

Yachad Ministries' Israel's News Update May 28, 2020 (5th Sivan, 5780)



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Hezbollah Training Syria's 1st Corps to Use in Future War; Hezbollah is preparing the Syrian Arab Army's 1st Corps for a future war, training its commanders and soldiers, as well as deploying it for intelligence gathering against the IDF in the Golan Heights. Following the return of regime forces to the south of the country, and the rebuilding of the SAA which was decimated over the course of the ongoing civil war, the influence of Lebanon's Hezbollah on the Syrian Arab Army (SAA) has been increasing dramatically. While Israel does not believe that Hezbollah plans to provoke a war with Israel in the near future, the IDF is concerned that any major event which threatens the regime in Tehran, such as a miscalculation by Washington against Iran in the Persian Gulf or in Iraq might lead Hezbollah to attack Israel.

Uruguay Considers Declaring Hezbollah a Terror Organization; Uruguayan President Luis Alberto Lacalle Pou claimed during a Zoom webinar on Wednesday, organized by the American Jewish Committee, that he considers declaring Hezbollah a terror organization. Lacalle Pou took part in an AJC program named "AJC Advocacy Anywhere," where he was interviewed by Dina Siegel Vann, Director of the AJC Institute of Latin American Affairs. The Uruguayan president participated in the AJC's Project Interchange in the past. Siegel Vann asked Lacalle Pou several questions as well as read questions from the audience, one of which asked him if he intends to blacklist Hezbollah as a terror organization, as other Latin American countries like Argentina, Paraguay and Honduras have done. In his answer, Lacalle Pou related to the last time he was asked that same question 10 months ago, when he said "we follow the UN list, because Uruguay does not have its own." This time, Lacalle Pou answered sincerely, claiming that "I am in the process of changing my mind."

Hungarian Foreign Minister: Israel Can Rely on US in the EU, UN; Hungary will continue to stand up for Israel in the European Union, United Nations and the International Criminal Court, Hungarian Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó said Thursday in his first call with Israeli Foreign Minister Gabi Ashkenazi. The call came less than a week after Hungary and Austria were the only two EU member states to oppose threatening sanctions if Israel moves forward with its annexation plans for parts of the West Bank. The EU's foreign policy is set by consensus, which meant its High Commissioner for Foreign Affairs Josep Borrell made a warning statement in his own name, as did several EU states. Borrell's statement released on Monday night,

with the support of 25 out of 27 EU states, said: "We strongly urge Israel to refrain from any unilateral decision that would lead to the annexation of any occupied Palestinian territory and would be, as such, contrary to International Law."

US Amb. Friedman: Jerusalem Has Been the Capital for 3000 Years; US Ambassador to Israel David Friedman posted a video on Thursday evening wishing Israelis a happy Jerusalem Day. "Yom Yerushalayim sameach (Happy Jerusalem Day). This is the fourth time that I've had the privilege of celebrating Yom Yerushalayim as the United States Ambassador to Israel," the ambassador said in the video. "Today, we are all Jerusalemites, thanking G-d that we have lived to see the restoration of this ancient city established by King David some 3,000 years ago as the capital of Israel," Ambassador Friedman declared. "As King David wrote in Psalm 122: 'Pray for the peace of Jerusalem.' Chag sameach, and may G-d bless Israel," the ambassador concluded.

EU Condemns Iranian Call for 'Final Solution' Against Israel; European Union High Representative for Foreign Affairs Josep Borrell condemned calls by Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei for a 'final solution' to destroy the State of Israel. "I condemn in the strongest possible terms the call by the Iranian Supreme Leader Khamenei to fight Israel. This is a threat to international peace and security. The security of Israel is of paramount importance and the EU will stand at its side." On Tuesday, Khamenei posted a tweet which included an illustration of a gunman dancing on the Temple Mount, behind him a portrait of himself, Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah and the founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ruhollah Khomeini. The poster reads: "Palestine will be free. The final solution. Resistance is referendum." Following condemnations by Israel and the US, Khamenei claimed that he had not referred to all Jews but only to the State of Israel in calling for a 'final solution.' "Eliminating the Zionist regime doesn't mean eliminating Jews. We aren't against Jews. It means abolishing the imposed regime & Muslim, Christian & Jewish Palestinians choose their own govt & expel thugs like Netanyahu. This is 'Eliminating Israel' & it will happen," Khamenei claimed.

