

Yachad Ministries' Israel's News Update August 19, 2021 ***(11th Elul, 5781)***



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Nasrallah Says Clashes with Israel 'Very Dangerous'; Hezbollah Secretary-General Hassan Nasrallah warned on Saturday night, August 7, that recent clashes with Israel are a "very dangerous development" which has not happened since the Second Lebanon War, a day after Hezbollah fired about 20 rockets towards Israel and the IDF responded with 40 artillery shells towards open areas in southern Lebanon. Nasrallah delivered the speech, announced days before the rocket fire, on the 15th anniversary of the Second Lebanon War. The Hezbollah leader stated that the rockets fired by the terrorist group were in response to what he called the first direct Israeli raids on southern Lebanon in the past 15 years, adding that Hezbollah targeted open areas because Israel targeted open areas in its strikes in Lebanon. Nasrallah added that Hezbollah "intended by the process to reinforce the old rules of engagement, and did not mean to create new rules of engagement." Nasrallah warned that any new Israeli raid on Lebanon would be responded to "appropriately and proportionately."

Israel Cancels Hundreds of Entry Permits for Foreign Nationals; Hundreds of foreign nationals, principally from the UK, who received approval for their entry permit applications before the country was added to Israel's red-list will have to reapply for new permits after the Population and Immigration Authority annulled the validity of their original authorizations. With the Population and Immigration Authority already facing a heavy burden of entry permit applications from around the world, the government body will now likely be flooded with hundreds of new applications that it has already approved. This will likely contribute to new delays and problems to the already heavily encumbered application process when restrictions on the UK are removed, beginning this Sunday. Efforts are ongoing to redress the situation. On July 30, the government added the UK to its so-called red list of countries with high rates of corona infections, meaning that the criteria for entry into Israel for UK residents became extremely limited. In April, the government reopened the borders to foreign nationals with first-degree relatives living in Israel and allowed them to enter for any reason. Permits granted are valid for 30 days. In the run-up to July 30, many hundreds of UK citizens and residents with immediate family in Israel received approval for their entry permit applications, according to the Yad L'Olim organization. But when the government restrictions on entry into Israel for people coming from the UK, together with Turkey, Georgia, and Cyprus, came into effect on July 30, the Population Authority stated that any permits that had been granted to citizens from those countries were now null and void.

Israeli Study Uncovers COVID-19's Impact on Doctors' Mental Health; An Israeli study conducted on Twitter found that health care professionals' mental health was significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, Ben Gurion University of the Negev (BGU) said on Wednesday. Conducted by BGU researchers, the study analyzed more than 53,000 tweets from hundreds of accounts of health care professionals (HCPs). The researchers found patterns of increased sadness, fear, and disgust in the HCPs' tweets, as well as noticeably decreased joy. They also found that approximately 44% of HCPs discourse on Twitter in 2020 was about professional topics, such as COVID-19 information and medical studies. "Our findings should be a warning to health organizations of the importance of better mental health support to help cope with the emotional consequences of the pandemic," the doctors noted. Parallels can be found between the BGU study and a University of Calgary study published this week, which showed the coronavirus pandemic has caused a global mental health crisis among children and adolescents. In May, the Israeli healthcare system went on strike to protest the former government's decision to cut funding for the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. Prime Minister Naftali Bennett announced an infusion of NIS 2.5 billion into the health system on Wednesday.

Bahrain-Israel Security Collab is No Secret; Israelis want to talk about Iran with Bahrain's Undersecretary for Political Affairs at the Foreign Ministry Dr. Shaikh Abdulla bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, but Al Khalifa wants to talk about peace. Al Khalifa, who also holds the position of deputy secretary-general of the Supreme Defense Council and is in charge of the Israel portfolio at the ministry, was in Israel for four days this week to deepen ties between the countries 11 months after they announced diplomatic relations. Along with meetings with Foreign Minister Yair Lapid, President Isaac Herzog, and the Head of the IDF Strategic Planning and Cooperation Directorate Maj.-Gen. Tal Kelman, Al-Khalifa held meetings with major research institutions – the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, The Institute for National Security Studies, and The Abba Eban Center – in his capacity as the chairman of Derasat, the Bahrain Center for Strategic, International and Energy Studies Al-Khalifa also went diving with Foreign Ministry Director-General Alon Ushpiz, resulting in a unique photo of each waving his country's flag underwater. But Al-Khalifa did not only make waves in the sea, as is his wont as an avid diver. Rather, it was his remarks about Iran that made the biggest headlines. "The [Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action nuclear deal] has caused more instigation and extremism in many different regions across the Middle East," Al Khalifa said at a briefing with Israeli journalists at the beginning of the week. "[Were] there any results that we have come out with? On the contrary. The JCPOA fueled crises across the Middle East." Al-Khalifa said he felt his remarks had been misconstrued. "The Abraham Accords and relations between Bahrain and Israel were done for the purpose of peace and stability and the advancement of the region," Al Khalifa emphasized. "There are common security challenges, but we come from Bahrain with a message of peace and prosperity. His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa has paved the way for taking that courageous step to build this relationship."

