

## **Yachad Ministries' Israel's News Update April 12, 2018 (27<sup>th</sup> of Nisan, 5778)**

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**AIR STRIKE ON SYRIAN AIR BASE:** Four Iranian military personnel were killed in an air strike on a Syrian air base on Sunday, 8 April 2018. Syria and its main allies Iran and Russia blamed Israel for carrying out the attack. Israel has not confirmed or denied mounting the raid, but Israeli officials said the Tiyas, or T-4, air base near Homs was being used by troops from Iran, and that Israel would not accept such a presence in Syria by its arch foe. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a British-based monitor, said at least 14 people were killed in the Sunday's raid, including some fighters of various nationalities. Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qasemi condemned the attack, calling it "an obvious breach of international laws that would make the Syrian crisis and regional equations more complicated". The attack took place hours after USA President Donald Trump warned of a "big price to pay" following the reports of a poison gas attack on the rebel-held town of Douma which killed dozens of people, including children. (J.Post)

**SYRIAN REGIME STRUCK REBEL-HELD TOWN WITH CHEMICAL WEAPONS:** The Syrian regime of Bashar Assad on Saturday 7 April 2018 again used chemical weapons against a rebel-held area. Syrian rebels and a medical organization both reported an assault on the town of Douma. They claimed the attack employed chlorine gas that killed 150 people and injured an estimated 1000 victims. The Syrian American Medical Society (SAMS) also stated that the chlorine attack was followed by the use of nerve gas against civilians. Assad's regime has been accused of using chemical weapons several times. In 2013, following a chemical attack, Syria claimed to have handed its entire chemical arsenal over to Russia to be destroyed. However, in 2014, 2015, and 2017 Assad was accused of employing chemical weapons against rebel-held areas. One volunteer rescue force tweeted graphic images showing scores of bodies in a basement. It said the death toll is likely to rise. The attacks came as Syrian government forces have resumed deadly bombardments of the last opposition holdout in the Eastern Ghouta area near Damascus. (Reuters/UK Daily Mail)

**TRUMP THREATENS TO RETALIATE ON SYRIA FOR CHEMICAL ATTACK:** President Donald Trump on Sunday 8 April 2018 condemned a “mindless CHEMICAL attack” in Syria that killed women and children. A top aide asked about the possibility of a USA missile strike in response, said, “I wouldn’t take anything off the table.” Trump, without elaboration, said there would be a “big price to pay” and he called Syrian President Bashar Assad an “animal.” Just over a year ago, Trump ordered dozens of cruise missiles to be fired at a Syrian air base after declaring there was no doubt Assad had “choked out the lives of helpless” civilians in an attack that he said used banned gases. Saturday’s attack took place in a rebel-held town near Damascus, the capital, amid a resumed offensive by Syrian government forces after the collapse of a truce. Syrian activists, rescuers and medics said a poison gas attack killed dozens of people, with entire families found suffocated in their houses and shelters. Trump said in a tweet Sunday that the “area of atrocity is in lockdown and encircled by Syrian Army, making it completely inaccessible to outside world.” He said Russian President Vladimir Putin and Iran, influential Syrian backers, “are responsible for backing Animal Assad.” Trump called for the area to be opened “immediately” for medical aid and verification. Trump’s homeland security adviser, Thomas Bossert, noted the timing of the suspected chemical attack — almost a year to the day of the USA missile strikes.” (Ynet)

**ISRAEL CONDEMNS SYRIA CHEMICAL WEAPONS ATTACK:** Israel strongly condemns the 8 April 2018 chemical weapons attack by Syrian forces on civilians in the rebel-held enclave of Eastern Ghouta outside Damascus, Israel's Foreign Ministry said. "The Syrian regime continues to commit crimes against humanity. This last attack is only the most recent of dozens of instances of the use of chemical weapons by the regime since Assad committed to take abandon such weapons," in 2013, the statement continued. "Syria blatantly violates its commitments and the decisions of the international community" The statement follows the 9 April 2018 airstrike, widely ascribed to Israel, on the Tiyas Military Airbase in Syria. (J.Post)

