

Yachad Ministries' Israel's News Update February 9, 2023 (18th Sh'vat, 5783)



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Strong Earthquake Knocks Down Buildings in Turkey and Syria; Shaking Felt Across Israel; A powerful earthquake struck southern Turkey early Monday, February 6, demolishing buildings and jostling people awake across the region, including in Israel, where it was felt in Tel Aviv and across the country. The earthquake knocked down buildings in Turkey and Syria, killing at least 2,400 people and injuring thousands more in both countries. At least 3,500 people were killed and more than 5,000 people were injured due to the magnitude 7.8 earthquake that struck central Turkey, according to Turkish officials. A second earthquake with a magnitude of 7.5 hit the Syrian capital Damascus on Monday, media reported in one quake-struck Turkish city, dozens pulled away chunks of concrete and twisted metal. People on the street shouted up to others inside a partially toppled apartment building, leaning dangerously. There were no immediate reports of injuries or damage in Israel from the 7.8 magnitude temblor. The earthquake, felt as far away as Cairo, was centered north of the city of Gaziantep in an area about 90 kilometers (60 miles) from the Syrian border. It was recorded at a depth of 17.9 kilometers and struck at 3:17 a.m. in Israel. Strong aftershocks continued to jolt the area hours after the initial quake, some of them felt in Israel as well.

Second 7.5 Magnitude Earthquake Hits Turkey, Syria, Hours After First; A second earthquake with a magnitude of 7.5 hit the Syrian capital Damascus on Monday, February 6, media reported. Turkish president Erdogan said that this tragedy is the country's largest disaster since 1939, adding that 2,818 buildings collapsed as a result. 45 countries have offered help with search and rescue efforts, the Turkish president said. The quake, which hit in the early darkness of a winter morning, was also felt in Cyprus and Lebanon. At least 371 people were killed in Syria in this incident, according to the Syrian media. The airport in the southern Turkish province of Adana closed for flights following the major earthquakes, a private Turkish news agency reported. The airport reopened a few hours later, according to the Turkish Transportation Ministry. The Turkish Defense Ministry said that armed forces have set up an air aid corridor to the earthquake zone. The tremor lasted about a minute and shattered windows, according to a witness in Diyarbakir, 350 km (218 miles) to the east, where a security official said at least 17 buildings collapsed. Turkish authorities scrambled rescue teams and supply aircraft to the region around the city of

Kahramanmaras, while declaring a "level 4 alarm" that calls for international assistance. "I have never felt anything like it in the 40 years I've lived," said Erdem, a resident of the Turkish city of Gaziantep, near the quake's epicenter, who declined to give his surname. "We were shaken at least three times very strongly, like a baby in a crib."

3,500 Confirmed Dead After Huge Earthquake, But Thousands More Fatalities Feared; At least 3,000 people are now confirmed to have died after the two catastrophic earthquakes devastated parts of Turkey and Syria - 1,762 of these in Turkey, more than 700 people in opposition-controlled Syria and 538 in government-held areas of Syria, reports British media outlet. Thousands more fatalities are feared in the coming days after the 7.8 and 7.5 magnitude tremors in southeastern Turkey caused buildings to collapse on people as they slept in their beds in the early hours of the morning. Victims trapped in collapsed buildings have been pleading for help as rescuers desperately try to free them - with some people even broadcasting on Facebook Live while trapped to try and get aid. In Turkey, entire apartment blocks crashed to the ground in a matter of seconds following the quakes, trapping families inside and killing thousands. In Diyarbakir in southeast Turkey, a woman speaking next to the wreckage of the seven-story block where she lived, said: 'We were shaken like a cradle. There were nine of us at home. Two sons of mine are still in the rubble, I'm waiting for them.' 'It was like the apocalypse,' said Abdul Salam al-Mahmoud, a Syrian in the northern town of Atareb. 'It's bitterly cold and there's heavy rain, and people need saving.' Heartbreaking photos and videos have shown emergency services pulling the bodies of children from the rubble in multiple cities, as well as miraculous rescues with people somehow being carried out alive after the catastrophe.

