

Yachad Ministries' Israel's News Update September 2, 2024 (Av 29, 5784)

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Israel-Hamas War, Day 332

Thousands Attend Funeral of Hersh Goldberg-Polin, Israeli-American Hostage Murdered by

- *General strike across Israel begins, hours after hundreds of thousands took to the streets in protest*
 - *25 remain in custody following Tel Aviv protest*
 - *Austin to Gallant: Hamas leaders must be held accountable*
 - *Biden, Harris to meet negotiating team, White House says*
- *Over a thousand attend NYC vigil for six hostages murdered by Hamas*
- *Hundreds block Tel Aviv highway; clashes break out between protesters, police; 15 detained, cuffed*
 - *Health ministry: The six hostages were shot at close range; Estimated to have been killed either Thursday or Friday*
 - *Lebanese reports: Israel struck in southern Lebanon*
 - *Dozens of protesters demanding hostage deal block Tel Aviv highway*
- *IDF says it attacked school in Gaza City used by Hamas as control center*
 - *Israel's Labor Federation Head announces general strike*
- *Casualties reported from anti-tank missile fired at northern Israeli town of Kfar Yuval*

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Israel Rescues Hostage After 325 Days in Hamas Captivity; One more Israeli hostage has been rescued. The IDF and Israel Security Agency announced Tuesday, August 27, that another hostage taken during the October 7 terrorist attack has been rescued. “The IDF and ISA have rescued Qaid Farhan Alkadi from Gaza where he was held hostage, and brought him to his family in Israel. This operation was part of the IDF’s daring and courageous activities conducted deep inside the Gaza strip,” said Israeli Minister of Defense Yoav Gallant. “This operation joins a series of actions taken by the IDF that bring us closer to achieving the goals of this war,” Gallant continued. “I would like to reiterate and emphasize: Israel is committed to taking advantage of every opportunity to return the hostages home to Israel.” Qaid Farhan Alkadi from Rahat was reportedly rescued by a mixed company of Israeli combatants, including members of the 401st Brigade, 162nd Division, and Shayetet 13. Members of the engineering combat spec-ops unit Yahalom and intelligence operatives from the Israel Security Agency also contributed to the rescue. Alkadi, 52, has been held in the Gaza Strip for almost a year and is reportedly in stable condition. No further details are being made available on the nature of the rescue operation, “due to considerations of the safety of our hostages, the security of our forces, and national security.” (FN/VFI News)

Sinwar 'Surrounded by 22 Handcuffed Hostages'; Jewish media reported that out of the 108 hostages believed to be still held in Gaza, only about 20 are alive and under Hamas’s control. These captives are reportedly being used to surround Sinwar, providing protection for the Hamas leader who remains in hiding underground. Intelligence sources told the Jewish news outlet that Israel has had several opportunities to eliminate Sinwar after locating his hiding tunnels. However, these attacks were not authorized due to the danger posed to the hostages. The remaining captives, both living and dead, are believed to be in the hands of smaller terror groups, including the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, the Mujahideen Brigades, the al-Nasser Salah al-Deen Brigades, and the al-Aqsa Martyrs’ Brigades. These groups have reportedly cut off contact with Sinwar and are rebelling against his instructions. These internal Palestinian frictions have reportedly been a significant obstacle in reaching a hostage deal. The situation is further complicated by Sinwar’s reliance on the captives for his own safety. The Hamas leader, in hiding since October 7, has reportedly surrounded himself with 22 living, handcuffed hostages, using them as protection against potential elimination by Israel. Sinwar’s main demands include ending the war, the withdrawal of the IDF from the entire Gaza Strip, and American guarantees that Israel will not continue the war after a hostage deal is completed. He is also seeking assurances that he will not be eliminated once the hostages in his possession are released. (IHY/VFI News)

Top Hamas Official Mashaal Urges Resumption of Suicide Bombings Against Israel; Top Hamas official Khaled Mashal called on Wednesday, August 28, for a resumption of suicide bombings in Judea and Samaria, Arabic media reported, and encouraged Palestinians and supporters of the Palestinian cause to engage in “actual resistance against the Zionist entity.” According to the news outlet, during an address at a conference in Istanbul, Turkey, Mashaal said that the Hamas terror group wanted to “return to [suicide] operations.” “They are fighting us with open conflict, and we are confronting them with open conflict ... I repeat my call to everyone to participate on multiple fronts in the actual resistance against the Zionist entity,” said Mashaal, who had briefly been seen as a frontrunner to replace Haniyeh before the reins were handed over to Sinwar. Earlier in August, Hamas claimed responsibility for an explosion in Tel Aviv which it said was a suicide bombing conducted as a joint operation with the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, and vowed that further, similar attacks would follow. One person was moderately injured in the August 18 attack, when the bomb detonated inside the backpack of the man carrying it, killing him instantly. In March of this year, a would-be suicide bomber was also killed while trying to infiltrate into Israel from Judea and Samaria. Other attempted attacks have been foiled in recent months at earlier stages. (TOI / VFI News)

