

Yachad Ministries' Israel's News Update November 4, 2021 (29th Cheshvan, 5782)



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

Drill for 2,000 Rockets a Day and Internal Strife: IDF Preps for War; Israel's Home Front Command and National Emergency Authority (RAHEL) is holding a week-long drill that started on Sunday, October 31, simulating a large-scale war in which civilians are evacuated from northern border communities and security agencies will deal with massive rocket barrages sent by Hezbollah. The drill is taking lessons that have been learned from past events in the North, as well as those from the May fighting between Israel and terror groups in the Gaza Strip – Operation Guardian of the Walls – and from the Second Lebanon War in 2006. Following the May fighting, the Home Front Command “carried out a very significant learning process with a lot of research, and this exercise is going to test what we’ve learned,” said Home Front Command Chief of Staff Brig.-Gen. Itzik Bar. Israel Police and Magen David Adom are also participating in the drill, which ends Thursday, and will see all security and various governmental bodies take part. “This exercise is also a great opportunity for all government ministries to understand the implications, starting with disruptions in the energy sector – we are talking about 24-hour power outages across the country, 72 hours in localized communities – and other such aspects in terms of continual functioning,” Bar said. According to RAHEL head Yoram Laredo, the drill is the first time that it is working together with the Home Front Command, and it will sharpen the abilities of the two to work hand-in-hand. The drill will focus on a new alert system for residents of northern Israel, as well as the rate of fire and the ability of Hezbollah to fire precision missiles and massive barrages toward specific areas – especially communities near the border fence. According to Bar, some of the issues that concern him are “the issue of precision-guided munitions and the effect that they will have on our ability to function and on things in the world of incoming fire alerts. The second is the rate of fire and Hezbollah’s ability to conduct truly massive rocket barrages at specific geographic areas – I’ll use the phrase ‘demolishing the front line’ – directed fire at the communities near the border.” On Wednesday, warning sirens with a new alert time and the unit’s emergency application will also be tested. Due to the large number of projectiles expected to be fired toward border communities and the continued lack of adequate bomb shelters, the drill will also focus on joint evacuation of residents of communities that are within five km. of the Lebanese border and their absorption into other locations in Israel. A scenario simulating a missile strike on an industrial plant containing hazardous materials will also be drilled at the Milotel factory in Nahariya’s Leiman industrial zone. In the exercise, a container holding the hazardous material is struck and forces have to contain the leak and provide care to the injured. As such, troops will enter the factory wearing protective suits to deal with the leak and ambulances will evacuate the wounded from the scene.

US and E3 Warn Against Dangerous Iran Escalation; The United States and the E3 (Germany, France and Britain) urged Iran on Saturday, October 27 to resume compliance with the 2015 nuclear deal in order to “avoid a dangerous escalation.” Leaders of the four countries, who are hoping to convince Tehran to stop enriching uranium to near-weapons-grade levels, said they wanted a negotiated solution. “This will only be possible if Iran changes course,” US President Joe Biden, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, French President Emmanuel Macron and British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said in a joint statement they issued on the sidelines of the G20 summit in Rome. Bennett is opposed to the 2015 Iran deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). The 2015 nuclear deal unraveled after then-US President Donald Trump withdrew from it in 2018, prompting Iran to breach various limits on uranium enrichment. Talks between Iran and world powers aimed at salvaging the deal, which started in April, are slated to resume at the end of November, the Islamic Republic’s top nuclear negotiator said on Wednesday, October 27. In their joint statement, the four leaders said they, “call upon President [Ibrahim] Raisi to seize this opportunity and return to a good faith effort to conclude our negotiations as a matter of urgency. That is the only sure way to avoid a dangerous escalation, which is not in any country’s interest.” They said that during their conversation they had shared their “grave and growing concern that, while Iran halted negotiations on a return to the JCPOA since June, it has accelerated the pace of provocative nuclear steps, such as the production of highly enriched uranium and enriched uranium metal.

