

# **Yachad Ministries' Israel's News Update April 26, 2018** **(11<sup>th</sup> of Lyar, 5778)**



**RAIN AND FLOODING – AT THE END OF APRIL?** After a week of summer weather, Israel may be in for another round of rainfall and flooding. Wed. 25 April, 2018 will be cloudy, with local rainfall in most areas of Israel, together with isolated thunderstorms. There is a chance of flooding in the southern and eastern rivers. Temperatures will drop significantly. Thursday will be cloudy, with local rainfall in most areas of Israel, along with isolated thunderstorms. Temperatures will remain lower than seasonal average. (INN)

**ROMANIA TO MOVE ISRAEL EMBASSY TO JERUSALEM, SAYS GOVERNMENT:** Romania has begun efforts to move its Israeli embassy to Jerusalem, ruling Social Democrat Party (PSD) leader Liviu Dragnea announced on Thurs. 20 April, 2018. If the move goes ahead it will make Romania the first European country to shift their embassy to the disputed city, following a controversial decision by the USA to do so. Dragnea said that the government had agreed on "the start of procedures with a view to the transfer of the embassy to Jerusalem." Israeli PM Minister Netanyahu said days ago that six countries were in serious discussions regarding embassy transfers to Jerusalem. Dragnea said the move would "produce major benefits for Romania. This is also a pragmatic approach," he added. Like all of us, Israel has the right to establish its capital where it wants." Israel's Deputy Foreign Minister Tzipi Hotovely welcomed the announcement. (Reuters/Worthy News)

**IVANKA, KUSHNER, MNUCHIN TO ATTEND J'LEM EMBASSY OPENING:** Some 250 people will join a USA delegation to Israel's capital for the opening of the new embassy in Jerusalem next month, including dozens of lawmakers, senior advisers to President Donald Trump, and Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin. Mnuchin will lead the American delegation to Jerusalem, where the USA is slated to open its new embassy on 14 May 2018 coinciding with Israel's 70th Independence Day. Among the other roughly 250 members of the delegation will be some 40 senators and members of the House of Representatives, as well as American Jewish leaders. President Donald Trump's son-in-law and senior adviser Jared Kushner will also join the delegation. The president's daughter, Ivanka Trump, will also likely attend. (Arutz-7)

**BUSINESS TIES TO ARAB WORLD SKYROCKETING, SAYS VENTURE CAPITALIST MARGALIT:** Israel has been benefiting from ever-growing business ties with the Arab world, according to

one Israeli executive who has helped paved the way for the budding rapprochement. “It’s taken 70 years but we’re starting to see signs of normalization,” said former Labor MK and venture capitalist Erel Margalit, who travels often throughout the Middle East to meet with emirs, monarchs and Arab business leaders. Israeli expertise in big data, business intelligence and artificial intelligence is of great interest to European and Arab countries. In the Middle East, Margalit publicly named Jordan, Egypt, Morocco, Dubai, Abu Dhabi as countries that seek to incorporate the Israeli homegrown tools. The executive has also met with leaders from Oman and Tunisia. Margalit recently visited Qatar to participate in a regional development conference, the first appearance of an Israeli leader in 10 years. With Saudi Arabia now developing a \$500 billion smart city mere kilometers from the southern city of Eilat, Israeli companies are in a prime place to bid for contracts and services. (J.Post)

**STATE DEPT. DROPS ‘OCCUPIED’ REFERENCE TO PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES IN REPORT:** An annual USA government report on human rights has dropped reference to the Palestinian territories as "occupied" for the first time since 1979. The State Department report, now lists its section on Israel and the territories by their names: Gaza and the West Bank, (Judea & Samaria) alongside the Golan Heights. Israel withdrew from Gaza in 2005 and has no administrative control over the Strip. But it maintains full security control over Judea & Samaria through military occupation, and continues to approve construction for Israeli settlers to live there. "The lie of the occupied Palestinian territories begins to be revealed," Israel's Defense Minister Avigdor Liberman wrote in response to the new report. "They say that a lie repeated often enough becomes true, but the truth is always stronger. The State Department report is proof of that," Liberman wrote. (Arutz-7)

