

Yachad Ministries' Israel's News Update April 25, 2019 ***(20th Nisan, 5779)***

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For the Yachad Report Newsletter For April 2019

ISRAEL RANKED AS 8TH MOST INFLUENTIAL COUNTRY IN THE WORLD: USA News & World Report has ranked Israel as the world's eighth-most influential country in the magazine's 2019 version of its annual list. The report describes Israel as "the only Jewish nation in the world, a small country on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea" that has had a large influence on global affairs. For its relatively small size, the country has played a large role in global affairs," the article said. "The country has a strong economy, landmarks of significance to several religions and strained relationships with many of its Arab neighbors." The rankings for "Most Influential Country" are based on "a global perceptions-based survey," the magazine said, "and countries are ranked based on the highest scores among more than 11,000 informed elites in a compilation of five country attributes: leader, connected to the rest of the world, influential culture, politically influential and strong international alliances." Israel came in ahead of several influential countries including Canada, Australia, and India. The United States, Russia, and China dominated the top three spots.

EXCITED CHIMPS GET MATZAH FOR PASSOVER: Humans are not the only creatures that enjoy the change in menu over Passover. Several species of animals at the Ramat Gan Safari love to chow down on matzah as well. The Ramat Gan Safari begins preparations for Passover just like any Jewish family. Just as Jewish families meticulously remove all traces of chametz from their homes, the Safari goes over every pedestrian path and animal enclosure in the 250-acre zoo to ensure they are as clean as humanly possible - as well as clean of chametz. The animals which receive matzah over Passover include apes, elephants, and other animals in the free-range part of the zoo. The bread that is left in the zoo before the holiday is usually given to Yossi the Elephant, the largest elephant in captivity in any zoo in the world. Yossi can eat eight loaves of bread a day. The matzah and the bread are not the main dish for the animals, but merely supplement the fruits and vegetables they receive. Still, the chimpanzees at the zoo are very excited when they receive matzah, and videos taken at Safari show them eagerly chowing down on the rare treat. In addition, the Safari ordered thirteen tons of kosher for Passover animal food for the holiday.

TRUMP'S PEACE PLAN WILL BE (ALMOST) EVERYTHING ISRAEL WANTS IT TO BE: There were those who were concerned that after recognizing Jerusalem as Israel's capital, moving the USA Embassy here, and giving a thumbs-up to Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights, President Donald Trump was going to require some pretty big concessions of the Jewish state in his soon-to-be-released scheme for Middle East peace. But France's outgoing ambassador to the USA, Gerard Araud, signaled last week that the Jewish state has no need to worry on that front. Araud acknowledged that he doesn't know the details of Trump's plan, rumored to be a full 50 pages long, but that he does know it will be "very close to what the Israelis want." Days earlier, a senior USA official believed to be Middle East envoy Jason Greenblatt was cited by Israel as hinting that the term "two-state solution" won't be part of Trump's plan. This official noted that since Israelis and Palestinians understand the term differently, it was pointless to use it as the basis for a peace agreement. Araud, said that Trump's "Deal of the Century" was almost certainly "doomed to fail." The French ambassador praised Trump and his son-in-law, Jared Kushner, for thinking outside the box in coming up with their plan, but said that both men had gravely underestimated the Palestinians' willingness to choose "suicide" over a more reasonable outcome that doesn't meet all their demands. Indeed, the Palestinian leadership has already rejected Trump's offering before it's even been released. That really shouldn't come as much of a surprise, considering that Yasser Arafat previously turned down a final status agreement offered by former-USA President Bill Clinton and then-Israeli PM Ehud Barak that met 95% of Palestinian demands, including control over large parts of eastern Jerusalem.

