

# ***Yachad Ministries' Israel's News Update February 2, 2023 (11<sup>th</sup> Sh'vat, 5783)***



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***Netanyahu Vows 'Strong, Swift,' Response to Deadliest Palestinian Terror Attack in Over a Decade;*** Seven people were murdered, including children, in a terrorist shooting attack on Friday evening, January 27, in Jerusalem's Neve Ya'akov neighborhood, while they were leaving a synagogue after Shabbat services. The attack occurred on International Holocaust Remembrance Day. The terrorist, identified as Alqam Khayri, a 21-year-old resident of eastern Jerusalem, was shot dead by police while attempting to flee. A second attack took place the morning after, when a 13-year-old terrorist opened fire on a group of Israelis outside the Old City of Jerusalem, severely wounding two people, a father and son. The younger victim, an off-duty soldier, managed to shoot the terrorist, as did another member of the group, wounding him. "Whoever tries to harm us – we will harm him, and those who help him," Netanyahu said at the start of an emergency meeting of the security cabinet. "We will seal and demolish terrorists' houses in an expedited fashion, in order to exact an additional price from those who supported terrorism. This process already started yesterday and is in progress," Netanyahu said. Netanyahu sent his "heartfelt condolences" to the families of those murdered in the "heinous and terrible attack." The Israeli premier praised the "bravery shown by ordinary citizens" for shooting the terrorists and saving lives. He said the cabinet would discuss expediting the procedure by which Israelis can receive gun licenses, which in Israel is known for being a laborious process that is hindered by excessive red tape. The cabinet was also slated to discuss removing national insurance benefits from terrorists who hold Israeli citizenship or residency rights. Israeli Police Commissioner Kobi Shabtai called on Israelis with firearm licenses to carry their guns. The IDF on Saturday deployed three more battalions in the West Bank amid the escalation of violence.

***US Condemns Shooting Attack in Jerusalem: Absolutely Horrific;*** The United States on Friday, January 27, condemned the terrorist attack that happened in Jerusalem that same day. State Department deputy spokesperson Vedant Patel told reporters that Washington is still gathering information about the attack, which he described as "absolutely horrific". Patel indicated that there are no changes to Secretary of State Antony Blinken's scheduled visit to Israel. US Ambassador to Israel Tom Nides tweeted, "Horrific act of violence at a Jerusalem synagogue on International Holocaust Remembrance Day. I am shocked and

disgusted at this heinous terrorist attack on innocent people, including children. Praying for all of the victims and their loved ones.” Opposition leader Yair Lapid commented on the attack and said, “A difficult and painful Erev Shabbat. The heart breaks when seeing the difficult sights. Terror in a synagogue, a criminal terrorist, a cold-blooded killer.” “I send my condolences to the families who lost their dearest and wish recovery to the injured. The security forces neutralized the terrorist and will lay hands on anyone who helped him. Terrorism must not be allowed to rear its head, the terrorists and their senders must be dealt with harshly,” he added. Yisrael Beytenu chairman MK Avigdor Liberman said, “A shocking massacre tonight in Jerusalem. I send condolences to the families of the murdered, strengthen the security forces operating in the field and wish a speedy recovery to the wounded. The government must exact a heavy price from the perpetrators of the attack and their senders.”

***Palestinians Celebrate Deadly Terror Attack with Candy, Fireworks, ‘Allahu Akbar’;*** Friday’s attack from Palestinian terrorist Alqam Khayri, was the deadliest Palestinian terror attack on Israelis since 2008. Videos posted to social media showed hundreds of Palestinians in at least 7 different cities marching and chanting in the streets, honking cars, firing rounds into the air from rifles, handing out candy, and igniting fireworks in jubilation over the terrorist attack. The morning after the shooting attack, another one took place, also in Jerusalem, when a 13-year-old Arab terrorist opened fire on a group of Israelis, severely wounding a father and son. The Palestinian Authority issued a statement on Saturday, January 28, saying it holds Israel “fully responsible for the dangerous escalation” in violence, while failing to mention the two terror attacks. It also referred to the Palestinian terrorists as “martyrs.” The terrorists were planning a large-scale bombing attack against Israel. Gaza-based terror groups later launched a barrage of rockets into Israel. The Palestinian Authority announced it would be cutting security cooperation with Israel.

