

Yachad Ministries' Israel's News Update March 3, 2022 (30th Adar-A, 5782)



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Zelensky Calls for General Mobilization as Russian Forces Advance; Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy signed a decree on the general mobilization of the population on Thursday night, February 24, in the wake of Russia's invasion. The decree stated that mobilization is to be carried out within 90 days. He also vowed on Friday to stay in Kyiv as his troops battled Russian invaders who are advancing toward the capital in the biggest attack on a European state since World War Two. The Russian 58th Brigade was held off in the north of Ukraine where battles were being held in the Peremoha regions, while in the south, Ukrainian forces retook a captured bridge near Kherson along the Dnieper river. Moscow captured the Chernobyl nuclear power plant in northern Ukraine on Thursday after Russian troops crossed into the country from Belarus, entering through the Chernobyl nuclear disaster zone, and have now advanced closer to Kyiv, a US defense official said. People working at the power plant were taken hostage. Russian forces have also taken over Zmiinyi Island, a Ukrainian island in the Black Sea, Ukraine's National Police said late on Thursday. Ukraine forces are still battling to keep hold of the Gosmotel military airport, near capital Kyiv, as two Russian helicopters were shot down by Ukrainian forces during sustained attacks on Gostomel, Ukraine's Armed Forces said. A Russian Antonov AN-26 military transport aircraft crashed in Russia's Voronezh region on Thursday night, killing the entire crew, Interfax reported citing military officials. Russian military officials have reportedly said the crash could have been caused by a technical failure. The Ukrainian military added that dozens of Russian armored equipment units were destroyed. A Russian platoon of Russia's 74th motor rifles brigade has surrendered to Ukrainian forces near Chernihiv in northern Ukraine, according to the Ukrainian Armed Forces. Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelenskiy said prior to the capture of Chernobyl that Ukrainian forces are "giving their lives to prevent the capture of the nuclear disaster zone, as heavy fighting in eastern Ukrainian cities continued after Russian President Vladimir Putin authorized a "special military operation" in the early hours of Thursday morning. Earlier, four ballistic missiles were launched from the territory of Belarus into Ukraine. The mayor of Ukraine's capital Kyiv ordered a curfew on Thursday in comments shown on television. Elsewhere, parts of Ukraine's southern Kherson region were no longer under Kyiv's control, the regional administration said. In addition, Russian troops have taken over the Kakhovka hydroelectric power station built on the Dnieper River, Ukraine's energy minister said. The outskirts of Ukraine's port city of Mariupol came under heavy fire and hundreds of explosions have been observed there, a diplomatic source told Reuters on Thursday, as Ukrainian forces battled Russian invaders on three sides.

Ukrainian Embassy Seeks to Recruit Israelis to Fight Russian Invasion; The Ukrainian Embassy in Israel on Saturday, February 26, began actively recruiting people in Israel to fight against the Russian military as its country is facing a full-scale invasion. “The Embassy has begun the formation of lists of volunteers who wish to participate in combat actions against the Russian aggressor,” the embassy wrote in a public Facebook post written in Ukrainian. In the post, the embassy asked those who wish to “participate in the protection of Ukraine from the Russian military aggression” to send an email with their personal information, including any “military specialty” they may have. On Friday, before the Facebook post was published, the Ukrainian ambassador to Israel told journalists that it was legal for Israelis to volunteer for the Ukrainian military. However, Israeli law does have a provision forbidding citizens from joining a foreign military — with a potential punishment of up to three years in prison. This is not applicable if the State of Israel has an agreement with the foreign country in question, though it was not immediately clear if this was the case with Ukraine. Curiously, while it may be illegal for Israelis to volunteer for a foreign military, it is not illegal for a foreign country to recruit people in Israel. The Ukrainian embassy’s post was later deleted from its Facebook page. No explanation was given for the move.

