

# ***Yachad Ministries' Israel's News Update November 25, 2021 (21<sup>st</sup> Kislev, 5782)***



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

***US Defense Secretary Vows to Keep Nukes out of Iran's Hands;*** U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin vowed Saturday, November 20, to both block Iran from securing nuclear weapons and counter its “dangerous use” of suicide drones throughout the Mideast. “The United States remains committed to preventing Iran from gaining a nuclear weapon, and we remain committed to a diplomatic outcome of the nuclear issue,” said Austin during the annual Manama Dialogue in Bahrain. “But if Iran isn’t willing to engage seriously, then we will look at all of the options necessary.” Austin’s pledge to America’s Gulf Arab allies came as the Biden administration is scrambling to revive Iran’s 2015 nuclear deal, which limited Iran’s enrichment of uranium in exchange for the lifting of economic sanctions. Donald Trump pulled out of the deal during his presidency, leaving many countries in vulnerable positions. Austin also sought to reassure Middle East allies about America’s commitment to the region’s security, following the US’s withdrawal from Afghanistan and amid rising tensions with China. Iran has long claimed its nuclear program is peaceful, but U.S. intelligence agencies and the International Atomic Energy Agency say Tehran had an organized weapons program until 2003. Iran’s mission to the United Nations did not immediately respond to a request for comment from the Associated Press on Saturday. After then-President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew America from the Iran nuclear deal in 2018, a number of escalating incidents have struck the wider Mideast. That includes drone and mine attacks targeting vessels at sea, as well as assaults blamed on Iran and its proxies in Iraq and Syria. Under President Biden, U.S. military officials are seeking a wider reshuffling of forces from the Mideast to other areas, but America still maintains a large presence at bases across the region.

***UK's Ban on Hamas a Significant Blow to Funding for Terror Group;*** The United Kingdom’s decision Friday, November 19, to designate the entirety of Hamas as a terror organization and outlaw support for the group is a major blow for the Islamist group, which carries out significant fundraising there. The UK proscribed the terror group’s military wing — the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades — in 2001. But the Hamas political leadership remained technically in the clear until now. This enabled Hamas to raise funds that were channeled to institutions including Gaza’s Islamic University, the leading facility for advancing the technology used in Hamas missile and other weapons development. Hamas reacted angrily to the decision, with spokesperson Hazim Qasim calling it “a new crime committed by Britain against our Palestinian people.” In a separate statement, Hamas condemned the move as one of a long line of British “sins” against the Palestinian people. The terror group singled out the 1917 Balfour Declaration, which affirmed British support

for establishing a Jewish state. UK Home Secretary Priti Patel, who is in charge of domestic security, said on Friday on Twitter that she had “acted to proscribe Hamas in its entirety.” The ban, which must be approved by Parliament, would make it illegal in Britain to be a member of Hamas or to express support for the group, with a maximum penalty of 14 years in prison.

***Shin Bet Catches Large Hamas Terrorist Network in West Bank;*** Just a day after a Hamas operative killed an Israeli and injured four others in a terrorist attack in Jerusalem, the Shin Bet revealed on Monday, November 22, that it had thwarted a massive Hamas terror network planning terror attacks in Israel and the West Bank. The network, led by senior Hamas officials living abroad, operated throughout the West Bank and aimed to carry out attacks including suicide bombings in both the West Bank and Israel proper. Some 50 cell members were arrested in the joint Shin Bet, IDF and Israel Police operation. According to a statement released by the Shin Bet, the cell members arrested were involved in establishing the cell and raising funds to buy weapons. During the arrest operation, weapons and enough explosive materials to make three or four suicide belts were seized. The cell members were drafted from around the West Bank, including Ramallah, Hebron and Jenin. One of the main individuals involved in the formation of the network was Hijazi Qawasmi 37, a known Hamas operative from Hebron. Qawasmi had been arrested multiple times due to his work for Hamas and planning for terror attacks. The network was funded and led by Deputy Hamas Political Bureau Chairman Saleh al-Arouri who lives in Turkey. Arouri is one of the founders of Hamas’s military wing the Izzedin al-Qassam Brigades and is responsible for several bloody terrorist attacks against Israeli civilians.

