

# ***Yachad Ministries' Israel's News Update December 8, 2022 (14<sup>th</sup> Kislev, 5783)***



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***Report from Iran: Four Executed for Cooperating with Israel;*** Iran's official news agency reported Sunday morning, December 4, that the Islamic Republic has executed four people accused of collaborating with the Israeli Mossad. According to the report, the four were executed by hanging. Two weeks ago, Iranian authorities announced they had sentenced four individuals to death. According to the semi-official Iranian government's news agency, the four were suspected of cooperating with the Israeli intelligence service and kidnapping Iranian officials. The report adds that three others were given five to ten years behind bars for allegedly damaging national security, aiding in kidnappings, and possessing illegal firearms. Iran occasionally announces the detention of people it says are spying for foreign countries, including the United States and Israel. Tehran does not recognize Israel and supports anti-Israeli armed groups across the region, such as Hezbollah and Hamas. Iran's Revolutionary Court regularly hands out death sentences, although it remains unclear which court charged the four men.

***Iran Intensifying Efforts to Kidnap, Kill Officials, Activists and Journalists – Report;*** Iran is intensifying its efforts to kidnap and kill government officials, activists and journalists, with security agencies in the US, Canada and the UK warning residents of threats to their lives by the Iranian regime, American media reported on Thursday, December 1. The report is based on government documents and interviews with 15 officials in the US, Europe and the Middle East. The individuals being targeted include former senior US government officials, Iranian dissidents who fled to Western countries, media organizations critical of the regime, and Jewish individuals or people linked to Israel. Similar to earlier reports, an American media outlet was told by officials that Iran is using proxies such as local criminals to carry out its plans. The officials warned that while so far Iran has failed to carry out an attack, it is persistent and likely to succeed in assassinating a dissident, journalist or Western official, which could spark a direct conflict with Tehran. The officials added that the rate of attempts has drastically increased in the past two years and are more ambitious and far-reaching than past attempts. The report comes as British and Canadian officials warned local Iranian dissidents that the Iranian regime was targeting them. Three weeks ago, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service stated that it is "actively investigating several threats to life emanating from the Islamic Republic of Iran based on credible intelligence".

***World Cup Fan 'Is Shot Dead by Islamic Regime Security Forces, After He Celebrated Iran's 1-0 Defeat to USA'*** A football fan was allegedly shot dead by Islamic Regime security forces Tuesday night, November 29, after he celebrated Iran's defeat to the USA in the World Cup. Mehran Samak, 27, was reportedly shot in the head in the city of Anzali, eastern Iran, by government agents after he honked his car horn to celebrate the Iranian national team's 1-0 loss. Samak was sitting in his car next to his fiancée when a member of Iran's security forces approached their car and shot the football fan with a bullet to the head, reports Iranian media. He was rushed to a hospital but he died within an hour. Samak had joined dozens of other Iranians across the country who celebrated the national team's loss to the United States amid growing anger against the Islamic Regime. Many saw the match result as a victory against the Iranian government, which has cracked down on nationwide protests that have engulfed the Islamic Republic for months. In Iran's Kurdish region, football fans set off fireworks and honked car horns early on Wednesday to celebrate the Iranian team's defeat.

***Iran Announces Disbandment of 'Morality Police'*** Iran's Attorney General, Mohammad Jaafar Montazeri, announced the dissolution of the Morality Police following the September 16 death of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini, and months of widespread protests that followed. On Saturday, December 3, Iranian authorities said they were reviewing a decades-old law that requires women to cover their heads in public, French media reported. "Both parliament and the judiciary are working (on the issue)" of whether the law needs any changes, Montazeri was quoted as saying at the time, adding that, "The review team met on Wednesday with parliament's cultural commission "and will see the results in a week or two." Montazeri did not specify what could be modified in the law by the two bodies, which are largely in the hands of conservatives. The announcement comes as protests in Iran continue following the death of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini on September 16, after she was arrested for an alleged breach of the country's strict dress code for women based on Sharia law. Hundreds of protesters have been killed in more than two months of nationwide unrest, including dozens of minors. In addition, at least six people have so far been handed death sentences.

