

Yachad Ministries' Israel's News Update January 13, 2022 ***(11th Shvat, 5782)***



For the Yachad Report Newsletter For January 2022

Iran Rules out Prospect of an Interim Nuclear Agreement in Vienna; Iran's Foreign Ministry on Monday, January 10, ruled out an interim agreement with world powers, as the sides continue their talks in Vienna aimed at returning to the 2015 nuclear accord. A spokesman for the ministry, Saeed Khatibzadeh, said Tehran is "looking for a lasting and credible agreement, and no agreement without these two components is on our agenda." He added: "We all need to make sure that the return of the United States [to the deal is accompanied by verification and the receipt of guarantees, and that a lifting of sanctions must take place. These are not achieved by any temporary agreement." On Sunday, January 9, Iran's foreign minister said talks with world powers to revive the nuclear accord were approaching a "good agreement" but reaching one soon depends on the other parties. "The initiatives of the Iranian side and the negotiations that have taken place have put us on the right track," Hossein Amir-Abdollahian said. "We are close to a good agreement, but to reach this good agreement in the short term, it must be pursued by the other side," state news agency IRNA quoted him as saying. Negotiations to restore the nuclear deal resumed in late November after they were suspended in June as Iran elected a new, ultra-conservative government. The original deal offered Iran sanctions relief in exchange for curbs on its nuclear program. But then-president Donald Trump withdrew the US in 2018 and derailed the accord, prompting Tehran to begin rolling back on its commitments.

Statue of Qassem Soleimani Torched Hours after Unveiling; A statue of the late Iranian General Qassem Soleimani was set on fire by protestors only hours after its unveiling on Wednesday, January 6, according to Iranian media reports. Soleimani, the commander of the Iranian Quds Force, was killed by a US drone strike on January 3, 2020. A statue honoring Soleimani was unveiled in Shahrekord, a city in southwestern Iran, on Wednesday morning. But only hours later, protestors set it on fire. Iran's ISNA news agency called the torching of the statue a "shameful act by unknown individuals." "This treacherous crime was carried out in darkness, just like the other crime committed at night at Baghdad airport," said senior cleric Mohammad Ali Nekounam, referring to Soleimani's killing, according to VOA News. Since his death two years ago, the Iranian regime has unveiled a series of sculptures in memory of Soleimani. His portraits also have been put up across Iran. On Wednesday, Iran announced that it will seek to prosecute 127 suspects for involvement and cooperation in the January 2020 elimination of the senior commander.

Saudis Say Hezbollah a Threat to Arabs after Nasrallah Calls King a ‘Terrorist’; Saudi Arabia’s ambassador to Beirut said Thursday, January 6, that Hezbollah was a threat to Arab security after the leader of the Iran-backed Lebanese movement branded King Salman a “terrorist.” The latest exchange of insults follows a crisis between Lebanon and Gulf Arab states over the war in Yemen, and Saudi accusations that Hezbollah was meddling in the conflict. “Riyadh hopes that the political parties will give priority to the supreme interest of Lebanon... and end Hezbollah’s terrorist hegemony over every aspect of the state,” ambassador Waleed Bukhari said in a statement to AFP. “Hezbollah’s terrorist activities and regional military behavior threaten Arab national security,” he added. Bukhari’s statement comes after Hassan Nasrallah, leader of the Shiite terror group, described King Salman as a “terrorist” and accused Saudi Arabia of exporting Islamic extremism in a televised speech earlier this week.

COVID 19: Israel Cancels Red Countries, Reopens its Skies; Starting from Friday, January 7, no country will be classified as red, Health Ministry Director-General Prof. Nachman Ash announced on Thursday, January 6, as Israel recorded more than 16,000 coronavirus cases the day before, marking a new record since the beginning of the pandemic. The move will allow Israelis to travel again anywhere in the world without needing special governmental permission, or to quarantine for a week upon their return – provided that they are vaccinated. Earlier in the week, the ministry announced that starting from Sunday, January 9, foreign nationals from non-red countries will also be able to enter Israel without the need for special permission for the first time since the end of November, provided that they are fully vaccinated under the Health Ministry’s criteria: inoculated twice within the previous six months, vaccinated with a booster, recovered with one shot, or recovered within six months, as demonstrated by an electronic recovery certificate. On Thursday, the list of red countries still included the US, the UK, Switzerland, the UAE, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Nigeria and Turkey. Ash said that the decision was made because keeping the borders closed would not help since morbidity is already high in Israel.