***Gazans Fire Rockets at South, as Israeli Jets Hit Strip in Retaliatory Strike;*** Gazans fired several rockets toward southern Israel, and Israeli Air Force warplanes carried out sorties in the Gaza Strip early Friday, January 27, as tit-for-tat fighting broke out amid sky-high tensions following a West Bank raid that left nine Palestinians, most of whom were terrorists, dead, a day earlier. At least three rockets were fired from Gaza at around 3:30 a.m. Friday, as Israeli jets bombed sites said to belong to the Hamas terror group in retaliation for a rocket attack hours earlier. One of the rockets was intercepted by the Iron Dome air defense system, another landed in an open field, and a third fell short of the border, the army said, after alarms sounded in the towns Nir Oz, Ein Habesor and Magen. The Israel Defense Forces said it was also investigating after incoming sirens were activated near Kfar Aza, a kibbutz near the Gaza border. The rocket attacks came as Israeli jets carried out a series of bombing raids in the central Gaza Strip in response to Gazan terrorists firing two rockets toward Ashkelon at midnight. Both projectiles were intercepted by Iron Dome. The military said it targeted an underground facility where rockets are manufactured in the Maghazi refugee camp in central Gaza. It said the site was in an area surrounded by residential buildings and 180 meters (590 feet) from a storage facility maintained by UNRWA, the United Nations relief agency for Palestinian refugees. Footage released by the military showed the site being bombed from the air.

***Hamas Tricked West Bank Residents into Delivering Cash, Weapons to Terrorists;*** The Shin Bet uncovered a scheme in which Hamas terrorists in Gaza use Palestinians from the West Bank, sometimes without their knowledge, as aid in carrying out terror attacks, the intelligence agency revealed on Wednesday, January 25. This activity is managed by the "Bank Staff" - a Hamas body in Gaza that's managed by people once exiled from Israel in the Gilad Schalit deal. How does the scheme work? The terrorists in the Gaza Strip hide their real identities and pose as business companies, recruit young Palestinians from the West Bank for paid "work", and send them to carry out various tasks. Some of them were transferring funds meant for buying weapons for terror attacks, others transported packages with weapons or ammunition in them without knowing the true nature of their cargo. The weapons and funds

handled by the unwitting delivery people were intended to ultimately be delivered to Hamas terrorists in the West Bank who are recruited from Gaza to carry out terror attacks. Furthermore, some of the messengers, who were in contact with Hamas terrorists in Gaza, had been charged with weapons trafficking in the past. As a result, some of them were indicted in a military court. One of the detainees is Salam Zid, a 27-year-old resident of the Jenin refugee camp. In July 2022, he was contacted by an unknown Facebook account with the name Khaled Talab. The user offered him a job in a Turkish delivery company that works in the West Bank. In the beginning, Zid was asked to deliver large sums of money worth thousands of shekels between various areas in the West Bank like Bethlehem, Ramallah and Hebron, but Zid didn't know that this was Hamas money.

***German MP Says EU Has Legal Evidence to Declare IRGC a Terrorist Entity;*** The EU on Monday, January 23, declined to sanction the 125,000-strong IRGC without a court decision from an EU nation that declares it is engaged in terrorist activities. The EU's chief diplomat, Josep Borrell, said that "It is something that cannot be decided without a court decision first. You cannot say I consider you a terrorist because I don't like you." Norbert Röttgen, a Christian Democratic Union lawmaker in the German parliament, told Israeli media that the legal requirement for Germany and the EU to proscribe Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps as a terrorist organization has been met. Röttgen, who was chairman of the Bundestag Foreign Affairs Committee from 2014 to 2021, flatly rejected the arguments of the European Union foreign policy chief Josep Borrell and German foreign minister Annalena Baerbock, who claim there is not a court case to justify the classification of the IRGC as a terrorist entity. "All the legal requirements are fulfilled," Röttgen said, adding that "currently the German attorney general is prosecuting terrorist attacks linked to the IRGC on several synagogues in the state of North Rhine-Westphalia, and in the US there is a federal court decision against the IRGC for acts of terrorism." The German parliamentarian said that "the German Foreign Ministry is pretending that there are legal obstacles to proscribing the IRGC. The foreign minister says that investigations or convictions in the EU are needed to list the Revolutionary Guards as a terrorist group, but the European Court of Justice has clarified that investigations or convictions can also be from outside the EU for a group to be put on the terror list."