UKRAINE: FIRST COUNTRY OUTSIDE ISRAEL WITH JEWISH PRESIDENT, PM: According to exit polls from Ukraine's presidential elections that country is set to become the only one in the world besides Israel whose president and prime minister are both Jewish. Comedian Volodymyr Zelensky's dramatic lead in exit polls Sunday 21 April 2019 — in many of them he received more than 73% of the vote — was so overwhelming that it prompted a concession of defeat by incumbent Petro Poroshenko even before the official results were in. If Zelensky is sworn in as president, his prime minister will be Volodymyr Groysman, a Jewish politician who was the mayor of the city of Vinnytsia. To some of Poroshenko's critics, the landslide success by the politically inexperienced Zelensky was not surprising in light of widespread resentment over the persistence of corruption under Poroshenko, who was elected in 2014 on a platform that vowed remedial action on exactly that front. More unusual to some, however, was how Zelensky's appears to have won the elections so decisively in spite of how his Jewish ancestry — his mother, Rima, is Jewish and he has jokingly referred to this during the campaign. After all, Russia and other critics claim Ukrainian society has a serious anti-Semitism problem and legacy. "Imagine, a pure-blooded Jew with the appearance of a Sholom Aleichem protagonist wins by a landslide in a country where the glorification of Nazi criminals is enacted into law," wrote Avigdor Eskin, a Russian-Israeli columnist, in an analysis published earlier this month by the Regnum news agency.

SMOTRICH: IGNORE FRANCE, LET PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY COLLAPSE: MK Bezalel Smotrich (United Right) called on Israeli PM Netanyahu to reject outright French President Emmanuel Macron's demand to transfer frozen tax funds to the Palestinian Authority. In Feb. 2019, the cabinet approved the implementation of the freeze on funds to the Palestinian Authority, which was passed by the Knesset in July 2018 and offset 502,697,000 shekels (\$138,426,818) from funds transferred from Israel to the PA. "I call on the Prime Minister to forcefully reject the French hypocrisy, and to send Macron to pressure Palestinian Authority Chairman Mahmoud Abbas to cease paying salaries to terrorists," Smotrich said. "As long as the Palestinian Authority encourages terror against Israel and pays salaries to terrorists, we cannot give it even one shekel. Let it collapse. We'll get two birds with one stone." Likud MK Avi Dichter echoed Smotrich's words, slamming Macron's demand. "I wonder what the French President would say if he found out that the Palestinian Authority is paying a salary of 12,000 NIS (\$3,341) per month to Carlos the Jackal, who is sitting a life sentence over there after carrying out serious terror attacks," Dichter said. "For President Macron's information, the law passed with an outstanding majority of 87 MKs. We are determined to fight terror with

every tool and every strategy. President Macron, here's a free tip from someone who fought terror for nearly 50 years: When you fight terror, any country which doesn't count change ends up counting bodies."

USA TO ELIMINATE IRAN OIL WAIVERS AFTER 2 MAY 2019: The Trump administration won't renew waivers that let countries buy Iranian oil without facing USA sanctions, according to sources familiar with the matter. The current set of waivers - issued to China, Greece, India, Italy, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and Turkey - expire on 2 May 2019. Other suppliers, including Saudi Arabia and the UAE, will offset the loss of Iranian crude on the market. "The maximum pressure campaign could not be maximalist until the administration cut off Iran's oil exports," said Mark Dubowitz, CEO of the Foundation for Defense of Democracies. "With this decision, Iran's economy will be under severe pressure as its hard currency earnings dry up and its foreign exchange reserves plummet." Greece, Italy, and Taiwan have already reduced their Iranian oil imports to zero. The administration's ramping up of its "maximum pressure" campaign is meant to starve the regime of the cash it needs to perpetuate its malign activities around the world. Iranian oil exports in March were at 1 million barrels per day, down from 2.5 million bpd in April 2018.

IRANIAN TERROR NETWORK EXPOSED IN CENTRAL AFRICA: The security forces in Chad and the Central African Republic have arrested an Al-Quds Force unit that sought to advance Iranian interests in Africa. Israeli news sources reported days ago that Chad, along with the Central African Republic, had uncovered an Iranian unit operating in their territories and other countries and arrested its members. According to the report, the unit called "Saraya Zahara" established infrastructure of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards' Quds Force in Central Africa, with the aim of attacking Western targets in these countries. In addition, the unit has operated in various African countries, including Chad, Sudan, and Eritrea, and has tried to establish additional terror cells in African countries and help pro-Iranian elements take control of various countries in the continent.

