

Yachad Ministries' Israel's News Update August 23, 2018 (12th of Elul, 5778)



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

ISRAEL'S ASHRAM SETS WORLD RECORD IN RHYTHMIC GYMNASTICS: Israeli rhythmic gymnast Linoy Ashram, 19, set a new world record with a score of 20.65 points in the clubs event at the Rhythmic Gymnastics World Challenge Cup Championship on 18 Aug. 2018 in Minsk. Ashram also won the gold medal in the all-round phase of the competition, in which gymnasts perform routines using a hoop, clubs, ball and ribbon. In May 2018 Ashram won Israel's first-ever gold medal in the World Challenge Cup competition, held in Spain, and now with her latest accomplishment she is the first athlete in the history of the Challenge Cup to win two all-around gold medals in one season. With the World Championships set to take place next month in Sofia, Bulgaria, Ashram has her sights set on another medal, following up third-place finishes in 2017 in the all-around and ribbon competitions. The gymnast dominated the 2016 Maccabiah's rhythmic gymnastics competitions, sweeping all five gold medals. With her ultimate goal of competing and medaling for Israel at the 2020 Olympics in Tokyo, Ashram has been in scorching form in 2018, with 16 overall medals in various preliminary rounds throughout the world.

COULD JELLYFISH HELP RID OUR WATERS OF PLASTIC WASTE? ISRAELI SCIENTISTS ARE ON IT: Jellyfish usually swarm Israel's Mediterranean waters to terrorize bathers beginning in July and their gelatinous remains can be found dotting the shoreline for the next two months. The plastic waste, meanwhile, is a permanent feature on the beach and in the water during those months, much to the dismay of those who care for the beach experience. Plastic garbage thrown away by beachgoers makes up a staggering 92% of the waste found in Israel's seawaters, whereas the global average is 75%. The world has produced some 6.3 billion tons of plastic waste since the 1950s, only nine percent of which has been recycled and the majority of it ends up in the ocean. Israeli scientists have been working alongside international researchers to find an innovative solution to help minimize plastic waste in the seawater, also known as microplastics following a degradation process, using jellyfish.

Since Jan. 2018, Dr. Dror Angel, from the University of Haifa's Department of Maritime Civilizations, and his team have been closely looking at the role of jellyfish-produced mucus and whether it could be used as a trapping agent to develop a filter for use in wastewater treatment plants and industrial processes to dispose of waste. The second part of the project involves removing a large number of jellyfish from the sea, which Dr.

Angel jokes will instantly help solve that nuisance for Israeli beachgoers. Dr. Angel According to a 2018 study, jellyfish are more likely than other marine life to ingest plastic debris, but “we don’t know if the plastic just got stuck on them or if the jellyfish were actually eating the plastic,” Dr. Angel explains. "Hence, if jellyfish were proven to willingly ingest plastic, it could have a great impact on the environment."

PEPSI TO BUY ISRAELI DRINK-MACHINE MAKER SODA STREAM FOR \$3.2 BILLION: Pepsi announced on 20 August 2018 that it would take over SodaStream, the Israeli company that sells do-it-yourself seltzer makers, in a deal worth \$3.2 billion. The move will boost Pepsi's efforts to shift from its traditional soft drinks to offering healthier options. SodaStream's products are marketed as a healthy alternative to sugary sodas.

‘RUSSIA, ISRAEL, AND USA AGREE – IRAN MUST LEAVE SYRIA’: The Russian government is in agreement with the USA and Israel over a key issue regarding the future of the Assad regime and the Kremlin’s support for the Syrian military, USA National Security Adviser John Bolton claimed on 19 August 2018. Bolton said that Russian President Vladimir Putin backed the demand by the USA and Israel that all Iranian forces be withdrawn from Syrian territory. Iran, a long-time ally of the Assad regime, has deployed elements of the Quds Force – a branch of the Revolutionary Guards – inside of Syria to bolster Assad against rebel forces. But the Quds Force has also been used for special operations against Syria’s neighbor to the southwest – Israel.

