

Yachad Ministries' Israel's News Update September 16, 2021 **(10th Tishrei, 5782)**



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

Lapid Says Israel Will Defend Itself Against Iran in Syria; Israel will continue to defend itself against Iranian actions in Syria, Foreign Minister Yair Lapid said in Moscow, following a meeting with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, amid concerns about Russian moves to curb Israeli strikes. “Israel will not sit by quietly while Iran builds terror bases on our northern border [with Syria], or while Iran supplies advanced weapons to terror organizations – weapons intended to be used against us,” Lapid said. There cannot be regional stability as long as Iran maintains a presence and continues to export terror, he warned. “We will maintain our ability to defend ourselves in the face of threats from Syria and elsewhere,” Lapid added. The foreign minister acknowledged Russia’s “key interests in the region,” and said that is why the “necessary and effective” military deconfliction mechanism between Moscow and Jerusalem exists. On Sunday, September 5, a Russian-made missile launched from Syria landed in the Gush Dan region. Two weeks before that, the Russian military in Syria said the air defense system it supplied to Syria shot down 22 of 24 missiles launched by Israel. Israel and Russia, which have soldiers in Syria, have a deconfliction mechanism regarding Israel’s aerial campaign to stop Iran from establishing bases near Israel’s borders. That mechanism seems to have been going less smoothly of late, as the Russian military message on missiles came on the heels of a report in the London-based ASharq al-Awsat in July that Moscow believes Washington has given it a green light to foil Israeli airstrikes in Syria. In response to a question from a Russian journalist, Lapid said that “Israel is not considering and never will consider returning the Golan Heights to Syria.” Lapid also warned that Israel reserves the right to act against Iran’s nuclear program.

Iranian Fuel, Hezbollah ‘Savior’ of Lebanon; Iran is trying to position itself as a fuel supplier to Lebanon to empower its Lebanese proxy. The goal is to force Lebanon to become dependent on Iran and then all the gas and fuel going to Lebanon will come through Hezbollah, so Hezbollah can provide it to allies and friends. Overall, Iran’s goal is to impoverish Lebanon, destroy its middle and upper class, encourage its Sunni and Christian community to emigrate, so that Hezbollah will grow in power and that all that will remain is a hollowed-out Lebanese state that is a province within a larger Hezbollahstan that is more powerful than Lebanon. Iran has been doing this for decades, slowly helping Hezbollah swallow Lebanon and create a parallel state and economy. Hezbollah has its own extra-judicial armed forces, a massive illegal armed militia with 150,000 missiles. Hezbollah sends fighters to Syria and conducts Lebanon’s foreign policy. Hezbollah has its own telecommunications network. It is able to control voting for the presidency and prime ministership. It also

has a parallel construction, banking, and even supermarket network. Now it will be the supplier of fuel, Iran says.

Israeli Security Forces Prepare for More Violence as Manhunt Continues; Israel's defense establishment is preparing for an escalation in violence in both Judea and Samaria and Gaza Strip, as the manhunt continues for six security prisoners who escaped from Gilboa Prison last week. The IDF has reinforced Judea and Samaria with four battalions with a focus on the area of Jenin and the border with Jordan, two locations to where the fugitives could have run. Israel canceled family visits for Palestinian prisoners on Thursday, September 9, until the end of the month, following the violent riots that broke out in jails across the country. The Palestinian Maan News Agency cited the Red Cross as saying families were informed that the visits were canceled due to "dangerous developments" in Israeli prisons. The rioting prisoners, mainly belonging to Palestinian Islamic Jihad, set fire to cells in Ketziot, Ramon and Ofer prisons on Wednesday, September 8, after Israel Prison Service (IPS) Commissioner Katy Perry placed new restrictions on inmates, and moved hundreds of prisoners in order to ensure that only one PIJ prisoner would be in a cell at a time. On Thursday, prisoners set fire to their cells at Ramon Prison in southern Israel. Following the escape, the IPS said that it would be sending the other security prisoners from Gilboa Prison to other facilities across the country as a precautionary measure in case there are other tunnels. Inmates from Gilboa and Megiddo Prison in the North were moved to other jails in the South. On Wednesday, however, the IPS backtracked on moving some 150 PIJ inmates from Ofer Prison in Judea and Samaria after prisoners threatened to riot, commit arson, and harm guards if they were transferred. Although the riots and fires were brought under control, authorities are preparing for additional violence.