'Request Was Received': Israel to Send Earthquake Relief to Syria and Turkey; Israel is sending aid to Syria, as well as Turkey, as they grapple with the aftermath of the devastating earthquake that killed over 3,500 people in the region, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Monday, February 6. Netanyahu said that Israel had received requests through diplomatic channels to assist in Syria, and that aid would be provided there. "A request was also received to [provide relief] for the many who were injured in the earthquake in Syria," Netanyahu said, and therefore he has "instructed that this be done." However, an unnamed Syrian official flatly denied that Damascus had made such a request for Israeli assistance in an interview with a Hezbollah-linked website. Still, the Israeli military and other security bodies were looking into how to provide aid to Syria, sources told Israeli media. Israel plans to send tents, medication and blankets to Syria. In addition, a senior political official said that Israel would receive wounded Syrians for medical treatment if a request was made. Netanyahu also said he sends condolences to the citizens of Turkey, and that "at the request of the Turkish government, I have instructed extraction, rescue, and medical relief teams." "That is how we operate around the world, and also how we operate nearby," he said in a statement.

'Olive Branches:' Israeli Humanitarian Aid Delegation Leaves for Turkey; Monday evening, February 6, the joint "Olive Branches" humanitarian aid delegation of the Israel Defense Forces, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Defense will leave Israel for Türkiye (Turkey) to assist in the earthquake-stricken area of the country. The delegation, led by the IDF Home Front Command, will depart from the Nevatim Air Force Base on Israeli Air Force aircraft this evening. It is expected to begin its search and rescue mission immediately. An advanced team departed for Türkiye earlier Monday afternoon and will receive the delegation upon landing in Türkiye. The Commanding Officer of the Home Front Command, MG Rafi Milo, defined the delegation's mission as providing immediate assistance in life-saving efforts. This will include quickly mapping out the sites hit by the earthquake. In parallel, the delegation is preparing to provide medical assistance to individuals rescued from the sites hit by the earthquake. The delegation is being led by the Commander of the National Rescue Unit in the Home Front Command, COL (res.) Golan Vach, and includes 150 active-duty and reservist personnel. Israel Fire and

Rescue Authority personnel will also join the delegation. The Commander of the Search and Rescue Brigade, COL Elad Edri, is responsible for search and rescue and logistical preparations. Furthermore, the IDF Medical Corps is making preparations to send out a delegation to assemble a field hospital if it is deemed necessary, and as instructed by the Minister of Defense.

Russia Threatens to Attack Israeli Military Aid to Ukraine; The Russian government issued a thinly-veiled warning to Israel not to provide any military weapons to Ukraine, after Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said that he was considering whether to do so. “If I’m asked by both sides, and frankly, if I’m asked by the United States — because I think, you know, you can’t have too many cooks in the kitchen,” Netanyahu said. “We say that all countries that supply weapons should understand that we will consider these to be legitimate targets for Russia’s armed forces,” Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova told reporters Wednesday, February 1. She added: “Any attempts — implemented or even unrealized but announced for the supply of additional, new or some other weapons — lead and will lead to an escalation of this crisis. And everyone should be aware of this.” Israel has supplied Ukraine with humanitarian aid since the Russian invasion began in late February 2022. However, the Ukrainian government has been critical of Israel's reticence to provide military aid during the now year-long war.

