

Yachad Ministries' Israel's News Update April 13, 2023 (Nisan 22, 5783)

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Passover Attack: Sisters from Efrat Murdered in Jordan Valley Terror Attack; Two women were killed in a terrorist shooting attack in the Jordan Valley Friday morning, April 7, with a third woman critically wounded. An army spokesperson said the attack occurred near the Israeli town of Hamra, and that the IDF has launched a manhunt for the terrorists responsible for the shooting. "Following the reports of a shooting attack at the Hamra Junction, a report was received regarding a car accident between a Palestinian and an Israeli vehicle. IDF soldiers who were dispatched to the scene located numerous bullet hits on the Israeli vehicle, it was indicated that the accident was in fact a shooting attack." The Islamic Jihad published a message congratulating the attack in the Jordan Valley and said that the operation was carried out as part of the policy aimed at carrying out attacks against the IDF checkpoints in Judea and Samaria, to hurt Israel in a way that it does not expect, and to send a strong message according to which "the crimes of the occupation against our (Palestinian) people will not go without a response that is commensurate with the scope of the crime". The fatally wounded victims have been identified as two sisters, Maia and Rina Dee, 20 and 15 years old respectively, from the town of Efrat, south of Jerusalem. The critically wounded victim is their 48-year-old mother. The mother was rushed to Hadassah Ein Kerem Medical Center in Jerusalem, where she is listed in a critical and unstable condition. Emergency first responders from MDA and United Hatzalah were dispatched to the scene to treat the victims but were forced to declare two of the victims dead at the scene. (INN / VFI News)

One Dead, Seven Injured Including UK and Italian Tourists after Terrorist Car-Ramming Attack in Tel Aviv; A car-ramming attack in Tel Aviv that left one man dead and seven others injured follows the shooting to death of two British-Israeli sisters in the country's West Bank amid a spike in violence coinciding with the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. According to a report by Israeli media, the incident occurred on the Kaufmann Street promenade late on Friday night, April 7, with "Arab Israeli" male Kafr Qassem mounting a bicycle lane in a car before hitting a number of foreign tourists from Italy and the United Kingdom enjoying a walk

by the seashore. Footage of the attack then shows the car careering off the road, eventually flipping as it ground to a halt. Qassem was subsequently shot dead by Israeli police, with officers reportedly believing that the attacker was reaching for a weapon when they approached him. The incident — which is being treated as a terrorist attack by Israeli authorities — is reported to have killed one man, Italian national Alessandro Parini. Seven others were also injured as a result of the attack, though media reports indicate that only three needed hospitalization, all of whom are now described as being in good condition. Government officials from Italy, Israel, and the United States have all condemned the attack, with Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni denouncing the attack as “cowardly”. (BB / VFI News)

Syria's Dangerous Game: Rocket Fire on Israel is Major Escalation – Analysis; Rocket fire from Syria is an unprecedented escalation that is unique in its brazenness. The Syrian regime has been working toward normalization in the region, particularly through outreach to the Persian Gulf and Egypt in recent months. However, the fact that rockets were fired from Syria, on the evening of April 8 and 9, as well as a drone launched from Syria on April 1 targeting Israel, illustrates that the regime is seeking normalization while it doesn't rein in dangerous terrorists and militant groups. Israel responded to the rocket fire from Syria on Sunday early in the morning. However, the importance of the rocket fire goes beyond just the rockets themselves or any response. The Syrian regime was supposed to bring stability and quiet, but it appears that it has allowed terrorist groups to continue to operate openly and threaten others. This is not exactly news, since the regime has tolerated various Iranian-backed groups for years because those groups aided Syria in its civil war. What is new is that the regime is now playing a dangerous game by not reining in the groups even as it poses as seeking normalization. Normalization would imply the regime controls its own territory. The regime cannot have it both ways, claiming to control its territory, but allowing attacks on other countries from its territory. (JPost / VFI News)

Iran Targets Israel on All Fronts, Seizing Opportunity of Dissent and Biden's Hostility;

In recent days, Iranian-backed terror groups, notably Hamas, have launched rockets against Israel from Gaza in the southwest and from Lebanon in the north — the latter with the permission of Iranian-backed Hezbollah. Palestinians have stockpiled weapons in the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem, with some barricading themselves inside to prepare attacks on Jewish worshippers at the Western Wall below — and to provoke Israeli raids that inflame opinion in the Arab world and in left-leaning Western media. At the same time, Joe Biden has been giving Prime Minister Netanyahu the cold shoulder, and he has also criticized Israel's judicial reforms — which would, ironically, bring the Israeli judiciary closer to the American norm, and would be far less radical than reforms Biden himself has considered, such as “packing” the Supreme Court. That has created a sense that Israel is alone and divided — and Iran is taking advantage, seeking to test Israel and expose its sudden strategic weakness. On Sunday, April 9, Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh and Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah, both backed by Iran, met in Beirut in a show of solidarity. Netanyahu has sounded the alarm, telling Israelis that the security situation is “challenging” and calling up the Border Police reserves. (BB / VFI News)

