

**IN THE NEWS**
**Israel to lift Lebanon blockade**

Israel announced it would lift its blockade on Lebanon's air space and seaports Thursday.

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's office said Wednesday that Israel had received assurances from the U.S. secretary of state, Condoleezza Rice, and the U.N. secretary-general, Kofi Annan, that foreign peacekeeper forces were prepared to take over observation posts designed to monitor the possible smuggling of arms to Hezbollah.

Israel imposed the blockade as part of its response to Hezbollah's abduction of two of its soldiers on July 12.

**Blair to head to visit Mideast**

British Prime Minister Tony Blair is slated to visit Israel this weekend. Blair is expected in Jerusalem on Saturday for talks with his Israeli counterpart, Ehud Olmert, on the aftermath of the Lebanon war.

Afterward, the British prime minister is to fly to Beirut.

Blair is facing increasing criticism at home for his defense of Israel's decision to wage war against Hezbollah after the Lebanese militia abducted two Israeli soldiers on July 12.

**Israel kills 5 suspected terrorists**

Israeli forces killed five suspected Palestinian terrorists in the southern Gaza Strip.

The five, described as Hamas gunmen, died Tuesday night and Wednesday during separate Israeli airstrikes and ground assaults in the towns of Khan Yunis and Rafah.

Israel recently has stepped up operations in southern Gaza, which sees regular arms smuggling from neighboring Egypt.

Gaza also is believed to be where Cpl. Gilad Shalit, an Israeli soldier seized by Palestinian gunmen in a June 25 cross-border raid, is being held.

# WORLD REPORT

PUBLISHED WEEKDAYS BY JTA—THE GLOBAL NEWS SERVICE OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE • WWW.JTA.ORG

## U.S. activists outraged as Israel proposes cutting Falash Mura aliyah

By URIEL HEILMAN

**J**ERUSALEM (JTA) — Israel's Finance Ministry is proposing substantial cuts to Ethiopian immigration next year as part of widespread belt-tightening following Israel's war in Lebanon.

The plan, announced Tuesday as part of Israel's proposed budget for 2007, would halve the number of Ethiopian immigrants brought to Israel per month, to 150 from the current rate of 300.

If adopted, the change would represent a major setback to U.S. backers of Ethiopian aliyah, who launched a \$100 million campaign last year designed in part to pressure the government to increase the rate of Ethiopian immigration.

Israel's Cabinet decided in March 2005 to double the rate of Ethiopian immigration to 600 people per month, but the decision was never implemented.

"I hope the Jewish leaders overseas will understand this breaks all the rules, all the agreements, all the understandings," said Shlomo Molla, an Ethiopian-Israeli politician and head of the World Zionist Organization's department of Zionist issues.

"We won't let this happen. It's a scandal," he said.

The proposal to slash Ethiopian immigration signals the failure of a complex agreement reached a year and a half ago to complete mass Ethiopian immigration to Israel by the end of 2007.

That agreement would have seen the takeover of Jewish aid compounds in Ethiopia by the Jewish Agency for Israel, the end of lobbying campaigns for immigration by the main Jewish advocacy group in Ethio-

pia and the raising of more than \$100 million by North American Jews to help Israel foot the bill for the airlift and absorption of up to 20,000 additional Ethiopians.

The collaborative effort was intended to bring the mass Ethiopian aliyah to a close in under three years.

Now it seems the estimated 12,000 remaining Ethiopian petitioners for aliyah — known as Falash Mura — will have to wait even longer in shantytowns in the Ethiopian cities of Gondar and Addis Ababa before they can emigrate to the Jewish state, if at all.

"I think it's morally reprehensible," Stephen Hoffman, president of the Jewish Community Federation of Cleveland, said of the proposed budget cuts. "We're going to obviously ask the government not to go in that direction."

The Israeli government repeatedly has delayed implementing the decision to accelerate the aliyah, with various ministries shifting the blame.

Under the current budget proposal, an increase in the aliyah rate wouldn't be reconsidered until the 2008 budget discussions.

