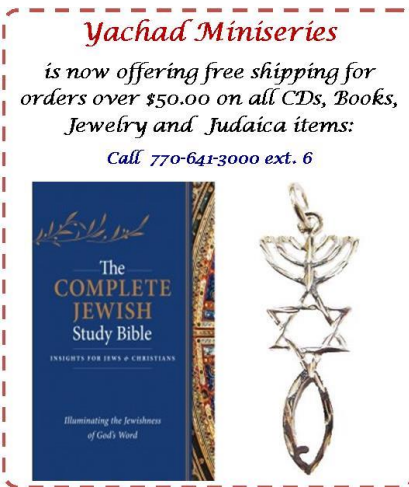


## ***Yachad Ministries' Israel's News Update May 26, 2022 (25<sup>th</sup> Iyyar, 5782)***



### **[For the Yachad Report Newsletter For May 2022](#)**

***Senior Iran Revolutionary Guards Member Assassinated in Tehran;*** A senior member of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps was killed outside his home in Tehran on Sunday, May 22, by unidentified gunmen on a motorbike, Iranian state TV reported, giving only scant details of the attack. Col. Hassan Sayad Khodayari "was assassinated during a gun attack carried out by two motorcyclists in Tehran's Mohahedin-e Eslam Street," IRNA said. Reports identified him as a "defender of the sanctuary," a reference to Iranians who carry out Tehran's operations in Syria and Iraq within the Guard's elite Quds Force that oversees operations abroad. The two assailants shot Col. Hassan Sayad Khodayari five times in his unarmored Iranian-made Kia Pride, state media said, right off a highly secure street home to Iran's parliament. Security forces were pursuing the suspected assailants, state TV reported, without offering further details or giving a motive for the killing.

***Slain Iranian Officer May Have Planned Attacks Against Israelis, Jews Worldwide;*** The senior member of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps who was killed in Tehran on Sunday, May 22, had planned kidnappings and other attempts to attack Israeli and Jewish targets worldwide. Although the Guard gave only scant detail about the attack that occurred in broad daylight in the heart of Iran's capital, the group blamed the killing on "global arrogance," typically code for the United States and Israel. An Iranian official quoted by Qatar-based Al-Jazeera warned that the assassination constitutes "a crossing of the red line," and that those responsible "will pay a heavy price." That accusation, as well as the style of the brazen attack, raised the possibility of a link with other motorbike slayings previously attributed to Israel in Iran, such as those targeting the country's nuclear scientists. If suspicions regarding Israeli involvement in the attack are true, it would pose a new level of action by the Jewish state against Iran, as Khodayari was not involved in any way in its nuclear program. Little information is publicly available about Khodayari, as Quds officers tend to be shadowy figures carrying out secretive military missions supporting Hezbollah, the Lebanese terror group, and other militias in Syria, Iraq and elsewhere.

***South Africa's EFF Says Israel is an 'Evil State that Must Be Destroyed';*** Israel is an "evil state which must be destroyed as a matter of urgency," South Africa's party Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) said in a statement released after the violent clashes during the funeral of Palestinian journalist Shireen Abu Akleh last week. The EFF, the third-largest party in the South African parliament, is a pan-Africanist

faction that "draws inspiration from the broad Marxist–Leninist tradition," according to its constitution. The party and its leader, Julius Malema, have been criticized for encouraging racist sentiments and were twice convicted of hate speech. In the statement, the EFF said it condemns the "sadistic, cruel and genocidal Israeli apartheid state" for Israel's Police actions taken against Palestinian rioters at the funeral of the Al Jazeera reporter. According to them, Israel is a "sick, fascist and inhumane regime whose actions eclipse those of an apartheid state." The EFF also called on the South African government and President Cyril Ramaphosa to expel the Israeli ambassador from the country, saying the world's patience has led "Zionist maniacs to believe they are untouchable." The EFF publicly supports Russia's invasion of Ukraine, saying in a statement released this week that it "commends Russia's anti-imperialist program against the NATO war alliance."

