

Yachad Ministries' Israel's News Update June 20, 2024 (Sivan 14, 5784)

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Israel-Hamas War, Day 258

Over 25 Rockets Fired From Lebanon at Northern Israel; IDF Arrests Nine in West Bank

- *Several houses directly hit by rockets in Zar'it; no casualties*
- *IDF assassinates Hezbollah commander in southern Lebanon*
- *Report in Lebanon: Two wounded in car attack by drone east of Tyre*
 - *Palestinian Health Ministry: 15-year-old killed in IDF fire*
 - *U.S. military's Gaza pier to resume operations, officials say*
- *Religious Services Minister says ministry is preparing itself for cases of mass burial due to possible war in northern Israel*
- *Netanyahu says IDF 'obligated' to government decisions after IDF spokesperson casts doubt on 'destroying Hamas'*
 - *IDF: 15 launches from Lebanon targeted Israel's north*
 - *IDF tanks push deeper into Rafah, Gaza sources say*

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11 Funerals for IDF Commanders, Soldiers Held across Israel as Nation Mourns; Eleven funerals were held across Israel on Sunday, June 16, for IDF troops who died over the weekend in three separate incidents in fighting in the Gaza Strip. Most of the fallen soldiers laid to rest were killed in a blast in southern Gaza's Rafah on Saturday morning, in what marked the deadliest incident for the IDF in the Strip since January. According to an initial IDF probe, the troops were all killed inside a Namer armored combat engineering vehicle (CEV). There were no survivors. The soldiers had been driving in a convoy heading to buildings captured by the army, for the troops to rest following the overnight operation. The Namer CEV was the fifth or sixth vehicle in the convoy, and at some point, it was hit by a major explosion. It was not immediately clear from the investigation if it was a bomb planted ahead of time or if Hamas operatives had approached the vehicle with an explosive device and directly placed it on the CEV. The troops all served in the Combat Engineering Corps' 601st Battalion. Seven of their funerals were held on Sunday, and the eighth will be held on Monday. The names of the fallen soldiers are Cpt. Wassem Mahmoud (23), Sgt. Eliyahu Moshe Zimbalist (21), Staff Sgt. Stanislav Kostarev (21), Sgt. Itay Amar (19), Staff Sgt. Oz Yeshaya Gruber (20), Staff Sgt. Orr Blumovitz (20), Sgt. Yakir Ya'akov Levi (21) and Sgt. Shalom Menachem (21). Further, Cpt. (res.) Eitan Koplovich (28), and Warrant Officer (res.) Elon Weiss (41), from the IDF's 8th Reserve Armored Brigade's 129th Battalion, were killed by an explosive device detonated against their tank in northern Gaza over the weekend. Sgt. Yair Roitman (19), an IDF soldier who was seriously wounded last week in southern Gaza, succumbed to his wounds on Saturday and was buried in Karnei Shomron on Sunday. (TOI / VFI News)

IDF Spokesman Hagari: 'Hezbollah Is Jeopardizing the Future of Lebanon'; IDF Spokesman Rear Admiral Daniel Hagari released a video statement on Sunday, June 16, addressing Hezbollah's increasing escalation on the northern border. "The Hezbollah terror organization in Lebanon has been escalating its attacks against Israel. Since deciding to join the war that Hamas started on October 7th - Hezbollah has fired over 5,000 rockets; anti-tank missiles and explosive UAVs from Lebanon at Israeli families, homes, and communities," Hagari stated. "Hezbollah's increasing aggression is bringing us to the brink of what could be a wider escalation - one that could have devastating consequences for Lebanon and the entire region. Hezbollah is jeopardizing the future of Lebanon - so that it can be a shield for Hamas. A shield for the Hamas terrorists who murdered the elderly, raped women, burned children, and kidnapped Jews, Muslims, and Christians - during their massacre on October 7th," he added. Hagari warned: "When we say that we will not let October 7th happen again on any one of our borders - we mean it. Because of Hezbollah's refusal to comply with UN Security Council Resolution 1701 — because of Hezbollah's military infrastructure; weapons and fire at Israel from the area south of the Litani River in southern Lebanon — and because of Lebanon's failure to enforce 1701 on Hezbollah — Israel will take the necessary measures to protect its civilians — until security along our border with Lebanon is restored."