In 1st-Ever Interview to Bahraini Paper, IDF General Threatens Iran; The Israel Defense Forces general tasked with countering Iran gave the military’s first-ever interview to a Bahraini newspaper on Sunday, October 32, hailing the ties between the two countries and discussing the threats posed by Tehran and its nuclear program. In his interview with Bahrain’s al-Ayam, Maj. Gen. Tal Kelman said Israel preferred a diplomatic solution to halt Tehran’s nuclear ambitions despite Iran’s current intransigence on the matter, but warned that Israel was “preparing for other scenarios” should those negotiations fail, apparently alluding to a possible military strike. Kelman said that Iran’s nuclear program represented a threat not only to Israel but to the entire world. “There would be a nuclear arms race in the Middle East because other countries would also want to obtain an atomic weapon,” Kelman said. (According to foreign reports, Israel maintains the Middle East’s sole nuclear arsenal, which it is said to consider an imperative for its continued survival in a historically hostile region.) In recent months, Iran has dragged its feet on returning to indirect negotiations with the United States about a mutual return to the 2015 nuclear deal, which then-US president Donald Trump needlessly destroyed in 2018 and Iran abandoned a year later. Last week, Iranian officials said they planned to return to the talks by the end of November, but US President Joe Biden’s administration has expressed growing impatience and threatened to explore some necessary “other options” should the negotiations fail or delay.

EU Refuses to Outlaw the Entire Hezbollah Terrorist Entity; Amid complaints by European Jewish leaders that the European Union does not have a serious plan to fight rising antisemitism on the continent, a spokesman for the EU told The Jerusalem Post that the EU will not ban the entire terrorist movement Hezbollah and declines to say if the Islamic Republic is an antisemitic regime. When the Post asked about a full ban of Hezbollah, Katharina von Schnurbein, the European Commission Coordinator on combating Antisemitism and fostering Jewish life, punted the question to her EU superiors. Peter Stano, EU Spokesperson for Foreign Policy, told the Post that “The military wing of Hezbollah is already on the EU terror list. Any changes in the nature and scope of the existing listing are for EU Member States to discuss and decide by unanimity.” After Hezbollah operatives blew up an Israeli terror bus in 2012 in Burgas, Bulgaria, murdering five Israelis and their Bulgarian Muslim bus driver, the EU merely proscribed Hezbollah’s military wing. Hezbollah considers its organization to be a unified movement that cannot be divided into military and political parts. The partial ban sparked Hezbollah spokesman Ibrahim Mousawi, in 2013, to reiterate what other top officials of the organization have stated over the years: “Hezbollah is a single, large organization. We have no wings that are separate from one another.” When asked if the Islamic Republic of Iran—the chief

sponsor and strategic ally of Hezbollah—is an anti-Semitic regime, Stano said that the “EU has been very clear in its condemnation of antisemitism in general and of the calls for the destruction of Israel by anyone who comes up with such unacceptable calls.” The Anti-Defamation League’s CEO, Jonathan Greenblatt, testified before the House Subcommittee on Intelligence and Counterterrorism in 2020 and said at the hearing that Iran’s regime is the top state-sponsor of Holocaust denial and antisemitism. Greenblatt wrote in Newsweek in late June that “Iranian president Ebrahim Raisi, played a hands-on role in promoting The Protocols as part of a sustained campaign to demonize and delegitimize the Jewish people.” The Protocols of the Elders of Zion was “a 19th-century forgery by Russian intelligence services...designed to scapegoat Jews for the empire’s hardships.” Several reasons why the EU commission won’t declare the Islamic Republic an antisemitic regime might be explained by attempts not to upset the clerical leaders in Tehran in order to reach an agreement on the nation’s nuclear program. European Union member nations are also animated by Iranian markets and trade deals, including Iran’s vast oil and gas production process. Hezbollah is widely considered a deeply antisemitic terrorist organization because of its terrorism targeting Jews and calls for the elimination of the Jewish state. Germany, Britain, the US, the Netherlands, the Arab League, Japan, Canada and many additional European and Latin American countries have proscribed Hezbollah’s entire organization as a terrorist entity. It is an unusual situation when the commissioner to combat antisemitism, Katharina von Schnurbein, declines to deliver her view on whether the EU should outlaw the world’s most deadly antisemitic organization.

