

Yachad Ministries' Israel's News Update June 18, 2020 (26th Sivan, 5780)



For the Yachad Report Newsletter For June 2020

Jewish Community Flourishing in Dubai; One of the most surprising Jewish communities in recent years has been the Jewish community of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), which is based largely in Dubai. The President of the community, Solly Wolf, spoke of what Jewish life is like in the country, and the respect the community is treated with. "When I came here, you could not find kosher food or matzah [for Passover]. Today, in most supermarkets, you can find many kosher ingredients, even kosher groceries and gefilte fish," Wolf said. When asked if it is difficult to live in such a devout Muslim state, Wolf responded, "We are very safe here, we are not hiding. We feel comfortable and we are able to pray and to go to the synagogue or anywhere else. I've been here for 18 years, and I've never felt hostility or anything like that, even though everyone knows I'm Jewish. We have neighbors near the synagogue, and they accept us as we are."

Israeli Researchers Using Precision Data to Heal the World; Recent studies have revealed that people suffering from the same disease category may have different manifestations. As doctors and scientists better understand the reasons underlying this variability, they can develop novel preventive, diagnostic, and therapeutic approaches and provide optimal, personalized care for every patient. This year, the Israel Precision Medicine Partnership (IPMP) selected 16 research projects to receive NIS 60 million in grants to advance the implementation of personalized healthcare approaches – providing the right treatment to the right patient at the right time. All the research projects pull data from Israel's unique and vast medical databases. Shai-Lee Spigelman, CEO of Digital Israel, a program of the Social Equality Ministry, said she hopes that the research programs will "strengthen the excellent existing collaboration between Israel's academia and health system. This collaboration underpins Israel's excellence in health and is one of the reasons for Israel's success in battling the first wave of the coronavirus pandemic.

Dutch Church Group Walks Back Call for EU Sanctions Against Israel; Following an internal debate, a large Dutch church group retracted and apologized for its call for European Union (EU) sanctions against Israel. The Council of Churches, an umbrella of 18 churches and denominations, issued its unusual apology in a statement Thursday. The group took back its letter from last month to Foreign Minister Stef Blok urging him to scrap trade deals between the European Union and Israel if Israel applies its civilian laws in Judea and

Samaria, a move some call annexation. “We’re sorry that the letter brought to the minister’s attention has led to concern and confusion,” the council wrote in the statement. Had the Dutch Council written its own letter, the retraction read, “it would have conveyed more carefully the ideas we wanted to express.” “We don’t wish to speak over specific sanctions or penal action, this is the responsibility of the political domain,” the statement said, although the council’s statement did reiterate its concern about what it called Israel’s “annexation plans.”

Trump Halts War Crimes Probe by International Criminal Court; US President Donald Trump has signed an executive order imposing sanctions on individuals involved in the International Criminal Court's (ICC) probe into war crimes allegedly committed by US, Afghan, & Israeli forces—as well as crimes against humanity allegedly committed by the Taliban—during the war in Afghanistan. The order authorizes US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo to freeze assets of ICC officials involved in the investigation. In addition, Pompeo will be authorized to block these officials from entering the US. The move follows a push by the court's Chief Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda to investigate potential crimes committed by Israel against the Palestinians—a prospect about which Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said they were "gravely concerned." "Despite our demand, the tribunal has also politically persecuted Israel, our ally," Trump said. The green light to sanction ICC officials has drawn concern from international officials and human rights organizations.

Hassidic Man Stabbed in London in Suspected Hate Crime; A Hassidic Jewish man was stabbed on Friday in a suspected hate crime in London’s Stoke Newington, suffering head wounds. The man was later identified by the Jewish Chronicle as Rabbi Alter Yaakov Schlesinger, an Orthodox rabbi from Stamford Hill’s Satmar community. The attacker was tackled by builders working nearby and pinned to the floor while police were called. Schlesinger, who is in his 50s, is identifiably Jewish and was wearing Orthodox clothing. He is thought to be in a stable condition as he was talking at the scene when dozens of emergency vehicles arrived, including the Jewish ambulance service Hatzalah. The area is home to one of London’s largest Jewish Orthodox populations. “Anti-Semitic incidents have become commonplace and part of what Jews around the world are going through,” Vice-Chairman of the World Zionist Organization Yaakov Hagoel said in response to the stabbing. “I call on the authorities to deal with the perpetrator to the fullest extent of the law,” Hagoel added