How War in Ukraine Increases Iran’s Threat to Israel; Reports on Thursday morning, February 24, showed Russian attacks across Ukraine, including against key airports and military sites. Air raid sirens were heard in western Ukraine and in Lviv, where some countries, including Israel, have relocated their embassies. The message that Russia’s unprovoked attack has for the world is clear: other countries can do the same. In the Middle East, Iran understands that the Russian operation gives it a blank check to continue attacking countries throughout the region. This has potential repercussions for Israel. Jerusalem has always behaved as if it will have to face Iran alone, but the conflict in Ukraine is yet another message for the Middle East. While Israel-Iran tensions have gone on for decades, the question is whether the Russian war in Ukraine will open a Pandora’s Box of similar invasions and wars. There is a chance that the war in Ukraine and the US focus on it could lead Iran to believe it can exploit this chaotic time to encourage its proxies to attack Israel. Hezbollah has been threatening Israel and increasingly stockpiling missiles and drones. Tehran could benefit from the Ukraine crisis by either getting a reduction in nuclear sanctions or empowering its proxies. To understand Iran’s current posture is to understand that in many ways, Iran’s attacks on countries in the region foreshadowed Russia’s aggression. Iran has encouraged its proxies and allies in the region to attack countries such as the United Arab Emirates, as well as US forces in Iraq and Israel. Iran openly moves drones and ballistic missiles across borders in the Middle East. This week, Israel alleged that the Islamic Republic was providing drone technology to Venezuela. Iran has armed the Houthis in Yemen and sent advisers to encourage their war against Saudi Arabia. It has also empowered Iraqi militias such as Kataib Hezbollah, which has carried out attacks against Saudi Arabia and the UAE alongside its militia partners in Iraq. In addition, Iran constructed a base near Albukamal in Syria to facilitate the movement of weapons there and to Lebanon, where Iran has helped Hezbollah stockpile masses of missiles. Tehran also backs Hamas, which has recently rolled out new drone and missile threats. Overall, the Iranian posture in the region is one that tests the new world order, which shows that countries that are willing to carry out unprovoked attacks will not suffer consequences.

Israel Will Vote to Condemn Russia; During a government meeting, Israeli Foreign Minister Yair Lapid (Yesh Atid) said that Israel intends to vote in favor of condemning Russia for its attack on Ukraine. The resolution in question is expected to be submitted in the coming days and will be brought for a vote in the United Nations General Assembly. Lapid said that Israel will not remain silent, and will instead take a clear position and choose a side. At the same time, he said that Israel will need to be calculated regarding all of its own interests. During a Foreign Ministry assessment earlier on Sunday, February 27, Lapid instructed that efforts be concentrated on assisting Israelis standing in line at Ukraine’s border crossings, and on sending humanitarian aid to Ukraine, as per the list of equipment the Ukrainians sent. According to the Foreign

Ministry, around 2,000 Israeli citizens have left Ukraine since the fighting started, and the Ukraine-Poland border crossings are very crowded. The Foreign Ministry, therefore, recommends that Israeli citizens trying to flee Ukraine travel to the country's borders with Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, and Moldova.

Israel Ready for 10,000 Immigrants from Ukraine in Coming Weeks; Israel's government estimates that around 10,000 Ukrainians will immigrate to Israel in the coming weeks, government officials told The Jerusalem Post on Saturday, February 26. The Ministry of Immigration and Absorption would not comment on this estimate, but responded, saying: "The Ministry of Immigration and Absorption is prepared for the emergency immigration of Ukrainian Jews, and in view of the escalation in Ukraine, the ministry, headed by Minister Tamano Shata, is preparing all sectors to assist and absorb any Jew seeking to immigrate to Israel." "In light of the drastic increase in applications for immigration from Ukraine and in view of the security situation in the region", the ministry said that Tamano-Shata and Finance Minister Avigdor Lieberman agreed on providing additional budgets to actualize the emergency immigration operation from Ukraine. In the entire year of 2021, a total of 13,006 Jews made Aliyah from Eastern Europe to Israel. Therefore, 10,000 immigrants from Ukraine in one month is substantial and dramatic. As revealed by the Jerusalem Post, Israel offers fleeing Jews from Ukraine free shelter and meals. The Ukrainian Jews will be offered to stay in hotels for a time of two weeks till one month – with possibilities to extend this time further.

