

Yachad Ministries' Israel's News Update January 12, 2023 ***(19th Tevet, 5783)***



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31 Israelis Murdered by Terrorists in 2022; 31 Israelis were murdered and 734 injured in terrorist attacks in 2022, according to data released by the Rescuers Without Borders organization. In total, 7,386 terrorist attacks were committed in the previous year, including 1,153 cases of stone throwing, 1,036 Molotov cocktails thrown, 559 cases of tires set on fire and 84 explosives thrown. 44 car bombs were set off during the year and Jewish residents of Judea and Samaria encountered 53 cases of stone barriers. 96 shooting attacks were recorded in the past year, as well as 9 stabbing attacks which resulted in casualties, 6 ramming attacks and one attack which included a combination of these methods. The organization noted that those murdered by terrorists in 2022 left 18 widows and widowers and 67 orphans and that 2 victims of attacks from previous years died from their wounds during the year. The organization further noted that its statistics do not include the hundreds of attacks on security forces during counterterror operations in the field, which include the throwing of stones and explosives and shooting attacks.

Top Fatah Official: Israelis Can Leave Palestine by Sea or by Wading Into a Sea of Blood; Fatah Central Committee member Abbas Zaki said in a recent televised address that Israelis must choose between leaving Palestine by sea, or wading "into a sea of blood". He praised Palestinian Arab terrorists who have taken the initiative to carry out attacks and for causing Israel to "lose sleep", and he said that the Palestinian Arabs have given "everything" for peace. He added that Israel's settler "scum" should "think about leaving". The comments aired on Palestine TV on January 2 and were translated by the Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI). "If the [Israelis] want to carry out what they proposed during the elections, then they will have to choose between two options: either they leave by way of the sea, or they wade in a sea of blood," Zaki said. "We will not be afraid of the settlers. They should think about leaving. We gave peace every chance. The time has come to prepare for all the options that are open," he added. Zaki, who is a member of the Fatah faction headed by Palestinian Authority (PA) Chairman Mahmoud Abbas, has lashed out at Israel on several occasions. In a speech in December of 2021, Zaki described Israel as a "ghoulish beast".

Israel to Halt PA Construction, Withhold Funds in Response to UNGA Vote; Israel plans to sanction the Palestinian Authority for its push to seek an advisory opinion against it from the world court by withholding tax fees, freezing building plans in Area C, penalizing Palestinian officials and taking steps against non-government groups it holds is involved in diplomatic warfare against the Jewish state. The Prime Minister's Office published information regarding the sanctions on Friday afternoon, January 6, after the security cabinet approved the measures Thursday during a closed-door meeting. "The current government will not sit idly by in the face of this war and will respond as necessary," the Prime Minister's Office said. Israel will transfer NIS 139 million from tax fees it collects on behalf of the Palestinian Authority to compensate the families of Palestinian terror victims. It will withhold PA tax fees to offset the monthly stipends the PA provides to the families of terrorists involved in killing Israelis. This will be retroactive to the start of 2022. Benefits will be denied to Palestinian VIPs "who are leading the political and legal war against Israel", the PMO's office said. The Security Cabinet said it would also continue to target non-governmental groups in the West Bank involved in terror activity or any hostile activity, "including political and legal action against Israel under the guise of humanitarian work."

Iranian Planning Chemical Weapons Attack Arrested in Germany; An Iranian national suspected of planning a terrorist attack using chemical weapons was arrested in Castrop-Rauxel, northeast of Düsseldorf, Germany, early Sunday morning, January 8, according to the Düsseldorf public prosecutor, the Recklinghausen police and the Münster police. According to local authorities, the Iranian citizen, 32, is suspected of preparing an "Islamist-motivated attack" using cyanide and ricin. News reports in Germany claimed that the intelligence came from Israel's Mossad. According to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), ricin is "one of the most toxic biological agents known" and is designated as a Schedule 1 chemical warfare agent. The investigation is ongoing. According to German media, investigators raided the Iranian's residence at around midnight. The scene was cordoned off and police, fire brigade and rescue workers were at the scene, many of whom were wearing protective suits. The evidence gathered by investigators was brought in blue barrels to a decontamination point set up by the fire department. The citizen and one other person have been arrested and evidence has been secured. According to a German media outlet, a "friendly intelligence service" informed German authorities about the danger of a chemical weapon attack.

