

# ISRAEL REPORT

To provide greater exposure to primary Israeli news sources and opinions in order to become better informed on the issues, and to gain a better understanding of the wide range of perspectives that exist in Israeli society and politics.

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## MINISTER KATZ DANCES TRADITIONAL SWORD DANCE IN OMAN (YNet 11/7/18)

Transportation and Intelligence Minister Yisrael Katz received Tuesday a very warm welcome upon his arrival in Oman, and joined his hosts in a traditional sword dance to the sounds of local folk music.

Katz toured the Nizwa Fort—one of UNESCO's world heritage sites. The city of Nizwa used to be the capital of the sultanate in the Persian Gulf.

Katz presented before several Arab ministers his "Tracks for Regional Peace" plan—a railway that will connect the Mediterranean and the Persian Gulf through Israel and Jordan.

"I was moved to receive such a warm welcome in Oman as an Israeli minister, and take part in Oman's traditional sword dance. This is a sign of Israel's growing strength."

In October, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu paid a secret visit to Oman, the first of its kind in more than 20 years.

## BRAZIL: WE WON'T YIELD TO ARAB PRESSURE, EMBASSY WILL MOVE TO JERUSALEM (Israel Hayom 11/7/18)

The new administration in Brazil has reiterated its position that despite mounting pressure from the Arab world, it will remain true to its word and relocate its embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.

"We're going to move the Brazilian Embassy to Jerusalem," Eduardo Bolsonaro, the son of newly elected President Jair Bolsonaro, wrote on Tuesday to Jane Silva, president of a leading pro-Israel organization in Brazil.

Silva had approached Eduardo Bolsonaro in the wake of reports in the Brazilian press indicating that Egypt had called off the Brazilian foreign minister's upcoming visit to Cairo in protest of the planned embassy transfer.

In her letter to Bolsonaro, Silva wrote: "Jerusalem was always the capital of Israel. ... There was a partition plan; the Arabs rejected it and launched wars against Israel and persecuted Israel. Israel has suffered, but it held its head high. Israel has seized every opportunity and established a nice home for the sole and legitimate owners of the land of Israel – the Jewish people."

"It's funny that there are over 50 Arab countries, none of which are willing to give a sliver of land to the Palestinians, while Israel is the only Jewish country in the world, smaller than [the state of] Sergipe in Brazil, and despite this they still want to divide Israel?" she wondered.

Meanwhile, Israeli and Brazilian officials have begun initial discussions to coordinate President Bolsonaro's visit to Israel soon after he is sworn into office.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu may attend Bolsonaro's inauguration, which is scheduled for January 1.

According to reports in the Brazilian media, it's possible that instead of a traditional Catholic Mass, which has been the setting for every preceding presidential inauguration, an evangelical pastor could preside over prayers at the event.

Bolsonaro has declared himself Catholic, while his wife is evangelical.

## US HOPES RUSSIA WILL CONTINUE TO LET ISRAEL HIT IRANIAN ASSETS IN SYRIA (Israel Hayom 11/8/18)

Ambassador James Jeffrey told a group of journalists via a telephone conference that Iran's 2015 nuclear deal with world powers, which U.S. President Donald Trump pulled America out of in May, had a bad effect on Iran's behavior and that it has "accelerated its activities."

Jeffrey expressed concerns about Russia's delivery of advanced S-300 air defense missiles last month to Syria, weeks after a Russian plane was shot down by Syrian forces responding to an Israeli air strike – a friendly fire incident that stoked regional tensions.

"We are concerned very much about the S-300 system being deployed to Syria," Jeffrey said. "The issue is at the detail level. Who will control it? What role will it play?"

"In the past, Russia has been permissive in consultations with the Israelis about Israeli strikes against Iranian targets inside Syria," he said. "We certainly hope that that permissive approach will continue."

Jeffrey said Israel has an "existential interest in blocking Iran from deploying long-range power projection systems such as surface-to-surface missiles" and drones aimed at and used against Israel.

Israel rarely acknowledges attacks inside Syria but has said it would use military action to prevent weapons transfers to its enemies.