Hezbollah Has Inter-Regional Tunnel Network Stretching Hundreds of Kilometers; A new report released by the ALMA Center has exposed a large-scale inter-regional tunnel network belonging to Hezbollah, stretching across Lebanon and designed to allow the group to move personnel and weapons. The report, titled "Land of tunnels" was released on Thursday by the center which researches security challenges facing Israel on its northern front. According to the report authored by Major (res.) Tal Beerli, Hezbollah began its tunnel project after the Second Lebanon War in 2006 with the help of the North Koreans and Iranians and "is much larger than the Hamas 'metro' project in the Gaza Strip." The network supposedly connects the Beirut area, Hezbollah's central headquarters, the Beqaa area used by the group as its logistical operational rear base, to Southern Lebanon. According to the report they allow for "hundreds of combatants, fully equipped, to pass stealthily and rapidly underground." The tunnels are also large enough for motorcycles, ATVs, and other small vehicles to move through them to allow for troops to maneuver from

place to place “for the purpose of reinforcing defense positions or for carrying out an attack in a safe, protected, and invisible manner”, according to the report by ALMA Center.

Freezing Tumor Instead of Cutting, Israelis Pioneer New Bladder Cancer Approach; Claiming a world first, Israeli doctors have removed cancer tumors from the bladder by freezing them instead of cutting them out. Doctors at the Rambam Healthcare Campus in Haifa say that the method has great potential to reduce bleeding, infection risk, and pain. They have conducted the operation four times, and all patients were discharged without side effects. Over the coming weeks, they will be monitored to see how effectively the operations banished cancer, and several more patients will receive the surgery. With current methods, bladder cancer patients are often prone to recurrence, but Dr. Isaac Hoffman said he expects freeze therapy to remove cancer cells more effectively and reduce the chance of recurrence. He noted that cryotherapy, the use of extreme cold to freeze and remove abnormal tissue, isn't new and is used on various cancers. But until now doctors haven't been able to use it on bladder cancer, which affects more than 2 million people worldwide, because of the nature of the tumors. After it is sprayed, ice forms between and inside the cancer cells, without harming the bladder muscles. Hoffman commented: “We believe there are advantages to the patient. After cutting you normally have to leave a catheter in, which can cause pain and risk of urinary tract infection. So we are reducing this.” The innovation will lead to patients spending less time in the hospital, Hoffman predicted. “We visualize the tumor and treat it with a freeze,” he said. “The aim is to release the patient from the hospital on the same day as the procedure.”

Hebrew U Ranks Among World's Top 100 Universities; Among 2,000 universities surveyed worldwide, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (HU) ranked 90th in the 2021 Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU)'s evaluation of higher education institutions. This marks HU's best showing since 2016. For the 19th year in a row, Harvard University topped the ranking list, with Stanford University and the University of Cambridge in the No. 2 and No. 3 seats, respectively. HU is not alone among Israeli universities in the Top 100. Israel's Weizman Institute of Science placed 92nd and the Technion- Institute of Technology 94th. Last year, HU had placed in the 101-150 category. This year, HU managed to surpass several leading universities in its ranking. Upon hearing the news, HU President Professor Asher Cohen shared, “The proof is in the pudding. Hebrew University's ongoing commitment to excellence and innovation has placed it among the world's leading academic institutions. This ranking is a tribute to the standard of excellence demonstrated day in and day out by Hebrew University staff, students, and professors alike.”

