

# ***Yachad Ministries' Israel's News Update September 21, 2023 (Tishrei 6, 5784)***

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***16 Tons of Rocket-making Material on Way to Gaza Discovered in Ashdod;*** It has been cleared for publication that in July 2023, the Customs Authority in Ashdod inspected two 54-ton containers that were said to be carrying plaster and were en route from Turkey to the Gaza Strip. During the inspection, the customs inspectors began to suspect that some of the materials in the containers were not plaster. The materials were taken to a lab inspection, which corroborated the suspicion that the material was ammonium chloride weighing 16 tons, which was being hidden between the sacks of plaster. Ammonium chloride is a dual-use substance known to be used by terror organizations in Gaza to manufacture rockets that are launched into Israel. (INN / VFI News)

***Netanyahu: Iran Is Violating All of Its Nuclear Commitments;*** Iran is "violating all of its commitments" in its pursuit of nuclear weapons, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu charged on Saturday evening, September 16, through the Prime Minister's Office, after it was revealed the Islamic Republic had banned a third of IAEA inspectors assigned to it, hindering its oversight of Tehran's atomic activities. "Israel is not surprised by Iran's moves, which prove it is continuing to violate all of its commitments to the international community," the PMO statement read. UN nuclear watchdog chief Rafael Grossi on Saturday condemned Iran's "disproportionate and unprecedented" move to bar multiple inspectors assigned to the country. Iran's move is a response to a call led by the United States, Britain, France, and Germany at the International Atomic Energy Agency's Board of Governors this week for Tehran to cooperate immediately with the IAEA on issues including explaining uranium traces found at undeclared sites. "This measure, while formally permitted by the NPT Safeguards Agreement, has been exercised by Iran in a manner that affects in a direct and severe way the ability of the IAEA to conduct its inspections effectively in Iran," the IAEA said. (JPost / VFI News)

***Britain, France, and Germany to Maintain Sanctions on Iran;*** London, Paris, and Berlin on Thursday, September 14, said they had agreed to a strategy maintaining nuclear proliferation-related sanctions on Iran beyond an October date that had been set to bring partial respite to Tehran, French media reported. Under the terms of the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) deal, signed between Iran and world powers, some of the sanctions are due to be lifted on October 18. However, in a joint statement from their respective foreign ministries, Britain, France, and Germany on Thursday noted Tehran's "non-compliance" and underlined their commitment to ensure the country does not obtain a nuclear weapons capacity. The statement said the decision was fully compliant with the JCPOA, given that "Iran has refused opportunities to return to the JCPOA twice and has continued to expand its program beyond JCPOA limitations and without any credible civilian justification," taking its stockpile of enriched uranium to more than 18 times the amount permitted under the deal. The ministries also stressed their "commitment to finding a diplomatic solution" and added the decision would be reversed if Iran fully implemented its commitments under the deal. (INN / VFI News)

***Mahsa Amini's Father Detained in Iran on the Anniversary of Her Death in Custody;*** Iranian security forces detained Mahsa Amini's father Saturday, September 16, on the first anniversary of the 22-year-old's death in their custody, which sparked widespread demonstrations across the country, according to reports. Amjad Amini was arrested as he left his home in western Iran, according to the Norwegian human rights group Hengaw. He was detained for a few hours and warned not to commemorate the anniversary of his daughter's death. One of Amini's uncles, Safa Aeli, was also detained in Saqez on September 5 and remains in custody, according to reports. Security forces were seen patrolling the streets in Tehran and western Iran. Roads to the Aichi cemetery where Mahsa is buried were blocked Saturday and military helicopters hovered overhead. The family said they wanted to hold a traditional religious ceremony and had visited the grave on Friday. Mahsa Amini was beaten to death after she was arrested by Iranian authorities for not properly wearing a hijab or head covering, in compliance with Iranian law. On Friday, the US imposed new sanctions against Iran. The U.S. said it was sanctioning 29 people and entities in Iran including members of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, the head of Iran's Prisons Organization, and three state-backed media outlets. It also announced visa restrictions on 13 Iranian officials. (NYP / VFI News)

***Netanyahu Heads to US, Will Meet Biden and Musk;*** Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu took off Sunday night, September 17, on his first official trip to the United States since the formation of his government approximately nine months ago. Following a two-day Rosh Hashanah holiday, Netanyahu and his entourage departed for the airport. The highlight of his visit is anticipated to be his address at the United Nations (UN) General Assembly on Friday morning Eastern Time. "I am now leaving for the UN General Assembly where I will represent Israel before the nations of the world," the prime minister said as he boarded the plane. "I will also meet with many world leaders, especially President Biden, with whom I will discuss – first and foremost, but among other topics – Iran and expanding the circle of peace." During his visit, Netanyahu is expected to hold meetings with several additional international leaders, including German Chancellor Olaf Schulz, Turkish President Recep Erdogan, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, South Korean President Yoon Seok-Yeol, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, and others. One of the most intriguing aspects of this visit is Netanyahu's expected meeting with the unconventional US billionaire Elon Musk, who, among other ventures, owns X (formerly known as Twitter). Netanyahu plans to discuss potential investments in Israeli companies with Musk. (JPost / VFI News)