Rocket Fired from Gaza at Southern Israel, Intercepted by Iron Dome; A rocket launched from the Gaza Strip at southern Israel on Wednesday evening, February 1, was intercepted by the Iron Dome air defense system, the military said. Incoming rocket sirens sounded in the southern city of Sderot and the nearby towns of Ibim and Nir Am. Footage showed Iron Dome interceptor missiles exploding in the air. The Israel Defense Forces said the rocket was downed by the air defense system. Medics said a woman in her 50s was lightly hurt after slipping while running to a bomb shelter in Sderot. She was taken by the Magen David Adom ambulance service to a nearby hospital for further treatment. A large piece of shrapnel landed in the southern city, causing minor damage to a road, the Sderot municipality said. Images and a video circulating on social media shortly after the rocket attack showed three Iranian-made 107mm Fajr-1 projectiles, similar to the shrapnel found in Sderot, with text on them reading: “The female prisoners are a red line.” The text was apparently referring to reports of a crackdown by the Israel Prison Service (IPS) against Palestinian inmates in Israeli jails, especially female prisoners. It was unclear which armed group had issued the footage, and there was no immediate claim by any of the Gaza-based terror groups for the rocket fire Wednesday.

Israel Bombs Hamas Sites in Retaliatory Gaza Strikes; Rocket Sirens Sound in Sderot; Israeli Air Force warplanes carried out sorties in the Gaza Strip early Thursday, February 2, in response to the rocket attack on southern Israel hours earlier, as a new round of rocket alarms sounded in Sderot and nearby towns, the military said. The Israel Defense Forces said its jets bombed a site where the Hamas terror group stores chemicals used to make missiles. It also struck a facility where the group manufactures weaponry, the army said. A Palestinian news outlet reported that Israel bombed “resistance sites” in central Gaza. Footage published by Palestinian media showed fireballs exploding amid the densely populated coastal enclave. Israel considers Hamas, which rules the Strip, responsible for any attack emanating from the enclave, regardless of whether the group was behind it. “The strike deals a serious blow to Hamas’s ability to fortify and arm itself,” the IDF said in a statement. “The Air Force destroyed Hamas weapons production and storage sites tonight. Any [rocket] fire at the State of Israel or any attempt to harm the lives of the residents of the south will be met with the strength of the IDF,” Defense Minister Yoav Gallant said on Twitter on Thursday morning.

Russian Missile Hits Ukrainian Synagogue, Chief Rabbi Condemns Attack; A chief rabbi of Ukraine condemned a Russian missile damaging a synagogue in Huliaipole on Tuesday, January 31. “In a

normative world it is accepted that holy places are off limits, the Russians also broke this convention," said Rabbi Moshe Azman. "I expect world leaders to strongly condemn the criminal act." Former minister, MK Zeev Elkin tweeted that "a Russian missile hit an ancient Synagogue in Ukraine in the area where my late great-grandfather was born, grew up, and was murdered, during the civil war." He added that he is named for this great-grandfather. Confronting the attack "How sad and disgusting," he said of the damage done by Russia to this synagogue. "The world should condemn damage to holy sites and houses of worship, even when it comes to war," Elkin wrote. Elkin made aliyah from Ukraine, and while he was a member of the Likud party, would accompany Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to meetings with Russian President Vladimir Putin as a confidant and translator. "I'm in touch with all Jewish communities in our area and there aren't many Jews that live in Huliaipole," Rabbi Nachum Ehrentreu, rabbi and Chabad emissary of the Jewish Community of Zaporozhye said that it seems it wasn't a missile that hit the synagogue, but rather, shrapnel from a missile, "otherwise the building would be totally destroyed," and according to Ehrentreu, the building was harmed but not ruined.

Israeli Drone Attack on Iranian Weapons Factory Was Phenomenal Success – Sources; Despite Iranian claims, an Israeli drone attack on Iran at Isfahan was a tremendous success, according to a mix of Western intelligence sources and foreign sources, Israeli media initially reported on Sunday morning, January 29. Several hours later, American media came out with a similar report, stating that Israel and the Mossad were behind the attack, citing US officials. There were four large explosions at the military industry factory, documented on social media, against a facility developing advanced weapons. The damage goes far beyond the "minor roof damage" that the Islamic Republic claimed earlier Sunday, and has falsely claimed in past incidents. Hours after the report, Iran intensified its threats against Israel, despite pretending that the attacks had failed. There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the blast, which came amid tension with the West over Tehran's nuclear activity and supply of arms for Russia's war in Ukraine, as well as months of anti-government demonstrations at home. Few organizations globally, besides the Mossad, are believed to possess the advanced and surgical strike capabilities displayed in the operation. Multiple large drones with significant amounts of explosives were involved and hit their targets with pinpoint accuracy.