Newly Hatched Loggerhead Sea Turtles Seen in Eilat for First Time; For the first time ever recorded in Israel's southernmost city, loggerhead turtles were seen hatching on a beach in Eilat on Tuesday. The Israel Nature and Parks Authority said that until now the loggerhead turtle had only been seen on the Mediterranean coast. “I took a look at the camera and I saw cute turtles emerging from the sand and just starting to run into the water. It's an amazing experience to see something like this, especially since we know it's the first record of this species in Eilat. Amazing,” said Omri Omsi, an INPA volunteer. According to a report, an adult loggerhead tried to lay eggs on Eilat's beach a number of months ago but was sent back to the sea by vacationers. The incident was filmed, and as a result, the Nature and Parks Authority gated the area off. After that, the same turtle apparently returned to lay eggs, this time with no disturbances. INPA said it hopes this was not a one-time event, and the loggerheads will return once more to Eilat. An estimated 8,000 loggerhead turtle egg clutches are laid in the central and eastern Mediterranean each year. Loggerheads are considered a vulnerable species, according to the International Union for Conservation of Nature.

Police to Significantly Increase Enforcement of COVID-19 Restrictions; Prime Minister Naftali Bennett in a discussion on Monday, August 9, instructed Public Security Minister Omer Bar-Lev and Police Commissioner Kobi Shabtai to step up the enforcement of coronavirus restrictions over the next eight weeks, including at the expense of other missions, to help try to prevent Israel from entering a fourth large-scale

coronavirus lockdown, Ynet reported. Minister Bar-Lev said during the meeting that the lockdown option is on the table, although it can still be prevented. Israel police announced in a statement on Monday that they had already begun to expand the level of enforcement of coronavirus restrictions on Sunday, but that they will be increasing their efforts even further starting on Tuesday. Data provided at the Bennett, Bar-Lev, and Shabtai's meeting on Monday show that on Sunday, August 8, 318 fines were issued for Israelis not wearing a mask, compared to 89 on Saturday, and 74 fines were issued for violating isolation restrictions, compared to 47 on Saturday.

CDC Warns Against Travel to Israel amid Surge in Delta Variant Cases; The US Centers for Disease Control claimed Monday that there is a “very high level” of coronavirus infection in Israel when considering it as a single unified entity with the West Bank and Gaza, and urged Americans to avoid travel to all three areas. The CDC in a travel advisory listed the risk of COVID-19 in Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza at its highest level — level 4. It urged even fully vaccinated Americans to avoid those areas. Data released by Israel's Health Ministry last month showed that the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID vaccine appeared to largely prevent hospitalization and serious cases, but is significantly less effective against preventing the spread of the Delta variant of the coronavirus. There were 34,103 active coronavirus cases in Israel as of Monday night, the highest number since March, which has largely been blamed on the ultra-contagious Delta variant.

20 Years Ago, a Hamas Terrorist Blew up a Pizzeria and Killed 15 People; Israelis and Americans mourn the 15 people, including seven children, who were killed 20 years ago during a terror attack. Hamas had claimed responsibility for the bombing. Sbarro, the pizza chain restaurant where the bomber, Izz al-Din Shuheil al-Masri, detonated his suicide vest, trended on Twitter as family members, friends, and government officials expressed their grief. Al-Masri was aided by Ahlam Al-Tamimi, who remains most wanted by the FBI for her role in scouting out the pizzeria and guiding the human bomb to the selected location. Al-Tamimi was initially arrested and convicted in Israel for her involvement in the bombing but was released in a prisoner exchange. One of the American victims, Malki Roth, was 15 years old. “My daughter Malki was murdered as were 14 other innocents,” her father, Arnold Roth, tweeted. The other American victim, Shoshana Yehudit Greenbaum, was 31 years old and pregnant. Her unborn child also died. Moreover, 130 people were injured by the blast or shrapnel stored in the explosive device. “There was a smell of explosives in the air and the patients arrived on stretchers directly from the site, because it was too close to even put them in ambulances. The initial moments were chaotic, it took some time before we were able to realize the extent of the catastrophe and that we were treating multiple siblings whose parents had been killed,” Chana Smadja, an emergency room nurse, recalled in an interview with The Jerusalem Post.

Iranians Criticize Macron for Congratulating Raisi; Prominent Iranian human rights activists blasted French President Emmanuel Macron for his congratulatory statement on Monday to the Iranian regime's new president, Ebrahim Raisi. “We the people of Iran will never forget this historical betrayal,” tweeted Masih Alinejad, an Iranian-American journalist and women's rights activist. “President of a democratic country congratulates a mass murderer like Raisi, who's ordered the execution of more than 5000 political prisoners in the 80s. He also approved the execution of French-Iranian journalist.” Iranians use the moniker “Butcher of Tehran” for Raisi due to his role in the mass murder of Iranians in 1988 and 2019. The US sanctioned Raisi for his grave human rights violations. He added that it was the first time in the history of the Islamic Republic that a chief justice became president. “Someone with a bloodstained record like Raisi will have a more difficult time on the world stage than Rouhani did,” said Brodsky. “And the costs of engagement will increase under this presidency.” Macron has opposed banning the Iranian regime's chief strategic partner, Hezbollah, in France and within the European Union. Two additional Western leaders – the presidents of Switzerland and Austria – also congratulated Raisi on his presidency.

