

Yachad Ministries' Israel's News Update April 17, 2015

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A gold menorah with seven branches and a silver metal bracelet with a Star of David. The menorah is ornate with a central stem and seven branches, each ending in a knob. The bracelet is made of metal links and features a prominent Star of David in the center.

ISRAELIS TO COMMEMORATE 70 YEARS SINCE END OF HOLOCAUST: Israelis across the country will mark Holocaust Remembrance Day with memorials and ceremonies on Wednesday evening, 15 April, 2015, and the following day. The commemoration of the six million Jews murdered by the Germans will begin with a torch-lighting ceremony attended by PM Benjamin Netanyahu, President Reuven Rivlin and other senior officials at the Yad Vashem Holocaust Museum in Jerusalem. Chief rabbis Yitzhak Yosef and David Lau will recite psalms and the “Mourner’s Kaddish” prayer. (Jerusalem Post)

ON THE EVE OF HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY, 45,000 SURVIVORS LIVING UNDER POVERTY LINE: The Foundation for the Benefit of Holocaust Victims in Israel released their annual report on the current situation of Holocaust survivors in Israel on the eve of Holocaust Remembrance Day. In 2015, there are 189,000 survivors living in Israel, two thirds of whom are women. Some 45,000 survivors living under the poverty line, survive on less than NIS 3,000 (\$754) a month, according to the National Insurance Institute. Close to a third of the survivor population (36%) live alone and have to fend for themselves. Half the survivors are widows and widowers. Approximately two-thirds (65%) of those in need of aid are above the age of 80 and 13% are above the age of 90. (J. Post)

SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE APPROVES IRAN BILL: The Senate Foreign Relations Committee on Tuesday, 14 April, 2015 unanimously approved, 19 to 0, legislation granting Congress a voice in negotiations on the Iran nuclear accord. The legislation will now go to the full Senate, after President Barack Obama earlier withdrew his opposition rather than face a bipartisan rebuke. Republican opponents of the nuclear agreement on the committee sided with Obama's strongest Democratic supporters in demanding a congressional role as international negotiators work to turn this month's nuclear framework into a final deal by June 30, 2015. The bill would mandate that the administration send the text of a final accord, along with classified material, to Congress as soon as it is completed. It also halts any lifting of sanctions during a congressional review and culminates in a vote to allow or forbid the lifting of congressionally imposed sanctions in exchange for the dismantling of much of Iran's nuclear infrastructure. While Obama was not "particularly thrilled" with the bill, his spokesman Josh Earnest said the president decided the new proposal put together by the top Republican and Democrat on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee was acceptable. With committee passage, the Senate would most likely approve the bill this month. Republican leaders in the House promised swift action on the Senate bill. (Arutz-7)

RUSSIA LIFTS ITS BAN ON DELIVERY OF S-300 MISSILES TO IRAN: The Kremlin lifted its ban on the delivery of the powerful S-300 missile air-defense system to Iran on Monday, 13 April, 2015 which would complicate airstrikes on Iranian nuclear facilities by Israel or the USA should the diplomatic track fail. In response, State Department spokeswoman Marie Harf said, "We think, given Iran's destabilizing actions in the region in places like Yemen or Syria or Lebanon, that this isn't the time to be selling these kinds of systems to them." Israeli Intelligence Minister Yuval Steinitz said, "It's proof that the economic momentum that will come for Iran after lifting sanctions will be exploited for an arms buildup and not for the welfare of the people of Iran." (Wall St, Journal)

NETANYAHU WARNS PUTIN DIRECTLY AGAINST SALE OF S-300 TO IRAN: PM Binyamin Netanyahu called Russian President Vladimir Putin on Tuesday evening, 14 April, 2015 after Putin lifted a ban on a sale of advanced S-300 anti-missile batteries to the Islamic regime of Iran. In the call, Netanyahu expressed Israel's great concerns over the deal, warning Putin that the sale will increase Iran's aggression in the region and shake the security of the Middle East. His talk of greater regional tension comes as Iran has been extending its influence through Hezbollah in Lebanon, the Houthis in Yemen, Shi'ite militias in Iraq and its own troops together with Hezbollah in Syria. Putin didn't appear to be receptive to the message.