In September, an Israeli military official revealed that the IDF had hit over 200 Iranian targets in Syria in the previous 18 months. Since the delivery of the S-300 systems, there have been no reports of Israeli airstrikes in Syria.

Iran has said it will stay in Syria as long as Assad wants it to.

ISIS launched several counteroffensives in recent weeks against the U.S.-backed Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces who have been trying to take the area from the extremists since early September, killing scores of them and capturing others. The counterattacks were carried out during sandstorms in the mostly desert area.

"One other reason for the reverse there was unusually bad and sustained weather that limited our use of air power which is very important for our fight against [ISIS]," he said. "As the weather changes and as additional troops are introduced, I expect the situation will change and we'll see advances

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against [ISIS]."

He added that after ISIS is defeated, concerns about the group as an insurgent force will remain "and also ISIS's ability to infiltrate back into areas as a terrorist force both in Iraq and in Syria in particular."

Jeffrey said that when American officials say that U.S. troops will stay in Syria, "we say until the enduring defeat of ISIS," which means to establish the conditions so that local forces, local populations and local governments can deal with ISIS as a terrorist or as an insurgent movement.

"We're not there yet," he said.

The United States seeks to regularize cease-fires now in place in Syria, move toward a political solution and then have all foreign forces that have entered the conflict since 2011 leave, with the exception of Russia.

### **KNESSET MEMBERS REACH ACROSS THE AISLE TO PROMOTE NON-ORTHODOX MOVEMENTS (JPost 11/7/18)**

Several MKs from the coalition and the opposition called for the state to improve relations with progressive Jewish denominations in the US and Israel, during a special hearing in the Knesset on Wednesday on equality and recognition for progressive Jewish denominations in Israel.

The session focused on the current situation regarding the progressive Jewish movements in Israel. The state does not recognize the Reform and Masorti (Conservative) denominations for the purposes of their religious ceremonies, for equal or proportionate funding as Orthodox institutions and for other matters such as eligibility to run as municipal rabbis.

There have also been severe disputes between the current government and the progressive denominations on issues such as prayer rights at the Western Wall, Jewish conversion and other matters.

Likud MK Amir Ohana said during the hearing that there is "great ignorance" among the Israeli public about Jews in the Diaspora, especially Jewish communities in the US, and noted that he had personally spent time in a non-Orthodox congregation when he resided in America.

Ohana, who is gay, said he and his partner were very warmly received by the community when they had been in Oregon for the birth by surrogacy of their children.

"The embrace and love we received there is something I and Alon [his partner] will never forget," said Ohana.

"We need to connect all political sides in order to finally be fitting for the title of the state of the Jews, a state of all the Jews," said the MK during the session.

MK Rachel Azaria of Kulanu, one of the coalition partners, said Jews of the Diaspora were part of her family and "a massive asset" for the State of Israel. Azaria, who is from the liberal wing of the religious Zionist community, described the Conservative and Reform movements as being "very important," and said ways must be found for all Jewish denominations to live together in Israel.

"The state of Israel will recognize the [non-Orthodox] denominations, that's the good news," she declared. "The bad news is that it will take more time."

### **BARKAT, HABAYIT HAYEHUDI GIVE CRUCIAL NOD TO LEON IN JERUSALEM MAYOR'S RACE (Ha'aretz 11/8/18)**

The Habayit Hayehudi party and outgoing Jerusalem Mayor Nir Barkat announced their support on Wednesday for Moshe Leon in next week's runoff election for the Jerusalem mayoralty. Barkat, in his statement, described Leon as "the best choice."

Leon is also negotiating with Agudat Yisrael, whose Council of Torah Sages ordered its local representatives to pursue contact with Leon. Likud ministers Yariv Levin and Tzachi Hanegbi also expressed support for Leon.

The move by Habayit Hayehudi is a blow for the secular candidate, Ofer Berkovich, who had tried to win the party's endorsement because he needs heavy support from the city's religious-Zionist residents to win.

Habayit Hayehudi's statement said, "Moshe Leon responded to all the

demands on Habayit Hayehudi's agenda, which are aimed at assuring the Zionist character of Israel's capital." It was also agreed that the chairman of Habayit Hayehudi's Jerusalem faction would be a deputy mayor and get the education portfolio.