***Most Online Anti-Semitism Stems from Palestinians, Pro-Palestinian Circles – Report;*** Sixty-eight percent of online anti-Semitism originates in Palestinian or progressive pro-Palestinian circles – according to a new report on the state of anti-Semitism, by the Diaspora Affairs Ministry, which was exposed by Minister Amichai Chikli during the cabinet meeting on Sunday morning, January 29. Chikli said that "anti-Semitism is changing the way it manifests and it is increasingly focusing on hatred towards the Jewish state and the denial of its right to exist." Chikli shared that most of the anti-Semitic discourse on social media, 68%, according to the comprehensive research carried out by the Diaspora Affairs Ministry, "originates in Palestinian or in progressive pro-Palestinian circles." Chikli added that even though there has been a decrease in anti-Semitic incidents around the world, "there has been a noticeable jump in the number of anti-Semitic incidents specifically in the US, where a hostile atmosphere is emerging on some college campuses towards Jewish students, especially if they identify as Zionists." "The State of Israel has a duty to lead the fight against anti-Semitism and to act in order to expand the adoption of the IHRA definition [for anti-Semitism], in as many countries and institutions as possible." In addition, the Diaspora affairs report specified a sharp increase of 13% in the scope of violent anti-Semitic events in 2022 compared to 2021. The report also showed a significant increase in anti-Semitic discourse online, compared to the last five years and in relation to 2021 in particular.

***Israeli Find Shown to Combat Antibiotic Resistance by 'Pricking Bacteria to Death';*** Israeli scientists have developed a substance that overcomes antibiotic resistance by "pricking bacteria to death," researchers at Ben Gurion University told Israeli media on Friday, January 27, in a breakthrough that could help combat a major threat to global health. The substance contains "nano needles" which have a lethal

effect on bacteria, and will be developed into topical creams and antibacterial coatings for surfaces, the scientists said, noting that it has shown 90% effectiveness in killing antibiotic-resistant bacteria in lab conditions. When bacteria stop being affected by antibiotics, it is known as antibiotic resistance, and these pathogens are sometimes colloquially called superbugs. The World Health Organization considers this phenomenon “one of the biggest threats to global health.” As antibiotics work by interfering with specific functions of bacteria, researchers at Ben Gurion University in Beersheba decided to try a different approach: physically destroying the bacteria. “Most antibiotics in use today work by affecting functions inside the bacteria, but our solution attacks the outside of the pathogen instead,” Nofar Yehuda, one of the scholars, told Israeli media. “Our solution is a material of tiny ‘nano needles’ that are basically poking the bacteria to death.” The key ingredient is polysaccharides — long chains of carbohydrate molecules — derived from sea algae. They created the new substance by mixing the polysaccharides with tiny copper particles.

***Hezbollah Ramping up Presence on Israeli Border;*** The Lebanese terrorist group Hezbollah has dramatically increased its presence on Israel’s northern border, according to a report by Israeli media Monday, January 23. Over the past year, Hezbollah has reportedly built at least 20 new observation and guard posts adjacent to the Israeli border, despite the terms of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1701, which bars the terrorist group from operating near Israel’s border fence. The increase in Hezbollah activity on the border coincides with an IDF project to build a fortified border fence spanning the Israel-Lebanon border. The new terrorist observation posts have been built parallel to the fortified fence, which is still under construction. Ori Eliyahu, a resident of Moshav Shtula near the Lebanese border, said he is not concerned by the new Hezbollah towers. “A few days ago, we saw a large truck unloading the top part of the watchtower.” “The outposts don’t concern me, because I know that Hezbollah is deterred by Israel. They are establishing the watchtowers as a miserable response to the work Israel is conducting along the border.”