In Feb. 2018 an armed, unmanned Iranian aircraft penetrated Israeli airspace from Syria, before being shot down by IDF forces. In May 2018 Iranian forces stationed in Syria launched roughly two dozen rockets at northern Israel, prompting retaliatory attacks by the IDF. Since then, Israel has pressed Russia to use its influence with Damascus and Tehran to push for the full withdrawal of Iranian forces in Syria. While in the past, Russian officials have backed the withdrawal of Iranian troops from the Israeli border, it remained unclear whether the Kremlin would pressure Tehran to remove the Quds Force from Syrian entirely. On Sunday, however, Bolton said, “The objective of the United States, of Israel and Russia’s President Putin is to get Iran, Iranian forces, Iranian militias, Iranian surrogates out of the offensive operations they’re in both In Syria and Iraq, and, frankly, to end Iran’s support for Hezbollah.” According to Bolton, Iran’s ability to conduct long-range operations as been significantly reduced due to America’s withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal, and the return of sanctions on Tehran.

GERMAN FIRMS IN LINE WITH USA IRAN SANCTIONS: German rail operator Deutsche Bahn and Deutsche Telekom are ending projects in Iran after Washington imposed new sanctions against Tehran and said firms doing business with Iran would be barred from doing business with the United States. New USA sanctions against Iran took effect days ago and several European companies have suspended plans to invest in Iran in light of the USA sanctions, including oil major Total as well as carmakers PSA, Renault and Daimler. State-owned Deutsche Bahn is involved in two projects in Iran via its subsidiary DB Engineering & Consulting, a spokeswoman said on 16 August 2018. “Both projects will be ended in August and September 2018 respectively,” she said. “Due to the altered banking practice we have sought to bring the contract to an amicable and timely conclusion.”

ERDOGAN IS LEADING TURKEY TO DISASTER: Nominally, the current USA-Turkey standoff is over American pastor Andrew Brunson, whom the Turks are holding hostage under trumped-up terrorism charges. But the root problem is Turkish strongman Recep Tayyip Erdogan’s determination to lead his nation to ruin. His obsession with gaining an ever-stronger lock on power, along with crushing dissent from all possible rivals, is undoing any previous positive achievements. Brunson isn’t even the only hostage Erdogan’s holding in a blatant attempt to force Washington to deliver his former ally, the cleric Fethullah Gulen, who has long lived in exile in Pennsylvania. Erdogan blames Gulen for a 2016 coup attempt, as well as for the exposure of major regime corruption a few years earlier.

Yet the failed coup gave Erdogan the excuse to crack down, arresting 50,000 and firing some 110,000 government employees, all for supposed Gulenist ties, as well as silencing the last of Turkey's once-free press. Even Erdogan's road to prosperity is looking like a dead end: Turkey now has foreign debts of \$217 billion and one of the largest trade deficits of any emerging-market nation. Inflation was soaring even before the latest crisis; the currency has lost half its value in recent months. Then, President Trump this month imposed sanctions over Erdogan's refusal to free Brunson, and he's threatening even more. Erdogan replied by calling for a boycott on iPhones and other American electronics. The common people are suffering, and will suffer more if he stays the course. But indications are that Erdogan doesn't care. Maybe, just maybe, Team Trump's tough approach will shock the tyrant back to his senses.

