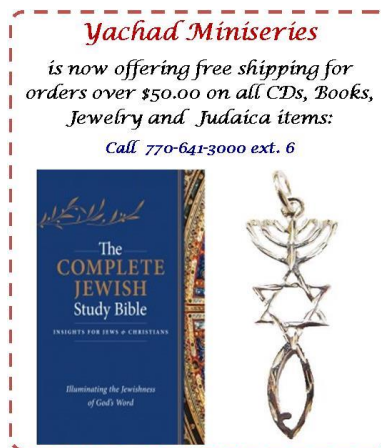


Yachad Ministries' Israel's News Update January 26, 2023 ***(4th Sh'vat, 5783)***



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European Parliament Votes in Favor of IRGC Blacklist; The European Parliament on Wednesday, January 18, called for the EU to list Iran's Revolutionary Guards as a terrorist organization, blaming the force for the repression of protesters and the supply of drones to Russia, British media reported. In a text backed by an overwhelming majority of lawmakers, the European Parliament condemned "the brutal crackdown by Iran, including the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), on the demonstrations after the death of Mahsa Amini, following her violent arrest, abuse and ill-treatment by Iran's 'morality police'". The text called for the EU and its member states to include the IRGC on the bloc's terrorist list "in the light of its terrorist activity, the repression of protesters and its supplying of drones to Russia". A total of 598 members of the parliament voted in favor, while nine voted against and 31 abstained. The European Parliament has no power to compel the EU to add the IRGC to its list, but the text proposed by Polish conservative lawmaker Anna Fotyga represented a clear political message to Tehran. Designating the IRGC as a terrorist group would mean that it would be considered a criminal offense by the EU to belong to it, and any of its assets in the bloc would be frozen. It would also not be able to receive funds from EU citizens or businesses. Wednesday's vote came days after German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock said that it is important that the EU blacklist the IRGC as a terrorist organization.

EU Backs Down from Adding Iran's Revolutionary Guard to Terror Listing; Despite last week's appeal from the European Parliament to blacklist Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps, EU foreign ministers, meeting in Brussels, won't proceed to do so. EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell, who chaired the meeting, said that this could only happen once a court in a member country hands down a ruling, condemning the Iranian guard corps for terror acts. The European Union is set to impose sanctions on several more Iranian officials suspected of playing a role in the crackdown on protesters, but won't add the Islamic Republic's Revolutionary Guard Corps to the EU's terror group blacklist. There has been vociferous pushback from Iranian officials against the listing move, along with warnings that European countries would face retaliation if it went ahead. The 27-nation bloc has already imposed three rounds of sanctions on Iranian officials and organizations — including government ministers, military officers and Iran's morality police — for human rights abuses over the protests that erupted in Iran in mid-September

over the death of Mahsa Amini. European officials also fear that blacklisting the Revolutionary Guard would all but end the slim hopes the bloc might have of resuscitating the Iran nuclear agreement, which has been on ice since the Trump administration withdrew from the internationally-backed accord in 2018.

Report: IRGC Office Discovered in Jewish Area of London; An office used by Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) has been discovered deep within a Jewish neighborhood in London, England. The chair of the British parliamentary foreign affairs select committee called on the government to close what is being described as the "London office" of the IRGC, which is used as an "outreach center" by the Iranian government, Jewish media reported. Conservative MP Alicia Kearns said that the Islamic Centre of England (ICE) in Maida Vale, which has voiced support for IRGC terrorists, is used by the Iranian regime for nefarious purposes related to the IRGC. With the IRGC in charge of Iran's funding of terrorist networks, specifically Hamas and Hezbollah, and with oversight over the country's nuclear and missile programs, Kearns told the news outlet that ICE used the office "solely to spread the word of the Islamic repressive regime." She also called on British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak to list the IRGC as a banned terror entity and added that ICE was responsible for harassing Iranian dissidents living in the UK. According to ICE's constitution, the head of the organization is the representative of Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. ICE's current director, Seyed Moosavi, who called protesters in Iran "soldiers of Satan" at a sermon at the center, was appointed by Khamenei.

