

Yachad Ministries' Israel's News Update July 25, 2019 ***(22th Tamuz, 5779)***



[For the Yachad Report Newsletter For July 2019](#)

UN SHOWCASES ISRAEL'S INNOVATIONS IN WATER, AGRICULTURE, TECHNOLOGY: An event at the UN headquarters in New York City last week highlighted six Israeli innovative solutions to critical problems around the world. Hosted by the Israeli Mission to the UN, it allowed members of the Israeli business community to connect with governments and senior officials from the international community at UN headquarters. Mino Negrin, founder, and CEO of NUFiltration introduced a creative technology for artificial kidney remission used to filter and purify water. Eyal Yassky, co-founder of Hilico, spoke about his company creating the world's first portable and affordable rain-harvesting device, designed to work off the grid that can turn rainwater into clean, drinking water in rural and disaster relief areas. "Over a billion people live off-grid and many of them rely on rainwater," he said. "This is our focus and duty as entrepreneurs and as global citizens to help those people."

Shuli Kurzon van Gelder from Israel's Agency for International Development Cooperation discussed its extensive fieldwork to help the development of countries around the globe and its projects with Israel's neighbors, Egypt and Jordan, as well as with the Palestinian Authority. "I think these programs are the seeds of the peace-building process because we're talking about people," she said. "When you invest in people, it gives stability to a relationship." The CEO of SupPlant talked about creating the world's first commercial system for autonomous irrigation by developing an artificial intelligence system that analyses data collected by sensors in the field and then translates them into irrigation commands. Other companies and organizations that participated in the event included the Rashi Foundation, Social Finance Israel and SmartWater Group. Guests at the event included diplomats and government representatives from various countries, UN officials, and representatives of Jewish and pro-Israel organizations.

CHURCH OF THE APOSTLES FOUND BY THE SEA OF GALILEE, ARCHAEOLOGISTS CLAIM: Archaeologists believe they have found the legendary Church of the Apostles, which Christian

tradition states was built over the home of some of the disciples of Jesus [Yeshua]. The discovery was made in an area thought to be the ancient village of Bethsaida by the Sea of Galilee, where it is believed the disciples Peter and Andrew lived. The archaeologists said that the ancient Jewish village of Bethsaida, which is mentioned in the Bible's New Testament, was much larger than experts had previously thought. Some people believe it could be the site referred to in the "Feeding of the 5,000" miracle when Yeshua is said to have fed a large crowd with five loaves of bread and two small fishes. What is known for certain is that the recent excavation at the suspected site of the biblical village in modern-day Beit Habek, also known as El-Araj, has uncovered the remains of a large Byzantine-era church. Some of the most notable evidence includes mosaic tiles, which archaeologists say are for wall mosaics and only appear in churches." Other finds at the site include marble fragments, two aisles, roof tiles designed for a big building and a cross carved into stone. Historical texts have referred to this area as being home to the church which was built on top of Peter and Andrew's old house but no one has been able to find it before. The theory that el-Araj is the long-lost Bethsaida and once home to the disciples Peter, Andrew, and Philip is supported by the archaeologists who have been excavating the church.

BRITAIN: IRAN'S SEIZURE OF TANKER A 'HOSTILE ACT': Britain on Saturday, 20 July 2019 denounced Iran's seizure of a British-flagged oil tanker in the Persian Gulf, rejecting Tehran's explanation that it seized the vessel because it had been involved in an accident. Iran's Revolutionary Guards posted a video online showing speedboats pulling alongside the Stena Impero tanker, its name clearly visible. Troops wearing ski masks and carrying machine guns rappelled to its deck from a helicopter. British Defense Secretary Penny Mordaunt called the incident a "hostile act"; while Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt said he had expressed "extreme disappointment" by phone to his Iranian counterpart, Mohammad Javad Zarif. A spokesman for Iran's Revolutionary Guards, Brigadier-General Ramezan Sharif, said Tehran had seized the ship in the Strait of Hormuz despite the "resistance and interference" of a British warship which had been escorting it. No British warship was visible in the video posted by the Guards. In a letter to the UN Security Council on Saturday night, 20 July 2019 Britain said the tanker was approached by Iranian forces when it was in Omani territorial waters exercising its lawful right of passage, and the action constitutes illegal interference.