**DANON TO UN: CONDEMN HAMAS FOR ENCOURAGING VIOLENCE:** Israel’s Ambassador to the UN, Danny Danon, reacted on Friday, 20 April 2018 to the latest violent riots by Palestinian Arabs along the fence between the Gaza Strip and Israel. “ Hamas is continuing to instigate violence against Israel as rioters today used firebombs and other means in attempts to damage the fence and infiltrate our sovereign territory. I call on all UN officials to condemn Hamas for encouraging violence, promoting instability and for the despicable act of exploiting women and children by placing them in harm’s way,” he said. Some 3,000 Palestinian Arabs tried to approach the security infrastructure on Friday, burning tires and flying kites with firebombs attached to them. The IDF said that a number of kites had crossed into Israeli territory and were extinguished as needed. IDF troops used riot dispersal methods and opened fire in accordance with the rules of engagement. The riots, dub bed “the March of the Return” and openly encouraged by Gaza’s Hamas rulers, have been ongoing since 30 March 2018. Palestinian Authority chairman Mahmoud Abbas has welcomed the marches, claiming they are a means of “peaceful resistance”. (INN) *The Gaza Strip Palestinians, ruled by the Hamas terrorist organization, continue to further their own self-destruction, tear down any possibilities of a prosperous future, teach their children to hate and endeavor to wipe out the Jewish state.*

**ISRAEL SECURITY PERSONNEL OPENED FIRE ON THE WOULD-BE INFILTRATORS, WOUNDING THREE:** Terrorists have taken advantage of the ongoing riots along the Israel-Gaza frontier to attack Israeli forces stationed on the border, and continue to attempt to infiltrate into Israel. Since 30 March 2018 tens of thousands of rioters have clashed with Israeli security forces along the border, in what organizers have dubbed the “March of Return”. Beginning on the 42nd anniversary of the 1976 Land Day riots, the uprisings are expected to last six weeks, culminating in a mass-demonstration on 15 May, 2018 the day after Israel’s 70th Independence Day, which Hamas and other terror groups mark as “Nakba Day” – the “Day of Disaster”. Health officials in Gaza claim 39 rioters and terrorists have been killed since 30 March, 2018. Rioters have used firebombs, flaming tires, and improvised explosive devices on kites to attack Israeli forces. Terrorists have also attempted to attack Israeli forces using firearms and roadside bombs. (Arutz-7)

**NASA TO TEST ISRAELI-DEVELOPED RADIATION-PROTECTION SUIT:** A suit developed by the Israeli company StemRad to protect astronauts from radiation will be launched into space as part of a

feasibility study for NASA's Mars mission in 2021. The suit is designed to protect organs that are particularly sensitive to the development of cancer due to exposure to radiation. The Israel Space Agency (IAA) of the Science and Technology Ministry will sign an agreement with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration this week to send the suit on the Deep Space Experiment flight as part of a feasibility study for the Mars mission in 2021. According to Science and Technology Minister Ofir Akunis, "Israeli entrepreneurs are known all over the world for their innovation and thinking outside the box. We are proud to pave the way for entrepreneurs and enable them to integrate the first Israeli technology of its kind in one of the most fascinating experiments in recent years. This is a wonderful gift for Israel's 70th anniversary celebrations." (J.Post)

**ISRAELI OFFICIAL TO IRAN: 'DON'T TEST US':** Education and Diaspora Affairs Minister Naftali Bennett addressed the official Remembrance Day Ceremony at Latrun on 17 April, 2018. The ceremony was attended by thousands of Jews from around the world and broadcast live to dozens of communities. During his speech, Bennett warned Iran and its proxies not to test Israel, because the Jewish State is stronger than they are. "Last week we remembered the price we paid for not having a state. Now we remember the price we have and pay for having a state. In two days at Auschwitz we lost the same number of soldiers we lost since the founding of Israel. Never will we depend on anyone but ourselves. Ladies and gentlemen, We are surrounded by enemies. Only a few weeks ago Iran sent an armed drone towards us. The Iranian octopus is trying to strangle us and break our spirit. But Israel is stronger than them. We have a 3,800 year old nation, with the strongest spirit on earth. From here I tell the leaders of Iran, Syria, Hamas and Hezbollah – do not try us. United, we can overcome any challenge." (Arutz-7) *Israel's northern borders are increasingly endangered by numerous enemies including Syria and the Lebanese-based Hezbollah terrorist group. The strongest and most dangerous is Iran that is steadily embedding its military resources in Syria and increasing its threats to attack the Jewish state. Iran has voiced its desire numerous times to "wipe out Israel."*

