

IN THE NEWS
Al-Qaida urges attacks on Israel

On the fifth anniversary of the Sept. 11 attacks, Al-Qaida urged Muslims to attack Israel.

In a statement aired Monday by CNN, Ayman al-Zawahiri, Osama bin Laden's deputy, warned the West that it would suffer further attacks by Islamic terrorists.

"You gave us every legitimacy and every opportunity to continue fighting you," he said. "You should worry about your presence in the Gulf, and the second place you should worry about is Israel."

 Hamas accepts unity government

Hamas agreed to enter a coalition government with Fatah that could pave the way for talks between the Palestinian Authority and Israel.

P.A. President Mahmoud Abbas, who has been struggling to salvage peacemaking since his Fatah faction was trounced by the hard-line Hamas in January elections, announced Monday that a coalition deal had been clinched.

Jewish groups to rally for Israel

U.S. Jewish groups are trying to enlist thousands of Jews and non-Jews to greet members of the U.N. General Assembly with a message of solidarity with Israel.

They also want to show Iran's president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, that his anti-Israel, anti-Semitic and anti-Western policies will not be tolerated.

The Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, Jewish Community Relations Council of New York, United Jewish Communities and the UJA-Federation of New York will hold a "Stand with Israel" rally in New York on Sept. 20, the first day of the General Assembly, the executive vice chairman of the Conference of Presidents, Malcolm Hoenlein, said in a conference call Monday.

WORLD REPORT

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

Iran seen clearly as a threat — but powers can't agree on solution

By RON KAMPEAS

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Iran is the bad neighbor in the Middle East, Israel and the world powers agree — but differences of opinion persist over how to stop its nuclear program.

Diplomatic sources say Russia has been the main stumbling block in meetings last week and this week among the six major powers that are dealing with Iran after it refused to suspend uranium enrichment. In addition to Russia, they are the United States, China, Britain, France and Germany.

All of the countries, except Germany, wield vetoes on the U.N. Security Council, where the United States is seeking sanctions against Iran.

The Europeans are making a final bid in the Security Council to talk Iran down from its insistence on developing the technology to enrich uranium.

The most recent report from the International Atomic Energy Agency, the U.N. nuclear watchdog, says Iran is closer than ever to weaponizing uranium, according to media reports.

The IAEA document was not made available for publication when it was released to Security Council members Aug. 31, but reports have said inspectors found traces of uranium enriched to levels that leave little doubt that Iran is trying to build a weapon, despite Iran's insistence that its nuclear program is peaceful.

IAEA chief Mohammed ElBaradei on Monday was due to brief the 35 nations that make up the agency's board.

A flurry of diplomatic activity had sparked

speculation that Iran had blinked at the last minute and was ready to suspend enrichment for two months, but those reports could not be confirmed.

Going into the IAEA briefing, ElBaradei said he still hoped the matter could be worked out through diplomacy.

But John Bolton, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, said the Bush administration already was looking ahead to the next step: punitive actions against Iran with or without the

Security Council.

Other officials have given the Security Council until Sept. 18 — the day the U.N. General Assembly opens — to come up with a draft sanctions resolution.

"We won't only seek sanctions through the Security Council, we will use other steps, other economic activities, we will work with other countries outside the Security Council as well," Bolton told the United Jewish Communities' Lion of Judah conference Sunday. "The Europeans have again asked us if we would give them another opportunity, they are engaged in that activity as we speak."

But Bolton called that a "stalling technique" and warned that an end to Iran's nuclear weapons program was inevitable.

"We will certainly seek it through the Security Council, but if we fail to achieve it through the Security Council we will seek it and we will find it in other ways," he said.

The suggestion of military action to stop Iran from going nuclear — something Bush administration officials have hinted at since the beginning of this year — earns approval from Israel, which considers a nuclear Iran

Continued on page 2

NEWS ANALYSIS

■ *Russia has been the main obstacle in agreeing to sanctions on Iran*

Continued from page 1

a mortal threat. Benjamin Netanyahu, leader of the opposition Likud Party, said he doubted that things would ever reach the point of a military confrontation, but said it was important not to take that option off the table.

"As long as Iran understands there is an option, there will be no need to use it," Netanyahu said in Washington last week, where he met with a delegation of about a dozen U.S. senators and Vice President Dick Cheney.

He said the senators pressed him hardest on how to deal with the dangers posed by Iran in the wake of an Iraq war that proved far less successful than the Bush administration had anticipated, and that was launched on false expectations that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction.

Netanyahu said the difference was that prewar intelligence on Iraq was never more than an educated guess, while the intelligence on Iran is a sure thing.