***Chad Restores Full Diplomatic Relations with Israel;*** Israel has an ambassador to Chad for the first time in 50 years, adding to Israel's growing ties to African countries. Ben Bourgel, who serves as a non-resident ambassador to several African countries, added Chad to his list on Tuesday when he presented his credentials to Chad's president, Mahamat Idriss Deby Itno. Several African nations whose leaders had friendly relations with Israel severed those ties in the 1970s, following pressure from Arab nations. Former Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu prioritized restoring diplomatic ties with many of them, and he met with Chad's former president, Idriss Déby Itno, in 2018. Déby Itno was killed last year by rebel militants and replaced by his son, Mahamat. Chad, whose surface area is roughly twice that of Texas, has around 16 million inhabitants, and the average annual salary is about \$760, according to World Bank statistics. Its government is widely seen as a dictatorship. The Israeli ambassador and his team "will work to strengthen the cooperation between the two countries in areas of common interest such as climate change, agriculture, water management, and health," the Israeli embassy in Dakar, Senegal, wrote on Twitter about Bourgel's accreditation.

***Lone Soldiers under Financial Strain, Fear IDF Scholarship Bill Won't Pass;*** Lone soldiers are expressing concern for their finances and education ahead of the Knesset votes for the IDF Scholarship Bill on Monday, May 23. The "MeMadim LeLimudim" scholarship for released lone soldiers, combat soldiers, and other soldiers from special backgrounds funds two-thirds of the cost of the veterans' academic or vocational studies — but has been suspended due to political disagreement and delays in the passing of the bill for the program. Lone soldiers, foreign-born IDF service people without families in Israel, or Israelis estranged from their families, are especially impacted by these delays. They've expressed concern about being in debt and having to suspend their studies because they are unable to pay — And feel that MKs have turned them into political gambling chips, despite having left their families and risked their lives to serve in the IDF. "The delay has affected me," said a former lone soldier currently serving as an officer. "I am currently studying for my master's and was counting on the scholarship to cover my last few months of university. I lost my mother to cancer recently and she was my main support mechanism. This has put me under unnecessary financial strain." The Ra'am Party agreed to support the bill, N12 reported on Tuesday, but the situation has become more tenuous since Meretz MK Ghaida Rinawie Zoabi said on Thursday that she would be departing the coalition — Leaving Bennett's faction with 59 MKs to the opposition's 61.

***Bennett's Chief of Staff Quits, in Latest Sign of Discord in PM's Office;*** Tal Gan-Zvi, Prime Minister Naftali Bennett's chief of staff, will be stepping down in the coming weeks, Bennett's office announced on Monday, May 23. Gan-Zvi, who has advised Bennett since 2013, submitted his resignation, according to the Prime Minister's Office. Bennett called Gan-Zvi's "wisdom, management skills, and fruits of his labor" a valuable asset, and referred to his aide as "one of my pillars." "I had the privilege over the past year to work with a true public servant for whom Israel's well-being was and remains always at the front of his mind," Gan-Zvi, 41, said in a statement thanking Bennett. Gan-Zvi's request comes less

than two weeks after another top Bennett adviser announced she would be leaving. Shimrit Meir, seen as a rival of Gan-Zvi's within Bennett's office, announced in a resignation letter that she would leave on June 1. Meir, the senior adviser for foreign affairs, is also one of Bennett's closest aides. However, she reportedly clashed repeatedly with Gan-Zvi and other political advisers who felt that she was trying to extend her influence into their spheres, including advising Bennett on his political strategy and responses to crises such as the coronavirus and the departure of MK Idit Silman from the coalition. Gan-Zvi's resignation was seen as a further sign of instability in the government, which is struggling to survive after losing its majority.

