

Yachad Ministries' Israel's News Update September 16, 2024 (Elul 13, 5784)

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Israel-Hamas War, Day 346

Biden Envoy Warns Israel:

Major Hezbollah Conflict in Lebanon Could Spark Mideast War

- *IDF says it attacked Hezbollah infrastructure in south Lebanon*
- *Sinwar to the Houthi Leader: 'The Combined Efforts with Yemen, Lebanon, and Iraq Will Break Israel'*
- *Opposition Leader Lapid set to meet U.S. Secretary of State Blinken in Washington later on Monday*
- *'Netanyahu has no grounds to insist on Philadelphi': Officials expect Israeli flexibility in Gaza talks*
 - *Germany reportedly slows arms exports to Israel significantly amid Gaza war concerns*
 - *Israel mistakenly issues statement condemning unannounced ICC arrest warrants*
 - *Netanyahu's office denies plans to replace gov't-appointed northern coordinator*
 - *IDF probe finds three hostages killed in November likely after Israeli strike*
 - *Forty rockets fired from Lebanon into northern Israel, IDF says*
 - *Netanyahu: Situation in northern border requires 'shift in the balance of powers, 'Israel would 'exact price' from Houthis*

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Reports: Israeli Troops Raided IRGC Weapons Facility in Syria, Took Equipment, Documents;

Israeli special forces carried out a raid on an Iranian weapons facility in the Masyaf area in Syria earlier this week, according to a number of unconfirmed reports on Wednesday, September 11, widely reported by Hebrew media. Local Syrian media reported at the time that the strikes hit a scientific research center in Masyaf, which has long been associated with the manufacture of chemical weapons and precision missiles by the Syrian regime and Iranian forces. However, the fresh reports were the first to claim that Israeli troops operated on the ground during the action at Masyaf, which lies about 200 kilometers (124 miles) north of Israel, though only about 30 kilometers (18 miles) from Syria's western coastline. Opposition Syrian media, based in Turkey, reported that Israeli helicopters did not land on Syrian soil, but instead hovered as special forces rappelled down ropes. The report said there were violent clashes in which three Syrians were killed, and two to four Iranians were captured. Separately, Middle East researcher Eva J. Koulouriotis said she was told by a "security source" that the IDF operation had targeted an IRGC facility for the development of ballistic missiles and drones that also provided logistical support to Hezbollah. In a series of posts to X, Koulouriotis said roads surrounding the facility were targeted with airstrikes to stop Syrian troops from reaching the area, before the Israeli helicopters carrying Special Forces approached, with air support from combat helicopters and drones. *(TOI / VFI News)*

Release Hostages from Gaza - Or We Invade Lebanon; MK Benny Gantz commented during his trip

to Washington that if no deal is reached for the hostages, Israel should begin an open war in the north. "The time for the north has come. We are late, I think we should make a deal to return the hostages even at a very painful price, but if we don't reach a deal in at most a few weeks, we should go to war in the north and ensure that we can return the residents to their homes," said Gantz. He added, "We can reach this goal, even if it requires harming the state of Lebanon itself. I do not see any other way, unfortunately. Resolution 1701 was a resolution aimed at ending a war, and now we must arrive at a resolution from which onward we will act offensively proactively, against any deviation and against any threat to our borders, with emphasis on a threat of infiltration into our communities. I think we made a mistake by evacuating such a large population." Gantz also referred to the greater Iranian threat: "True, Hezbollah poses an operational threat, but one must remember the root of the problem – and that is Iran. Look at what is happening in Iraq, Yemen and Lebanon." "This is a global mission. If there is another nuclear deal on the table, it must not only be free of the loopholes of the previous one in the areas of enrichment and missile capabilities, but also include severe restrictions on the funding and operation of its proxies. Iran is a global challenge, regional and not just a problem for Israel," he concluded. *(INN / VFI News)*

Iran Close to Acquiring Nuclear Weapons After the Regime's Atomic Research Program Was Left Unchecked for Years; The Israeli Defense Secretary has warned that Iran is 'close' to acquiring nuclear weapons after the hardline regime's program has gone unchecked for years. Yoav Gallant spoke to British media as Israel braces for a retaliatory strike following the assassination of Hamas chief Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran. The Commander of Iran's IRGC Hossein Salami has said "the nightmare of Iran's inevitable response is shaking Israel day and night." Gallant issued a firm rebuke at the Ministry of Defense in Tel Aviv on Monday, September 9, warning Tehran: "We have the ability to hit any strategic goal in Iran." But he warned that their capabilities may soon go nuclear, with even more terrifying potential than the hundreds of missiles, rockets and drones they launched at Israel in April. "Iran is behind the chaos in this region," he said. "Iran is creating a war of attrition against Israel in order to gain the time and space to acquire nuclear capabilities – and they are close. Each one of the 110 missiles they fired at Israel in April could have carried a nuclear device if they had it - and they can reach others." Iran is not believed to possess nuclear weapons but the United Nations nuclear watchdog on Monday warned that Tehran's nuclear program has run unchecked for nearly four years. (DM / VFI News)