***'Health, Peace, Prosperity': From Biden to Zelensky, Leaders Wish Jews Happy New Year;*** Leaders from around the world offered New Year's greetings to the Jewish people Friday night, September 15, as they celebrated Rosh Hashanah. In a missive, US President Joe Biden said, "During this spiritual time of reflection and atonement, we are also uplifted by the hope a new year brings" and "are reminded

that it is never too late to change and begin anew. Our actions have the power to shift the balance of our fate, our nation, and our world.” British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak wished a good year to Jews in Britain and around the world, saying “British Jews play an integral part in the success of this nation, and I am delighted the vibrant and diverse Jewish faith continues to thrive across the country.” “Chag Sameach!” declared Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. “Shana Tova U’metuka! To Jewish communities across the country: As you celebrate Rosh Hashanah with prayer, the sounds of the shofar, traditional meals, and sweet treats, I’m wishing you a happy New Year.” Ukraine’s President Volodymyr Zelensky, who is Jewish, tweeted, in English, “Shanah Tovah to all Jewish communities in Ukraine and across the world celebrating #RoshHashanah today! Let the new year bring a fresh start and hope for a brighter future,” he said. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Turkey’s President Recep Tayyip Erdogan also offered their greetings with the former going a bit further and issuing his tweet entirely in Hebrew. (TOI / VFI News)

***UNESCO Names Ancient Jericho A World Heritage Site in Palestine;*** The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) named Ancient Jericho (Tel es-Sultan) as a World Heritage site on Sunday, September 17. The vote was initially held at the World Heritage Committee meeting in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, reports say. UNESCO’s website saw the site affiliated with the “State of Palestine,” which brought the number of inscribed Palestinian sites to four. Israel quit UNESCO in 2019. UNESCO had previously designated three other sites in Judea and Samaria as World Heritage sites: the Church of the Nativity, Battir hill landscape of grapevines and olive trees, and the Old Town in Hebron, American media reported. Ancient Jericho is considered one of humanity’s oldest-known villages, dating back to 2,600 B.C. The Israel Foreign Ministry expressed its opposition to this decision and disclosed in a statement that Israel will act against its many friends in the organization to change all the distorted decisions that were made. Professor Eugene Kontorovich, director of international law at the Jerusalem-based Kohelet Policy Forum, said that the UNESCO decision “ethnically cleanses Jews from the history of ancient Jericho - even as the Jews worldwide were busy celebrating Rosh Hashanah, one of the holiest days of the year.” Shlomo Ne’eman, Mayor of the Gush Etzion Regional Council and Chairman of the Yesha Council stated that “we received additional evidence that the Palestinian Authority continues to fight us using all the means at their disposal, including desperate attempts to involve our history. (JPost / VFI News)

***Israeli Population Nearing 10 Million People Ahead of Jewish New Year;*** About 9.8 million people were living in Israel ahead of Rosh Hashanah, with the country’s population expected to reach 10 million people by the end of next year, according to data published by the Central Bureau of Statistics on Wednesday, September 13. By the end of 2048, Israel’s population is expected to reach 15 million people. Of the 9.8 million people living in Israel, 7.2 million (73%) are Jews and about 2.1 million (21%) are Arabs. Another 549,000 were from other sectors. Israel’s population grew by about 194,000 people this past year, marking a 2% growth. 172,000 new babies were born and about 70,000 people moved to the country, including about 66,000 new immigrants. (JPost / VFI News)

***Israel Will Act Against Iranian Nuclear Pursuit, Uranium Enrichment;*** Israel will act against Iran’s enrichment of uranium at above 60% because that means it was admitting pursuit of nuclear weapons, National Security Advisor Tzachi Hanegbi told the World Summit on Counter-Terrorism in Herzliya on Monday morning, September 11. “If Iran enriches uranium at above 60% as an action that we would identify — and there is no chance that we would not, that the world and the International Atomic Energy Agency would not recognize it — the result is that Israel would have to act,” Hanegbi said. “There would not be any choice” but to act, he stated. Passing over the 60% threshold would mean that “we have reached the moment when Iran is clearly telling the world that it is going for a [nuclear] bomb,” Hanegbi explained. “It would mean that this is now Iranian policy.” Hanegbi noted that recently Iran had hit the

83.7 mark on uranium enrichment, but had hastened to explain that this was a mistake. Such steps are never accidental, he added. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has explained this to world leaders including the United States and the E3 — Germany, France, and Italy. IAEA Director-General Rafael Grossi also warned on Monday that there is a "routinization" process underway of Iran's many nuclear violations. (JPost / VFI News)

