

# ***Yachad Ministries' Israel's News Update June 30, 2022*** ***(1<sup>st</sup> Tamuz, 5782)***



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***Israel and Turkey Foiled Multiple Iranian Terror Attacks in Recent Days;*** Prime Minister Naftali Bennett said Monday, June 20, that Israeli and Turkish security officials have worked together to foil terrorist attacks on Israelis in Turkey. “The operational efforts alongside Turkish security forces have borne fruit,” Bennett said. “In recent days, in a joint Israeli-Turkish effort, we thwarted a number of attacks, and a number of terrorists were arrested on Turkish soil.” The prime minister did not include details on the number of attacks, how many individuals were arrested, or the nationality of the terrorists. Israel is “working closely with Turkish officials to thwart attempts to strike Israelis and Jews,” said Bennett. Bennett spoke in his office to Israeli reporters hours before he and Foreign Minister Yair Lapid announced that they would be dissolving the Knesset. Senior Israeli leaders have sounded a series of warnings since last week that Iran is trying to carry out terror attacks against Israelis on Turkish soil. “The goal is to return the situation to normal as quickly as possible,” Bennett said.

***Israeli security forces evacuate Israelis from Turkey after threat;*** Israeli security forces evacuated Israeli citizens from their Istanbul hotel last week, allegedly ahead of an Iranian hit squad that was intent on kidnapping or killing them. The real-life drama played out amid reports that the Iranians were targeting Israeli tourists in Istanbul as retaliation for last month’s murder of Hassan Sayyad Khodaei, a Revolutionary Guard colonel, which Iran has blamed on Israel. But far from sowing panic, the evacuation order and subsequent warnings were met by confusion, and some apathy, on the ground in Turkey among both local Jews and Israelis visiting the country. The warnings come at a time when Turkish-Israeli relations are warmer — or at least less chilly — than they have been in over a decade. Earlier this year, Israeli President Isaac Herzog met with his counterpart, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, and last month, Turkey’s foreign minister traveled to Jerusalem to meet with his Israeli counterpart, Yair Lapid. Israel reportedly put off issuing the warning for some time in order to give Turkish authorities a chance to resolve the threat internally. Ultimately the evacuation was done in cooperation between Mossad and Turkish authorities, whom Prime Minister Bennett praised this week.

***After Terror Attacks, Israel Reinforces Part of West Bank Barrier with Wall;*** Construction work began Tuesday, June 21, to upgrade a section of the West Bank security barrier, months after a series of deadly terror attacks were committed by Palestinians who illegally entered Israel, defense officials said. The Defense Ministry said the 9-meter (30 foot) tall concrete wall replaces a 45-kilometer (28 miles) stretch of fencing from an area in the northern West Bank to Israel's Bat Hefer region — one of the first sections of the barrier ever built, some 20 years ago. NIS 300 million (some \$93 million) was allocated toward the plan in April. Separately in April, work to fix up holes over dozens of kilometers of the fence began, following a spate of deadly terror attacks in Israel, including several in which terrorists from the northern West Bank entered Israel via large holes in the barrier. On April 7, a Palestinian gunman — who entered Israel through a gap in the barrier — shot dead three people in Tel Aviv. A week earlier, a Palestinian who also crossed through the barrier illegally — with a vehicle — shot and killed five people in Bnei Brak. And on May 5 in Elad, two Palestinians who entered Israel illegally killed three people in an ax attack. “We are continuing our defensive efforts in the north by strengthening the Judea and Samaria security barrier and providing solutions for the Israeli home front,” Defense Minister Benny Gantz said in a statement published by his office on Wednesday. “These efforts constitute an integral part of our operational activity. Along with this, we will continue to operate against all threats we face in order to maintain the security of Israel's civilians,” he added.

***Iran Claims it Detained Mossad Cell Planning to Kill Nuclear Scientists;*** Iran claimed on Tuesday, June 21, that it had arrested Mossad agents who were planning to assassinate nuclear scientists in the country. The announcement did not detail the alleged agents' nationalities or how many people had been detained. There were no further details given on the alleged plot. “The arrest of these Mossad operatives came after a complicated intelligence operation that lasted for eight months of monitoring them,” said Mehdi Shamsabadi, the prosecutor general of Sistan-Baluchistan province, according to Iranian news outlets. Shamsabadi said the investigation was ongoing and that the individuals would be charged in the near future. “The case is currently in the preliminary investigation stage and an indictment will be issued and sent to the court soon,” he said, according to the state-run Islamic Republic News Agency. Three people had been arrested two months earlier on suspicion of leaking classified information related to Iran's nuclear program. The report said the three — named M.S., M.Z., and A-Gh — were linked to Israeli intelligence services. It said one of those arrested was a woman who held a government position in an Iranian province but had previously worked for an organization linked to the presidency. Another individual arrested had tried to access confidential information through “administrative and executive authorities.” Iran often detains individuals it claims are linked to foreign intelligence services without providing public evidence.