Around the time of the phone call, Netanyahu released the following statement: "This sale of advanced weaponry to Iran is the direct result of the dangerous deal on the table between Iran and the P5+1. Can anyone still seriously claim that the deal with Iran will enhance security in the Middle East?" The S-300 system is considered to be a game-

changer, in that it would allow Iran to shoot down ballistic missiles aiming to strike its covert nuclear program, which a deal being sealed with world powers will leave completely intact. The system is also able to shoot down planes, meaning it could destroy jets trying to strike the nuclear facilities. (INN)

IAF MUST 'INVEST A LOT' TO OVERCOME RUSSIAN S-300 MISSILES: The Israel Air Force will have to spend considerable sums in order to develop ways to successfully deal with the Russian-made S-300 air-defense missile system set to be delivered to Iran, a former senior air force officer told media sources on Tuesday 14 April, 2015. Brig.-Gen. (res.) Asaf Agmon, CEO of the Institute for Air and Space Strategic Studies in Herzliya, described the S-300 as one of the most advanced air defense systems in the world. "This system will be a challenge for an air force to overcome. Its arrival is a significant change in our region. Once the S-300 is stationed in Iran, the chances of it getting to Syria and Lebanon rise," he warned. Asked if he thought Israel should risk conflict by intercepting potential future shipments of the S-300 from Iran to Syria or Lebanon, Agmon said he could only refer to statements made by official Israeli representatives, who have clearly said that if the systems arrive in Syria, Israel will attack them. (J. Post)

GERMAN FOREIGN MINISTER SPEAKS OUT AGAINST S-300 DEAL: German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier this week spoke out against Russia's decision to prepare to deliver missile systems to Iran. Speaking before a meeting of G7 foreign ministers in the German city of Luebeck, Steinmeier said it was too early to think about rewarding Iran. "We're in the middle of a process," he told reporters. "It is too early to talk about rewards at this stage." Steinmeier's comments against the Russian decision came as PM Netanyahu called Russian President Vladimir Putin and expressed Israel's great concerns over the deal, warning Putin that the sale will increase Iran's aggression in the region and shake the security of the Middle East. For its part, the United States has responded to the lifting of the ban with statements of concern and admonition, while Iran touted the deal as being good for "regional stability." (J. Post)

CHILD SOLDIERS: HAMAS UNVEILS ITS YOUNGEST 'TERROR TOT': Hamas evidently wanted to leave no doubts that when it comes to implementing its jihadist genocidal goals of wiping out the Jewish people by all terrorist means at its disposal, age is no barrier - and that brainwashing works all the better the younger you start. Hamas' Ministry of Interior, which is part of its "governmental branch" that some in the international arena have sought to give legitimacy, posted a photo shoot on its official Facebook page last weekend unveiling a tiny child soldier of the terror group. The little boy, no older than five, is seen in full military fatigues holding an actual automatic rifle, with the accompanying text reading "these are our lion cubs. We have brought them up on the love of Jihad and Shahada (martyrdom-death)." (Israel National News)

REPORT: A-SISI DECLARES DEATH PENALTY TO TUNNEL-DIGGERS:

Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi declared Sunday, 12 April, 2015 that anyone convicted of digging tunnels into Gaza from Sinai or of assisting in such activity would face a death sentence, according to a report on Israel's Channel 1 TV. Sunday proved to be another bloody day in Egypt, as at least five people were killed and some 30 injured in bomb blasts outside a police station in the Sinai town of El Arish, news agencies said. Authorities blamed Islamist terror groups who have essentially take control of Sinai for the attack. In yet a second major attack Sunday, 12 April, 2015, on security forces in Sinai, seven soldiers were killed when a bomb hit an armored vehicle in northern Sinai near the Gaza border. Islamists from the Sinai Province group, said to be affiliated with ISIS, took responsibility for that attack. Sunday's casualties join hundreds that have been killed in bombings by groups in Sinai and other areas of Egypt, seeking control of the country, or at least the Sinai area. (Israel National News)

JEB BUSH: OBAMA MEETS CASTRO BUT SNUBS NETANYAHU:

Former Florida Governor Jeb Bush, a possible Republican candidate in the 2016 presidential election, expressed his discontent on Sunday, 12 April, 2015 over the fact that President Barack Obama had held a meeting with Cuban leader Raul Castro. In a post on Twitter, Bush wondered why Obama had met with Castro while snubbing Israel's PM Netanyahu when he recently visited Washington. "Why legitimize a cruel dictator of a repressive regime?" wrote Bush. The two leaders held an historic formal meeting at a Panama City convention center. Obama and Castro met for about an hour, with Obama telling reporters before the meeting, that it was time to try something new and to engage with both Cuba's government and its people. (Arutz-7)

IN A STEP THAT WILL WEAKEN UNITED NATIONS-MANDATED SANCTIONS THAT WERE ENACTED IN RESPONSE TO IRAN'S ILLICIT NUCLEAR PROGRAM,

the Russian government has lifted a 2010 ban on shipping an advanced air-defense system to Iran, The Wall Street Journal reported (Google link) today. The lifting of the ban also raised fears that Iran could deploy the missiles to protect its nuclear sites from an American or Israeli air strike. The Kremlin posted a decree by President Vladimir Putin on its website Monday afternoon that formally removed the Russian ban. The move comes as world powers including the U.S. and Russia scramble to strike a final deal with Iran over the dismantlement of its nuclear program by a June 30 deadline. Russia signed a contract worth hundreds of millions of dollars to deliver S-300s to Iran in 2007. But the U.S. and Israel pushed the Kremlin to drop the deal, worrying that Tehran could use the sophisticated air-defense system to protect its nuclear facilities from an attack. Russia relented, and in 2010, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev issued a Kremlin decree prohibiting the delivery of any Russian S-300 missiles to Iran. The 2010 order brought Russia in line with United Nations Security Council sanctions passed that year, which established an arms embargo on Iran in an attempt to further impede the country's nuclear enrichment. UN Security Council Resolution 1929, issued in 2010, clearly prohibits the "transfer to Iran of any ... missiles and related systems or parts."

