

Yachad Ministries' Israel's News Update August 16, 2018 **(5th of Elul, 5778)**



[For the Yachad Report Newsletter For August 2018](#)

ISRAELI MEDICAL CLOWN HEALS WITH HUMOR: For medical clown Dr. Amnon Raviv, humor for patients with serious illnesses is a survival order – a weapon to fight disease. Well known across Israel for his 23 years of work in medical clowning, Raviv will be in South Africa throughout August 2018 to share his expertise and assist the newly established NGO Dr. Heartbeat with medical-clown training. “Today we know that it is not possible to treat the body without taking care of the soul,” Raviv told media sources. The medical clown treats the psyche, and the stronger it is, the better the chances of recovery. Many studies indicate that medical clowning reduces anxiety and pain in patients – children and adults – and thus allows for better coping with the disease and its consequences. We know that laughter causes the secretion of hormones called endorphins that strengthen the immune system. The special empathetic connection that the medical clown creates with the patients reinforces and strengthens them,” Raviv explained. He added that “humor allows them to observe his or her situation from another, ‘smiling’ perspective. The laughter, brought by the medical clown to patients enables them to celebrate life here and now and to mobilize forces in coping with the disease.”

ISRAEL CONFISCATES TENS OF THOUSANDS OF BALLOONS HEADED FOR GAZA: Three shipping containers containing tens of thousands of balloons on their way to Gaza were stopped and confiscated at the Ashdod port on 13 Aug. 2018. Hundreds of arson fires sparked by Gaza terrorists have burned more than 7,500 acres of Israeli farm and nature lands in the last few months, causing millions of shekels in damage. Though a massive military escalation last week has since abated, Israel has not managed to stop the launching of incendiary kites and balloons that have started fires, with some even landing in residential communities. On 10 Aug, 2018 a massive “terror kite” landed on power lines near Kibbutz Sufa, causing blackouts and leading Israel Electric Company officials to scramble to remove the device before it started a fire.

LABOUR LEADER CORBYN PHOTOGRAPHED LAYING WREATHS FOR MUNICH TERRORISTS: Photographs emerged over the weekend of British Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn holding a wreath in 2014 as he stands near the grave of terrorists who massacred 11 Israeli athletes at the 1972 Munich Olympics. The Labour leader was said to be attending a service to commemorate Palestinian “martyrs” at a cemetery in Tunisia. In another photo, Corbyn is seen close to the grave of terrorist Atef Bseiso, intelligence chief of the Palestine Liberation Organization. Bseiso is also linked to the massacre. The images, posted on the Facebook page of the Palestinian embassy in Tunisia, show him standing under a red canopy with a corrugated steel roof. That structure runs beside the graves of Black September members and a plaque honoring their founder, Salah Khalaf, his key aide Fakhri al-Omari, and Hayel Abdel-Hamid, PLO chief of security.

“It beggars belief that anyone would wish to honor the terrorists behind the brutal massacre of 11 Israeli athletes at Munich. However, it is sadly utterly unsurprising that Jeremy Corbyn appears to have done so. Others will rightly regard it as totally sickening.” British Home Secretary Sajid Javid on August 2018 suggested that Jeremy Corbyn should quit as Labour leader following controversy over his visit to a cemetery in Tunisia containing memorials to Palestine Liberation Organization terrorists. Meanwhile, Israel's PM Netanyahu, who has largely avoided publicly criticizing British Labour party head Jeremy Corbyn, let loose on Tues. 14 Aug. 2018 saying Corbyn's participation in a ceremony commemorating the perpetrators of the Munich massacre deserved widespread condemnation. “The laying of a wreath by Jeremy Corbyn on the graves of the terrorists who carried out the Munich massacre deserves unequivocal condemnation from everyone – from the left, the right and across the entire political spectrum,” he wrote in a Facebook post.

KHAMENEI” WE WON’T NEGOTIATE WITH THE USA: Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei on Mon. 13 August 2018, refused USA President Donald Trump's offer to negotiate. In a tweet, Khamenei wrote, “Recently, USA officials have been talking blatantly about us. Beside sanctions, they are talking about war and negotiations. In this regard, let me say a few words to the people: ‘There will be no war, nor will we negotiate with the USA.’” Earlier on Monday, Khamenei claimed the USA sanctions will not necessarily harm Iran. “Today's livelihood problems do not emerge from outside; they are internal,” he tweeted. “If actions are taken more efficiently, more prudently, more swiftly and more firmly, sanctions cannot have much effect and they can be resisted.” Earlier this month, Trump re-imposed sanctions on Iran, urging countries not to do business with them. An additional set of sanctions will go into effect on 4 November 2018. Trump pulled out of the 2015 nuclear deal in May 2018 but has called for direct negotiations and emphasized his willingness to re-evaluate his decision if changes to the deal are made.