Tourist Groups Allowed into Israel Without Isolation Beginning in Two Weeks; Foreign groups of vaccinated tourists from selected countries will be allowed into Israel again starting September 19 in the framework of a special pilot program, the Tourism Ministry told The Jerusalem Post on Sunday. In order to qualify, the tourists will need to present proof of a second vaccination recognized by the Israeli Health Ministry received within the last six months or of a third vaccination. When they land, visitors will be required to take a serological test to prove the presence of antibodies in their blood. Only tourists coming from countries classified as "yellow" or "orange" by the Health Ministry can be part of the groups. Currently, these include all the nations in the world except for Brazil, Bulgaria, Mexico, and Turkey, which are classified as "red." The ministry said that travel agents and tour operators can submit requests for groups from 5 to 30 tourists, as was the case before the program was temporarily halted due to increased morbidity in Israel and around the world as a result of the coronavirus Delta variant. The program does not limit the total number of foreign tourist groups allowed into the country. The ministry said it expects applications to start arriving last week, after Rosh Hashanah. Israeli borders have been closed to foreign nationals for a year and a half, with very limited exceptions.

Arizona Divests from Ben & Jerry's Over its Israel Boycott; The State of Arizona plans to completely divest \$143 million from the global ice cream company Ben & Jerry's as of September 2021 over its Israel boycott. "Israel is and will continue to be a major trading partner of Arizona," State Treasurer Kimberly Yee said on Tuesday, September 7. Arizona is the first state to totally divest from Ben & Jerry's after the ice cream giant, which is a subsidiary of the British-based Unilever conglomerate, announced that it planned to end its contract with its Israeli franchise as of December 2022. The Israeli Ben & Jerry's franchise is based in southern Israel and has been in operation for 35 years. It ran afoul of Ben & Jerry's for its refusal to halt ice cream sales to Judea and Samaria towns.

Over 100 Headstones Smashed at Jewish Cemetery in Argentina; More than 100 headstones were smashed at a Jewish cemetery in Argentina that had seen similar damage in 2009. The vandalism at the Tablada Cemetery in the Buenos Aires area was discovered on Sunday, September 5, the Jewish news site Visavis reported. The headstones were between the cemetery's older section and the new one, which also contains the

remains of dozens of victims from the 1994 terrorist bombing at the AMIA (Argentine Israelite Mutual Association) Jewish community center in Buenos Aires. AMIA, the umbrella of Argentine Jewish communities, condemned the vandalism and lamented the “neglect and lack of control” by law enforcement around the cemetery in La Matanza, an eastern district of the Argentine capital. Police are investigating, AMIA said in a statement. It did not say whether there are indications of vandalism being an anti-Semitic hate crime. There are no suspects. In 2009, unidentified individuals defaced more than 60 headstones, including victims of the 1994 bombing. That vandalism also happened shortly before Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, which this year began on Monday evening, September 6. AMIA did call that vandalism anti-Semitic.

2,000-Year-Old Quarry Found to Supply Stones for Ancient Jerusalem; Har Hotzvim, one of Jerusalem’s main hi-tech hubs, owes its name, which in Hebrew means “Quarrymen’s Hill,” to a much more ancient industrial activity: It is where archaeologists from the Israel Antiquities Authority have uncovered a quarry dating back some 2,000 years, the IAA revealed Sunday, September 5. The quarry was discovered during a salvage excavation before a new building project was set to begin. According to law, a salvage excavation must accompany all construction projects. “The large-scale building projects in ancient Jerusalem, such as the Temple Mount, required a vast amount of building materials and the ability to organize and coordinate the quarrying and transportation of thousands of building blocks to the ancient city,” IAA excavation director Moran Hagbi said. “Building blocks in various stages of spadework were discovered in the quarry,” he said. “For example, we uncovered large, cubical blocks of stone about to be detached from the bedrock, prior to being loaded and transported to the ancient city.” The site has only been partially uncovered. Researchers believe it was two or three times larger than the 600 sq.m. currently exposed. “For us as archaeologists, this quarry presents a golden opportunity,” Hagbi said. “Because some of the stones were left in situ in this way, we can copy ancient technologies and experiment with them to recreate the processes by which the building stones were quarried.” To better understand how ancient workers operated, the researchers plan to reproduce tools and techniques known to have been used at the time to test their efficacy.