"Here we're not guessing, we know," he said. "And what we know, Americans know."

Netanyahu was in Washington as an emissary of Israel's government and made representations on behalf of Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, a holdover of the solidarity that most political parties showed during this summer's war against Hezbollah in Lebanon.

Israel's foreign minister, Tzipi Livni, is expected to reinforce Israel's arguments for toughness against Iran when she arrives Wednesday for talks with Condoleezza Rice, the U.S. secretary of state

and Stephen Hadley, the White House's national security adviser.

Israel's friends in Congress are ready to reinforce America's and Israel's hands through the Iran Freedom Act, legislation that would broaden existing sanctions against Iran to include third parties that deal with the country.

The U.S. House of Representatives has passed the legislation, and Yleem Poblete, chief of staff for the House's Middle East subcommittee, told JTA that getting the

bill through the Senate before Congress breaks next month for midterm elections is a priority. Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-Fla.), who chairs the subcommittee, sponsored the original legislation.

Livni is to continue to New York over the weekend, where she will attend the General Assembly opening. Iran's president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who has discounted speculation that Iran will suspend uranium enrichment, is to address the assembly next Tuesday. ■

Study: Anti-Semitism on rise in Britain

By VANESSA BULKACZ

LONDON (JTA) — Anti-Semitism is rising in Britain, partly as a result of the situation in the Middle East, according to a new study.

The Report of the All-Party Parliamentary Inquiry Into Anti-Semitism was presented last week to British Prime Minister Tony Blair. The study was chaired by Labor Party lawmaker Denis MacShane and co-written by a multiparty group of 14 lawmakers over 10 months.

MacShane said many British Jews bear the brunt of people's anger over Israeli and American policies.

British Jews welcomed the report.

"This is an important document and its recommendations demand careful study. The report bears out many of the concerns that the board has expressed for the past five years," said Henry Grunwald, president of the Board of Deputies of British Jews. "We look forward to working with the government and other interested parties in implementing the report's recommendations in the days ahead."

The report makes more than 30 recommendations, including calling on the British government to provide greater support for British Jews' security needs, especially with reference to places of worship and schools. It also calls for a concrete definition of anti-Semitism.

"Anti-Semitism is not one-dimensional. It is perpetrated in different ways by different groups within society, and for this reason it is hard to identify," the report said.

It describes the policing situation as "inexcusable," saying police forces aren't required to record anti-Semitic incidents as they are other hate crimes.

In addition to more than 100 written submissions from organizations and individuals, the panel of lawmakers heard oral evidence in four sessions that were held in February and March. Presenters included former Home Secretary Charles Clarke; Attorney General Lord Goldsmith;

Orthodox Chief Rabbi Sir Jonathan Sacks; race watchdog chief Trevor Phillips; and the former head of the Muslim Council of Britain, Sir Iqbal Sacranie.

One of the panel members, former Conservative leader Iain Duncan Smith, said the situation is worse than he had realized.

The inquiry indicates that fewer than one in 10 anti-Semitic attacks reported to authorities resulted in prosecutions, and called for the Crown Prosecution Service to investigate why the number reported is so low.

The study suggests that tensions in the Middle East have exacerbated the problem. The report points to a minority of Islamic extremists who have used the situation in the Middle East to stoke hatred against Jews. ■

The report describes the policing situation as 'inexcusable,' saying police forces aren't required to record anti-Semitic incidents as they are other hate crimes.

JTA WORLD REPORT

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

Noa Artzi-Weill
Marketing 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.
© JTA. Reproduction only with permission.

The ethical dilemma of Auschwitz artifacts

By DINAH A. SPRITZER

PRAGUE (JTA) — Museums chronicling Jewish life and death — including the Holocaust — safeguard the memory of millions who can no longer speak.

These institutions often rely on artifacts bequeathed by those who want to share their family's history with the world.

But at former Nazi concentration camps that are now museums, the artifacts were largely items that were already on site, so they were obtained without the consent of former owners or their heirs.

So who has the right to claim them?

It is perhaps the ultimate ethical nightmare for a Jewish museum.

That nightmare is embodied in the case of Dina Babbitt, who has a claim against the Auschwitz Museum in Poland.

The 83-year-old Jewish artist, Czech-born and now living in California, was forced by Dr. Josef Mengele in Auschwitz to paint watercolors of gypsies, or Roma, as part of his effort to document their genetic inferiority.

Babbitt has unsuccessfully been trying for years to get seven of her paintings back from the Auschwitz Museum. The museum argues that the artworks' role as crucial evidence in one of the 20th century's greatest crime against humanity supersedes her ownership rights and her emotional attachment to the works that saved her and her mother's life.