***Coalition to Begin Process on Wednesday for Dissolving Knesset, New Elections;*** The coalition on Tuesday, June 21, pushed up its timeline for the Knesset's disbandment and new elections, adding its dispersal bill to Wednesday's legislative agenda. The Knesset Presidium approved the addition, and the Knesset House Committee granted the bill an exemption from the traditional 45-day waiting period between submission and an initial vote. The earliest the Knesset can disband was Wednesday, although a more likely scenario would be Monday of next week, as the legislation must pass four plenum votes and two committee reviews. If it proceeds as planned, Foreign Minister Yair Lapid will take over as prime minister next week, possibly on Tuesday, and will hold the post through elections in the fall and until the formation of Israel's next coalition government. “We hope that within a week we will complete the process,” Welfare Minister Cohen told Kan Radio. “The intention is to finish it as soon as possible and to go to elections.” On Monday evening, Prime Minister Naftali Bennett and Lapid surprised the nation — and many of their own coalition members — by announcing their intention to voluntarily disband their own government and send the country back to its fifth election since 2019, likely in late October or early

November. They said they did so after coming to a conclusion that there was no way to maintain the current government.

***Chaos at Ben Gurion Airport Worsens as Lines Stretch out of Terminal;*** Months of heavy congestion and an overall sense of chaos at Ben Gurion Airport seemed to worsen on Wednesday, June 22, with long lines reaching outside the airport and attempts to ease the crowding by using a secondary terminal failing to address the thing needed most — more staff. Scenes of chaos at Israel's main international airport have become the new normal over the past few months. Pictures published on social media on Wednesday showed long lines of travelers stretching outside the airport. In an attempt to ease the congestion at the main terminal building (Terminal 3), the Israel Airports Authority diverted some international flights to Terminal 1, which only seemed to create further disorder as the congestion spread. The airport authority has said the situation is not expected to change until next year, with travelers advised to arrive four hours ahead of their flights instead of two to three hours as is usually recommended.

***Victoria First Australian State to Ban Public Displays of Swastikas;*** Victoria became Australia's first state to pass a bill banning the public display of swastikas this week. Chairman of Australia's Anti-Defamation Commission Dr. Dvir Abramovich, who was at the helm of a five-year campaign to get the bill passed, was the only member of the public present at the passing of the bill in the Victorian Parliament's Legislative Council. The passing of the bill means it will now be a criminal offense for any person to deliberately display a swastika publicly, which can lead to fines of up to 22,000 Australian Dollars (\$15,100 USD) and/or imprisonment. The bill contains exemptions for members of the Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain religions to whom the swastika is historically a symbol of peace.

***Italy Scouts for Israeli Water Tech as Drought Concerns Mount;*** A large delegation of Italian water utility companies recently wrapped up a visit to Israel to scout for collaborations and partnerships on water technologies, meeting with startup representatives, government authorities, and business entities as Italy battles the country's worst drought in some 70 years. The delegation of 22 Italian water utility companies and three engineering firms was hosted earlier this month by the Israel Export Institute, a government agency tasked with facilitating trade opportunities, partnerships, and strategic alliances under the purview of the Economy and Industry Ministry. The parties met in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem for the Israel Water Innovation Technology Summit and toured water desalination, purification, and conservation plants by Mekorot, Israel's national water company which says it supplies about 1.7 billion cubic meters of water (or about 450 billion gallons) per year.

***Netanyahu: This isn't the time for elections, I'll compromise;*** Opposition leader MK Benjamin Netanyahu (Likud) has said in closed conversations that he is willing to compromise on both the Justice Ministry and the right of veto in legal matters if it means Israel will avoid new elections, Israel Hayom reported. Elections can be avoided if, prior to the Knesset's dissolution, a new coalition is formed. "This is not the time for elections," Netanyahu said. "The current government has abandoned the Iranian issue, and that is the most urgent thing to deal with. Everything else can wait a moment."

***Turkey to Nab Iranian Cell Planning Attacks on Israelis;*** Turkey has detained several people allegedly working for an Iranian intelligence cell that planned to assassinate or snatch Israeli tourists in Istanbul. The news of the bust came weeks after Israel ordered its citizens in Istanbul to leave immediately, warning of an imminent Iranian attack plot targeting Israelis in Turkey. Among those who were being targeted for kidnapping were a former Israeli diplomat and his wife. The diplomat's name was not published. The suspects, who were not all Iranian nationals, were detained in a raid last week in three houses in Istanbul's popular Beyoglu district.

