

# **Yachad Ministries' Israel's News Update September 27, 2018 (18<sup>th</sup> of Tishrei, 5779)**



**[For the Yachad Report Newsletter For September 2018](#)**

**‘JERUSALEM, ISRAEL’ TO BE WRITTEN IN USA PASSPORTS?** Fifty-five members of Congress will ask USA President Donald Trump to allow Americans born in Jerusalem to have "Jerusalem, Israel," written as their birthplace in their USA passports. "Despite the progress in moving the embassy, the State Department has not yet fully implemented the administration's policy of recognizing Jerusalem as Israel's capital for purposes of registration of birth, certification of nationality, or issuance of a passport of a United States citizen born in the city of Jerusalem," the letter said. New York's Representative Lee Zeldin and Florida's Representative Ileana Ros-Lehtinen initiated the move, and released the letter to the media. Despite Trump's decision to recognize Jerusalem and the subsequent USA Embassy move, the USA State Department made clear that it has not altered its policy regarding government documents provided to USA citizens born in Jerusalem.

**HAMAS: CEASE-FIRE TALKS WITH ISRAEL ARE OVER:** The Hamas terrorist organization announced on Sunday 23 Sept. 2018 that its indirect cease-fire talks with Israel have halted. Hamas spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri blamed the impasse on the Palestinian Authority, which has voiced its strong opposition to the talks. Abu Zuhri said that in response, Hamas would be escalating its protests in new locations along Gaza's borders with Israel. Egypt had been brokering ceasefire talks between Hamas and Israel in recent weeks, but the PA has repeatedly criticized those talks. One report said that PA chairman Mahmoud Abbas had threatened to cut all contact with Israel, should the Jewish state reach a ceasefire agreement with the Hamas terrorist organization. Abbas' Fatah faction and Hamas have been at odds since 2007, when Hamas violently took control of Gaza from Fatah. Fatah and Hamas signed a reconciliation deal last October, under which the PA was to have resumed full control of Gaza by 1 Dec. 2018. That deadline was initially put back by 10 days and had later reportedly hit "obstacles". All attempts to get the sides back to the negotiating table have failed.

**450 TERRORIST ATTACKS AND 700 ROCKETS SINCE SEPTEMBER 2015:** Since September 2015, Israel has experienced a relentless wave of Palestinian terrorism in which nearly 450 terrorist attacks have been perpetrated. Most have been carried out by young individuals, fueled by incitement to hatred. Days ago, an Israeli civilian and father of 4 children, Ari Fuld, joined the list of victims of terrorism in the last 3 years. Since October 2015, 69 innocent people have been killed in terrorist attacks in Israel and Judea & Samaria and more than 1,000 people have been injured. A total of 195 stabbing attacks, 202 shooting attacks, and 68 hit-

and-run attacks have been carried out. The first of this wave of attacks were carried out on 1 October 2015 when Rabbi Eitam Henkin and his wife Naama were killed in front of their four children after Palestinian terrorists fired on the car in which they were traveling. In addition, at least 730 rockets have been fired at Israel from the Gaza Strip since September 2015. Between July and August of this year alone, more than 350 rockets were fired into Israeli territory. Likewise, since "Return Marches" began near the Gaza-Israel border, it has initiated a new type of terrorism among Palestinians in which they send kites and incendiary balloons to communities in southern Israel. These attacks have led to nearly 1,400 fires that have caused major economic and environmental losses in the south of the country.

**STATE DEPARTMENT: WHY SHOULD USA FUND PA HOSPITALS:** State Department spokeswoman Heather Nauert recently said that the USA had no reason to fund Palestinian Authority (PA) hospitals, as this funding allows the PA to free up funds for payments of terrorists. Earlier this month, USA President Donald Trump announced he would cut \$25 million in aid to six PA-run hospitals in Jerusalem, noting the funds would be directed to "high-priority projects elsewhere." Previously, the USA covered the costs of medical treatment for Palestinian Arabs who received care at these hospitals. Nauert was asked whether she anticipated any sort of blowback from the decision to cut the aid to PA hospitals. "The United States Government does not believe that it is responsible for paying for the hospital bills," she replied. "Now, that may shock some people to hear that. The Palestinian Authority is solely responsible for paying for the treatment of Palestinians in those hospitals. "Historically," noted Nauert, "they have neglected to pay the bills of those individuals and other bills related to the hospital. Our funding in the past has generously shored them up. The PA, though has failed to prioritize paying its debts and has instead put money into funding things like payment to families of terrorists. The Palestinians should be funding the care of their own people in the hospitals and it should not be the responsibility of the United States Government to pay those bills when the Palestinians have that money that they could choose to use for their own people, as opposed to funding the families of terrorists and those who are serving in prison," she said.