Putin's decree is titled "Amendment to Executive Order on measures for implementing UN Security Council Resolution No. 1929."

While the issue of sanctions relief in the context of Iran's nuclear program usually refers to economic sanctions, the international sanction regime potentially undermined by Russia's actions are aimed at reining in Iran's related military ambitions, which have been destabilizing the Middle East. Many observers, including House Foreign Affairs Committee chairman Rep. Ed Royce (R-Calif.), argue that the relaxed economic sanctions that accompanied the current nuclear talks with Iran has fueled Iran's regional ambitions. Former Secretaries of State Henry Kissinger and George Shultz warned last week that further weakening sanctions will only increase Iran's designs on the region. Despite President Barack Obama's assurance that sanctions, once removed or scaled back, can be "snapped back" into place after Iranian violations, the process to restore sanctions "may prove unworkable." (via TheTower.org)

A MEETING BETWEEN JORDANIAN AND ISRAELI ENVIRONMENTALISTS IN AQABA RECENTLY HAS THE GREEN SECTOR IN BOTH COUNTRIES CAUTIOUSLY OPTIMISTIC. It was the first time in 10 years that Israeli and Jordanian groups working to improve and conserve the coastal and marine environment in the Gulf of Aqaba came to the table. "Participants were excited and enthusiastic about the meeting and about the possibility to further meet in the future," says Mare Nostrum Project initiator and coordinator Prof. Rachelle Alterman of the Technion-Israel Institute of Technology. The Mare Nostrum Project is an EU-funded cross-border initiative that explores ways of protecting the Mediterranean coastline. Raanan Boral, academic program manager of the Mare Nostrum Project and a veteran environmentalist, tells ISRAEL21c that the Gulf of Aqaba is included in Mare Nostrum because "our project deals with the coast even though the shared coastline between Jordan and Israel is not on the Mediterranean." Partners in the global initiative include universities, research institutes, municipalities, environmental NGOs and port operators from Malta, Greece, Israel, Jordan and Spain. The project's main goal is to bridge the policy-implementation gap between the ideals of the Barcelona Convention's Protocol on Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) and its effects on the ground in conservation and management in the Mediterranean Basin. "Environmental issues on one side of the border immediately affect the other," says Eilat-Eilat region environmental department head Asaf Admon, referring to the Evrona oil spill in December 2014. Admon says the latest meeting signals a renewal in joint work on issues of importance to both sides. (via Israel21c)

ISIS SEIZES PALESTINIAN NEIGHBORHOOD IN DAMASCUS: ISIS forces last week took over the Yarmouk neighborhood in southern Damascus, which is popularly known as a "Palestinian refugee camp," with reports indicating ISIS has been conducting arrests and acts of mass murder. Representatives of the Islamic nationalist forces in Gaza, which are a confederation of the various Palestinian Arab groups, met with the Islamic Jihad headquarters in Gaza, after which an announcement condemning the activities was

published. The Islamist nationalist forces in the statement said that ISIS in Yarmouk is committing "genocide and harming the refugee problem and their right of return to Israel."

The mention of "right of return" refers to the fact that the residents of Yarmouk are the descendants of Arab residents of Israel who left the country during the 1948 War of Independence. Roughly 800,000 of the so-called "Palestinian refugees" left, whereas 850,000 Jewish refugees were forced out of Arab lands in the same time period, although their plight has received no international fanfare. ISIS has expressed its intentions to depose Hamas and the Palestinian Authority because they do not fully embrace jihad according to ISIS's definition and have not been immediately imposing Islamic Sharia law. (Arutz-7).