***Israeli Team to Join Firefighting Efforts in Cyprus;*** On the instruction of Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett, Foreign Minister Yair Lapid (Yesh Atid), and Public Security Minister Omer Barlev (Labor), two firefighting planes and a plane filled with firefighting equipment will leave for Cyprus. The equipment will help Cypriot firefighters manage the fires blazing on the island. The decision to send the firefighting planes was made following a request by the Cypriot government. The Israeli Embassy in Nicosia, headed by Ambassador Oren Anolik, is coordinating together with the National Security Council and Israel Fire and Rescue Services the arrival of an Israeli firefighting team to Cyprus and their activities with the local firefighters. Israel, Cyprus, and Greece are signatories to an agreement under which they will cooperate on the management of natural disasters.

***Iran Orders US to Pay \$4 billion in Compensation for Slain Nuke Scientists;*** A court in Iran on Thursday, June 23, ordered the United States government to pay over \$4 billion to the families of Iranian nuclear scientists who have been killed in targeted attacks in recent years, state-run media reported. The largely symbolic ruling underscores the escalating tensions between Iran and the West over Tehran's rapidly advancing nuclear program, with negotiations to restore the tattered atomic accord at a standstill. Although Tehran has blamed Israel in the past for slayings targeting Iranian nuclear scientists since a decade ago, Iran did not directly accuse Jerusalem in its announcement. Iran has not recognized Israel since the 1979 Islamic Revolution that ousted the pro-West monarchy and brought Islamists to power. The court mentioned Israel only in saying the US supported the "Zionist regime" in its "organized crime" against the victims. It's unclear how the court decision, like a raft of previous Iranian cases against the US as the two sides have engaged in a spiraling escalation of threats, would gain traction; there are no American assets to confiscate in the Islamic Republic.

***Pro-Iran Professor Slips his 'Crimes Against Humanity' in Interview;*** Oberlin College's Islamic Studies professor Mohammad Jafar Mahallati's alleged interview with Voice of America's Masih Alinejad, an Iranian-American journalist and human rights activist on Friday, June 24, revealed a number of instances in which he covered up crimes against humanity during his time serving as Iran's ambassador to the UN in 1988, according to lawyers and human rights experts. Iranian human rights activist Lawdan Barzargan has, in recent times, emerged as the pivotal leader of a dynamic international campaign called Alliance Against Islamic Regime of Iran Apologists to dislodge Mahallati from academia. In a highly detailed Amnesty International report on the clerical regime's mass murder of 5,000 innocent Iranian prisoners in 1988, published in 2018, the London-based human rights organization said Mahallati committed "crimes against humanity" by covering up the slaughter of Iranian political prisoners. Mahallati sports the title "Professor Peace" because he teaches about peace and friendship.

***UNRWA Teachers Continue to Support Antisemitism, Terrorism On Social Media;*** Teachers working for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) continue to publish antisemitic posts on social media despite commitments by UNRWA and the US to ensure that antisemitism, violence and terrorism are not supported in UNRWA institutions, according to a new report by the NGO UN Watch published on Thursday, June 23. The report came as the US and other Western countries gathered to pledge funding for the agency for Palestinian refugees. In the new report, UN Watch shared 20 new examples of UNRWA teachers and staffers in the West Bank, Lebanon and Jordan expressing support for terrorist groups, violence against Jews and Israelis and antisemitism. One of the new examples is Nihaya Awad, a computer teacher for UNRWA in the West Bank, who posted a photo of a Hamas terrorist next to a child in a Hamas military uniform, accompanied by text praising Hamas.

***Satanic Temple Called 'Leading Beacon of Light';*** The Satanic Temple called itself the leader of the "battle for abortion access" after the Supreme Court overruled Roe v. Wade on Friday, June 24. "The Satanic Temple is the leading beacon of light in the battle for abortion access. With Roe v Wade

overturned, a religious exemption will be the only available challenge to many restrictions to access,” the organization wrote in a social media post. The temple’s website says, “Satanic abortions are protected by religious liberty laws.” “In accordance with the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA), first trimester abortions are now exempt from unnecessary regulations for all individuals practicing the Satanic Temple’s religious abortion ritual,” the organization says.

***French Jews Fear for their Safety in Europe;*** A study of the Jewish populations in twelve European countries found that Jews living in France were the most fearful for their own safety, mostly due to anti-Semitic terrorist attacks in recent years. The European Jewish Association (EJA) released the data last week, which compiled a “Jewish Quality of Life” index using data gathered by the Institute for Jewish Policy Research in London and the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights regarding key issues for Jews in Europe. According to the index, French Jews claim they feel the least safe in their country. In contrast, Jews in Denmark felt the safest, with Daniel Staetsky, the author of the index, citing anti-Semitic terrorist attacks in France as a possible reason for the feelings of insecurity. France, which has the largest population of Jews in the European Union, ranked 10th out of 12 in the index overall, which covered security of Jews, government attitude toward Jews, freedom of worship and other issues relating to the security of religious sites.



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