Netherlands Defunds Palestinian NGO Israel Declared Terror Organization; The Netherlands stopped its funding of the Union of Agricultural Work Committees (UAWC), one of six Palestinian NGOs Israel banned last year due to ties to the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) terrorist organization. The Dutch government had donated €21.5 million to UAWC, but suspended funding in 2020 after two senior UAWC officials were indicted for taking part in a bombing that killed Rina Shnerb, 17, in August 2019. In a letter to the Dutch parliament released on Wednesday, January 5, two ministers wrote that the investigation found that 34 UAWC employees were active in the PFLP in 2007-2020, some at the same time as holding leadership positions in the terrorist group. "The large number of board members of UAWC with a dual mandate is particularly worrying," Development Cooperation Minister Tom de Bruijn and Foreign Affairs Minister Ben Knapen wrote. However, contrary to what Israel has said, the Dutch investigation did not find that UAWC itself was linked to the PFLP, organizationally or financially. Still, the Dutch government criticized the UAWC board, saying that its behavior was a betrayal of trust. The ministers pointed out that the NGO’s own guidelines say employees may not be politically active and said the board should have been more transparent about those ties, and as such, they have decided to permanently stop funding UAWC. The report also finds that several other Palestinian organizations could be viewed as "the social branch of the PFLP," and De Bruijn wrote that the Dutch cabinet will look at its donations to other Palestinian NGOs, as well. The full report was not made available to the public. The Netherlands does not directly fund any other organizations banned by Israel in October, but it does finance Defense for Children International - Palestine through the UN and Al-Haq through a Dutch organization called SOMO. The letter also said that the Netherlands will invest in new water and agriculture projects for the Palestinians.

Israel McDonald's Kiosk Denies Service to People Without Valid Green Pass; A video posted on social media shows an Israeli McDonald’s refusing service to customers if they do not have a Green Pass, a health certificate used to identify people who have a COVID-19 vaccine. In the video, a user approaches the

touch-screen kiosk where customers order food, which brings up a prompt asking for confirmation of a valid green certificate. The screen resets if the user selects "Don't Have." Local news outlet Israel 365 reports that McDonald's is the first food provider in Israel to deny customers who do not have valid proof of vaccination. But the restaurant claims it is merely following government requirements and that the restriction only applied to locations on food courts. "The Israeli government has enacted emergency regulations banning the sale of food on a food court without a 'Green Pass,' and McDonald's Israel is complying with the law and has acted accordingly," a McDonald's Israel spokesperson told Fox News. "Following the upcoming cancellation of the Green Pass this coming Monday by the government, the announcement in Mac Touch will also be canceled accordingly." The Green Pass program has served as a temporary restriction the government has issued, but officials continue to expand its application with each iteration. The current program applies to individuals who have received at least one shot of a COVID-19 vaccine or who have had an infection but recovered, indicating the presence of antibodies to protect against reinfection.

2022 Goals: Let's Cut Our Addiction to Plastic; We've all seen the mountains of trash on TV news, with 2 billion tons of waste produced across the world – every year. Only 4% is currently recycled and 80% ends up in open landfills, with much of this waste making its way into our rivers, lakes and oceans. Landfills generate 8% of carbon emissions, impacting the climate as well as contaminating nature, damaging marine life, and ultimately, affecting our health. And as populations grow and economies strengthen, the problem only increases. And now for more bad news: Israel is the second-biggest per capita consumer of waste-generating single-use plastic – in the world. As Environmental Protection Minister Tamar Zandberg said: "Israel is addicted to disposable plastic... and it is time to break the habit." However, there is good news (on the environmental, not necessarily financial front.) To try to counter this addiction, in 2017 Israel began enforcing a tax on plastic bags, which led to an 80% decrease in their use. And a new tax on disposable plastic plates, bowls, cups, and straws aims to double their prices. While this hasn't been received well across the board because of the additional costs involved, the plan aims to cut purchases of single-use plastic tableware by up to 40%. To play its part further, Prime Minister Naftali Bennett said at the recent COP26 climate summit that the start-up nation must become "the climate innovation nation." And there are already some impressive Israeli technologies out there making a difference.