***Brazilian Journalist says Brazil Would Need to Kill Jews to Grow Economy;*** A journalist working for one of Brazil’s largest broadcasters apologized for saying on TV on Wednesday, November 17, that the only way his country could match Germany’s wealth is by killing its Jews. Jose Carlos Bernardi, a pundit for Jovem Pan, a right-leaning radio and television station, made the comments in a discussion Tuesday about a visit by former Brazilian president Luis Inácio Lula da Silva to Germany. Asked by journalist Amanda Klein how Brazil could attain the economic development enjoyed by Germany, Bernardi replied: “Only by attacking Jews will we get there. If we kill a gazillion Jews and appropriate their economic power, then Brazil will get rich. That’s what happened with Germany after the war.” Bernardi’s remarks provoked an outcry by critics who accused him of inciting violence and repeating anti-Semitic stereotypes about Jews and wealth. A prosecutor in Sao Paulo is looking into charging Bernardi with incitement to hatred, according to the Brazilian newspaper Jornal do Comercio. In a statement, Bernardi said he “apologized for the unfortunate remarks” he had made, saying his intention was to address and highlight the injustice done to Jews by Germany rather than recommend it as a course of action. Jovem Pan also apologized for the remarks. The network has not responded to calls to fire Bernardi. A right-wing lawmaker in the parliament of the Brazilian state of Sao Paulo, Antônio Campos Machado, said that his office has pulled out of a contract with Bernardi, who had provided consulting services to Campos Machado. “There are no longer the conditions necessary” for employing Bernardi, Campos Machado wrote. CONIB, the umbrella group of Brazilian Jewish communities, in a statement said Bernardi’s remarks caused “distress and pain” to many Jews and reiterated its position against comparing contemporary political issues to the Holocaust.

***Palestinian School Magazine Calls for ‘Armed Struggle’ against ‘Israeli Monster’;*** Demonization of Israel and incitement to violence are rampant in Waed, a magazine published by Fatah’s youth movement and distributed in Palestinian Authority schools, a new study by Palestinian Media Watch found. Palestinian Media Watch (PMW) reviewed 17 issues of Waed published in December 2014-September 2021, and found that the magazine glorifies terrorists who murdered Israelis as heroes and anticipates a Palestinian state that will replace all of Israel, including the removal of Israelis from the land. PMW distributed its report to Norwegian lawmakers on Wednesday, November 17, as the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee for funding to the PA met in Oslo. The magazines include references to “the giant Israeli murder machine” and “the Israeli monster,” and accuses Israel of behaving like Nazis. Waed claims Palestinians have a “right to wage an armed

struggle to take back its stolen homeland,” and “the liberation of Palestine will only be achieved through armed struggle.” Waed is a publication of Lion Cubs and Flowers, the youth movement of the PA’s ruling party Fatah. The movement is for Palestinian children aged 6-15, and its magazine is distributed at summer camps, schools and activities.

***IDF to Invest NIS 1 billion as it Prepares for War in Lebanon and Syria;*** The IDF is set to invest NIS 1 billion in combat training drills and exercises for reserves units in 2022, as it began preparations this month toward an operation against Hezbollah and pro-Iranian terrorist militias based in Lebanon and Syria. According to foreign reports, Israel has stepped up its military involvement in Syria. Syrian reports consistently attribute airstrikes over the country to Israel, with the latest coming on Monday, November 15, when the IDF allegedly struck an empty building in Damascus. The latest strike came a little over a week after two Syrian soldiers were injured and material damage was caused by an alleged Israeli airstrike targeting sites along the coast of Syria and in the center of the country. The latest attacks in Syria targeted pro-Iranian militias and IRGC infrastructure scattered across the country, as well as Midhat al-Saleh, a Syrian man who spent time in prison for terrorist activities and was killed by an Israeli sniper in October, according to foreign reports. Al-Saleh was involved in the planning of a future terror attack targeting Israel, according to Israeli sources.

***At Least 85,000 Jewish Intermarried Couples in Israel;*** There are some 85,000 intermarried couples in Israel in which one spouse is Jewish and one is not, according to data from the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS). The information was obtained recently by Dr. Netanel Fisher, head of the School of Public Administration, Governance and Law, at Sha’arei Mishpat, Academic College of Law and Science. According to the data, there are in total 1.3 million married couples in Israel in which at least one spouse is Jewish, of whom 85,000 include just one Jewish spouse, meaning that intermarried couples constitute roughly 7% of all married couples. These figures do not include couples of different religious identities who cohabit without marrying, or Israelis living with or married to foreign workers without permanent residency, for whom the CBS does not have figures. The vast majority of intermarried couples in Israel, some 90%, involve a Jew and a citizen defined as “without religious classification,” the large majority of whom are Israeli citizens born in the former Soviet Union or their descendants. There are today some 465,000 Israeli citizens “without religious classification,” most of whom are immigrants from the countries of the former Soviet Union or their descendants who are not Jewish according to Jewish law but have a Jewish parent or grandparent. In recent years, the number of such mixed marriages has been increasing. CBS figures show that in 2011, there were at least 1,527 couples who married abroad that year, or registered their foreign civil marriage that year, in which one of the spouses was Jewish and the other non-Jewish. Seven years later, in 2018, at least 2,460 such intermarried couples wed or registered their marriages that year, an increase of 38% in the rate of intermarriage. A lack of clarity in the religious identity of another group of people included in the CBS statistics means that intermarriages could be almost twice this number.