Barkat's statement said, "I believe that the choice of Moshe Leon in the second round is a choice for the benefit of Jerusalem, which is why I decided to support him. Moshe Leon has the ability to lead the city for the benefit of all its residents. From my familiarity with both candidates and my work with both of them, I have no doubt that Leon is the best choice for Jerusalem."

Barkat added, "After many conversations with Moshe, in which he presented his path and his plans to lead the city, I was convinced that he intends to lead Jerusalem through inclusion and dialogue with all sectors and that everyone will be equal to him, so there will be a continuation of the way I led Jerusalem over the past decade."

Five years ago Leon was a bitter rival of Barkat's in the mayoral race and the latter attacked him harshly, accusing him of corruption and saying his candidacy was the result of a shady deal. Since then the two reconciled, and Leon in recent years was part of Barkat's municipal coalition. Leon was disappointed when Barkat supported Jerusalem Affairs Minister Zeev Elkin in last week's first round of voting.

Relations between Barkat and Berkovitch, who had been his senior secular partner in the coalition, fell apart a year-and-a-half ago and Berkovitch's Hitorerut faction left the municipal coalition. Since then Barkat has criticized Berkovitch periodically. Leon thanked Barkat for his support, saying "it's very precious to me."

Agudat Yisrael, whose candidate Yossi Daitch came in fourth in the first round, is negotiating with Leon and is expected to support him. It still isn't clear what Agudat Yisrael's terms are, however, and how enthusiastic the endorsement will be. An Agudat Yisrael source said the party's endorsement of Leon was expected, but will apparently be half-hearted and not call on party supporters to get involved in the campaign. At this point, however, even a weak endorsement could tip the scales in Leon's favor.

During last week's voting, Leon got more than 79,000 votes – 33 percent. Berkovitch got 68,000 votes, or 29 percent.

### **RIVLIN SPEAKS AT MASS PRAYER CEREMONY FOR SIGD HOLIDAY (Arutz-7 11/7/18)**

President Reuven Rivlin spoke today, Wednesday, at prayers to mark the Sigd holiday of the Ethiopian-Israeli community that took place at the Sherover Promenade (Tayelet) in Armon Hanatziv, Jerusalem. The president shook hands warmly with the leaders of the community and thanks them for inviting him to open the special ceremony.

"'Jeena, Jeena, Jerusalem', 'Longing, Longing for Jerusalem' – this is what we sing to Jerusalem in the prayers of the festival. And those prayers: those ancient, wonderful prayers that you kept hold of and held dear to you and learned by heart and taught your children and passed down the generations. They are prayers of wonder and expectation all the way to Jerusalem," began the president.

"You brought a spirit of heroism and nobility that was sorely tested on the difficult journey you undertook, and over the long years of expectation and yearning. And you brought with you an ancient and passionate love for Zion, a love without bounds," he said.

The president emphasized the efforts being made to secure the release of Avera Mengistu and the good relations between Israel and Ethiopia: "At this time, I would like to speak about Avera. Fate has made him everyone's son, and his absence and our concern for his safety have already cast a shadow over the celebration of this holiday for four long years. This year, I had the privilege to be the first Israeli president to visit Ethiopia. On my visit, I asked the president and the prime minister to work for Avera's release, and said I was hopeful that because of the Ethiopian-Israeli community here, the relations between the two countries will become stronger."

"We have much work ahead of us, but how good it is to know that we have returned home. When we are here together, sharing Israeli Hope and a single path that leads to Jerusalem. Happy Sigd!," concluded the president.

### **THE ISRAELI STARTUP AIMING TO PREVENT THE NEXT PITTSBURGH MASSACRE** (JPost 11/8/18)

A startling 75% of Americans between the ages of 15 and 21, also known as Generation Z, say mass and school shootings are significant sources of stress, according to an American Psychological Association survey published last week.

The worrying new figures were released only three days after Pittsburgh's Jewish community was rocked by the murder of 11 Tree of Life synagogue congregants at a mass shooting during Shabbat morning prayers.

According to nonprofit Gun Violence Archive, the synagogue shooting was the 294th mass shooting incident in 2018. The unwelcome figure has since risen to 306.

