

Yachad Ministries' Israel's News Update January 8, 2024 (Tevet 27, 5784)

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The image shows two items: on the left, a book cover titled "GOD'S APPOINTED TIMES" by Barney Kasdan, with a purple background and gold and red text. On the right, a glass bottle of "Anointing Oil" with a white label and a gold cap.

For the Yachad Report Newsletter For January 2024

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Israel-Hamas War, Day 94

Nine Israeli Army Soldiers Killed in Gaza; Hezbollah Drone Chief Reportedly Killed in Airstrike

- *Nine IDF soldiers killed in Gaza Strip on Monday*
- *Blinken meets with Israeli leaders and war cabinet, stresses need for 'realization of a Palestinian state' after meeting with Netanyahu*
- *Rocket, aerial infiltration sirens sound across Israeli northern communities*
 - *Hezbollah drone strikes IDF northern command base*
- *Two top Hezbollah military commanders killed in Israeli-attributed airstrikes in past day*

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Hamas' 2nd in Command Killed in Beirut Explosion; Saleh al-Arouri, the deputy chairman of Hamas' political bureau, was killed in an explosion in the neighborhood of Dahieh in southern Beirut Tuesday evening, January 2, Arabic and Hezbollah media sources reported. Al-Arouri was considered the 'number two' of the terrorist organization under Ismail Haniyeh and was responsible for terrorist activity in Judea and Samaria. He once admitted Hamas' responsibility for the kidnapping and murder of three Israeli teenagers in 2014. He was close to Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah. According to one report, Al-Arouri was killed in a strike on an apartment building by an Israeli drone. Videos from the scene show nearby vehicles set on fire from the blast. Lebanese media reported that the raid killed four and injured several others. The building said to house Hamas' offices is in Dahieh, an area in Beirut's southern suburbs which is also a stronghold of the Iran-backed Hezbollah. The blast reportedly occurred while al-Arouri was in a meeting with other terrorist operatives from Hamas and Hezbollah. According to reports, one of the operatives who was killed in the strike together with al-Arouri was Khalil al-Hayya, a senior member of the Hamas political wing. The Prime Minister of Lebanon, Najib Mikati, reacted to the assassination and said: "The explosion in Dahieh is an Israeli crime aimed at dragging Lebanon into a new phase of conflict. It casts a shadow on Lebanon and is a clear response to our efforts to distance the fighting spirit in Gaza from Lebanon." (INN / VFI News)

Hamas, Hezbollah, and Iran Hint at Retaliation After Beirut Blast; Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had threatened to kill Saleh al-Arouri - who headed Hamas in Judea and Samaria and helped to found the group's armed wing - which eventually happened earlier this week after an Israeli drone reportedly struck Hamas' offices in Lebanon. Israeli officials vowed that all Hamas leaders 'are doomed to death' after the attack, but declined to comment on whether their forces had carried out the Beirut blast. Hamas condemned the killing as a "cowardly assassination" by Israel and declared that such attacks "will not succeed in breaking the will and steadfastness of our people, or undermining the continuation of their valiant resistance." Hezbollah leader Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah earlier pledged to retaliate against any Israeli targeting of Palestinian officials in Lebanon. As the most senior Hamas figure killed since the war erupted almost 90 days ago, al-Arouri's death could provoke major retaliation, with Israel anticipating that its enemies could launch revenge rocket attacks. Iran's Foreign Minister also joined Hamas and Hezbollah in condemning what they described as the violation of Lebanon's sovereignty. Minister Nasser Kanaani said in a chilling response to the attack that the "martyr's blood will undoubtedly ignite another surge in the veins of resistance and motivation to fight" against Israel. (DM / VFI News)

7 Killed in Rocket Strike on Synagogue in India; Seven members of the Bnei Menashe Jewish community of India were killed when a rocket struck a synagogue in Manipur, the Knesset Diaspora Affairs Committee announced Tuesday, January 2. The rocket strike is not believed to have been deliberately targeted at the synagogue of the Bnei Menashe community. However, the death toll underscores the vulnerability of the community and the importance of facilitating their Aliyah to Israel, the committee members stated. Committee chairman MK Oded Forer (Yisrael Beytenu) called on the Aliyah and Integration Ministry to make bringing Bnei Menashe refugees to Israel a priority and criticized the ministry for failing to do so following the outbreak of the Kuki-Meitei conflict in May 2023, which led to the displacement of many Bnei Menashe. “We have been asking the government ministries for six months and are not getting any answers,” he said. MK Pnina Tamano-Shata (National Unity Party) also accused the government of “dragging its feet” in assisting the Bnei Menashe community. Michal Willer Tal, the head of the Foreign Ministry’s Southeast Asia desk, told the committee on Tuesday that the Bnei Menashe community is not being targeted for its members’ Jewish faith, but is in danger due to the wider ethnic conflict in the region. She advised that Israel’s involvement in the Aliyah process be kept “low profile” due to the potential for causing diplomatic problems with the Indian government. (INN / VFI News)

Explosions in Iran: 95 Killed in Blasts Near Soleimani's Burial Place During Ceremony; Two explosions caused by “terrorist attacks” killed nearly 100 people and wounded many others at a ceremony in Iran to commemorate top commander Qassem Soleimani who was killed in a 2020 US drone attack, Iranian officials said on Wednesday, January 3. Iranian state media reported a first and then a second explosion during the anniversary event at the cemetery where Soleimani is buried in the southeastern city of Kerman. Iranian Health Minister Bahram Eynollahi told state media the death toll was at 95, down from 103, and said 211 others were injured, making it the deadliest attack in the history of the Islamic Republic, which has faced similar incidents in the past from various groups, including the Islamic State. No group has yet claimed responsibility for the attacks. Iran has in the past blamed Israel for attacks on individual people or places within its borders - claims which Israel has neither confirmed nor denied - but there was no indication of any involvement of a foreign state in the cemetery explosions. Local media officials told Iranian state media later on Wednesday that the explosions were caused by two suitcases containing explosives that were triggered remotely. According to the sources, the second explosion deliberately targeted security forces in the area, according to Israeli media. (JPost / VFI News)

