

# ***Yachad Ministries' Israel's News Update November 18, 2021 (14<sup>th</sup> Kislev, 5782)***



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

***Lack of Contact from Iran's Government 'Astonishing'***; The head of the UN nuclear watchdog said Friday, November 12, it was "astonishing" that he has had no contact with the new Iranian government over several important outstanding issues since it took office. Rafael Grossi, director-general of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), had been hoping to visit Iran before the next meeting of the IAEA's Board of Governors starts on November 22 but made clear on Friday that he was disappointed that no invitation had yet been forthcoming. Grossi's latest comments come as diplomats prepare for international talks in Vienna to restart later this month on the restoration of the 2015 Iran nuclear deal. In parallel with those efforts, the IAEA has been trying to resolve several other issues with Iran, including restrictions on some of its inspections activities imposed earlier this year. Grossi visited Tehran in September where he clinched a deal over access to surveillance equipment at Iran's nuclear facilities but had hoped to return soon afterward to have further discussions with the government of ultraconservative President Ebrahim Raisi, who took office in August. "I have not had any contact with this government... that has been there for more than five months," Grossi told reporters, adding that the only exceptions had been "technical conversations" with Iran's new atomic energy chief Mohamed Eslami. "This is astonishing and I am saying it openly because I'm saying it to them," Grossi said. "There's a long list of things we need to discuss," he said.

***Israel, UAE, Bahrain, and USA Hold Joint Drill in Red Sea***; On Wednesday, November 10, the militaries of Israel, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain, and the United States kicked off a multilateral maritime security operations exercise, the US Naval Forces Central Command (NAVCENT) said Thursday. The five-day exercise in the Red Sea is the first public naval exercise Israel has held with the UAE and Bahrain since the Abraham Accords were signed last year. The exercise includes training on the USS Portland, which will "enhance interoperability between participating forces' maritime interdiction teams," NAVCENT said in its statement. Vice Adm. Brad Cooper, commander of NAVCENT, US 5th Fleet and Combined Maritime Forces, said, "Maritime collaboration helps safeguard freedom of navigation and the free flow of trade, which are essential to regional security and stability." On Sunday, November 7, Iran kicked off a large-scale military exercise, conducted throughout the area from north of the Indian Ocean to parts of the Red Sea. The Iranian exercise includes among other things, the use of drones, manned aircraft, special forces, and both defensive and offensive missile systems.

***Bennett to Christians: Radical Islam Wants to Take Over the World;*** Iran wants to dominate the world through Islamist extremism, Prime Minister Naftali Bennett warned during the Government Press Organization's seventh annual Christian Media Summit on Thursday, November 11. "Here in Israel, we are fighting a very visible enemy, radical militant Islam," Bennett warned in a pre-recorded message, delivered to the virtual conference. "The terror that begins in Tehran seeks to destroy Israel, dominate the world, and drive it into a dark abyss." Bennett said that people should not kill or spread war and hatred in the name of the God of life, peace, and love. The only place in the Middle East that fully protects Christians is Israel, where the Christian community is "growing, thriving and prospering," he said. "More than ever, Israel stands united with Christians. We're brothers and sisters. We are united. We won't let anyone extinguish our light." Bennett thanked Christians for standing up for Israel and the truth. The theme of this year's Christian Media Summit was the Abraham Accords, which Bennett called "a new dawn for Israel's standing in the region." "Just like the doors of Abraham's tent were open, the doors of Israel are open to a better and brighter future," the prime minister stated. Bennett emphasized the importance of Jerusalem to Christians and Jews. "Jerusalem is the beating heart of Israel, and our hearts beat with love for Jerusalem and the State of Israel."