Founded in 2016, Tel Aviv-based start-up Gabriel aims to provide a smart, affordable and easy-to-use solution for mass shootings aimed at so-called soft targets and communal spaces, including schools, community centers, synagogues and churches.

Gabriel CEO Yoni Sherizen spent 15 years working in the Jewish community before shifting his focus to business. Motivated by the June 2016 mass shooting at Tel Aviv's Sarona Market and, six days later, the murder of 49 people at the Pulse nightclub in Orlando, Florida, Sherizen sought to develop a technological platform to change the outcome of future, similar events.

"In events like that, the casualty rate skyrockets with every passing minute. If you can help people instantly get to safety, alert them of the danger, alert authorities and provide emergency services with real-time information on how to deal with the crisis, you can dramatically change the way these things unfold," said Sherizen.

The company's crisis platform integrates three critical components. First, a physical device placed on the wall of the building which serves both as a panic button to alert first responders, police and building occupants, and also as a video and audio communication hub should all other communication services fail.

Second, the Gabriel smartphone application enables users to declare an emergency, alert others and continue to share critical, real-time information from the scene. Smartphones become key communication and intelligence points for emergency response teams.

Finally, the company has developed an intuitive command and control dashboard to enable real-time crisis management. Available both as a web and smartphone application, the dashboard provides direct video and audio feeds and a dynamic site map.

"We wanted to create something not only easy to use, but also to install. There are military-grade or government-grade platforms on the market but you can't start a discussion for less than \$200,000 for a serious solution." said Sherizen.

"Our starter kit costs \$10,000. Depending on the size and makeup of the community building, it would cost between \$20-30,000 to fully outfit the location. We have made it very affordable. This is a game-changer for the lock-down and active shooter drills that are now a standard part of any child's upbringing in the States."

Boosted by an advisory board including former Mossad deputy director Ram Ben-Barak, former Israel Police chief Yohanan Danino, former Shin Bet Director of Overseas Missions Kobi Mor and father of Parkland school shooting victim Ryan Petty, Sherizen and co-founder Asaf Adler will launch their finished product in the coming weeks after a successful pilot program in Detroit focusing on a school and a local Jewish Community Center.

The Detroit Jewish community has already pre-ordered the finished product and the system will initially be installed in 25 locations. Sherizen expects more communities to join following recent events in Pittsburgh.

"Unfortunately every month there seems to be another high-profile event of this nature. After the Vegas shooting, we were able to show our system would have managed to identify the location of the shooter much quicker," said Sherizen.

With more than 475,000 soft targets across the United States and increasing security fears, the potential market for the Gabriel is huge. The company would gain revenues of almost \$1 billion if only 10% of soft targets were to invest \$20,000 in its alert systems.

"We have had requests from condominiums and interest from corporations due to workplace shootings. There are concerns from robberies gone wrong to workplace violence and active shooter situations. The most sensitive one right now is the soft targets."

### **REMAINS OF MISSING ISRAELI FIGHTER PILOT FOUND AFTER 56 YEARS** (Israel Hayom 11/7/18)

The remains of an Israeli Air Force pilot that has been missing since his plane went down 56 years ago have been located, the IDF Spokesperson's Unit said Tuesday.

Lt. Yakir Mordechai Naveh, 23, initially served as an airborne mechanic, eventually becoming a fighter pilot and flight instructor.

According to military records, on May 6, 1962, Naveh and IAF cadet Oded Cotton embarked on a training flight on a single-engine Fouga Magister. While flying over the Sea of Galilee, their plane flew too low over the water and the engine failed, jolting the aircraft and causing its nose to hit the water. This sent the Fouga into a fierce spin from which they could not recover, crashing into the lake.

Cotton's body was found a year later near the wreckage of the plane, but there was no sign of Naveh and he was declared a fallen soldier whose burial place is unknown.

In 2000, the IDF renewed its search for the pilot using new technology and has continued to conduct periodic scans of the lake.

On Oct. 16, the military began its 12th search round for the pilot's remains, which were eventually discovered on Oct. 25 on the bottom of the Sea of Galilee, 2.5 miles west of Tiberias, along with more pieces of the aircraft.