JEREMY CORBYN WAS FILMED ENDORSING BDS IN 2015: Corbyn, who became the leader of Britain's Labour party in 2015, is shown during a conference in Belfast months before he assumed the party leadership. Corbyn has maintained that he opposes a blanket boycott of Israel, supporting instead only boycotting produce from Israeli settlements. "Jeremy is not in favor of a comprehensive or blanket boycott," a spokesperson for Corbyn told The Guardian in December 2017. "He doesn't support BDS. He does support targeted action aimed at illegal settlements and occupied territories." In the footage filmed in Belfast, he is asked: "Can the panel give hope to the people of Palestine by supporting the movement for Boycott Divestment and Sanctions against Israel?" He replies: "I think the boycott campaign, divestment campaign, is part and parcel of a legal process that has to be adopted." He later adds: "I believe that sanctions against Israel, because of its breach of the trade agreement, are the appropriate way of promoting the peace process." The footage was published in 2015 by Sinn Féin, the Northern Irish political party that hosted Corbyn in Belfast. Last week, Corbyn faced rebuke from within Labour and beyond following the publication of a picture of him holding a wreath in 2014 over a plaque in Tunisia honoring the mastermind of the 1972 massacre of 11 Israeli athletes at the 1972 Munich Olympics. He had previously denied claims that he honored the terrorists.

ISRAEL PERFECTS ANTI-TUMOR FREEZE BLASTING TECHNOLOGY: Tel Aviv-listed IceCure Medical Ltd., a company developing a minimally invasive medical device for treating tumors, announced last week it will start offering its technology in Israel's hospitals in upcoming weeks. Founded in 2006 and headquartered in Israel's affluent coastal town Caesarea, IceCure's device is an ultrasound imaging-guided probe that injects liquid nitrogen into a tumor. The company states that the process, called cryoablation, takes 20-40 minutes, does not require hospitalization, leaves minimal to no scarring, and has a short recovery time. The destroyed tumor cells are then reabsorbed in the body over time. The company's device is approved in the USA and the European Union. The treatment will be available in Israel to women suffering from fibroadenomas, benign breast tumors usually found in women under 30, and for patients with malignant kidney tumors. The medical center intends to offer the treatment to women with malignant breast cancer in the future.

ISRAELI INVENTION TO HELP COMBAT CHOLERA EPIDEMIC IN CAMEROON: Israel's NUFiltration will provide its unique water filtration systems to thousands of people in the African country of Cameroon who currently have no access to clean water and face a cholera epidemic. With support of the Foreign Ministry, NUF will provide \$15,000 worth of water treatment systems. Each system can convert eight liters of water per minute, providing the average daily water consumption for 500 people. The device uses disinfected, recycled, high-standard dialysis filters to purify water. The filters do not require electricity and have a minimum lifespan of three years. "With the use of a medical device that otherwise would have been discarded into the waste we purify water at the best rate possible," said NUF CEO Mino Negrin.

TRUMP THREATENS TURKEY OVER PASTOR: USA President Donald Trump has vowed to take new steps to free an American pastor detained in Turkey, stating that "we haven't seen the last of it. We are not

going to take it sitting down,” Trump said on Friday 17 August 2018. The USA president’s remarks followed a ruling by a Turkish court, which rejected an appeal for the release of USA Pastor Andrew Brunson, who has been held by Ankara since 2016. Brunson, an evangelical pastor, is under house arrest and faces 35 years in prison on espionage and terror-related charges. The Turkish currency fell again on Friday, after the United States threatened to impose new sanctions on the NATO country. The lira dropped about 5%, to about 6.11 per dollar. The USA has already imposed sanctions on two Turkish government ministers and doubled tariffs on Turkish steel and aluminum imports. Turkey retaliated with tariffs on some USA imports -- including cars, tobacco and alcoholic drinks - and vowed to boycott USA electronic goods.

TRUMP: BOTH ISRAELIS AND PALESTINIANS WILL HAVE TO GIVE UP SOMETHING FOR PEACE:

The Trump Administration is still not revealing the details of its long-awaited Middle East peace plan, but did say on Wed. 16 August 2018: "No one will be fully pleased with our proposal, but that’s the way it must be if real peace is to be achieved," said Jason Greenblatt, who is Trump's special Middle East envoy. "Peace can only succeed if it is based on realities," Greenblatt continued. The statement was also endorsed by USA Ambassador to the UN Nikki Haley, USA Ambassador to Israel David Friedman, and White House Adviser Jared Kushner. All four senior USA officials are noted for their pro-Israel positions, so many expect that the concessions required of Israel (which has already made numerous concessions over the past two decades) won't be too severe. Others fear that having already acquiesced to several major Israeli demands, such as reinstating sanctions against Iran and moving the USA Embassy to Jerusalem, Trump might now, indeed, insist on painful Israeli concessions in return.