Russia Sends Veiled Threat to Israel, US over Iranian Weapons Depot Blast; Russia appeared to issue a veiled threat against Israel and the United States on Monday, January 30 when it condemned the attack on the Iranian weapons depot, as US Secretary of State Antony Blinken spoke with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Jerusalem. The Russian Foreign Ministry said on Monday: "We strongly condemn any provocative efforts that have the potential to provoke an uncontrolled escalation of tensions in a region that's far from being peaceful as it is," according to a statement published by Russian media. "Such destructive actions could have unpredictable consequences for peace and stability in the Middle East," it said. "That has to be understood by the organizers of the brazen raid, their backers and those who are gloating over the issue, holding on to the futile hope for the weakening of Iran." Pundits have presumed that the "organizers" the Russian Foreign Ministry referenced in its statement was Israel and that the "backers" it spoke of referred to the Biden administration. In Jerusalem, Blinken and Netanyahu looked to strengthen their cooperation against Iran. They met as international opposition to the Islamic Republic has grown and as the White House recognizes that the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, known as the Iran nuclear deal, can no longer be relied on to halt Tehran's development of nuclear weapons.

Iran, Russia Link Banking Systems Amid Western Sanction; Iran and Russia have connected their interbank communication and transfer systems to help boost trade and financial transactions, a senior Iranian official said on Monday, January 30, as both Tehran and Moscow are chafing under Western sanctions. Since the 2018 reimposition of US sanctions on Iran after Washington ditched Tehran's 2015 nuclear deal with world powers, the Islamic Republic has been disconnected from the Belgium-based

SWIFT financial messaging service, which is a key international banking access point. Similar limitations have been slapped on some Russian banks since Moscow's invasion of Ukraine last year. "Iranian banks no longer need to use SWIFT ... with Russian banks, which can be used for the opening of Letters of Credit and transfers or warranties," Deputy Governor of Iran's Central Bank, Mohsen Karimi, told Iranian media. While Russia's central bank declined to comment on the deal signed on Sunday, Karimi said "about 700 Russian banks and 106 non-Russian banks from 13 different countries will be connected to this system," without elaborating on the names of the foreign banks. Iran's Central Bank chief Mohammad Farzin welcomed the move. "The financial channel between Iran and the world is being repaired," he tweeted.

Israel to Expedite Civilian Gun Licenses After Jerusalem Attacks; Israel's security cabinet approved measures to curb terrorism following the deadly attacks that occurred in Jerusalem on January 27-28, including making it easier for Israeli civilians to carry guns and revoking residency and citizenship of terrorists. "We will exact a price from those who carry out terrorist attacks and from their supporters," Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said at the start of the weekly cabinet meeting, after the two terror attacks rocked the capital. The security cabinet passed a measure to make it easier for law-abiding Israeli citizens to procure licenses for carrying firearms, which in Israel is notoriously difficult. "When civilians have guns, they can defend themselves," National Security Minister, Itamar Ben-Gvir, told reporters on Saturday night, January 28. Netanyahu also said Israel would "strengthen [Jewish] settlements" in the West Bank "in order to make it clear to the terrorists who seek to uproot us from our land that we are here to stay." In perhaps the most controversial measure, Netanyahu said the cabinet would discuss "revoking Israeli identity cards and residency of the terror-supporting families of terrorists."