***IAI Unveils New Defensive Electronic Warfare Systems;*** Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI) unveiled a family of new electronic warfare (EW) systems on Thursday which can combat a range of threats, including UAVs, ships, missiles, and radar systems. The Scorpius family of systems scans the entire surrounding area for targets and deploys narrowly focused beams to interfere with multiple threats across the electromagnetic spectrum. The system effectively disrupts the operation of electromagnetic systems, including radar, electronic sensors, navigation, and data communications. Scorpius has unprecedented receiver sensitivity and transmission power, allowing it to detect and address multiple threats of different kinds simultaneously from much farther distances than it was able to do in the past. The Scorpius family includes five systems: the Scorpius G (ground), N (naval), SP (air - self-protection), SJ (air - standoff jammer), and the Scorpius T (training). The Scorpius G is a mobile, ground-based EW system used to detect and disrupt ground and airborne threats. The system can be quickly deployed by vehicle and is a "soft-kill" air defense system that creates an electronic dome of protection above a wide area. The Scorpius N defends ships against advanced threats, including cruise missiles, UAVs, and airborne imaging radars. The system's extremely high range provides early detection and targeting of threats. The Scorpius SP is a self-protection pod for combat aircraft, while the SJ is a standoff jammer that disrupts a range of enemy aerial and ground-based electromagnetic operations. The system can be installed on fighter and mission aircraft for escort and stand-off jamming missions or on military transport aircraft. It operates automatically and can provide protection against all types of Air-to-Air and Surface-to-Air threats. The Scorpius T provides electronic warfare (EW) training for pilots. The system emulates a variety of modern air-defense systems simultaneously from a single platform and can support training for fifth-generation aircraft. It was used during the international Blue Flag aerial exercise. "The modern battlefield depends on the electromagnetic domain for sensing, communications, and navigation," said Adi Dulberg, general manager of IAI's Intelligence Division. "Protecting the use of the electromagnetic domain for our forces, while denying its use by the enemy, has become mission-critical for success in combat and for ensuring the superiority of our forces in the field." The new technology, developed by IAI's talented engineers, tips the scale of electronic warfare, providing world-first breakthrough capabilities for electronic defense and disrupting enemy systems."

***Israel to Hold National Drill to Prepare for Future Covid Variants;*** Israel held a nationwide drill on Thursday, November 11, to prepare for the possibility of future coronavirus variants, the Prime Minister's Office announced, saying the exercise would be the first of its kind in the world. "The State of Israel is in an excellent situation, we defeated the fourth wave and we are on the verge of exiting the Delta variant," Prime Minister Naftali Bennett said in a statement. "But, at the same time, we are always looking to the future and preparing for the continuation of the campaign." Bennett said that the government and health officials "are not packing up our equipment and not shutting down our management bodies and our virus-fighting forces."

Rather the opposite — we're continuing to be prepared and to challenge ourselves." The drill, which was run from a situation room in Jerusalem, was a simulation that deals with coordinating various high-level officials and bodies to prepare for a new COVID strain, nicknamed the "Omega" strain for the exercise. The gathered officials are to deal with a wide range of scenarios and work to coordinate and make decisions related to the restriction of movement, quarantine, education, air travel, and more. The drill came as Israel is exiting its fourth wave of coronavirus infection. The number of active COVID-19 cases in the country dropped to 6,450 after being above 10,000 for over three months and after passing 90,000 in early September, according to figures released on Wednesday, November 10, by the Health Ministry. The data also showed 475 new cases were confirmed on Tuesday, November 9, down from between 5,000 and 6,000 daily almost two months ago. There were 147 people hospitalized in serious condition and the death toll stood at 8,133.

***Term Limits for Prime Minister Pass Unanimously on Sunday;*** The ministerial committee on legislation voted unanimously on Sunday, November 14, in favor of setting term limits for Israel's prime minister, said sources close to Justice Minister Gideon Sa'ar, who chairs the committee. Sa'ar received approval from Prime Minister Naftali Bennett to go ahead with the bill, because it will not be retroactive and therefore would not apply to opposition leader Benjamin Netanyahu, who could serve eight more years as prime minister until the bill applied to him. "By their third term in office, prime ministers deal with survival instead of helping citizens," Sa'ar told Channel 13. "The bill has no connection to Netanyahu." Another Sa'ar-sponsored bill, which would prevent anyone under a serious indictment — including Netanyahu — from forming a government, has not obtained the support of Bennett. It is also opposed by Interior Minister Ayelet Shaked, Deputy Minister Abir Kara (Yamina) and Blue and White MK Michael Biton. "The second bill requires dialogue, especially with the prime minister," Sa'ar said. "There is no deadline yet. I will do my best to reach agreements. When we do, we can advance the bill." Joint List head Ayman Odeh urged Sa'ar to present the second bill as soon as possible. He told Sa'ar that if he hesitates with the bill, the Joint List would present it first. Due to a logjam in legislation, the term-limit bill is not expected to be brought to a vote in the Knesset in the coming week.