***Prince Charles Meets President of Israel at Highgrove;*** Charles welcomed Isaac Herzog to his country retreat in Tetbury, Gloucestershire, on Monday morning, November 22. Mr. Herzog, who took office in the summer, arrived in the UK on Sunday, November 21, for a three-day official visit. The president has warned the West to stop “wasting time” on Iran’s “games”, and called on the UK to work with Israel to stop Tehran from exploiting the world’s willingness to negotiate over a nuclear deal. Writing in the Sunday Telegraph, Mr Herzog said: “Iran does not want dialogue. It is exploiting the world’s willingness to negotiate to buy time. Israel cannot allow the fundamentalists of Tehran to acquire a nuclear bomb.” Mr Herzog said on Twitter that he would be meeting Prime Minister Boris Johnson during his trip, as well as Foreign Secretary Liz Truss and Jewish community leaders. He will also pay tribute to former Chief Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks, who died last year.

***Iran's Raisi Says Tehran is 'Absolutely Serious' about Nuclear Talks;*** Iran is “absolutely serious” about nuclear talks expected to resume late this month, its President Ebrahim Raisi told his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin in a phone call on Tuesday, November 16. “The Islamic Republic of Iran is absolutely serious about the negotiations and we are equally serious about our people’s rights to have sanctions lifted,” Raisi said, according to a statement published on the presidency’s website. His remarks come one day after Tehran invited the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency, Rafael Grossi, to visit and meet Iran’s foreign minister, after the UN official expressed concern over lack of contact with Iranian officials. Nuclear talks, which have been on hold since Raisi’s election in June, are set to resume in Vienna on November 29 in a bid to revive the 2015 deal that offered Tehran relief from sanctions in return for curbs on its nuclear activity. The deal was torpedoed when Donald Trump unilaterally pulled out of it in 2018. The other parties to the deal — Russia, China, Germany, Britain, and France — will participate in the Vienna talks in the presence of European negotiator Enrique Mora. The US will take part in the negotiations indirectly. According to a Kremlin statement, Putin expressed hopes “that the talks scheduled for late November will be constructive.” Iran’s Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian called on the West not to make “excessive demands” on Tehran in the talks, in a call with his Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov earlier this month.

***Bennett Says No Matter What Happens with Iran Talks, We'll Defend Ourselves;*** Prime Minister Naftali Bennett stressed that Israel would defend itself, no matter what happens in the nuclear talks between Iran and the world powers, during a visit to an exercise being carried out by the IDF in northern Israel on Tuesday, November 16. "We are surrounded by security challenges and the goal is to take advantage of periods of relative quiet to build strength. Therefore, we are preparing for various scenarios, both near and far," said Bennett. "We are dealing with Iran and its affiliates in Lebanon and Syria. No matter what happens between Iran and the superpowers, and we are certainly concerned about the fact that there is not enough toughness in the face of Iranian violations, Israel will defend itself, on its own." During the visit, Defense Minister Benny Gantz stated that "we are of course following everything happening on all fronts." "We are currently seeing Iran's policy within Iran in the nuclear context, as well as its strengthening outside Iran, and its influence in Syria and Lebanon," added Gantz. "The world must act against Iran and Israel must continue to do what it needs in every front in general and in the northern front in particular." Last week, the IDF began a drill in northern Israel, as part of which reservists in the 36th Division, also known as the Ga'ash Formation, were called up. About 3,000 soldiers from the Golani Brigade, Armored Corps, Artillery, and Reserve Brigades, along with Intelligence and the Air Force, took part in the drill. "We found here a very cohesive and trained system that is gaining more and more capabilities, and I am very happy with what we have seen here," said Gantz about the drill. "The state budget has been approved and this is especially important for the IDF, which can properly plan its resources, train continuously and intensively and invest everything it needs in preparing for the next war," said Bennett.