MEMORIAL FOR FALLEN JEWISH SOLDIERS OPENS IN AUSTRALIA: Australia has opened a new war memorial in memory of the hundreds of Jewish service members who have died for their country. The monument bearing the names of the fallen was dedicated at the National Jewish Memorial Centre in Canberra on 12 August 2018, in the presence of governor-general Sir Peter Cosgrove and Defense Force chief General Angus Campbell. Around 9,000 Australian Jews have served in their country's armed forces since the late 19th century with 341 of them dying in the line of duty. The dedication was timed to coincide with the 100th anniversary of the knighting of Sir John Monash, Australia's most famous Jewish soldier and one of the most-decorated commanders of the First World War. Last month, a sculpture of General Monash was commemorated at the Australian War Memorial.

BABY BOOM REPORTED THROUGHOUT ISRAEL: Hospitals from north to south are welcoming 10% more babies than average. Several hospitals in Israel have reported record-breaking numbers of deliveries of newborns. Maternity wards in most of Israel's hospitals are at capacity, with some mothers being referred to other departments and others having their being delivered in hallways. Soroka Hospital in Be'er Sheva broke its all-time record for births in any given month with 1,518 deliveries in July 2018. That's almost an increase of 10% points over the 1,395 births recorded there in July 2017. The Israeli hospital with the second-largest

number of births, Ichilov Hospital, saw 1,014 births in July – nearly 10% above that hospital's monthly average of 916 births. Smaller hospitals also saw a noticeable increase. In 2016, Israel had 181,405 deliveries and a fertility rate of 3.11 children per mother. This figure is by far the highest fertility rate among the members of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, a club of 34 industrialized nations. Israel had a fertility rate of four children per mother in 1970, but it had dropped to 2.9 by 1999 before climbing up to its current level. The average fertility rate within the OECD is 1.7 children per mother.

2.4 MILLION TOURISTS CAME TO ISRAEL SO FAR IN 2018, MINISTRY SAYS: Israel's Ministry of Tourism has announced that 2.4 million tourists have visited Israel since the beginning of 2018, a 17% increase in tourists for the same period in 2017. Citing findings from Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics, the ministry said that the number of tourists is 46% more than in 2016, almost double the number of tourists that entered during the same period that year. According to the ministry, 293,400 tourists entered Israel during July 2018 alone, which is around eight percent more tourists than in July 2017. "Month after month, we are witnessing new achievements and record highs in incoming tourism," said Minister of Tourism Yariv Levin. "The tourism industry continues to be a significant factor in making exceptional impact and contributions to the Israeli economy and workforce." Levin also praised the ministry's marketing initiatives and innovative activities, together with the incentives for airlines and investments in infrastructure, for contributing to the rise in tourism.

ONE KILLED, 170 WOUNDED IN CLASHES ALONG GAZA BORDER: One Palestinian was killed as thousands of Gazans gathered along the Gaza border fence on Friday 10 August 2018. Violent protests continued along the border fence with Israel after over 200 rockets and mortars were launched from the Hamas run enclave. Protesters marking the 20th week of the "Return March" demonstrations rioted along five spots along the border throwing rocks at Israeli soldiers and burning tires and launching incendiary kites into Israel from the Strip, causing at least six fires. An IDF spokesperson stated that 9000 rioters gathered along the Gaza border fence and threw stones, Molotov cocktails and other explosives. In response to a grenade thrown at Israel forces, an IDF tank attacked a Hamas position in the northern Gaza Strip. No Israeli soldiers were injured.

Later on Friday the IDF targeted another Hamas position with tank fire in the southern Gaza Strip. The deadly riots came after a 12-hour lull of fighting between Israel and Hamas which saw over 200 rockets and mortars fired from the coastal enclave towards southern Israeli communities and over 150 retaliatory strikes by Israeli jets. While a ceasefire to end the escalation of violence was said to have been agreed upon by the two sides following Egyptian and UN mediation, Hamas vowed that the Return March demonstrations would continue. The protests along the border have been the greatest threat to Israeli security in the region since operation Protective Edge due to the combination of terror tunnels, riots, attempted infiltrations and the use of incendiary items.