Billions of NIS / This Is How Much Hamas Makes from Humanitarian Aid; The income that Hamas steals from the humanitarian aid sent to Gaza is estimated at half a billion dollars, Israeli media reported on Tuesday evening, September 10. Hamas takes control over the aid, hides it in warehouses and later sells it to the Gazan population, earning a lot of money from it. The money Hamas earns is invested in recruiting new terrorists and paying salaries to existing ones. Last week, Israeli media announced that bereaved families and parents of hostages appealed to the Supreme Court demanding a halt in humanitarian aid to Gaza, following a petition submitted by left-wing organizations, seeking to expand aid to Gaza. The request stated that "the applicants are victims of a crime, families of the hostages, who are being held by force by Hamas, in violation of the laws of war, families of those murdered during the October 7th (Simchat Torah) massacre, as well as families of those killed in terrorist acts by Hamas." "The applicants claim that the humanitarian aid mentioned in the petition serves as direct aid to terrorism, and they request to declare that it is prohibited to aid terrorism, and that this is in breach of the law and immoral. They demand to join as respondents to the petition to ensure that their rights as victims of a crime will be heard and that they will be protected," they stated in the appeal. (INN / VFI News)

Digital Warfare: Here's How Israel Is Trying to Change UNRWA's Narrative Online; Internet users in the United States and Europe, seeking information about UNRWA on Google, have recently found themselves redirected to an unexpected destination. Instead of being ushered to the official website of the international agency dedicated to Palestinian refugees or its Wikipedia entry, thousands were led to an Israeli site telling a different story – depicting UNRWA as a facade for Hamas activities in Gaza. For several months now, Israel has embarked on a sweeping digital campaign designed to erode trust in UNRWA among American and European audiences. These ads, prominently displayed at the top of Google search results, are purchased directly from the American tech giant through government advertising channels, steering users to a government-run site that casts UNRWA as a Hamas collaborator. The content on the government site leaves no room for ambiguity: "UNRWA in Gaza is beyond redemption. Donor countries still funding UNRWA are indirectly funding Hamas, plain and simple," declares one English-language article, alongside other assertions that challenge the organization's neutrality and implicate its employees in the October 7 massacre. Alongside search ads, Israel also purchased video ads in the US with messages claiming "UNRWA is inseparable from Hamas" and "continues to employ terrorists." (YNet / VFI News)

Israel Faces a Looming Financial Crisis If It Fails to Act, Former Chief Economist Warns; Israel needs to act vigorously and with immediate action to formulate a responsible 2025 budget to stave off the risk of a looming financial crisis that could drag its war-battered economy into a recession and

endanger the country's national security, a former Finance Ministry chief economist has warned. In an assessment policy paper, Yoel Naveh, the Finance Ministry's chief economist during a four-year tenure ending in 2018, and Lev Drucker, former senior deputy to the chief economist until 2022, cautioned that if the government fails to address the 2025 budget responsibly by implementing the needed spending cuts, tax hikes, and growth-enhancing reforms, there is a high probability that Israel will be facing a financial crisis in the next three to five years. "We believe that official growth projections that the current policies are based on are too optimistic as they assume that everything will go back to normal with the end of the war without any permanent damage," Drucker told Israeli media. "Policymakers must realize that even with the end of the fighting, the economy will not return to the growth path that preceded October 7." "We don't think that we will see an abrupt end of the war, but rather a gradual decline in the intensity of the security situation throughout 2025, which means that there will be a stabilization, but not the kind of accelerated recovery we saw after the coronavirus pandemic," Drucker added. "If the government will not act responsibly by providing forward-looking guidance to reduce the debt trajectory in these times of great uncertainty, interest rates will have to stay high for longer." (*TOI / VFI News*)

Albania to Open Commercial Liaison Office in Jerusalem; Marking the first-ever visit by an Israeli President to Albania, President Herzog met on Thursday, September 12, with the Prime Minister of Albania, Edi Rama, in the capital Tirana. Accompanying the President on his visit was Idit Ohel, mother of Alon Ohel who is among the 101 hostages still being held captive by Hamas. The Albanian Prime Minister, known for his love of painting and art, emotionally presented Idit with a book of his works as a token of appreciation and emphasized to her once again the importance of bringing the hostages home. During President Herzog's historic visit, Prime Minister Rama also informed the President of his decision to open a new office in Jerusalem that will serve as a commercial liaison office. According to the President's office: "The decision marks a significant upgrade in the strong relationship between the two nations and represents a symbol of the deep friendship between the two peoples." (*INN / VFI News*)

World's Oldest Jewish Text Debuts Exhibit at Museum of the Bible; The Museum of the Bible in Washington announced on Thursday, September 12, that it was set to exhibit the world's oldest Jewish book on September 24, just before Rosh Hashanah. The exhibit, Sacred Words: Revealing the Earliest Hebrew Book, showcases the book, which was discovered in Afghanistan and dates back roughly 1,300 years. The book, referred to as the ALQ, is comprised of prayers, poems, and pages of the oldest discovered Passover Haggadah, which was mysteriously written upside down. The prayers and poetry in the book draw on texts from the Hebrew Bible. "The ALQ is one of the most cherished treasures in the museum's collection, which we are honored to steward and share with people of all faiths," said Bobby Duke, interim Chief Curatorial Officer at Museum of the Bible. "It clarifies our understanding of the Bible's journey along the Silk Roads and shines a light on the diverse religious, ethnic and cultural tapestry of Afghanistan throughout most of its history." The book is also said to hold a connection to the Bamiyan Valley of Afghanistan. Upon discovering the text, a group of Muslims, Christians, and Jews worked together to rescue the historic document, the museum said. The group later made it accessible across the globe. (*JPost / VFI News*)

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