

Yachad Ministries' Israel's News Update December 18, 2025 (Kislev 28, 5786)



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Israel-Hamas Cease-fire

ISIS Praises Bondi Shooting in Australia as 'Source of Pride' Without Claiming Responsibility

- *Dozens of Israeli settlers attempted to break security barrier and cross into the Gaza Strip*
- *Saudi, French and U.S. officials push Hezbollah disarmament, amid wave of intense Israeli airstrikes in Lebanon*
 - *Four wounded in Israeli airstrike on Taybeh, Lebanon's health ministry says*
- *Islamic State praises Bondi Beach Hannukah festival shooting in Australia, calling it a 'source of pride'*
 - *IDF: Strike in southern Lebanon kills Hezbollah militant*
- *Israeli hotline offering emotional first aid to Australian Jewish community in light of deadly Hanukkah attack*
 - *Suspected gunman in Bondi Beach terror attack charged with 15 counts of murder*
 - *IDF confirms mortar shell misfired in Gaza City, says it is 'aware' of casualties*

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If you are interested in having Yachad Ministries to come your church and share about what is going on in Israel and the Middle East, and how the Bible is unfolding right in front of our eyes.

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15 People, Including One Gunman, Shot Dead At Sydney's Bondi Beach; A shooting attack at Sydney's Bondi Beach on Sunday evening, December 14, left 15 people dead, including one attacker, after a Hanukkah gathering near a children's playground was targeted. The event, described as drawing more than 1,000 attendees, was underway when gunfire erupted, turning a public celebration into a scene of panic and grief. Dozens of people were reported injured, and emergency services rushed the wounded to nearby hospitals. Authorities said the attack was aimed at Sydney's Jewish community, and officials urged the public to stay away from the area while the situation unfolded. Two police officers were among those shot, as law enforcement tried to secure the beach and surrounding streets. Reports also indicated that suspicious items were found near the shooting location, heightening concerns as bomb specialists worked to remove a potential threat. As the community absorbed the shock, one local rabbi was identified among the victims, deepening the sense of loss for families who had gathered for a night meant to be peaceful. Tributes described a steady, familiar presence who served his community with constancy and care. The attack added to growing fears among Jewish communities worldwide as public gatherings increasingly require heightened security. (BB/VFI News)

Israeli FM Warns Australian FM After Hanukkah Massacre: Words Have Consequences; Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Sa'ar spoke with Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong on Sunday, December 14, 2025, after the deadly shooting attack at a Hanukkah event in Sydney. Sa'ar expressed sorrow and solidarity with the Jewish community, describing the assault as an antisemitic terror attack. The conversation was presented as a direct response to a tragedy that struck during a public holiday gathering. Sa'ar said antisemitism in Australia has surged since October 7, 2023, pointing to hostile rhetoric and public demonstrations that have created a threatening atmosphere for Jewish communities. He emphasized that security cannot rest only on police protection, but also on confronting the broader climate that normalizes hatred. He warned that language portraying Jews and Israel as evil or illegitimate fuels real-world violence. He urged decisive action against incitement and stated that certain calls—especially those celebrating violence—should not be treated as acceptable public discourse. Sa'ar framed the issue as one of public responsibility, insisting that words do not remain abstract when they repeatedly encourage intimidation or harm. The message was clear: changing the atmosphere is essential to protecting Jewish life in Australia. (INN/VFI News)

'A Genuine Hero': Unarmed Muslim Bystander Filmed Disarming Sydney Terrorist; A bystander was filmed tackling and disarming one of the gunmen during the terror attack on a Hanukkah event at Sydney's Bondi Beach on Sunday, December 14. The man was identified as Ahmed al Ahmed, a 43-year-old Muslim father of two who runs a local produce store. The attack left at least 15 people dead and dozens wounded, as two assailants opened fire on the crowd. Footage showed Ahmed, apparently unarmed, wrestling a rifle away from one of the attackers and turning the weapon back toward him. A relative said Ahmed was shot twice in the arm during the struggle and was taken to a local hospital for surgery. Reports

also indicated he had no prior experience with firearms and was hit after successfully taking the weapon from the first gunman. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu publicly praised Ahmed's bravery and saluted him for stopping one of the terrorists from continuing to fire on Jewish civilians. New South Wales Premier Chris Minns called the video an unbelievable scene and said people were alive because of Ahmed's actions. Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese also honored everyday citizens who put themselves in danger to protect others, saying their courage saved lives. *(TOI/VFI News)*

IDF Kills Top Hamas Commander Raad Saad, a Key Planner of Oct. 7, in Gaza City Strike; The Israel Defense Forces said a strike in Gaza City on Saturday, December 13, killed top Hamas commander Raad Saad, describing him as a senior figure in Hamas's military wing. Saad was identified as the head of Hamas's weapons manufacturing headquarters and as one of the architects of the October 7, 2023, onslaught. The strike was described as an escalatory move during a ceasefire period that Israel said Hamas had violated. Reports indicated the strike hit a vehicle traveling along the coastal Rashid Road on the Hamas-controlled side of the ceasefire line. Palestinian reports said multiple people were killed and more than 20 were injured. Israel said Saad had been directly responsible for ceasefire violations and for continued weapons production in Gaza during the ceasefire. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defense Minister Israel Katz said the assassination followed an earlier incident in southern Gaza in which an explosive device lightly injured two Israeli troops. The IDF said it had identified repeated attempts to attack Israeli forces during the ceasefire, including explosive devices. Israel also released footage of the strike and said it acted after receiving fresh intelligence on Saad's location. *(TOI/VFI News)*