What most do agree on is that whatever the particulars of the plan, it is unlikely to get off the ground considering that the Palestinian Authority (PA) has pre-rejected any proposal put forward by Trump. And if the PA does sign on, Trump won't tolerate violations of the agreement, in contrast to past presidents, who routinely overlooked Palestinian transgressions. The Palestinians have already determined that the Trump Administration is not a viable peace broker.

ABBAS: WE WILL THWART TRUMP’S PEACE PLAN:

USA administration officials who purportedly claim to want to improve the living conditions of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip are “liars,” Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas said last week. Abbas, who was speaking at the opening session of the PLO Central Council in Ramallah, also vowed to pursue efforts to thwart USA President Donald Trump’s yet-to-be-unveiled plan for peace in the Middle East and the Jewish Nation-State Law. He also pledged to continue payments to Palestinian security prisoners and families of “martyrs” killed while carrying out terrorist attacks against Israel. Referring to Trump’s unseen plan, which is also known as the “Deal of the Century,” Abbas said: “We were the first to fight against it and we will continue to fight against it until it falls. This is the ‘slap of the century.’”

THOUSANDS RIOT ON FRIDAY ALONG GAZA BORDER:

IDF troops responded with riot dispersal means and fired according to standard operating procedures, said the IDF Spokesperson’s Unit on Friday 17 August 2018. The Hamas-run health ministry in Gaza claimed that two Palestinian Arabs had been shot dead while taking part in protests along the Gaza Strip border with Israel. The violent riots along the border have been ongoing since 30 March 2018. In addition to attempting to infiltrate into Israel, the Arab rioters have been using kites and balloons with explosives attached in order to set fire to Israeli property. The protests have been openly encouraged by Gaza’s Hamas terrorist rulers. An incendiary balloon launched from Gaza caused a fire in Be'eri Forest in southern Israel Friday 17 August 2018. The fire was put out but two new fires have been reported in the same forest.

STABBING ATTEMPT IN JERUSALEM’S OLD CITY:

The Arab terrorist who tried to stab a policeman in Jerusalem's Old City on Friday afternoon 17 August 2018 has been identified as Ahmad Mahameed from the Arab Israeli city of Umm al-Fahm, which is located in northern Israel. The attack carried out by

Mahameed took place around 5:30 p.m. on Friday near the Damascus Gate. The terrorist left the Temple Mount area and a few moments later encountered a team of police officers who were stationed there. He tried to stab one of them with a knife before being shot dead by the officers who were at the scene. No one was physically injured, but a Magen David Adom team of paramedics treated two women for emotional trauma.

ISRAEL'S EXPORTS TO GULF STATES WORTH \$1 BILLION: Israel's exports to Gulf Arab states were worth nearly \$1 billion in 2016, a new analysis of trade data suggests, despite their refusal to recognize Israel or have diplomatic relations with it. The Tony Blair Institute for Global Change said last week its analysis of goods flows between third countries suggest the true amount of Israel's direct trade in recent years with Saudi Arabia and the UAE is "close to" \$1 billion. The study said the current figure is only a tiny fraction of the trade's potential. The institute said the true value of current trade is hidden in export statistics of trade with third countries. These goods are then resold to the Gulf. The institute estimates that the level of trade is greater than Israel has with Egypt and Jordan combined, despite having peace treaties with both.