Pompeo: Iran Echoing Hitler's Call for Genocide; US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo on Friday accused Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif of "echoing Hitler's call for genocide" after Zarif backed Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei's call for a "Final Solution" such as the one the Nazis implemented against Jews. "We stand with Germany and Israel against this oldest & most vile form of hatred, and say 'Never Again,'" tweeted Pompeo. On Thursday, Zarif had blasted Germany for condemning Khamenei's use of a poster evoking Nazi Germany's "Final Solution" to destroy Israel. European Union High Representative for Foreign Affairs Josep Borrell had already condemned Khamenei as well, after which Khamenei claimed that he had not referred to all Jews but only to the State of Israel in calling for a "final solution." "Eliminating the Zionist regime doesn't mean eliminating Jews. We aren't against Jews. It means abolishing the imposed regime & Muslim, Christian & Jewish Palestinians choose their own govt & expel thugs like Netanyahu." Khamenei claimed.

Netanyahu to Khamenei: Those Who Threaten Israel Place Themselves in Danger; Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu on Friday responded to Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei's latest statement against Israel. "We say again - those who threaten Israel with extermination place themselves in similar danger," said Netanyahu after Khamenei stated earlier that "Israel is a cancerous growth in the Middle East." Speaking on the occasion of the Iranian Al-Quds Day in Tehran, Khamenei threatened that "the Zionist virus will not last long and the Zionist regime will not survive - and will be destroyed." The comments mark the second time this week that Khamenei has threatened Israel. Earlier this week, the Supreme Leader posted a tweet in which he threatened to implement the Nazi "Final Solution" against Israel. After Netanyahu responded to those threats, Khamenei asserted that in using the term "Final Solution", he did not refer to Jews but rather only to the State of Israel.

UN Envoy Condemns Calls for Israel's Destruction; Nickolay Mladenov, the UN envoy to the Middle East, on Friday, condemned the calls by Iranian leaders for Israel's destruction. "Dangerous calls for the destruction of Israel should be condemned by all. Such inciteful rhetoric is a modern form of anti-Semitism. The UN will continue to stand against all forms of racism, hatred, and strive for peace and stability in the Middle East," he tweeted. The tweet comes after Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, stated earlier that "Israel is a cancerous growth in the Middle East." Speaking on the occasion of the Iranian Al-Quds Day in Tehran, Khamenei threatened that "the Zionist virus will not last long and the Zionist regime will not survive - and will be destroyed." The comments mark the second time this week that Khamenei has threatened Israel. Earlier this week, the Supreme Leader posted a tweet in which he threatened to implement the Nazi "Final Solution" against Israel.

Hidden Underground Chambers Discovered Near Western Wall in Jerusalem; Archaeologists in Israel have discovered ancient treasures—a rare clay seal mark and a 2,600-year-old stone stamp—in the remains of a structure likely destroyed by ancient Babylonians. The seal and stone stamp both feature ancient Hebrew script, including the first archaeological evidence of the Biblical name Nathan-Melech. The seal mark and stamp likely survived a major fire as evidenced by the presence of charred pottery shards nearby. Archaeologists have revealed the subterranean system near the Western Wall plaza and its tunnels. Excavations were conducted by the Israel Antiquities Authority in the "Beit Straus" complex beneath the entrance lobby to the Western Wall tunnels. The subterranean system consists of a courtyard and two rooms arranged in three levels, one above the other. They are connected by staircases hewn from rock. "This is a unique finding," said Dr. Barak Monnickendam-Givon and Tehila Sadiel, who directed the excavation, in the statement. "This is the first time a subterranean system has been uncovered adjacent to the Western Wall."