***UNRWA Finds Tunnel Underneath One of Its Gaza Schools;*** UNRWA, the UN agency tasked with helping "Palestinian refugees", announced it found a tunnel underneath one of its schools in the Gaza Strip, condemning it as a "neutrality breach", Israeli-based media reported on Wednesday, November 30. In a statement, UNRWA did not mention Hamas, which rules the Gaza Strip and has dug many tunnels used for terrorist operations and leading from Gaza to Israeli territory. "The Agency protested strongly to the relevant authorities in Gaza to express outrage and condemnation of the presence of such a structure underneath one of its installations," UNRWA said in the statement. "The presence of a man-made cavity underneath the grounds of an UNRWA school is a serious violation of the Agency's neutrality and a breach of international law. Moreover, it exposes children and Agency staff to significant security and safety risks," it added. This is not the first time that a tunnel has been discovered underneath an UNRWA installation. In June of 2021, UNRWA admitted it revealed a tunnel beneath one of its schools that armed terrorist groups utilized during a round of fighting with Israel the previous month. During the 2014 counterterrorism Operation Protective Edge, Hamas rockets were discovered inside a school building run by UNRWA. Likewise, a booby-trapped UNRWA clinic was detonated, killing three IDF soldiers. Aside from the massive amounts of explosives hidden in the walls of the clinic, it was revealed that it stood on top of dozens of terror tunnels, showing how UNRWA is closely embedded with Hamas.

***UN to Mark 'Nakba Day' - Israel's Establishment as Catastrophe;*** The UN General Assembly voted Wednesday afternoon, November 30, in favor of holding a commemorative event in honor of the 75th "Nakba Day," the Palestinian name for Israel's establishment, which translates to "catastrophe." The vote was 90-30, with 47 abstentions. The United States, Canada, Australia and the United Kingdom were

among those who opposed the move. Most of the European Union also rejected the motion, save for Cyprus which supported the measure. Ambassador to the UN Gilad Erdan tweeted that the UN in "passing such an extreme and baseless resolution, the UN is only helping to perpetuate the conflict." In a UN General Assembly plenum debate prior to the vote, Erdan called for the UN to "stop ignoring the Jewish Nakba," referring to the 750,000 Jews expelled from Arab and Muslim countries in the aftermath of Israel's establishment. "What would you say if the international community celebrated the establishment of your country as a disaster? What a disgrace," Erdan said.

***Abe Foxman: My Support for Israel May Now Be Conditional;*** Abe Foxman, the past Anti-Defamation League leader who long has said that nothing could separate him from support for Israel, now says the leaders of an "extreme" party could do the trick if they get their way in coalition talks with incoming Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. "I never thought that I would reach that point where I would say that my support of Israel is conditional," Foxman said in an interview published Friday, December 2, by Israeli media. "I've always said that [my support of Israel] is unconditional, but it's conditional. I don't think that it's a horrific condition to say: 'I love Israel and I want to love Israel as a Jewish and democratic state that respects pluralism.'" "If Israel ceases to be an open democracy, I won't be able to support it," he said. Foxman said his outlook reflected that of the larger Jewish community — but added that he was optimistic Netanyahu would not let the leaders of Otzma Yehudit, the party accused of extremism, assuming a role in the incoming government, make drastic changes. "I think he's sensitive and smart enough to listen, to see the very serious concerns that [American Jews] have" said Foxman, who retired from the ADL in 2015, 50 years after first joining the organization. He pointed to an interview Netanyahu had recently, in which the incoming prime minister said he would not allow the excesses counseled by the right-wing party leaders including Bezalel Smotrich, Itamar Ben-Gvir and Avi Maoz.

***'Abraham Accords Unleashed Energy Between Israel, Arab World';*** President Isaac Herzog participated Sunday night, December 4, in an economic forum held at the Bahrain Economic Development Board, with the participation of the Crown Prince and Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Bahrain, Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa. During the event, the President announced that an expanded business delegation will visit Bahrain soon to promote economic cooperation. President Isaac Herzog at the start of the event: "It is a great honor for us to be here. Your hospitality means so much to us and to our delegation." "I am so happy to meet our counterparts. In this meeting we will speak about how to raise and move forward and upgrade remarkably the economic relations between our nations. As you said correctly, the Abraham Accords unleashed energy that existed underneath, but had to be realized between the nations, and we truly feel in the family." "We truly feel that we are meeting our cousins, our brothers and sisters. I bring a message of goodwill and congratulations from the people of Israel to the people of Bahrain, hoping to create more business contacts and other relations in all areas of life, so we can show the entire region why peace is so important."