TWO ISRAELI UNIVERSITIES LISTED AMONG GLOBAL TOP 100: Israel's Technion Institute of Technology and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem were listed in the top 100 universities in the world by the Academic Ranking of World Universities, otherwise known as the Shanghai Ranking. Israel's Technion, which was in the 93rd spot last year, shot up to the 77th spot among universities across the globe. Hebrew University, which did not make the list, last year, reached the 95th slot. The Shanghai Ranking list was topped by Harvard University. The rankings factor is the number of Nobel Prize winners emanating from the university, as well as the number of publications in acclaimed academic and scientific journals. Israel was the only Middle Eastern country to be featured in the Top 100 list.

TOP TRUMP SECURITY AIDE BOLTON TO VISIT ISRAEL NEXT WEEK: Top White House official John Bolton will visit Israel for talks next week, the Trump administration said on 14 Aug. 2018. Bolton, USA President Donald Trump's national security adviser will visit Israel as part of a trip that will also take him to Ukraine and Geneva, where he will follow up with Russian officials on Trump's meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin last month. The trip to Israel will be the first for Bolton, seen as a pro-Israel hawk, since he was appointed to the role in March 2018. At the time, government figures praised the choice, with Education Minister Naftali Bennett calling him a "stalwart friend of Israel." A former ambassador to the UN, Bolton is known for taking a hard line against Iran, and was seen as a central player in the USA decision to withdraw from the nuclear deal in May 2018. In the past he has advocated for Israel carrying out military strikes against Iran. Bolton is highly defensive of Israel. After former president Obama allowed passage of a UN Security Council resolution in 2016 that condemned Israeli settlements, Bolton said Obama "stabbed Israel in the front" and that the measure was "clearly intended to tip the peace process toward the Palestinians."

ARGENTINA PLACES BLAME FOR GAZA VIOLENCE SQUARELY ON PALESTINIANS: In a sign of Buenos Aires' changing attitude toward Israel, the Argentine Foreign Ministry has issued a statement that puts the blame for recent clashes between the Israeli military and Hamas squarely on the Palestinians. Referring to the recent escalation in tensions that has seen Hamas fire hundreds of rockets into Israeli territory and the Israelis carry out numerous retaliatory strikes against Hamas outposts and fighters, the statement expressed its "deep concern" over the violence, which it said was "caused by the launch of rockets towards Israel." Relations between Argentina and Israel have warmed significantly since the 2015 election of President Mauricio Macri. He replaced Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, under whose leadership bilateral ties frayed significantly. In 2010 Kirchner recognized Palestine as a "free and independent state." In June 2018, an Argentine federal court found that Jewish special prosecutor Alberto Nisman had been murdered as a direct consequence of his accusation against Kirchner of a cover-up of Iran's role in the 1994 AMIA Jewish center bombing. Israeli PM Netanyahu visited Buenos Aires last year and met with Macri, calling him "a true friend of Israel."

PALESTINIAN USA CONGRESSWOMAN-TO-BE VOWS TO VOTE AGAINST ISRAEL AID:

Rashida Tlaib, the soon-to-be first Muslim congresswoman in the United States, said that she would "absolutely" vote against military aid for Israel when questioned during a media interview on 13 August 2018. "For me USA aid should be leverage," said Tlaib. "I will be using my position in congress so that no country, not one, should be able to get aid from the USA, when they still promote injustice." Tlaib, when asked about her views on the Arab-Israeli conflict, said that "So much is about choosing a side. I am for making sure that every single person there has the right to thrive." The future congresswoman is a Detroit native and born to a family of Palestinian immigrants to the USA. On 7 August, 2018 she won her district's Democratic nomination for Michigan's 13th Congressional district, encompassing parts of Detroit and surrounding suburbs and home to one of the largest Muslim and Arab-American populations in the United States. Since no one ran in the Republican primary, Tlaib is poised to win the seat.