“One way or another - we will ensure the safe and secure return of Israelis to their homes in Northern Israel. That is not up for negotiation.” (INN / VFI News)

UK, France, Germany Slam Iran for Expanding Nuclear Program, ‘Hollowing out’ Deal; France, Germany, and Britain on Saturday, June 15, condemned Iran’s latest steps, as reported by the International Atomic Energy Agency, to further expand its nuclear program. “Iran has taken further steps in hollowing out the JCPOA, by operating dozens of additional advanced centrifuges at the Natanz enrichment site as well as announcing it will install thousands more centrifuges at both its Fordow and Natanz sites,” the joint statement said, referring to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action signed with Iran in 2015. “This decision is a further escalation of Iran’s nuclear program, which carries significant proliferation risks,” it added. The joint statement stressed that “Iran’s decision to substantially increase its production capacity at the underground Fordow facility is especially concerning.” The condemnation came a day after the International Atomic Energy Agency reported that Iran has started new cascades of advanced centrifuges and plans to install more in the coming weeks. Spinning up new centrifuges further advances Iran’s nuclear program, which already enriches uranium at near-weapons-grade levels and boasts a stockpile enough for several nuclear bombs if it chose to pursue them. “Iran aims to continue expanding its nuclear program in ways that have no credible peaceful purpose,” US State Department spokesman Matthew Miller said in a statement, also denouncing Tehran. “These planned actions further undermine Iran’s claims to the contrary. If Iran implements these plans, we will respond accordingly.” (TOI / VFI News)

UK’s Labor Party Pledges to Recognize Palestinian State, 66% of US Christians Believe Israel’s Right to Biblical Borders; Britain’s opposition Labor Party, which is far ahead in polls before a July 4 election, pledged on Thursday, June 13, to recognize a Palestinian state as a contribution to a renewed peace process. “Palestinian statehood is the inalienable right of the Palestinian people,” said Labor’s election manifesto - the collection of policies it would enact if it forms the next government. “We are committed to recognizing a Palestinian state as a contribution to a renewed peace process which results in a two-state solution with a safe and secure Israel alongside a viable and sovereign Palestinian state.” The current Conservative-led government has previously said Britain could formally recognize a Palestinian state before the end of a peace process, and that Palestinians in Judea and Samaria and Gaza Strip must be given “the political perspective of a credible route to a Palestinian state and a new future.” Interestingly, in the US, sixty-two percent of Christians agreed that Israel’s right to the land extends to the biblical borders, highlighting significant support for the nation’s territorial claims based on religious texts. The study, conducted between March 8 and March 14, 2024, included 2,033 American Christian adults and found that among evangelicals, 69 percent agree that Israel’s right to the land extends to the biblical borders, reflecting the highest level of support among the denominations surveyed. Mainline Protestants showed a slightly lower agreement rate at 52 percent, while 56 percent of Catholics concurred with this perspective. (YNet / VFI News)

Survey: 96% of Palestinians Deny October 7th Massacre; A public opinion poll conducted by the Palestinian Center for Survey Research led by Dr. Khalil Shikaki reveals that 66 percent expressed support for the October 7 attack against Israel, and half of the respondents believe that Hamas will return to power in the Gaza Strip after the war. A full 96% of the respondents denied the massacre in the Gaza envelope and claimed that Hamas terrorists did not commit atrocities against Israeli civilians on October 7. Another 73% believe that Hamas made the right decision in launching the attack and 79% of the respondents believe that Hamas will win the war - the highest rate since the beginning of the war. The data also shows that half of the residents of the Gaza Strip expect Hamas to win and return to power in the Gaza Strip after the war. According to the survey, if elections for the Palestinian Authority are held, Fatah leader Marwan Barghouti – who is imprisoned for the murder of Jews – will win the majority. If the elections are held

between Barghouti and Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh, Haniyeh will win about 60% of the votes. (INN / VFI News)