Anti-Semitic Insults Hurlled at Paris Counter-Protesters; In light of the Black Lives Matter rallies that have been taking place in protest against police brutality in the US, French protesters gathered in the city to protest the death of Adama Traoré, a Malian French man who died in police custody in 2016. Tensions were already running high when a counter-protest group dropped a banner from a nearby building reading "Justice for the victims of anti-white terrorism." In response, some protesters were heard yelling "dirty Jews," at the counter-protesters. The European Jewish Congress called on anti-racist marchers and organizers to ensure that “antisemitism is not being adopted by some within their ranks,” following Saturday’s incident in Paris. “The people who claim to march against hate and racism while shouting violent anti-Semitic statements are hypocrites and acting against the worthy cause of the majority,” EJC President Dr. Moshe Kantor said. “They are trying to hijack and piggyback on the justifiable anger and hurt of anti-racist demonstrators. ...They have shown that they would rather sabotage an important rally for their own hate.”

Pompeo: The US will always support Israel's right to defend itself; US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo on Sunday addressed the opening plenary of the 2020 AJC Global Forum, where he reaffirmed the strong US-Israel relationship, condemned rising worldwide anti-Semitism, and cautioned Iran against threatening Israel and pursuing a nuclear weapons program. AJC's signature annual event, which was originally scheduled to take place this week in Berlin, Germany, was changed to an online meeting due to the coronavirus pandemic. As a result, Pompeo’s remarks reached an audience of many thousands in the US and around the world. "Since 1948, Israel has proven time and again that it's up to any challenge to the Jewish people's right to govern themselves in their ancestral homeland," he said. "The United States will always support Israel's right

to defend itself." Pompeo noted that he has visited Israel four times as Secretary of State, adding, "As a Christian, being in Israel deeply is moving, a very moving experience for me."

Anti-Semitic Groups Seek to Hijack the Black Lives Matter Movement; The protests in the US and around the world have sought to confront police brutality, tapping into growing anger among many young people over a variety of systemic issues. And in many ways, the mass protests are unprecedented—as is the crackdown. But, as with any popular movement, there have been documented attempts to hijack the agenda—and that list includes groups who are anti-Jew and anti-Israel—even white supremacists. The issue facing pro-Israel Jews in the US and abroad amid the protests is whether to allow these fringe anti-Semitic voices to steal focus in the way the Women’s March or other groups were hijacked. Because the reality is that for ninety-nine percent of participants, Israel is not the issue. Rather, making Israel a central argument plays into the hands of those who try to inject anti-Israel views into everything in the US, from cuisine to fashion—as it reinforces Israel as a partisan issue in the US and abroad, and severely limits our ability to draw the broad international support that we desperately need.

Top Saudi cleric: Jews, Muslims need to join forces to fight antisemitism; The Muslim World League, a Saudi Arabian government-funded NGO, is prepared to fight “shoulder-to-shoulder” with Jews from around the world to defeat antisemitism, head of the group Sheikh Dr. Mohammed Al-Issa said on Tuesday. “We in the Muslim World League are proud to stand shoulder to shoulder with our Jewish brothers and sisters to build understanding, respect, love and interreligious harmony,” said al-Issa from Mecca in a virtual conference organized by the Combat Anti-Semitism Movement and the American Sephardi Federation. He said that Jews and Muslims need to work together to rebuild ties and create “bridges of dialogue” between their communities. “Whereas Jews and Muslims lived centuries together, in these last decades we have sadly grown apart,” al-Issa said. “Now, we must rebuild the bridges of dialogue and the bonds of partnership between our communities... Since taking over the Muslim World League, it has been my mission to fight the forces of hatred and violence.”

Netanyahu to German FM: Stop funding anti-Israel organizations; Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu met Wednesday evening with German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas in Jerusalem. The two discussed, among other things, Israel's demand that Germany ceases funding anti-Israel organizations that defame the Jewish State. Maas inquired about the Israeli government's plans in light of the Trump Administration's 'Deal of the Century' and its intentions to apply sovereignty in Judea and Samaria. He noted that this was important because Germany will soon assume the presidency of the European Union (EU) and its membership in the UN Security Council. The prime minister stated that Israel's security interests must be maintained in any agreement, including full security control on the western side of the Jordan River. "Every realistic plan must recognize the reality of Israeli settlements on the ground, and not foster the illusion of displacing people from their homes," Netanyahu added.