***US, Israel Launch Major Air Force Exercise in Message to Iran;*** The US and the IDF on Monday, January 23, launched what has been described by both some Israeli and US officials as the most significant large-scale joint exercise to date, in a not-so-veiled message to Iran and other adversaries. Though an Israeli media outlet was informed by multiple senior officials of the exercise weeks ago as being extremely significant, it was under the condition of not publicizing it until it was officially announced. The exercise, known as “the Juniper Oak” drills, will involve thousands of forces, a dozen ships, significant numbers of attack and intelligence collection drones and 142 aircraft, including nuclear-capable bombers, and runs through this entire week. These drills are meant to demonstrate and deepen integration between the US and Israeli militaries, a senior US defense official said, and come at a time of growing tension over Iran’s nuclear program. Critical for any potential strike on the Islamic Republic, the exercise will involve midair refueling aircraft, including the IDF said, the KC-46 aircraft which Israel will eventually receive from the US. Although the drills will likely draw interest from Tehran, the US official said there would be no mockups of Iranian targets and that the exercises weren’t oriented around any particular adversary. “I do think that the scale of the exercise is relevant to a whole range of scenarios, and Iran may draw certain inferences from that,” the official acknowledged. “It’s really meant mostly to kick the tires on our ability to do things at this scale with the Israelis against a whole range of different threats.”

***Holocaust ‘Book of Names’ to Be Unveiled at the UN;*** When Yad Vashem was created in 1953 on the slopes of Jerusalem’s Mount of Remembrance to commemorate the Holocaust, its founders understood that one of the central functions of the institution would be to document the names of the 6 million Jewish victims. Now, to mark International Holocaust Remembrance Day on January 27, Yad Vashem is inaugurating its Book of Names — a monumental installation containing the names of 4,800,000 victims of the Shoah — at the United Nations headquarters in New York. Afterward it will be transferred to its

permanent location at Yad Vashem, the World Holocaust Remembrance Center, in Jerusalem, where it will be open to public viewing in time for Yom HaShoah, the Israeli and Jewish Holocaust remembrance day, in April. The installation is an updated version of the Yad Vashem Book of Names that has been on permanent display at the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum in Poland since 2017. The new version, which contains 500,000 additional names, stands 6.5 feet high and approximately 3.3 feet wide. Its total length is 26.5 feet. The massive volume lists the names of the victims in alphabetical order and, where the information is known, includes their birth dates, hometowns and places of death. The book has blank pages at the end symbolizing the approximately 1 million victims whose names are not yet recorded. The special team that finds the names and archives them in Yad Vashem's names database is challenged by the fact that the Nazis either tried to eliminate traces of their crimes against humanity by destroying records, or never registered Jews' names in the first place — especially in Eastern Europe.

***AJC Survey: Half of Americans Don't Know How Many Jews Were Killed in Holocaust;*** Most American adults know when the Holocaust happened and are familiar with Auschwitz, but fewer are knowledgeable about the number of Jews murdered and how Hitler came to power in Germany, according to a new American Jewish Committee (AJC) public opinion survey. Only 53 percent of Americans over the age of 18 answered correctly that approximately six million Jews were killed in the Holocaust, while 20 percent replied they were not sure, 13 percent chose approximately three million, and 11 percent chose more than 12 million. The survey, released ahead of International Holocaust Remembrance Day on January 27, was based on questions asked of a sample of 1,004 adults from the general population, and was included as part of a larger national AJC survey of the general U.S. population on anti-Semitism. "Lacking knowledge can open pathways to trivialization and denial of the Holocaust that also contribute to rising anti-Semitism," said AJC CEO Ted Deutch. "As we mark International Holocaust Remembrance Day, 78 years after the liberation of Auschwitz, it is imperative that Americans continue to learn about the most documented, planned genocide in modern history – the Nazi extermination of one-third of the Jewish people."

***90 Seconds to Midnight: World Closer to Doomsday Than Ever - Doomsday Clock;*** The Doomsday Clock was first created in 1947 as a metaphorical countdown to the end of the world as we know it. Specifically, it refers to the impending global disaster that is solely caused by human hands, and it is adjusted every January upon review by scientists from the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists. Upon its unveiling in 1947, the clock was seven minutes to midnight. Since that time, it has moved back and forth a total of 24 different times. In 2023 though, earth is closer to a catastrophic global demise than ever before, with the famous Doomsday Clock of the Bulletin being at 90 seconds to midnight, thanks in large part to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. This is the closest the clock has ever been to reaching the dreaded midnight. This marks a 10-second change compared to 2022 when the Doomsday Clock was set at 100 seconds to midnight. "We are living in a time of unprecedented danger, and the Doomsday Clock time reflects that reality," Bulletin president and CEO Rachel Bronson said, adding that "90 seconds to midnight is the closest the Clock has ever been set to midnight, and it's a decision our experts do not take lightly." "The US government, its NATO allies and Ukraine have a multitude of channels for dialogue; we urge leaders to explore all of them to their fullest ability to turn back the Clock." The change was largely due to the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the subsequently increased possibility of nuclear war, especially with the nuclear rhetoric espoused by officials in Moscow. However, there were other factors at play too, such as the ongoing climate crisis.