### ***NYC Mayor Sparks Outrage: Touts 40% Drop in Hate Crimes While Antisemitism Surges;***

Jewish activist Dov Hikind slammed New York City Mayor Eric Adams for boasting about a 40 percent single-month drop in hate crimes without releasing a plan to fight anti-Semitic attacks in the city, which continue to increase. "When I heard that Adams had touted a 40% single-month drop in hate crimes even as violent antisemitism continues to skyrocket, I assumed it was because he has some kind of plan for dealing with it," Hikind wrote in a tweet. He described in a video how he contacted the mayor's office to find out what his plan was to deal with antisemitism. "People in the Jewish community all over New York are extremely concerned about antisemitism, about the attacks that are ongoing almost on a daily basis," said Hikind, a former NY State assemblyman and the founder of Americans Against Antisemitism. "Just recently the New York Times headlined, 'Anti-Semitic attacks in New York are at highest level in decades.' What I find fascinating is that the mayor visited a synagogue this past weekend and he sort of boasted, and I understand why he would want to do that, that there was a 40 percent drop in New York City hate crimes, which is very perplexing because there have been attacks after attacks within our community just in the past week." Hikind added that "I know the mayor cares" and said that he knew "the mayor wants to deal with this problem." He called on Adams to release a plan on how he is going to deal with record high ongoing antisemitic attacks taking place in the city. "Jewish New Yorkers in particular, they take off their yarmulkes, they hide their Star of David, they are afraid. That is the reality. Mayor Adams, please can I get a copy of the plan, your plan to fight this outbreak of hate in New York. How are you going to deal with it?" Hikind went on to ask the public to call the mayor's office to request a copy of the plan, providing them with the phone number. He noted that New York was facing "a serious problem of hate directed against the Jewish people happening on a daily basis."

### ***Tens of Thousands March in New York's Israel Parade in Major Show of Solidarity;***

Tens of thousands marched in New York City's Celebrate Israel parade on Sunday, May 22, in a significant and long-delayed affirmation for the area's Jewish communities and Israel supporters. Hundreds of groups representing a broad swath of American Jewry — from yeshiva students to bikers — marched and rode down Manhattan's Fifth Avenue, along with top American and Israeli government officials. The parade billed as the largest expression of solidarity with Israel outside of its borders is normally held annually but had not taken place in three years due to the pandemic. It is meant to be both a public show of support for Israel, including at the political level and a chance for New York Jews to get together. The march came during a fraught period. Since the last parade in 2019, antisemitism has surged in New York, the partisan climate has continued to stoke tensions between Jewish groups and fray political support for Israel, and sizable anti-Israel marches have taken place in the city. Yet the parade passed without incident, and a protest against the event was sparsely attended. A heavy police presence secured the area around the parade, with manned barricades and police vehicles monitoring entries to the area starting a couple of blocks away. A New York City Police Department marching band led the procession, which passed by thousands of spectators, many waving flags in front of the avenue's flagship company stores, for several hours on Sunday afternoon. Many Israelis chatted in Hebrew on the sidelines and in the procession.

***Iran Weeks Away from Having Enough Fissile Material for First Atomic Weapon;*** Israeli Defense Minister Benny Gantz warned Tuesday morning, May 17, that Tehran is just weeks away from being able to produce sufficient fissile material necessary for a nuclear weapon. Speaking at the 'A New Global Order' conference being held at Reichman University in Herzliya a day before his trip to Washington, Gantz said Iran's nuclear program is making significant progress both qualitatively and quantitatively. "Iran continues to accumulate irreversible knowledge and experience in the development, research, production, and operation of advanced centrifuges. It stands just a few weeks away from accumulating fissile material that will be sufficient for a first bomb, holds 60 kilograms of enriched material at 60%, produces metallic uranium at the enrichment level of 20%, and prevents the IAEA from accessing its facilities." "Even today, Iran is making an effort to complete the production and installation of 1,000 advanced IR6 centrifuges at its nuclear facilities, including a new facility being built at an underground site near Natanz. Even now, Iran is working to complete the manufacture and installation of 1,000 new advanced IR6 centrifuges at its nuclear facilities, including at its new underground facility near Natanz." He added: "We will continue the political effort to strengthen our relations with our neighbors in the region and our partners around the world. This while being willing to make efforts to shrink the conflict and strive for political arrangements between us and the Palestinians, which, even if they seem distant, are a strategic need."