Thousands March for Ukraine in Tel Aviv; Thousands gathered in Tel Aviv's HaBima Square and Rothschild Boulevard Saturday, February 26, to protest the ongoing Russian invasion of Ukraine, as well as what they say is Israel's lackluster response, as the war concluded its third day. The rally-goers marched toward the Russian embassy building, where police kept them several dozen meters away from the mission. Vyacheslav Feldman, the founder of protest organization Israeli Friends of Ukraine, told The Times of Israel that the demonstration's first priority was to "stop the war," and the second was for the Israeli government to take a more active role. "We're asking the Israeli government to take a clearer step," he said. "We want Israel to take a side. Humanitarian assistance is nice, but what Ukraine needs is defensive weapons." As Russia attacks Ukraine, Israel has avoided taking a stance aligned too closely with either side. This is believed to be at least partly due to its need to work with the Russian military presence in neighboring Syria. Israel has expressed concern regarding the invasion and offered humanitarian aid to the Ukrainian people, but Prime Minister Naftali Bennett has avoided condemning Russia or even mentioning the country by name in his statements since the launching of the widespread military operation across Russia's border. Foreign Minister Yair Lapid issued a clearer condemnation of Moscow Thursday, February 24, calling the invasion "a grave violation of the international order."

Here's How the War in Ukraine Will Impact the Israeli Economy; The war between Russia and Ukraine stands to have a major effect on the global economy, and there is much discussion of strict sanctions being placed on the aggressing superpower. Meanwhile, the Israeli economy also stands to be affected by the conflict in a variety of ways. Israel and Ukraine have fostered an import-heavy relationship over the years. In 2020, Israel imported more than \$150 million dollars of goods from Ukraine, with a heavy emphasis on food. More than \$70m went toward the import of oils, dairy, eggs, and grains. During a visit to Israel earlier this month, Ukrainian Deputy Foreign Minister Emine Dzhaparova said that Ukraine was the source of half of the grains imported into Israel. "Cut your bread supply in half to understand how Israel will be affected," she said. "In case of an escalation, the State of Israel will be directly affected." Furthermore, Ukraine is responsible for a large portion of construction material imports into Israel. In 2018, Israel imported more than \$175m worth of iron and steel. As a result, the Israeli construction industry stands to suffer a blow from the ongoing conflict. A significant chunk of the Start-Up Nation's labor force is based in Ukraine, as cheaper wages, a lack of time zone-related complications, and exceptional hi-tech talent have led companies to outsource their work to the Eastern European nation. Over the past few weeks, hi-tech companies have scrambled to prepare for war in Ukraine, either by finding redundancies to support themselves in case of a loss of labor power, or by

relocating their Ukraine-based teams elsewhere. Gas prices throughout Europe are expected to skyrocket due to Russia's position as a key source of oil. The price per barrel of oil is currently over \$100 for the first time since September 2014. Gasoline prices in Israel were recently raised by NIS 0.34 per liter as of February 1 in response to supply chain complications. This latest development will only add more (increasingly expensive) fuel to the fire. "Oil prices went through the roof. We're talking about oil prices going to \$103 a barrel," said Dr. Alexander Coman from the Faculty of Management at Tel Aviv University. "This is dramatic, and we will have to pay for it at the gas station, and in the cost of electricity. In Israel, we pay particularly more because 60% of what we pay for gasoline is taxes, so everything is amplified dramatically."

Can Israel Become Europe's Gas Supplier? Israel could make moves to position itself as a central gas exporter in the Middle East, as tensions surrounding the war in Ukraine have led to a discussion about alternatives to Russia's gas exports. While it is already supplying gas to Jordan and Egypt, if the right steps are taken, Israel has the potential to become a natural gas source for Europe, as well. "Europe is completely hysterical that it sits in the hands of Putin," said Dr. Alexander Coman, from the Faculty of Management at Tel Aviv University. "The idea that Putin is sitting with his hand on the faucet and can, at will, open or close gas supply to Europe – this is a terrible scenario for them." It is, however, a brilliant opportunity for Israel: in its current position, Europe would do much to find alternative sources to its fuel supply needs. "One of the ways is an alternative pipeline that will bring gas – or perhaps electricity – from Egypt, Israel, and [perhaps] Saudi Arabia to Europe, through Cyprus," explained Coman. He refers to the EastMed pipeline, a planned project that will directly connect the natural energy resources in the East Mediterranean sea to greater Europe. In light of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, there may be an opportunity to revisit the EastMed pipeline's viability, though it could hinge on US willingness to renege its withdrawal, as well as Europe's progress in renewable energy. In a tweet, Likud MK Yuval Steinitz urged the government to promote the construction of the pipeline. "In this time of dramatic rise in energy prices worldwide, and of severe shortages of natural gas in Europe, it is of immense importance to promote Israel's ability to export gas directly to Europe through pipelines that cross the Mediterranean," he said. Germany, which is the largest importer of Russian gas, has announced moves to reduce its dependence on Russia, including the construction of two liquefied natural gas terminals. It has also halted the \$11 billion Nord Stream 2 Baltic Sea gas pipeline project, which would effectively double Russia's export capacity made possible by its predecessor, the Nord Stream pipeline. At present, Israel's gas supply mainly comes from two primary natural gas fields off the western shore of the country: Tamar, which contains approximately 10.8 trillion cubic feet of natural gas, and Leviathan, which contains 22 trillion cubic feet – enough to last the country for decades at its current level of gas expenditure. This excess has opened up the opportunity to begin exporting gas to neighboring countries such as Jordan and Egypt. Israel began supplying natural gas to the former in 2017 when Jordan signed a \$10b 15-year supply deal. Israel has exported gas to Egypt since 2016 and is expected to substantially increase the export amount in 2022.