For First Time in 20 Months, Israel Welcomes Tourists; Israel on Monday, November 1, opened its borders for the first time since March 2020 to tourists who are vaccinated against COVID-19 or have recovered from the disease. The vast majority of tourists have effectively been banned from entering Israel since the start of the coronavirus pandemic. The reopening of borders has been delayed numerous times throughout the year, as COVID infections waxed and waned. The move is seen as a vital step to somewhat restoring Israel’s tourism industry, which has been devastated by the pandemic and accompanying restrictions. The Tourism Ministry welcomed Monday’s reopening, saying that “throughout the global corona pandemic, interest in visiting Israel has remained high and Israel’s Ministry of Tourism has worked hard to find creative solutions to facilitate the safe return of tourists.” The ministry said that in recent months it had put in place a trial program with “several thousand tourists, primarily from the USA and Europe, visiting Israel’s religious, historical, cultural and natural sites within a safe and tourist-friendly environment.” However, not all tourists will immediately be eligible to visit Israel, and those that do come will face restrictions. Only tourists from countries that aren’t defined as “red” due to high infection rates will be allowed in, although currently there are no countries labeled as such. Under the new regulations, only tourists who have been vaccinated during the 180 days before they boarded the plane will be allowed to enter Israel. Fourteen days must elapse between the traveler’s second or third shot and entry to Israel (for Johnson & Johnson, one dose is required). The serology test, which detects antibodies, will verify that those who enter the country really are inoculated against the coronavirus, he said. Under the previous regulations, tourists began arriving in organized groups in May, though in a very limited capacity. Additionally, first-degree relatives of Israeli citizens or residents were able to apply for permits to travel to the country. While the reopening has been welcomed by tourism officials, it has received a mixed reaction from health officials with some concerned it will expose Israel to new variants. “We shouldn’t over-test the immunity we’ve built up here,” Prof. Gabi Barbash, a former director-general of the Health Ministry, told The Times of Israel last week. In contrast, Prof. Eyal Leshem, an infectious disease specialist at Sheba Medical Center, said that prior to widespread vaccination, there was a logic to keeping tourists out — as a single COVID-positive foreigner was liable to infect many others. But the risk is much lower now that inoculation has reduced transmission rates. Israel appears to be at the tail end of its fourth coronavirus wave, as new infections and serious cases have ticked down over the past few weeks.

Israeli 'No Checkout' Technology Helps Tesco, Rewe Compete with Amazon; In the past month, three of Europe’s biggest grocery retailers opened cashier-less stores that allow customers to walk in, select their

items, and walk out, without having to wait in checkout lines or scan any items. “Some people are saying this is the biggest thing to happen this year in retail,” says Michael Gabay, CEO of Trigo, the Israeli company providing the system’s technology. Shoppers at the Tesco Express store in central London and the REWE supermarket chain in Cologne, Germany got to experience the technology for the first time last month. After downloading the store’s app and creating a payment profile, shoppers must scan a QR code as they enter the store to get logged into the system. Then, after they walk around the store and choose their products, they can simply walk out of the store without doing anything else. A network of cameras placed around the store follow each shopper around, tracking just their skeleton, “with no biometric tracking, no facial recognition, and without knowing who you are,” Gabay explains. “The cameras track everything you take, with fraud prevention to make sure that people can’t fool the system. It is more than 99% accurate, and works amazingly.” That gives traditional retailers the tools to compete with Amazon’s growing network of no-checkout retail chains. Amazon now has about 30 branches of its Amazon Go convenience store chain and 18 Amazon Fresh supermarket chain around the US. The retail juggernaut recently entered the European market with six Amazon Fresh stores in the UK, with plans for more. “The global war between Amazon and the grocery industry has begun,” Gabay says. “Amazon entered the grocery space very aggressively. We are the only company offering retailers the technology to compete.” The deployment challenges are significant, Gabay says. “Amazon is building new stores that are designed with their technology from the ground up,” he says. “Our mission is much more challenging — to come into existing stores and implement the platform without disrupting the store’s layout. That’s not easy.” However, that also means that Trigo’s ability to scale its technology is broader. “We are working with retailers that already have thousands of stores around the world,” Gabay notes. “Amazon has to build each new location from scratch.” Tesco, the third-largest retailer in the world, began testing Trigo’s platform in 2018 at a small store on its main campus used mainly by company employees. (Prior to that, it ran smaller tests in Israel with the Shufersal chain). Trigo plans to expand into the US market next year and to work with other types of stores in the future, from department stores to electronics and toy stores. “Next year, we’ll be in dozens of stores, in two years, we’ll have hundreds of stores, and in five years, I expect we will be in thousands of stores. We have contracts for hundreds of stores already in place.”