USA CONDEMNS STATE DEPARTMENT HAMAS ROCKET ATTACKS: State Department Spokesperson Heather Nauert said over the weekend: "We condemn the launching of missile attacks into Israel and call for an end to the destructive violence. We've seen reports that 180 or more rocket attacks have taken place, shot from Gaza into Israel, and we fully support Israel's right to defend itself and to take actions to prevent provocations of that nature. Let's not forget that Hamas bears ultimate responsibility for the dire humanitarian situation in Gaza."

IDF TOPPLES HAMAS HEADQUARTERS: Israeli fighter jets leveled a five-story building in the northern Gaza Strip on Thurs. evening 9 August 2018 as the fighting between Israel and Hamas continued to escalate. Israel says that the building serves as the command center for Hamas' internal security forces, which is responsible for and manages all internal security activities in the Gaza Strip. Some members of the Internal Security Unit are also active in the military wing of Hamas and take part in armed activity against Israel. The IDF said that it had decided to attack what it deemed a high-value target after Hamas fired rockets at Be'er

Sheva earlier in the day, the first time Israel's southern capital was targeted since 2014's Operation Protective Edge. "The assault was carried out following the extensive IDF attacks and in response to the firing of the terrorist organization by the Hamas terrorist organization at the city of Beer Sheva earlier in the day", said that IDF Spokesperson's Unit, adding that "this attack is an expression of the IDF's intelligence and operational capabilities. The Hamas terrorist organization bears responsibility for everything happening in and out of the Gaza Strip, and it will bear the consequences for the terrorist acts against Israeli citizens," added IDF Brigadier General Ronen Manelis.

EU: GAZA AND ISRAEL DANGEROUSLY CLOSE TO CONFLICT: "The rocket fire from Gaza towards communities in Southern Israel as well as other violent actions and provocations against Israel by Hamas and other Palestinian terrorist groups are totally unacceptable," an EU foreign affairs spokesperson said in a statement. "While having the right to defend itself, Israel is expected to continue to exercise restraint and do everything to avoid civilian casualties in Gaza. The European Union reiterates its full support to the efforts by Egypt and the UN to reduce tensions and to alleviate the situation in Gaza, including by enhancing the international response to the current crisis and easing movement and access," the statement concluded.

THERESA MAY DOUBLES HER PERSONAL POLL LEAD OVER JEREMY CORBYN: Theresa May has doubled her personal poll lead over Jeremy Corbyn as he faces a barrage of criticism over failing to tackle the anti-Semitism scandal. And the Tories have overtaken Labour in the polls and now lead by four points. A YouGov poll published over the weekend shows that 36% of those surveyed said they think May makes the best PM - up from 32 points a week ago. Corbyn's ratings have slid from 25 to 22 points over the same period, the survey for The Times newspaper found. Meanwhile, the Conservatives are beating Labour in the poll by 39 points to 35 - even though the two parties were neck and neck on 38 points last week. The results suggest that Corbyn's popularity is taking a battering amid widespread criticism that he is woefully failing to tackle the anti-Semitism scandal. The Labour leader has been accused of purposely ignoring the racism which festers among party members and some of his supporters.

IRAN TEST-FIRES BALLISTIC MISSILE: For the first time in more than a year, Iran has test-fired a ballistic missile, three USA officials with knowledge of the launch told news sources on Friday, 10 August 2018. The test of an Iranian Fateh-110 short-range ballistic missile coincided with a large-scale naval exercise by Iran's Revolutionary Guard forces late last week involving over 50 small gunboats in the Strait of Hormuz to rehearse "swarm tactics which could one day potentially shut down the vital waterway, through which 30% of the world's oil passes each year. The launch was detected by a spy satellite. The officials said the anti-ship Fateh-110 Mod 3 flew over 100 miles on a flight path over the Strait of Hormuz to a test range in the Iranian desert. "It was shore-to-shore," said one USA source describing the launch, Last week's missile launch is the first known test of the Fateh-110 in over a year since a pair were launched on consecutive days in March 2017. The United States has several times imposed sanctions on Iran over the tests, saying its missile tests violate UN resolutions. Iranian President Hassan Rouhani has stressed that Iran will continue to produce missiles for its defense.