**IRAN PREPARING FOR DIRECT CONFRONTATION WITH ISRAEL:** Tehran is preparing for a sustained campaign of direct confrontation with Israel, with plans to use the Iranian military's growing presence in Syria to launch attacks on targets inside the Jewish state. For decades, the radical Islamist regime in Tehran has engaged in a de facto war with Israel via proxies – using terror groups in the Gaza Strip and Lebanon to attack Israeli civilian and military targets. On 17 April 2018, however, Israeli security officials revealed that Iran is now preparing for a direct assault on Israel, using its growing military assets on Israel's northern border to strike targets inside the Jewish state. The expanded Iranian presence in Syria has opened the door for Tehran to adopt an increasingly aggressive stance vis-à-vis Israel, attempting direct attacks on Israeli targets by the Iranian military itself, rather than through proxy groups.

Earlier this month IDF spokesman Brigadier General Ronen Manelis reported that the Iranian drone operated from T-4 which had violated Israeli airspace in Feb. 2018 had been armed, and was en route to carry out an attack on Israeli forces, and was not merely on an information-gathering mission. One senior Israeli security official told media source that the attempted attack was unprecedented, and represented a shift in Iranian policy. According to this week's report by Israel's Channel 10, Iran's build up in Syria in preparation for a direct conflict with the Jewish state has included the deployment of advanced airborne weapons platforms – including drone aircraft – shipments of weapons disguised as humanitarian aid, and Iranian military flights conducted under the cover of civilian airline companies. On 16 April, 2018 Naim Qassem, deputy chief of the Hezbollah terrorist group – an ally and proxy of Tehran – warned that Iran would respond to an air strike on the T-4 airbase in Syria which was attributed to Israel and in which seven Iranian personnel were killed. (J.Post)

**IRANIAN GENERAL: 'DATE SET' FOR DESTRUCTION OF ISRAEL:** Brigadier General Kioumars Heydari, the commander of the Iranian ground forces, said in a speech this week that Iran's army is "much stronger than in the past" and that Israel can no longer threaten the Islamic Republic. The Iranian news agency Mehr reported that the general said that "the date has already been set" for the destruction of Israel. He stressed that unlike Saudi Arabia and other countries in the region, which import weapons from the West, his country produces its own weapons. Iran's military budget for 2017 was \$15.9 billion, an increase of almost 65% from 2014. Tensions between Israel and Iran have been rising over Iran's military presence in Syria. Last week Israeli security officials revealed that Iran is now preparing for a direct assault on Israel, using its growing military assets on Israel's northern border to strike targets inside the Jewish state. (Arutz-7)

**TOP PILOT: ISRAEL 'CAPABLE' OF STRIKING IRAN IF ORDERS GIVEN:** Israel is fully capable of striking Iran, a former Israel Air Force pilot – who took part in the destruction of Iraq’s nuclear reactor in 1981 – told media sources last week. “If the decision is taken by the political echelon, the air force pilots and planes are capable of doing it,” said Brig.-Gen. (res.) Amir Nachumi. “The attack against the Syrian reactor in Deir al-Zor in 2007 is just one proof of that.” Nachumi led one of two formations of four aircraft each that destroyed the Osirak nuclear reactor near Baghdad. The distance between Israel and Iran “makes it more complicated” than the strikes on Iraq and Syria, he said, acknowledging the obstacles which could arise in attacking the Islamic Republic’s nuclear facilities. “But I am sure that Israel’s air force of today – which is by far more developed and advanced with technology that we did not have in 1981 – is capable of doing it.” (J.Post)