Netanyahu Committed to Annexation Amid Threat of EU Sanctions; The EU is applying pressure to impose sanctions on Israel if it proceeds with its plan to annex parts of the West Bank next month, German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas told Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Wednesday. The first high-level dignitary to visit Jerusalem since the establishment of the new government, Maas arrived on Wednesday to try to convince Netanyahu to back down from his plan to begin the process of unilaterally annexing up to 30 percent of the West Bank on July 1. In addition to pressures within the EU – Israel’s biggest trading partner – to adopt punitive measures against Israel if it moves forward with annexation, Maas said the states could also move forward with recognizing a Palestinian state. Netanyahu told Maas that any peace plan must take Israeli settlements into account. “Any realistic plan must recognize the reality of Israeli settlement in the territory and not nurture the delusion of uprooting people from their homes,” he said.

Palestinian Authority Refuses Second Medical Supply Shipment from UAE; For the second time in a month, the Palestinian Authority (PA) has refused a planeload of medical supplies from the United Arab Emirates to help fight coronavirus, since it was coordinated with Israel rather than with them, AFP reported. "We refuse to receive it because it was coordinated directly between Israel and them (the UAE)," the PA's Civil Affairs Minister Hussein al-Sheikh said. "We were not part of the coordination," he added. The PA is outraged over the coalition agreement between Netanyahu and Defense Minister Benny Gantz, which stipulates that the government can apply sovereignty over Judea and Samaria in July. In response to the move, PA chairman Mahmoud Abbas announced recently that the PA was no longer bound by the agreements it signed with Israel and the US, including the security coordination with Israel.

Israeli Scientists Make Progress on New COVID-19 Passive Vaccine; A team of Israeli researchers at Bar-Ilan University have identified short amino acid sequences—often referred to as the "building blocks of life"—that could help develop a vaccine against the novel coronavirus, and which they believe could stop the next outbreak. "Our study has identified a set of potential immunodominant epitopes from the SARS-CoV-2 proteome, such that these epitopes are capable of generating both antibody and cell-mediated immune responses," Dr. Milana Frenkel-Morgenstern, head of the Cancer Genomics and BioComputing of Complex Diseases Lab at Bar-Ilan University's Azrieli Faculty of Medicine, explained. Epitopes, known also as antigenic determinants, are the part of the antigen that binds to a specific antigen receptor on the surface of B cells or T cells. They are capable of stimulating an immune response. The result: A passive (as opposed to an active) vaccine, capable of activating both cellular and humoral immune responses in humans.

Post-Pandemic Israel: A Long Road to Recovery for Those in Need; At Vision for Israel, we are working day and night to meet the needs of the most vulnerable among us. But with the unprecedented crisis of the global pandemic, funds have been stretched thinner than ever. And so, we at Vision for Israel are asking you, our dear readers and donors, if you would help us meet the requests for aid and financial assistance that are pouring into our VFI offices by the hour. Over a million people have been suddenly left jobless and entire families are suffering. We need supernatural divine provisions. We ask you also to take the time to review the projects we continue to undergird and the accomplishments that are taking place as you give to Vision for Israel.

Israeli Researchers: Save the Endangered Biblical Gazelle; "When the day blows gently, And the shadows flee, Set out, my beloved, Swift as a gazelle, Or a young stag, For the hills of spices!" reads a verse in Song of Songs, a powerful celebration of love that is traditionally read as an allegory of the connection between the people of Israel and God. Indeed, for millennia, mountain gazelles have roamed freely around the land, with their graceful slender bodies and their dark gaze becoming an integral part of its ancient landscapes. But Israeli researchers have raised an alarm about their survival, and are proposing a comprehensive plan to protect them. With about 5,000 gazelles, Israel has remained the last stronghold of the species once common all over the so-called Levant, including northern Iraq, Turkey, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan, according to a paper published in Oryx – The International Journal of Conservation on Wednesday.



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