***Israel's Economy Growing 7.1% in 2021;*** Israel's economy will show growth of 7.1% for 2021, reflecting the country's rapid recovery from the coronavirus pandemic, the Finance Ministry said Monday, November 15. GDP will continue to grow another 4.7% in 2022 as private consumption and tax revenues continue to rise. The ministry had previously forecast 5.1% growth this year. The model takes into account dealing with the fourth wave of the coronavirus without severe restrictions on economic activity, the Finance Ministry said. In 2020, under the shadow of the global crisis, Israel's economy contracted a smaller-than-expected 2.4%, after growing 3.8% in 2019. That loss may already be made up by 2022, the Treasury said. During the second quarter of 2021, after Israel reopened from its third lockdown, GDP grew a whopping 16.6% at an annual rate, as private consumption returned to near pre-crisis levels and exports of hi-tech services jumped. Third-quarter growth was more moderate, while inflation rose and capital markets reached record levels, the Finance Ministry noted. Private consumption, which fell a sharp 9.2% in 2020, is recovering this year at a rapid 13.1% pace and is expected to continue to grow 7.5% in 2022. Continued growth in exports, mainly hi-tech, as well as some recovery in tourism are expected in 2022. Tax revenues have grown by 25% this year, and are expected to beat expectations for 2021 and 2022. The rising tide in the housing and capital markets, as well as a bevy of hi-tech exists, contributed significantly to tax revenues, the ministry said. The Consumer Price Index has risen by 2.5% over the past 12 months. Inflation is expected to come in at 2.8% in 2021 and 2.1% in 2022, a bit higher than previous forecasts but within the government's targets. The strong shekel, currently trading at NIS 3.10 to the dollar, is helping to mitigate some inflationary pressures. Separately, employment figures continue to improve, with the overall unemployment rate reaching 7% in October, compared to 7.9% in September. The number of unemployed Israelis, excluding those on unpaid leave due to coronavirus-related reasons, improved slightly to 5.2%. Employment figures improved quickly between April and July, when the economy started reopening but had stagnated somewhat in August and September, raising concerns about the

recovery. However, it seems more likely now to attribute that hiccup to factors related to the holiday season and Delta variant fears. There were 143,274 open job positions available in Israel in October, compared to 138,113 in September, CBS said.

***Jerusalem Firm Launches World's First Saliva Pregnancy Test;*** An Israeli company is launching the world's first pregnancy test that delivers results from saliva samples, using technology it developed for COVID-19 tests. Salignostics, a Jerusalem-based medical startup, was working on a saliva pregnancy test before the pandemic. It then developed saliva coronavirus tests and suddenly had most of the missing technology it needed, allowing it to quickly move forward on the pregnancy test. The company announced Thursday, November 11, that it will start to commercialize its SaliStick test early next year, which has 95 percent sensitivity when used after a missed period. The company has successfully completed clinical trials in Israel on more than 300 volunteers — both pregnant and non-pregnant — and has begun the approval process with America's Food and Drug Administration and for the European Union's CE Mark. "While we've been looking for a few years into the application of saliva pregnancy tests, once COVID came along and we had an opportunity to use saliva to detect the virus, there was, of course, a more urgent need to invest in this technology," Dr. Guy Krief, co-founder and deputy CEO at Salignostics, told The Times of Israel. "It is deeply encouraging that technology that was honed and developed to help us deal with one of the worst pandemics is able to be developed further to help contribute to help and wellness for women and families all over the world." The Salignostics coronavirus test is European Union-approved and has sold widely in Europe and Africa. "Saliva is the key to rapid diagnostics for a variety of medical uses," said Kries. "With SaliStick, we are leveraging the powerful diagnostics abilities we have been able to create from analyzing saliva."

***Israel to Evacuate Families of Diplomats from Ethiopia, Steps Up Travel Warning;*** Amid an escalating civil war in Ethiopia, Israel's Foreign Ministry on Saturday, November 6, announced it would begin evacuating the families of its diplomats stationed in the African country. The Israeli diplomats themselves will continue to work at the Addis Ababa Embassy, ministry spokesman Lior Haiat said. The ministry on Saturday also announced an updated travel warning for Ethiopia, after an advisory to avoid non-essential trips was issued on Wednesday, which followed a state of emergency announcement from the African country. Ethiopia declared a nationwide state of emergency on Tuesday, a year into the civil war, and ordered residents of Addis Ababa to prepare to defend their neighborhoods amid fears that Tigrayan rebels were heading for the capital. Israel's Saturday advisory recommended citizens planning to visit Ethiopia cancel their trip, and for those already there to leave immediately. On Wednesday, the advisory had only urged Israelis to refrain from going to conflict zones, and remain vigilant around the capital. The advisories came as the fighting between the Ethiopian government and rebels intensified following a year of war that has killed thousands and displaced millions.