**MAY: WE WON'T LET ANTI-SEMITISM WIN:** A recent poll that found nearly 40% of British Jews would leave the country if Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn came to power "sickens me," British PM Theresa May said. "I do not underestimate the threat posed by those who promote anti-Semitism, or hatred in any form. Nor the pernicious nature of what those people say and what they stand for," May said at a recent United Jewish Israel Appeal dinner in London. "But I do not believe those voices speak for the vast, overwhelming majority of people in our country. And most importantly, I do not believe that those voices will ever win. We will not let them win," she told the audience of 800. "If we are to stand up for the values that we share – then one of the things we need to do is give young Jewish people the confidence to be proud of their identity – as British, Jewish and Zionist too," May said. She offered her support to the British Jewish community and to Israel. "I have come here tonight as Prime Minister of our country to say that I stand with you," she said. "I stand with Israel as the homeland of the Jewish people. And I stand with the entire Jewish community in Britain."

**ANTI-SEMITISM IN FRANCE: 'JEWS TRASH LIVES HERE':** A Jewish home in Paris was targeted by anti-Semitic vandals, who defaced the front door with anti-Jewish graffiti and a symbol used by far-right groups in Europe. On 20 Sept. 2018, residents of the home, located in the Grandes-Carrières district of the French capital, found that the front door of their home had been vandalized, likely at the conclusion of the Yom Kippur holiday. Scrawled across the doors were the words "Here lives Jewish trash," along with a cross overlaid on a circle. Known as a "Celtic cross", the symbol has been used in recent years by white supremacist and neo-Nazi groups across Europe. The family in question has been targeted by vandals in the past, and the door of the building has been torched twice in the last three months. Local mayor Eric Lejoindre said that the police went to the scene and collected evidence. "An investigation is underway and I hope it will be completed as soon as possible," he said.

**KOSOVO OFFERS ISRAEL AN EMBASSY IN EXCHANGE FOR RECOGNITION:** The President of Kosovo says his country would set up an embassy in Israel if the Jewish state recognizes it as an independent state, media sources reported Friday 21 Sept. 2018. "If Kosovo were recognized by Israel, I would place the Kosovo embassy in Jerusalem," Thaci was quoted as saying. The United States and dozens of other countries have recognized Kosovo, a Muslim-majority country, as a state since it declared independence from Serbia in 2008. Opposition by Russia and China have kept Kosovo from getting UN membership, however. Israel, Spain, India, Morocco and Ukraine are among the key countries that have not recognized Kosovo, reportedly out of opposition to unilateral declarations of independence, including in territories they control.

**JORDAN TO IMPORT 85% OF ITS NATURAL GAS FROM ISRAEL:** Jordan will import 8.5 million cubic meters of natural gas from Israel every day, according to Amani Azzam, secretary general of the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources. Jordan's daily needs of natural gas stand at 9.9 million cubic meters. A 65-km. pipeline will transfer \$10 billion worth of natural gas from Israel into Jordan for 15 years, with supplies expected to begin in 2020. The gas will be distributed to the country's power plants for electricity generation. The deal is expected to save around 700 million Jordanian dinars (nearly \$1 billion) annually from the country's energy bill. Egyptian gas supply to the kingdom halted in 2013 following terrorist attacks that destroyed the pipeline that brought cheap gas to Jordan.