***US to Refuel Israeli Warplanes During Massive Drill Simulating Strike on Iran;*** In a signal to Iran, the US Air Force will refuel Israel Air Force fighter jets during a massive aerial drill in the coming weeks that will simulate an Israeli strike against Iran. The Israeli drill – dubbed “Chariots of Fire” – will simulate striking targets far from Israel's borders with a large number of planes while simultaneously acquiring new targets on various fronts in real-time. It will be the largest military drill in Israel's history. Unprecedented in scope, the drill will enable the army to maintain a high level of readiness in an ever-changing region, the IDF said. It aims to improve the military's capabilities in an intense, multi-front and prolonged war on all of Israel's borders. The chief of staff said that following the month-long drill – which reflects “updated operational planes, customized military capabilities and new combat methods including cooperation with the US military” – the IDF's readiness for war will be at its peak. Alongside the drill, the IDF has said that fighting the ongoing wave of terror attacks is its No. 1 priority, and will continue to carry out operations to arrest suspects and confiscate weapons.

***Hezbollah Bloc Loses Majority as Final Results Released;*** Hezbollah and its allies lost the majority it held in the Lebanese parliament, as their opponent, the Christian Lebanese Forces, became the largest Christian party in parliament after the final results of the elections in the country were announced on Tuesday, May 17. The election process was marred by violence, violations of election regulations, and power outages, with only about 41% of voters casting their vote. Supporters of Hezbollah and the Christian Lebanese Forces clashed and polling monitors were threatened as Lebanese citizens voted in the first parliamentary elections since the economic crisis in the country began. Monitors from the Lebanese Association for Democratic Elections (LADE) reported that its monitors were threatened by members of Hezbollah and its ally the Amal Movement multiple times at multiple polling locations on Sunday. Politicians will now need to work to form a government and resume efforts to remedy Lebanon's worsening economic crisis.

***In First, Israel Sends 2,000 Helmets, 500 Flak Jackets to Ukraine;*** In a further sign of its shifting stance on the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Israel on Wednesday, May 18, sent Ukraine helmets and flak jackets that the Defense Ministry said will be given to rescue forces and civilian organizations. In a statement, the ministry said it was shipping 2,000 helmets and 500 flak jackets — the first sent by the Jewish state since the Russian invasion began. Since Russia invaded Ukraine on February 24, Jerusalem has tried to preserve its ties with Moscow and has until recently refused to send defensive equipment to

Ukraine — instead, sending over some 100 tons of humanitarian aid as well as setting up a field hospital in western Ukraine for six weeks. However, the attempt to maintain a neutral stance has appeared to shift somewhat in recent weeks. Jerusalem agreed last month to send the helmets and flak jackets to emergency workers in Ukraine and explicitly accused Russia of war crimes as scenes of atrocities have emerged in towns and cities across the country. Sending defensive arms would mark a sea change in Israel's approach to the war, though it would stop well short of the tanks, guns, planes, and ammunition sent by the Europeans and Americans. The reported move is being driven both by pressure from the US and other Western allies, which want Israel to back up its condemnations with actions and by concerns that Israel's reluctance to more fully back Ukraine could hurt defense exports if countries fear Jerusalem will do the same to them in a time of need.