Long-Lasting Coronavirus Disinfectant Developed by Israeli Researchers; Scientists from the Technion Israel Institute of Technology in Haifa have developed "smart" disinfectants that not only destroy the coronavirus but unlike other commonly used disinfectants that diminish rapidly, remain on surfaces for an extended period of time. "The materials we developed will be a game-changer because they will block the cycle of infection from contaminated surfaces," said Assistant Professor Shady Farah, head of the research group. "Infection from touching surfaces is a serious problem, especially in public places such as hospitals, factories, schools, shopping malls, and public transportation. Our polymers will make these places safer," Farah added. The novel coronavirus can last on surfaces for an extended time - the length of time depends on several factors - raising the need for a disinfectant that can also last on surfaces for long periods. Findings from the Diamond Princess Ship found that the virus can last on surfaces as long as 17 days.

Nasrallah: Palestine Must be Liberated; Hezbollah Secretary-General Hassan Nasrallah on Friday gave a speech in honor of the Iranian Al-Quds Day, during which he called for the destruction of Israel and the "liberation of Palestine". "Israel is cautious and examines Hezbollah's reactions," Nasrallah said, adding that "the very fact that Israel is deterred by us is an achievement." He further said that "Palestine belongs to the Palestinian people, it must be restored. Soon we will pray in Jerusalem, we are as close as possible to its liberation. Jerusalem is holy to us. Anyone who believes he can change our position through wars, sanctions or eliminations—is wrong." He denounced Israel's plans to apply sovereignty over Judea and Samaria, claiming that "Israel strives for full control and annexation of all occupied lands. It is fueled by the United States which supports it in a security, military, economic and political way. It strengthens and stabilizes Israel, and therefore our real battle is against the US as well."

Abbas Renounces Agreements with Israel and US Over Annexation Plans; Palestinian Authority (PA) chairman Mahmoud Abbas on Tuesday declared an end to the agreements and understandings signed with Israel and the United States in response to Israel's plans to annex Judea and Samaria. "The Palestine Liberation Organization and the State of Palestine are absolved, as of today, of all the agreements and understandings with the American and Israeli governments and of all the obligations based on these

understandings and agreements, including the security ones," Abbas declared at an emergency meeting in Ramallah, according to the Wafa news agency. He went on to place blame upon the current US administration for, "...the oppression befalling the Palestinian people," and went on to reaffirm a series of commitments—including to "a solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict based on the two-state solution," and "fighting international terrorism regardless of its shape or source." The new coalition agreement between Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu and Defense Minister Benny Gantz stipulates that the government can apply sovereignty over Judea and Samaria this coming July.

Study Results: 70% of Coronavirus Cases in Israel Started in the US; More than 70% of coronavirus patients in Israel were infected by a strain that originated in the United States, according to a new study published Monday by Tel Aviv University. "Those who returned from the US created transmission chains," Dr. Adi Stern of the School of Molecular Cell Biology and Biotechnology at TAU's George S. Wise Faculty of Life Sciences. Flights from Europe and other parts of the world began to be halted between February 26 and March 4 – but not from the US. Only beginning on March 9 did Israel block its borders to anyone who came from abroad who couldn't complete 14 days of quarantine in Israel. "There was this gap in policy, and this gap allowed people to return from the US who thought that they could go wherever they wanted, so they probably spread the virus that way," Stern said. Stern noted another important finding, that there was "a very clear reduction in transmission as of March 20, which is when the lockdown was implemented in Israel—which means the social distancing measures worked... The lockdown saved lives."