Chinese Group Carried out Widespread Cyber Espionage Campaign in Israel; United States cybersecurity firm FireEye said a Chinese group has waged a widespread espionage campaign against Israeli entities. The attacks targeted Israeli government institutions, IT providers, and telecommunications firms in multiple, concurrent operations starting in January of 2019. The hackers carried out data harvesting and reconnaissance, likely motivated by financial, technological, and business interests. FireEye did not report Chinese government involvement but said the targets coincided with Beijing's interests. During the same campaign against Israel, the group attacked targets in Iran, the United Arab Emirates and Kazakhstan, and may have sought to ascribe the attacks to Iran. FireEye first detected the Chinese espionage group, called UNC215, making the intrusions by exploiting a Microsoft SharePoint vulnerability in early 2019. The group used its custom malware tools, called FOCUSFJORD and HYPERBRO, during the attacks. After breaking into a system, the group stole large numbers of users' credentials and carried out internal network reconnaissance. The group's HYPERBRO malware was used for information collection, such as screen captures and keylogging. Israel has been caught between China and the US in recent years, as the two rivals seek to wield global influence while Jerusalem tries to maintain friendly relations and trade ties. China has also bid for or been involved with, Israeli tunnel construction, railways, desalination plants, agriculture projects, and 5G network infrastructure. Israel has been working for years to expand trade with China, one of the world's largest markets.

EU lawmakers Pan Decision to Send Senior Diplomat to Iran for Raisi Inauguration; Nine members of the European Parliament sent a letter to EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell, blasting the decision to send a senior EU diplomat to Tehran for last week's inauguration of Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi. "Sending such senior representation to the inauguration of a president with such a dark record, at this sensitive time, contradicts European commitments to uphold and stand up for human rights," wrote the MEPs. The parliamentarians called Raisi's electoral victory in June "a sham election," and decried his "appalling record of personal responsibility for the most heinous of human rights abuses." Prior to the inauguration ceremony, Israel's Foreign Ministry called the EU decision to send Enrique Mora, the EU point man on the Vienna nuclear talks, a "shameful" display of "poor judgment." The ultraconservative Raisi, 60, was inaugurated by Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei last Tuesday and sworn in before parliament two days later. The decision "is puzzling and shows poor judgment," the Foreign Ministry said.

Lebanon's Maronite Patriarch Calls on Army to Confront Hezbollah; Lebanon's Maronite Patriarch Bechara Boutros al-Rahi called on Sunday for the Lebanese army to take control of the southern part of the country, Hezbollah's stronghold, and strictly implement UN Security Council Resolution 1701, after recent clashes between Israel and Hezbollah. "We call upon the Lebanese army, which is responsible with the international forces for the security of the South, to take control of the entire lands of the South, to strictly implement Resolution 1701 and to prevent the launching of missiles from Lebanese territory, not for the sake of Israel's safety, but rather for the safety of Lebanon," said Rahi during Sunday Mass. The Maronite patriarch stressed that he could not "accept, by virtue of equality before the law, that a party decides peace and war outside the decision of legality and the national decision entrusted to two-thirds of the members of the government." On Friday, August 6, 19 rockets were fired from southern Lebanon into northern Israel, with the Iron Dome intercepting 10 rockets and six rockets falling in open areas near Har Dov, along the Lebanese border. The others fell inside Lebanon. There were no injuries or casualties. It was the sixth such attack in recent months and the first in which Hezbollah admitted responsibility.

Israeli Law School Journal No. 3 in World in Human Rights; The College of Law and Business international law journal has finished third in the world in the human rights category of the 2020 American W&L Law Journal Rankings, narrowly beating out Harvard Law School which finished fourth. Only Columbia University Law School and Georgetown University Law School finished ahead of the journal, which is formally known as the Law & Ethics of Human Rights journal. The law school also had a third-place

finish in the world among 600 non-US law journals in terms of the expected impact of the articles. In that competition, it beat out the European Journal of International Law.



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: <https://www.yachad.com/>

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

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