

Yachad Ministries' Israel's News Update December 22, 2025 (Tevet 2, 5786)

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Israel-Hamas Cease-fire

Netanyahu: Gov't-backed Oct. 7 Inquiry to Probe Oslo Accords, Anti-judicial Coup Protests

- *Woman arrested for harassing Jewish students in Sydney; Netanyahu gov't moves to close Army Radio*
 - *IDF says it struck Hezbollah militants in Lebanon's southern coast*
 - *Israeli activist says masked settlers stoned his car east of Ramallah*
 - *Four wounded in Israeli airstrike on Taybeh, Lebanon's health ministry says*
 - *Israeli security cabinet approves recognition of 19 new West Bank settlements*
- *IDF top lawyer to meet with family of soldier who died during controversial excursion to Lebanon*
 - *Families of Oct. 7 victims urge public to oppose Netanyahu government probe*
- *President Herzog leads Jerusalem lighting of eighth Hanukkah candle in solidarity with Australia*

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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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Bondi Beach Attack: Terrorists Trained in Philippines before Hanukkah Massacre; Security sources said two terrorists identified as a father and son—carried out a deadly attack at a Hanukkah celebration at Bondi Beach in Sydney, killing 15 people. Officials said the pair had traveled to the Philippines only weeks earlier and received what was described as military-style training, raising urgent questions about how the attackers prepared and whether their preparation involved outside guidance or structured instruction beyond Australia’s borders. Investigators were also examining the younger attacker’s reported connections to individuals tied to Islamic State-linked circles in Australia. The inquiry included scrutiny of relationships and communications that might help explain how the attackers became capable of carrying out a mass-casualty assault against a public Jewish gathering. At least one figure mentioned in the investigation, speaking through legal counsel, denied any knowledge of or involvement in the shootings. Authorities were working to determine whether the two attackers were connected to a broader international network. Officials said the men traveled to Manila in early November 2025 and later went to the southern Philippines, where they reportedly underwent training. According to the information shared with investigators, the pair returned to Australia in late November 2025, only weeks before the massacre on Sunday, December 14, 2025, intensifying concerns that the operation may have involved purposeful preparation timed to coincide with a high-profile holiday event. *(INN/VFI News)*

Following Sydney Attack: Israel Urging Increased Security at Jewish Events Worldwide; In the wake of the deadly terror attack in Sydney and as Hanukkah approaches, Israel urged multiple countries, particularly in Europe, to strengthen security around public Jewish events. The outreach reflected heightened concern that Jewish gatherings could be targeted during the holiday period, especially in visible public settings where large crowds gather, and security arrangements can vary widely. Israeli officials assessed that the days ahead could be especially sensitive, not only because of Hanukkah celebrations but also because of Christmas markets and New Year’s events that draw significant crowds. The concern was that the combination of heightened public activity and the international attention around the Sydney massacre could create a dangerous environment in which additional attackers might seek to imitate the violence, choosing symbolic dates and high-visibility targets. Israeli authorities noted that the Sydney massacre involved two terrorists who murdered 15 people and wounded more than 40 others, underscoring how quickly a holiday celebration can become the scene of tragedy. With many Jewish communities holding candle-lightings, communal meals, and synagogue gatherings throughout the week of Hanukkah, Israel’s warning emphasized both vigilance and practical security measures to reduce risk. On Sunday, December 14, 2025, Israel’s National Security Council recommended that Israelis abroad avoid attending unsecured public events, including those held at Chabad houses and synagogues. The guidance highlighted the importance of situational awareness and the need for communities to coordinate with local authorities where possible, particularly for events that are publicized widely or expected to draw large attendance. *(INN/VFI News)*

FBI Foils Alleged New Year’s Eve Bomb Plot Organized by Pro-Palestinian Group; US authorities said the FBI recently stopped a plot aimed at carrying out coordinated bombing attacks across Southern California on New Year’s Eve. The announcement described the plan as organized and time-bound, with the

intent to strike during a major public holiday when crowds gather, and emergency services are stretched, potentially increasing casualties and disruption. US Attorney General Pam Bondi said the group involved was the “Turtle Island Liberation Front,” described as far-left, pro-Palestinian, anti-government, and anti-capitalist. Authorities said the group was preparing a series of bombings against multiple targets in California beginning on New Year’s Eve, and that it also planned to target ICE agents and vehicles, indicating a broader pattern of hostility toward federal law enforcement and government operations. Four individuals were charged, according to the complaint filed in federal court in California. The charges included conspiracy and possession of an unregistered destructive device. The suspects named were Audrey Illeene Carroll, Zachary Aaron Page, Dante Gaffield, and Tina Lai, and the case described alleged preparations consistent with testing or assembling improvised explosive devices. Authorities said the arrests took place in Lucerne Valley, a desert community east of Los Angeles, where the suspects were believed to be preparing to test explosive devices ahead of the planned attacks. Investigators said the intervention happened before the plot could advance into an operational phase, preventing what officials described as an imminent threat and underscoring the ongoing risk posed by ideologically motivated violence tied to domestic networks. *(TOI/VFI News)*