Last year, the United Jewish Communities umbrella group of North American federations launched a campaign called Operation Promise to raise \$100 million for Ethiopian aliyah and motivate the Israeli government to move ahead with its March 2005 decision.

The United Jewish Communities raised about half of the amount before the campaign stalled and was overshadowed this summer by special emergency fund-raising

*Continued on page 2*

## ■ U.S. Jewish groups have actively advocated accelerated Ethiopian aliyah

*Continued from page 1*  
for Israel's war with Hezbollah.

Some U.S. Jewish leaders say they're not sure whether the proposed slash in the Ethiopian immigration budget is a legitimate cutback resulting from the war or just an excuse to avoid bringing more Ethiopians to Israel.

One federation official told JTA he's beginning to doubt Israel's commitment to accepting the Falash Mura as immigrants.

"I think there will be great skepticism that this is not about something beyond money," said John Ruskay, executive vice president of UJA-Federation of New York.

"I think many of us are aware of the complexity and costs involved, but the signal that will be sent if the number is in fact reduced will, in my judgment, weaken the partnership with world Jewry."

"Every prime minister has said to us over and over again that the issue of aliyah is a No. 1 priority," Ruskay said. "The rabbinate has indicated that these are Jews. Ultimately, this is an issue in the hands of the Israeli public and the Israeli political system."

■  
The government's reticence to bring the Falash Mura to Israel has been both economic and ideological — and, some charge, racist.

Each Ethiopian immigrant costs the state approximately \$100,000 over the course of his lifetime, according to Israeli government estimates. The Ethiopians

are considered far more expensive than other immigrants since the background they're coming from is so different than Israel, and they need extensive support services after immigrating.

Many Israelis also doubt the Falash Mura's Jewish credentials, despite their being classified as Jews by Israel's Chief Rabbinate and the three major religious denominations of American Judaism.

The Falash Mura are Ethiopians of Jewish ancestry whose progenitors converted to Christianity several generations ago to escape social and economic pressures. Now they have begun returning to Judaism — in order to emigrate to the Jewish state along with their extended families, some charge.

■  
Given the state of record-keeping in Ethiopia, the Falash Mura's Jewish pedigree is virtually impossible to prove.

Unlike Ethiopian immigrants who came to Israel in Operations Moses and Solomon in 1984 and 1991, the Falash Mura have not continuously maintained Jewish traditions and practice, so Israel

has been accepting only those Falash Mura who can demonstrate a familial connection with Ethiopians already in Israel.

Some of those now coming to the Jewish state have no claims to Jewish heritage at all and are linked to descendants of Jews only by marriage.

■  
It's not clear exactly how many Falash Mura remain in Ethiopia, though aid officials say the number is probably not more than 12,000.

The longer it takes Israel to bring the current group of Falash Mura, the more petitioners for aliyah there will be, warn Israeli and American Jewish officials stationed in Ethiopia.

"It seems to me they don't know what they're doing," Avraham Neguise, director of South Wing to Zion, an Ethiopian Israeli advocacy and aid group, said of the Israeli government.

"It's just Jewish abuse," Neguise said. The Falash Mura "are in a tough situation, the government took a decision, told them that by the end of 2007 they would bring everyone, and they continue to live there in difficult circumstances. Instead of accelerating the pace, they are going backward. It's total disregard for the community."

**'I think many of us are aware of the complexity and costs involved, but the signal that will be sent if the number is in fact reduced will, in my judgment, weaken the partnership with world Jewry.'**

**John Ruskay**

Executive vice president,  
UJA-Federation of New York

## Shin Bet seeks high-tech experts

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Israel's domestic spy service launched a recruitment drive for high-tech experts.

The Shin Bet went public Tuesday with a call for computer programmers and specialists to join its counterterrorism and counterespionage missions in Israel, the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Salaries and terms would be attractive enough to compete with Israel's lucrative private high-tech market, the agency said. "If you thought the only way to fight terrorists was through interrogations in Arabic, think again," read an ad posted on the agency's Web site. "Today, more and more

preventive operations are carried out using the language of computing."