***Iran Restarts Nuke Parts Production at Facility Mossad Accused of Blowing Up;*** Iran has resumed production of equipment for advanced centrifuges at the Karaj nuclear site that it accused the Mossad of blowing up in June, the Wall Street Journal reported on Tuesday, November 16. The report cited Western diplomatic sources who expressed concern that Iran could start to secretly divert advanced centrifuges to undeclared sites if it wished to clandestinely move closer to a nuclear weapon. Centrifuges enrich uranium for potentially making a nuclear weapon, and some of Iran’s more advanced models can speed up that process by a rate of four to five times compared to older models. These concerns are exacerbated by the fact that the IAEA admitted in September that it has been blind to what is going on at Karaj since June because of the Islamic Republic’s refusal to grant the nuclear inspectors access to the site or explain what happened to the monitoring cameras. Although Tehran has claimed that postponing IAEA access relates to its investigation of the June sabotage attack in which the site was attacked by a drone, allegedly directed by the Mossad, IAEA Director-General Rafael Grossi has already said in September that such an explanation no longer holds water. Former prime minister Ehud Barak has expressed concern that with a newly growing supply of 60% enriched

uranium and advanced centrifuges, it would be easier to hide aspects of the nuclear program than in the past when a bigger space was needed for a much larger number of less advanced centrifuges to enrich lower quality uranium. Former Mossad director Yossi Cohen has also expressed concerns about Iran's ability to make clandestine moves and that any return of the US to a nuclear deal with the Islamic Republic would require much stricter controls over the nuclear program. The Western diplomats quoted said there was no sign that Iran was trying to break out faster with a nuclear weapon, but it was unclear how they would know if Tehran tried to do so clandestinely.

***PM on Israelis Detained in Turkey: 'We are Doing All We Can';*** Prime Minister Naftali Bennett said at the opening of Sunday's, November 14, cabinet meeting that he was working to secure the release of an Israeli couple detained in Turkey for taking photographs of the president's palace. "They are two innocent citizens who accidentally got into a complicated situation," Bennett said. "I spoke with the family yesterday and we are doing everything we can to resolve the issue. I ask the family, despite the great difficulty, to be strong. We are with you. Beyond that, it wouldn't be right to expand [on the matter] at the moment." Turkish authorities detained Natali and Mordy Oknin, residents of Modiin, on Thursday, November 11, for photographing Erdogan's palace in Istanbul. The couple and their family insist they did not know it was illegal to do so. Earlier on Sunday, Bennett and Foreign Minister Yair Lapid held urgent consultations on the issue. Bennett and Lapid reviewed the efforts made over the weekend and agreed to continue to work to find a solution as soon as possible. Foreign Ministry Director-General Alon Ushpiz, National Security Council head Eyal Hulata and other officials participated in the talks. A Turkish court on Friday extended the couple's remand by 20 days, with local authorities saying they suspected the Oknins of espionage, as the episode appeared to be expanding into a diplomatic spat between the two countries. Israel has firmly and formally rejected the allegation that the couple, both of whom are Egged bus drivers, are spies. Meanwhile, the Israeli lawyer representing the pair said Sunday that he hoped that no indictment would be filed and the pair would be allowed to return home.

***Iranian President Claims Country's Frozen Assets Abroad Were Released;*** Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi announced that Iran now has access to its resources in other countries, during a session in the Iranian parliament on Tuesday, November 16, according to the Fars News Agency. "In the beginning, the government had problems with selling oil, but now the situation has improved and I can only say that the government has access to its resources in other countries," said Raisi. The president did not provide any further details. The announcement comes just days after Ali Naderi, the managing director of Iran's Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA), tweeted that over \$3.5 billion of Iran's blocked resources had been released by one of the countries holding them. Naderi added that a "significant portion" of the now unblocked resources were entering Iran's trade cycle. The IRNA CEO did not specify which country had released the resources.

***Can Israel's Vaccine End the COVID-19 Pandemic?;*** Israel's COVID-19 vaccine could be a game-changer for Israel and the rest of the world. "There is innovation associated with the Israeli vaccine that potentially addresses this terrible virus better than other technologies," said Dr. Jonathan Javitt, CEO of NeuroRx, the US pharmaceutical company that was given exclusive worldwide development, manufacturing, and marketing rights to Israel's BriLife vaccine over the summer. The vaccine candidate was originally developed by the Israel Institute for Biological Research (IIBR), which operates under the auspices of the Prime Minister's Office and works closely with the Defense Ministry. Prof. Yossi Caraco, director of Hadassah's clinical research unit, who served as the national principal investigator for the trial, said this data should be looked at with "precaution," but that it was also "promising" and even "encouraging." The BriLife vaccine is based on a platform used by pharmaceutical giant Merck & Co. for its Ebola vaccine, meaning it is a platform that has been validated around the world for several years and has been proven both safe and effective. BriLife is a vector-based vaccine. The vaccine takes the vesicular stomatitis virus (VSV) and genetically engineers it so it will express the spike protein of the novel coronavirus on its envelope. Once