Germany Arrests Five Suspects in Foiled Islamist Plot on Christmas Market; German authorities announced that five men were arrested on suspicion of planning an Islamist-motivated attack on a Christmas market in Bavaria. Prosecutors said formal warrants were issued for four suspects, while a fifth was held in preventative custody. Investigators believe the plot involved using a vehicle to strike a crowded market area. The suspects were identified as a 56-year-old Egyptian, a 37-year-old Syrian, and three Moroccan nationals aged 22, 28, and 30. Authorities stated that the intended target was in the Dingolfing area of southern Bavaria, although the specific market was not publicly identified. Officials credited rapid cooperation among security services with preventing a potentially deadly attack. The arrests come amid heightened concern over holiday security, with markets viewed as vulnerable soft targets. Officials referenced past attacks and attempted attacks in Germany in recent years as the reason for increased vigilance. The foiled plot underscored how quickly festive public spaces can become the focus of terror planning—and why authorities remain on high alert. *(INN/VFI News)*

Hezbollah Leader Promises: We Will Not Disarm; Hezbollah leader Naim Qassem rejected calls for his organization to disarm, speaking on Saturday, December 13, as international pressure grows on Lebanese authorities. Qassem criticized US efforts aimed at pushing disarmament and said Hezbollah would defend itself in any scenario. He insisted the group would never give up its weapons, even if the entire world united against Lebanon. Qassem described Hezbollah's "land, weapons, and spirit" as inseparable, arguing that disarmament would amount to "execution." He framed Hezbollah's arsenal as existential, portraying external demands as an attempt to strip Lebanon's resistance of its power. His remarks reinforced Hezbollah's longstanding position that its weapons are not a temporary measure but the foundation of its identity and deterrence. He claimed Israel sought to destroy Hezbollah after the killing of longtime leader Hassan Nasrallah and other senior figures, but said Hezbollah prevented Israel from achieving that goal. Qassem also said Hezbollah is ready to cooperate with the Lebanese Army under a defense-oriented strategy, but only on terms that do not resemble surrender. The stance highlighted the continuing friction between Lebanese state institutions and a heavily armed terror group operating alongside them. *(INN/VFI News)*

University of Arkansas Prof. Canned over Alleged Support for Iranian Regime, Anti-Israel Stance; A political science professor at the University of Arkansas was removed from her role as head of the school's Middle East Studies program on Friday, December 12, after allegations that she praised Iran's leadership and expressed strong anti-Israel views. The professor, Shirin Saeidi, was also accused of using university letterhead in support of Hamid Nouri, an Iranian figure convicted in Sweden in 2022 for involvement in the 1988 executions at Gohardasht Prison. University officials said the letterhead matter is being reviewed under school policies. The allegations drew sharp reactions from Iranian dissidents and human rights advocates, who argued that academic credibility can be misused to soften or obscure the brutality of oppressive regimes. Activists said they gathered thousands of petition signatures urging university action. Political figures in Arkansas also weighed in, voicing concern that public institutions should not be used to promote hostility toward Jews or to normalize support for a regime associated with severe human rights abuses. Saeidi reportedly continued to hold her faculty position while the controversy unfolded, with calls from critics for further discipline or dismissal. The case highlighted how Middle East politics can erupt into campus-level conflict, raising questions about the boundary between personal activism and institutional endorsement. It also intensified concerns about antisemitism and anti-Israel hostility appearing in academic settings, where rhetoric can spill over into intimidation and social division. *(NYP/VFI News)*

Archaeologists Uncover Rare Fresco of Jesus in Town Pope Leo XIV Recently Visited;

Archaeologists in Turkey uncovered a fresco depicting Jesus as the "Good Shepherd," described as a major discovery from the region's early Christian era. The artwork was found in August 2025 inside an underground tomb near Iznik, a site closely associated with early Christian history. Researchers said the tomb likely dates to the third century, a period when Christians faced persecution under the Roman Empire. The fresco portrays a youthful, clean-shaven Jesus wearing a toga and carrying a goat on his shoulders—an image that scholars noted is uncommon in Anatolia, particularly with Roman artistic attributes. The discovery was described as unusually well-preserved and potentially unique for the region. Archaeologists working inside the tomb were shown cleaning and restoring the painted surfaces as part of ongoing efforts to protect the fragile site. The find also drew attention because Iznik is linked to the Council of Nicaea and the Nicene Creed, a foundational statement of Christian faith. Pope Leo XIV recently visited the town as part of a trip marking the 1,700th anniversary of the council. The discovery added fresh interest to a place already significant to millions of believers, connecting ancient art, archaeology, and living faith traditions. *(FOX/VFI News)*

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