

Yachad Ministries' Israel's News Update June 24, 2021 (14th Tamuz, 5781)



[For the Yachad Report Newsletter For June 2021](#)

Texas First US State to Adopt IHRA Definition of Anti-Semitism; Texas Governor Greg Abbott signed a bill Wednesday adopting the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of anti-Semitism. Texas is the first US state to officially adopt the IHRA definition of anti-Semitism. The State Senate and House of Representatives both passed the bill to adopt the definition without any dissenting votes. The Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations praised Texas for adopting the widely accepted tool for identifying anti-Semitism.

4.2 Earthquake Rocks Dead Sea; A magnitude 4.2 earthquake was felt in southern Israel on Tuesday night, June 15, at 2:08 AM. The epicenter of the quake was 68 kilometers northeast of Eilat and a depth of ten kilometers. According to statistics and seismic history, the region should experience a major quake every 80-100 years. The last major quake was on July 11, 1927, and registered 6.2 on the Richter Scale killing 500 people. Another major earthquake is therefore now due. As terrifying as earthquakes can be, there may be a silver lining to an increase in regional seismic activity. In a 2007 article in the J-Post, Dr. Shmuel Marco, Head of the School of the Environment and Earth Sciences at Tel Aviv University, noted that prophets became active a certain number of years after major earthquakes. Major earthquakes were recorded in the Jordan Valley in the years 31 BCE, 363 CE, 749 CE, and 1033 CE.

After Years of Delays, Jordan to Nix Red Sea-Dead Sea Canal with Israel, PA; Jordan has decided to cancel a highly touted joint project with Israel and the Palestinian Authority for a canal linking the Red Sea and the Dead Sea, after years of the plan stagnating, the Kan public broadcaster reported Thursday, June 17. According to the report, Amman has decided to finally pull the plug on the joint pipeline, citing unnamed sources saying there was "no real Israeli desire" for the plan to go ahead. After being talked about for years, an agreement on the canal was signed in 2013 to help to alleviate Jordan's severe water shortage while helping replenish the fast-shrinking Dead Sea. According to the plan, a desalination plant in Jordan would provide much-needed drinking water to the region while its leftover brine would be pumped north to the Dead Sea to replenish the fast-shrinking lake, while also producing green energy through the use of water turbines. Instead, Jordan will reportedly focus on a potential internal project that will see water pumped from the Red Sea and desalinated at a facility in Aqaba.

Individual Tourists to be Allowed into Israel Starting July 1; Vaccinated individual tourists are to be allowed into Israel from July 1. Tourism Minister Orit Farkash-Hacohen made the announcement, but a Health Ministry official said the statement was premature. “I’m happy that the hard work of the Tourism Ministry staff, along with the Health Ministry, Foreign Affairs, and the Interior Ministry, led the interior minister to declare that the requirements for vaccinated tourists will be relaxed and there will be an expansion of the entry of individual tourists starting July 1,” Tourism Minister Orit Farkash-Hacohen tweeted Friday. “The time has come for Israel to open up to tourism and to take advantage of its status as a vaccinated country for the benefit of its economy.”

IDF Destroys Syrian Outpost Used by Hezbollah; The IDF struck a Syrian outpost near the city of Quneitra on Thursday, June 17, marking the first strike on the northern border by the government of Prime Minister Naftali Bennett. The post, some 150 meters away from the border, was affiliated with the Syrian Army’s 90th Brigade and First Corps, and had been frequented by Hezbollah officials and used as a reconnaissance post against IDF forces on the Golan Heights. According to Syrian opposition reports, it was destroyed by tank fire. Two weeks ago, the IDF destroyed another observation post in the same area, built in the demilitarized zone.