Jerusalem: The New Capital of the Start-Up Nation; Start Up Nation Central's "Finder" revealed that Jerusalem may be the new capital of the "start-up nation," thanks to its growing technology ecosystem, which includes 405 companies, 22 exits, and total investments worth \$1.6B—\$233.5M just from the past year. According to Start Up Nation Central's Finder, the Israeli innovation tracking platform, the list of active companies in Jerusalem has grown 102% since 2012, to a total of 405 in the Ecosystem. In 2019 alone, \$233.5M was invested in Jerusalem-based companies and start-ups, a 21% increase from the year prior. The city prides itself on 22 tech exits and total investments worth \$1.6B. Out of these 405 companies, two fields of expertise are more prominent than others: artificial intelligence, which has seen a 166% increase—and life sciences, which is currently providing a massive range of innovative solutions for COVID-19

Amb Ron Dermer: Annex Judea, Samaria & Jordan Valley Now, in Case Trump Loses; Israeli Ambassador to the US Ron Dermer is urging the government to apply sovereignty in Judea, Samaria, and the Jordan Valley quickly, due to the possibility of Donald Trump losing the upcoming US Presidential election. Speaking in a closed briefing in Washington DC, Dermer said that "we must move forward with the annexation now because we don't know what will happen in the US presidential election in November—Biden may win. Now there is a window of opportunity and so we should do it now." "There is a one-time opportunity to promote annexation as long as Trump is there," Dermer went on to say. Dermer has been talking to senior US government officials in recent weeks to promote a swift application of Israeli sovereignty over territories liberated during the Six-Day War. Dermer was reported to have said that the next administration would have to live with the facts on the ground established during the Trump Administration.

25 Of 27 EU Member States Condemn Annexation Plans, Hungary & Austria Stand in Dissent; On Monday night, High Representative for Foreign Affairs Josep Borrell released the third of a series of statements criticizing Israel's annexation plans. With the support of 25 out of 27 EU states, Borrell said: "We strongly urge Israel to refrain from any unilateral decision that would lead to the annexation of any occupied Palestinian territory and would be, as such, contrary to International Law." Hungary and Austria, the sole dissenters in the EU, stood in opposition on Wednesday to Borrell's criticism. A Hungarian diplomatic source said that no one knows if Israel will actually apply its laws to parts of the West Bank, which is why his country called to exercise caution in its messages toward Israel and focus on back-channel diplomacy rather than broadcasting public statements. French Ambassador to the UN Nicolas de Rivière warned Israel that any

such move “would be detrimental to Israel’s role in the world, to its integration in its regional environment, as well as to Israel’s relationships with its partners,” he said.

IDF Chief Defends Cyber-Attack on Iranian Port Terminal; The Washington Post reported on Monday that Israel is believed to be behind a recent cyber-attack on the shipping traffic at Iran’s Shahid Rajaee port terminal. Computers that regulate the flow of vessels, trucks and goods all crashed at once, creating massive backups on waterways and roads leading to the facility. Speaking at an inauguration ceremony Tuesday evening, IDF Chief of Staff Aviv Kochavi said, “We will continue to use a variety of military tools and unique combat methods to hit the enemy.” Kochavi added that the IDF has the moral obligation to protect Israeli citizens from the threats surrounding the Jewish State. “When the Israeli home front is threatened by thousands of missiles and rockets, we will not hesitate to attack with force to thwart the threats. While we do everything we can to avoid civilian casualties, the enemy makes every effort to harm civilians.” “Unlike the enemy, we will act both aggressively and in accordance with our values, and will base our action on intelligence and operational need. Dozens of attacks, even in recent times, have already demonstrated the superiority of the IDF’s intelligence and firepower,” Kochavi added.