Report: Anti-Semitism on London University Campuses up 250%; A new report by the Community Security Trust (CST), the organization tasked with providing safety, security, and advice to the British Jewish community, found that anti-Semitism on London university campuses has risen 250 percent over the past two years. During the same time period, the 2020/2021 and 2021/2022 academic years, campus anti-Semitism has increased 22 percent across the UK, the report also found. The investigation was the second time that CST has exclusively examined the experiences of Jewish students along with staff and campus Jewish organizations in the UK. The report noted that 150 anti-Semitic campus incidents were reported to CST in the last two academic years taking place on 30 campuses in the UK. "Jewish life on campus is vibrant and there are a wealth of opportunities available that contribute to the overwhelmingly positive experiences of Jewish students at university. Most Jewish students will not encounter any anti-Semitism during their studies, but anti-Jewish hatred can still present a significant challenge for Jewish staff and students," CST said in a blog post. CST recorded 95 university-related anti-Semitic incidents in 2020/2021, the highest ever total for an academic year. The report said that 55 of the incidents took place in May 2021 during the conflict between Israel and Hamas. The 150 incidents listed in the report include seven threats against Jewish students, three of which were death threats, and three physical assaults. The other 140 incidents were described as "abusive behavior," including verbal abuse, anti-Semitic graffiti on non-Jewish property, and online or offline written abuse.

'Anti-Semitism Threatens Democracy as a Whole'; Germany's Commissioner for Jewish Life in Germany and the Fight against Anti-Semitism, Felix Klein, highlighted the fact that the fight against anti-Semitism will not go away any time soon. In times of crisis people are particularly susceptible to supposedly simple answers such as those offered by anti-Semitism, Klein said during a meeting of the Bundestag Human Rights Committee. "Whether it is the Ukraine war, the energy crisis, inflation or the Corona pandemic – crises provide a breeding ground for such ideas," Klein said. "Conspiracy narratives, Holocaust trivialization and criticism of Israel have long since spread not only on the political fringe, but have reached into the middle of society and can also be found in intellectual, academic milieus. This threatens democracy in Germany as a whole." The fact that there are efforts in EU member states such as Finland to ban circumcision and slaughter is worrying, as it threatens the basic conditions for Jewish life, Klein said. The number of online hate posts has recently risen massively in Germany, and the number of criminal offenses had reached a peak of more than 3,000 in 2021, he said, referring to statistics from the

Federal Criminal Police Office. The first National Strategy against Anti-Semitism, which the German government adopted in November 2022, should contribute to countering anti-Semitism at all political and social levels, Klein explained. For the first time, it deliberately addresses everyone, defines five fields of action. Klein emphasized the importance of countering hatred on the internet. He also called for the fight against anti-Semitism to be placed even higher on the European agenda.

North Korea Reportedly Persecutes Christians More Than Any Other Country; Open Doors US is an organization that tracks the persecution of Christians around the world. This week, the organization released its annual report of 50 countries where Christians experience the most extreme levels of discrimination for their faith. The number one country where Christians are being persecuted the most is North Korea, and according to the watch list, the country has the highest levels of persecution ever seen. The high score reflects an increase in arrests of Christians and house-churches discovered getting closed. Somalia reportedly came in second and Yemen came in third. Afghanistan made the ninth spot, and in previous years had ranked higher. Open Doors said fewer Afghan Christians were killed for their faith in 2022, as many left the country or were killed when the Taliban regained control. Also notable was China, which ranked 16th. The organization said China's use of digital surveillance technology is adding to persecution and intimidation, and as the tools become more sophisticated, the communist government employed censorship, disinformation and surveillance to gain control over the religious groups. Open Doors reported that last year, 5,621 Christians were killed because of their faith, and 90% of those deaths were in Nigeria alone. Nigeria ranked sixth on the list, and the organization noted that the increase in violence in the country has only caused more Christians to lose their lives over the last five years. "I would emphasize again, persecution of Christians is now a global phenomenon, and it requires a global response," Pearce said. "I urge each of us to do what we can to be alongside them, to pray for and support them, and to use the influence we have to speak up for their right to live out their faith."