Iran Using Public Cameras to ID, Penalize Women Who Don't Wear Hijabs; Iranian authorities say they'll be installing cameras in public places and thoroughfares to track down and punish women who don't wear head coverings. In a move aimed at “preventing resistance against the hijab law,” violators who are identified will initially receive “warning text messages as to the consequences,” police said Saturday, April 8, in a statement distributed by Iranian state media. The statement claimed such resistance tarnishes the country's spiritual image and spreads insecurity. It was released on the heels of a growing number of Iranian women dumping their veils since the September death of Mahsa Amini, an aspiring 22-year-old lawyer. Saturday's police statement called on business owners to “seriously monitor the observance of societal norms with their diligent inspections”. Describing the veil as “one of the civilizational foundations of the Iranian nation” and “one of the practical principles of the Islamic Republic,” an Interior Ministry statement on March 30 said there would be no retreat on the issue. It urged citizens to confront unveiled women. (NYP / VFI News)

Azerbaijan Arrests Six Radical Islamists over 'Coup Plot' Blamed on Iran; Azerbaijan on Thursday, April 6, arrested six men it said were linked to Iranian secret services and were plotting a coup in the Caspian nation, in the latest friction between Baku and Tehran. Relations between the neighbors have long been strained, with Azerbaijan being a close ally of Iran's historical rival Turkey and holding close ties with arch-foe Israel. The

arrests came after months of diplomatic tensions. Baku said the six Azerbaijani nationals were “recruited by Iranian secret services to destabilize the situation in the country.” It announced the arrests in a joint statement by the interior ministry, state security service, and prosecutor general’s office. It said the group was plotting to “set up a ‘resistance squad’ aimed at establishing a Sharia state in Azerbaijan through armed unrest and violent overthrow of Azerbaijan’s constitutional order.” It accused them of being “engaged in a pro-Iranian propaganda of religious radicalism, fulfilling orders from abroad to undermine Azerbaijan’s tradition of tolerance.” According to Azerbaijan, they promoted “radical Islam” using money from drug profits. (TOI / VFI News)

Eyeing Moscow, Finland to Purchase Israeli David’s Sling Anti-Missile System; Finland said Wednesday, April 5, that it will purchase Israel’s David’s Sling missile defense system in an initial deal worth some 316 million euros (\$344 million) in an announcement made the day after it joined the NATO military alliance. “The David’s Sling system will extend the operational range of Finland’s ground-based air defense capabilities significantly,” the statement said. David’s Sling, produced by Rafael Advanced Defense Systems, is capable of intercepting rockets and missiles at a range of 40-300 kilometers (25-185 miles). The statement said that Finland’s minimum flight altitude requirement for the system was set at 15,000 meters (9.3 miles). David’s Sling, also known as the Magic Wand, has been operational in Israel since 2017 and makes up the middle tier of Israel’s multi-layer missile defense capabilities, which also included the short-range Iron Dome and a top level of Arrow 2 and Arrow 3 systems, which are intended to engage long-range ballistic missiles. This marks the first foreign sale of the system. The agreement also includes an option for a second purchase valued at 216 million euros (\$235 million.) (TOI / VFI News)

34 Rockets Fired from Lebanon; Hamas Blamed, Hezbollah Role Seen after Al-Aqsa Warning; Thirty-four rockets were fired from southern Lebanon on Thursday afternoon, April 6, with 25 intercepted by the Iron Dome air defense system over northern Israel, the military said. At least three people were injured and several buildings were damaged. Israel blamed Lebanon-based Hamas forces for the fire, with Israeli official sources saying it would not have been carried out without Hezbollah’s consent. Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh is currently in Lebanon. The Israel Defense Forces said five of the rockets landed inside Israel, and most of the rest were downed by Iron Dome. The impact sites of four others were not yet clear. The barrage was the largest number of rockets fired from Lebanon since the 2006 war, during which thousands of rockets were launched at Israel. In August 2021, Hezbollah fired 19 rockets at northern Israel. There was no immediate claim of responsibility, and a Hezbollah source told Arabian media that it was not behind the rocket fire, blaming Palestinian groups based in the area. Lebanese security officials said the rockets had been fired from the area of a Palestinian refugee camp. The IDF backed up that assessment, with spokesman Daniel Hagari telling reporters later Thursday that Hamas was behind the rocket fire. (TOI / VFI News)