***IDF Holds Joint Air Drills with US, Simulating Strikes on Iran and Proxies;*** The Israel Defense Forces on Tuesday, November 29, said it would be holding a series of joint aerial exercises with the US military, simulating strikes against Iran and its regional terror proxies. In a statement, the IDF said the drills, set to take place over Israel and the Mediterranean Sea, would begin Tuesday. "Fighter jets and refuelers from the IAF and the US Air Force will take part in the exercise and simulate a number of scenarios in the face of regional threats," the statement said. The joint drill was agreed upon during IDF chief Aviv Kohavi's trip to the US last week. The IDF said Kohavi told American defense officials in Washington that the two militaries must accelerate joint plans for offensive actions against Iran. On Thursday, November 24, Kohavi said joint activities with the US military in the Middle East would be "significantly expanded." "At the same time, the IDF will continue to act at an accelerated rate against the entrenchment of the Iranian regime in the region," he added. Kohavi held meetings with senior American

officials over five days, focused on the Iranian threat. “During the discussions, it was agreed that we are at a critical point in time that requires the acceleration of operational plans and cooperation against Iran and its terrorist proxies in the region,” he said last week.

***IDF Arrests 3,000 Palestinians, Thwarts 500 Attacks in Past 6 Months;*** The IDF’s ongoing Operation Break the Wave in the West Bank has seen thousands of troops and reservists crack down on Palestinian terrorism, arresting over 3,000 suspects and thwarting over 500 terror attacks. The operation began in late March after a series of terror attacks in Israeli cities left 20 people dead. Israeli security forces, including the IDF, Shin Bet (Israel Security Agency) and Israel Police have been carrying out raids during day and night against Palestinians suspected of terrorism. For more than six months, some 25 regular battalions have been deployed to the West Bank, along with an additional 84 of reservists deployed to the area by the end of next year. The large number of troops comes as the level of violence in the West Bank continues to remain unusually high, with massive amounts of gunfire directed against troops carrying out operational missions as well as against Israeli civilians. The past year has seen a marked increase in terrorism, with 281 serious terror attacks by Palestinians: 239 against soldiers and 42 against civilians. There were also a total of 8,483 violent incidents by Palestinians such as riots or stone throwings, about 40% of them against Israeli civilians and 60% against IDF troops. The number marked a significant rise of almost 20% from the 7,039 attacks last year.

***A Book of Psalms Saved a Victim's Life in Jerusalem Terror Attack;*** A man who was seriously injured in Jerusalem bombing last week was spared from what could have been a fatal fate by none other than his book of Psalms – or Tehillim in Hebrew – which blocked a shard of debris from piercing his body, said Shaare Zedek Medical Center. The victim, a 62-year-old man, arrived to Shaare Zedek hospital in serious condition and underwent a series of operations to remove shrapnel from his body. While the man was recovering, visitors were stunned to discover that he had a book of psalms in his possession that was pierced almost entirely through by a shard of debris resulting from the explosion. The shard hit the back cover of the book and penetrated nearly all the way through – though stopping just short, and potentially saving the man’s life. The shard penetrated the book up to the 124th chapter of the Psalms before stopping at the line: "Our soul is like a bird that escaped from a box of hardships." The psalm that the shrapnel stopped is obviously very notable, as the message in the psalm is about being saved from hardship. The bus station bombing in Jerusalem on Tuesday, November 22, killed two, including a 16-year-old boy, and wounded 18 others – including the fortunate man who had this book of psalms with him

***Lapid: Netanyahu and Allies Intend to Dismantle the Democratic Foundations of Israel;*** Outgoing Prime Minister Yair Lapid launched a blistering attack on prime minister-designate Benjamin Netanyahu on Monday, November 28, accusing him of “a crime of opportunity” in seeking judicial reforms that would affect his ongoing corruption trial. The prime minister-designate and his expected coalition colleagues, Lapid charged, were seeking to remove all limitations on the political majority of the day, and to turn Israel into a country “without gatekeepers, without courts... dismantling the democratic foundations of the country.” “Netanyahu wants to decide who the prosecutor in his trial will be. Netanyahu wants to decide the identity of the judges who will hear his appeal,” Lapid told a conference of the Israel Democracy Institute. “Netanyahu wants to pass a law that would bar indictments against a prime minister, because he is a prime minister who has been indicted.” “This isn’t judicial reform,” Lapid added. “This isn’t ideology. This is a crime of opportunity.” Lapid, who is expected to become opposition leader once Netanyahu succeeds in nailing down his expected 64-seat coalition, said “we must stop this. This is what we are determined to fight against.”