Tel Aviv Ranks 8th on Time Out's Best Cities in the World; Tel Aviv made Time Out magazine's top cities in the world in 2021, which was published on Wednesday, September 8. Of the 37 cities that the magazine lists, Tel Aviv places high at number 8, beating out cities like Tokyo, Los Angeles, London, Barcelona, Sydney, Shanghai, Buenos Aires, Dubai, and Paris. The section on the Israeli city refers to it as the "city that never sleeps." Regarding the attractions, Time Out notes that Tel Aviv has "spaces like Dizengoff Square played host to gigs, screenings, and talks." According to the Time Out poll, 81% of Tel Aviv residents believe their city to be "fun." Time Out acknowledged Tel Aviv's Carmel Market and Park HaMesila as notable attractions within the city. Cities that placed higher than Tel Aviv include Montreal, New York, Copenhagen, and Amsterdam.

Israel's Population Rises to 9.3 Million on Rosh Hashanah Eve; On the eve of Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish new year, the Central Bureau of Statistics reported Sunday that Israel’s population topped 9.3 million this year, growing by 146,000 people from the year before in a rise of 1.6 percent. There are now 9,391,000 people living in the Jewish state, according to the CBS figures published ahead of Rosh Hashanah, which began Monday evening, September 6. The number is expected to pass 10 million by the end of 2024. The population comprises more than 6.94 million Jews, or 74%; over 1.98 million Arabs, who account for 21%; and another 466,000 people of other ethnic groups, 5% of the population. The figures show 172,000 babies were born and there were 48,000 deaths — including around 5,800 from the coronavirus — in the 11.5 (Gregorian calendar) months since Rosh Hashanah last year. Life expectancy is 80.7 years for Israeli men and 84.8 years for women, the CBS said. The ongoing coronavirus pandemic and the vast curbs on international travel have had a significant impact on immigration. 19,676 immigrants arrived in Israel during 2020, a dramatic 40.8% drop from 2019 when there were more than 33,000 new arrivals. The first half of 2021 appeared to show something of a recovery. Between January and July, 13,000 people immigrated, a 30% increase over the same period in

2020. The CBS numbers came as the Jewish Agency reported there were now 15.2 million Jews worldwide, an increase of 100,000 from the year before.

Washington, Israel Set up Joint Team on Containing Iran; In a dramatic move, Israel and the United States have established a joint task force to contain Iran, reports JTA (Jewish Telegraphic Agency). Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett revealed the information to U.S. Jewish leaders in a Rosh Hashanah call. In his first meeting with the Israeli premier last week, US President Joe Biden sought to appease Israeli concerns by implying an openness to resorting to a military option to contain Iran. During the call Friday morning, September 3, with the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, Bennett said that the joint team emerged from the talks he had with Biden as well as other senior officials. “The immediate follow-up was to form a joint team based on the joint objectives of rolling Iran back into their box and preventing Iran from ever being able to break out a nuclear weapon,” Bennett said. “We set up a joint team with our national security advisor and America’s, and we’re working very hard, and the cooperation is great.” Bennett also stressed the importance of rebuilding relations with Democrats following years of tension under Netanyahu’s leadership. “We got such a warm reception,” he said of his interaction with Biden. The leaders will disagree in some areas, he said, but “the good spirit means we’re going to be mensches with each other.” Biden echoed similar sentiments in a Rosh Hashanah call on Thursday with rabbis, calling Bennett a “gentleman.” Bennett said that he presented to Biden a strategy to confront the Islamic Republic by creating a regional alliance to prevent Iran from going nuclear and to quash its influence in the region, which Israel and Sunni Arab states see as dangerous.

Taliban Willing to Establish Relations with All Nations Except Israel; The Taliban are willing to establish ties with all countries except for Israel, a spokesman said Tuesday, September 7, as the extremist group announced its new government after taking control of Afghanistan. Spokesman Suhail Shaheen told Russia’s Sputnik News that The Taliban were willing to work with the US after they swiftly toppled the 20-year-old Western-backed government last month just as President Joe Biden was completing a pullout to end America’s longest war. “Yes, of course, in a new chapter if America wants to have a relation with us, which could be in the interest of both countries and both peoples, and if they want to participate in the reconstruction of Afghanistan, they are welcome”, Shaheen said. However, there was no chance for ties with Israel. “Of course, we won’t have any relation with Israel. We want to have relations with other countries, Israel is not among these countries,” Shaheen said.