US, Britain Condemn Latest Executions in Iran; State Department spokesperson Ned Price on Saturday, January 7, condemned the latest executions of protesters in Iran, after the Islamic Republic hanged two protesters who were found guilty over their alleged involvement in the death of a paramilitary officer. "We condemn Iran's sham trials & execution of Mohammad Mehdi Karami & Mohammad Hosseini in the strongest terms. These executions are a key component of the regime's effort to suppress protests. We continue to work with partners to pursue accountability for Iran's brutal crackdown," tweeted Price. British Foreign Secretary James Cleverly also condemned the executions. "Iran must immediately end the violence against its own people. The execution of Mohammad Mahdi Karami and Seyed Mohammad Hosseini by the Iranian regime is abhorrent," he tweeted. "The UK is strongly opposed to the death penalty in all circumstances," added Cleverly. Previously, two men aged 23 were executed over the protests, and campaigners fear dozens more risk being hanged, as Iran uses capital punishment as an intimidation tactic in a bid to quell the protests.

'Pathological Obsession': Senator Cruz Blasts Biden over Condemnation of Israel; US Senator Ted Cruz (R-TX), a member of the Committee on Foreign Relations, blasted the Biden administration on Wednesday, January 4, after top administration officials condemned Israel and suggested that the government may be changing the "status quo" regarding the Temple Mount following National Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir's visit to the compound. "The Biden administration's pathological obsession with undermining Israel is endangering the national security of America and our allies," said Cruz. "A visit

by a minister from Israel's government to a site inside Israel is not a change in any status quo arrangement, and it should not be controversial for a Jew to visit the holiest site in Judaism," he clarified. "The statements from the Biden White House and State Department, which suggest otherwise, will further destabilize the Middle East and risk inciting terrorism. They convince Palestinian officials that compromise is unnecessary because Democrat administrations will coerce our Israeli allies into making dangerous concessions." Cruz said that the Biden administration "has consistently sought to undermine Israel's security and sovereignty over its territory. It prohibited even mentioning the 'Abraham Accords,' sought to open a Palestinian consulate in Israel's capital Jerusalem, unleashed the FBI against the Israeli army, and publicly ostracized parts of Israel's democratically-elected government." "Meanwhile, the administration is pouring over a billion dollars into Palestinian areas and bringing officials from the terrorist Palestine Liberation Organization to Washington, D.C. Now it is doubling down on these disastrous policies," he concluded.

After Demonstrating 57% Remission Rate, Israeli Immunotherapy Licensed by US Firm; An Israeli immunotherapy has successfully "reprogrammed the immune systems" of cancer patients, with a US-based pharma company licensing it for commercialization, its inventors revealed on Wednesday, January 4. The treatment involves removing healthy white blood cells — T-cells — from cancer patients and adding an artificial molecule before returning the cells to the body, said Prof. Cyrille Cohen of Bar Ilan University. The molecule gives the T-cells powers to recognize and kill cells that cause multiple myeloma, a bone marrow cancer. Hadassah Medical Center in Jerusalem tested the therapy with different dose levels and found that, when given at the highest strength, 57 percent of multiple myeloma patients went into remission. Some 90% of patients given the high dose saw an improvement in their condition. Partial results from the ongoing study, which involved 50 cancer patients, have been peer-reviewed. The innovation arms of Bar Ilan and Hadassah Medical Center announced Wednesday that they have signed a deal with Los Angeles-based Immix BioPharma for the further development and commercialization of the therapy. It is named HBI0101, with the first three letters referencing Hadassah and Bar Ilan. "This is very exciting, and represents the first immunotherapy of its type developed entirely in Israel, a blue-and-white cancer treatment," said Cohen, who co-invented HBI0101 together with Prof. Polina Stepensky of Hadassah, predicting that it could be in mainstream use within five years.

Israeli Singer Ofra Haza Named as One of 200 Greatest Singers of All Time; Israeli singer Ofra Haza has been named to the list of Rolling Stone Magazine's 200 greatest singers of all time, coming in at 186. "Like a call to prayer, the opening phrase of Ofra Haza's 1984 song 'Im Nin'alu' is instantly transportive, sweeping the listener up in her expressive, fluttery mezzo-soprano," the magazine wrote of Haza. "And when U.K. production duo Coldcut sampled that passage on their landmark 1987 remix of Eric B. & Rakim's 'Paid in Full,' it was a cross-cultural masterstroke that helped bring the Israeli singer's unmistakable voice to the pop mainstream." "Inspired by her Yemeni-Jewish ancestry, Haza combined traditional vocal conventions with modern technique to create something that felt at once ancient and ahead of its time." "On albums like 1984's Shirei Teiman, 1988's Shaday, and 1992's Kirya, her unprecedented splash in the U.S. pop market cemented her status as 'The Madonna of the Middle East,'" the magazine added. Haza, who was born in Tel Aviv in 1957, was the youngest of nine children. She joined a local theater group at the age of 12 and became Israel's foremost pop star at the age of 19. Haza recorded 17 studio albums and one live album. She passed away on February 23, 2000, at the age of 42.