***China Detains Protesters, Journalist in Crackdown on Rare Public Demonstrations;*** Chinese security forces detained people Monday, November 28, at the scene of a rare demonstration, as authorities

worked to extinguish protests that flared across the country calling for political freedoms and an end to COVID lockdowns. People have taken to the streets in major cities and gathered at University campuses across China to call for an end to lockdowns and greater political freedoms, in a wave of protests not seen since pro-democracy rallies in 1989 were crushed. A deadly fire last week in Urumqi, the capital of northwest China's Xinjiang region, was the catalyst for the public anger, with many blaming COVID lockdowns for hampering rescue efforts. Beijing Monday accused "forces with ulterior motives" for linking the fire to COVID measures, saying local authorities had "made clear the facts and refuted this information and smears." A British media outlet said one of its journalists had been arrested and beaten by police while covering the Shanghai protests, though China's Foreign Ministry said the reporter had not identified himself as such. A British government minister Monday denounced the Chinese police's actions as "unacceptable" and "concerning." In the capital, at least 400 people gathered on the banks of a river for several hours, with some shouting: "We are all Xinjiang people! Go Chinese people!" Three people were then detained by police at the site, a journalist saw, with law enforcement preventing passersby from taking photos or video of the area. When asked why one of the people was taken away, a policeman said "because he didn't obey our arrangements" before referring the reporter to local police authorities.

***Pompeo: Anti-Semitism Is a cancer, We Stand with the Jewish People;*** Former US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo on Saturday, November 26, denounced anti-Semitism in a tweet which appeared to be a response to former President Donald Trump's meeting with white supremacist Nick Fuentes and controversial rapper Kanye West. "Anti-Semitism is a cancer. As Secretary, I fought to ban funding for anti-Semitic groups that pushed BDS," wrote Pompeo. "We stand with the Jewish people in the fight against the world's oldest bigotry," he added. While the former Secretary of State did not specifically mention Trump, the former President has come under fire over the meeting with Fuentes and West, which took place at his Mar-a-Lago estate earlier the previous week. According to media reports, Fuentes and West were seen dining with Trump at his Mar-a-Lago estate on Tuesday, November 22, when West said he had asked the former president to be his vice presidential running mate in 2024. While sources confirmed to American media that Fuentes did attend the dinner with Trump and West, Trump told the news outlet that he had never met Fuentes before dining with him. "Kanye West very much wanted to visit Mar-a-Lago," Trump said in a statement. "Our dinner meeting was intended to be Kanye and me only, but he arrived with a guest whom I had never met and knew nothing about."

***UK Census Finds 271,000 Jews in England and Wales;*** The latest British census results found that the Jewish population of England and Wales has increased slightly, from 265,000 in 2011 to 271,000 in 2021, according to Jewish British media. The 2021 census, compiled by the Office for National Statistics (ONS), found that while the Jewish community's population has increased in the last decade, Jews have remained at 0.5 percent of the total population of England and Wales. However, ONS noted that the results may not be completely accurate given that religion was a voluntary question, with 6 percent of respondents choosing not to answer. The largest religious group on the 2021 census remained Christians, but for the first time less than half the population (46.2 percent) identified with the religion, down from 59.3 percent in 2011. "Few people today understand or appreciate just how important the census is. But there is nothing like it," Dr. Jonathan Boyd, executive director of the Jewish Policy Research Institute, told the news outlet. "Its extraordinary detail allows us to see and understand the UK's entirely unique ways. It is, without question, the most important research exercise in the UK."

***In First, Israeli Drones to Fly Medical Supplies to Major Hospitals Countrywide;*** An Israeli startup has developed an autonomous long-distance unmanned aerial vehicle that will fly medical supplies to all major Israeli hospitals across the country. Rehovot-based aero-logistics company Gadfin recently inked an exclusive five-year partnership agreement with Sarel, the country's biggest medical purchasing and logistics company, to create the first aerial drone grid that delivers urgent medical supplies to Israeli

hospitals within 200 kilometers. “This will allow Israel to be the first country in the world that will have such a fast supply of urgent medical supplies to all the hospitals around the country from one center, which will end up saving lives,” Eyal Regev, founder and CEO of Gadfin, told Israeli media. “Within three years we plan to have the full aerial drone network to deliver medical supplies to 11 hospitals in Israel and we are also duplicating this network around the world.” Gadfin’s Spirit-One hydrogen-powered UAV can deliver payloads of up to five kilograms (11 pounds) in a 30-liter (eight-gallon) cargo compartment to locations up to 200 kilometers (124 miles) away without needing to change batteries. The contract will allow Sarel to ensure a constant supply of medical equipment, medicines, vaccines, blood, serum, lab samples and more, across Israel, at less than one hour from call, the two companies said in a statement. The Spirit One air-vehicle can also carry inside its cargo bay a standard cooled medical supply package at up to a temperature of minus 80 degrees Celsius, allowing for the delivery of organs, according to Regev.



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