Israeli Embassy to Ukraine Evacuates to Lviv; The Israeli embassy to Ukraine officially evacuated to Lviv on Tuesday, February 22, moving from the capital in Kyiv after Russia declared separatist areas of Donetsk and Luhansk to be independent republics, a likely escalation against Ukraine. Foreign Minister Yair Lapid emphasized that he is prioritizing the safety of Israel's emissaries and citizens in Ukraine, as well as that of the local Jewish community. Lapid thanked Israeli Ambassador to Ukraine Michael Brodsky and his staff for smoothly evacuating the embassy in Kyiv, which is farther east than Lviv and therefore closer to the area of conflict. Israel has been providing consular services in Lviv for citizens seeking to return since last week. The Foreign Ministry reiterated its call for all Israeli citizens to leave Ukraine immediately. Lapid also thanked Poland, Slovakia, Romania, Moldova, and Hungary for coordinating with Israel in advance of the possibility that Israelis will need to be evacuated by land. Israeli diplomats in those countries visited border crossings with Ukraine in recent days and held meetings with the border authorities to ensure passage for Israelis.

Despite the efforts and the government's entreaties over the past week, only about 4,000 out of an estimated 12,000 Israelis had left Ukraine as of Monday.

Putin Recognizes Ukraine Separatist Territories as Independent, Defying West; Russian President Vladimir Putin on Monday, February 21, recognized the independence of separatist regions in eastern Ukraine and paved the way to provide them with military support — a direct challenge to the West that will fuel fears that Russia could imminently invade Ukraine. The carefully staged move announced in the Kremlin could lead to new sanctions on Russia and flies in the face of European efforts for a diplomatic solution to the escalating crisis, which has brought East-West relations to a new low and jeopardized trade. Britain's prime minister called it a "breach of international law." It came amid a spike in skirmishes in the eastern regions that Western powers believe Russia could use as a pretext for an attack on the western-looking democracy that has defied Moscow's attempts to pull it back into its orbit. Putin justified his decision in a far-reaching, pre-recorded speech blaming NATO for the current crisis and calling the US-led alliance an existential threat to Russia. Sweeping through more than a century of history, he painted today's Ukraine as a modern construct that is inextricably linked to Russia. He charged that Ukraine had inherited Russia's historic lands and after the Soviet collapse was used by the West to contain Russia. Ukrainians shrugged off the move as meaningless, but it remains a fundamental blow to their country, eight years after fighting erupted in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions between Russia-backed separatists and Ukrainian forces. After his speech, Putin signed decrees in the Kremlin recognizing those regions' independence and called on lawmakers to approve measures paving the way for military support.