Ohio Is Investigating a Nazi Homeschooling Network that Teaches Children to Love Hitler; Ohio's department of education is investigating a homeschooling network that claims public schools are run by "Zionist scum," teaches kids to say "Sieg Heil" in class, and instructs fellow parents not to give their kids "Jewish media content." These are the more than 2,500 members of the "Dissident Homeschool Network," a channel on the social network messaging app Telegram. The "dissidents" are a group of Nazi parents who share homeschooling lesson plans, extolling the virtues of Hitler and white nationalism — while relying on a popular social media account run by a Jewish woman to provide ammunition for their hatred. The founders of the group were recently unmasked by a hate group monitor as a couple in rural Upper Sandusky, Ohio. "We are so deeply invested into making sure that [our] child becomes a wonderful Nazi," the founder of Dissident Homeschool Network, who goes by the pseudonym "Mrs. Saxon," recently said on a neo-Nazi podcast to promote the group. "There is absolutely no place for hate-filled, divisive and hurtful instruction in Ohio's schools, including our state's home-schooling community," Stephanie Siddens, the interim superintendent of public instruction at Ohio's education department, told media. "I emphatically and categorically denounce the racist, anti-Semitic and fascist ideology and materials being circulated." Ohio Governor Mike DeWine, along with Rep. Bob Latta, whose district encompasses Upper Sandusky, and Rep. Jim Jordan, all gave statements condemning the group.

Israel Refills Lake Kinneret, Supplying Jordan on the Way; When the floodgates are open, a torrent of water gushes into a dry river bed and races to the shore of Lake Kinneret, a biblical lake in northern Israel that was being lost to drought and the growing population around it. The water is fresh, high-quality, and expensive. Desalinated from the Mediterranean Sea and transported across the country where it awaits the order to replenish the lake, should it start to shrink again. This new network will also let Israel double the amount of water it sells to neighboring Jordan under a broader water-for-energy deal forged through a working, though often fractious, relationship. The Kinneret, whose waters Christians believe Jesus walked upon, is Israel's main reservoir and a big tourist draw. Hotels and campsites line the perimeter, encircled by lush hills. It feeds the Jordan River that flows south to the Dead Sea. After a heat wave or strong rain, the level of the lake makes national news. Alarms went off regularly this past decade following protracted

droughts and receding shorelines. So Israel built a chain of desalination plants along its Mediterranean coast, putting it in the unlikely position of having a surplus of water, a bright spot in an arid region extremely vulnerable to climate change. "All the extra water that (the plants) are producing, we will be able to bring it with the national water carrier system up north and into Lake Kinneret," said Yoav Barkay, who manages the national carrier at state-owned Mekorot.

For the First Time in Israel: Breakthrough Cancer Treatment Employed in Holon; Doctors at Wolfson Medical Center in Holon successfully implemented a new treatment for pancreatic cancer this week. The treatment, which had never been attempted previously in Israel, involved the injection of a radioactive substance called Oncosil into a patient diagnosed with advanced-stage pancreatic cancer. This innovative treatment is approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration as a breakthrough technology, and so far, about 250 cancer patients throughout Europe, Australia and New Zealand. "While today the accepted treatment for patients with pancreatic cancer is one of two types of chemotherapy, [this] unique treatment makes it possible to deliver a large and concentrated amount of radiation directly into the tumor without affecting and damaging other organs," explained Dr. Tomer Griner, director of the invasive endoscopy unit. Prof. Eran Israeli, director of the Gastroenterology Institute at the Wolfson Medical Center, added: "The goal of the treatment is to shrink the tumor to such a size that it will be possible to perform surgery and resection of the tumor." "This is the first time in Israel that the radioactive medicinal substance to treat a cancerous tumor is injected directly into the target organ under [endoscopic ultrasound] guidance."



Robert I. Solomon: Messianic Rabbi, rabbisolomon@yachad.com

Jeffery Blalock: Ministries Coordinator, jeffery@yachad.com

Yachad Ministries, 950 Pine Grove Road, Roswell, Georgia 30075

E-mail: info@yachad.com, Web Page: <https://www.yachad.com/>

Phone: 770-641-3000 (ext. 6)

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