**FIRST TRAIN LEAVES JERUSALEM'S NEW STATION:** The first train left Jerusalem's Navon station (opposite Binyanei Ha'Uma) at 12.30 pm on 20 Sept. 2018 on what was billed as a special test run rather than the official launch. The train was scheduled to make it as far as Ben Gurion airport because electrification on the section between the airport and Tel Aviv has not been completed. PM Benjamin Netanyahu and Minister of Transport Yisrael Katz attended the ceremony in Jerusalem as the first train left the station. Optimistic estimates say it will take another 3-6 months before the line is fully operational. In the first stage there will be only one train per hour between Jerusalem and Ben Gurion airport station where passengers will change to a diesel train. When fully operational there will be one train every 15 minutes. The line is designed to connect Israel's capital to the Greater Tel Aviv metropolitan area and the central region and relieve traffic congestion. Travel time from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, the last stop on the line, is meant to be 28 minutes.

**ISRAELI DELEGATION PRESENTS FINDINGS OVER DOWNED RUSSIAN JET:** An Israeli delegation led by the head of the air force left for Moscow Thurs. 20 Sept. 2018 to present findings of an investigation into last week's downing of a Russian jet in Syria. Fifteen Russian servicemen were killed when their military transport plane was struck by Syrian defense missiles in the wake of an Israeli attack on a weapons manufacturing facility in Latakia. The Russian Defense Ministry immediately laid blame squarely on Israel's shoulders, but President Vladimir Putin later defused what was shaping up to be a major diplomatic crisis by attributing the event to a "chain of tragic circumstances." According to the Israel Defense Forces, the targeted facility produced advanced weaponry meant to be transferred to Iranian terrorist proxy, Hizbullah, in Lebanon and thereby "posed an intolerable threat" to the Jewish state.

According to an official source on Friday 21 Sept. 2018 the Israeli military delegation to Moscow had answered Russia's questions over last week's incident, including debunking the false notion that the Israeli jets had hidden behind the Russian plane. Israel also clarified that its attack planes had left the area before the Syrians fired the missile that downed the Russian plane. He also said Israel notified the Russians ahead of the strike, and not a minute before as Moscow had originally claimed. The official said the Israeli played the Russians a recording of the telephone conversation between the IAF and the Russian air force base in Syria before the IAF strike. And he dismissed a pro-Hizbullah newspaper's claim that Russia had refused to accept Israel's explanations over the incident, for which Israel firmly blames Syria.

**BENNETT: WE WANT TO PREVENT IRAN FROM ENVELOPING ISRAEL IN ITS ARMS:** Naftali Bennett, Israel's Minister of Education and of Diaspora Affairs, said on 20 Sept. 2018, "We want to prevent a

situation in which Iran is enveloping the State of Israel in its arms." He was interviewed by Israel Defense Forces Radio about the downing of a Russian plane after an Israeli airstrike on a facility in Syria where the IDF said "systems to manufacture accurate and lethal weapons were about to be transferred on behalf of Iran to Hizbullah terrorists in Lebanon." Bennett noted, "When the Syrian army launched the missiles into the plane, our planes were no longer in the area. Russia has certain interests and Israel has other interests. In the end, we need to act with determination and consistency." Iran apparently assumed Israel would not attack in Latakia, Syria, because of Russia's heavy presence in the area, and therefore bolstered its activity there. Iran had built warehouses and weapons development facilities as well as workshops to improve existing arms.

**ISRAEL BOOSTING DEFENSE OF NUCLEAR REACTORS FEARING IRANIAN MISSILE ATTACK:** Israel is upgrading and reinforcing its nuclear sites amid Iranian threats to attack them, according to the director general of the country's Atomic Energy Commission. In light of Iranian clandestine activities, Zeev Snir said, "we cannot ignore the repeated and explicit threats, made by Iran and its proxies, to attack Israel's nuclear sites. These outrageous threats require Israel to take action and continue to protect and defend its nuclear facilities. These facilities are constantly upgraded and reinforced, in line with IAEA safety guidelines, in order to withstand any attack." Meanwhile, Iranian state media reported on Thurs. 20 Sept. 2018 that Tehran has asked the UN to condemn Israeli threats against Tehran and to bring Israel's nuclear program under its supervision. PM Netanyahu used a visit to a secretive Israeli atomic reactor in late August 2018 to warn the country's enemies that it has the means to destroy them, in what appeared to be a veiled reference to its assumed nuclear arsenal. Since its 1979 Islamic Revolution, Iran has preached Israel's destruction. It backs the Lebanese terrorist militia, Hizbullah, and the Palestinian Islamist movement, Hamas. Its reinforcement of Damascus during Syria's civil war is seen by the Netanyahu government as a further Iranian deployment on Israel's borders.