FRANCE, GERMANY AND BRITAIN BAND TOGETHER TO CONDEMN IRAN'S ACTIONS: France, Germany, and Bahrain condemned Iran on Saturday 20 July 2019 after it seized a British oil tanker in the Strait of Hormuz. A German foreign ministry spokesman said, "We urge Iran to release this ship and its crew immediately. Germany continued by saying this could further escalate tensions in the region and "would be very dangerous and undermine all ongoing efforts to find a way out of the current crisis." France's foreign ministry also put out a comment saying, "We have learned with great concern of the seizure of a British vessel by Iranian forces and we strongly condemn it and express an already tense situation in the area." Earlier Saturday, the British Foreign Minister Jeremy Hunt also expressed concern over the Iranian move calling it a "dangerous path." Iran's Fars news agency originally reported the previous night that the British oil tanker had been taken to the Bander Abbas port and Iran said that the ship had been involved in an accident with an Iranian fishing ship. According to Iran, the ship sent out a distress call and the British tanker ignored the call. In a tweet, Hunt said: "Yesterday's action in Gulf show worrying signs Iran may be choosing a dangerous path of illegal and destabilizing behavior after Gibraltar's legal detention of oil bound for Syria our reaction will be considered but robust. We have been trying to find a way to solve the issue but will ensure the safety of our shipping." On 4 July 2019, the British Navy seized an Iranian oil tanker in Gibraltar. They suspected the ship to be smuggling oil to Syria which is in breach of EU sanctions.

DEMOCRATS BRUSH OFF REP. OMAR'S PUSH FOR ISRAEL BOYCOTT, TARGET BDS MOVEMENT INSTEAD: Jewish Democrats brushed off Rep. Ilhan Omar's Israel boycott resolution last week and instead kept their focus on their own resolution to denounce the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement. Rep. Brad Sherman (D-Cal.) told media sources that Omar's resolution was "dead on arrival." He said, "What I regret most is Omar's claim that somehow free speech requires that people say what

she wants to say. The idea to say that in order to protect American free speech we must say that we hate Israel is bizarre." Rep. Eliot L. Engel (D-NY), chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, said, "I think the BDS movement is harmful, and anyone that promotes it is making a big mistake." House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Cal.) and Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (D-Md.) strongly condemned the BDS movement at the AIPAC conference in March 2019. Lawmakers said they expect a vote this week on a resolution that would explicitly denounce the BDS movement. *The BDS movement started on 9 July 2005, when 171 Palestinian civil society organizations banded together and decided to try a new approach to fight the so-called "occupation." Since then, the movement has expanded to include hundreds of campaigns on six continents. They range from pushes for investors such as churches, trade unions, and universities, to divest from companies holding Israeli military contracts, to consumer boycotts, calls for musicians and other artists to cancel appearances in Israel, and demands for governments to impose sanctions. BDS has never been invoked against any other country. Common sense and decency ask how any movement can single-out the only democracy in the region while ignoring the brutal treatment of women and minorities in countries such as Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Pakistan. There is a worldwide struggle against the very existence of one country of all countries in the world. Not North Korea. Not Iran. Not Sudan. Only Israel. Intercede against the BDS movement that seeks to further hatred against the Jewish state and to undermine Israel's economy.*

ARGENTINA BRANDS HEZBOLLAH A TERRORIST ORGANIZATION, FREEZES ASSETS: Argentine authorities last week designated Hezbollah a terrorist organization and ordered the freezing of the Lebanese Islamist group's assets in the country. The announcement came as Argentina marks the 25th anniversary of the bombing of a Jewish community center in Buenos Aires in which 85 people died. Argentina blames Iran and Hezbollah for the attack, as well as for an attack on the Israeli embassy in Buenos Aires in 1992 that killed 29 people. Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu praised Argentine President Mauricio Macri for the designation. "It is time the entire enlightened world understand the grave danger Iran and Hezbollah pose. It is time the entire world stand up against it," Netanyahu said.

FATHER SEVERELY INJURED IN SOUTHERN ISRAEL CAR CRASH PASSES AWAY: Petah Tikva's Rabin Medical Center on Saturday, 20 July 2019 announced the death of Rodrigo Rostasky, who was critically injured last week when a truck rammed into the family's car in southern Israel. The crash killed Rostasky's wife Sophia, 28, and their two-month-old son Itai. The family's 3-year-old daughter, who was lightly injured in the crash, was released from the hospital last Friday 19 July 2019 and is now at her grandparents' home. Rostasky, who was in his 40s, was an officer in Israel's Air Force. The driver of the truck, Ashkelon resident Yossi Cohen, 32, was placed under house arrest. It has not been found that he was driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol. However, during his interrogation, Cohen said that just before the collision occurred his cigarette fell to the floor of his vehicle and he bent down to retrieve it. As he bent over, he lost control of the vehicle, swerving from his lane and directly and forcefully rear-ending the Rostasky family's vehicle.