Written Records of Biblical King David Discovered by Researchers; The Mesha Stele, also called the Moabite Stone, is a basalt stone slab that has provided historians and linguists with the largest source of the Moabite language to date. Researchers have only now been able to verify with a considerable degree of certainty that the stele contains explicit references to King David. The stele was discovered in fragments in 1868 roughly 15 miles east of the Dead Sea, and currently resides in the Louvre museum in Paris. While it was damaged in 1869, a paper-mache impression of the inscription was captured before the damage occurred. The slab is etched with a lengthy account of King Mesha of Moab going to war with Israel. The events described correspond, albeit imprecisely, with a similar account in 2 Kings chapter 3. The House of David The text contains allusions to the Israelite God as well as the "House of David" and the "Altar of David." However, until today, scholars could not be entirely sure that these references to King David were being correctly deciphered. The Moabite phrase "House of David" consists of five letters: bt dwd. "Bt" is similar to today's Hebrew word for house - bayit - which is beit in its construct form. And "dwd" can be thought of like modern Hebrew's daled vav (the letter, in this case, is actually waw) daled which spells the name "David."

Expanded Cardiovascular Benefits Shown When Wearing Tefillin – Study; The cardiovascular health of both men and women who wear tefillin (phylacteries) around their arms can improve, according to new research at the University of Cincinnati (UC). The study suggests those benefits are the result of ischemic, or reduced, blood-flow preconditioning that produces protection from the damage caused by heart attacks. "Tefillin is used for morning prayers for Jewish men over the age of 13 on weekdays," said clinical internal medicine Prof. Jack Rubinstein of the Division of Cardiovascular Health in UC's College of Medicine. "It is placed on the non-dominant arm around the bicep and the forearm in a fairly tight manner," he said. "It is never worn in a fashion as to occlude the blood flow. This is traditionally worn for about 30 minutes continuously during prayers, which involve sitting and standing, resulting in occasional

retightening of the strap around your arm.” The study included 14 men and 16 women. The binding of the arm and the discomfort users often report may serve as a form of preconditioning, and offer a substantial degree of protection against the damage that occurs when someone suffers a sudden loss of blood flow (acute ischemia) or after the blood supply is restored to a tissue or organ after an ischemic event (reperfusion), Rubinstein said. “It means that if we can have people wearing tefillin or a similar device, and they can get themselves to be preconditioned every day, we expect that those people should be protected or should have a decreased amount of damage if they should get a heart attack during the time they are protected,” he said. “This is a low-intensity way of protecting people from heart attacks.”

Report: Hamas Preparing for Military Confrontation with Israel in 2023; A Lebanese newspaper, which is affiliated with Hezbollah, reported on Monday, January 16, that the Palestinian Arab organizations in the Gaza Strip recently held a series of meetings in which they discussed the challenges posed by the "fascist and racist government in Israel" and how to deal with it. A Palestinian Arab source quoted by the newspaper said that at these meetings, assessments were presented which claim that "the Netanyahu government will lead to an explosion which means an almost certain confrontation in several arenas, including the Gaza Strip." The report also said that, based on these assessments, the terrorist organizations decided to prepare for one or more rounds of conflict this year, as they are of the same opinion regarding the need to "prevent Israel from violating the existing situation in Jerusalem and Al-Aqsa Mosque or from taking dramatic measures in regards to prisoners, the situation of the Palestinians or annexation of Judea and Samaria." The Palestinian Arab source quoted in the report said, "The resistance organizations believe that avoiding a reaction to the enemy's escalating measures" will encourage Israel to continue its attempts to establish facts on the ground.