American Jewish Astronaut Jessica Meir Discusses Her Love for Israel; US astronaut Dr. Jessica Meir – the fourth Jewish woman and 15th Jewish person ever to travel to space – spoke last week by live broadcast to the Tel Aviv University (TAU) board of governors. Born to a Swedish mother and an Israeli father who grew up in Tel Aviv, Meir has always felt close to Israel. During her virtual presentation to the symposium, Meir spoke of her connection to this country and displayed several images of the country captured from outer space. “Israel is a very important part of me,” she said, also describing the personal items she brought to the International Space Station including an Israeli flag, Hanukkah socks bearing Stars of David and menorahs, along with a commemorative coin honoring late Israeli astronaut Ilan Ramon. Meir. “We have to work together to truly preserve our planet for the future,” said Meir, who is a marine biologist and physiologist. She spoke to the Yehiel Ben-Zvi academic symposium entitled “Between Climate Change, Space Research and Life under Extreme Conditions,” held on the TAU campus. This year’s symposium topic highlights TAU’s prioritization of climate change research. As part of this campus-wide effort, TAU launched the Center for Climate Change Action in June of this year.

Planned Law will let Israel Collect Personal Info on All Airline Passengers; Israeli authorities are drafting a bill that will require airlines to share private information about travelers entering or leaving the country, including the credit card number used to pay for the ticket, their billing address and where else they might be traveling. The proposal, which is nearing completion but has not been submitted to the government for approval, is expected to face serious opposition once it reaches lawmakers for a vote, though proponents note that its provisions are in line with standard information collected on passengers in the United States and Europe. Work on the bill has been underway for several years, initially spurred by terror concerns, but it has

been given extra urgency recently by the coronavirus pandemic, defense officials told The Times of Israel on condition of anonymity. During the pandemic, Israel has sought to track where arrivals are coming from and their activities in the country as part of contact tracing efforts. Of particular interest to authorities during the pandemic is knowing where travelers were coming from — not just their last immediate port of departure, but every place they visited or had a connection. Israel banned entry for arrivals from certain countries and at times imposed varying quarantine rules depending on infection rates in different locations, but those rules were easily circumvented by connecting through a third locale. According to the text of the legislation being worked on by the Justice Ministry, Shin Bet security service and National Security Council, which is still under wraps but was seen by The Times of Israel, a passenger database will be created to hold a wide array of information on “any person who is landing or will soon land in Israel or is taking off or will soon take off from it.” Beyond the person’s name, nationality, date of birth and passport number, which are already transferred to authorities, the database will collect files used by airlines called PNRs, or passenger name records. These include a wide array of information regarding passengers, the flight or flights they took, how the tickets were purchased and travel status, including where they sit, how much luggage they check in or carry on, and any special requests like meals or other in-flight services. The database will allow authorities to see credit card numbers used to purchase a ticket, as well as a billing address and whether there are other related charges on the card. If a passenger is in a frequent flyer or rewards program, or got an upgrade, or bought a one-way ticket, it will be in the database, and if six tickets were purchased together, or someone missed their flight, it will show that too.

Iran Expanding Uranium Enrichment at Natanz Site, Says UN Nuclear Watchdog; Iran has taken another step to increase its enrichment activities in purifying uranium beyond 20 percent, Reuters reported Monday, October 25, citing a report by the International Atomic Agency. The move at Iran’s Natanz plant is likely aimed at building knowledge of the refinement process, the report said, as the product from changes to centrifuges is not being kept. Though Iran already enriches uranium to 60% at Natanz, research to improve enrichment methods is opposed by Western powers, as it is irreversible and builds Iran’s ability to produce weapons-grade uranium. “On October 25, 2021, the Agency verified that Iran began feeding (uranium hexafluoride gas) enriched up to 20% U-235 into a single IR-6 centrifuge in R&D line 2 at PFEP,” the IAEA said in its report. “The resulting product and tails streams were being re-combined,” the IAEA report noted, meaning that the enriched uranium was not being stored. In response to the developments, the IAEA report said it will “increase the frequency and intensity of its safeguards activities” at the Pilot Fuel Enrichment Plant, an aboveground facility located at the Natanz site. A statement from the IAEA outlining the report said that last week Iran had notified that it planned to make changes involving uranium enriched up to 20% in the setup of clusters of small to medium-sized enrichment centrifuges at Natanz. However, so far, those additional machines have not been fed, according to the IAEA report. Earlier this month, the head of Iran’s atomic energy agency said the country has enriched more than 120 kilograms of 20% enriched uranium. On Monday US Special Envoy for Iran, Robert Malley, said Iran’s explanations for staying away from nuclear talks in Vienna are “wearing thin.” Malley said Washington is increasingly concerned Iran will choose to continue to delay the resumption of nuclear talks or come back to the negotiations with unrealistic demands. The US is intensifying “in the coming days and weeks” its diplomacy and consulting with allies on steps should Iran choose that path, according to Malley. Though the preference is to find a diplomatic solution, Malley reiterated that the US will use “other tools” to stop Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons if the Vienna talks fail.