HUGE 9,000-YEAR-OLD STONE AGE SETTLEMENT, ONE OF THE LARGEST IN THE WORLD, DISCOVERED IN ISRAEL: Archaeologists in Israel have discovered a huge Neolithic settlement near Jerusalem, which they say is one of the largest ever found. The prehistoric settlement was uncovered during excavations by the Israel Antiquities Authority. Thousands of arrowheads, pieces of jewelry and prehistoric figurines have been unearthed at the site near Motza Junction. Experts say that the settlement is the largest found in Israel from the Neolithic period. "At least 2,000 – 3,000 residents lived here – an order of magnitude that parallels a present-day city!" said excavation directors Dr. Hamoudi Khalaily and Dr. Jacob Vardi. Large buildings were discovered at the site, which include places for public and ritual use. Plaster that had been used to create floors was found in some of the buildings. Burial places have been exposed in and amongst the houses, into which various burial offerings have been placed – either useful or precious objects, believed to serve the deceased in the next world," the researchers added.

These gifts testify to the fact that already during this ancient period, the residents of this site conducted exchange relationships with faraway places. Items made of an unknown stone were found at the site, along with volcanic glass from Anatolia, which is in modern-day Turkey and sea-shells, both from the Mediterranean Sea and the Red Sea. Archaeologists also discovered small hand-made stone bracelets that likely belonged to children. Additionally, flint tools were found at the site, which includes thousands of arrowheads that were used for hunting, and potentially, warfare. Other items discovered include axes, sickle blades, and knives. Storage sheds containing preserved seeds were also found during the excavation, offering a glimpse into the agricultural life of the settlement. Israel continues to reveal fresh aspects of its incredible history.

93 PERCENT OF TOURISTS SAY VISIT TO ISRAEL WAS SUCCESSFUL: A Ministry of Tourism survey found that 93% of tourists in 2018 said their visit to Israel was successful with tourism bringing almost 21 billion shekels into the country, excluding flights. 53% of the tourists said that their opinion of Israel changed for the better after the visit, 46% said the visit did not change their minds, and 1% said it had a negative impact. Jerusalem is the most visited city, with 77.5% of the tourists in the country visiting the capital. Tel Aviv is in second place with 67.4%, followed by the Dead Sea area (48%) and Tiberias (36.2%). The Western Wall is the most popular site, with 71.6% of tourists visiting there. Next in line was the Church of the Holy Sepulcher visited by 52.2% of tourists, 50.1% visiting Old Jaffa, and Via Dolorosa in fourth place with 47.4%. The age group of 25-44 was the largest among tourists, making up 35.8% of the bunch, while 24.1% were aged 55 and over and 20.7% were 24 and under. Jews made up 27.5% of the tourists, but twice as many Christians visited – a staggering 54.9%. The survey is based on the responses of 15,000 tourists.

IRAN THREATENS TO ABANDON ALL LIMITS ON NUCLEAR PROGRAM: Iran warned the EU on Mon.15 July 2019 that it is prepared to end all of its commitments under the 2015 deal and restore its nuclear program to the status quo ante, under which Tehran placed no limits on any areas of nuclear development. The spokesman for the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran, Behrouz Kamalvandi, said that Tehran will withdraw from the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action if the European signatories do not bypass American sanctions on Iran imposed after the USA withdrew from the deal. "If the Europeans and the United States do not fulfill their commitments, we will balance out their actions by reducing commitments and taking the conditions back to how they were four years ago," he said. "Currently, we have gone beyond 3.67% uranium enrichment and are also producing the enriched material required for nuclear plant fuel with 4.5% purity."

HEZBOLLAH FORCES ON THE MOVE: The Hezbollah terror organization has moved some of its forces which were previously located around Syria, to the Lebanon-Syria border. Forces also moved heavy weapons and set up new bases along the border. On Mon. 15 July 2019, Israel sent a message to Russia asking them to act to remove Hezbollah from the Syrian Golan Heights in the same way they removed the Iranians from the area. The report also noted that the publication of the issue delayed Hezbollah's attempts to base itself in Syria, but did not stop them. On Friday, Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah warned that if war breaks out between the USA and Iran, Israel would be bombarded "with ferocity and force."