***Mossad Thwarts Iranian Attacks on Israelis in Africa;*** The Mossad has thwarted multiple attacks by Iran against Israeli tourists and businessmen in at least three African countries, Channel 12 reported on Sunday night, November 7. According to the report, the targets were Israelis visiting Tanzania, Senegal and Ghana. Five suspects, all with African passports, have reportedly been arrested. Iran has been seeking to harm Israel or Israelis - at sea, using cyberattacks and by attacking Israelis overseas. There is an ongoing shadow war between the countries going back decades, but Iranian efforts spiked since November 2020, after the Islamic Republic's top nuclear scientist, Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, was assassinated, allegedly by the Mossad. In addition, Iran has accused the Mossad of sabotaging its nuclear facilities in July 2020 as well as in April and June of this year. The Jerusalem Post and foreign outlets have also reported on Israeli intelligence assistance in the US's assassination of Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps Quds Force Chief Qasem Soleimani in January 2020. In early October, some Israeli officials accused Tehran of trying to assassinate Israelis in Cyprus, something Tehran also attempted in 2012. Around the same 2012 period, there were Iranian plots to target Israelis in Thailand, India, Georgia, Azerbaijan and Kenya. In January, Iranian proxies attempted an

attack against Israeli diplomats in India. Israeli intelligence officials have estimated that the Islamic Republic will continue to target Israelis and Jews in spots where they believe security is weaker, at least until they feel like they have achieved some amount of revenge and deterrence against Israeli attacks on Iran.

***After Surviving Drone Assassination Attempt, Iraq PM Urges 'Calm and Restraint';*** Iraq's Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi said he was unhurt and appealed for "calm and restraint" after a drone attack on his residence in Baghdad's Green Zone early Sunday, November 7, as political tensions mount in the country. The attack was a major escalation amid tensions sparked by the refusal of Iran-backed militias to accept last month's parliamentary election results. Two Iraqi officials told The Associated Press that seven of al-Kadhimi's security guards were injured in the attack with two armed drones which occurred in Baghdad's heavily fortified Green Zone area. They spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to give official statements. "I'm doing fine, praise be to God, and I call for calm and restraint on the part of everyone for the good of Iraq," al-Kadhimi wrote on Twitter, after what his office called a "failed assassination attempt." He later appeared on Iraqi television, seated behind a desk in a white shirt, looking calm and composed. "Cowardly rocket and drone attacks don't build homelands and don't build a future," he said. Two security sources earlier confirmed the attack in the heavily-guarded Green Zone, which also hosts the US embassy and is frequently targeted by rocket attacks. The United States condemned the attack as "an apparent act of terrorism." "We are relieved to learn the prime minister was unharmed. This apparent act of terrorism, which we strongly condemn, was directed at the heart of the Iraqi state," State Department spokesman Ned Price said.

***IDF Chief of Staff: 'Accelerating Military Plans to Take Care of Iran';*** MK Ram Ben Barak (Yesh Atid) on Tuesday, November 9, held a meeting of the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, which he chairs. Before the start of the meeting, IDF Chief of Staff Aviv Kochavi said, "The IDF is accelerating its military plans to handle Iran." "The budget which was approved allows us to deal with a variety of challenges," he added. "We have many challenges, and we will continue to act to remove the threats and respond to every hit to our sovereignty." Later, Kochavi thanked Ben Barak and the Committee's members, saying, "We feel that we have here a deep understanding of the challenges of the hour, and the work is no less praiseworthy, thanks to your insistence on keeping the IDF national, and above all political disagreements."

***Iran Boasts of Boosting its Stockpile of 60% Enriched Uranium to 25 Kg;*** Iran said it has almost doubled its stock of enriched uranium in less than a month, as it prepares to resume talks with world powers on curbing its nuclear program. Meanwhile, the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency warned on Thursday, November 4, that its oversight capabilities in Iran are being weakened. "We have more than 210 kilograms of uranium enriched to 20 percent, and we've produced 25 kilos at 60%, a level that no country apart from those with nuclear arms are able to produce," said the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) spokesman Behrouz Kamalvandi, in a report carried by the semi-official Tasnim and Fars news agencies. Sixty percent enrichment is the highest level to which Iran has enriched uranium and is a short technical step to weapons-grade 90%. Under the nuclear agreement, Iran was barred from enriching uranium above 3.67%. Tehran has progressively abandoned its commitments to a 2015 nuclear deal since former US President Donald Trump pulled Washington out in 2018, prompting Washington to impose fresh sanctions in response. In September, the International Atomic Energy Agency confirmed that Iran had boosted its stocks of uranium enriched above the percentage allowed in the deal.

