; funds for Lebanon's reconstruction; the Palestinian Anti-Terrorism Act; new and tougher sanctions against Iran.

### WEDNESDAY

- The Museum of Jewish Heritage in New York launches an exhibition on the friendship between Pope John Paul II and the Jews.
- Hillel Neuer, who heads U.N. Watch, a group that monitors U.N. anti-Jewish and anti-Israel bias, issues a report on the first three months of the reconstituted U.N. Human Rights Council and testifies at U.S. congressional hearings on U.N. reform.

### THURSDAY

- The five permanent, veto-wielding members of the U.N. Security Council and Germany meet in Berlin to discuss what to do now that Iran has missed its final deadline for stopping the enrichment of uranium.
- Former Iranian President Mohammed Khatami speaks at the National Cathedral in Washington.

### SUNDAY

- The Arab American Institute launches a three-day leadership conference in Washington. Sessions will address Israel-Palestinian relations and the Lebanon war. One session will be on coalition-building with Jewish groups.

# NEWS IN BRIEF

## MIDDLE EAST

### Annan chides Iran over Holocaust

Kofi Annan urged Iranians to accept the Holocaust as historical fact. "I think the tragedy of the Holocaust is a sad and an undeniable historical fact, so we should really handle that, accept that fact and teach children what happened in World War II and ensure that it is never repeated," the U.N. secretary-general said Sunday during a visit to Tehran. "We should be careful not to say anything that is used as an excuse for incitement to hatred or violence."

Annan stirred up Jewish ire abroad by meeting with Iran's president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who has called the Holocaust a myth and urged for Israel to be eliminated. While in Tehran, Annan also dismissed as "distasteful" an Iranian-sponsored exhibition of cartoons denying the Holocaust and denigrating its victims.

### Olmert urges peace with Lebanon

Ehud Olmert called on Lebanon to make peace with Israel. The Israeli prime minister revealed Sunday that he had recently made several overtures for peace talks with his Lebanese counterpart, Fouad Siniora.

Siniora last week ruled out an independent Lebanese peace accord with Israel.

### Israelis warned on tough talk

An Israeli government memorandum warned that belligerent talk by Cabinet officials or military chiefs could encourage foreign war-crimes suits.

Jerusalem sources said Monday that the Foreign Ministry recently assembled a legal team to assess the risk of foreign entities filing suit against Israeli officials accused of involvement in the Lebanon war or military crackdowns on the Palestinians.

The ministry issued a memorandum to the military and other government agencies, warning those who could be targeted for prosecution against publicly making statements that could be used in evidence against them.

Among terms and phrases now considered off-limits are "crushing the enemy" and "wiping out," or "cleansing," areas suspected of harboring Hezbollah or Palestinian terrorists. The Foreign Ministry document said war-crimes suits were being prepared in France, Belgium, Morocco and Britain against Israeli army commanders or civil servants.

### Settlements to be expanded

Israel issued requests for construction bids for hundreds of new homes in two West Bank settlements. The tender for 348 construction plots in Ma'aleh Adumim and 342 in Beitar Illit were published by the Israel Lands Administration on Monday, the biggest such expansion initiative since Prime Minister Ehud Olmert took power in May.

Israel is obligated to freeze settlement construction under the U.S.-led "road map" for peace with the Palestinians, but Olmert has vowed that major settlement blocs will remain in the Jewish state under any final accord.

### Al-Qaida suspects in Sinai

Egyptian authorities searched the Sinai for a suspected Al-Qaida squad. Egyptian police mounted a major manhunt around Red Sea resorts and inland areas Sunday for five men suspected of being foreign members of Osama bin Laden's terror network.

According to one report, the suspects are traveling on fake Egyptian passports. Cairo had previously long denied the existence of Al-Qaida elements in Sinai, despite Israeli assertions to the contrary.

### Israel lets Beirut flights through

Israel allowed an Arab carrier to flout its air blockade over Lebanon. After Qatar Airways announced it would resume direct flights to Beirut on Monday, disregarding an Israeli requirement to stop off in Jordan first, Jerusalem said its air force would not be opposed.

Other regional carriers such as Lebanon's Middle East Airlines and Royal Jordanian have abided by the requirements of Israel's air blockade, imposed soon after the eruption of the recent war against Hezbollah.

### Jewish delegation meets Egyptian officials

An American Jewish Committee delegation discussed regional security issues in Cairo with Egypt's top foreign policy officials.

"The main message we take away from our meetings in Cairo is that Egypt and Israel need each other more than ever — that the two nations share concerns about Iran, regional extremism and the urgency of advancing peace, concerns heightened by the war in Lebanon," said Robert Goodkind, president of the AJCommittee, after the meetings Sunday.

## WORLD

### British report to focus on violence

British politicians prepared a report, accusing some left-wing activists and Muslim extremists of using the war in Israel as an excuse for anti-Semitic activities. The members of Parliament, from Britain's three major political parties, are to present the report to Prime Minister Tony Blair on Thursday.

The report will be released in the wake of what is being called an "alarming increase" in verbal harassment, abusive e-mails and letters, and violent assaults on British Jews during the month of July.

Although the report has been in preparation over a 10-month period, the recent spike in anti-Semitic activities has prompted a call for an emergency meeting with the prime minister.

### Europeans bar El Al planes with arms

Several European nations are barring El Al planes carrying arms from landing and refueling on their way to Israel.

The decision made by England, Germany, Portugal, Spain and Italy will require Israel to significantly cut down the size of arms shipments.

### Finland marks Jewish centennial

Finland marked the 100th anniversary of the Helsinki synagogue.

Sunday's celebration, led by the Jewish community, was attended by President Tarja Halonen, Parliament speaker Paavo Lipponen and Israel's tourism minister, Isaac Herzog, as well as leaders of various faiths.

## NORTH AMERICA

### Canadian man sentenced in Internet hate case

A Canadian man was sentenced to 16 months in jail followed by three years of probation for spreading hatred against Jews via the Internet.

The sentence handed down last Friday came in the first Internet hate crime to go before a criminal court in Canada.

Reni Sentana-Ries was also ordered to take down his site and was forbidden to use the Internet upon his release.

The 63-year-old defendant, who had changed his name from Reinhart Mueller, wrote that Jews are demons who worship the devil, have a sense of superiority that is like a "viral infection" and perpetuated the "myth" of the Holocaust for their own gain.