Tiny Clay Seals Reveal First Temple Royal Treasuries in Jerusalem; Dozens of inscribed clay seal impressions recovered during excavations near the Temple Mount have been identified as evidence of two treasuries in ancient Jerusalem in the late 8th century BCE, researchers said Thursday, January 6. Archeologists said the clay impressions, or bullae, were used for the management of storehouses during the First Temple period. In ancient times, the lumps of clay were pressed over the knot of a cord securing a doorknob or a vessel, and the manager of a treasury would then impress his, or his superior's, seal upon the clay to prevent others from tampering. Archeologists Zachi Dvira and Dr. Gabriel Barkay found that on the reverse side of several bullae in Jerusalem, an impression of woven fabric appeared, which they said indicated some were attached to small bags containing pieces of silver or precious metals, while others were likely attached to fabric that covered ceramic jars used to store agricultural produce. The bullae were revealed during the sifting of Temple Mount soil and in excavations at the Ophel Park adjacent to the mount. The researchers said the findings constitute concrete evidence of the existence of two central treasuries in Jerusalem, which managed the economy of the Kingdom of Judah. According to the researchers, the names that appeared on the bullae in the Paleo-Hebrew script were of the chief treasurers in charge of the so-called Temple Treasury and the Royal Treasury of the Kingdom of Judah. The Royal Treasury was located in the "Royal Building" located in the Ophel Park, in which numerous storage jars were found, and more recently, at least 34 bullae were discovered. Nearly half of those seals had impressions of woven fabric, the study said. The full name on one of the Temple Mount soil seals was Hisilyahu son of Immer, who apparently served as one of the officials managing the so-called Temple Treasuries, the researchers said. They tied him to a priestly family that served in the Temple in the 7th or early 6th century BCE.

Iran Believes That Maneuvering Missiles, Drones Will Evade Air Defense; The Islamic Republic is seeking to improve its missile and drone capability to tap into the latest technology from Russia and China and learn how to get around the latest air-defense systems, according to Iranian military analysts. Tehran now says it wants to learn from the experience of history how missiles have defeated air defense. “It should be noted that maneuvering ballistic warheads are just one step away from Hypersonic Gliding Vehicles (HGVs), which are now the cutting edge of missile technology in warheads.” “This type of projectile differs from maneuvering warheads only in design and flight path, and its speed varies from Mach 5 to 20 [3,836 mph-15,345 mph] depending on the design and opinion of the manufacturer,” it said. “Instead of gaining altitude, such as ballistic missiles, HGV projectiles travel at much lower altitudes with the possibility of frequent reorientation, and as a result, the early defense radars of the enemy defense have difficulty detecting them and may surprise the enemy missile defense complex.” Iran’s interest here is in learning from Chinese military technology. It openly says the Chinese have moved in the direction of HGV projectiles; Iran likely wants the same weapons. Tehran and Beijing recently signed a 25-year cooperation agreement. This may not involve missiles yet, but Iran could be seeking more technology from North Korea, China, and Russia in the coming years. Iran also says its rockets have improved maneuverability. It references the Qadr rocket and what it says is a detachable warhead on the Qiam and Sajil missiles. Iran is thus openly saying it seeks to get around Israel’s Arrow air-defense system. Israel has a multilayered air-defense system with Arrow, David’s Sling, and Iron Dome; it also has Patriot batteries. Israel and the US cooperate closely on these issues.

Technical Malfunction Behind Deadly IDF Helicopter Crash; The military believes a serious technical malfunction caused the crash of an Israel Navy helicopter off the coast of Haifa on Monday night, January 3. Two IAF pilots died after their helicopter, an Atalef AS565 Panther, went down around 9 p.m. The crash was likely due to a fire that broke out in the left engine, IAF OC Operations Brig.-Gen. Amir Lazar said. The crew was able to lower to an altitude to carry out an emergency landing on the sea after the fire caused a power failure, which is likely why they were unable to make a distress call, he said. It took one and a half to two minutes from when a fire was noticed in the engine to when the helicopter crashed, Lazar said. The crew was able to deploy the flotation devices that gave the navy the ability to locate the helicopter. The officer who survived the crash, Capt. Ron Birman called the squadron commander from his telephone and told him they had made an emergency landing at sea. Birman made an unsuccessful attempt to rescue the other crew members, Lazar said. It is still unclear why the two pilots were unable to exit the helicopter, and the exact cause of their deaths is yet to be determined. The victims were identified as Lt.-Col. Erez Sachaini, 38, a married father of three who served as deputy commander of Ramat David Airbase, and Maj. Hen Fogel, 27.