Museum spokesman Jaroslav Mensfelt suggests that acknowledging owners' rights to thousands of Auschwitz artifacts would undermine the museum's ability to educate the public at a time when Holocaust denial has reached new levels.

He explains the museum's position, which it is also taking with a French man who took legal action earlier this year in an attempt to reclaim his father's suitcase.

"A good example is the 'Arbeit Mach Frei' gate. We know the author of this sign. Within the Babbitt way of thinking, why shouldn't the author claim the gate and hang it on his wall?"

Despite Mensfelt's reasoning, Babbitt's case has elicited outrage among artists and museum directors that a concentration camp survivor should be thwarted by a museum devoted to depicting Jewish suffering. But experts in curatorial ethics and historians are by no means united about the museum's position.

The International Council of Museums has 21,000 members in 141 countries and works in tandem with UNESCO.

The chairman of the council's legal committee, Patrick Boylan, accused the Auschwitz Museum in an e-mail of behaving like a institution wanting to keep Nazi-looted art from Jewish heirs.

"That the museum is going to keep the disputed items because [the museum asserts] they are more valuable to the museum than to the legal owner is deeply repugnant in ethical terms — and an argument that Jewish and other groups demanding Holocaust restitutions have strongly denounced when museums or governments have refused to return items from public museum collections," he wrote.

To those focused on Holocaust education, the need for the public to be aware of what Babbitt's paintings represent is paramount.

The works are part of an exhibition on the Nazi's attempted extermination of the Roma. Estimates of gypsy victims range from 250,000 to half a million, but what is agreed upon is that they lost a greater percentage of their ethnic group, about 50 percent, than any other group besides Jews.

Czech Roma activist Karel Holomek said, "The most important thing are the circumstances under which these portraits had been made and for which purpose. They acted as one of the instruments of liquidation of the Roma people and as a proof of their imperfection of their anthropological attributes — according to the Nazi theory. The portraits belong to the place where they are and there they should stay."

Yehuda Bauer, a renowned Holocaust scholar and adviser to Yad Vashem, also said the Babbitt paintings were essential to the museum.

"Do you think that if Rembrandt was alive, he should have the right to reclaim

his paintings, whether paid for or not, as his private property, six decades after he had painted them?" Bauer wrote in an e-mail.

He added that it was "a scandal" for Babbitt "to demand that pictures of Gypsy victims that testify to genocide should become her private property, to be sold on the market or hung in her private apartment."

Babbitt has expressed a desire to move the paintings to an American museum.

Kalman Sultanik of the Auschwitz International Council said that although he thinks that this move would be wrong, the Auschwitz Museum needs to reach some sort of compromise with Babbitt that would honor her role as the painting's creator.

The Holocaust Museum in Washington would not weigh in on the Babbitt case, although in a written statement the museum expressed understanding for both sides in the conflict.

A Yad Vashem spokeswoman noted that the museum had dealt with a handful of victim claims, some concluding with the return of property.

Michaela Hajkova, a curator for the Jewish Museum in Prague, explains that she had dealt with a small number of situations in which heirs sought to recover artworks.

The most significant case for the Prague museum's collections involved 174 expressionistic portraits of life at the Theresienstadt camp painted by artist Bedrich Fritta before he was murdered at Auschwitz.

The hidden paintings were given to the museum by Fritta's friend after World War II, and it was only in the mid-1990s that Fritta's son Tomas claimed them.

"We knew he didn't have the facilities to store these or a clue of how to take care of them. We knew the paintings were essential as documents from evidence. We were worried they might be destroyed," said Hajkova.

But even with that knowledge, "We just gave them back," said Hajkova. "We recognized his moral right."

'A good example is the "Arbeit Mach Frei" gate. We know the author of this sign. Within the Babbitt way of thinking, why shouldn't the author claim the gate and hang it on his wall?'

Jaroslav Mensfelt
Spokesman, Auschwitz Museum

NEWS IN BRIEF

NORTH AMERICA

Ex-Iranian president sued

Some Iranian Jewish emigres sued former Iranian President Mohammed Khatami.

The seven families, who currently live in Los Angeles and Israel, are suing Khatami for allegedly instituting policies that prevented them from gaining information about their relatives, who were arrested between 1994 and 1997 as they tried to leave Iran and cross into Pakistan.

The lawsuit was filed Sept. 7 and a summons was issued last Friday to Khatami, who was touring the United States on a two-week special visa. The plaintiffs are suing for compensation under an act that allows non-U.S. citizens to sue in American courts.

Clinton condemns 'hit-and-run democracy'

Former President Clinton earned applause from a Jewish group for condemning what he called the Bush administration's foreign policy of "hit-and-run democracy."