Iran Cyberattack, 4,300 Gas Stations Disrupted; Around 4,300 gas stations across Iran were disabled by a cyberattack on Tuesday, October 26, lasting until Wednesday, October 27, when gasoline distribution returned to normal. Iranian president Ebrahim Raisi stated that the cyberattack was meant to create disorder, stating that “there should be serious readiness in the field of cyberwar and related bodies should not allow the enemy to follow their ominous aims to create problems.” The cyberattack disrupted the sale of heavily

subsidized gasoline across the Islamic Republic, which Raisi said on Wednesday was designed to create "disorder and disruption." The details of the attack and its source are under investigation, Abul-Hassan Firouzabadi, Secretary of the Supreme Council to Regulate Virtual Space, said. While the origin of the attacks is unknown, some have speculated that it was caused by the US, Israel or local Iranian anti-regime groups. The Oil Ministry said that only sales with smart cards used for cheaper, rationed gasoline were disrupted.

Islamic State in Afghanistan Could Attack US in 6 Months; The US intelligence community has assessed that Islamic State in Afghanistan could have the capability to attack the United States in as little as six months, and has the intention to do so, a senior Pentagon official told Congress on Tuesday, October 26. The remarks by Colin Kahl, Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, are the latest reminder that Afghanistan could still pose serious national security concerns for the United States even after it ended its two-decade-old war in defeat in August. The Taliban, which won the war, are enemies of the Islamic State and have seen its attempts to impose law and order after the US pullout thwarted by suicide bombings and other attacks claimed by Islamic State. They include bombings targeting the minority Shi'ite sect and even an Islamic State beheading of a member of a Taliban militia force in the eastern city of Jalalabad. In testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee, Kahl said it was still unclear whether the Taliban has the ability to fight Islamic State effectively following the US withdrawal in August. The United States fought the Taliban as well as striking groups like Islamic State and al Qaeda. "It is our assessment that the Taliban and ISIS-K are mortal enemies. So the Taliban is highly motivated to go after ISIS-K. Their ability to do so, I think, is to be determined," Kahl said, using an acronym for Islamic State in Afghanistan. Kahl estimated Islamic State had a "cadre of a few thousand" fighters. Acting Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi of the new Taliban government has said the threat from Islamic State militants will be addressed. He also said Afghanistan would not become a base for attacks on other countries. Kahl suggested al Qaeda in Afghanistan posed a more complex problem, given its ties to the Taliban. It was those ties that triggered the US military intervention in Afghanistan in 2001 following al Qaeda's September 11 attacks on New York and Washington. The Taliban had harbored al Qaeda leaders. Kahl said it could take al Qaeda "a year or two" to regenerate the capability to carry out attacks outside of Afghanistan against the United States.

