

Yachad Ministries' Israel's News Update July 27, 2023 **(Av 9, 5783)**

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The image shows a golden menorah with seven branches and a bottle of Anointing Oil. The bottle has a label that reads 'Anointing Oil' and features a picture of a menorah. The items are set against a white background with a red dashed border.

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Reasonableness Bill Passes 64-0 after Compromise Falls at Last Minute; The reasonableness standard bill has officially passed into law, marking the first bill in the government's contentious judicial reform to pass into law after six months of fierce public debate and negotiations on a possible compromise that lasted until the last minute. The opposition boycotted the vote, and the final tally was 64-0. Every member of the coalition voted in favor of the bill. The voting on the bill's second reading included 140 objections and lasted a number of hours. The voting began after a marathon 26-hour debate that began on Sunday at 10:00 a.m. Justice Minister Yariv Levin and Knesset Constitution, Law and Justice Committee chairman MK Simcha Rothman (Religious Zionist Party) summed up the debate. The drama continued until the very last minute, as negotiations over a compromise continued between MKs in the plenum itself throughout the vote, with President Isaac Herzog reportedly speaking on the phone at one point with Shas chairman MK Aryeh Deri, and representatives of the President's Residence speaking on the phone to Netanyahu as well. The "reasonableness standard bill" is an amendment to Basic Law: The Judiciary, that would block Israel's courts from applying what is known as the "reasonableness standard" to decisions made by elected officials. The bill's current wording bars the use of the standard for decisions made by the prime minister, the cabinet as a whole, or any specific minister. It also bars its use against a minister's decision not to use his or her authority and on ministers' appointments of government workers. (JPost /VFI News)

Another 10,000 IDF Reservists Announce They Won't Serve Anymore; Some 10,000 reservists from throughout the IDF will no longer show up for service, they announced in a press conference on Saturday evening, July 22, according to Israeli media. These reservists are joining 1,142 Air Force reservists who made the same announcement in a letter on Friday. "This is one of the most difficult evenings for the State of Israel, but it's also one of the most important in the state's history," said Brothers

in Arms leader Eyal Neve. "We represent some 10,000 reservists who are telling the government, the defense minister, and the prime minister the responsibility is on you! If you want us on your side as we've served under right and left-wing governments, we are calling on you to stop the legislation." "I've served in the Air Force for 35 years," said a former fighter pilot. "The people in the force are my family, and this is a difficult day for us. The deep commitment to Judaism and democracy is the inner fuel of our engine. Our statement is clear: If the government violates the basic values and becomes a dictatorship, we won't serve." A group of former IDF, Israel Police, Mossad, and Shin Bet chiefs backed up this decision in a letter that was sent to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Saturday. The reservists were also defended by former IDF chief of staff MK Gadi Eisenkot who said they weren't refusniks. Meanwhile, the chairman of the Histadrut Bar-David threatened a major strike of the workforce in Israel on Monday, July 24, after the reasonableness bill passed. (JPost / VFI News)

3,600-Plus Palestinian Terror Attacks in First Half of 2023; The escalation in Palestinian terrorism that started over a year ago shows no signs of abating, data from Rescuers Without Borders (Hatzalah Judea and Samaria) published on Tuesday, July 18, indicates. In the first six months of 2023, the emergency service recorded 3,640 acts of terror throughout Israel, including 2,118 cases of rock-throwing, 799 attacks with Molotov cocktails, 18 attempted stabbings, and six car rammings. The number of shootings has already surpassed last year's total, with 101 instances of gunfire directed at Israelis reported. Hatzalah's figures do not include the hundreds of attacks on security personnel during counterterrorism operations in Palestinian villages. Palestinian terrorists have killed 28 people and wounded 362 others since January, the organization said. In addition, two Israelis died from wounds sustained in previous years. Shimon Maatuf died in February after suffering severe head wounds in an attack by two Palestinians armed with axes in 2022, and New York-born Chana Nachenberg died last month after a Palestinian suicide bombing put her in a coma 22 years ago. Hatzalah released its biannual report on terrorism amid yet another uptick in Arab attacks throughout Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria. On Tuesday, July 18, security forces thwarted a possible terrorist attack at the Shuafat checkpoint in northeastern Jerusalem, arresting a 14-year-old Palestinian suspect who behaved suspiciously and had a knife in his possession. Two days earlier, an Israeli man was shot and seriously wounded, and his two daughters lightly injured, in a Palestinian drive-by shooting near the Tekoa Junction in Gush Etzion. (I365N / VFI News)