CLOSE TO 300 DEAD - HUNDREDS WOUNDED - IN SRI LANKA EXPLOSIONS: Close to 300 people has been killed and hundreds wounded in explosions at 3 hotels and 3 churches in Sri Lanka. The 3 hotels hit in the capital Colombo, were the Shangri-La, Kingsbury Hotel and Cinnamon Grand. The 3 churches hit by blasts were St Anthony's Church in the capital, St Sebastian's in Katuwapitiya, north of Colombo, and local media has also reported a church in Batticaloa in Eastern Province was hit. The six explosions took place as the Christian world celebrated Easter on Sunday 21 April 2019, and happened almost simultaneously. Sri Lanka's defense minister announced that seven suspects had been arrested. Nobody has yet claimed responsibility for the explosions, but local reports have claimed that ISIS is behind the attacks. One of the Sri Lanka terrorist bombers checked into a five-star hotel, waited in a queue for a breakfast buffet and then blew himself up. A manager at the Cinnamon Grand hotel in Colombo said the attacker had set off the horrific explosion in a packed restaurant at 8.30 am. A suicide bomber then struck when police raided a house in a northern suburb of the capital, killing at least three officers, an official told reporters.

Other blasts were reported at St. Sebastian's Church in Negombo, a majority Catholic town north of Colombo, and at Zion Church in the eastern town of Batticaloa. The explosion ripped off the roof and knocked out doors and windows at St. Sebastian's, where people carried the wounded away from blood-stained pews. Israeli PM Binyamin Netanyahu offered assistance to Sri Lanka immediately following the attacks and called for the world to unite against terrorism. "In the name of the citizens of Israel, it expresses deep shock at the murderous attacks against innocent civilians in Sri Lanka, and Israel is ready to assist the authorities in Sri Lanka at this difficult time. The entire world must unite in the battle against the scourge of terrorism." The city hall in Tel Aviv lit up with the Sri Lanka flag on Sunday night 21 April 2019, in a display of solidarity with the Asian country after the horrific terror attacks. "Tonight the #TelAviv Municipality Hall lit in the colors of the Sri Lankan #flag. Our thoughts and prayers go out to the people of #SriLanka and all those affected by the terrible terror attack," tweeted the municipality.

TENS OF THOUSANDS OF JEWS TO VISIT HEBRON ON CHOL HAMOED PESACH: Tens of thousands of Jews are expected to visit the Tomb of the Patriarchs in Hebron during Chol Hamoed Pesach. [Chol Hamoed consists of the second through sixth days of the Passover holiday.] On Monday and Tuesday 22-23 April 2019, the entire cave will be open to Jews who will be guarded by Border Police, policemen, and IDF soldiers. About 25,000 people are expected to take part in a wide variety of tours of the holy sites, the Jewish neighborhoods, prayer gatherings and tours of the Tomb of the Patriarchs. During Chol Hamoed Pesach, the Tomb will be open from 4:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.

BORN IN THE GOLAN? USA PASSPORT WILL NOW SAY ISRAEL: The State Department updated its manual to reflect President Donald Trump's proclamation on the Golan Heights, and it now states that "USA policy recognizes the Golan Heights as part of Israel. The POB for applicants born in the Golan Heights is Israel." The previous version of the manual recognized the Golan as "Syrian territory." Jason Greenblatt, Special Representative for International Negotiations, last week tweeted a picture of the updated map, with the Golan as a part of Israel. A group of ten Republican Senators sent a letter to the President on Wed. 17 April 2019, urging the administration to take necessary steps to fully implement the proclamation, such as directing the State Department to treat the Golan Heights as the State of Israel's sovereign territory to issue passports to Americans born there. Meanwhile, Syria failed to secure a majority within the UN Security Council to condemn Trump's proclamation, said Israeli officials. According to the officials, the Syrian delegation tried – with no success – to pass a resolution that would criticize the move right after the formal announcement. Israeli Ambassador, Danny Danon said that he is satisfied with the latest development: "This is an important moment of clarity for the Security Council and the UN. Too often, the representatives don't realize the consequences of these resolutions, but they came to see that giving the Golan to anyone but Israel would lead to increased violence and chaos in the region."