Matzah Factory Survives a Russian Strike as Ukraine Jews Prepare Passover under Fire; When Jews around the world tell the Exodus story during the Passover Seder on Wednesday night, April 5, they recall God taking them out of Egypt “with blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke.” With the war still raging in their country, those same features – but from a very different source – marked Ukrainian Jews’ preparations for Passover. Last Wednesday night, March 29, workers were preparing matzah in the Tiferet Matzot bakery in southern Dnipro, Ukraine’s main matzah factory. Sirens in the central Ukrainian city sounded at 10 p.m., warning of another attack by Russian drones. Though many of the Russian and Iranian-made drones were intercepted, one slipped by the defenses and struck a factory next to the bakery. Security camera footage from inside the bakery shows an orange flash that shakes the building, then darkness as electricity goes out. According to the Federation of Jewish Communities in Ukraine, after the strike, local Jews began preparing to remove equipment and hundreds of kilograms of matzah as the fire in the factory threatened to engulf the bakery as well. Ultimately, though, Ukrainian firefighters gained control of the flames, saving the bakery in the process. (TOI / VFI News)

After Al-Aqsa Clashes: Sirens Sounded in Southern Israel; Terrorists operating in the Hamas-ruled Gaza Strip fired 16 rockets towards Israel overnight and Wednesday morning, April 5, prompting the IDF to retaliate with strikes on Hamas targets in the Gaza Strip. Sirens were sounded early Wednesday morning in communities located near the border with the Gaza Strip and in Sderot. The sirens were sounded, among other places, in Gevim, Ibim, Nir Am, and Sapir College. About 20 minutes later, sirens were also sounded in the Sha'ar Hanegev Regional Council. The city of Sderot said one of the rockets that were fired landed near a factory. There were no injuries, but the factory sustained damage. The IDF Spokesperson's Unit said that in the first barrage, five launches from the Gaza Strip into Israeli territory were detected. Four were intercepted by the air defense fighters. In the second barrage, four additional launches from the Gaza Strip into Israeli territory were detected and fell in open areas. Another rocket fired from the Gaza Strip toward Israel exploded in an open area near Kibbutz Yad Mordechai. Six more rockets were later fired toward Israel for a total of 16 recorded launches. According to an IDF spokesperson, IDF fighter jets bombed a Hamas military compound in the northern Gaza Strip. The compound was used as a terrorist training facility, the army said. IDF tanks additionally struck Hamas military posts along the border of the Gaza Strip. (INN / VFI News)

Mystery Drone Downed by IDF in Israeli Airspace Was Sent by Iran; The IDF confirmed that the drone that invaded Israeli airspace from Syria, and that it was brought down on Sunday, April 2, was Iranian. It also said it was shot down using special physical electronic means. Initially, the details of the identity of the drone and how it was brought down were partially censored, since usually the IDF has shot down such invading drones in the past and wants to keep its various electronic capabilities quiet so as not to tip off its enemies. It was unclear why the IDF used different means this time to bring down the drone and what the significance was of temporarily delaying putting out some of the key information about the incident, followed by a decision on Monday to reveal more. The IDF is still investigating the specifics of the incident, and part of the reason for revealing more information could be that the drone was located and collected for further study in the Hula Valley area on Monday morning. Iran sent the drone into Israel following reports attributing several attacks by Israel on Iranian targets and their proxies in Syria in recent days. The increase in attacks attributed to the IDF came shortly after Hezbollah sent an operative to set off explosives in Israel. (JPost / VFI News)

Women in Iran Face 'Yogurt Attack' for Being Unveiled in Public; A video went viral the previous week, showing a man throwing yogurt at two unveiled women in a shop near the holy Shi'ite Muslim city of Mashhad. President Ebrahim Raisi said in response on Saturday, April 1, that the hijab was the law in Iran. In live remarks on state television, Raisi said: "If some people say they don't believe (in the hijab)... it's good to use persuasion ... But the important point is that there is a legal requirement ... and the hijab is today a legal matter." Judicial authorities in a town near the northeastern city of Mashhad issued arrest warrants for the man seen pouring yogurt over the heads of two women, a mother, and her daughter. The latter was also the subject of arrest warrants for flouting Iran's strict female dress rules, state media reported. Risking arrest for defying the obligatory dress code, women are still widely seen unveiled in malls, restaurants, shops, and streets around the country. Authorities said the owner of the dairy shop, who confronted the attacker, had been warned. Reports on social media showed his shop had been shut, although he was quoted by a local news agency as saying he had been allowed to reopen and was due to "give explanations" to a court. Judiciary chief Gholamhossein Mohseni Ejei earlier threatened to prosecute "without mercy" women who appear in public unveiled, Iranian media reported. (JPost / VFI News)