**VOLKSWAGEN PULLS OUT OF IRAN:** The USA has persuaded Volkswagen to comply with sanctions on Iran and end almost all of its business in the country, USA Ambassador to Germany Richard Grenell said last week. "We are pleased with this decision because Iran diverts its economic resources away from its people to spread violence and instability across the globe," he said. A senior State Department official said there was now no business left for the EU to protect in Iran and that the USA had essentially won in its battle to persuade companies to leave. He said that European nations and businesses are far more closely aligned with the USA than they are with the EU on that issue.

**USA AMBASSADOR: PA TERROR COMPENSATION MUST STOP:** USA Ambassador to Israel David Friedman reiterated Thurs. 20 Sept. 2018 his country's demand that the Palestinian Authority stop paying the families of terrorists. "The Palestinian Prisoner Affairs Commission has confirmed that the family of the terrorist who murdered Ari Fuld is 'eligible to receive a monthly salary' as compensation for his incarceration," he tweeted. "This practice is unconscionable and must stop if there is to be any hope for peace." It should be noted that Fuld, who was murdered last week in a stabbing attack at the entrance to the shopping center near the Gush Etzion junction, was an American citizen. Hours after the murder, Ambassador Friedman posted an announcement saying that "America grieves as one of its citizens was brutally murdered by a Palestinian terrorist. Ari Fuld was a passionate defender of Israel and an American patriot. He represented the best of both countries and will be deeply missed. May his family be comforted & his memory be blessed."

**HAMAS RAMPS UP PRESSURE ON GAZA BORDER:** Sources in Gaza have confirmed that Hamas has decided to escalate the demonstrations on the Gaza border in order to pressure Egypt and Israel. Egyptian-mediated ceasefire talks have been suspended for the past three weeks, and PA President Mahmoud Abbas has threatened to end all financial support for Gaza. In the past two weeks, Hamas has been encouraging the public in Gaza to intensify the clashes at the border fence. Sources in Gaza said that a \$200 grant had been handed to every Palestinian wounded in the riots since the beginning of Sept. 2018. The funding reportedly

comes from Iran. Hamas has renewed the launching of incendiary balloons and has called for a series of violent confrontations almost every evening. Hundreds of Palestinians rioted near the Gaza security fence during Yom Kippur on Wed. 19 Sept. 2018, throwing firebombs, a hand grenade and an explosive device at IDF soldiers. The previous evening a Palestinian man charged at a Jewish worshiper with a screwdriver in central Jerusalem shortly after Yom Kippur began, the holiest day of the Jewish year. After passersby tripped the attacker, he ran at police officers to stab them before he was shot and killed.

**MASS PROTEST IN GAZA OVER UNRWA JOB CUTS:** Thousands of employees of UNRWA protested in Gaza on 19 Sept. 2018 against forced redundancies as a result of USA funding cuts. More than 5,000 people attended the march that began at the Gaza headquarters of UNRWA, including senior figures from Hamas and other factions. The agency announced it would cut more than 250 jobs in Gaza and Judea & Samaria and make over 500 other positions part-time, as it seeks to survive crippling financial shortfalls caused by USA aid cuts. Washington has provided more than \$350 million a year for the agency, but USA President Donald Trump on 1 Sept. 2018 pulled all funding. The job cuts have sparked fierce protests, with UNRWA's head in Gaza accusing the agency's labor union in Gaza of "mutiny." During Wednesday's demonstration, union representative Amir al-Mashal announced "a full strike in all UNRWA agencies on 24 Sept. 2018 as a first step of protests." (Arutz-7) The United States earlier this month ended its decades of funding for the UN agency that helps Palestinian refugees, a week after slashing bilateral USA aid for projects in Judea & Samaria and Gaza. The USA had supplied nearly 30% of the total budget of the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) and had been demanding reforms in the way it is run. The USA State Department said the United States "will no longer commit further funding to this irredeemably flawed operation".

