

# ***Yachad Ministries' Israel's News Update August 31, 2023 (Elul 14, 5783)***



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***IDF Thwarted Smuggling of Iranian Explosives from Jordan – Report;*** The IDF thwarted an attempt to smuggle Iranian-produced explosives from Jordan to Israel in July, the IDF cleared for publication on Sunday, August 27. At the end of July, the IDF announced that it had thwarted an "unusual" weapons smuggling attempt in the Jordan Valley near Ashdot Yaakov. It is estimated that the explosives were intended for terrorist organizations in Judea and Samaria. The investigation of the smuggling was assigned to the Shin Bet. The announcement comes as Israeli officials place a greater focus on Iran's efforts to aid terrorism and crime in the region. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has recently stated that the wave of terrorist attacks in Judea and Samaria was being "encouraged, directed, and financed by Iran and its affiliates." On Thursday, the Shin Bet announced that 4 Arab Israelis from Lod and Kafr Kassem had been arrested and indicted after receiving Iranian-made explosives and ammunition through Hezbollah, which they intended to use for criminal purposes. (JPost / VFI News)

***Netanyahu Warns Hamas to Pay 'Full Price,' After Its Leader Threatens War;*** Hamas and Iran will pay "full price" for their terrorist attacks against Israel, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told the cabinet at the start of its weekly meeting, after Hamas senior leader Saleh al-Arouri threatened regional warfare. "Hamas and other Iranian proxies understand very well that we will fight with all means against their attempts to promote terrorism against us ... Whoever tries to harm us, whoever finances, whoever organizes, whoever sends terror against Israel – will pay the full price," Netanyahu said. It was a message he had broadcast two weeks ago as well, in the aftermath of two deadly Palestinian terrorist shootings in Judea and Samaria in which three Israelis were murdered. Israel blamed both Iran and Hamas for the attacks, linking the latest wave of terrorism in particular to funding from Iran. "I would also like to appeal to the citizens of Israel: We are facing waves of terrorism, both internal and external. These are not simple

times; these are challenging times. We need to unite our forces against terrorism ... I appeal to the Arab public. I appeal to the MKs, local council heads, and opinion-makers, and I tell them – stand together with the government in the joint effort against the criminal organizations” Netanyahu added. (JPost / VFI News)

***IDF, Palestinians Clash as Explosives Thrown at Judea and Samaria Post;*** Israeli security forces shot at Palestinian terrorists who hurled explosives at an IDF post near Yabad, in Judea and Samaria, on Monday morning, August 28. Several suspects who were injured by the gunfire were arrested, with their vehicle confiscated. Israeli forces launched scans of the area in search of suspects who fled the scene, the IDF said. In total, 16 Palestinian suspects were arrested as part of an overnight raid, the IDF added later on Monday morning. Elsewhere in Judea and Samaria, Border Police officers arrested three Palestinians who attempted to cross into Israel on Sunday night. One of the suspects was found carrying a knife, Border Police said. The armed suspect, a 32-year-old resident of Bethlehem, was detained ahead of an interrogation. (JPost / VFI News)

***Israel to Have Partial Laser Defenses by Next Year;*** Israel will have partial laser defenses by this time next year, Rafael Advanced Defense Systems chairman Yuval Steinitz told IDF radio network on Sunday, August 27. "One year from now – Israel will be the first country to have partial laser protection. In two years there may be complete protection – against missiles, shells, rockets, or anything else. This will protect us both in the South and in the North," said Steinitz. This past February, senior Defense Ministry official Brig.-Gen. (res.) Danny Gold said Israel's air-defense lasers, when fully deployed, will be able to shoot down the drones Iran has been sending Russia to use against Ukraine. Speaking at an Artificial Intelligence conference he talked about multiple successful tests destroying rockets "with a very sophisticated laser-weapons system... We have done the same for mortars, rockets, and UAVs [unmanned aerial vehicles], like the Iranian UAVs they are sending to Ukraine. The same concept of UAV, we can shoot them down." In February 2022, then-prime minister Naftali Bennett also proclaimed that Israel's ability to use lasers had progressed significantly and could be operational much sooner than people had expected. (JPost / VFI News)