***Iron Dome Shoots Down Hamas Drone Flown Out to Sea;*** The Iron Dome missile defense system shot down a Hamas drone that was flown out to sea from the Gaza Strip on Monday, November 8, the Israel Defense Forces said. The interception appeared to be the second time that the Iron Dome has shot down an enemy unmanned aerial vehicle following upgrades to the air defense system, which was initially designed

only to counter short-range rockets. According to the IDF, the device “was monitored throughout the entire incident” by the air force’s ground control. The Iron Dome was first used operationally to intercept a Hamas drone in May, during an 11-day conflict with Palestinian terror groups in the Strip, known in Israel as Operation Guardian of the Walls. During the conflict, the system also mistakenly shot down an Israeli drone. The launching of the drone from Gaza came as Hamas fired a number of rockets out to sea, apparently as part of efforts to test its capabilities. Israel typically does not interfere when Hamas conducts test launches; however, it does generally shoot down any drones that are flown out of the Strip. Operation Guardian of the Walls left over a dozen people killed in Israel and some 250 killed in Gaza, roughly half of them terrorist operatives, and caused vast damage on both sides as terror groups fired thousands of rockets, mortar shells and missiles at Israel and the IDF retaliated with hundreds of airstrikes on targets throughout the Strip. Since the fighting ended, the two sides have been involved in ongoing ceasefire talks to negotiate a long-term truce.

***Shekel Hits Yet Another 25-Year High Against the Dollar;*** The shekel-to-dollar exchange rate hit a new 25-year-high on Monday, November 8, with \$1 briefly fetching just NIS 3.08 before closing for the day around NIS 3.11. The shekel has been gaining in strength against major currencies like the dollar and euro, thanks in large part to high levels of foreign direct investment and the strength of the tech sector. While a stronger currency allows for cheaper imports, it can also hurt exporters by making their goods more expensive for foreign customers. The new record high came just days after the previous record high was briefly reached, before receding. The Globes business daily reported that the Bank of Israel intervened on Tuesday with a purchase of foreign currency to slow the shekel’s rise. The bank declined to comment. The currency’s strength is due to factors including Israel’s strong economy, foreign investments in Israeli companies moving capital into the country, Bank of Israel monetary policies, and strong global equities markets, which can cause Israeli financial institutions to sell foreign currency as their exposure rises. The shekel traded at around 3.6 to the dollar for several years, but more recently was in the 3.2 – 3.3 range.

***Ford to Install Israeli Water-From-Air System on its Vehicles;*** Ford has approached Israel-based Watergen, one of the world leaders in atmospheric water generation, to collaborate as facilitators for Ford off-grid adventure recreational vehicles. The project will result in Watergen’s Mobile Box, the world’s first vehicle on-board water generating system, to be pre-installed on Ford vehicles. Watergen’s innovative Mobile Box device is the world’s first vehicle on-board drinking system capable of effortlessly extracting clean water from ambient air and made its world debut on the Ford Ranger pickup at the Specialty Equipment Market Association (SEMA) show in Las Vegas last weekend. SEMA attracts more than 70,000 OEM and Tier One suppliers from around the globe, and the collaboration with Ford underlines Watergen’s ambition to become a global automotive supplier. The Mobile Box can generate up to 25 liters per day of fresh drinking water removing the need to carry bottled water and reducing plastic waste. The unit simply needs a 12V power supply and access to fresh air to produce the highest quality drinking water. Ford will mount the Mobile Box unit, which is fitted with sturdy wheels for ease of transport, on the flatbed of the Ranger where it will occupy minimal space due to its compact dimensions (630 x 530 x 460 mm). Its portability means that fresh water is always available – whether on a road trip, camping or working outdoors. The Mobile Box device is equipped with replaceable filters and a mineralization system to ensure a constant and reliable supply of the highest quality drinking water. The ability to produce clean drinking water without relying on an external water source is a gamechanger for those who seek off-grid adventure.

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