Soccer Fans in Belgium Do Nazi Salutes, Chant About Killing Jews; Dozens of soccer fans in Antwerp, Belgium, were filmed giving Nazi salutes while chanting about Hamas and gassing and burning Jews. Police are investigating the videos, which appeared on social media earlier this week. The incident appeared to have taken place at or outside Café Stadion, a restaurant near a soccer stadium. The men chanted: “My father was in the commandos, my mother was in the SS, together they burned Jews because Jews burn the best,” as well as “Hamas, Jews to the gas” while making the Nazi salutes. They appear to be fans of the Beerschot soccer team of Antwerp, the Gazet van Antwerpen reported. Such soccer chants occur regularly in Europe, and in the Netherlands and Belgium especially, ahead of matches between teams that fans of rival soccer clubs label as “Jewish.” Sometimes, as in the case of the Ajax team of Amsterdam, supporters of those teams call themselves and their teams Jewish. But in recent years, these soccer chants increasingly have been occurring also outside the context of sports, including at a graduation party of high school students in the Netherlands in 2016. Separately, the ethics board of the Royal Belgian Soccer Association last week fined the Club Brugge Belgian soccer team to the tune of \$2,226 for chants heard at three recent matches. Fans of Brugge shouted “Whoever doesn’t jump is a Jew,” as they sprang up and down during the matches.

UN Hits New Anti-Israel Low; Last week Anne Bayefsky, a Canadian human rights professor who is a member of the International Law Association Committee on International Human Rights Law and Practice, sent an alarming email. Anne also serves on the board of the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs (JINSA), a think tank that focuses on Israel's security in its relationship with the United States. Below is the bulk of her alarming email: "Two and a half hours ago the UN General Assembly's budget committee (a committee of the whole, i.e. composed of all 193 member states) decided to fund a new 'Commission of Inquiry' established by the UN Human Rights Council that is intended to emasculate the state of Israel." Continuing, she said, "Without exaggeration, it is the most hostile and dangerous anti-Israel body the UN has ever created. It will decide Israel is guilty of apartheid, validate and unleash criminal prosecutions of Israelis, significantly magnify pressure on 'third states'" and 'business enterprises' to engage in BDS, and insist on an arms embargo against Israel." The email went on to say, "It is permanent in duration. It will have 18 permanent UN staff funded by the regular budget - which means 22% of it will come from American taxpayers, creating an in-house legal bureau to seek criminal charges against members of the IDF and the highest echelons of the Israeli government ('command responsibility'). The three members of the 'Inquiry' have been appointed - and all have public records of extreme anti-Israel hostility." "We can, and we must discredit this Inquiry. That's why I'm writing. Here's how: The Inquiry - which ought to become known as Pillay's Pogrom - has issued a 'Call for Submissions.' It sets out five vast topics for submissions - in effect, going back to the justifications of a Jewish state period. It is particularly interested in identifying the propagators of racial and religious 'discrimination' and 'repression'. Making a submission is an opportunity to recount history, abuses, facts, law - the truth that the Inquiry doesn't want to hear. Large numbers of submissions that are ignored or vilified by the Inquiry will erode credibility." She continued to explain, "Massive numbers of submissions on Israel's side, standing against modern anti-Semitism, will push back against the UN's unprecedented global attack on Israel and the Jewish people," Bayefski wrote. The first report of the Commission of Inquiry is expected in June 2022. A shocking 125 countries supported the creation of the new UN 'human rights commission' while Hungary was the only European country to vote against the UN commission's budgeting. The rest of the European countries, as well as Canada and Australia, abstained. The United States, however, voted against the anti-Israel resolution and President Joe Biden's administration envoy to the UN made it clear that it was "unfair" to single Israel out for permanent human rights investigations that span the entire country.

Outgoing Honduras President Says Christians, Parliament Will Protect Strong Israel Ties; "Mr. President, you are a true friend of Israel," Prime Minister Naftali Bennett told Juan Orlando Hernández shortly before the inauguration ceremony for Honduras's new embassy in Jerusalem in June. "The Jewish people have a long memory, and you will be recorded in the pages of history as having done a brave and justified deed for the State of Israel." Moving the embassy wasn't the only policy the Honduran leader enacted in support of Israel. Throughout his eight years as president, Hernández has made the Central American nation — which recognized the State of Palestine less than three years before he took office — into one of Israel's most reliable allies. Besides becoming the fourth country to open an embassy in Jerusalem, Honduras under Hernández's leadership has regularly supported Israel at the UN and other international bodies. But Hernández is leaving office on January 27, to be replaced by Xiomara Castro, a self-proclaimed democratic socialist whose husband and campaign manager allied himself with far-left Venezuelan leader Hugo Chávez and Cuba's Fidel Castro when he was the president himself. The president-elect has declared her intention to overturn many of Hernández's policies. "The Christian people in Latin America, the Jewish people in Latin America, we have to create a coalition in order to advocate for Israel," Hernández said. "And I believe in the Christian community you have very important support. I'm not just talking about Central America. I'm talking about the whole Latin America region." Given the significant economic and social challenges Castro will face when she assumes the presidency in late January, she has good reason to choose the pragmatic path of continuing cooperation with Israel and the US. Her silence on the issue to this point indicates that she may

well be waiting to make up her mind. Israeli officials, Honduran friends of Israel, and Hernández himself will be watching closely in the coming weeks to try to gain a sense of where Israel-Honduras ties are headed.