**ISRAEL’S F-15 JETS STAY ON ALERT AT HOME, RATHER THAN AT DRILL IN THE USA:** With tensions high between Damascus, Tehran, and Jerusalem, Israel has decided to keep its fleet of F-15 jet fighters on alert on home soil rather than let them take part in a military drill in the USA as planned. The jets were due to participate in Red Flag, an international military drill scheduled to take place in Alaska next month. But following a recent pre-dawn aerial attack on the T-4 airbase in Homs - attributed by Iran and its backer Russia to Israel and confirmed as such by a senior Israeli military figure last week - the Israel Defense Forces are keeping their ground and air forces on high alert on the northern border, in the event Iran decides to launch a revenge attack. Troops are on the lookout for attempted missile or drone attacks, infiltration of terrorists over the border and attempts by them to lay explosive devices. At least seven Iranians were reported to have been killed in the attack by Israel. The Iranian Foreign Ministry threatened that Iran would respond to the attack and that Israel would come to regret it. The strike on the T-4 airbase came after Iran launched an explosives-laden drone into Israeli airspace in Feb. 2018. (Times of Israel)

**EUROPE TO HAMAS: DISARM, AND WE’LL REBUILD GAZA:** European groups recently passed on to Hamas a wide-reaching proposition to solve the Humanitarian crises in Gaza. If accepted, Hamas would relinquish armed struggle against Israel for at least five years. In exchange, an EU-created institution would pay the salaries of the Gaza strip civic administration and run all humanitarian affairs there. While the concept of connecting together wide-scale humanitarian and financial aid to Gaza with Hamas rejecting terrorism and violence is not new, this offer is unique for including an assumption of comprehensive authorities by a European body that would operate in the Gaza strip. For Hamas, it may be tempting that the financial aid for health, education and developing public administration would come directly from a European body and not via the Palestinian Authority in Judea & Samaria, currently controlled by Mahmoud Abbas. The Hamas negotiation team is reportedly still studying the European offer before responding to it. (J.Post)

**THE PIGEONS THAT HELPED ISRAEL WIN THE WAR OF INDEPENDENCE:** A secluded dovecote in an Israeli kibbutz was once part of a top-secret Israeli communications project, helping Israel in its 1948 War of Independence. Shaul Sapir, a pigeon trainer during the war, explains: "It was the only way to communicate, to receive news of what was going on with the troops. It was all done through the pigeons." There was a clandestine network of 68 dovecotes. Soldiers flew them from the heart of the battle. They carried coded messages. Now an educational center, the dovecote houses 60 pigeons, some of them descendants of those used during the war. (Reuters)

**ISRAELI SCHOOL STUDENTS MAKE STUNNING ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDS:** Students from local schools recently participated in field trips that saw them helping to excavate areas in northern Israel as part of a new interactive hiking trail providing a picture of Jewish life in the area 2,000 years ago. One young student unearthed a 1,400-year-old intact oil lamp featuring a seven-branched menorah. Another student, Ilai Yonah from Ha-Moshava High School in Zikhron Ya'akov, stumbled upon an extremely rare gold coin from the reign of the Ottoman Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent. Yonah and his buddies at first thought that perhaps the archaeologists were having a bit of fun with them, purposefully placing artifacts in their path. But officials at the site noted they would never so carelessly play with such rare artifacts, and that the discovery of the gold coin was indeed genuine. In the Galilee, where Jewish life was re-established 1,900 years ago after the fall of the Second Temple, thousands of Israeli students and volunteers have created a “smart” trail connecting the different centers in which the Great Sanhedrin sat under the rule of the Roman Empire. After its inauguration on 22 April 2018, tourists will be able to walk and learn about the archeology, nature, and historical surroundings through high-tech milestones, which transmit information and activities directly to hikers’ smartphones. (Israel Today/Times of Israel)