***Catastrophe Looms for Dead Sea as Incoming Water Sources Dry Up;*** The Dead Sea sinkhole situation is worsening, according to a marine scientist, who is warning of a looming environmental catastrophe. “At present, there are over 6,000 sinkholes on the western [Israeli] side alone,” said Dr. Michael Lazar, from the Department of Marine Geosciences at the University of Haifa. Since the 1960s, the Dead Sea has lost a third of its surface area, and the water continues to recede by about a meter every year. A report released by the Environmental Protection Ministry in 2014, based on 10 years of research and data collection, attributes this decline to evaporation accelerated by global warming and climate change as well as human activities, such as the diversion of water from the Jordan River and mineral extraction. Downstream from Syrian and Lebanese tributaries, water is diverted for agricultural and other purposes. This is essentially turning off the Dead Sea's tap, with very little water now flowing into it. In addition, water is being pumped from the sea to the Dead Sea Works factories' artificial evaporation ponds. Very little water enters the salt lake in the north but lots of water exits in the south. The Israel Meteorological Service recently published a report on extreme weather events that indicates a significant warming trend in all regions of the country. The warming rate is higher in the west – the coastal plain, the northern Negev, and the mountain region – than it is in the valleys, the east, and the north, where the rate of temperature increase was the lowest. By the end of the 21st century, precipitation is likely to decrease by 10%. The change in rainfall distribution is expected to result in years of below-average rainfall, a phenomenon that could lead to decreased replenishment of water sources causing an increase in the salinity of water sources. The flow of the Jordan River – the main water source of the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea – is expected to shrink by up to 22% (or possibly more) in the 21st century. This is a dramatic trend for the region regarding water availability and water scarcity. “There is a clear correlation between sinkhole collapse and peak drought periods,” Lazar said directly linking the increase in sinkholes to the climate crisis.

***What Are the Jewish Roots of France's Newest Prime Minister?;*** French President Emmanuel Macron appointed Labor Minister Élisabeth Borne as the new prime minister of France on Monday, May 16. Borne is the second female prime minister in the republic, and is also the daughter of a Jewish Holocaust survivor. Here are her Jewish roots: Borne, 61, was born in Paris's 15th arrondissement (administrative district) to Joseph (Borne) Bornstein and Marguerite Lecèsne. Her father is a Jew of Polish origin, born to a family that fled to France in 1939 as refugees escaping from the Nazis. He was a member of the Resistance and was therefore deported in 1942 from France. He was naturalized as a French citizen in 1950. Borne's parents ran a pharmaceutical laboratory. Since her father passed away when she was just 11 years old, she became “a pupil of the Nation,” receiving educational benefits granted by the state to minors who had a parent injured or killed during a war, a terrorist attack, or while rendering certain public services. This allowed her to obtain a full scholarship for her studies. She had previously spoken about being the daughter of a single mother, saying in an interview that “It has not always been easy. I lost my father when I was very young and so we ended up with my mother, who had two daughters and who did not really have an income.” When Borne presented her naturalization decree as a citizen for the first time,

as a prefect in school, she was moved. She told a local newspaper in 2015: “That I, the daughter of this stateless refugee who only became French in 1950, made this gesture... says something about integration.” Borne has served as a civil servant for decades – but is not considered someone who might overshadow Macron.

***McDonald's Leaving Russia after Three Decades;*** McDonald’s announced on Monday, May 16, that it will be permanently closing up its operations in Russia after over 30 years in the country and that it has begun selling off its restaurant locations. The decision came after the company said it was temporarily closing its 850 Russian sites in March in response to Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. McDonald’s said the decision was made due to the "humanitarian crisis" and "unpredictable operating environment" created by the Ukraine war, BBC News reported. McDonald’s first opened a location in Russia in 1990 as the Cold War was coming to an end, with the arrival of the fast-food giant in the Soviet Union seen as symbolic of the end of tensions between the West and the East. In 1991, the USSR fell apart and when Russia opened its economy to Western companies, McDonald’s began to add more locations. "This is a complicated issue that's without precedent and with profound consequences," McDonald's CEO Chris Kempczinski said in a message addressed to staff and suppliers.

***Jewish Radio Station to Open in Morocco;*** A Jewish-focused radio station will soon be opening in Morocco, featuring programming that highlights the culture of Moroccan Jews. With a planned September launch, Mozaik will offer programming on Moroccan Judaism, and will be based in studios in Casablanca, said Jacques Knafo, who is one of the project’s founders, EJP reported. Mozaik will start off as an online station before launching as an FM radio station once it receives its broadcast license. The station will focus on social and cultural aspects of Moroccan Judaism and will start off broadcasting in Casablanca, Rabat, and Marrakesh before expanding to other Moroccan cities.



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