Foreign Ministry Issues Fresh Call for Israelis in Ukraine to Leave Immediately; The Foreign Ministry on Saturday, February 19, issued a fresh call for Israelis in Ukraine to immediately leave the country, amid growing Western warnings of a looming Russian invasion. The ministry made the appeal after holding a situational assessment and following talks that director-general Alon Ushpiz held with unspecified figures at the Munich Security Conference. A Foreign Ministry statement also cited "the events in eastern Ukraine," apparently referring to intensifying clashes there between Ukrainian forces and Russian-backed separatists. "An eruption [of war] will be quick and severe," the statement said. The ministry said it decided to keep Israeli Ambassador Michael Brodsky in Kyiv to assist Israelis seeking to leave. He and embassy staff will open the consular section on Sunday "to provide travel documents to citizens that require this," according to the statement. The Foreign Ministry also said it was keeping tabs on the decisions by the US and Britain to move their embassies in Kyiv to the city of Lviv, "with the aim of safeguarding the lives of the State of Israel's envoys in Ukraine while providing a response to Israeli citizens." The Foreign Ministry issued a travel warning for Ukraine last weekend and urged Israelis in the country to immediately leave, a call repeated throughout the week by Israeli officials. These pleas have been met with a mixed response. In an interview with The Times of Israel on Tuesday at his Kyiv office, Brodsky said Israelis should immediately leave Ukraine and not count on rescue flights to extract them if war breaks out. The Foreign Ministry's latest appeal came as Germany and France urged their citizens to leave Ukraine, as deadly clashes broke out between Ukrainian forces and Russian-backed separatists, and Moscow test-fired nuclear-capable missiles in a defiant show of force. Both German airline Lufthansa and Austrian Airlines said they would stop flights to Kyiv and Odesa from Monday until the end of February but would maintain flights to western Ukraine.

Netanyahu Warns US Congress Members: No Accord Will Stop Iran's Nuclear Program; Opposition leader MK Benjamin Netanyahu told a group of visiting members of the US House of Representatives that no signed agreement would ever stop Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons, and insisted that only stiff sanctions and military action would be effective. Dozens of Congress members from both the Republican and Democratic parties are in Israel this week, meeting with local officials on a trip organized by the AIPAC-affiliated American Israel Education Foundation. Western officials have indicated that negotiations between world powers and Iran to restore the faltering 2015 nuclear deal could produce an agreement within days. The

so-called Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action has unraveled since the US unilaterally pulled out of it in 2018, in a move supported by Israel when Netanyahu was still prime minister. Netanyahu told the US lawmakers on Monday, February 21, that history has shown that other countries in the region seeking nuclear weapons were only stopped when Israel took military action and bombed reactor sites before they became operational, citing the attacks on Iraq's reactor in 1981 and a Syrian reactor in 2007. "The way to stop the arming of such regimes with military weapons is not, then, through agreements. It is important to understand that it just does not work," Netanyahu said. "The only thing that has worked in the past is one of two things or both: either crippling sanctions or a credible military response or both — preferably both," he said. "Nothing else has worked and in my judgment, nothing else can work."

Israel Looks to Increase Trade with Morocco to \$500 Million; Israel is targeting an annual trade volume of \$500 million with Morocco, up from \$131 million currently as the two countries look to broaden cooperation since they normalized relations in 2020, Israel's economy minister said on Monday, February 21. Orna Barbivai made the statement following talks in Rabat with Moroccan industry and trade minister Ryad Mezzour, with whom she signed a trade and investment cooperation deal. Under this deal, the two countries commit to facilitating trade and investments in the aerospace, automobile, agri-food, textile, and pharmaceutical industries in particular, Mezzour said. Earlier in the day, Barbivai discussed with her Moroccan counterpart Nadia Fettah Alaoui future agreements on investment incentives, customs cooperation, and double taxation, Morocco's economy and finance ministry said in a statement. Morocco is also looking forward to cooperating with Israel in fields relating to industrial research and development and the setting up of industrial zones, Mezzour said. Barbivai's visit to Morocco comes three months after the two countries signed a defense pact.

Jordan's King Abdullah Kept Secret Swiss Bank Accounts to Hide Vast Wealth; The king of Jordan, Abdullah II, has for years kept massive bank accounts in Credit Suisse, a Swiss bank known for providing secrecy for high-end clients, during a period in which his country has suffered through economic and political turmoil. King Abdullah was in possession of at least six accounts with the bank, including one that at one point was worth 230 million Swiss francs (\$251 million), while his wife maintained another account. Some of the accounts date from as far back as 2011. Lawyers for King Abdullah II and Queen Rania asserted that their clients had abided by every relevant tax law, that there had been no wrongdoing by the couple, and that most of the wealth in the bank accounts had been inherited from King Abdullah II's father. Jordan's economy, while strong compared to those of many other Middle Eastern countries, has been negatively impacted by COVID-19, contracting by 1.6% during 2020, according to the World Bank. Abdullah, meanwhile, has been dogged by allegations of corruption in recent years. Through the release of the Panama Papers, it was revealed that he had secretly purchased 14 luxury homes — at an estimated total value of \$106 million — in the United States and the United Kingdom between 2003 and 2017, through front companies. According to a report from the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists, attorneys and advisers to Abdullah worked extensively to conceal his real estate holdings, including establishing multiple shell companies and working through entities in Switzerland and the British Virgin Islands. The investigation found Abdullah owned at least 36 secret shell companies in tax havens. Jordanian intelligence worked relentlessly to quash the publication of information related to King Abdullah II's finances, threatening and intimidating local media outlets. Jordan has been criticized for lapsing into increased authoritarianism in recent years. The US advocacy group Freedom House, which monitors democracy and human rights across the world, downgraded the kingdom from "partly free" to "not free" last year.