***Iran Tests Its 'Electronic Warfare' Capabilities in New Drills;*** Iran on Friday, August 25, launched exercises to test its "electronic warfare" capabilities against mock enemy drones, fighter jets, and helicopters, British media reported, citing Iranian state television. According to the report, units from the Iranian military's navy, ground and air forces as well as air defenses took part in the drills in the central, largely desert region of the Islamic Republic. The exercises featured domestically manufactured radars, drones, manned and unmanned fighter jets, micro aerial vehicles, and other military equipment, state TV said. "The army has the appropriate infrastructure, and we have achieved favorable results in countering threats in today's world and predicting future threats in this sensitive and complicated arena," Rear Admiral Habibollah Sayyari, deputy chief of the army's coordination department, was quoted as having said. Iran often boasts of its military accomplishments, though it is not always possible to determine with certainty that it is telling the truth about those accomplishments. Previously, Iran's Revolutionary Guard claimed it had successfully tested a Hormuz 2-type ballistic missile. (INN / VFI News)

***Libyan Foreign Minister Fired After Meeting with Israel, Fleeing Country;*** Libyan Foreign Minister Najla Mangoush was fired on Monday, August 28, a Libyan government source told British media, after Foreign Minister Eli Cohen said Sunday that he had met her last week in Rome, even though the countries lack formal relations. The initial suspension notice was signed by Prime Minister Abdulhamid al-Dbeibah, who heads Libya's Government of National Unity. According to media reports, Mangoush left Libya for Turkey early Monday morning. Israel said the face-to-face conversation facilitated by Italian Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani had been pre-arranged, lasted for over an hour, and

included a discussion on cooperation in a wide array of arenas including agriculture and water technology. The report of the meeting sparked anger on the Libyan streets, prompting protests, including against the Foreign Ministry building there. Libya's Foreign Ministry said Mangoush had refused a proposed meeting with Israeli representatives and that what had occurred was "an unprepared, casual encounter during a meeting at Italy's Foreign Affairs Ministry." The Foreign Ministry also issued a statement stressing its support for the Palestinians and affirming Jerusalem's status as the capital of a Palestinian state. Despite the statements by the Libyan government, two senior Libyan government officials told American media that al-Dbeibah knew about the talks between Mangoush and Cohen, and had given the green light for the meeting last month. (JPost / VFI News)

***'Don't Erase Us:' Hundreds of Women Demonstrate Against Haredim in Bnei Brak;*** Hundreds of left-wing women activists marched in protest in the largely haredi city of Bnei Brak Thursday evening, August 24, against what they called the "erasure of women" due to haredi pressure and influence. Women's organizations that announced the march sent out a message that said: "They want to throw us into the back seat of the bus, they demand that our daughters cover up, they fired all the women who were CEOs of government offices, they want us only to be anxious mothers to serving soldiers." The left-wing activist organization noted that they concurrently initiated a women's solidarity conference in Beni Brak. More than 100 ultra-Orthodox, secular, and Arab women attended. A group of well-known rabbis in Bnei Brak issued a joint call to their followers not to go to the locations of the demonstration, where confrontations could occur. In their letter, the rabbis stated that the purpose of the demonstration was to oppose "the Torah and commandment-observant public, and against the preservation of modesty and holiness." "We address this to the entire community, we should not be dragged into a confrontation with them at all. It is the responsibility of each and every one of us not to approach their places of gathering, not to respond to them positively or negatively, and not to be drawn to go near them, and certainly not to argue with them and, God forbid, cause the name of Heaven to be profaned," the rabbis warned. (INN / VFI News)

***History: Israel Wins Gold Medal at World Rhythmic Gymnastics Championships;*** Israel made history on Friday, August 25, as it won its first-ever group all-around gold medal at the 2023 World Rhythmic Gymnastics Championships taking place in Valencia, Spain. This is only Israel's second medal in the event all-time, joining the historic silver medal the squad claimed last year at the global event in Sofia, Bulgaria. The Israeli team totaled 70.800 points, to hold off the People's Republic of China, which earned a two-event score of 70.050. Spain took the bronze medal with a total of 68.600. The Israeli team, which consists of Shani Bakanov, Eliza Banchuk, Adar Friedmann, Romi Paritzki, Ofir Shaham, and Diana Svertsov, earned event scores of 38.150, five hoops, and 32.650, three ribbons and two balls. (INN / VFI News)

***Teen Girls Being Used by Terror Groups in Battle Against IDF – Report;*** A recent report revealed a chilling tactic by Palestinian terrorist organizations: recruiting teenage girls as spotters for terrorists during their operations against the IDF. Even more chilling is a report that over 60,000 Palestinian children are being trained every year to participate in combat. The report of an American-based news agency stated that this year alone, some 65,000 Palestinian children attended "summer camps" that included combat training and anti-Israel indoctrination. Middle East analyst Jonathan Halevi reported that on April 10, 2022, a Telegram channel serving armed Palestinian groups in the Jenin region, published instructions for mujahideen (Jihad fighters) that deal with the use of children "to conduct visual observation and information gathering." The Telegram channel also noted that Jenin has a network of observation units staffed by "young people" assisting terrorist groups by "documenting on video and delivering reports about the activities of IDF forces." A guidelines document (originally in Arabic) states: "To our brothers and the crown of our head ... use children and residents to observe and gather information." Nada