**NETANYAHU, REVLIN WISH ISRAEL A HAPPY 70TH ANNIVERSARY:** PM Benjamin Netanyahu released an Independence Day greeting video on 18 April 2018, commemorating "70 years of freedom, 70 years of democracy, 70 years of bettering the world. Israel's success didn't happen overnight," Netanyahu said. "Men and women from every walk of life — young and old, Jew, Christian, Muslim, religious and secular — have worked hard to build our nation." Wednesday night marked the transition from Remembrance Day to Independence Day in Israel, and on Thursday, many Israelis headed outdoors to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the founding of the state. "I have no doubt that 70 years from now, Israel will be even stronger, even more prosperous than it is today," Netanyahu said. In President Reuven Rivlin's greeting, he lingered on the Remembrance Day, remembering those for whom Israel "owes a great debt of gratitude." Both Netanyahu and Rivlin remarked that Israel has amazed and will continue to amaze the world for the next 70 years. (J.Post)

**WORLD LEADERS CONGRATULATE ISRAEL ON ITS 70TH ANNIVERSARY:** Leaders around the world sent letters of congratulations to President Reuven Rivlin on Israel's 70th anniversary Thurs. 19 April, 2018. Among the leaders who greeted the president and the state were presidents of the United States, Russia, Germany and Croatia, as well as the Queen of England and the UN Secretary-General. USA President Donald Trump wrote to Rivlin, "President Harry Truman spoke a lot about the pride he felt when he supported the establishment of the State of Israel. As I have stated in the past, I announced the transfer of the USA Embassy to Jerusalem one of my proudest moments as President of the United States. Our commitment to the security of Israel is strong and unwavering, and we will continue to stand by you as we have done in the past seven decades. I hope to deepen our historic friendship and witness Israel's prosperity." UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres wrote to the President of Israel, "The United Nations is enriched by the diversity of its members and our mission is strengthened when we unite to strengthen the values that are the anchor of our foundation."

German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier said in a letter to the President's Residence: "Israel celebrates 70 years of independence and we celebrate with it. The reconciliation and partnership with Israel that bridges the abyss that opened up in our history is a wonderful thing. For us Germans, it is a gift on one hand and a responsibility on the other. We will not forget this and will do our fair share to ensure a good future to Israel and trust between Germans and Israelis. To you, Mr. President, your wife and all the citizens and citizens of Israel. I send my heartfelt greetings, also on behalf of my countrymen." The Queen of England wrote to President Rivlin, "It is my pleasure to congratulate you warmly on the occasion of the Independence Day celebrations, and warm wishes for the happiness and well-being of all the citizens of Israel in the coming year." Russian President Vladimir Putin wrote: "I wish to note the excellent relations that exist between our two countries, and I am confident that together we will continue to develop bilateral dialogue and fruitful cooperation in economics, science, technology and humanitarian assistance for the sake of our people, and in order to strengthen peace, stability and security in the Middle East." (Arutz-7)

**PENCE: WE STAND WITH ISRAEL ON THIS HISTORIC DAY:** USA Vice President Mike Pence congratulated Israel on Wed. 18 April, 2018 on the occasion of its 70th Independence Day. "Today we join our great ally Israel as they celebrate their 70th Anniversary of Independence. The miracle of Israel's rebirth in her historic homeland is an inspiration to the world," tweeted Pence. "The American people are proud to stand with Israel on this historic day and every day." Earlier, President Donald Trump congratulated the State of Israel as well. "Best wishes to Prime Minister Netanyahu and all of the people of Israel on the 70th Anniversary of your Great Independence. We have no better friends anywhere. Looking forward to moving our Embassy to Jerusalem next month!" he wrote on Twitter. PM Binyamin Netanyahu thanked Trump, writing, "We too have no better friend than America. We are greatly looking forward to your moving the embassy to Jerusalem, Israel's eternal capital." (Arutz-7)

**'ISRAELIS ARE PROUD OF THEIR COUNTRY':** Tourism Minister Yariv Levin, on Wed. 18 April, 2018 congratulated the State of Israel and its citizens on the occasion of Israel's 70th Independence Day. "The fact that we are privileged to live in an independent country with great capabilities and which also provides its citizens with the best living conditions in the world is not something that should be taken for granted. It will always require us to be vigilant and if we can understand that, then I think that the extent of our commitment to internal cohesion will increase as well," said Levin. "Israel is a stronger country than ever before, with a strong economy and tremendous technology, a glorious education system and the list goes on. The State of Israel is constantly growing, and the settlement in all parts of the country is expanding and deepening as well," said Levin. (Arutz-7)