On Monday, Israel's deputy prime minister, Shimon Peres, urged Israel's security services to press ahead with technological innovation, "perhaps even on a type of intelligence hitherto unknown, grounded in revolutionary nanotechnology."

Peres wrote in Britain's Guardian newspaper, "A terrorist might be deterred by the knowledge that new surveillance tools have been developed that could identify him, even in a large crowd; that his weapon could be detected without his knowledge."



**Daniel J. Krifcher**  
President

**Mark J. Joffe**  
Executive Editor and Publisher

**Lisa Hostein**  
Editor

**Michael S. Arnold**  
Managing Editor

**Lenore A. Silverstein**  
Finance and Administration Director

JTA WORLD REPORT is published five days a week, except holidays, by the Jewish Telegraphic Agency Inc., 330 Seventh Ave., New York, N.Y. 10001-5010. For more information about how to subscribe by e-mail, fax or regular mail, call (212) 643-1890, or visit our Web site at [www.jta.org](http://www.jta.org).  
© JTA. Reproduction only with permission.

# Ukrainian Jews rate high on top-100 list

By VLADIMIR MATVEYEV

KIEV, Ukraine (JTA) — For Ukrainian Jews, success can be considered a dangerous thing.

The large number of Jews on a list of the 100 most influential Ukrainians has created a mixture of pride and anxiety in the country's Jewish community.

About 20 of those who made it to this year's list are Jewish. The list is published annually by Korrespondent, a Russian-language Kiev weekly.

Jews make up no more than one half-percent of Ukraine's population of 47 million, and some fear the overrepresentation of Jews among the country's business and political elites may strengthen anti-Semitic stereotypes.

"In the eyes of the public, this can create a wrong impression that Jews in Ukraine are very wealthy and the Jewish community is prospering," said Ilya Korchman, a Jewish pensioner from Kiev.

Yet Ukrainian Jews have a reason to celebrate, he said: The heavy Jewish representation on the list "is a result of the many talents of Jews, who are really influential in Ukraine."

One Kiev Jewish activist and researcher agrees.

"Ukrainian anti-Semites will use this list for their propaganda purposes," Alexander Nayman said. "And at the same time, the good people will have more respect toward Jews."

The public hasn't seemed to pay much attention to the preponderance of Jews on the list. Instead, many focused on the fact that for the first time in four years, Ukraine's president didn't top the list.

Business tycoon and lawmaker Rinat Akhmetov, believed to be the wealthiest man in Ukraine, moved up to the top spot from fifth place last year. He replaced President Viktor Yushchenko, who was second this year.

The shift is being attributed to the changing nature of the Ukrainian elite, where business leaders came to play a more prominent role after the 2004 "Orange Revolution" and subsequent political turmoil.

"Business is taking political power into its hands," political expert Vladimir Malinkovich told JTA.

All the Jews but one on this year's list are business leaders.

The highest-ranking Jew on the list is Igor Kolomoysky, 42, a co-owner of the Privat business group that has interests in the metal and financial sectors. Kolomoysky, who was eighth on the list last

year, moved up to the sixth spot.

Viktor Pinchuk, 45, another Jewish business tycoon and son-in-law of former President Leonid Kuchma, was ranked 12th on the list, the same as last year.

Eduard Shifrin, 46, president of the Zaporozhstal steel holding and co-chairman of the Jewish Confederation of Ukraine, was ranked 87th.

One of the Jews whose influence fell after the Orange Revolution is Yevgeny Chervonenko, 46, former minister of transport and communications who now serves as a regional governor in eastern Ukraine. Chervonenko, the vice president of the United Jewish Community of

Ukraine, slipped from 27th to 89th.

The only Jew on the list who is not a member of the country's business elite is Rabbi Ya'akov Dov Bleich, 42, who ranked 62nd.