Clinton delivered the keynote address Monday at the United Jewish Communities' Lion of Judah conference, which commemorated five years since the Sept. 11 attacks. He said the central lesson he drew from the attacks is that "people are the prize": The West must counter terrorists not only through war, but also through long-term investment in developing countries that produce terrorists.

Speaking to 1,500 female fund-raisers, Clinton derided the deterioration of the fragile democracy in Afghanistan and said, "The one thing we learned at that moment in time is that we can't practice hit-and-run democracy."

Khatami defends Hezbollah

Speaking at Harvard, a former Iranian president defended Hezbollah for fighting Israel.

"Hezbollah today is a symbol of Lebanese resistance," Mohammed Khatami said Sunday. Khatami also denied that Iran funds the Shi'ite militant group, though that is widely accepted as fact around the globe. He criticized Osama bin Laden, both for the crimes he committed and for doing so in the name of Islam.

An estimated 200 people protested Khatami's speech, which took place at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government.

Rabbi delivers blessing to Arab Americans

A leading Reform rabbi delivered the blessing at an Arab American commemoration of Sept. 11.

Rabbi David Saperstein, director of the Reform movement's Religious Action Center, joined a multifaith panel at the Arab American Institute's commemoration Monday in Washington and delivered the blessing. "Where there are ignorance and superstition, let there be enlightenment and knowledge," Saperstein said.

He said the West had failed "to stand up to terrorism earlier and to ameliorate the conditions that cause terrorism," adding that military action alone would not eradicate the problem. "The sword enters the world because of justice delayed and justice denied," Saperstein said, citing the Talmud.

Canadian parties' resolutions blasted

Two Middle East resolutions adopted by Canada's New Democratic Party are "irresponsibly one-sided and dangerously misinformed," the Canada-Israel Committee charged in a statement.

The first resolution, adopted at the Quebec City convention this weekend, called Israel's response to Hezbollah during the recent war "drastically disproportionate" and described Hezbollah as "a recognized political party with democratically elected members in

Lebanon's Cabinet and Parliament."

The second resolution also criticized Israel and called for a two-state solution for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

MIDDLE EAST

Court limits rabbinical jurisdiction

Israel's High Court of Justice ruled that rabbinical courts cannot rule in mixed-marriage divorces.

Monday's ruling could affect an increasing number of divorces involving immigrants who are not Jewish according to Jewish law.

Expulsion remarks draw flak

Anti-Arab remarks by a senior right-wing lawmaker stirred up controversy in Israel. Army Radio on Monday broadcast a speech in which Effi Eitam, a leader of the National Union-National Religious Party bloc, said most Palestinians in the West Bank should be deported and that Israeli Arabs should be excluded from national politics.

"We have let a fifth column rise up among us," Eitam said in the speech, delivered Sunday at a memorial service for an Israeli army officer killed in the recent Lebanon war, according to Army Radio.

The remarks were condemned across Israel's political spectrum.

Conviction in attack on Palestinians

A West Bank settler was convicted of murdering four Palestinians.

Jerusalem District Court on Monday convicted Asher Weisgal, 38, of gunning down four Palestinians with whom he worked at a West Bank factory in August 2005. The Shvut Rachel resident is expected to get a life sentence.

WORLD

British Jews meet on security

The current threat to the Jewish community and wider British society "is very real and is not going away," an expert on terrorism said.

Andy Hayman, assistant commissioner of specialist operations at the Metropolitan Police Service, made the comments Sept. 7 in an annual pre-High Holiday security briefing for British Jews.

The meeting took place as anti-Semitic incidents are on the rise in Britain. Some 300 synagogue security officers and volunteers with the Community Security Trust, the group that monitors security for British Jews, were briefed on what the trust and the police have done to ensure the community's safety during the holidays.

BBC ordered to release report

The British Broadcasting Corp. no longer can keep private a report on the broadcaster's Middle East coverage, a tribunal ruled.

Set up to deal with inquiries under Britain's 2000 Freedom of Information Act, the tribunal ruled that BBC cannot keep private a report presented in 2004 to BBC news executives by Malcolm Balen, its senior adviser on the Middle East.

Babi Yar event to be international

Delegations from 40 countries are expected to attend a Holocaust event in Kiev later this month, the organizer said.

It remains unclear whether Russian President Vladimir Putin will attend the event marking the 65th anniversary of the Nazi massacre in Babi Yar, Vyacheslav "Moshe" Kantor said Monday during a conference call with journalists.

Kantor is president of the Russian Jewish Congress and chairman of the board of the European Jewish Congress.