**SOME OF THE 70 REASONS PEOPLE LOVE ISRAEL:** Israel helped 30 countries foil terrorist attacks in 2017. Israeli technology helped identify the terrorists on the overwhelming output of the surveillance cameras at the Boston Marathon bombing in 2013. 90% of our wastewater is recycled. Spain is No. 2 with 20%. Some 93% of Israeli homes use solar energy for water heating, the highest percentage in the world. Israel has the largest percentage of vegans per capita in the world - 5% of the population. Over 500 million birds migrate through the skies of Israel twice a year, but a researcher, using radar, a motorized glider, drones and a network of birdwatchers, planned alternate commercial air routes, reducing bird-plane collisions by 76%. Israelis have more children than any other Western democracy. According to Startup Genome, Tel Aviv has more start-ups per capita than anywhere else, and it has 61 companies on NASDAQ. That's more than Europe, Japan, Korea and China combined. Israel has the highest percentage of start-ups in the world and is second only to the USA in absolute terms. (J. Post)

**PRE-INDEPENDENCE DAY MIRACLE:** Israel's security inspectors on 18 April 2018, located a powerful bomb, apparently intended for an Independence Day attack on Israel. It was found hidden on PA truck delivering goods to Jewish communities in Samaria. The powerful explosive device was hidden in the roof of the truck. The truck had merchandise intended for Jewish communities in that area. Police sappers worked to neutralize the threat and the Arab driver was arrested. A Defense Ministry official, Erez Sidon, praised the security forces' activities in cooperation with police sappers. "I am proud of the security inspectors who acted exactly as we expect them to, from the identification of the suspicious truck to the identification of the attempted smuggling that turned out to be an explosive, apparently intended for an attack during Independence Day," Sidon said. Defense Minister Avigdor Liberman also commended forces for apprehending the terror vehicle. "The vigilance and professionalism of authorities at the Defense Ministry led to the uncovering of a bomb and the thwarting of a major attack on the 70th Independence Day, and we will pursue those who planned to attack our holiday," he said. (Arutz-7)

**SENECA NATION CELEBRATES ISRAEL'S INDEPENDENCE DAY:** The Seneca Nation, a federally recognized Seneca tribe based in western New York State, officially recognized 19 April 2018, as the '70th Anniversary of Israel's Independence.' The proclamation states that "the Seneca Nation and the State of Israel share in common a passion for freedom and a willingness to fight for and defend our sovereignty and our shared right to be a free and independent people." The proclamation further states: "The Seneca nation has admiration and respect for the warrior spirit of the Israeli people. The warrior spirit of the Israeli people has enabled the State of Israel to protect and defend its sovereignty and its very existence against all that have tried to destroy it. Now, therefore, be it resolved that I, Todd Gates, President of the Seneca Nation of Indians, do hereby declare April 19, 2018 as Israeli Independence Day on the territory of the Seneca Nation of Indians." (Arutz-7)

**ISRAELIS CONTINUE DOMINANCE IN BIBLE QUIZ WITH FIRST-AND SECOND PLACE FINISHES:** An Israeli boy won the International Bible Quiz and an Israeli girl finished second as the host nation continued its dominance in the event. Ezriel Shilat, 16, a resident of Hatzor Haglilit in the north and a yeshiva student at Shomria in the south, took the title in the final round on Thurs. 19 April 2018, Israel's Independence Day, in Jerusalem. Shilat and Cohen were among four Israelis to reach the final round of 16 along with three Americans and Mexicans, two Australians and South Africans, and one each from Panama and Argentina. Israelis typically win the quiz, although a Canadian won in 2014 and an American tied with an Israeli in 2013. PM Netanyahu was on hand for the competition held annually on Independence Day. (JTA)

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