Iran Warship Enters Increasingly Contested Red Sea Shipping Lanes; Iranian media reported that Iran’s frigate Alborz, launched in 1969 on completion by Vickers in the UK, will fly the country’s flag across the key shipping lanes. In this report, the details of the Alborz’s mission were not specified, but the news outlet highlighted what it claimed were the regional implications of Israel’s war against Hamas terrorists in Gaza. “Following rising tensions in the Gaza war, there has been an acceleration in developments in the Gulf of Aden and the Bab al-Mandeb Strait,” it said, repeating words of action long pronounced by Tehran in its war with the West. On Sunday, December 31, U.S. Navy helicopters sank three Houthi-operated vessels that had attacked a container ship in the Red Sea, the U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) said in a statement. The UK defense minister also warned on Monday that London is “willing to take direct action” against the Houthis. “We are willing to take direct action, and we won’t hesitate to take further action to deter threats to freedom of navigation in the Red Sea,” Defense Secretary Grant Shapps wrote in a British newspaper. According to the outlet, Britain is collaborating with the U.S. for potential military strikes against the Houthis, and a joint statement giving the militants a final warning to cease their attacks is imminent. (BB / VFI News)

Embattled Harvard President Claudine Gay Resigns after Plagiarism, Anti-Semitism Scandals; Harvard University president Claudine Gay announced Tuesday, January 2, that she is stepping down from leading the prestigious college, following weeks of controversy over campus politics and her own

academic record. “It is with a heavy heart but a deep love for Harvard that I write to share that I will be stepping down as president,” Gay, 53, wrote in the emotional missive. “[I]t has become clear that it is in the best interests of Harvard for me to resign so that our community can ... focus on the institution rather than any individual,” she explained. Calls for Gay’s resignation started in the fall when she would not condemn over 30 Harvard student groups that published a letter holding Israel “entirely responsible” for Hamas’ October 7 terror attack. She then appeared before Congress on December 5 where she refused to say that anyone calling for the genocide of Jews at the university would be punished. In her resignation, Gay cited how she had been subject to racism since the attacks. Inaction over antisemitism on campus and Gay’s disastrous appearance before Congress led Rabbi David Wolpe, a visiting professor at Harvard Divinity School, to quit a panel formed by Gay to advise on antisemitism because there was “no sense of urgency, no sense of anger, no sense of disgust,” at the “urgent crisis” before them. Political Science professor Gay will now return to a position as a regular faculty member after the six-month stint as professor, the shortest in Harvard’s history. Harvard Provost and Chief Academic Alan Garber will step in as interim president. (NYP / VFI News)

Joshua's Altar Vandalized by Palestinian Authority Arabs; The “The Forum for the Struggle for Every Dunam” visited the Biblical Altar of Joshua on Mt. Ebal and found that over the past few days, the altar has been vandalized by residents of nearby villages in the Palestinian Authority, who burned tires at the site and spray painted Arabic graffiti and a Palestinian Authority flag on the altar. Following the vandalism, the forum announced that they would hold a dawn prayer service at the site of the altar to increase Jewish presence there, in memory of Captain (res.) Harel Sharvit, of blessed memory, who was killed in action in Gaza and was one of the most active individuals in establishing the Jewish presence there. “The grave incident that took place this week is a direct result of the lack of Jewish presence on this hill. Ever since the Civil Administration decided to completely demolish the Jewish farm on the mountain three years ago, we have seen a string of incidents of vandalism of the altar, a massive takeover by the Palestinian Authority, and several irreversible actions taken in the area,” the Forum stated. “Today, it is clearer than ever that only the fixed Jewish presence of a farm or town will guarantee there is really control over the site, and prevent further damage or destruction of the altar.” (INN / VFI News)

Government to Mull Plan to Replace Palestinian Laborers with 80,000 Foreign Workers; The government is reportedly set to consider a plan that would seek to replace thousands of Palestinian laborers with workers flown in from abroad, as the country attempts to recover from the shocking attacks of October 7. The ambitious proposal is designed to address a perceived security threat by allowing the continued barring of most Palestinians, but it carries the risk of fueling fresh anger and disillusionment in Judea and Samaria by removing what many policymakers see as a key economic valve keeping the motivation for terror in check. Under the reported plan, Israel would bring in over 80,000 workers, mainly from Asia, for jobs in construction and agriculture normally filled by Palestinians. According to Israeli media, the proposal, the brainchild of a body set up to coordinate between ministries, calls for Israel to arrange for the entry of 25,500 workers from Sri Lanka, 20,000 from China, 17,000 from India, 13,000 from Thailand, and 6,000 from Moldova. It’s unclear, though, if Israel will be able to recruit enough workers to plug the gap during the ongoing war, despite offering higher wages than their home countries for manual labor. Before the Hamas attack and subsequent war in Gaza, some 150,000 Palestinians from Judea and Samaria and an additional 18,500 from the Gaza Strip had permits to enter Israel for work, according to the Coordination of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT). Thousands more Palestinians are thought to enter illegally for work as well, a phenomenon Israel had largely turned a blind eye to before cracking down in recent years over security concerns. (TOI / VFI News)

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