Israel Expects to Establish Ties with Comoros, Maldives; The leading candidates to normalize ties with Israel next are the Muslim-majority island nations of The Comoros and Maldives, according to diplomatic sources. The sources said there were ongoing contacts. However, there were no indications from diplomatic sources that an announcement was expected anytime in the near future. The Comoros, a small archipelago in the Indian ocean, has never recognized Israel, but Israeli officials confirmed last October that the US had brought Comorian and Israeli officials together to discuss normalization. Located in the Indian Ocean, the archipelago nation of roughly 330,000 inhabitants, spread across hundreds of islands, does not tolerate the public practice of any religion other than Islam and currently does not grant non-Muslims citizenship.

Google Acquires Israeli Cybersecurity Company Siemplify for \$500m; Google has acquired another Israeli company, threat detection firm Siemplify, for a reported \$500 million, nine years after its \$1 billion purchase of navigation app Waze. The purchase will mark Google's fourth acquisition of an Israeli company and its first in the cybersecurity industry outside the US. Siemplify will become part of Google Cloud's security team "to help companies better manage their threat response," wrote Google Cloud Security VP and GM Sunil Potti, in a post on Tuesday, January 4. Siemplify's cloud services will serve as the foundation for Google's cloud activities and cybersecurity operations with "the team's talent leading the way," he said. Last summer, Google committed to investing \$10 billion in cybersecurity over the next five years to "strengthen cybersecurity, including expanding zero-trust programs, helping secure the software supply chain, and enhancing open-source security" and to train 100,000 Americans in fields like IT support and data analytics. Governments and businesses are at a "watershed moment," in addressing cybersecurity, Kent Walker, SVP of global affairs at Google, said in August, as "cyber attacks are increasingly endangering valuable data and critical infrastructure." Siemplify was founded in 2015 by entrepreneurs Amos Stern, CEO, Alon Cohen, CTO, and Garry Fatakhov, COO, with offices in Tel Aviv and headquarters in New York. According to CTech by Calcalist, Stern was previously "in the IDF's Intelligence Corps where he headed a cyber unit before moving on to work for Elbit Systems, where he met his co-founders." Siemplify says it offers a "holistic security operations platform" that allows security analysts at enterprises and organizations to "work smarter and respond faster" to threats. The company developed a security orchestration, automation, and response (SOAR) system that helps security analysts automate certain tasks, "integrate security tools to respond to cyber threats with speed and precision while getting smarter with every analyst interaction." SOAR is set to be unified with Google's cloud cybersecurity service Chronicle (which grew out of X, Alphabet's "moonshot factory" incubator). In his own post on Tuesday, Stern said he and his co-founders knew from their "experience building and training security operations centers from around the world," that security analysts in large enterprises and organizations need more tools to face threats.

63,000 Infected Poultry Found in Northern Israel; Another avian influenza hotspot was reported in the town of Nahalal in northern Israel on Monday, January 3, with about 42,000 turkeys reportedly infected with the virus, according to the Agriculture Ministry. The newest outbreak comes just a day after two new outbreaks of the virus were reported in northern Israel on Sunday, January 2, as the virus continues to spread in Israel and around the world. The two hotspots were located in the towns of Gadish and Ne'ot Golan. In Gadish, about 7,400 infected chickens were found in two coops. In Ne'ot Golan, about 14,000 turkeys were found to be infected. The veterinary services are operating in an emergency format and continuing to actively locate outbreaks in northern Israel and isolate the hotspots. Eggs produced in Gadish are being kept out of the market. "This is an infection event of a magnitude we have not experienced here before," said Agriculture Minister Oded Forer on Sunday. "Each new hotspot is a warning sign that directs us to work to increase the biological safety of all chicken coops in Israel," he said. "Agriculture Ministry employees work in an emergency format, with increased forces, and work day and night to handle every site to allow a return to

routine as soon as possible.” Forer recently instructed his office to raise the egg quotas for farmers in Israel and to open the market for imports due to expectations of an egg shortage in the coming months. The minister is operating an inter-ministerial command room to handle the continuing bird flu outbreak in the country.



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