WHY IS PA LEADER ABBAS NOT TAKING THE CASE OF YARMOUK BEFORE THE INTERNATIONAL COURT? Palestinian Authority leader Mahmoud Abbas and his representatives in Syria, have repeatedly stressed that they can do little to help the Palestinians suffering near Damascus. Still, some have wondered why the Palestinian leadership has not taken the case of Yarmouk before the International Criminal Court, the UN or the EU, as it did concerning Gaza after last summer's war. "If Israel was acting toward the Palestinians as jihadists are now, they would have dragged Israel before the international community long ago," a Palestinian journalist from Nablus told media sources. "In fact, you would have been charged even for things unworthy of indictment." While the journalist was speaking cynically, what he said is a tragic fact. (Israel Today)

REPORT: ISIS WANTS YOU, TEACHERS AND BOMB MAKERS: The Islamist group ISIS is looking to boost staff operations for its would-be caliphate. The terror group has posted vacancies for assorted jobs, including school teacher, fitness instructor, press officer and - for the truly motivated - bomb maker. "The brothers in the bomb-making department are the core and backbone of nearly every operation," a British jihadist in Syria wrote in a vivid job description that surfaced online. "Imagine the reward in preparing a car packed with explosives for a brother to go detonate in enemy lines - you would get the same reward as the brother who pushes the button and sends 50 unbelievers to hell," he wrote. The job at the top of the list, is for press officers in the ISIS media office. Known for using the Internet to distribute propaganda and to recruit, the black-flagged terrorist group emerged last summer in a lightning-fast military rampage through swaths of Iraq and Syria, and with sadistic, slickly produced videos of beheadings and mass killings. But a religiously pure nation-state also requires some workaday skills besides decapitation and suicide bombing. (Newsmax)

ISIS DEMANDS \$30 MILLION TO FREE CHRISTIAN HOSTAGES: ISIS terrorists are demanding up to \$30 million in ransom to release the hundreds of Christian hostages in Syria. In ongoing negotiations between ISIS terrorists and the Assyrian leadership to free the 250-300 Christians abducted by the terrorist group in February,

2015, ISIS is demanding \$100,000 per individual, according to the source. Third-party Syrian Sunni Muslims from the local area are reported to be brokering the talks between the two groups. "They know we cannot come up with this kind of money, so they are hoping other groups and countries will come up with the money," one official said. Hostages remain in custody after a Feb. 23, 2015 attack on villages in the northern province of al Hasakah, an area where the native Christian community thrived for generations. In late January, 2015, there were similar reports of a raid by ISIS on the same area, and threats to bomb churches if crosses were not removed. ISIS has desecrated churches and Christian graveyards in wholesale fashion in both Iraq and Syria. Reports indicate the barbaric group was using its Christian hostages as human shields in military confrontations. ISIS militants transported large groups of Christian captives to areas of intense fighting against Kurdish and Christian militias as they continue to battle for strategic areas along the northeastern Syrian border, according to state-run media. On Easter Sunday, ISIS blew up Church of the Virgin Mary in Tal Nasri village, an 80-year-old cathedral in the same Syrian province. (Fox)

‘JEWISH BOOKSHOP IN BARCELONA TARGETED FOR BOMBING BY ISLAMISTS:’ Members of a militant Islamist cell arrested last week in Spain were trying to obtain explosives to bomb a Jewish bookshop in Barcelona, an investigating magistrate said on Friday, 9 April, 2015. Other potential targets of the group included synagogues and public buildings in the Catalonia region, the magistrate said after receiving information from prosecutors. The report said seven of the 11 people arrested in northeastern Catalonia have been put under formal investigation and will be held in custody awaiting trial. All but one of them is suspected of belonging to a terrorist cell with a profile similar to that of the ISIS jihadist movement, while the last one is suspected of aiding the cell and possessing weapons and explosives, it said. Spain has been cracking down on suspected terrorists in the wake of the January, 2015 Islamist attacks on French satirical weekly Charlie Hebdo in Paris that killed 17 people. More than 30 people have been arrested so far this year in Spain. (J. Post)

JEWISH DELI VANDALIZED IN COPENHAGEN: A Jewish deli in Copenhagen was vandalized last week – its walls spray-painted with antisemitic remarks, a window shattered to pieces. Police discovered the damage in the early hours of Thursday morning, 9 April, 2015 local newspapers reported. The words "Jewish pig" could be seen on one of the supermarket's walls as law enforcement searched the affluent Østerbro neighborhood for the perpetrators. The owner of the deli – which was guarded by an armed security officer during business hours, following a spate of terror attacks in the city – is an Israeli native who moved to Denmark 22 years ago. The area has seen an increase in police presence lately, following attacks in a cafe and a synagogue in the city in February, 2015. (J. Post)

EGYPT SENTENCES MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD LEADER, OTHERS TO DEATH: An Egyptian court sentenced Mohamed Badie, leader of the outlawed Muslim

Brotherhood, and 13 other senior members of the group to death for inciting chaos and violence, and gave a life term to a USA-Egyptian citizen for ties to the Brotherhood. The men were among thousands of people detained after Islamist president Mohamed Mursi was toppled in 2013 by the military under Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, who is now president. Sisi describes the Brotherhood as a major security threat. (Yahoo)

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Sharing Yeshua in unity with both Jew and Gentile