**UK AND USA SAY SUSPECTED SYRIA GAS ATTACK BEARS HALLMARKS OF ASSAD GOV'T:** Britain and the United States agreed on Monday 9 April 2018 that a poison gas attack in Syria bears the hallmarks of previous chemical weapons attacks carried out by Bashar Assad's Syrian government. Following a telephone call between British foreign minister Boris Johnson and acting USA Secretary of State John Sullivan, a spokeswoman said: "The Foreign Secretary and Acting Secretary of State agreed that, based on current media reports and reports from those on the ground, this attack bore hallmarks of previous chemical weapons attacks by the Assad regime. They reiterated their commitment to standing up for the Chemical Weapons Convention and to ensuring that those responsible for this horrific attack are held to account." (J.Post)

**ASSAD REGIME PLACES TANKS, ARTILLERY IN BUFFER ZONE WITH ISRAEL:** The Bashar Assad regime in its preparations for an offensive to retake southern Syria and the Syrian Golan Heights from rebel groups, placed tanks and heavy artillery inside the demilitarized buffer zone on the country’s border with Israel. The step violates the Agreement on Disengagement signed in 1974 between Israel and Syria, which concluded the Yom Kippur War. Israel is expected to complain to the UN peacemaking force. The United Nations Disengagement Observer Force has patrolled the buffer zone between Syria and Israel since 1974, a year after the war ended. For nearly four decades, UNDOF helped enforce a stable truce between the two countries, but the Syrian civil war has now spilled into the area. Since most UN staff has been moved out of Syria due to the bloody war and are now watching at a safe distance from Israel, it is unclear if the international body can force the Assad regime to halt its military presence in the buffer zone. The six-year conflict has seen not only some intense fighting in the buffer zone but the abduction of peacekeepers by al-Qaeda-linked anti-Syrian government terrorists, and other attacks that prompted several countries to withdraw their soldiers. Israel has tried to stay out of the civil war in Syria and refrained from taking sides, but has responded to spillover fire on numerous occasions and warned the Assad regime against attack. (Times of Israel)

**HAMAS-LED GAZA MOBS FLY NAZI FLAG IN CONFRONTING ISRAEL:** In most Western countries, a demonstration that utilizes Nazi imagery would never be characterized as "peaceful" in nature because the Nazi agenda is anything but peaceful. So, one must wonder why the international mainstream media is describing the Palestinian demonstrations along the Gaza security fence in such terms. Forget the thousands of burning tires, the hurling of stones and firebombs and the under-reported use of guns and makeshift explosives. The fact that those participating in Friday's 6 April, 2018, Gaza riot flew a flag adorned with a swastika should tell one everything what they need to know about the nature of this "peaceful demonstration." But, just in case the message was lost in translation, Israel PM Netanyahu clarified: "I salute the soldiers of the IDF who keep us safe from those who pretend to speak of human rights, while holding a Nazi flag. Here is the naked truth. They speak of human rights, but they really want to crush the Jewish state. We won't let them. We'll stand strong. We'll keep our country safe." The Nazi flag and the ideology behind it mean but one thing for both Israel and the Palestinian nationalist movement - the eradication of the Jewish people. (Israel Today)

**PALESTINIANS SAY UN NO LONGER CREDIBLE BECAUSE IT LETS AMERICA VETO STUFF:** It's not because it puts repressive regimes like Saudi Arabia, Syria and Iran on the councils responsible for human and women's rights. No, the UN has lost all credibility because it allows America to prevent the Palestinians from wasting the world's time with pointless (and unsubstantiated) condemnations of Israel. That, of course, is according to the Palestinian Authority itself. On Saturday 7 April 2018 the Palestinian leadership demanded that the UN revoke America's right to veto Security Council resolutions and statements. A day earlier, the USA had blocked a Security Council draft condemning Israel for the Palestinian deaths that occurred during the violent mass demonstrations along the Gaza security fence. Most of the Security Council wanted yet another "independent investigation" into what had happened. But it's not rocket science. The facts seem pretty clear. Hamas, a recognized terrorist organization, sent tens of thousands of Gazans in an admitted effort to breach sovereign Israeli territory. Israeli soldiers did their job in protecting the border, while taking unprecedented measures to avoid large-scale casualties. It's no less than any other country would do to prevent a hostile mass infiltration. And the Palestinian Authority's hopeless attempt to upend one of the main mechanisms of the UN (the veto power enjoyed by the world's top powers) is evidence of just how desperate they've become as the international community grows increasingly weary of their charade. (Israel Today)