UN Envoy Thanks Hezbollah Terror Group, Draws Rebuke from Israeli Officials: 'Is This Real?'; A United Nations official on Monday, January 16, thanked a representative of Hezbollah for giving her a "tour d'horizon" of Lebanese issues, drawing a rebuke from Israeli officials. Joanna Wronecka, the U.N.'s special coordinator for Lebanon, tweeted her thanks to Ammar Moussawi, head of international relations for Hezbollah, which is designated as a terrorist organization by the State Department. "I thank Mr. Ammar Moussawi of Hizbullah (sic) for a tour d'horizon on issues of priority for #Lebanon, including the election of a new President, the functioning of state institutions and the impact of regional and international developments on the country," Wronecka wrote. Several Israeli officials criticized the tweet. "Is this real..??" wrote Joshua Zarka, head of strategic affairs in Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. "An official Senior UN Representative thanks the terrorist organization responsible for the murder of a UN peacekeeper for 'a tour d'horizon'!!!" "So how does it feel to be indoctrinated by a terrorist? Care to share with us?" asked Yaki Lopez, head of public diplomacy at Israel's embassy in Berlin.

US Quietly Shipping Ammo to Ukraine from Massive Stockpile in Israel — Report; The US military is quietly shipping hundreds of thousands of artillery shells to Ukraine from a massive stockpile in Israel, according to a Tuesday report, January 17. The ammunition supply is located in Israel for the US military to use in regional conflicts. The US has also given Israel permission to use some of the supplies in emergency situations, American media reported, citing American and Israeli officials. The previous government approved of the move, as Israel attempted to chart a course between maintaining ties with the US and Ukraine, and not antagonizing Russia. US officials first brought up the possibility of supplying Ukraine from the stockpile in Israel last year, sparking concerns in Jerusalem about how Russia would react, the report said. Eventually, the US and Israel agreed to ship around 300,000 shells to Ukraine, according to Israeli and US officials. Israeli officials told Israeli media that Jerusalem had not altered its position against giving Ukraine lethal weapons, but was agreeing to the US using its own supplies. Israel has provided large amounts of humanitarian aid to Ukraine, as well as other types of assistance, and the

new government under Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has said it intends to keep those supplies flowing.

Christie's Auction House Honors 25 Years of Nazi-Confiscated Art Restitution Efforts; Leading auction house Christie's Restitution Department recently revealed plans to host a year-long series of programs honoring 25 years of the Washington Principles, an international agreement that progressed the restitution of Nazi-confiscated art. In December 1998, representatives from over 40 countries and several non-governmental organizations met in Washington, DC for the Washington Conference on Holocaust-Era Assets. To address the widespread theft and seizure of art by the Nazis from 1933-1945, the conference formulated 11 Washington Principles on Nazi-Confiscated Art that established new international guidelines for locating, researching, and recovering stolen art. "When we discover a loss, a malign change of ownership, or a forced sale that was not addressed and remedied after World War II, the Washington Principles gives parties the framework to address these issues, even many decades after they occurred," Christie's Global Head of Restitution Richard Aronowitz said in a press release. Perhaps the most well-publicized example of restitution under the Washington Principles came in 2006 when five Gustav Klimt paintings were returned to the heirs of the Bloch-Bauer family. A more recent example of Christie's restitution efforts, is the recovery and sale of the Kainer collection, specifically Edgar Degas's "Danseuse" in 2009, and Pissarro's "The Anse des Pilotes, Le Havre" in 2022.