Israel's Response to Turkey's Boycott; The Economy Ministry is promoting new regulations for Israel's economic relations with Turkey in light of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's increasing antagonism against the Jewish State and support for the Hamas terrorist organization. The decision follows Erdogan's decision to impose a trade embargo against Israel, which violates the trade agreement between the countries. The move entails the activation of a control mechanism that includes a licensing requirement that will apply to all products imported from Turkey directly to Israel. In 2023, imports from Turkey amounted to approximately \$5.2 billion. No unique items that are unavailable elsewhere are imported from Turkey, and the Economy and Foreign Ministries are working to find alternative markets to replace Turkey. In early May, Turkey suspended all export and import operations with Israel due to what it described as its "aggression against Palestine in violation of international law and human rights." "Since the first day, our country has rushed to the aid of the people of Gaza, delivered tens of thousands of tons of humanitarian aid ... However, the massacre, humanitarian catastrophe, and physical destruction caused by Israel continued, and the Israeli government ignored international ceasefire efforts and prevented humanitarian aid," the Turkish Trade Ministry said. The trade embargo was announced several weeks after Turkey restricted exports to Israel of 54 product categories. (INN / VFI News)

In Yemen, Muslim Community Honors One of the Last Remaining Jews with Respectful Burial; Yahya Ben Youssef, one of Yemen's last remaining Jews, passed away on Thursday, June 13, and was laid to rest by his Muslim neighbors in the village of Madar, north of the capital Sanaa. Videos of the funeral were shared on the Yemeni Jews' Facebook page, which said, "This was an act of unity and respect from the local Muslim community, who buried one of the six remaining Jews in the country." The post highlighted that there were no longer enough Jews in Yemen to perform the funeral or recite the Kaddish prayer, so his neighbors volunteered to ensure he received an honorable Jewish sendoff. "This moment signifies the power of humanity and compassion that transcends religious boundaries, especially in these trying times," the post read. Ben Youssef, who was claimed to be over 100 years old, had refused offers to immigrate to Israel, where some of his relatives live, despite facing harassment from the Houthis due to his dedication to his Jewish roots. (YNet / VFI News)

Clues of Biblical Battle Between Angel of God and 185K Invading Soldiers Uncovered in Jerusalem: New Research; A newly discovered archaeological site may provide evidence of Biblical truth. Researchers in Jerusalem have uncovered an ancient military base that may provide clues of a battleground for God's army against Assyrian soldiers who came to conquer the Holy Land around 2,700 years ago, per a report from British media. As the Bible story goes, an angel of the Lord is said to have descended on the invading troops and killed 185,000 soldiers in a night. The Assyrian Empire reigned from 1,365 to 609 BC, led by King Sennacherib's campaign to control all routes across the Syrian Desert that led to the Mediterranean Sea. A previously known carving on the stone walls of Sennacherib's palace depicts the conquest of Lachish, a city 42 miles south of Jerusalem, including an illustration of a military base floor plan. With this ancient engraving, archaeologist Stephen Compton was able to cross-reference aerial photos of the alleged area — part of a historic site in Israel called Ammunition Hill — in 1910 to discover the maps matched up. "This appears to be the site of Sennacherib's camp from the siege of Jerusalem, which was featured in the three books of the Bible," Compton wrote in a June 4 press release. The drawings pointed to ruins of a perimeter wall and buried pottery shards revealed to be at least roughly 2,600 years old, according to Compton's analysis. The site is now believed to have been abandoned after Sennacherib's invasion. (NYP / VFI News)

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