**1.5 MILLION VISITED NATURE RESERVES NATIONAL PARKS DURING PASSOVER:** The Israel Nature and Parks Authority said Saturday 7 April 2018 that during Passover, the intermediate days and second holiday, 1.5 million people visited nature reserves and national parks across the country. The popular sites were Caesarea National Park, where horse shows took place in the big hippodrome, Ein Gedi and Banias nature reserves, Yarkon, Masada and Ashkelon national parks. On Saturday alone, 100,000 people visited the nature reserves and national parks. (Ynet)

**LIBERMAN: ISRAEL'S PREPARATION THWARTED GAZA'S 'TERRORIST MARCH':** Defense Minister Avigdor Liberman on Saturday 7 April, 2018 praised the actions of security forces over Passover, saying the "holiday that is now coming to a close was one of the quietest and safest we have known in recent years. Our preparation on the Gaza border proved itself." He said Israelis were indebted to "thousands" in the military, police, and Shin Bet security agency "who worked very hard and thwarted any attempt to challenge us." Some 20,000 Gazans participated in Friday's 6 April 2018 second successive Hamas-backed "March of Return" at the Gaza border. The army said protesters burned tires and threw bombs, Molotov cocktails, and rocks at Israeli soldiers. Several attempts were made to breach the border fence. Soldiers responded with tear gas, rubber bullets, and in some cases live fire. Palestinians said nine Gazans were killed and over 1,000 wounded in the clashes. The demonstrations largely abated by Saturday, but three Palestinians were wounded by Israeli forces in a small clash east of Gaza City in the afternoon. Liberman characterized the protest as "a terrorist march." He said that Hamas had "sent terrorists disguised as civilians to challenge our sovereignty and the world portrays it as a civil protest." He lambasted the world's "hypocrisy," noting that dozens of

civilians had been killed in the latest regime airstrikes in Syria, “but the UN secretary general did not call for an investigative committee, the UN Security Council did not convene, the Arab League ignored it, and the BBC didn’t see or hear any of it.” (Times of Israel)

**TRUMP WANTS OUT OF SYRIA:** The White House said days ago that the USA military mission in Syria was coming to “a rapid end” even as President Trump has insisted it’s time for American troops to return home. With Israel and other USA allies anxious about a hasty USA withdrawal, the Trump administration said it would stay in war-torn Syria to finish off the job of defeating the ISIS group and was committed to eliminating the terrorists’ “small” presence that “our forces have not already eradicated.” There have been clear signs the United States was narrowing its mission in Syria and would focus only on defeating ISIS and not on the broader task of stabilizing the country. “We will continue to consult with our allies and friends regarding future plans,” said White House press secretary Sarah Sanders. “We expect countries in the region and beyond, plus the UN, to work toward peace and ensure” that ISIS never returns. USA officials and foreign governments have been concerned that without a continued American military presence, ISIS could re-constitute itself or others could fill the void. Many have warned that a premature USA withdrawal from Syria would cede the country to Iran and Russia, which have supported Syrian President Bashar Assad. Iran’s continued presence in Syria is especially troubling to neighboring Israel that regards Iran as an existential threat. (World Israel)

**RUSSIA, IRAN AND TURKEY MEET TO DIVIDE THE SYRIAN SPOILS:** The presidents of Russia, Iran and Turkey gathered in Ankara on 4 April, 2018 in a tripartite summit designed to reach an agreement on ending the civil war and on dividing their influence in war-ravaged Syria. Analysts say that the three countries have very different interests, but they are planning to take advantage of the declining Western assets in the country since Trump’s announcement that he wants out. Commenting on the tripartite meeting, Israel’s Defense Minister Avigdor Liberman said, “This is the first time since the Second World War that a meeting like this was held without the approval of the UN. They are determining Syria’s future without any American representative.”