Islamic Jihad Terrorists Attack Worshippers at Joseph's Tomb; One person was reported dead and several wounded in clashes that erupted in Shechem (Nablus) on Wednesday, July 19, night after Palestinian Islamic Jihad terrorists attacked Jewish worshippers and their military escort at Joseph's Tomb. In addition to being fired upon, Israeli forces were attacked with explosives and stones, according to the IDF. The soldiers responded with live fire and riot dispersal measures, and several hits were identified. The Palestinian Health Ministry reported that one person was killed and at least four wounded in the exchange, two seriously. The Palestinian Red Crescent identified the casualty as Egyptian citizen Bader Sami Rabhi, 19. The Nablus battalion of the Al-Quds Brigades, the armed wing of the Islamic Jihad terrorist group, said its members were "fighting the occupation forces and groups of settlers who had stormed the area of Joseph's Tomb," British media reported. Four terror suspects were arrested overnight in separate operations in Judea and Samaria, and weapons and ammunition were confiscated, according to the military. (I365N / VFI News)

Herzog: Vilifying Israel Is Anti-Semitism; Vilification of Israel and denying Israel's right to exist are antisemitism, President Isaac Herzog said to a joint session of the US Congress on Wednesday, July 19, honoring 75 years of Israeli Independence. "I respect criticism, especially from friends, although one does not always have to accept it. But criticism of Israel must not cross the line into negation of the State of Israel's right to exist. Questioning the Jewish people's right to self-determination is not legitimate diplomacy, it is antisemitism." "Vilifying and attacking Jews, whether in Israel, in the United States, or

anywhere in the world is antisemitism,” Herzog said. “Antisemitism is a disgrace in every form, and I commend President Joe Biden for laying out the United States’ first ever National Strategy to Combat Anti- Semitism.” Herzog’s remarks came the day after Congress passed a resolution affirming US support for Israel and calling it a democratic ally, as well as condemning anti-Semitism. Herzog later added that “as president of Israel, I am here to tell the American people, and each of you, that I have great confidence in Israeli democracy. Although we are working through some issues, just like you, I know our democracy is strong and resilient. Israel has democracy in its DNA.” He also thanked Congress for supporting Israel throughout its history, and said the US-Israel relationship is a “two-way alliance, in which Israel has been making critical contributions to the national security and interests of the United States in numerous ways.” (JPost /VFI News)

Moroccan King Invites Netanyahu to Rabat; King Muhammad VI of Morocco has invited Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to meet with him in Rabat. The invitation in a personal letter came on Wednesday, July 19, two days after Israel recognized Moroccan sovereignty in Western Sahara and said it may open a consulate in the city of Dakhla. “The visit will open new opportunities to strengthen the relations between our countries,” the King wrote. Netanyahu’s office said he would like the visit to take place “soon.” The US recognized Moroccan sovereignty over the territory, in conjunction with Rabat’s establishment of ties with Jerusalem. Only 28 countries have consulates in Western Sahara. The invitation from King Muhammad VI came just as President Isaac Herzog met with the Congressional Abraham Accords caucus immediately after his address to both houses of Congress. Herzog met with senators Jacky Rosen (D-NV), James Lankford (R-OK), Cory Booker (D-NJ), Joni Ernst (R-IA), and Reps. Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-WA-5), Brad Schneider (D-IL-10), Ann Wagner (D-MO-2), and David Trone (D-MD-6). Rosen, a founding caucus member, said that the countries cooperate “on tourism, trade, education, health care, energy, regional security. These are the kinds of people-to-people things that make a difference.” The senator also said that Herzog’s speech before Congress was “beautiful.” “I think he addressed all the issues and thinking about where we’re going to go in the future. I think it was inspiring and hopeful, and I feel very good about what he said,” she added. (JPost /VFI News)

