

# ***Yachad Ministries' Israel's News Update April 15, 2021*** ***(3<sup>rd</sup> Iyyar, 5781)***



## ***For the Yachad Report Newsletter For April 2021***

***Remembrance Day: 43 Fallen IDF Soldiers in the Past Year;*** A total of 43 deaths were added to Israel's list of fallen soldiers between the previous Remembrance Day until now, the Defense Ministry announced on Friday morning, with another 69 disabled persons dying as a result of injury in defense services. Major ceremonies at the Western Wall, the National Hall for Israel's Fallen in Mount Herzl, and at Yad LaBanim Memorial Center in Jerusalem are set to take place on Remembrance Day Eve, Tuesday, April 13. However, this year attendance will be restricted to Green Pass holders. Only people with a vaccination certificate or a certificate of recovery will be allowed to attend the ceremonies, and only 5,000 people will be allowed to attend the Western Wall ceremony. During Remembrance Day, bereaved families will be allowed to visit the cemeteries without COVID-19 limitations.

***'May Prince Philip's Memory be a Blessing';*** Israeli officials expressed their condolences after the British Royal Family announced the death of 99-year-old Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh, husband of Queen Elizabeth, on Friday. "My deepest condolences and heartfelt sympathy to HM Queen Elizabeth II, HRH The Prince of Wales, the Royal Family, and the people of the United Kingdom" tweeted President Reuven Rivlin, adding: "May his memory be a blessing." Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu also expressed his "Condolences to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, Prince Charles, the Royal Family and the people of the United Kingdom on the passing of the Duke of Edinburgh. Prince Philip was the consummate public servant and will be much missed in Israel and across the world."

***Health Ministry Weighing Permits to Allow Tourist Groups Back into Israel;*** The Health Ministry is considering issuing permits for the first tourists to enter Israel in over a year, a senior health official said Friday. The unnamed official told the Kan public broadcaster that the initial stage of the plan would probably allow organized tour groups, such as Birthright, to enter the country. Health officials thought that it would be easier to monitor for any possible outbreaks if the travelers were in official, authorized groups, the report said.

***Israel Responds to ICC: You Have No Jurisdiction Over Us;*** Israel will not cooperate with the International Criminal Court's investigation of Israel for alleged war crimes, top ministers decided on Thursday. The state will argue in a letter of response to The Hague that the court has no jurisdiction to open the probe, consistent with Israel's longstanding position. The letter will also declare that Israel rejects the accusation that it committed war crimes. Israel is not a member of the ICC and has a policy of not cooperating with it, such that it was unclear that the government would respond at all to the letter Chief Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda sent last month.

***Republicans Delay Reinstated Economic Support to Palestinians;*** Congressional Republicans put a hold on \$75 million of the newly reinstated US aid to the Palestinians, two sources in Washington confirmed on Thursday. On March 26, the US Agency for International Development (USAID) sent Congress a "program narrative" of about \$75m. in Economic Support Funds (ESF) for programs in the West Bank and Gaza that would begin 15 days after the notification was received. Sen. Jim Risch (R-Idaho) and Rep. Michael McCaul (R-Texas), used their respective positions as ranking member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and lead Republican of the House Foreign Affairs Committee to stop the USAID's notification about the reinstated funding from reaching the committees, which means the aid will not start on April 10 as planned. The USAID programs for the Palestinians include roads, sidewalks, bus lots, emergency preparedness, adapting to climate change, "community initiatives" and "safe spaces to engage in community initiatives."

***Threats of War Between China and Taiwan;*** The U.S. military is concerned that an attack on Taiwan by Chinese forces is imminent, which could trigger a significant increase in tensions between the two countries. Military officials are suspecting that China's government is accelerating a timetable for attacking and possibly seizing control of the island following years of building tensions and disputes over sovereignty, The Associated Press reported Wednesday. "We have indications that the risks are actually going up," Admiral Philip Davidson told a Senate panel in March. As a result of the heightened tensions, the USS John S. McCain arrived in the Taiwan strait Wednesday, according to Reuters, as China attempted to continue agitating Taiwan with fighter jet flyovers.