The remains were then sent to the National Center of Forensic Medicine for identification, the IDF said.

The Sea of Galilee is a relatively small body of water, but IDF divers have often described search efforts there as "hellish," over the lake's soft, silty bottom, which reduces visibility to a minimum.

"On Thursday, Oct. 25, 2018, the remains of Lt. Yakir Mordechai Naveh were located in the Sea of Galilee among the wreckage of the aircraft that crashed there in 1962 and were transferred to the forensics institute," a military statement said.

"On Oct. 16, the 12th search operation for Naveh's remains was launched using new and advanced technology provided by a company that was chosen especially by the Defense Ministry. The IAF spearheaded the operation and was supported by several other units."

The efforts to locate the pilot's remains were "part of the IDF's moral and ethical obligation to locate all its missing and captive personnel, including fallen soldiers whose burial place is unknown," the statement said.

Brig. Gen. Nathan Yisraeli, head of the IAF's Personnel Directorate, said the operation "symbolizes the IAF's determination to ensure our fallen soldiers are found and given a proper burial."

Lt. Yakir Mordechai Naveh will be laid to rest on Nov. 13 at the Kiryat Shaul Military Cemetery in Tel Aviv.

### **HEBREW U TEAM DEVELOPS SHAPE-SHIFTING 3D PRINTED PILLS FOR BETTER TARGETED DRUGS** (Times of Israel 11/6/18)

Researchers at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem have developed a new way to create drug capsules using 3D printers, a step that will help pave the way for pills that can be tailored to perform better than the conventional

capsules manufactured today.

The custom-printed pills are made out of a hydrogel in which the medication is inserted, said Professor Shlomo Magdassi, head of the Hebrew University's 3D and Functional Printing Center, who developed the technology together with Dr. Ofra Benny, a researcher at Hebrew University's Institute for Drug Research. The substance has the consistency of *malabi*, a Middle Eastern milk pudding, Magdassi said.

The technology enables the creation of pills with complex designs, he explained, from star-shaped to crystalline to round, that can expand, change shape and be activated on a preset schedule. This is currently not possible, or very expensive to do, in conventional pharmaceutical manufacturing techniques. The flexibility enables the capsules to expand or release their medication at the location they need to target.

For example, Magdassi said, a tablet can be printed that can swell in the stomach to give a feeling of fullness, or to only release its medication in the intestine, where acidity is lower than in the stomach. It will also allow doctors to more specifically tailor the dosage of the drugs to individual patients.

"These 3D printed objects will be able to change shape through contact with water, or humidity – enabling them to open only under certain conditions," said Magdassi, who is also a member of the Center for Nanoscience and Nanotechnology and Institute of Chemistry at the university.

The 3D pills are just one of the technologies developed by researchers at The Hebrew University. The university has set up a 3D printing center in which researchers, startups, artists, "people from different fields" can come to utilize the various printers and implement their new ideas, Magdassi said.

"This technology is bringing us closer to a future in which the medical field can offer personalized, patient-centered care," said Dr. Yaron Daniely, CEO and president of Yissum, the technology transfer company of the university, in a statement announcing the development of the technology.

The 3D printed hydrogels are just one of many innovations that will be presented at the 2nd annual conference, 3D Printing and Beyond, to be held on Wednesday, which will bring to Jerusalem a wide range of global industry leaders and researchers to explore advances in pharmaceuticals, electronics, and defense related technologies, along with 3D printed food, automotive parts and more.

The key to moving this field forward is to continue to experiment with various disciplines, Magdassi said.

In a 3D printing process, a computer-controlled design shapes a material — like metal powder or a liquid dispersion of metal particles — to create a three-dimensional object. These objects are generally created by adding layers of material, one over the other, Magdassi explained.

### **HAMAS'S 'WAIT AND SEE' STRATEGY IN GAZA CEASEFIRE TALKS** (Alex Fishman, YNet 11/6/18)

Over the past weekend, Hamas dictated a new strategy for managing the "March of Return" campaign: *tahfif*, a sort of "wait and see" strategy. Meaning, curbing the violent demonstrations on the Gaza border until it becomes clear what the terror organization can get from Israel and the Palestinian Authority in exchange for maintaining the relative calm.