AlTaher, a senior foreign reporter, posted a video on Twitter last month claiming that 15-year-old Sadil Nagnaghia was filming IDF troops when she was shot. In conventional armies, a spotter acts as part of a sniper team, observing the targets and their surroundings. In asymmetrical warfare and terrorist organizations, spotters serve a similar purpose, however, the team may be setting off an Improvised Explosive Device (IED). (I365N / VFI News)

***Canada Condemns Terrorist Attacks Against Israelis: Horrific Acts;*** The Canadian Embassy in Israel on Tuesday, August 22, issued a statement condemning the recent terrorist attacks against Israelis. "We condemn these horrific acts and extend our condolences to the victims and their loved ones," it wrote in a tweet. The statement comes a day after Batsheva Nigri was murdered in a shooting attack near Hebron. The two terrorists who carried out the attack were arrested by security forces overnight Monday. On Saturday, Aviad Nir and his father, Shai Silas Nigreker, were murdered in a shooting attack in Huwara. The Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) welcomed the statement from the Canadian Embassy. "A welcome condemnation of the murder of innocent Israeli civilians by Palestinian terrorists. In addition to condemning the acts, Canada should also condemn the perpetrators and hold the Palestinian Authority accountable for incentivizing terror," it tweeted. Meanwhile, amidst the attacks, MK Boaz Bismuth (Likud) who serves as a member of the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee has proposed a bill to increase punishment for terrorists' accomplices. Bismuth believes that "anyone who helps a lowly terrorist before or after a terror attack - whether by hiding him, whether by allowing him to make a phone call, or even by giving him a sip of water - he is a terrorist." He noted that as of now, the maximum punishment for aiding a terrorist after a terror attack is five years in prison. (INN / VFI News)

***Biden Pays \$16 Billion Ransom to Iran, Fails to Free 3 Americans;*** Critics are livid as US President Joe Biden prepares to pay the Iranian regime a hefty \$16 billion for five hostages held by Tehran. Not only does the huge ransom provide a lifeline for its sanction-stricken economy and help continue exporting terror across the world, but the deal leaves out three American nationals held as bargaining chips by the Islamic Republic. The son of one of the hostages, Shahab Dalili, told American media that the Biden administration has abandoned his father. "They have included two unnamed prisoners in this deal with Iran who have been there for only a matter of months and have excluded him who's been there for seven years and keep saying that they haven't reached a decision on the unlawful designation matter. How could that take seven years?" Shahab was detained by Iranian authorities when he visited the country for his father's funeral in 2016. He was charged with "communications with a hostile country" and underwent what critics call a "shame trial." "The Biden administration's policy on Iran is a strategic and moral travesty. Biden is giving the regime in Iran nearly \$16 billion as ransom for five hostages. The regime will now get a big financial boost as it faces a popular revolt and possible collapse," Alireza Nader, a Washington-based Iran scholar, told American media. (INN / VFI News)

***Warning that Prisoner Swap with Iran Could Involve A Renewed Nuclear Deal;*** A group of 26 Republican senators raised concerns about the Biden administration bypassing congressional authority to agree to a nuclear deal with Iran. In a letter addressed to Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen, the lawmakers voiced concerns about a "secret negotiation." "When the Obama administration released \$400 million in liquidated assets to Iran in 2016, we warned that this dangerous precedent would put a price on American lives. Seven years later, the current administration is providing a ransom payment worth at least fifteen times that amount to the world's largest state sponsor of terror, in yet another violation of the United States' long-standing 'no concessions' policy," the senators wrote. "The release of such a significant sum to the Iranian regime runs entirely counter to that claim and will only serve to encourage additional hostage-taking for financial or political gain," the letter continued. The letter comes after House Intelligence Committee Chairman Mike Turner (R-OH) said earlier this month that the Biden administration's prisoner swap with Iran involved a renewed Iran nuclear deal. An

American news outlet also reported that the agreement could increase the chances of Biden pursuing his goal of coming to the table with Iran over nuclear weapons. Last summer, Biden attempted to renew the Obama administration's nuclear deal but ultimately failed. (DW / VFI News)