IDF: 90% of Hezbollah's Rockets Fired from Civilian Areas; The IDF announced on Monday night, August 26, that 90% of the rockets and drones that Hezbollah launched against Israel on Sunday were fired from civilian areas in Lebanon. In addition, the military provided an infographic displaying the proximity of the aerial threats launched by Hezbollah to mosques, schools, UN facilities, and other such civilian locations. According to the IDF, much like Hamas, Hezbollah is systematically abusing the laws of war by using both human shields and civilian locations to perpetrate its terror attacks against Israeli civilians. Israel said it detected 230 rocket attacks and 20 drone attacks against it on Sunday. Hezbollah said that it launched around 350 rocket and drone attacks against Israel. (JPost / VFI News)

Israel Coordinates Delivery of 25,100 Polio Vaccine Vials to Gaza Amid Fears of Outbreak; Israel said it delivered 25,100 vials of the polio vaccine to Gaza via the Kerem Shalom Crossing on Sunday, August 25, as the UN has urged an inoculation campaign in the Strip following the first case of polio there in 25 years. The vaccines will be enough to inoculate 1,255,000 people, just over half of the Strip’s population, according to COGAT, Israel’s civilian coordination agency for the Palestinian territories, which released footage of the delivery. The World Health Organization and UNICEF, the UN child welfare agency, have said that fighting in Gaza must pause for at least seven days to vaccinate some 640,000 children. The agencies say the campaign will be carried out in every municipality in Gaza, with help from 2,700 workers. COGAT has vowed a “joint effort” with the international community to combat polio in Gaza. Last Friday, five trucks brought into the Strip equipment to store and transport the vaccines, COGAT said, adding that it had coordinated the delivery with UNICEF. (TOI / VFI News)

Israel's Economy in Grave Danger as Gaza War Drags on, Economists Warn; In Jerusalem’s Old City, nearly all souvenir shops are closed. In Haifa’s flea market, forlorn merchants polish their wares on empty streets. Airlines are canceling flights, businesses are failing and luxury hotels are half empty. Nearly 11 months into the war with the Hamas terror group, Israel’s economy is struggling as the offensive in Gaza grinds on, showing no signs of ending and threatening to escalate into a wider conflict. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has tried to allay concerns by saying the economic damage is only temporary. But the bloodiest, most destructive war ever between Israel and Hamas has hurt thousands of small businesses and compromised international trust in an economy once thought of as an entrepreneurial dynamo. Some leading economists say a ceasefire is the best way to stop the damage. “The economy right now is under huge uncertainty, and it’s related to the security situation — how long the war will go on, what the intensity will be, and the question of whether there will be further escalation,” said Karnit Flug, Israel’s former central bank chief who is now the vice president of research at the Israel Democracy

Institute, a Jerusalem think tank. The war has inflicted a far heavier toll on Gaza's already broken economy, displacing 90% of the population and leaving the vast majority of the workforce unemployed. All banks in the territory have shut. (TOI/VFI News)

Millions of Israelis Drowning in Overdraft as Interest Rates Hold High; Nearly 2.5 million Israelis, or 39.3% of the adult population, are overdrawn in their bank accounts, according to a Bank of Israel report released at the end of 2023. The report highlights a total overdraft debt of NIS 10.7 billion (\$2.9 billion). Israeli banks permit overdrafts but charge a steep 11.64% interest rate, making it twice as costly as other types of loans and generating NIS 1.1 billion (\$300,000) in annual revenue for the banks. Although public pressure and warnings from the Bank of Israel led to a temporary reduction in overdraft interest rates, these rates returned to previous levels in July. Measures introduced by the central bank to curb public debt are set to expire in September, likely leading to increased financial strain, particularly on low-income households. "Israel is the only OECD member that allows such debt," said Dr. Neta Yaniv, an economist at Reichman University. "In most developed countries, bank customers can only spend the money they have, with minimal opportunity to incur debt on checking accounts," Yaniv added. (YNet / VFI News)

French, German Police Arrest Islamic Foreign Nationals in Separate Terror Attacks: Reports; Law enforcement officials in Germany and France arrested two Islamic foreign nationals in separate cases who are accused of carrying out terrorist attacks over the weekend in the respective countries. Approximately 200 police officers in France were searching for the individual who blew up two cars at a synagogue in La Grande-Motte on Saturday morning, August 24, tried to enter the building with a gun, and later set the building on fire — all while carrying a Palestinian flag. Local media said that police arrested a 33-year-old Algerian man who was suspected of carrying out the terrorist attack. A separate attack was carried out last Friday night in the German city of Solingen at the "Festival of Diversity" — a three-day event celebrating the 650th anniversary of the city's founding. Witnesses described the suspect as "Arab-looking," and they say that he shouted "Allahu Akbar" while stabbing nine people, killing three. Police said four of the six who survived remain in life-threatening condition. The suspect, a 26-year-old Syrian identified as "Issa Al H." turned himself in to authorities and took credit for the attack, American media reported. ISIS claimed responsibility for the terrorist attack, saying: "The perpetrator of the attack on the Christian gathering in the city of Solingen, Germany, yesterday, was a soldier from the Islamic State, and he carried it out as revenge against Muslims in Palestine and everywhere." (DW / VFI News)

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