injected, it does not cause disease by itself. Instead, the body recognizes the spike protein that is expressed on the envelope and begins to develop an immunological response. Moreover, unlike other vaccines, this one binds to the exact cell in the lung that is targeted by the novel coronavirus. “It’s like getting a virus-like coronavirus without getting the disease,” Caraco explained. “Then, if you happen to be exposed to the real coronavirus, the immunological response that was triggered by the vaccine will prevent infection.” Most standard vaccines, such as the measles vaccine, expose the immune system to a weakened version of the antigen, which teaches it to recognize and kill the disease. Novel mRNA vaccines, on the other hand, use a sequence of genetic RNA material produced in a lab that, when injected, enters the cells and sparks production of the viral components that subsequently train the immune system to fight the virus. Because the BriLife vaccine presents the immune system with a somewhat more complete version of the spike protein, this may allow the immune system an opportunity to see more targets on the spike protein and therefore target more things on the virus – making it more effective against variants.

***Technion Researchers Make Breakthrough in Alzheimer's Disease Research;*** Researchers from the Technion - Israel Institute of Technology and the French National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS) developed a molecule that could slow the progress of Alzheimer's Disease, according to a report published in the *Angewandte Chemie* last week. One cause of this neurodegenerative disease is an excess of copper ions within cells. When oxidizing agents called free radicals are formed by the copper and amyloid-beta complex Cu-A $\beta$ , damage may be caused to brain cells. However, removing the copper breaks this substance down, preventing cell death and inhibiting the development of Alzheimer's Disease. Copper is separated from the amyloid by introducing molecules that bind the copper ions, a process known as chelation. This can be difficult as the molecules must be stable and resistant to oxidation-reduction reactions. They also must not bind zinc ions because these are necessary for normal brain functioning and binding them will prevent the molecules from binding copper. The artificial molecule developed by the researchers, called P3, can bind copper, forming CuP3, and remove the copper from the amyloid, thereby inhibiting the formation of harmful oxidizing agents. One caveat is the molecule binds zinc as well, but the bond is relatively weak and causes the zinc-amyloid complex to be unstable; therefore, P3 mostly binds copper. These findings, by Professor Galia Maayan and doctoral student Anastasia Behar of the Technion's Schulich Faculty of Chemistry, as well as Prof. Christelle Hureau from the Laboratoire de Chimie de Coordination du CNRS, Toulouse, France, break new ground in research toward the treatment of Alzheimer's, a debilitating disease with no known cure

***Hellenist Fortress Destroyed by Hasmoneans Uncovered;*** Weapons, burnt wooden beams, dozens of coins, and a Hellenistic fortified structure—tangible evidence of a battle between the Hasmoneans and the Seleucids some 2,100 years ago—are currently being unearthed in Israel Antiquities Authority excavations in Lachish Forest. The excavations are being conducted as part of the Kings of Judah Road project, in cooperation with the Jewish National Fund, funded by the Jerusalem and Heritage Ministry, assisted by high-school students majoring in the Ministry of Education’s Land of Israel Studies and Archaeology program, and students from the Asher Ruach Bo pre-military program in Mitzpe Ramon for youths at risk. According to Saar Ganor, Vladik Lifshits, and Ahinoam Montagu, excavation directors on behalf of the Israel Antiquities Authority, “The excavation site provides tangible evidence of the Hanukkah stories. It appears that we have discovered a building that was part of a fortified line erected by the Hellenistic army commanders to protect the large Hellenistic city of Maresha from a Hasmonean offensive. However, the finds from the site show that the Seleucid defenses were unsuccessful; the excavated building was badly burnt and devastated by the Hasmoneans.” The excavation revealed a 15 × 15 m building planned as a well-fortified unit. The external walls, no less than 3 m wide, were built of large stones and had a sloping outer glacis to prevent the wall from being scaled. The inside of the structure was divided into seven rooms, preserved to an exceptional height of roughly 2 m. The excavation uncovered a stairwell leading to a second floor, which was not preserved. The building is estimated to have been about 5 m high. The site lies on the summit of a high hill commanding a view of the ancient main road, which ran along the Nahal Lachish streambed and connected the coastal plain

to the central highland ridge. The building overlooks Maresha, the largest Hellenistic city in the area and the capital of Idumea in the Hellenistic period.



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