***NYC's Mayor Adams in Jerusalem: it's Time to Put Faith into Action to Combat Hate;*** New York City Mayor Eric Adams kicked off a three-day trip to Israel on Monday, August 21, meeting with interfaith leaders in Jerusalem to discuss antisemitism and tolerance. The mayor, a self-professed man of faith, told Jewish, Muslim, Christian and Druze representatives welcoming him to the city that rising global tensions demand that people convert their religious principles into actions. "We are now at a moment that I believe we have to transcend our desire and our faith to move from being worshipers to practitioners," he said. "What we learn in our churches, synagogues and mosques cannot remain in the sterilized environment of our places of faith," the mayor continued. New York boasts the world's largest Jewish metropolitan population, and Adams' visit comes as antisemitic violence continues to persist in New York City, which tallied 100 anti-Jewish hate crimes in the first half of 2023. The mayor, a former police captain who has championed increased public safety, is considered to have good relations with several of the city's Jewish communities. Human rights champion and former Israeli minister Natan Sharansky also stressed the centrality of coexistence to Jerusalem's inner workings, while progressive Jewish educational leader Rabbi Avital Hochstein pushed for religious pluralism. (TOI / VFI News)

***Uruguay to Open Diplomatic Office in Jerusalem, Foreign Minister Announces;*** Uruguay will open a diplomatic mission in Jerusalem, Foreign Minister Eli Cohen announced Wednesday, August 16, during his visit to the South American country. The mission will not be an embassy, but rather an office aimed at boosting cooperation "in the innovation arena," the Foreign Ministry said in a statement. There was no immediate confirmation from Uruguay and no details were given by Israel regarding when the mission will open. The announcement came after Cohen met in Montevideo with his Uruguayan counterpart Francisco Bustillo and President Luis Lacalle Pou. Cohen said he invited Lacalle Pou to Jerusalem to inaugurate the new office, "We're continuing to strengthen the international status of Israel's capital. Uruguay is one of Israel's most important friends in Latin America, and the president's decision to open an innovation office in Jerusalem will advance economic and trade ties between us." The move did not appear to mark a shift in Uruguay's stance on Jerusalem where it maintained an embassy until 1980 when it moved the mission out of the capital to Herzliya north of Tel Aviv. (TOI / VFI News)

***Ukraine Warns Israel: Maltreatment of Refugees Will Cost You Uman;*** Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky issued a warning to Israel on Friday, August 18, regarding visas for Ukrainians seeking to enter Israel. In a statement from his weekly briefing to Ukrainians, and published on the Ukrainian president's official government website, Zelensky said, "The things that the citizens of Ukraine actually face is the visa issue. Managers responsible for these issues have been given appropriate tasks. The rights of Ukrainian citizens must be guaranteed." Yevgen Korniychuk, Ukraine's ambassador to Israel, elucidated the statement, asserting that it was directed at Israel. "The government of Ukraine will not tolerate [the] humiliation of its citizens while entering Israel. We will halt our bilateral visa waiver agreements as stipulated by Article 7 of the intergovernmental agreement. This option is on the table of our government," Korniychuk said. "It is unthinkable," he added, "that we will have to go out of our way to host tens of thousands of Israelis in Uman, with a high-security risk, and with a huge logistical effort, when, on the other hand, the Israeli government abuses our citizens who come to Israel within the framework of the treaty between the two countries." The ambassador went on to state that if Israel would like Ukraine to continue to permit Israelis to visit Ukraine, including Uman, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu should directly involve himself in solving the Ukrainian visa issue. (JPost / VFI News)

***2,000-year-old Arch in Caesarea Aqueduct Collapses; Official: ‘We Sounded the Alarm’;*** A nearly 2,000-year-old arch in Caesarea’s famous ancient Roman aqueduct system collapsed on a much-frequented beach early Friday morning, August 18, leading the head of the Israel Antiquities Authority to issue accusations against the bodies responsible for the beach for ignoring repeated warnings and appeals to care of the structure. IAA inspectors arrived Friday morning at the beach, which is popular with bathers, to assess the damage. The aqueduct was built some 2,000 years ago, in the days of King Herod. The authority said the section that collapsed was a later addition, built in the time of Emperor Hadrian, some 1,900 years ago. “It’s pure luck that bathers weren’t killed,” said IAA Director-General Eli Eskosido. “We have been sounding the alarm, we presented documents and plans, we said the situation was catastrophic and there was a real danger of collapse, we met again and again with the owners of the land — we even offered to cover some of the cost of the works, as we understood that this was a disaster waiting to happen.” Ami Shahaar, head of the IAA’s Conservation Department, added: “At this point, we feel we must inform the public that Acre’s 15-kilometer-long aqueduct is in an even more precarious state and faces collapse. (TOI / VFI News)



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