"*Tahfif*" in Arabic stems from the word "*hafif*," which is an expression well known to Israelis, even those who don't speak Arabic, and describes a shoddy manner of doing things. And between us, everything Israel does on the border is shoddy and lacks real direction. "*Arrangement*" is a word that was invented to dodge the term "agreement."

Hamas was the one that decided to lower the flames, as the Gaza rulers estimate they are on the verge of reaching an Egypt-mediated agreement with Israel, like the agreement achieved after the 2014 Operation Protective Edge, when Israel opened the Gaza border crossings, the strip's fishing zone was increased to nine nautical miles, and international commitments were made to rehabilitate the coastal enclave.

This time, allowing fuel into the strip was added, and by doing so Israel is

allowing Gaza's residents to enjoy a supply of electricity for more than eight hours per day.

Furthermore, this is the first time Israel has made a move vis-à-vis Hamas, while bypassing and weakening the Palestinian Authority (PA) by pressuring it not to tighten the sanctions imposed on Gaza, as well as circumventing Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas on the strip's fuel supply.

In addition, negotiations to transfer Qatari money into the strip are currently ongoing—despite the PA's objection—to pay the salaries of Hamas officials.

If Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi succeeds in convincing Abbas to allow the transferring of funds into Gaza, Hamas could dub its violent strategy over the past eight months as a success, and move on to the "*tahfif*" strategy—continue the "March of Return" protests, but cease to create provocations on the border and halt the launching of incendiary balloons.

Meanwhile it is unknown whether an agreement has been reached with the PA regarding the Qatari funds, as that would require Hamas to meet a series of conditions imposed by Abbas, which include giving up its independent military force.

But this is not the only obstacle to achieving calm: Israel's defense establishment knows that receiving fuel and Qatari money will not be enough for Hamas to halt the violence.

The terror organization has another card up its sleeve, which it plans to reveal once it receives the money from Qatar—a demand for a seaport independent of any Israeli involvement.

For Hamas, the seaport would be the ultimate achievement, justifying the hundreds of dead and wounded Palestinians in the "March of Return" campaign.

The seaport symbolizes the lifting of the siege, and building it is not so far-fetched. Defense Minister Avigdor Lieberman and Transportation Minister Yisrael Katz have both spoken in past about establishing a seaport in Gaza under Israeli supervision. As far as Hamas is concerned, it is already half way there; only one tiny condition is yet to be fulfilled—a seaport independent of Israel.

Hamas thinks that with a little pressure applied on the Israeli government, whose sole interest is its own survival, it can achieve its goals.

Moreover, the IDF has advised the political echelon not to go to war in Gaza now, and rejected Lieberman's plan to deliver a hard blow to Hamas, fearing it would escalate into a ground operation in the strip. Nevertheless, the army is also convinced several rounds of limited fighting are yet to come. And what then? Nobody knows.

So what should Hamas understand from all of this? That it can demand more, since it is not under a real existential threat. Give them a finger, and they'll take the whole hand.

Hamas leader in Gaza Yahya Sinwar and his close circle know the Israeli society very well. They know that when the Israelis living in Gaza border communities say they are at their wit's end, the government, with elections on the horizon, can be brought down to its knees—meaning they can continue applying pressure. After a seaport, Hamas might demand an airport.

Israel's own "*hafif*" strategy creates a situation in which the left hand doesn't know what the right hand is doing. On the one hand, Israel is making an effort to achieve calm, while on the other hand two decisions that will certainly cause a flare-up in security prisons in Israel—and as a result in the West Bank and Gaza—have been made.

A law allowing Israel to deduct money the PA is transferring to families of security prisoners, alongside an instruction not to allow the prisoners to receive the PA's NIS 400 monthly allowance for food and clothing, will go into effect in the beginning of January.

If the PA doesn't pay, Israel would pay tens of millions of shekels. But that's not the point. The security prisoners, who are allowed certain independence in their daily life, would no longer be afforded that. And when the prisons go up in flames, so do the territories. This is a populist decision. Who needs it?