RUSSIAN EXERTS GROWING CLOUT IN MIDDLE EAST AS IT BEGINS PATROLS IN GOLAN HEIGHTS:

Russian military police have begun patrolling the demilitarized zone between Israel and Syria in the Golan Heights, highlighting Moscow's increasing clout as a Middle Eastern power broker following its intervention in the civil war there. "The Russian military police are pioneers in renewing patrols of the Golan Heights," Lt Gen Sergei Kuralenko told journalists at a damaged UN observer post. "There is almost no danger besides from mines. The whole demilitarised zone is under control now." Following the start of the Syrian conflict, terrorists drove out the UN peacekeepers that had served in the area since 1974. The pockmarked guardhouses and discarded ammo and rocket-propelled grenade launcher boxes testified to the fierce fighting between Bashar Assad's regime and the Nusra Front before government forces pushed the al-Qaeda-linked jihadist group from the post and the wider area last month. The mission of Moscow's forces is to help the UN disengagement observer force restart its monitoring of the zone, he said. They have mapped safe routes and accompanied UN observers down the MCM road through the DMZ this month, he added. Russian military police have four bases in the area and will establish more on Bravo Line, the side of the zone held by Syria.

AL QAEDA RETURNS? UN PANEL WARNS OF NEW BIN LADEN THREAT:

As ISIS is driven out of its former strongholds, a UN panel is warning that the next big terror threat in the region could come, once again, from Al Qaeda -- led by the son of Usama bin Laden. The report by UN experts, released this week, included startling findings about both terror networks. The report found that while ISIS had been defeated militarily in Iraq and most of Syria, it had rallied in early 2018 and still had approximately 20,000-30,000 members in the two countries. The UN report found ISIS, though, is in the process of moving from "a proto-State network to a covert network" that continues to threaten other countries. Its leadership is still intact, under Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi.

The report also raised significant concerns about Al Qaeda, which fell into the background amid the international attention on ISIS and its brutal tactics, particularly after the death of Usama bin Laden in 2011. The report found that Al Qaeda is still a global network showing resilience, and it is stronger than ISIS in places like Somalia, Yemen and South Asia -- and its leadership in Iran has grown more prominent. Earlier this month, 29-year-old Hamza, who has said he wants to avenge his father, is believed to have married the daughter of Mohammed Atta -- who hijacked and flew the first plane into the World Trade Center on 11 Sept. 2001.

WESTMINSTER 'TERROR ATTACK':

A terror suspect was arrested after a car crashed into a barrier at the Houses of Parliament at high speed police have said. At least three people were injured when the silver Ford Fiesta hit a group of cyclists and pedestrians waiting for traffic lights to change. Rooftop camera footage shows the car mounting a pavement on the wrong side of the road before, witnesses said it traveled at up to 50mph for around 130ft and hit a bollard. Scotland Yard said a man in his late 20s was arrested after the incident on 14 August 2018. The suspect was taken to a south London police station, where he remains on

suspicion of terrorism offences. The terrorist threat against the UK is seen as unprecedented. In addition to five attacks last year, authorities say they have stopped 13 Islamist and four extreme right-wing plots since the Westminster atrocity in March 2017. Police and MI5 are running at least 500 live operations involving roughly 3,000 active "subjects of interest" at any one time - while there is also a wider pool of more than 20,000 individuals who have previously featured in investigations whose threat must be kept under review.

ISRAELI SWIMMERS WIN TWO GOLD MEDALS IN EUROPEAN PARALYMPIC CHAMPIONSHIP: Israeli swimmers won two gold medals this week in the European Paralympic championship held in Dublin, Ireland. Inbal Pezaro, 31, came first in her 200 meter freestyle final, while Ami Dadaon, 17, won the 100 meter freestyle race. Pezaro, who has been paralyzed since birth in her lower limbs, has represented Israel at the Paralympic games since 2004 and has won a total of four silver medals and five bronze medals. She has also represented the country in countless other tournaments, with three gold medals in world championships — in 2002, 2006 and 2010. Culture and Sports Minister Miri Regev tweeted her congratulations to the swimmers, writing: “You have brought honor to the State of Israel!”



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