***Iranian Ship Used as Revolutionary Guard Base Near Yemen Attacked 'by Israel';*** An Iranian cargo ship believed to be a base for the Revolutionary Guard has been attacked. Iran's Foreign Ministry confirmed the Tuesday attack on the MV Saviz, which has been anchored in the Red Sea off the coast of Yemen for years. The assault, which is suspected to have been carried out by Israel, came as Iran and world powers sat down in Vienna for the first talks about the US potentially rejoining a landmark nuclear deal with Tehran and others. 'Fortunately, no casualties were reported ... and technical investigations are underway,' Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said in a statement. 'Our country will take all necessary measures through international authorities.'

***Red Sea on the Brink of Environmental Catastrophe;*** [CAIRO] The Red Sea has been flirting with environmental disaster for six years, ever since Houthi rebels seized control of the FSO Safer, floating storage and offloading vessel for petroleum moored north of the Yemeni port city of Hodeidah. Last year it began to leak. Mohammed Ali al-Houthi, the de facto president of Yemen, in a tweet congratulating the Egyptian government on the reopening of the Suez Canal last week, warned of a greater crisis if the deteriorating 44-year-old vessel loses hull integrity.

***Paris-Area Jews Catch and Overpower Suspected Stabber Fleeing the Scene;*** Jewish residents of a Paris suburb chased and overpowered a man whom witnesses said tried to stab three Jews, then handed him over to police. The suspect, a 35-year-old Pakistani man, approached the men from behind near a synagogue in Sarcelles on Wednesday evening. The men were wearing yarmulkes. René Taïeb, a leader of the local

Jewish community, said the incident may have been an anti-Semitic attack. Residents who saw the scene unfold from their balcony warned the three men, who ran away unscathed. The suspect, who was carrying an 11-inch blade that is used to slice plasterboards, also fled. But local Jews alerted to the commotion pursued and overpowered him, holding the man until police arrived.

***Israeli Startup Partners with US Radiology Practice to Apply AI Solutions;*** US-based Radiology Partners (RP) will be teaming up with Israel-based Aidoc "to offer unparalleled AI capabilities to its hospitals and health systems and to accelerate the adoption of AI as the standard of care in radiology," the two have announced in a statement. RP is one of the leading radiology practices in the United States, while Aidoc is a leader in artificial intelligence solutions for medical imaging. RP's equity reportedly totals \$4 billion before the addition of the strategic partnership. "AI has the potential to unlock enormous value for the entire healthcare ecosystem, and I believe our partnership with Aidoc will turn out to be the tipping point for AI in radiology, a medical specialty that has a systemic influence on the overall delivery of patient care," said CEO and Chairman for RP Rich Whitney.

***Israeli Forces Carried out Strike on Iranian Ship in Red Sea;*** Israeli forces carried out a strike on an Iranian ship in the Red Sea in retaliation for previous strikes by Iran against Israeli vessels, according to a Tuesday report. A US official told The New York Times that Israel notified the US that Israeli forces attacked the ship around 7:30 a.m. local time on Tuesday. The development came as the US and Iran opened indirect talks aimed at rescuing the 2015 Iranian nuclear deal. Israel strongly opposes the deal's revival. The anonymous US official said Israel called the strike a retaliation, and that the ship had been hit below the waterline. Israel has not officially commented on the incident. Israel rarely confirms or denies strikes against Iran-linked targets, but sometimes claims credit for attacks that are a direct response to aggression by Iran or its proxies.

***Vaccinated or Recovered Foreigners Permitted to Enter Israel to Visit Relatives;*** Foreigners who are vaccinated or recovered COVID-19 patients and who have first-degree relatives in Israel will be able to enter the country to visit them, the Population and Immigration Authority announced on Tuesday. Visitors are permitted to enter with their partners and children. Israeli citizens or permanent residents and their families whose "center of life" is abroad may also come to Israel to visit first-degree relatives. Foreigners seeking to enter Israel must submit a formal request to the Population and Immigration Authority and receive approval prior to their flight. They must also show proof of vaccination or recovery and proof of relation to those they are visiting.