Netanyahu Says He'll Revert to 'Openly' Opposing Iran Deal, Names Security Cabinet; Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Tuesday, January 3, that he would change Israel's strategy toward countering Iranian nuclear ambitions, promising to bring the fight back to the court of public opinion. Speaking at a cabinet meeting, Netanyahu said that it was still a "possibility" that Western powers would resuscitate efforts to sign a nuclear deal with Iran, and that he would apply public pressure to prevent it.

Tuesday's meeting was the first with official business since the government was sworn in on Thursday. "We will work openly, from a position of strength, in the international arena against a return to the nuclear agreement," Netanyahu said. "Not only in talks with leaders behind closed doors but strongly and openly in the sphere of global opinion, which is now aware of the true dangers posed by Iran – the Iranian regime that is killing innocent citizens in and outside Iran." The most recently discussed nuclear agreement with Iran was panned as a "bad deal" by Israel's previous government and security establishment, because it would release billions of dollars to Tehran without guaranteeing a real curb to its nuclear ambitions.

Netanyahu Pans 'Despicable' UN Vote, Says Jews Cannot Be Occupiers in Their Own Land;

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu slammed the United Nations General Assembly Saturday, December 31, for a resolution passed the previous day to refer Israel's "occupation... of Palestinian territory" to the International Court of Justice, accusing the global body of "distorting historical facts" and declaring that the Jewish people cannot be "an occupier" in its own land. In a strongly worded statement, Netanyahu, who only regained the prime minister-ship on Thursday, said Israel would not be bound by the UNGA resolution demanding the ICJ weigh in on the conflict, in accordance with international law and the UN charter. "Like hundreds of the twisted decisions against Israel taken by the UNGA over the years, today's despicable decision will not bind the Israeli government. The Jewish nation is not an occupier in its own land and its own eternal capital, Jerusalem," he said, adding that "no UN decision can distort the historical facts." "We will continue to fight for the truth," the statement concluded. The UN General Assembly resolution, passed by 87 votes to 26, calls on the Hague-based ICJ to "render urgently an advisory opinion" on Israel's "prolonged occupation, settlement and annexation of Palestinian territory." It also calls for an investigation into Israeli measures "aimed at altering the demographic composition, character and status of the Holy City of Jerusalem" and says Israel has adopted "discriminatory legislation and measures."

Blinken Tells Israel's New FM: US Will Oppose Steps that Undermine 2-State Solution;

Secretary of State Antony Blinken on Monday, January 2, stressed US opposition to policies that undermine efforts to reach a two-state solution to the Israel-Palestinian conflict, during his first call with new Foreign Minister Eli Cohen. Netanyahu's right-religious coalition has agreed to expand Israeli settlements in the West Bank and legalize dozens of wildcat outposts. The first clause of its overall government guidelines specifies: "The Jewish people have an exclusive and inalienable right to all parts of the Land of Israel" — an area that includes the biblical Judea and Samaria, today's West Bank. For the Biden administration, any moves toward West Bank annexation or changing the status quo barring Jewish prayer at the Temple Mount represent "red lines," according to two Israeli and US Officials familiar with the matter. Apart from the aforementioned points, the US and Israeli readouts on the roughly 40-minute Blinken-Cohen call were largely the same. According to the statements, Blinken and Cohen talked about the US commitment to Israel's security, as well as efforts to strengthen the Abraham Accords and advance Israel's integration in the region. They also discussed the Iran nuclear threat. Blinken told Cohen that US efforts to revive the Iran nuclear agreement were currently on hold, due to Tehran's intractable stance, the ongoing protests in the Islamic Republic and the latter's intensified cooperation with Russian forces invading Ukraine — a reality that the new Israeli government is likely satisfied with, given its opposition to the nuclear deal. The readout from Cohen's office said he also used the call to explain his approach to the Palestinians and emphasized his opposition to Palestinians' effort to bring the conflict to the International Court of Justice (ICJ).

Jewish Man and Infant Son Violently Attacked in London;

A Jewish man and his infant son were viciously attacked in the Stamford Hill section of London while taking a walk, according to Stamford Hill Shomrim. The community safety organization said that the man was walking with his wife and one-year-old son when they were attacked by an assailant who threatened to stab them. "A racist male unhappy with

the child's speed pushed the 1-yr-old shouting 'Move F** Jew, I will stab & kill you' before cutting the victim on his face/hand," Stamford Hill Shomrim said on Twitter. The incident is the latest in a series of anti-Semitic attacks on Jewish Londoners that have continued into the new year, which Stamford Hill Somrim referred to in November as a "racism pandemic." The comment was made in reference to a "prolific racist male [who] assaulted Jewish victim shouting 'You Jews, you think you own the world.'" "Locals (St Andrews Mews #N16) are terrified of this violent male," they added. In August, three serious anti-Semitic incidents occurred in one day in London.