***Two Israelis Wounded in Judea and Samaria Terror Shooting Near Huwara;*** Two people were wounded in a shooting attack near Huwara in northern Judea and Samaria on Tuesday evening, September 12, according to Magen David Adom. The two suffered from injuries caused by shards of glass. Samaria Regional Council head Yossi Dagan was in the area at the time of the attack and helped treat those wounded. Shortly after the attack, the al-Fajr Brigade terrorist group claimed responsibility for the shooting. The terrorist group said it committed the attack in response to alleged attacks on Palestinian women in Jerusalem and Hebron. Hamas spokesperson Muhammad Hamadeh also welcomed the attack. Last week, the al-Fajr Brigade claimed responsibility for a shooting attack in the Jordan Valley in which a Border Police officer was moderately injured. For the first time ever, an armed guard will be stationed outside each synagogue in Jerusalem, as part of preparations for the upcoming High Holidays and amid concerns over the recent terrorist attacks. According to reports in Israeli media, there have been 19 terrorist attacks in Jerusalem since the beginning of the year, with 31 other incidents successfully thwarted. (JPost / VFI News)

***Israel Arrests Three Palestinians Amid Riots on Gaza Border;*** Three Palestinians were arrested during riots along the border of the Gaza Strip on Tuesday evening, September 12, according to the IDF Spokesperson's Unit. According to Palestinian reports, the rioters burned tires and set off explosives near the border fence. The three arrested suspects were transferred for questioning. The riots were being conducted as part of protests against restrictions that National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir intends to implement against Palestinian prisoners. Ben-Gvir announced a decision to restrict the visits of families of Palestinian prisoners to once every two months; with Netanyahu stating shortly afterward that no such decision was made. Ben-Gvir subsequently claimed that he was simply enforcing the law and that the decision would be implemented regardless. Last week, the Supreme Emergency Committee for Palestinian Prisoners announced that the prisoners intend to launch a hunger strike starting this Thursday. The committee has downplayed the decisions by Netanyahu to push off the issue, stating that they still intend to move forward with the hunger strike. The committee and the Palestinian factions called for Palestinians to gather at demonstrations in support of the prisoners throughout Judea and Samaria and the Gaza Strip on Tuesday evening, with protests held in a number of cities. (JPost / VFI News)

***Morocco Rescuers Race to Find Survivors as Earthquake Toll Reaches 2,900;*** Rescuers on Monday searched villages reduced to rubble for any survivors of Morocco's deadliest earthquake in more than six decades, in a desperate race against time as the death toll rose to 2,901 and the scale of destruction became clearer. Search teams from Spain, Britain, and Qatar were joining efforts to find people buried under debris after the 6.8 magnitude quake struck late on Friday night, September 8, in the High Atlas Mountains, with the epicenter 72 km (45 miles) southwest of Marrakech. Many survivors spent a third night outside, their homes destroyed or rendered unsafe. State television reported that the death toll was now 2,901, while the number of people injured more than doubled to 5,530. Survivors struggling to find shelter and supplies have described the government response as slow, though it appeared to be speeding up on Monday. In a televised statement on Sunday, government spokesperson Mustapha Baytas said every effort was being made on the ground. Neither King Mohammed VI nor Prime Minister Aziz Akhannouch have addressed the nation since the disaster. Morocco had accepted offers of aid from Spain, Britain, the United Arab Emirates, and Qatar. The European Union also said it was releasing an initial 1 million euros (\$1.07 million) to non-governmental aid organizations in Morocco. (JPost / VFI News)

***Afghanistan Now World's Fastest-growing Meth Manufacturer Despite Taliban Ban on Narcotics;*** Afghanistan is the world's fastest-growing maker of methamphetamine, a report from the United Nations drug agency said Sunday, September 10. The country is also a major opium producer and heroin source, even though the Taliban declared war on narcotics after they returned to power in August 2021. The United Nations' Office on Drugs and Crimes, which published the report, said meth in Afghanistan is mostly made from legally available substances or extracted from the ephedra plant, which grows in the wild. The report called Afghanistan's meth manufacturing a growing threat to national and regional health and security because it could disrupt the synthetic drug market and fuel addiction. It said seizures of meth suspected to have come from Afghanistan have been reported from the European Union and East Africa. Annual meth seizure totals from inside the country rose from less than 100 kilograms (220 pounds) in 2019 to nearly 2,700 kilograms (6,000 pounds) in 2021, suggesting increased production, the report said. Authorities have already destroyed 644 factories and around 12,000 acres of land where prohibited narcotics were cultivated, processed, or produced. There have been more than 5,000 raids in which 6,000 people have been arrested. (NYP / VFI News)

***Iran's Jews Warned Against Rosh Hashanah Gatherings Amid Tensions;*** The Tehran Jewish community urged its members to refrain from publicly celebrating Rosh Hashanah, following escalating tensions in the Iranian capital. "Worshipers are strongly requested to refrain from stopping and gathering in the streets during Rosh Hashanah and after performing religious duties in synagogues for any reason," the community leaders announced on Telegram. This comes after the community's announcement of its collaboration with the Greater Tehran police force to ensure the safe observance of Rosh Hashanah against the backdrop of the upcoming one-year anniversary of the death of Mahsa Amini, a young Iranian woman. According to a message sent to members of the community, in the official Telegram channel, the community members were urged not to participate in the demonstrations in memory of Amini. Furthermore, in a statement from the Tehran Kilimian Association's public relations team, they expressed gratitude towards the police force for their unwavering support. They remain confident that with collective vigilance and divine assistance, the Rosh Hashanah ceremonies will conclude successfully and without incident. (JPost / VFI News)

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