PALESTINIANS IN GAZA FIRE 180 ROCKETS AT ISRAEL: Palestinians in Gaza fired more than 180 rockets at Israeli towns beginning on Wed. night 8 July 2018, triggering Israeli airstrikes against Hamas military installations. 19 Israelis were injured in rocket attacks from Gaza on Wednesday and Thursday. Israel responded with attacks on terror targets in Gaza. At least 30 rockets were intercepted by the Iron Dome missile defense system. Two homes and a factory in Sderot were hit by shrapnel, as well as a home in Hof Ashkelon. A senior IDF officer warned Thursday that Israel was nearing a full-blown military confrontation in Gaza after hundreds of rockets were launched overnight by Palestinian terror groups. "We are rapidly nearing a confrontation. Hamas is making serious mistakes, and we may have to make it clear after four years that this path doesn't yield any results for it and isn't worth it."

BRAZIL: PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE PROMISES EMBASSY MOVE: Brazil's front-running presidential candidate has announced he will close the Palestinian Authority's "embassy" in Brasilia in addition to moving his country's embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. "Is Palestine a country? Palestine is not a country, so there should be no embassy here," Jair Bolsonaro, a lawmaker from the Social Liberal Party, declared on 7 August 2018. "You do not negotiate with terrorists," he added. The right-wing lawmaker is a strong admirer and supporter of Israel. He slammed the fact that Palestinian Authority diplomatic representation is located less than two miles away from the Planalto Palace, Brazil's government headquarters. Elections are scheduled to be held in Brazil on 7 October 2018. Bolsonaro, a 62-year-old conservative politician who appears to be as pro-Israel as he is pro-law and order, said he will seek to broaden the dialogue with Israel, the United States and Europe. The candidate has participated in a handful of television interviews in recent weeks, where he noted that he has never been accused of corruption during his nearly 30-year political career and also repeated his intention to move the Brazilian embassy to Jerusalem.

TRUMP SIGNS ORDER RE-IMPOSING SANCTIONS ON IRAN: USA President Donald Trump signed an executive order officially reinstating USA sanctions against Iran on Mon. 6 August 2018. The order marks the first round of sanctions to be imposed on Iran following Trump's withdrawal from the 2015 nuclear agreement in May 2018. The sanctions target Iran's access to American dollars and steel and automobile industries, ban trade with Iran in gold and other precious metals, and include other sanctions which were lifted under the 2015 deal. The second round of sanctions will take effect on 4 Nov. 2018. Those sanctions will target Iran's oil and shipping industries. A senior administration official said that the sanctions "support the president's decision to impose significant financial pressure".

Israeli officials praised the move. Earlier, Defense Minister Avigdor Lieberman tweeted: "Tonight, the sanctions imposed by the American administration on Iran will enter into force. In a courageous decision that will be remembered for generations, USA President Donald Trump has changed direction with regard to Iran. No more agreements and obsequiousness, but a determined struggle to stop the murderous ayatollah's regime, which spreads terror, violence and hatred throughout the Middle East." Education Minister Naftali Bennett wrote: "I congratulate Donald Trump for his brave stand against Iran's tyrannous regime. The sanctions stand as a lesson to Iran's leaders and the whole world. Iran must end its genocidal ambitions & its spread of hatred, instability, & terror across the region." The USA sanctions have taken their toll on the Iranian economy even before going into effect. Last week, the Iranian rial plunged to a record low of less than 1,000 to the American dollar.

USA CALLS ON COUNTRIES TO STOP BUYING IRANIAN OIL: The USA wants as many countries as possible to cut their imports of Iranian oil to zero, a senior USA administration official said on Mon. 6 August, 2018. Asked if the USA will offer any waivers to countries to continue buying Iranian oil, the official said: "It is our policy to get as many countries to zero as quickly as possible. We are going to work with individual countries on a case by case basis, but our goal is to reduce the amount of revenue and hard currency going into Iran." Trump not only announced the most "biting sanctions ever imposed" on Iran on Tues 7 August 2018 but also said that anyone doing business with Iran will not be able to do so with the USA. "

ISRAEL'S DEFENSE MINISTER, SAYS IRAN'S TERROR SUPPORT BUDGET STANDS AT 2.5 BILLION ANNUALLY: Defense Minister Avigdor Lieberman on Tues. 7 August 2018 praised the reinstatement of USA sanctions on Iran, noting the money the ayatollah regime obtained from the lifting of sanctions under the 2015 nuclear deal helped fund terrorism "The renewal of sanctions on Iran is a necessary step, particularly from those who are fighting terrorism," Lieberman said. "The nuclear agreement brought billions of dollars to the regime in Iran, which used that money not for the benefit of its citizens, but for terrorism and subversion all across the Middle East," he added. The defense minister explained that Tehran's "terror support budget" is \$2.5 billion a year, which is allocated to the "Quds Force in Syria, funding Hezbollah, funding the Shiite militias in Iraq, funding the Houthi militias in Yemen, funding Hamas and

Islamic Jihad. He warned about the situation in Syria, saying "We see the Syrian army, which doesn't settle for capturing all Syrian territory, but is clearly building a broad, new army, which will go back to its previous size and even beyond. That is why we're monitoring every development and are ready for any scenario."