US Base in Syria Hit with 2 Rockets, Following 3rd Anniversary of Soleimani Killing; Two rockets struck a U.S. military base in northeastern Syria Wednesday, January 4, following the 3rd anniversary of the killing of Iranian military leader Qassem Soleimani by a U.S. drone strike in 2020. Coalition forces at Mission Support Site Conoco were targeted in the attack that occurred around 9 a.m. local time, according to United States Central Command (CENTCOM). There were no injuries or even damage to the base or the coalition's property. Attacks of this kind place coalition forces and the civilian populace at risk, and undermine the hard-earned stability and security of Syria and the region," Col. Joe Buccino, a spokesman for CENTCOM said. It is unclear how many troops were on the base at the time of the attack, though some 900 U.S. forces are stationed in Syria. Syrian Democratic Forces visited the site of the rocket's origin and found a third unfired rocket. The attack came one day after the anniversary of Soleimani's death on Jan. 3, 2020 in Baghdad, by a U.S. drone strike.

Wave of International Criticism After Ben Gvir Visits Flashpoint Temple Mount; Israel's new government faced a wave of international condemnation on Tuesday, January 3, after National Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir paid a morning visit to the flashpoint Temple Mount site, which houses the Al-Aqsa Mosque. Amid the chorus of denunciation, police reportedly raised their alertness level in Jerusalem. Jordan, which views itself as a custodian of the Temple Mount — a status Israel does not recognize, though it acknowledged the kingdom's "special role" at the site in the countries' 1994 peace treaty — castigated Israel over the far-right minister's visit. "Jordan condemns in the severest of terms the storming of the Al-Aqsa Mosque and violation of its sanctity," the Jordanian Foreign Ministry said in a statement, according to British media. Ben Gvir did not enter the mosque. He made a 15-minute visit to the Temple Mount compound around 7 a.m. — during the time Jews are allowed to enter the site. He had visited on numerous previous occasions, but Tuesday's trip carried more weight as it was his first as a minister. Israel's ambassador to Jordan, Eitan Surkis, was called into Jordan's Foreign Ministry offices for a dressing-down, according to Hebrew media reports. Surkis told the Jordanians that Israel remained committed to the status quo, that there had not been any violations of the agreement, and that Israeli ministers have visited the site in the past.

New Immigrants Will Need to Prove They've Settled in Israel Before Getting Passports; Interior Minister Aryeh Deri is planning a new policy that will see new immigrants required to prove they've settled in Israel, in order to be eligible for an Israeli passport, his office said Monday, January 2. A statement said Deri had instructed the Population Authority to begin preparing for the move, a shift from the current policy that grants a passport automatically upon obtaining citizenship. Deri's plan would first require a law change, which would be part of the incoming coalition's immigration reform. In addition to the passport law, the government also intends to alter the Law of Return, specifically the clause that permits anyone with at least one Jewish grandparent to obtain citizenship. This has drawn intense criticism from Diaspora Jewry. In the past, new immigrants were only eligible for a passport after a year in the country. In 2017, a new law allowed new immigrants to obtain a passport immediately, despite warnings from law enforcement that such a permissive policy could lead to abuse. "The 'air train' in which people eligible [for citizenship] under the Law of Return are taking advantage of their right to a passport and 'absorption package' [of government benefits], and then going back to where they came from is

unacceptable,” Deri said. “We should give status and a passport only to those who are settling in Israel, not to those looking to get benefits they’re not entitled to.”

Bank of Israel Hikes Interest Rates to 3.75%, Highest Since 2008; The Bank of Israel on Monday, January 2, increased the benchmark interest rate for the seventh straight meeting, raising its key lending rate by 50 basis points to 3.75 percent, the highest level since 2008, as the central bank steps up efforts to tame the rising inflation of recent months. The central bank’s monetary committee decided to lift the benchmark rate to 3.75% from 3.25%, in line with most economists’ forecasts. Since policy makers started to raise borrowing costs in April from an all-time low of 0.1%, the key lending rate increased by more than 300 basis points in 2022, as the Bank of Israel seeks to bring inflation back into the government’s 1% to 3% target range. Despite the steps, Israeli inflation accelerated to 5.3% in November, over the previous 12 months, led by spiraling housing and food costs. “High inflation involves growing uncertainty and increasing difficulty in making decisions at the household and the business levels, weighs on economic conduct, and adversely impacts growth and welfare, first and foremost among the weaker strata,” said Bank of Israel governor Amir Yaron. “In addition, the more entrenched inflation becomes, the harder it is to eradicate, and then ultimately the required interest rate will be even higher.”



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