Ukraine's longest-serving rabbi, the Brooklyn-born Bleich has lived in Kiev since 1989 and has been chief rabbi of Kiev and Ukraine since 1990.

Bleich is the only non-Christian cleric on the list.

A Ukrainian Jewish leader, Josef Zissels, was among 20 experts from different fields on the board that helped the magazine compile the list. ■



## How culture was saved from bomb rubble in Argentina

By FLORENCIA ARBISER

BUENOS AIRES (JTA) — Twelve years after the AMIA Jewish center in Buenos Aires was bombed, a new book and documentary highlight a different side of the deadly terrorist attack.

Both works, still untitled, document the efforts of some 800 young people who saved cultural pieces from the building after it was bombed on July 18, 1994, killing 85 people and wounding hundreds.

After the explosion, young adults of all nationalities offered their help to AMIA. In the middle of the post-bombing confusion, they met Ester Szwarc, the academic coordinator of YIVO in Argentina.

Founded in 1925 in what is today Vilnius, Lithuania, to study and preserve the Jewish life and culture, YIVO's branch in

Argentina opened in Buenos Aires in 1928.

The organization stored a huge collection of theater posters, programs, books, paintings, photographs and manuscripts, some of it rescued from the Holocaust. Since 1945, YIVO operated on the third and fourth floors of the AMIA building. The bomb destroyed most of the artifacts.

As the rest of July 1994 passed and the hope of finding lives below the rubble vanished, the youth brigade, coordinated by Szwarc, began the project of rescuing the objects.

Despite the cold, rainy winter, the volunteers worked from July to December.

"It was terrible to approach the destruction, to walk cautiously picking up pieces of history, making human chains from the fourth floor to the basement to get the objects out of the brash," said Szwarc at

a recent event previewing the upcoming documentary and book.

At the event, held on the 12th anniversary of the bombing, a 15-minute preview of the documentary, made by YIVO with the help of Lomas de Zamora University and Argentine journalist Rodolfo Compte, was shown.

A book of volunteers' testimonies — also under Compte's direction — is being published in October, while the film is in the final editing stage.

"I knew there was no more life below the rubble. But I thought that there had to be something," Nicolas, one of the volunteers, says in the documentary.

The film shows how hair dryers and stoves were used to dry the books' pages, as well as the discovery of a piano standing in a destroyed room. ■

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### NORTH AMERICA

#### Jewish man thrown off Canadian flight

An Orthodox Jew was thrown off an Air Canada Jazz plane for praying.

The incident occurred Sept. 1 on a flight from Montreal to New York, the CBC reported. The airplane was on the runway when the man began praying. A flight attendant said he was making other passengers nervous. He was escorted off the plane.

#### Bush: Free world won't allow nuclear Iran

The world will not allow Iran to develop a nuclear program, President Bush said.

The ultimatum, delivered Tuesday in the second of a series of speeches on the terrorism threat, was significant because it suggested that Bush would lead an effort to isolate Iran if the current bid to do so at the United Nations fails. The United States is leading efforts to get the U.N. Security Council to sanction Iran until it stops enriching uranium, a step toward manufacturing nuclear weapons. Russia and China are leading the resistance to sanctions.

#### Katherine Harris wins Florida primary

Katherine Harris, the Florida Republican who said electing non-Christians amounts to "legislating sin," won her party's U.S. Senate primary. Harris, currently in the U.S. House of Representatives, has said her comment to a Baptist publication was "taken out of context," although it was published as a full transcript.

She has also noted her solid support for Israel in Congress. Now that Harris has won Monday's primary, Harris faces Sen. Bill Nelson, whom she trails, in the November election.

#### Fund-raiser removes anti-Semitic comments

MoveOn.org, a major Democratic Party fund-raiser, removed anti-Semitic comments from its online message boards. The liberal group played a prominent role in Ned Lamont's successful bid in Connecticut's Democratic primary against incumbent Sen. Joe Lieberman, who was seen as overly close to President Bush.

