

Yachad Ministries' Israel's News Update December 26, 2024 (Kislev 25, 5785)

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Israel-Hamas War, Day 447

IDF: Targets Bombed in Yemen 'Used to Smuggle Iranian Weapons Into Region'

- **ISRAEL:** Israeli military carries out strikes in Yemen in response to missiles fired at Israel
- **GAZA:** Hamas-run Health Ministry says five journalists were killed in Gaza
- **WEST BANK: IDF:** Senior officer wounded in explosion during counterterror operation in West Bank, prompting Air Force to fire on terrorist cell that planted explosive devices in Jordan Valley area where troops were operating
- **ISRAEL:** IDF probe into killing of six Israeli hostages by Hamas in August finds troops weren't aware of their presence in the area

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During the War: Millions of Israelis Enlisted; Donations Arrived in the Millions; The extensive enlistment and volunteering of Israeli citizens during the Swords of Iron War assisted millions of citizens, with an economic contribution estimated at hundreds of millions of Shekels, according to the volunteering and social involvement yearbook. During the fourteen months of the war, volunteering crossed all sectors, genders, and ages. Almost one in every two people volunteered at the beginning of the war (45.2%), but after six weeks the volunteering rate dropped to 28.7% and currently stands at 15%. Donations and assistance were directed to over one million citizens, with an estimated value of hundreds of millions of Shekels. The yearbook is based on nine in-depth surveys and presents a comprehensive picture of patterns of civil volunteering during the war. The surveys found that most volunteers acted out of solidarity and a desire to help, many of them for the first time and independently. Others joined initiatives through organizations where they also contributed during routine times. About 90.2% of volunteers indicated that they acted out of a desire to help others and ensure the safety of all citizens. (INN / VFI News)

Mossad Chief: Go After Iran Directly, Not the Houthis; Mossad chief David Barnea recommended in conversations with the political echelon that Israel strike Iran in response to recent ballistic missile attacks by the Houthis in Yemen rather than strike back at the Houthis. Barnea said that Israel should “go after the head” rather than the arms. On Saturday morning, December 21, sixteen people were wounded when a Houthi-launched ballistic missile exploded in Jaffa. The IDF stated, “One projectile launched from Yemen was identified and unsuccessful interception attempts were made. A fallen projectile was identified in the area.” The IDF later confirmed that the projectile had fallen in Tel Aviv-Jaffa. The hit created a crater in a playground between two residential buildings. “Several lightly injured individuals were evacuated to receive medical treatment, and Home Front Command teams are currently operating with the security forces in the scene,” the IDF added. (INN / VFI News)

Hostages' Families: We Demand A Deal that Will Ensure the Return of All Hostages; Crowds gathered Saturday night, December 21, at Hostages Square for the weekly families’ rally, under the banner, “A complete nation requires everyone - together!” Families of released hostages and those whose bodies have been returned to Israel opened the rally with a message of support to all the families, stressing, “We stand with you until the last hostage returns!” During the rally, the families emphasized their unequivocal demand for a deal that would guarantee the return of every last hostage. Hen Avigdori, whose wife Sharon and daughter Noam were released from Hamas captivity, said: “The release of hostages isn’t just about freeing a hundred people from terrible captivity by human monsters – it’s the liberation of us all – it’s all of us emerging from darkness to light, from division to unity, from dwelling on past grievances to building a shared future.” Noam Peri, daughter of the late Chaim Peri, noted: “My father was taken alive, he survived with incredible mental strength in captivity, and he could have been saved and brought home through a deal. For us and for 26 other families whose loved ones entered Gaza alive and returned in black bags, the cost of missing an opportunity for a deal is very tangible. Very personal. Very painful.” (INN/VFI News)

PA Official: Talks on Ceasefire Deal Are 90% Complete; Talks to broker a Gaza ceasefire and a hostage release deal between Israel and Hamas are “90% complete”, but significant issues remain unresolved, a senior Palestinian Arab official involved in the negotiations told British media on Saturday, December 21. According to the report, one of the key sticking points is the IDF’s continued presence in the Philadelphi Corridor. The official shared details of the discussions taking place in Doha, which include a proposal for a buffer zone several kilometers wide along Israel’s border with Gaza. Israel would maintain a military presence within this zone, the official noted. If these issues are resolved, the parties could agree on a three-stage ceasefire within days, the official added. Under the proposed deal, an exchange of 20 terrorist prisoners would occur for every female soldier released in the first phase of the ceasefire. Senior Fatah terrorist Marwan Barghouti is not expected to be included, as Israel is likely to veto his release. Israeli hostages would also be released in stages, with Hamas reportedly needing to locate some of the missing individuals. In the final stage of the three-phase plan, which aims to conclude the 14-month war, Gaza would be governed by a committee of technocrats. These individuals would have no prior political affiliations but would be supported by all Palestinian Arab factions. (*INN/VFI News*)