GOP's Haley, Rubio Slam Biden for Rebuke of Netanyahu over Judicial Overhaul; White House Republican hopeful Nikki Haley and Florida Sen. Marco Rubio bashed US President Joe Biden on Wednesday, March 29, for his rebuke of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his government's highly contentious judicial overhaul. "It's outrageous for Joe Biden to lecture Israel on a matter that is entirely

their domestic concern,” Haley tweeted. “We would never want the Israeli government to push America on issues surrounding our Supreme Court, and they wouldn’t do it. We should let Israelis decide this themselves.” Meanwhile, Florida Sen. Marco Rubio, who has previously expressed discomfort over the security situation unfolding amid the Israeli government’s plan to shackle the High Court, suggested that Biden’s comments constituted a threat to Israel. “If during these already dangerous days, Israel is attacked by Hezbollah, Hamas or Iran it will be because Joe Biden decided to involve himself in Israeli politics,” Rubio tweeted. Rep. Elise Stefanik (R-NY), chair of the House Republican Conference, on Thursday, March 30, also criticized US President Joe Biden over his response to the planned judicial reforms in Israel. “Biden’s hostile comments toward our ally Israel are shameful,” she tweeted. South Carolina’s Sen. Lindsey Graham, who has also shown discomfort with the plan, wrote as part of a series of tweets about a call he had with Foreign Minister Eli Cohen, that “Israel and the United States have an unbreakable bond.” (TOI / VFI News)

Bank of Israel Hikes Rate to 4.5%, Warns Judicial Shakeup Could Badly Harm Economy; The Bank of Israel on Monday, April 3, lifted the benchmark interest rate for the ninth straight meeting, raising its key lending rate by 25 basis points to 4.5 percent, the highest level since before the 2008 crash, as the central bank battles inflation pressure and as “tremendous” uncertainty over the government’s judicial overhaul plan weighs on the economy. “The uncertainty and the events we witnessed in recent weeks have naturally also had an impact on the Israeli economy,” said Bank of Israel governor Amir Yaron, speaking at a press conference in Jerusalem following the interest rate decision. Specifically, Yaron warned about the “uncertainty deriving from the legislative processes related to the judicial system” and the substantial impact these could have on the “economic and financial developments in the short term and in the longer term, and therefore on the monetary policy that will be required.” The central bank’s monetary committee decided to raise the benchmark rate to 4.5% from 4.25%, the smallest increase since April 2022. The Bank of Israel has steadily raised its benchmark interest rate from a record low of 0.1% last April in a bid to rein in inflation, which has been hovering above 5% in annual terms for the past six months, falling short of the government’s target range of 1% to 3%. (TOi / VFI News)

In Groundbreaking Research, Tel Aviv U Team Records Plants ‘Talking’ for First Time; It has been known for some time that plants communicate with one another, but Israeli scientists now say they’ve identified “words,” and have found that different species speak in different “languages,” according to a groundbreaking new study published Thursday, March 30, in a prestigious scientific journal. Scientists already know that plants communicate in a variety of ways when they are stressed. They might change physically (by wilting or changing leaf color), become bitter to the taste (to deter herbivores), or emit smells (volatile organic compounds) to tell other members of the family that they are under attack, for example by insects. But according to researchers from Tel Aviv University, the new study is the first time that airborne sounds from stressed plants have been recorded at a distance and classified. The research team recorded ultrasonic sounds emitted by tomato and tobacco plants that had been deprived of water, suffered a cut to the stem, or been left alone (as a control group). It turns out that plants “talk” in clicks, which sounds a bit like popcorn popping. The sounds are emitted at a volume similar to human speech, but at high frequencies (20 to 150 kHz), beyond the hearing range of humans. (TOI / VFI News)

1,700-Year-Old Gold Jewelry Discovered 50 in Pagan Burial Cave on Display for First Time; Gold jewelry that was discovered in 1971 in an ancient burial cave will be put on display for the first time, the Israel Antiquities Authority announced Monday, April 3. The jewelry was discovered in a lead coffin on Mount Scopus during excavations carried out by the Israel Department of Antiquities, and headed by late archaeologist Yael Adler. According to the IAA, the find included gold earrings, a hairpin, a gold pendant and gold beads, carnelian beads, and a glass bead. The display will be part of the 48th Archaeological Congress organized by the Israel Antiquities Authority, the Israel Exploration Society, and

the Israel Archaeological Association. The jewelry was studied as part of an extensive project to publish past archaeological excavations that were not fully published as part of the Israel Antiquities Authority's "Publication of Past Excavations Project", whereby old excavations that were not fully published are now being published. The congress will take place at the Jay and Jeanie Schottenstein National Campus for the Archaeology of Israel, now inaugurated in Jerusalem. "The location of the original reports that gathered dust over the years in the Israel Antiquities Authority archives, and physically tracing the whereabouts of the items themselves, has shed light on long-forgotten treasures," says Dr. Ayelet Dayan, Head of the Archaeological Research Department, who heads this project. "The beautiful jewelry that we researched is an example of such treasures." (I365N / VFI News)



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