Iran Offers to Talk to Europeans about Restarting Nuclear Negotiations; Iran has formally suggested to the three European countries signed on a landmark 2015 nuclear deal that they hold talks about a return to negotiations aimed at saving the unraveling pact, the state-owned Press TV outlet reported Wednesday, October 27. The proposal comes as the United States has said its patience was running thin with the Islamic Republic's excuses for not directly returning to stalled European Union-sponsored talks in Vienna to revive the deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. Citing an anonymous source familiar with the developments, Press TV said that Iran had told Britain, France, and Germany that it was willing to meet with their representatives either in their own capitals or in Tehran. The purpose of the talks would be to discuss the restarting of the Vienna negotiations on reviving the JCPOA, the report said. So far there has been no response to the offer, the source noted, rejecting a Tuesday, October 26, Wall Street Journal report that said Iran had declined a request from those countries to hold discussions. Top Iranian nuclear negotiator Deputy Foreign Minister Ali Bagheri is in Brussels for separate talks with the European Union's Deputy Secretary-General Enrique Mora. In an effort to save time, Britain, France and Germany told Bagheri they were willing to send representatives to join the meetings with Mora. WSJ reporter Laurence Norman tweeted Tuesday that Bagheri had turned down the idea. "This looks like out and out time-wasting even as Iran tries to create [an] image of engagement," Norman tweeted. On Monday, October 25, US Special Envoy for Iran Robert Malley said Iran's explanations for staying away from nuclear talks in Vienna were "wearing thin." Malley called Iran's actions "in contradiction or inconsistent with what they claim to be their desire to come back to the JCPOA," while saying the US was ready to adapt to a reality in which Iran does not return to the nuclear deal. The US, China, Russia, Germany, France and Britain struck the JCPOA accord in Vienna with Iran on its nuclear program in 2015 under President Obama. The nuclear deal began to fall apart in 2018 when then-US

president Donald Trump's administration withdrew from it and reinstated sanctions. Iran in turn again started to ramp up its nuclear activities, particularly enrichment of uranium which is bringing it nearer to the threshold of making a bomb. All dialogue has been stalled since the sixth round of talks in June when ultraconservative Ebrahim Raisi won Iran's presidential election. Though the preference is to find a diplomatic solution, Malley reiterated that the US would use "other tools" to stop Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons if the Vienna talks fail.

Eight Antiquity Robbers in Israel Search for Gold, Get Caught in Pit; Archaeological evidence suggests that the site of Be'er Kalech in southern Israel was in use for millennia, from the Bronze Age (3300-1200 BCE) to the Ottoman domination, which ended just a century ago. Among others, Be'er Kalech features ancient cisterns, tombs and quarried caves used for raising doves and pigeons, which provided both food and fertilizer to the population. During the weekend, a group of eight robbers was caught by IAA inspectors as they were digging in an ancient well at the site. Six of them were actively excavating and another two were observing the work. The suspects, who were transferred to a police station for interrogation and indictment, are residents of the Bedouin city of Tel Sheva. Robbing or damaging antiquities in Israel is a criminal offense that carries a sentence of up to five years in prison. "Unfortunately, some residents of the South tend to believe in 'legends' about Ottoman-era gold caches that exist in the southern region," said Amir Ganor, director of the IAA Robbery Prevention Unit. "We at the IAA have identified a growing trend in which squads of antiquities robbers go to archaeological sites equipped with excavation tools, look for hidden signs in the area, and dig deep pits while harming the heritage of all of us." According to Ganor, sometimes well-known sheiks in the Bedouin sector encourage the activity. "The sheikh is supposed to help locate the gold and fight the 'demon' that guards the treasure in the depths of the earth," he said. "Just last month, a famous sheikh was caught in a moat in Nahal Hagav with other suspects.

2.5 Mil. Christians Visited Israel in 2019. Will They Return Post-COVID?; Donna Jollay has lost \$3 million and thousands of clients since the start of the COVID-19 crisis. "We are reaching a breaking point," the owner of Jerusalem Tours International told The Jerusalem Post. Jollay purchased her company, which specializes in Christian tourism, six months before the start of the pandemic. She said she has at least six groups that she has rescheduled five times since March 2020. "We are seeing people lose hope," she said. "They are giving up. You can only be rejected so long by the one you love until you say that it isn't meant to be." Before the COVID-19 crisis, Christian visitors flooded Israel to visit the places they read about in the Bible, connect to their history and experience a glimpse of the future – when most believe Jesus will return and usher in a messianic era that begins in the Holy Land. But since the pandemic, all tourism – including Christian tourism – has totally dried up. Prime Minister Naftali Bennett and the Health and Tourism ministries approved a plan on Thursday, October 21, to allow vaccinated and recovered tourists into the country beginning Nov. 1, despite a revelation that at least a handful of cases of the new AY4.2 variant have entered Israel in the last few days. But even as the government approves the plan to open the gates of Ben-Gurion Airport once again to individual travelers, it is unclear whether Christians, who used to account for the largest percentage of annual tourists, will come back the way that tour operators surely hope. For perspective, before COVID, Israel had reached 4.5 million tourists a year, of which 2.5 million or 55% were Christians, according to data released by the Tourism Ministry at the end of 2019. The majority (84%) visited Jerusalem, and 65% Tel Aviv, as well as many holy sites throughout Israel, from the Jordan River to the West Bank settlements they call the "biblical heartland" – home to ancient Shiloh, city of the Tabernacle, for example. In May 2021, when Israel first launched a pilot program to let in small groups of vaccinated tourists, the first to land in the country was a group of 12 Christians led by Tom Zelt from Prince of Peace Church in Fremont, California. The travelers were students at the Concordia Seminary in Missouri, visiting as part of their study program. But they were few and far between, as Israel's coronavirus travel rules have kept the vast majority of visitors at bay. The government promised in June, July and again this month to open the country to individual tourists, but no formal announcement had been made until Thursday. And in the release from the Prime Minister's