First-Ever Direct Flight from Abu Dhabi Lands in Israel; An Etihad Airlines flight, direct from Abu Dhabi, landed in Israel for the first time on Tuesday night, the Foreign Ministry confirmed. A cargo flight for the United Arab Emirates flag carrier, it headed to Israel with humanitarian aid for Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. Among the aid provided was 14 tons of medical supplies, including personal protective equipment and 10 ventilators. This aid is in line with the United Nations COVID-19 Response Plan for the occupied Palestinian territory, and the plan supports the efforts led by the Government of Palestine to contain the pandemic and mitigate its impact. Nickolay Mladenov, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, thanked the government and people of the UAE for their continued support to the Palestinian people. “Global solidarity is in the interest of everyone. Today we are facing the most challenging crisis since the Second World War. We can get through it only by working together.”

Israeli Inventors Create Face Mask with Slot for Eating in Public; Israeli restaurants will reopen next week and require about 6 feet between patrons, but what about people who aren’t ready to take off their masks when they eat in public? Some Israeli inventors have created a face mask for the coronavirus age that will allow wearers to eat food without removing it. The mask has a slot that opens with a hand remote lever to allow food to go through, Reuters first reported. Drippy dishes might not fare very well, the story said, but solid foods “can be gobbled up in a flash a la Pac-Man.” The developer, Tel Aviv-area based Avtipus Patents and Inventions, told Reuters that it has already submitted a patent for the mask and plans to start manufacturing in the next few months.

Congresswoman Rashida Tlaib Under Fire for “Nakba Day” Tweet; Last Friday, the Michigan Democrat Congresswoman Rashida Tlaib tweeted on the day after the 72nd anniversary of the establishment of Israel: “Today, Palestinians around the world commemorate the Nakba (النكبة), Arabic for ‘catastrophe’ recognizing the ethnic cleansing of indigenous Palestine. ~530 Palestinian neighborhoods were uprooted + destroyed +750,000 Palestinians became refugees,” Tlaib tweeted. In a statement, Rabbi Aryeh Spero of the Conference of Jewish Affairs called her words “despicable” adding that, “The ethnic cleansing going on today in the Middle East and northern Africa is being done mostly by Arab Muslim leaders and jihadists who are systematically purging these areas of age-old Christian communities, indigenous tribes, and remnants of the few Jews remaining in these areas.” For years, anti-Israel activists have marked May 15th – the day after the anniversary of Israel’s establishment – as a day of mourning, dubbed the “Nakba Day”. Last year, Tlaib was barred from entering Israel, over her vocal support for the anti-Israel Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions movement.

Netanyahu Khamenei Trade Threats as Tensions Rise Over Anti-Semitic Tweet; Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu responded to threats from Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, according to which his country is planning a "final solution" against Israel. "Khamenei's threats to implement the "Final Solution" against Israel are reminiscent of the Nazi "Final Solution" plan for the destruction of the Jewish people. He must know that any regime that threatens Israel with extermination will find itself in similar danger," Netanyahu wrote on Twitter. US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo also addressed the Iranian Supreme Leader's threat, saying, "Khamenei's crazy and anti-Semitic rhetoric does not represent the tolerance of the Iranian people." Yesterday, Khamenei posted a tweet which included an illustration of gunmen dancing on the Temple Mount, behind him a portrait of himself, Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah and the founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ruhollah Khomeini. The poster reads: "Palestine will be free. The final solution. Resistance is referendum."

Thousands of Iranians Reach Out to Israel for Asylum, Help; The number of Iranians asking Israel for help has spiked in recent months, in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic, the Foreign Ministry said on Wednesday. "Thousands of people are asking to come to Israel for medical assistance or to emigrate," according to Yiftah Curiel, head of Digital Diplomacy at the Foreign Ministry. The requests have arrived mostly through private messages on the Foreign Ministry's social media accounts in Persian, as well as from e-mails. Others have been made openly, in public comments on social media, but by accounts using pseudonyms. Curiel said many of the messages are serious asylum requests. Sharona Avginsaz, who runs the Foreign Ministry's Persian social media accounts added, "We have a very receptive audience. There are lots of Iranians in Iran and in the Diaspora that support Israel, reject the regime and want to see a different future between the two countries."



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