US Senate Passes Resolution Condemning Surge in Anti-Semitism; On Monday, June 14, the US Senate passed a resolution by voice vote condemning anti-Semitic violence and threats targeting the Jewish community. The motion was led by Senators Jacky Rosen (D-NV) and James Lankford (R-OK), the co-founders and chairs of the Senate Bipartisan Task Force for Combating Anti-Semitism, and was co-sponsored by 74 senators. “Proud that my bipartisan resolution w/ @SenatorLankford condemning the surge in anti-Semitic incidents & calling for action, cosponsored by 74 Senators, just passed the Senate by voice vote,” Rosen tweeted.

No-Confidence Vote Filed Against New Government; The first two no-confidence votes against the new government of Prime Minister Naftali Bennett were filed on Wednesday. The Likud wrote in its no-confidence motion that “the government was formed with lies and tricking the public, and has no mandate from the public.” The motion was filed by Likud faction chairman Miki Zohar and will be presented on Monday by MK Ofir Akunis. A separate no-confidence motion, filed by Shas and United Torah Judaism, relates to matters of religion and state.

Israel Issues New Proof-of-Vaccine, Recovery Documents Valid Until End of 2021; Israel has begun issuing new documentation with proof of virus vaccination or recovery that will be valid until the end of the year. The new documentation can be downloaded from the Health Ministry’s website here. The Health Ministry told the Ynet news site it was acting to ensure that the current certification won’t lapse, leaving people without the means to travel or requiring them to undergo expensive testing. Last month, the Health Ministry announced that it would be extending the validity of the Green Pass for those vaccinated against COVID-19 or who have recovered from coronavirus, through 2021. The initial certificates were valid for just six months; at the time of their issuance, it was still unknown how long the vaccines’ protection would last.

King of Morocco Congratulates Bennett; Putin Thanks Netanyahu; King of Morocco Mohammed VI sent a letter of congratulations to new Prime Minister Naftali Bennett in which he said the kingdom will continue to promote peace in the region, the Prime Minister’s Office announced on Wednesday. In his letter, the monarch said that Morocco will “continue its efforts to promote peace, justice, and coexistence in the Middle East, which will ensure security, stability, and brotherhood for all peoples living side by side.” The letter also sent Bennett “warm greetings and best wishes for great success” following his entry into office this week. Meanwhile, Russian President Vladimir Putin expressed his appreciation for former prime minister

Benjamin Netanyahu upon his exit from office. According to reports, the letter from Putin thanked Netanyahu for the “cooperation and mutual understanding between us for many years. I appreciate the great work you have invested in strengthening the ties between our nations in many areas,” he wrote. “Your capabilities and experience will always be an asset to Israel.”

Biden Picks Thomas Nides as Ambassador to Israel; US President Joe Biden’s announcement on Tuesday that he intends to appoint Thomas Nides as the country’s next ambassador to Israel was met with a wave of approval from both liberal and conservative Israelis and Americans who have had previous dealings with him. “I worked with him when he was undersecretary of state for Hillary Clinton,” Michael Oren, former Israeli Ambassador to Washington, said. “We’ve dealt extensively with a wide range of issues: peace process, security, Gaza,” Oren continued. “Tom is an excellent diplomat and a real statesman. He understands the issues; he’s passionate about Israel, understands it very well, he is committed to the relationship, committed to the alliance, and to Israel’s security. Ambassadors do not make policy, but he will be representing positions based on the two-state solution for the Palestinians and the renewal of the JCPOA.” Nides is currently the managing director and vice-chairman of Morgan Stanley, working with global clients and external and governmental affairs issues. He previously served as deputy secretary of state for management and resources under Hillary Clinton from 2011 to 2013. He was also awarded the secretary of state’s Distinguished Service Award in January 2013.

Shirley Pinto, the First-Ever Deaf MK, Sworn into Knesset Using Sign Language; Pinto, an MK from Yamina, entered the Israeli parliament following the resignation of one of the party’s ministers through the “Norwegian Law,” which allows any MK who is appointed to a cabinet post to step down temporarily from the Knesset, thereby permitting the next candidate on the party’s slate to enter parliament in their stead. Knesset Secretary-General Yardena Meller-Horowitz called Pinto’s name in the plenum, and the lawmaker stood and, in both sign language and spoken Hebrew, swore her allegiance to the Knesset. Pinto is a long-time activist for disability-related issues, particularly those dealing with the hearing-impaired, and serves as Yamina’s representative in the World Zionist Congress.