IRAN CROWDS CHANT 'DEATH TO THE DICTATOR!' AS USA SANCTIONS INCREASE ECONOMIC UNREST: Days of unprecedented protests aimed at Iran's sluggish economy along with "biting" sanctions imposed by President Trump ramped up pressure Tues. 7 August 2018 on the Islamic Republic's ruling class, causing many analysts to wonder if regime change could be on the horizon. Videos circulating on social media taken from inside Iran show thousands of protesters marching through the streets. In one video, crowds leaving a soccer match are heard yelling "death to the dictator! Death to Khamenei! Death to Rouhani!" and "Islamic regime must get lost!" according to a translation tweeted by a Middle East analyst. Another video said to be taken in Tehran shows idle buses lined up as far as the eye can see, with the same analyst reporting Iran's government has refused to pay back its debts to a contractor that gives the drivers fuel, leaving them – and the thousands of Iranians they would have been transporting – stranded. A senior Trump administration official said the restored sanctions against Iran are designed to constrict the revenue Iran uses to fund "terrorists, dictators, proxy militias, and the regime's own cronies."

POLL: MOST PALESTINIANS OPPOSE CONTINUED MILITARY OPERATIONS AGAINST ISRAEL: 58% of Palestinians in Gaza and 51% in Judea & Samaria oppose the continuation of military operations against Israeli targets, while 34% in Gaza and 32% in Judea & Samaria support them, according to a poll conducted by the Jerusalem Media and Communication Center released on Tues. 7 August. 71% said they would not mind working in Israel or in an Israeli settlement. When asked which political faction they trust the most, 25% said Fatah, 13% said Hamas, and 49% said they didn't trust anyone.

BIN LADEN'S SON MARRIES 9/11 HIJACKER'S DAUGHTER: The son of Osama bin Laden has tied the knot with the daughter of the lead hijacker in the 9/11 terror attacks. The 9/11 mastermind's half-brothers Ahmad and Hassan al-Attas mentioned the nuptials of 29-year-old Hamza bin Laden, who has assumed a senior position in al Qaeda. "We have heard he has married the daughter of Mohammed Atta," Ahmad told media sources, referring to the terrorist who piloted hijacked American Airlines Flight 11, which slammed into the Twin Towers. "We're not sure where he is, but it could be Afghanistan," he added. Hamza is the son of one of bin Laden's three surviving wives, Khairiah Sabar, who was living with her husband near a Pakistani military base when he was killed by US Navy SEALs seven years ago. Seeking to avenge his father's death, Hamza, who is considered the deputy to al Qaeda's current leader, Ayman al-Zawahiri, has urged followers to wage war on Washington, London, Paris and Tel Aviv. Bin Laden's mother, Alia Ghanem, had this to say about Hamza: "When we thought everyone was over this, next thing I knew was Hamza saying I am going to avenge my father. If he was in front of me now, I would tell him, 'God guide you. Think twice about what you are doing. Don't retake the steps of your father. You are entering really negative and horrible parts of your soul.'"

PRAY FOR RAIN: ISRAEL'S DRY SPELL A FIVE-YEAR DROUGHT: Israel is experiencing a five-year drought that is drying out several crucial bodies of water, causing a struggle for farmers trying to produce successful crops and having a ripple effect on the economy. "Nobody expected five years of drought in a row, so despite our desalination capacity, it's still a very, very grave situation," said Yuval Steinitz, Israel's minister of energy. The drought is expected to be felt throughout the Israeli economy as well. "The less rainfall there is this winter, the greater the damage to agriculture, and this will reduce harvests and agriculture-affected goods. Most critical is the condition of the dairy sector. If there is no food in the form of grains for the dairy sector, the target price will rise." Years of decreased rainfall have reduced the Sea of Galilee, and while Israel has tried to increase desalination efforts to meet demand, it isn't enough. As early as January this past winter - the season when Israel relies on rainfall to increase its stores - officials were already predicting it

was the driest winter in years. Now in the throes of a hot dry summer with months to go until the rains begin again, many Israelis are beginning to pray for precipitation to exceed the past few years.



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