Messages on its online boards, according to the Anti-Defamation League, included references to "Jew Lieberman" and "media-owning Jewish pigs," according to an Anti-Defamation League review. MoveOn removed the comments this week after ADL complaints.

"The comments that were posted were abhorrent," Eli Pariser, the group's executive director, said in a notice posted on the Web site.

#### Israel on Campus leaders meet in D.C.

Thirty leaders of the Israel on Campus Coalition met with White House officials and Israel's ambassador to Washington to plan for the academic year.

The group, which convened Tuesday, anticipates a tough year ahead for pro-Israel students on college campuses in the aftermath of Israel's war with Hezbollah in Lebanon. The leaders launched a petition drive to thank congressional leaders for their support of Israel during the war.

#### N.J. Democrats: Iraq war endangers Israel

Two New Jersey Democrats running to unseat Republicans said the Iraq war endangers Israel.

The argument advanced Wednesday by Linda Stender and Paul Aronsohn in a conference call with reporters for Jewish media launched what will be the national party's strategy to counter Republican claims that President Bush has been the best friend the Jewish community ever had.

"Iran has emerged as a greater threat which is part of the reason

I always opposed the war in Iraq," said Stender, an assemblywoman running to unseat U.S. Rep. Michael Ferguson.

"Everything we have devoted to the war in Iraq are resources not available to the real war on international terrorism," said Aronsohn, a health-care specialist targeting U.S. Rep. Scott Garrett.

#### RJC launches anti-Democrat campaign

The Republican Jewish Coalition launched a campaign saying that support for Israel among Democrats is eroding.

The e-mail campaign, titled "Democrats Increasingly Turn Their Backs on Israel," quotes recent statements by former President Carter, who said Israel's war in Lebanon was not justified, and two polls showing that, while both Democrats and Republicans are likelier to favor Israel, Republicans outpace Democrats overwhelmingly on the question.

The National Jewish Democratic Council counters that the Republican Party has its own critics of Israel's Lebanon war, including U.S. Sen. John Warner (R-Va.), the chairman of the Armed Services Committee.

#### Boston community protests Iranian's visit

Boston's Jewish community is protesting a planned speech at Harvard by Iran's former president, Mohammed Khatami.

The city's Jewish Community Relations Council said in a statement that Khatami "has expressed his goal to destroy Israel and promote violent jihad against the West on numerous occasions." Khatami is scheduled to speak at Harvard on Sunday.

### WORLD

#### U.N. Watch: Council a 'disappointment'

The new U.N. Human Rights Council has proven to be a "profound disappointment," a U.N. watchdog said.

In its three months, Hillel Neuer, U.N. Watch's executive director said, "the council, dominated by the Organization of the Islamic Conference, devoted 100 percent of its country-specific resolutions, two special sessions, one 'fact-finding' mission and a 'high-level commission of inquiry' to one-sided and politically motivated attacks on Israel, all of which granted effective immunity to violations of international law by Hamas and Hezbollah."

Neuer, whose Geneva-based organization monitors anti-Israel and anti-Jewish bias at the United Nations, was testifying Wednesday before Congress.

In contrast, he said, the council has virtually ignored severe human rights crises in places like Sudan.

#### Rabbis, Anglican leader agree to talk

Israel's chief rabbis and the archbishop of Canterbury signed an agreement aimed at continuing interfaith dialogue.

The rabbis, Shlomo Amar and Yona Metzger, signed the agreement Tuesday with Rowan Williams, The Associated Press reported. Williams acknowledged Tuesday that there are differences of opinion over how to reduce tensions in the Middle East.

### MIDDLE EAST

#### Immigrants land in Israel

Some 230 North American Jews immigrated to Israel. The flight, which arrived Wednesday in Israel, is the seventh planeload of Anglophone immigrants to the Jewish state this summer, bringing the total to more than 3,000.

The flights are sponsored by Nefesh B'Nefesh in conjunction with the Jewish Agency for Israel.