Another matter of concern is the fate of some \$200 million in USA stabilization assistance for Syria that the White House put on hold after Trump said last week that he wanted to leave Syria “very soon.” The State Department was to have spent the money on building up the country’s infrastructure, including power, water and roads. Trump in recent weeks has asked Saudi Arabia to contribute \$4 billion for reconstruction in Syria as part of the president’s effort to get other countries to pay for stabilizing the country so the USA isn’t on the hook. The United States is awaiting a response from the Saudis, said the official. A senior Syrian Kurdish official said Trump’s comments on wanting to withdraw from Syria came at an “inappropriate time” as ISIS re-emerges in eastern Syria and amid threats from Turkey. (World Israel)

**ISIS CAUGHT PLOTTING ROME ATTACK: TERROR THREAT HAS NEVER BEEN HIGHER:** A large scale anti-terror operation by Italian authorities has netted several ISIS terrorists who authorities believe were planning to attack Rome. Italy's Interior ministry says "Rome is in the crosshairs of ISIS" and "Italy's terror threat has never been so high." Five persons were arrested in the sweep and 20 are under investigation. Police were tipped off to the network by analyzing the cell phone of Anis Amir, the attacker at the Berlin Christmas market in 2016. Four days after the attack, Amir was killed in a shootout with police near Milan in northern Italy. ISIS has long hoped to attack and conquer Rome. They believe it is necessary to fulfill what Islam teaches was the prophecy of Muhammed and to prepare the return of the Muslim messiah: the Mehdi. (CBN)

**MOSSAD CHIEF “100 PERCENT CERTAIN” IRAN SEEKS NUCLEAR BOMB:** Yossi Cohen, the head of Israel's Mossad intelligence agency, told a recent closed meeting of senior officials in Jerusalem, "I am 100% certain that Iran has never abandoned its military nuclear vision for a single instant. This nuclear deal enables Iran to achieve that vision. That is why I believe the deal must be completely changed or

scrapped. The failure to do so would be a grave threat to Israel's security." He called the nuclear deal a "terrible mistake" that allows Iran to keep key elements of its nuclear program intact and will remove other restraints in a few years. "Then Iran will be able to enrich enough uranium for an arsenal of nuclear bombs," Cohen said. He added that the decision to lift sanctions on Iran has resulted in "significantly increased" aggression by Iran, and noted Iran's continued development of long-range ballistic missiles. (VOA)

**IRAN'S SUPREME LEADER CALLS ON MUSLIMS TO DEFEAT ISRAEL:** After Saudi Arabia's crown prince said Israelis were entitled to live peacefully on their own land, Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei last week called on the people of Muslim countries to defeat Israel. "With an intense and planned struggle they should force the enemy to retreat toward the point of demise." Khamenei also said, "Movement toward negotiation with Israel is a big, unforgivable mistake that will push back the victory of the people of Palestine." He pledged continued Iranian backing for the Palestinian terror group Hamas. (Reuters)

**TRUMP ADMINISTRATION: COMBATING ANTI-SEMITISM A 'PRIORITY':** A State Department spokeswoman said combating anti-Semitism remains a "priority" for the Trump administration, but would not say if the Trump administration would fill the congressionally mandated job of an anti-Semitism monitor. "The position of Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism is currently unfilled, but the Office of International Religious Freedom at the Department of State continues actively to support the mission of that office," the spokeswoman said in response to a query about why the position remains empty. "Combating anti-Semitism internationally is a priority for this administration," the spokeswoman said. "President Donald Trump and Vice President Mike Pence have publicly expressed their deep concern about high levels of anti-Semitism globally." The position of anti-Semitism monitor, mandated by a law passed in 2004, has not been filled by Trump more than a year after it was vacated. (Arutz-7)