IVANKA TRUMP CONCERNED ABOUT RISING ANTI-SEMITISM: Ivanka Trump said that she is concerned about a "rise in anti-Semitism." Trump, the Jewish daughter of President Donald Trump, also said during her visit to Africa that there now is "less support for Israel than Israel has traditionally experienced." Trump converted to Judaism before her marriage to Jared Kushner in 2009. Both Trump and Kushner currently serve as White House senior advisers. Asked if she agreed with the president's statements that the Democratic Party has become "anti-Jewish," she replied that "I never make categorical statements, but certainly there are some who have said things that are not supportive of the State of Israel." She acknowledged that her work at the White House takes a "tremendous toll" on her family life and her three young children.

UNIVERSITIES ARE FAILING TO PROTECT JEWISH STUDENTS: Israel Apartheid Week now takes place on 37 campuses around the USA, with protests, rallies, film screenings, lectures, and actions designed to promote BDS and the idea that Israel is a colonialist apartheid regime. It is increasingly funded by the schools themselves. This year, Harvard provided the Palestinian Solidarity Committee with \$2,050 to host Israel Apartheid Week. IAW is not calculated to foster dialogue; it is designed as an expression of rage for the Palestinian cause and an attempt to enrage others into action. The Israeli government is out of the reach of these student activists, but Jewish students make a convenient target. As a result, we are now watching as students who are members of a group of historically oppressed minority people - who were the primary targets of the largest genocide of the 20th century - are harassed across American universities. Israel Apartheid Week is sponsored intimidation. It isn't about learning or debating; it's entirely about attacking and harassing Jews because of their Jewishness.

UK LABOUR PARTY COMMEMORATES PASSOVER WITH A LOAF OF LEAVENED BREAD: The official Twitter account of UK's Labour Party displayed ignorance of basic Jewish history on Friday 19 April 2019, when it commemorated Passover with an image featuring a loaf of leavened bread. "As Jewish people prepare for Passover," the tweet began, "we're wishing everyone in the Jewish community chag sameach." Beneath the friendly greeting was an image featuring a Star of David along with a chalice of wine

and a fluffy, fully-leavened bread loaf. The image concluded with the words, "Happy Passover from everyone at the Labour Party." According to Exodus 12, Jews celebrated the first Passover as they were preparing to flee from their bondage in Egypt. Specifically, the Feast of Unleavened Bread was symbolic of the haste with which they were commanded to escape the land cursed by God for its idolatry and oppression of His people. Leaven would become a recurring symbol in Hebrew literature for the negative influence of idolatry and sin. Though quietly deleted and replaced with a tweet that did not feature leavened bread the gaffe did not go unnoticed.

NOBLE ENERGY ESTABLISHES DORON LEARNING CENTER IN ASHDOD: Houston-based Noble Energy has inaugurated a professional training center in Ashdod to prepare employees for work on the company's offshore Israel gas platforms. The natural gas platforms include the Leviathan rig, currently in the final stages of being built in Texas, and Tamar, which is already supplying natural gas to the Israeli market. The Doron Learning Center, located at Noble Energy's onshore natural gas terminal close to Ashdod Port, will train employees for work in electronics, mechanics and the operation of the natural gas production platforms. The center's facilities will simulate the nature of work and life offshore. "Noble Energy aims to train the new employees to service the Leviathan and Tamar gas rigs in the most professional manner to install the importance of maintaining strict levels of safety, even in the initial stages of training," said Bini Zomer, Noble Energy vice president for regional affairs. "The establishment of the center reflects the continued commitment of Noble Energy to building the gas and oil industry in Israel, and its reliance on a skilled local workforce." The center is expected to open its doors to the first intake of workers at the end of April 2019.