***Prime Minister Netanyahu Meets with King Abdullah II;*** Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu flew to Jordan on Tuesday, January 24, to meet with King Abdullah II. The two leaders discussed regional issues, especially strategic, security and economic cooperation between Israel and Jordan, which contributes to regional stability. They also praised the long-standing friendship and partnership between

Israel and the Hashemite Kingdom. The head of the ISA, the head of the National Security Council, the military secretary to the Prime Minister, and the Minister of strategic affairs Ron Dermer took part in the meeting as well. Netanyahu assured King Abdullah that the status quo on the Temple Mount would be maintained. According to a Jordanian press release, the King of Jordan stressed to Netanyahu that "the historical and legal status quo at the Al-Aqsa Mosque must be respected." This is Netanyahu's first public visit to Jordan since June 2018. The visit comes amid tensions between Jordan and Israel surrounding the visit by National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir to the Temple Mount about two weeks ago, and the incident that occurred last week when the Jordanian ambassador was detained at the entrance to the Temple Mount. The Israel police said that "contrary to erroneous publications, the ambassador's entry was not prevented. He was the one who decided at a certain point to leave the place on his own initiative, while the policeman was updating his commander and receiving appropriate instructions. If he had waited a few more seconds, he would have been permitted entry to the Temple Mount."

***Israel Philharmonic Orchestra Debuts in Abu Dhabi, First Time in Arab Country Since 1945;***

The Israel Philharmonic Orchestra made its debut in Abu Dhabi during the last week of 2022, marking the first time that it performed in an Arab country since 1945. The orchestra was invited to participate in the prestigious Abu Dhabi Classics Festival by the Ministry of Culture of the United Arab Emirates, and played at the Emirates Palace. Conductor Lahav Shani led the orchestra in an epic work befitting the grand occasion, Gustav Mahler's powerful "Titan" Symphony No. 1. The Tel Aviv-based ensemble also performed Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 23. Israel and the UAE normalized their relations with the Abraham Accords in 2020. Since then, the cooperation between the two countries has grown stronger both in the political and economical fields, and in the cultural one. The performance of Israel's national anthem Hatikva at the beginning of the concert embodied the new era of friendship between the nations. Founded in 1936 by Polish violinist Bronislaw Huberman, the orchestra included dozens of Jewish musicians fleeing anti-Semitism and persecution in Europe. In the following years, world-acclaimed conductor Arturo Toscani led the ensemble twice. In 1945, the orchestra went on tour in Egypt and performed at the Cairo Opera House. Seventy-seven years later, it played again in an Arab country. "Our performance in an Arab country is perhaps a small step on the way to what we all wish for - peace," Shani said according to Israeli media.

***Israel Sees Driest Winter Season in About 60 Years;***

Israel is experiencing its driest winter so far in about 60 years, with significantly less rainfall than the corresponding period last year, according to new rainfall figures by the Israel Meteorological Service cited by Hebrew-language media on Thursday, January 19. According to the findings, the rainfall this winter season raised the water levels of the Sea of Galilee by just 2 cm (about 0.8 inches) so far, down significantly from the corresponding periods between the start of the winter season in December and January 19, where water levels rose by dozens of centimeters and up to a meter in recent years. Israel's largest freshwater lake, though no longer used as the main source of drinking water, is still seen as a popular gauge of seasonal rainfall. An average Israeli winter that runs from December to March yields an increase of about 1.6 meters (3.2 feet) in the lake's water levels, Israeli media reported. Israel's water authorities said the long periods between rainfalls in this first half of the winter season have led to slower flows from streams and run-offs from hills in northern regions, and have thus limited the amount by which the water levels could rise. Eyal Wiesel, a director at the hydrological service of the government's Government Water and Sewage Authority, told Haaretz that 2 cm was the most modest rise since 1964, when national rainfall measurements began.

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