**ISRAEL THWARTS MAJOR ISLAMIC JIHAD MISSILE ATTACK:** Since Friday, 30 March 2018, thousands of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip have gathered by the Israeli border fence, with some attempting to break through it. On Wed. 4 April, the IDF published a video that showed the IDF boarding a Gaza fishing vessel from Rafah which had sailed beyond the permissible nautical line. Ten Palestinians were arrested and taken in for questioning. The Shin Bet said that during his interrogation, Amin Sa'adi Muhammad Jum'a, the ringleader, confessed to a plot by which one Gaza fishing vessel would act as a decoy, forcing an Israel naval ship to approach it. The Palestinians on board a second fishing boat would then launch a Kornet missile targeting the Israeli vessel, and after that, board the vessel from a third ship, so that they could kidnap soldiers who survived the attack. Islamic Jihad, with Juma's help, had been gathering intelligence about the Israeli navy off the Gaza coast for some time in order to prepare for the attack, the Shin Bet said. The naval plot "proves the true intentions of the terrorist organizations in Gaza that are trying to disguise their murderous intentions by provocative actions against the (Gaza) security fence. Their sole purpose is to provide a cover under which terrorists can carry out attacks against Israel," said PM Benjamin Netanyahu. (J.Post)

**USA SUPREME COURT WON'T MAKE PLO PAY \$656 MILLION TERROR AWARD:** The Palestinian Authority and the Palestine Liberation Organization escaped a \$656 million damage award as the USA Supreme Court turned away an appeal by American victims of six bombing and shooting attacks in Israel. The justices left intact a lower court decision that said the Palestinian entities didn't have enough of a connection to the USA to let them be sued under a federal anti-terrorism law. The PA and PLO were accused of supporting Hamas and the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade by providing money, explosives, training and personnel. Both groups are designated as terrorist groups by the USA government. Mark Sokolow, his wife and two of his daughters were injured in a Jerusalem suicide bombing in 2002. His fellow plaintiffs are families of victims of terrorist attacks in Israel that killed 33, including several Americans, and wounded over 450. Their suit argued that the late PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat had paid attackers and their families, and that they had standing to sue his organization under the 1992 Anti-Terrorism Act. (Bloomberg/JTA)

**SAUDI CROWN PRINCE RECOGNIZES ISRAEL'S RIGHT TO EXIST:** Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, in an interview published this week, recognized Israel's right to exist and extolled the prospect of future diplomatic relations between his kingdom and the Jewish state. Asked whether he believes "the Jewish people have a right to a nation-state in at least part of their ancestral homeland," he replied: "I believe that each people anywhere, has a right to live in their peaceful nation." Asked about anti-Semitism in Saudi Arabia, he said: "Our country doesn't have a problem with Jews. Our Prophet Muhammad married a Jewish woman. She was not just a friend — he married her. You will find a lot of Jews in Saudi Arabia coming from America, coming from Europe," he added. Israel and Saudi Arabia have no official relations but Israel has hinted at clandestine ties with Saudi Arabia in recent years, stressing the two countries share an interest in countering Iran. Salman give emphasis to the threat to the Middle East he said was posed by Iran, even saying that Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the supreme leader of the Islamic Republic, "makes Hitler look good." (Times of Israel)

**CORBYN ATTENDS EVENT WITH GROUP CALLING FOR ISRAEL'S DESTRUCTION:** On Mon. 2 April, 2018 Labour UK chief Jeremy Corbyn attended an "alternative" Passover Seder hosted by the radical anti-Israel "Jewdas" organization in Islington. The far-left group has in the past called for the destruction of the State of Israel, describing the Jewish state as a "steaming pile of sewage which needs to be properly disposed of." Corbyn spent several hours at the Jewdas event during which participants mocked a recent protest against anti-Semitism in the Labour Party. A spokesman for Corbyn admitted that the Labour UK leader had attended the Jewdas event, but said Corbyn had participated in a personal capacity, and not as a representative of his party. Nevertheless, some members of the Labour Party blasted Corbyn over his attendance, arguing that it undermined the fight against anti-Semitism. "This is deliberately baiting the mainstream Jewish community days after they pleaded with him to tackle anti-Semitism," tweeted Labour MP John Woodcock. "And he must know that meeting them now will give his members the message that the group's extreme views are ok. This is irresponsible and dangerous." (Arutz-7)