**WE WILL BRING ANOTHER 1,000 ETHIOPIAN JEWS TO ISRAEL':** PM Benjamin Netanyahu, convened the Ministerial Committee on the Advancement and Integration of Israeli Citizens of Ethiopian Origin, where he promised to bring another 1,000 Ethiopian Jews to Israel. "This is the 11th meeting of this ministerial committee. At the previous meeting I promised to submit a recommendation regarding the Falash Mura and after consulting with MKs Amsalem and Neguise, I am pleased to inform you that I have decided that approximately 1,000 community members – whose children are already here – must be brought to Israel," Netanyahu said. " I am determined to do this and I add that this is in wake of 1,300 Falash Mura who have already come to Israel. I have asked Interior Minister Aryeh Deri, to submit a draft Government decision. This is in continuation of the importance with which we have been handling this precious community, which is part of our people and part of our state."

**PUTIN ABSOLVES ISRAEL IN DOWNING OF SPY PLANE, BUT WARNS PM: DON'T LET IT RECUR:** PM Netanyahu spoke Tues.18 Sept. 2018 with Russian President Vladimir Putin amid rising tensions between the two countries after a Russian spy plane was shot down by Syria during an Israeli airstrike. The prime minister, in the name of the State of Israel, conveyed sorrow over the deaths of the Russian soldiers but said that the responsibility for downing the plane falls on Syria. The previous day, Syria accidentally shot down the Russian plane, killing all 15 crew members, when its air defenses moved into action against an Israeli strike. The Russian defense ministry blamed Israel, saying the IAF jets used the Russian plane as cover. However, Putin later told reporters that the downing of the plane by Syrian air defenses was a "chain of tragic accidental circumstances." The Kremlin said that Putin emphasized that the Israeli attack violated Syria's sovereignty and also breached the Russian-Israeli agreements on avoiding clashes in Syria. The Russian leader urged Netanyahu "not to allow such situations in the future." Earlier Israel said its jets had attacked a Syrian military facility that manufactured "accurate and lethal weapons," which were "about to be transferred, on behalf of Iran, to Hezbollah in Lebanon." The conversation came on Tuesday evening just before Israel began observing Yom Kippur, the holiest day of the Jewish year. Earlier Tuesday Putin confirmed that Israel did not shoot down the plane. "It rather looks like a chain of tragic accidental circumstances," Putin told reporters.

**ABBAS WILL TRY TO BYPASS TRUMP:** Palestinian Authority Chairman Mahmoud Abbas arrived in France this week to hold a meeting with President Emmanuel Macron in an attempt to secure European sponsorship of negotiations with Israel, instead of negotiations led by the United States. A Palestinian Authority official said that Abbas would ask European leaders to recognize a Palestinian state and convene a peace conference under international auspices. France has been a convenient place on several occasions for the PA to produce initiatives to bypass the USA administration. In the past, France threatened to recognize a Palestinian state unilaterally and even convened an alternative peace summit, which failed to create a new agenda, and even in hindsight was considered a failure. The current French administration reiterates at every opportunity that it is committed to the two-state solution, but it is doubtful that it will be the one to take the step which would manifest a challenge to the USA, which declares that it has been working on a Middle East peace plan. Abbas also intends to appeal to other European leaders to try to persuade them to promote a parallel peace plan, after the USA recently presented a series of blows to the PA over its refusal to negotiate - including the cessation of UNRWA funding, the cutback in aid to the PA, the freezing of its bank accounts in the USA and the closing of the PLO's representation in Washington. The USA administration is not responding to these initiatives at the moment and the Israeli political establishment believes that no European country will be interested in taking over the peace plan.