Hacker Claims to Have Stolen Personal Data of Vast Majority of Israelis; A hacker using the name Sangkancil has claimed to have stolen the personal information of 7 million Israelis. The attacker said he stole the data from the CITY4U website, which is used by local authorities in Israel to process payments such as property taxes, fines, and utility bills. Israel’s current population is some 9.4 million. If the claims are valid, the hack would be one of the most severe breaches of privacy in Israel’s history. The National Cyber Directorate said it was investigating the hacker’s claims, but that the document leak was likely old information. The attacker first claimed to have hacked Israeli municipalities on Sunday, September 5, in a post on the Telegram messaging application. Starting Monday, September 6, he released images of documents he said backed up his claims, including Israeli identity cards, driver’s licenses, and tax bills. The documents were sent out on Telegram and online hacking forums. The attacker offered the data for sale without disclosing the asking price and hinted he may reveal more information in the coming days. “This is my first surprise for the Jewish new year. Enjoy!” the attacker wrote, referring to this week’s Rosh Hashanah holiday. Sang Kancil is the name of a series of fables popular in Indonesia and Malaysia. The alleged attack appears similar to a hack of Israel’s Shirbit Insurance company last year and comes amid a global uptick in ransomware attacks. In the Shirbit attack, a hacking group calling itself Black Shadow broke into the insurance firm, stealing client details and demanding a ransom or it would publish the data to the internet. The company refused to pay and the hackers later said they had sold the information on the dark web.

Aussie Cops Surround Synagogue, Fine Rosh Hashanah Worshipers in Lockdown Breach; Australian police on Tuesday, September 7, issued fines to worshipers at a synagogue in Melbourne where a group of Orthodox Jews held Rosh Hashanah services in apparent violation of pandemic lockdown ordinances. According to local reports, some 100 worshipers gathered inside the synagogue at around 5 a.m. and refused to leave until nightfall. Police surrounded the synagogue after receiving calls of a suspected mass gathering held in breach of COVID-19 restrictions. A police source told The Age newspaper that officers were not going to force their way into the synagogue and waited for worshipers to come out. Each attendee received a fine of \$5,452 Australian dollars (\$4,026 USD) upon leaving the synagogue, the report said. Victoria, the state where Melbourne is located, has strict stay-at-home orders in place, with residents barred from holding gatherings or leaving their homes each night during curfew, among other sweeping restrictions. “I understand this has been a very difficult year for lots of people that can’t go and do the things that they want to do,” Victoria Premier Daniel Andrews said. “But if we don’t follow these rules, then we will all have to wait longer to do the things that we want to do. That’s why the rules apply to everybody.” He also noted Jewish leaders have previously condemned lockdown violations. The Jewish Community Council of Victoria put out a video last week urging local Jews to adhere to coronavirus restrictions and mark the Jewish new year at home.

Israel Celebrates Trove of 9 Paralympic Medals as Tokyo Games Come to a Close; As the Tokyo Paralympics draw to a close, Israel is bringing home an impressive 9 medals, 6 of them gold, triple its medal haul from the Rio Paralympics in 2016, and the most gold medals it’s won since the 1988 Games. After 12 days of competitions, the Paralympics came to an end on Sunday, September 5, with a colorful, circus-like closing ceremony. But none of the Israeli delegation stuck around to take part in the ceremony, opting instead to return home before the start of Rosh Hashanah, which began Monday evening, September 6. Israel, which sent 33 athletes to compete across 11 sports, won 9 medals at the Games, its highest total since 2004 in Athens when it took home 13 medals. Six of Israel’s medals this year were gold, which is the highest figure since the 1988 Paralympic Games in Seoul. All but one of Israel’s Tokyo Paralympic medals came in swimming, where three Israeli swimmers — Mark Malyar, Ami Dadaon, and Iyad Shalabi — dominated the waters and the podium, each shattering world records along the way. The trio landed at Ben Gurion Airport on Sunday afternoon, where they were greeted by cheers, balloons, posters, and plenty of singing and dancing.



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