Iraq: Protesters Set Swedish Embassy in Baghdad on Fire; Hundreds of protesters stormed the Swedish embassy in Baghdad in the early hours of Thursday morning, July 20, and set it on fire, British media reported. A source who spoke to the media outlet said no embassy staff had been harmed and declined to elaborate further. Swedish embassy officials in Baghdad did not immediately respond to requests for comment. The protest was called by supporters of Shiite cleric Muqtada Sadr ahead of an expected burning of a Quran in Sweden. A series of videos posted by a popular Telegram channel that supports Sadr, showed people gathering around the embassy around 1:00 a.m. local time on Thursday and storming the embassy complex around an hour later. Later videos showed smoke rising from a building in the embassy complex. Past incidents of Quran burnings in Sweden caused an uproar in the Muslim world, including an incident last month in which an Iraqi citizen living in Sweden, 37-year-old Salwan Momika, stomped on the Muslim holy book and set several pages alight. Swedish police had granted him a permit in line with free-speech protections, but authorities later also said they had opened an investigation over "agitation". Sweden's government later condemned the Quran burning and called it an "Islamophobic" act. (INN / VFI News)

Where Are Jerusalem's Jews, Arabs Living Together?; Two recent surveys published by the Jerusalem Institute for Policy Research (JIPR) show some intriguing changes and trends in the behavior among the city’s various sectors, as well as shifts in residential areas. While the surveys, based on data from the Central Bureau of Statistics, find that the number of Palestinians who choose to live in Jewish neighborhoods (mainly for improving housing conditions) is increasing and currently stands at 12,000 people (at least), the number of Jews who moved – mainly for ideological reasons – to live in crowded

Muslim population areas is about 4,000 to 5,000. For years, neighborhoods in Jerusalem were divided separately between Jews and Arabs; but sources in local political circles estimate that this new reality might encourage more Palestinians to take part in the upcoming municipal elections. “They move to Jewish neighborhoods to find better conditions, but living surrounded by Jews may also have some impact on their attitude toward these elections,” says a source, who adds, “being away from the Palestinians activist groups – Hamas or Fatah – can help these residents to feel less concerned about their “Israelization” process. Two case studies involving areas in Jerusalem where Jews and Palestinians work and play alongside each other are the Mamilla Mall on the east-west Jerusalem seamline, and Liberty Bell Park, a park in west Jerusalem. (JPost / VFI News)

Gallant: Iran Has Attempted Over 50 Terror Attacks Globally Against Jews in Recent Years; Iran has planned more than 50 terrorist attacks globally against Jews in recent years, Defense Minister Yoav Gallant said Thursday, July 13, in Azerbaijan, where he is on a visit to strengthen an alliance against the Iranian threat. “By order of the supreme leader [Ayatollah Ali Khamenei], in recent years, Iran has led an unprecedented global campaign of terror focused on Israelis and other Jews across the globe,” Gallant said. “There have been more than 50 attempts in recent years, the majority of which already got to the point of being ready to be carried out but were thwarted at the last minute.” The plots were thwarted “by virtue of our defense establishment and by virtue of tight cooperation with many foreign countries and by virtue of the understanding that Iran constitutes a threat to the world,” he said. Israeli efforts to thwart the ayatollahs’ global terrorism continued alongside its efforts to block an Iranian nuclear weapon and Tehran’s weapons smuggling to its proxies on Israel’s borders, he added. Gallant made the comments not long after meeting with Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev in the capital city of Baku on Thursday, which was in the shadow of a recent Iran-inspired attempted terrorist attack on Israel’s embassy there, and with the Islamic Republic closer than ever to a nuclear weapon. (JPost / VFI News)