**MICHIGAN PROFESSOR UNDER FIRE FOR SUPPORTING BDS:** A University of Michigan professor is under fire for refusing to write a letter of recommendation for a student hoping to study in Israel, citing his commitment to the academic boycott of Israel espoused by the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement. A screenshot circulated over social media of an email sent by John Cheney-Lippold, an associate professor in the university's Department of American Culture, in which he rescinds a previous offer to write an undergraduate student named Abigail a reference letter for a semester abroad program in Israel has sparked outrage. In recent years, dozens of states – including Michigan – have passed legislation against the BDS movement. Among the other states to have approved similar laws: New York, California, New Jersey, Indiana, Florida, Tennessee, Montana, Kansas, Arizona and Virginia. BDS, however, remains a concern in USA campuses. A recent study revealed a close connection between the activities of lecturers who support boycotts against Israel in a certain institution and a sharp rise in anti-Semitism in the same institution.

**ISRAEL, TURKEY SAID IN TALKS TO REPAIR RELATIONS, RETURN ENVOYS:** Israel and Turkey are holding backchannel talks in a bid to restore the all-but-severed diplomatic relations between the two nations. After the violent protests on the Gaza border in May 2018 in which over 60 Palestinians, most of them members of Hamas and other terror groups, were killed, Turkish leader Recep Tayyip Erdogan placed the blame for the deaths squarely on Israel, calling it a “terrorist state” that commits “genocide.” Turkey recalled its ambassador and expelled Israel's ambassador, Eitan Na'eh, and consul in Istanbul. Israel responded at the time by expelling Turkey's consul-general in Jerusalem and summoning the country's deputy ambassador in Tel Aviv for a dressing down. If the latest talks bear fruit, both governments expect to return their respective ambassadors in early October 2018. While Ankara under the leadership of Islamist President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has positioned itself as a supporter of the Gaza-Strip Hamas terrorist group since coming to power in 2003, the two nations now find themselves sharing vital interests on several fronts, especially Syria. As the Syrian civil war grinds to an end with the final regime offensive underway in Idlib, Sunni Turkey is fearful of Shiite Iran's domination of its southern neighbor, a concern shared by Israel. Turkey also faces an economic crisis and a collapsing currency amid a diplomatic falling out and trade dispute with the United States over Ankara's detention of an American pastor in the country on espionage charges.

**RECORD HOLIDAY INT'L TRAVEL FOR ISRAELIS DUE TO “OPEN SKY” CHEAP FARES:** September is expected to continue to break record passenger traffic at Ben-Gurion International Airport with more than 2.2 million passengers on 14,000 international flights, a 15% increase in international passenger traffic compared to the same period last year. Since the beginning of 2018, 15 million passengers on international flights have passed through Ben-Gurion Airport, an increase of 13% over last year. The Israel

Airports Authority (IAA) readied itself for the September rush, warning travelers to check-in four hours before the scheduled departure time, translating to about three and a half hours of standing in various lines before boarding. Even those travelers able to check-in online were advised to come extra early. Why the exodus? For one thing, international air travel is more available and affordable than ever before, since Israel signed the Open Sky Agreement, enabling many low-cost airlines to enter the marketplace. According to the IAA, half the top 10 airlines operating in August 2018 were low-cost: Wizzair, EasyJet, Aeroflot Russian Airlines, Aegean Airlines, Pegasus Airlines and Ukrainian International Airlines.

**BABY RHINO BORN IN RAMAT GAN SAFARI:** Tanda the rhinoceros gave birth to a baby in the Ramat Gan Safari on Sunday 16 Sept 2018. Celebrations were held because of the exciting birth. The baby rhino was born at 5 p.m. and weighed 50 kilograms. The countdown began when a year and a half ago, when zoo keepers noted Tanda mating with Atari, a male rhino at the safari. Rhinoceroses' pregnancies usually last 15-18 months. Tanda is 25 and has 4 other offspring. At this stage, the baby rhinoceros has no horn, but it will start to grow one in the coming weeks. The new rhino is a southern white rhinoceros, a species that has been poached almost to extinction. A white rhino's horn could be sold for up to \$3,000 a pound in the black market, according to National Geographic Magazine.



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