MUSLIMS CONVERT TO CHRISTIANITY IN SYRIAN TOWN ONCE BESIEGED BY ISIS: A community of Syrians who converted to Christianity from Islam is growing in Kobani, a town besieged by ISIS for months, and where the tide turned against the terrorists four years ago. The converts say the experience of war and the onslaught of a group claiming to fight for Islam pushed them towards their new faith. After a number of families converted, the Syrian-Turkish border town's first evangelical church opened last year. ISIS terrorists were beaten back by USA airstrikes and Kurdish fighters at Kobani in early 2015 after taking over swaths of Iraq and Syria. After years of fighting, USA-backed forces fully ended the group's control overpopulated territory last month. Christianity is one of the region's minority faiths that was persecuted by ISIS. "After the war with ISIS people were looking for the right path, and distancing themselves from Islam," said Omar Firas, the founder of Kobani's evangelical church. "People were scared and felt lost." Firas works for a Christian aid group at a nearby camp for displaced people that helped set up the church. He said around 20 families, or around 80 to 100 people, in Kobani now worship there. They have not changed their names. "We meet on Tuesdays and hold a service on Fridays. It is open to anyone who wants to join," he said. The church's current pastor, Zani Bakr, 34, arrived last year from Afrin, a town in northern Syria. He converted in 2007.

AFTER NOTRE-DAME FIRE JEWISH WORLD LEADERS EXPRESS SOLIDARITY: In the aftermath of the devastating blaze that ravaged the Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris, Jewish leaders from all over the world have been expressing their condolences to the French people and institutions over their national tragedy. "We were about to send greetings for a tranquil Easter to our French Catholic members and for Passover to the Jewish community. Throughout history, and especially under Nazi occupation, synagogues were burned and cemeteries desecrated. We thus acutely feel the pain of our Christian friends at this time," said the Director for International Relations of the Wiesenthal Center, Shimon Samuels, in a letter to the French president, Emmanuel Macron, on Tue. 16 April 2019. "The World Jewish Congress and our affiliated communities in more than 100 countries stand shoulder-to-shoulder with the people of France and the Catholic Church in the face of the unimaginable devastation of the Notre-Dame Cathedral, a blow that has struck straight to the heart of Paris," World Jewish Congress President, Ronald S. Lauder, said in a statement. The president of Israel, Reuven Rivlin, remarked on the important role the cathedral has played in French culture and history. "Our hearts are with the people of #France and the legends of @notredameparis, real and

fictional, and we pray it will stand in eternity,” he tweeted, also sharing a memory of a recent visit to Paris. “I looked over the skyline of the city and the spires of the cathedral made it even more beautiful,” he added.

NETANYAHU AGAIN ON TIME’S LIST OF WORLD’S 100 MOST INFLUENTIAL PEOPLE: PM Benjamin Netanyahu recently won a fifth term as Israel’s prime minister and on Wed. 17 April 2019 he was rewarded by Time magazine with inclusion for the fourth time in a decade on its list of the world’s 100 most influential people. “Israel is Bibi’s nation,” Time columnist, David French, wrote in a short piece explaining the choice and noting Netanyahu’s recent reelection to a fifth term. “The reasons for his enduring appeal are clear,” French wrote. “The Second Intifada undermined Israel’s political Left, with fresh memories of suicide bombers rebuking the idea that there exists a partner for peace. Ongoing rocket attacks launched by Hamas show that present dangers are real. And Iran’s power and ambition signal that even two generations after the Yom Kippur War, Israel can face existential threats.” French wrote that in spite of the dangers, Israel is growing more prosperous and powerful, with the elections showing that sufficient numbers of Israelis believe that Netanyahu is not only partly responsible for that success, “but that he’s the nation’s, indispensable man”. Netanyahu made the list in 2011, 2012 and then again in 2015. He is one of only 27 people who have been on the list four times or more.