Iran Stores Arsenal of Ballistic Missiles in Dozens of Bunkers in Hidden Valley – Report; Iran uses a valley in Kermanshah, Iran to base its Qiam-1 ballistic missiles, according to a new report from the Alma Research and Education Center. “Not only do we have positive identification of the Qiam-1 ballistic missile arsenal in Kermanshah, Iran but you can even look directly into the missile base from an overlooking observation point,” the Center said in the beginning of July. The report shows Qiam-1 ballistic missiles based at an area around 150 km from the border with Iraq. The missiles are allegedly kept in dozens of bunkers in three underground sites. One of them is in Konesht Canyon. There are “dozens of missile bunkers” dug into this canyon, the research center says. A video online produced by Alma shows evidence of 61 missile bunkers in the canyon. Footage also shows what a bunker for a Qiam missile might look like. They also say they have identified 80 other bunkers at a site called Panj Pelleh. These could house Qiam or Fatteh missiles. The canyon site has anti-aircraft weapons as well. (JPost / VFI News)

Iran: Morality Police Return to the Street Months after Protests; Iranian authorities on Sunday, July 16, announced a new campaign to force women to wear the Islamic headscarf. Following the announcement, morality police returned to the streets 10 months after the death of a woman in their custody sparked nationwide protests, American media reported. The morality police had largely pulled back following the death of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini last September. Amini’s death was followed by mass anti-government protests. The government crackdown on the demonstrations resulted in hundreds of people being killed, including dozens of security personnel, and thousands arrested. The protests largely died down earlier this year following the crackdown, however, the police have urged citizens since to confront unveiled women. Such directives in past decades have emboldened hardliners to attack women. On Sunday, Gen. Saeed Montazerolmahdi, a police spokesman, said the morality police would resume notifying and then detaining women not wearing hijab in public. In Tehran, the men and women of the morality police could be seen patrolling the streets in marked vans. (INN / VFI News)

Palestinian Authority Issues Warning to Gunmen Amid Rising Tension after Jenin Operation; The Palestinian Authority has issued a stiff warning to unruly gunmen in Judea and Samaria, saying it will “cut off the hand of anyone who tries to tamper with the security and stability” of the Palestinians. In a statement on Monday, July 17, the PA Ministry of Interior, which is in charge of the Palestinian security forces, said in a statement: “The Ministry affirms its full commitment to implement the directives of President Mahmoud Abbas to work continuously to implement the rule of law and provide security and safety for our people.” “We warn anyone who seeks to harm the security of Palestine and its people.” The warning came amid rising tension between the PA and some armed groups in the aftermath of the large-scale Israeli military operation in Jenin Refugee Camp earlier this month. The groups claim that the PA security forces have arrested several gunmen over the past few days as part of a larger campaign to end the phenomenon of “resistance” against Israel. The PA, however, said it arrested a number of “outlaws” who participated in an attack on a Palestinian police station near Jenin. On the first day of the operation, PA security forces arrested two gunmen, Murad Malaisheh and Mohammed Barahmeh, as they were on their way from the village of Jaba’, near Jenin, to take part in the fighting against Israeli troops in Jenin Refugee Camp. In response, several gunmen attacked the PA police station in Jaba’ with gunfire before setting it on fire. No one was hurt. Jenin’s PA Governor Akram Rajoub described the suspects as “outlaws” and revealed that they belong to Palestinian Islamic Jihad, Hamas, and Fatah. (JPost / VFI News)

Warning of ‘Clear and Immediate Danger,’ Ex-Shin Bet Agents Urge Overhaul Be Shelved; A group of 800 former Shin Bet agents on Sunday, July 17, urged Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defense Minister Yoav Gallant to shelve the judicial overhaul, warning the legislation poses “a clear and immediate danger” to Israel’s security. In a letter to Netanyahu and Gallant, the ex-operatives cited the coalition’s plans to curb the courts’ review powers, stressing the importance of an independent judiciary in countering terror. The group released the letter under the name “Shin Bet Veterans for defending democracy.” “This will bring substantial harm to international recognition of the independence of Israel’s judicial system in Israel,” they wrote. The group warned Israeli forces “will be exposed to investigations and being put on trial at international tribunals” if the legislation passes, calling the High Court of Justice an “Iron Dome” that provides judicial cover to troops and decision-makers. “This protection will be immediately removed if the legislation is passed,” the agents said. Separately, the former deputy chief of Military Intelligence’s elite Unit 8200 has told his commander he would no longer volunteer for reserve duty, Israeli media reported. Furthermore, according to a list published Sunday, nearly 4,000 reservists have signed letters threatening to not show up for duty in protest of the planned changes to the judiciary. (TOI /VFI News)