Germany: Car Drives into Christmas Market, at Least 11 Dead; A car drove into a group of people at a Christmas market in the eastern German city of Magdeburg on Friday evening, December 20. According to unconfirmed reports, at least 11 people were killed. Magdeburg emergency services reported that between 60 to 80 people were injured. Several people were “severely” injured”, a spokesman told French media. The suspect, a 50-year-old psychiatrist who has lived in Germany for almost two decades, was arrested at the scene following the three-minute attack in the central city that shocked the country. Authorities said on Saturday the motive was not clear. However, the Magdeburg prosecutor, Horst Nopens, said one possible factor could be what he called the suspect’s frustration with Germany’s handling of Saudi refugees. Posts on the suspect’s X account, verified by British media, suggested he supported anti-Islam and far-right parties. German Interior Minister Nancy Faeser said the suspect’s islamophobia was clear to see, but she declined to comment on the motive. Chancellor Olaf Scholz commented on the incident and warned that the death toll is likely to rise. “The reports from Magdeburg suggest something terrible is to come. My thoughts are with the victims and their families. We stand by their side and by the side of the people of Magdeburg. My thanks go to the dedicated rescue workers in these anxious hours,” he said in a statement. (*INN/VFI News*)

'September 5' Film on 1972 Munich Olympics Captures the Truth about Terrorism; The film “September 5,” which covers the 1972 Summer Olympics massacre of Israeli athletes in Munich, has a refreshingly simple — but not simplistic — take: Kidnapping and murdering civilians is bad, and there is no context in which to justify it. Swiss-born Tim Fehlbaum, the director, isn’t known for ideology; his previous features were science fiction and horror. It’s the absence of ideology here that works. We see the Munich terror attack unfold through the eyes of journalists — people who are competent at their job, covering the pre-attack Games, but who aren’t foreign-policy “experts.” So when the team of journalists, guided by rookie producer Geoffrey Mason, hears gunshots from the athletes’ housing compound that September dawn, the reaction is natural, in an era before reporters came to associate global events with terror risk: shock and perplexity. When the terrorists reveal themselves as they peer out of the Israeli athletes’ apartment they’ve taken over, the American journalists reflexively see them as bad people. (*NYP/VFI News*)

House Republicans Find 'Systemic' Failure to Address Antisemitism by US and Colleges; A new Congressional report accuses top American universities, medical institutions, and the Biden Administration of failing to respond properly to the outbreak of antisemitism that followed the October 7 massacre, renowned American media reported. The 42-page report from House Republicans found that there have been “systemic” and “astounding” shortcomings in these institutions’ response to antisemitism

and that “antisemitism has been allowed to fester unchecked” as the result of “a disturbing pattern of defensiveness and denial.” The report states, “Across the nation, Jewish Americans have been harassed, assaulted, intimidated, and subjected to hostile environments - violations that stand in stark contrast to America’s fundamental values, including a foundational commitment to religious freedom for all.” “The failure of our federal government departments and agencies is astounding,” the report added. While even hate speech is usually protected under the First Amendment in the US, the report noted that federal law prohibits institutions that tolerate discrimination from receiving federal funding and that the US government therefore has leverage under Title VI to compel institutions that tolerate anti-Semitic discrimination and harassment to take stronger action to ensure Jewish students, faculty, and employees are treated equally. (INN/ VFI News)

Bill Barring Teachers Who Studied in PA from Teaching in Israel Advances; The Ministerial Committee for Legislation approved, despite the opposition of the Attorney General, the bill to prevent the employment of teachers with academic degrees from the Palestinian Authority in Israel. The bill will be put to a vote in a preliminary reading in the Knesset plenum this week. The proposed law amends the School Supervision Law and the Education Ordinance so that the Director General of the Ministry of Education can refuse to employ teaching staff whose academic degrees were obtained in institutions in the PA. At the same time, a transitional provision was proposed that would allow those who already work in the education system or who completed their studies before the law came into effect to complete their studies in Israel as a condition for continued employment. MK Amit Halevi (Likud) said that “this law is another step in the war on terrorist infrastructure, primarily the educational infrastructure.” “When we complete the legislation, anyone who was trained in PA institutions that preach the delegitimization of Israel, the demonization of the Jewish people, and the glorification of terrorist acts will not be able to be a teacher in Israel. He could be welcomed today in Tehran and Ramallah, but not in our schools, not anymore.” (INN / VFI News)

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