Israel is 6th-Most Expensive Country in the World for Groceries; Israel has the sixth-highest cost of groceries in the world, according to a new study that analyzed the average cost of a "standard" trip to the grocery store in 36 countries around the world. According to the research, the average cost of groceries in Israel totals \$28.45 per person a week — a figure higher than that of the US, Denmark, or Canada. The most

expensive country to shop for groceries was Switzerland, with an average weekly cost of \$48.16. Switzerland is known for its high cost of living, with meat prices being particularly high at \$7.94 for 300g of chicken filets and \$5.20 for 100g of beef. Conversely, the cheapest country to purchase groceries was Turkey, with a meager \$8.95 average cost – only about a fifth of Switzerland’s. Colombia came in second place with an average spend of \$9.71 per week. The study also analyzed the cost of groceries in comparison to average weekly earnings, finding that the country with the least affordable groceries per capita was Mexico, while the Netherlands was considered the most affordable country. Although the Netherlands' average cost was \$22.28 – compared to \$14.47 in Mexico – the average monthly income in Mexico is \$1,352, while the average monthly income in the Netherlands is over \$4,900, or just 1.97% of cost/earning compared to 4.65% of individual earnings in Mexico, more than twice as much. Grocery prices have gone up across Israel since the start of 2022, which has led to a backlash. Prices for goods such as fruits, Osem products, and even diapers have risen in the last few months, angering shoppers and leading to calls for boycotts. Israel’s Consumer Price Index (CPI) rose 2.8% in 2021 and increased another 0.1% to 2.9% this year as of January 30, the Central Bureau of Statistics reported in January.

New Analysis of 3,200-Year-Old Lead Ingots Sinks Theories About Bronze Age Trade; A new analysis of four 3,200-year-old lead ingots from shipwrecks off the coast of Caesarea redraws late Bronze Age trade routes and may shift researchers’ understanding of Cyprus’s geopolitical role. The recently published study in the *Journal of Archaeological Science: Reports*, “Incised Late Bronze Age lead ingots from the southern anchorage of Caesarea,” takes a new look at four lead ingots originally recovered in dives in the late 1980s, which were etched with indecipherable Cypro-Minoan markings used by Cypriots in the 13th–early 12th century BCE. “It was a bit of a detective story,” said co-author Prof. Naama Yahalom-Mack of the Hebrew University’s Institute of Archaeology in conversation Monday. “We started from the markings and went on to the metal itself to understand where it comes from. First of all what it is, then to see in isotopic analysis that the lead’s ‘fingerprint’ points us to Sardinia.” She noted that Sardinia is an unexpected place of origin for these presumably Cypriot ingots because it is “beyond the western Mediterranean, beyond the [Cypriots’] regular route of trade, which is Egypt, the Levant, Anatolia and the Aegean” According to Yahalom-Mack, Cyprus was once thought of as a “passive” bit player, merely a producer of copper for others to buy and sell in the international metals trade. Bronze, the ubiquitous metal of the era, is forged through a combination of tin, lead, and copper. However, new interdisciplinary research published jointly by the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the University of Haifa describes a small but agile nation with both formal and informal trade ties that may well have helped fill the power vacuum that occurred with the collapse of entrenched empires around 1200 BCE. What the new study points to is that “along with formal trade expressed in texts, there is informal trade — smaller ships, entrepreneurs, taking advantage of formal trade and hitching a ride on it,” Yahalom-Mack said. Yahalom-Mack said there is some evidence that Canaanites may have been involved. She said the current study is “another brick in the building” that is taking Cyprus from a passive player to a more active player, but much more work is needed.

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