Biden, Netanyahu to Meet in US after First Phone Call in Months; US President Joe Biden on Monday, July 17, agreed to meet Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in the United States, after twice refusing to host him in the White House. The two leaders spoke by phone after months of increasing friction over Israel’s judicial overhaul process, Iran, and accelerated Judea and Samaria settlement activity. The Prime Minister’s Office did not say whether the Netanyahu-Biden meeting would take place at the White House, and there was speculation that it could take place on the sidelines of high-level sessions at the UN General Assembly in New York this fall. Netanyahu updated Biden on the expected passage next week in the Knesset of the reasonableness bill, which is part of the package of judicial overhaul legislation. He assured Biden that consensus talks would be held over the summer on other overhaul bills, even though the reasonableness bill is moving forward without consensus. Meanwhile, Biden told Israeli President Isaac Herzog in the Oval Office on Tuesday that the US commitment to Israel remains strong. “Our friendship with Israel is unbreakable...America’s commitment to Israel is firm, is ironclad,” Biden said, adding that he said the same to Netanyahu on the phone on Monday. (JPost /VFI News)

Hatzalah Volunteer, 4 Others, Injured in Rock Attack in Samaria; A United Hatzalah volunteer EMT and four others were lightly injured on Monday afternoon, July 17, in a rock-throwing attack on their vehicles near Karnei Shomron. United Hatzalah volunteers provided initial treatment to those injured. The attack occurred on Highway 55 between Karnei Shomron and Maale Shomron, leaving the volunteer EMT, who was in her car, along with some of her passengers and people in other cars, with light injuries. The volunteer was hit by the rock that smashed her windshield, and other passengers in the vehicle were injured by shattered glass. The volunteer, a member of the Adele and Joel Sandberg Women's Unit, continued driving until she arrived at the Maale Shomron intersection, where she was treated for her injuries before being taken to the hospital for further care and observation. One of the Psychotrauma and Crisis Response Unit leaders and a volunteer EMT with United Hatzalah, Hadas Rucham, was one of the first responders at the scene and said: "I responded to the incident as an EMT as I work nearby. When I arrived, I found that six vehicles had been hit by the rocks thrown by the attackers. I began treating the injured, all of whom were in light condition. When enough other medical responders arrived, I switched hats and began providing psychological first aid and treating people for anxiety and emotional distress." (INN / VFI News)

World Bank: Over Half of Palestinians in Judea and Samaria and Gaza Suffer from Depression; A study published by the World Bank on Friday, July 14, reveals that over half of the Palestinian population in Judea and Samaria, and Gaza show symptoms of depression. The study, presented in Ramallah in March, indicates that 50 percent of Palestinian residents of Judea and Samaria and 71% of Gazans (58% of all Palestinians in the territories) exhibit symptoms consistent with depression. In addition, 7% of Palestinian adults screened positive for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The study shows that while depression, anxiety, and PTSD are directly linked to traumatic events — 65% of Gazans and 35% of residents in Judea and Samaria said they had been exposed to a traumatic event in the preceding 12 months — they are also correlated with economic deprivation and “loss of sense of agency” due to high unemployment. At the end of 2022, the average unemployment rate for Palestinians as a whole was 24%, with a stark disparity between Judea and Samaria (13%) and Gaza (45%). Youth unemployment was particularly high in the strip, at nearly 70%. The data showed a clear correlation between unemployment and the risk of depression, and between food insecurity and psychological distress, according to the researchers. It also indicated that people with comorbidity, such as a chronic illness (19% of respondents) or a disability (2% of respondents) had higher levels of depression symptoms and PTSD symptoms. The study was carried out by the World Bank in collaboration with the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), and two German non-profits. (TOI / VFI News)

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