Iran Says It Has 6.5 Kg of 60%-Enriched Uranium, Inching Closer to Weapons-Grade; Iran said Tuesday that it has produced 6.5 kilograms (14.3 pounds) of uranium enriched to 60 percent purity and 108 kilograms of uranium enriched to 20% purity in five months, far ahead of the schedule set by a law passed earlier this year by Tehran. The move takes the Islamic Republic even closer to the nuclear weapons-grade level of 90% purity. The development came amid talks between Iran and world powers in Vienna aimed at rebuilding the 2015 nuclear deal that put curbs on Tehran’s nuclear program in exchange for sanctions relief. Iran has been increasingly violating the terms of the deal since the Trump administration withdrew the United States from it in 2018.

Young Evangelical Support for Israel Drops by Half in 3 Years; The rate of support for the State of Israel among Evangelicals between the ages of 18 and 29 has declined by more than half between 2018 and 2021 – from 69% to 33.6% – according to a study that will be presented Thursday at Tel Aviv University. “It seems that the Israeli government’s decision to abandon large segments of the liberal, progressive Democratic public and gamble only on the Evangelicals might end up costing us dearly,” said Dr. Yoav Fromer, head of the Center for the Study of the United States at Tel Aviv University, in partnership with the Fulbright Program, in response to the study. The research will be featured as part of a university conference called “The Americanization of the Israeli Right.”

Israeli’s New UK Passport Lists Birthplace as ‘Occupied Palestinian Territories’; A Jerusalem-born Israeli woman with British citizenship said Wednesday she was shocked to discover that her new UK passport lists her birthplace as the “Occupied Palestinian Territories.” The British Home Office later apologized,

describing the listing as an “error” and saying it was urgently investigating the matter. Ayelet Balaban, whose father is British, was born at Hadassah Mount Scopus Hospital in Jerusalem. The medical center sits within the territory that formed an Israeli exclave between the 1948 War of Independence and the 1967 Six-Day War, at which time Israeli forces captured the surrounding area from Jordan. The Mount Scopus site, which the hospital shares with Hebrew University, was never part of Jordanian-controlled East Jerusalem.

Family of Murdered Iranian Wrestler Navid Afkari Beaten and Arrested; Iran’s regime on Saturday intensified its persecution of the family of the murdered champion wrestler, Navid Afkari, whose family members faced brutal beatings and arrests in the city of Shiraz for their protest against the reported wrongful imprisonment of Navid’s brothers, Vahid and Habib. Navid’s brother, Saeed, tweeted “Two female officers beat my mother so that her head was hit on the asphalt. 20 people beat Navid, 5 people [beat] Elham, and 2 people [beat] my mother, who is a 55-year-old woman. You give meaning to the word filth, you cowards.” The clerical regime executed the champion Greco-Roman wrestler Navid Afkari in September 2020 for his role in 2018 protests against the worsening economic situation in the Islamic Republic.

Ohio: 7 Coaches Fired after Allegedly Trying to Force Hebrew Israelite Teen to Eat Pepperoni Pizza; An Ohio high school coach and six assistant coaches were fired Thursday over an incident in which they allegedly tried to force a football player to eat a pepperoni pizza despite his religious dietary restrictions forbidding pork. The Canton City School District Board of Education decided during a special meeting following an investigation. The family of a 17-year-old Canton McKinley High School boy, who is part of the Hebrew Israelite faith, claimed the student was threatened with extra drills for his teammates and being kicked off the team for not eating the pizza. Family attorney Edward Gilbert said the pork pizza was used as a punishment because the player had missed a no mandatory practice for an injury. "What’s interesting is everyone on the team knows this child will not eat pork," he said.



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