Office it was already stressed that the plan “would be updated according to developments and the discovery of new variants.” With evangelical Christians, the situation is even more complex. Evangelicals are the least likely to be vaccinated of any other Christian group in the United States, according to data reported by Pew Research Center. Only 57% of white Evangelical Protestants have received at least one dose of the vaccine, Pew reported earlier this month, compared to 82% of Catholic adults, 73% of white non-Evangelicals and 70% of black Protestants. Christians have often been the people who come to support Israel during its hardest times. They showed up in solidarity during the Second Intifada, and have flown into the country and headed down South to connect with their Israeli brothers and sisters during wars with Hamas. “They are willing to lay down their selves and their lives to support Israel,” Jollay said. “It is a very hard and sad situation for the Evangelicals to understand: Why isn’t Israel taking them into consideration when they are the largest supporters, when they come when no one else comes?”

First Public Israeli Flight Lands in Saudi Arabia; An Israeli private jet landed in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia on Tuesday morning, October 26, per KAN news, marking the first time a public flight from Israel has ever landed in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The news comes just a day after the first flight from Saudi Arabia landed in Israel, as an Emirati 737 Royal Jet landed in Ben-Gurion airport Monday evening, October 25. This is the latest among improving regional ties for Israel: Agreements to normalize ties with four nations — UAE, Bahrain, Morocco and Sudan — have been realized since the 2020 Abraham Accords. While there remain no commercial flights between Saudi Arabia and Israel, as the two states share no official relations, the flights are a considerable advancement in Saudi-Israeli relations, as both nations finally opened their airspaces to each other just last year. Surrounded by nations that have clashed with Israel in the past, free air travel is not something that is taken for granted in Israel. Along the 2020 normalization of ties with Bahrain, Sudan, Morocco and the UAE was the opening of airspaces to Israeli flights, along with announcements of direct flights to Dubai, Morocco, and Bahrain.

3 Jewish Baseball Players Could Make or Break the 2021 World Series; The World Series is upon us, and there are likely more Jewish players in this year’s edition than there have been in decades. The American League champion Houston Astros, who ousted Chaim Bloom’s Boston Red Sox last week, feature star slugger Alex Bregman. The National League champion Atlanta Braves boast an impressive duo of Jewish players: pitcher Max Fried and outfielder Joc Pederson. (The Astros did not include Jewish backup catcher Garrett Stubbs on their roster. Had Stubbs been added, this would probably be the most Jewish World Series ever.) For Bregman and Pederson, it is a rematch of the infamous 2017 World Series, when Bregman’s Astros beat Pederson’s former team, the Los Angeles Dodgers, while using illegal sign-stealing techniques that led to high-profile suspensions. Pederson hit three home runs during the series, and Bregman added two of his own. Hardcore Jewish baseball fans may recall the 1959 World Series, a matchup between the Dodgers and the Chicago White Sox, which also included three Jewish players: L.A.’s pitching roster boasted the legendary Sandy Koufax and the series’ Most Valuable Player, Larry Sherry, while Chicago had pitcher Barry Latman, although he did not appear in the series (just three years later, however, he would be named an All-Star). But thanks to its Jewish talent, this year’s Series promises to feature just as many memorable Jewish moments. Here’s a Jewish guide to the 2021 Fall Classic.

Donate



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)

Sharing Yeshua in unity with both Jew and Gentile

To unsubscribe [click here](#).

()