TEL AVIV UNIVERSITY SCIENTISTS PRINT FIRST 3D HEART USING PATIENT’S BIOLOGICAL MATERIALS: Tel Aviv University researchers have "printed" the world's first 3D vascularised engineered heart using a patient's own cells and biological materials. "This is the first time anyone anywhere has successfully engineered and printed an entire heart replete with cells, blood vessels, ventricles, and chambers," said Prof. Tal Dvir. "Maybe, in ten years, there will be organ printers in the finest hospitals around the world." The 3D-printed heart is small, about the size of a rabbit's. It is not yet functional and doesn't pump. However, the Israeli work on the engineered heart has more immediate value in making a cardiac patch, a piece of functioning heart tissue to repair heart attack damage.

USA INT’L MAPS INCLUDE GOLAN HEIGHTS AS PART OF ISRAEL: The USA has updated its official international maps to include the Golan Heights as part of Israel. Jason Greenblatt, the USA Special Representative for International Negotiations, unveiled the maps in a post Tue. 16 April 2019 on his Twitter account. “Welcome to the newest addition of our international maps system after @POTUS issued a proclamation recognizing Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights,” wrote Greenblatt. Trump several weeks ago signed a proclamation recognizing Israeli sovereignty of the Golan Heights which was liberated by Israel from Syria during the 1967 Six Day War. Israel annexed the Golan Heights in 1981, in a move that has never been recognized by the international community.

GROUP OF SCHOOLCHILDREN FIND 1,600 YEAR-OLD COIN IN THE GALILEE: A rare 1,600 year-old gold coin was recently found by a group of ninth-graders, the Israel Antiquities Authorities said this week. The coin was discovered during a school trip in Nahal Zippori in the Galilee. Nahal Zippori was once the capital of the region and the seat of the Sanhedrin. The coin features the effigy of the Byzantine emperor Theodosius II, who was also the Roman leader who abolished the presidency of the Sanhedrin. The four students from Kibbutz Yifat gave the coin to the relevant authorities. They were awarded a certificate of good citizenship. "This type of coin is known as a solidus, a gold coin minted in Constantinople, today's Istanbul, by Theodosius II, around 423-420 AD," said Gabi Bichovsky, a coin expert at the Antiquities Authority. “This is the first time a coin of this kind has been discovered in the Land of Israel," he added.

HERE’S TO A SWEET YEAR AS WINTER RAINFALL HAS HONEY PRODUCTION BUZZING: After a five year decline of honey production in Israel, the heavy rains and large range of flower blooms this year will bring the annual honey production up to 3,800 tons of honey just in time for Passover, according to the Council of Production and Marketing of Honey. Normally the Passover holiday accounts for a quarter of the annual demand for honey manufactured in Israel, and about 20% of the amount of honey

consumed in Israel, this year the council is expecting a need for 800 tons. "Last year, the production of honey was about 3,000 tons, and this year we expect a 25% increase in output, an additional 800 tons of honey. There has been never been such an increase in honey production," said Zeev Meidan, the director general of the council. Considering this was one of the stormiest and rainy winters in past years, distributing preternatural amounts of water around the country to farms and wild agriculture alike - the rainfall ensured great spring blossoms and have heightened areas of bee pollination throughout Israel. Meidan noted that in Israel and abroad, there has been a phenomenal disappearance of bees expanding in number from year to year worldwide, with about a third of the bees having disappeared from around the world.

The honey council encourages tree planting in certain areas, and works in cooperation with experts from around the world in order to provide enough food for the bees and proper honey production, "for the honeybee is not only a manufacturer of honey, but, it is also of great importance to man, because it is the central pollinator in nature, which is responsible for taking care of 80% of all agricultural crops," urged Meidan. According to data from the council, the honey bee contributes around NIS 3 billion to the country's economy every year in various forms, currently housing thousands of hives dealing with and assisting agriculture as well as honey production. With the numbers appearing the way they are now, there will be no shortness in sweetness this year.



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