Born A Decade Before WW1: World's Oldest Person Dies at 118; The world's oldest known person, French nun Lucile Randon, has died at the age of 118, a spokesman told French media on Tuesday, January 17. Randon, known as Sister Andre, a name she took when she joined a Catholic charitable order in 1944, had survived COVID-19 last year. She was born in southern France on February 11, 1904, when World War I was still a decade away. Randon was the world's oldest living person according to the Gerontology Research Group's (GRG) World Supercentenarian Rankings List. She died in her sleep at her nursing home in Toulon, spokesman David Tavella said. "There is great sadness but... it was her desire to join her beloved brother. For her, it's a liberation," Tavella, of the Sainte-Catherine-Laboure nursing home said. Randon's days in the nursing home were punctuated by prayer, mealtimes and visits from residents and hospice workers, according to the report.

New Culture Minister: Films 'Offensive' to Israel Will Not Receive Funds; Culture and Sports Minister Miki Zohar has said Israeli filmmakers who seek state funding for their work will need to sign a pledge that their productions are not "offensive" to the country or its armed forces. Speaking to Israeli media Monday, January 16, Zohar said that organizations that want to boycott Israel often point to locally produced works critical of the government and its policies toward Palestinians, as proof that their claims of Israeli abuse are justified. Therefore, he said, the Israel Film Council will require filmmakers seeking government grants to sign a clause that they won't produce anti-Israeli content, though he did not give specifics on what exactly the criteria for this would be. "In the end, the public will decide whether they come to see a film or not, but we will not compromise on the financing issue. We will not fund offensive content against IDF soldiers and the State of Israel." "You have to remember, you are allowed to make any movie you want within the law, of course," he said. "We are in a democracy. But the state does not have to finance such controversial content because it violates very fundamental things."

Man Wearing A 'Jesus Saves' T-shirt Is Ordered by Security Guard to Take It Off or Leave; A man wearing a 'Jesus Saves' T-shirt was ordered to remove the clothing, or leave at the Mall of America last weekend, in a video that has gone viral on social media. A security guard at the nation's most famous shopping center in Minnesota can be heard telling the man: 'If you want to shop here you need to take off that shirt'. Another clip shows the same guard saying: 'Jesus is associated with religion and it is offending people. People have been offended.' The video which was recorded on January 7 has prompted outrage

online with one group organizing a protest at the Mall where they intend to wear their own 'Jesus Saves' shirts. The man can be heard saying: 'I didn't say anything though. I didn't speak. I didn't say anything. I just went to Macy's.' The guard replies: 'Again, I'm giving you a couple options. You can take the shirt off and you can go to Macy's and you can do your shopping. Or you can leave the mall, OK? Those are your only options right now.' The officer later claims the man was engaging in 'religious soliciting,' which the Mall forbids. However, the man insists throughout the video that he was not attempting to preach but was simply wearing the shirt while shopping. A spokesman for Mall of America told British media that the man was allowed to remain in the Mall following the interaction, while still wearing his shirt. This is despite the fact guards can clearly be heard threatening to kick him out.

Rise in Housing Prices Slows But Still up Almost 19% from 2021; The persistent rise in housing prices over the course of 2022 slowed in November, but home costs were still up close to 19% compared to the same period in 2021, according to new figures released Sunday, January 15, by the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS). The newest housing report showed that housing prices rose by 18.8% on average in October-November 2022 compared to October-November 2021, and by a moderate 0.3% from September-October 2022. This marked a slight drop from the previous monthly CBS report, which indicated that housing prices rose by a record 20.3% in September-October 2022, compared with the corresponding period in 2021. It was the largest year-on-year increase since May-June 2010, with a 20.4% rise on May-June 2009, according to CBS figures. In October-November 2022, the highest price rises were seen in northern Israel, where prices were up 21.7%, followed by central Israel where housing prices increased by 21% on average from October-November 2021. Prices in southern Israel rose by just over 13% in the same period, according to the report. Jerusalem and Tel Aviv housing prices increased by 15.9% and 18%, respectively. Overall, prices for new housing — dwellings not sold in the second-hand market or through subsidized housing programs — were up 22.4% in October-November 2022.



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