TRUMP: DEMOCRATS ALLIED WITH ISRAEL HATERS: USA President Donald Trump earlier this week doubled down on tweets telling a group of Democratic congresswomen that they should "go back" to the countries that they came from. "So sad to see the Democrats sticking up for people who speak so badly of our Country and who, in addition, hate Israel with a true and unbridled passion. Whenever confronted, they call their adversaries, including Nancy Pelosi, 'RACIST,'" Trump wrote. "Their disgusting language and the many terrible things they say about the United States must not be allowed to go unchallenged. If the Democrat Party wants to continue to condone such disgraceful behavior, then we look even more forward to seeing you at the ballot box in 2020!" he added. Trump, in both sets of tweets, was almost certainly referring to Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez of New York and her allies in what has become known as the squad. The others are Reps. Ilhan Omar of Minnesota, Ayanna Pressley of Massachusetts, and Rashida Tlaib of Michigan.

Ocasio-Cortez has come under fire after saying the United States operated "concentration camps" on its southern border; she previously said that cutting military and economic aid to Israel as a way to signal opposition to Israeli policies should be "on the table." Omar was criticized after she suggested on Twitter that Republicans were attacking her at the behest of the pro-Israel lobby AIPAC. She subsequently issued a half-hearted apology before ultimately deleting the controversial tweets. Tlaib claimed in an interview on May 2019 that Palestinian Arabs living in the British Mandate prior to the establishment of the State of Israel "provided" a safe haven to Jews after the Holocaust. She has also backed BDS and, when asked in a television interview whether she would vote against military aid to Israel when she goes to Congress, replied "absolutely." The tensions within the party escalated after Ocasio-Cortez told media sources that she felt Pelosi was targeting women of color.

TRUMP: WHEN WILL RADICAL DEMOCRATS APOLOGIZE TO ISRAEL? President Donald Trump excoriated several unnamed Democratic lawmakers this week calling on them to apologize to the USA, to Israel, and to the office of the presidency. "When will the Radical Left Congresswomen apologize to our Country, the people of Israel and even to the Office of the President, for the foul language they have used, and the terrible things they have said?" Trump tweeted. "If Democrats want to unite around the foul language & racist hatred spewed from the mouths and actions of these very unpopular & unrepresentative Congresswomen, it will be interesting to see how it plays out. I can tell you that they have made Israel feel abandoned by the USA".

NY GOP CHIEF: IT'S A DARK TIME IN OUR COUNTRY: The leader of the New York State Republican Party excoriated several Democratic members of the House of Representatives this week, echoing criticisms made by President Donald Trump and South Carolina Senator Lindsey Graham. Speaking at a media event on Mon. evening 15 July 2019, Nick Langworthy, the newly minted Chairman of the NY State Republican Party accused Democratic freshman lawmakers Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (NY) and Ilhan Omar (MN) of "anti-Semitic behavior" and trivializing the Holocaust, saying that the rise of such politicians in Congress marked a "dark time" for the USA. "I felt it critically important, within the acceptance speech of my election, to condemn the anti-Semitic rhetoric of Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Ilhan Omar and many other members of Congress in that organization. We cannot tolerate their anti-Semitic behavior and the minimization of the Holocaust. Lindsey challenged Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez to get on an airplane and go to Yad Vashem "so maybe you can see firsthand that you shouldn't run your mouth off about things you don't understand."

ANTI-CHRISTIAN WAVE IN EUROPE SEEMS COUPLED WITH ANTI-SEMITIC WAVE: Richard Bernstein, writing for RealClearInvestigations, recently headed to France to interview residents about the climate that has led to a quadrupling of anti-Christian incidents between 2008 and 2019, according to the French Ministry of the Interior. "It's safe to say that there are attacks that have nothing to do with extremist groups," Ellen Fantini, head of the Observatory on Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians in Europe told Bernstein. Many of the culprits were surprisingly native French youth, with the rest either homeless or disgruntled lone actors with a score to settle against the church. "There is a mood against the church, against faith. There is a discourse against the church in French culture and media," Father Joseph Dequick, a priest in Lavours - where two boys were found guilty of a church arson - told Bernstein. The trend seems to be coupled with a rise in anti-Semitic violence, with French Interior Minister Christophe Castaner reporting a 74% spike in anti-Semitic incidents between 2017 and 2018 in Feb. 2019. Across the English Channel, the UK which also experienced a slew of church arsons over the past few years, recorded its highest number of anti-Semitic incidents in 2018, a 16% increase from 2017's total, "which was itself a record annual total," according to Community Security Trust.

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Robert I. Solomon: Messianic Rabbi, rabbisolomon@yachad.com

Jeffery Blalock: Ministries Coordinator, jeffery@yachad.com

Yachad Ministries, 950 Pine Grove Road, Roswell, Georgia 30075

E-mail: info@yachad.com, Web Page: www.yachad.com

Phone: 770-641-3000 (ext. 6)

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