***Yom Hasho'a in Israel;*** Thursday was Yome Hasho'a in Israel, Holocaust Remembrance Day. We're focusing our efforts on some of the most deserving recipients of our care and generosity—Holocaust survivors. By definition, Holocaust survivors are of advanced age, and many of them suffer from health complications, a higher risk of mortality due to Covid-19, and ever-present loneliness. Pessy grew up in Leipzig and quickly bore witness to unspeakable atrocities acted upon her family and the other Jews of Europe. Her harrowing tale of escape, heroism, and redemption serves as an example—both of the inhuman treatment inflicted by the Nazis and the powerful perseverance of the faithful. Like Pessy there are over 180,000 survivors in Israel who are nothing short of walking miracles who live amongst us. With the help of our heroic donors, we're embracing the Holocaust survivors and providing them with financial aid, social activities, donating emergency panic buttons, and giving them heaters and blankets to keep them warm throughout the winter. Watch Pessy's story now:

***Coronavirus Damage on Economy Four Times Worse than 2008 Crisis;*** The damage from the coronavirus pandemic on the economy to date is about 5% of GDP, four times the damage from the sub-prime crisis of 2008, and similar to the fallout following the dot-com crash of 2001-2003, the Bank of Israel said in

its annual report presented Tuesday. The main challenges facing Israel's economy now are taming the fiscal deficit and restoring unemployment to normal levels, Bank of Israel governor Prof. Amir Yaron said. GDP in 2020 fell by 2.5%, led by a 9.5% in private consumption. Unemployment averaged 15.7% over the course of the year. While Israel may eventually need to raise taxes in order to reduce the debts it incurred during the coronavirus pandemic, tax rates are not expected to rise in 2021, Yaron said at a press conference upon presenting the central bank's annual report.

***Jewish Communities in Gulf Set to Mark Israel's Holocaust Remembrance Day;*** Jewish communities on the Arabian Peninsula will host a series of events marking Israel's Holocaust Remembrance Day on Thursday in a further sign of the warming ties between Gulf states and their Jewish populations. On Thursday, the Association of Gulf Jewish Communities will host a webinar discussing the Holocaust moderated by Emily Judd from the Higher Committee of Human Fraternity, which will involve both Muslims and Jews. The webinar will feature two young Muslims, Fetama al Harbi from Bahrain and Thoufeek Zakriya from the United Arab Emirates, who will discuss their experiences during their recent visit to Yad Vashem. They will also be joined by members of the Jewish community in the Gulf and will discuss how Muslims and Jews can cooperate in the region.

***Sudan Moves to Cancel Israel Boycott;*** Sudan moved toward repealing its law mandating a boycott of Israel in a cabinet vote on Tuesday. The cabinet voted to cancel the 1958 law, which forbade diplomatic and business relations with Israel, it said in a statement. The Sudanese decision still needs the approval of a joint meeting of Sudan's sovereign council and cabinet, which serves as Sudan's interim legislative body. The government in Khartoum had also promised Israel it would cancel a law used to imprison migrants who left Sudan and then returned, which would open the opportunity for some of the 6,200 Sudanese migrants in Israel to return.

***Pfizer Halts Corona Vaccine Shipments to Israel After Country Fails to Pay;*** Pfizer has halted shipments of coronavirus vaccines to Israel in outrage over the country failing to transfer payment for the last 2.5 million doses it supplied to the country. Senior officials at Pfizer have said they are concerned that the government-in-transition will not pay up and the company does not want to be taken advantage of. They said that they do not understand how such a situation can occur in an organized country. A shipment of 700,000 doses was expected to arrive in Israel on Sunday but was delayed until further notice.



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