**MAJOR JEWISH DONOR PULLS SUPPORT FOR BRITISH LABOUR PARTY:** One of the British Labour Party's major donors left the party over its failure to deal with "the most blatant acts of anti-Semitism." Sir David Garrard, who is Jewish, has donated about \$2.1 million to Labour since 2003. "As one of the former leading political and financial supporters of the Labour party, of which I was a member for so many decades, I no longer feel any affinity with, or connection to, what it seems to have become," Garrard told British media sources. The announcement came as a major British daily on 1 April 2018 reported that 12 senior staff working for Corbyn and for the shadow chancellor, John McDonnell, are members of Facebook groups containing anti-Semitic and violent comments, including praise for Adolf Hitler.

The report also found that 20 of the biggest pro-Corbyn Facebook groups contained "more than 2,000 racist, anti-Semitic, misogynistic, violent and abusive messages," and found routine attacks on Jewish people, including Holocaust denial. Garrard said that he has "watched with dismay and foreboding the manner in which the leadership has, in my view, over the last two years, conducted itself. I consider that it has supported and endorsed the most blatant acts of anti-Semitism. These things conjure up the very kind of anti-Semitic attacks that led to such unbearable consequences for innocent millions in the past. So there no longer exists a party which even pretends to maintain and promote the principles and the integrity of what always was, to me, the Labour Party," said Garrard. (JTA)

**ISIS CLAIMS EASTER KILLING OF CHRISTIAN FAMILY IN PAKISTAN:** The ISIS terrorist group on Tues. 3 April 2018, claimed responsibility for murdering four Christian family members in southwestern Pakistan a day after Easter celebrations. The terrorist group opened fire on the group of Christians traveling to the city of Quetta, the capital of Baluchistan province, killing four. The family set off to visit their relatives, but their vehicle was intercepted by the terrorists who then shot them. The terror attack came just a day after

Christians around the world celebrated Easter. The Pakistani Christian community, the second largest minority group in the country, consists of over 2 million people. (Fox)

**‘RISE NINEVEH’: CHRISTIANS IN IRAQ CELEBRATE ASSYRIAN NEW YEAR AND EASTER:**

Thousands of Christians celebrated the Assyrian New Year in northern Iraq over the last several days. The celebrations coincided with Easter and brought together groups of Assyrian Christian activists who are seeking to rekindle the flame of their community from the ravages of ISIS. The Easter Mass at the Saint Mary’s Assyrian Church of the East was attended by hundreds of worshipers on 31 March 2018, the same day on which Juliana Taimoorazy, the founder and president of the Iraqi Christian Relief Council and co-founder of a project called “Rise Nineveh,” led members of her group to Mosul to stand on the ruins of Nineveh. “There is a lot of meaning to ‘Rise Nineveh.’ It reminds of us Jonah of the Bible and Abraham, the father of the three religions. He was the first person who worshiped the one and almighty God.” The Assyrian Empire once ruled over the areas around Mosul and prophets such as Jonah, Nahum and Daniel played a pivotal role in the spiritual landscape of this region. (J.Post)

**ISRAEL’S INNOVATIVE SURGERY TO FREEZE METASTASIS IN THE LIVER:** Doctor Yevgeny Solomonov, head of the surgical department at Israel’s Ziv/Sieff Medical Center in Safed, has used advanced technology to freeze liver cancer metastasis using liquid nitrogen as part of an operation in a patient with secondary cancer - liver metastasis of cancerous cancer in the colon. After the left lobe of the liver was removed, the remaining part of the liver underwent an innovative medical procedure - cryotherapy, which means freezing the metastases using special ProSense devices developed and manufactured by an Israeli company, IceCure Medical. Recent studies have shown that as a result of cryosurgery, the immune system "wakes up", attacks and kills the cancer cells that remain. This treatment has been tried in the past on patients with breast and kidney cancer, but this is the first time in Israel that the treatment is performed in liver cancer, which is considered very complex treatment. (INN)



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