Israel up in Arms as US, Qatar Renew Talks for Sale of Advanced F-35 Jets; Israel expressed growing concern over renewed US discussions with Qatar regarding a possible sale of advanced F-35 fighter jets. The worry centers on Israel’s long-standing insistence that it retain a qualitative military edge in the region, particularly as advanced aircraft and munitions reshape the balance of power and expand the reach of states that may not share Israel’s security priorities. According to the report, Qatar reopened a request to purchase the stealth aircraft after a similar bid was rejected about five years earlier, and contacts between Qatari and US officials were said to be underway. Israeli officials were also watching broader regional developments that could include additional major US arms arrangements with other Middle Eastern actors, creating a cumulative effect that Israel fears could narrow its current technological advantage. Israeli defense officials were described as concerned that a wave of advanced US arms sales in the region could erode Israel’s military edge, especially in the air domain. In response, Israel’s defense establishment was said to be preparing a package of requests aimed at securing compensatory capabilities—steps intended to ensure Israel can maintain operational superiority, deterrence strength, and the ability to defend its population amid shifting regional procurement.; The report said those requests include two squadrons of advanced fighter jets—one of F-35s and another of F-15I aircraft tailored to Israel’s operational requirements, as well as expanded access to advanced munitions and related systems. Israeli officials were said to believe there may be a limited window to act before production availability is absorbed by other buyers, making timely decisions and intensive engagement with Washington a priority in the months ahead. *(TOI/VFI News)*

Trump Expands Travel Ban to Include Palestinian Arabs; US President Donald Trump expanded a US travel ban to include nationals from seven additional countries, including Syria, and also to include holders of Palestinian Authority passports. The move was presented as a security-related measure, widening restrictions and adding new categories of travelers who may be barred from entry under the updated policy. A White House proclamation said the restrictions were intended to prevent foreign nationals who could undermine or destabilize US culture, government, institutions, or founding principles. The announcement came amid heightened security concerns following a deadly incident in Syria in which two US soldiers and a civilian were killed, intensifying public scrutiny on cross-border threats and the vetting of travelers from high-risk areas. The report said the Trump administration had already informally barred Palestinian Authority passport holders and framed the step as part of a broader posture aligned with Israel’s opposition to international recognition of a Palestinian state. The policy shift reflects a sharper linkage between US border controls and geopolitical priorities, with travel eligibility increasingly influenced by security narratives, diplomatic positioning, and concerns about destabilization and hostile activity. *(INN/VFI News)*

Senators Ted Cruz and John Fetterman Agree on Hating One ‘Evil’ During Bipartisan Interview;

In a bipartisan interview aired on Tuesday, December 16, 2025, US Senators Ted Cruz and John Fetterman spoke about the rise of antisemitism and found rare common ground in condemning hatred directed at Jews and at Israel. Cruz publicly praised Fetterman for what he described as courage in calling out anti-Semitism within his own political camp, saying that stance carried a personal and political cost. The discussion took place in the shadow of the Bondi Beach mass shooting on Sunday, December 14, 2025, in which 15 people were killed during a Hanukkah celebration. Authorities said around 1,000 people had gathered to mark the first night of Hanukkah when the violence erupted, turning a public religious celebration into a scene of terror and mourning, and deepening international concern about threats to Jewish communities outside Israel. Both senators described the attack as evidence of spreading hatred, framing antisemitism as a growing danger that demands direct confrontation. Fetterman emphasized that antisemitism is an issue that must be faced openly, while Cruz called the phenomenon evil and dangerous, urging a stronger resolve against it. The exchange reflected an unusual moment of agreement in a polarized environment, centered on the protection of Jewish life and the rejection of ideological hatred that targets worshipers and public gatherings. (FOX/VFI News)

Netanyahu Approves \$35 Bil. Gas Deal with Egypt;

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Energy and Infrastructure Minister Eli Cohen announced approval of what they described as the largest natural gas deal in Israel’s history, valued at NIS 112 billion—about \$35 billion. The announcement framed the agreement as a major milestone for Israel’s economy and strategic posture, particularly as energy resources increasingly shape regional relationships and national resilience. Netanyahu said that NIS 58 billion from the deal would go to Israel’s state treasury, describing the expected revenue as a long-term financial stream rather than an immediate one-time gain. He outlined a phased timeline in which the first four years would bring roughly half a billion shekels, while companies involved undertake substantial infrastructure investments, including pipeline expansion to support the scale of the agreement and ensure sustained delivery capacity. The prime minister said that after the initial investment-heavy stage, annual revenues were expected to rise, reaching about NIS 6 billion each year for the state treasury within a few years. He said the funds would strengthen key national priorities, including education, health, infrastructure, security, and the future of coming generations, presenting the agreement as a practical driver of stability and national development. Netanyahu also said the agreement involves the American company Chevron, along with Israeli partners and includes supplying natural gas to Egypt. He said he approved the deal after ensuring Israel’s security interests and additional vital interests, while also describing the agreement as strengthening Israel’s status as a regional energy power and contributing to regional stability through reliable energy ties. (INN/VFI News)

In Move to Deter Turkey, Israel Explores Creation of Rapid-Response Force with Greece, Cyprus;

Israel is exploring the creation of a rapid-response force together with Greece and Cyprus as part of an effort to deter Turkey’s military and strategic activity in the eastern Mediterranean. The initiative was described as a move aimed at strengthening readiness and coordinated action among partners with shared concerns in the region, where maritime posture and defense signaling can carry significant consequences. The report framed the concept as part of a broader deterrence effort, suggesting that Israel is weighing new forms of cooperation that move beyond diplomacy and into structured operational readiness. A rapid-response framework implies speed, coordination, and the ability to act in developing situations, especially where regional tensions, air and sea activity, and strategic messaging can shift quickly. By placing emphasis on deterrence, the initiative reflects the idea that preventing escalation often depends on credible preparedness and aligned partnerships. Israel’s exploration of cooperation with Greece and Cyprus underscores the importance of regional coordination in the eastern Mediterranean, where strategic interests intersect and where defense planning is increasingly linked to shared assessments of risk and stability. (JPost/VFI News)

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