

Yachad Ministries' Israel's News Update February 16, 2026 (Shvat 28, 5786)



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Israel-Hamas Cease-fire; IDF Says It Killed Palestinian Militants Who Infiltrated Gaza Border Base on October 7

- *Police say father and son shot to death in northern Israel, marking 46 homicides in Arab community since beginning of year*
- *Ultra-Orthodox block entry to Jerusalem in protest over arrest of two IDF draft dodgers*
 - *Iran meets with UN nuclear watchdog*
 - *Netanyahu says Israel's goal is to 'build an independent arms industry' and 'phase out' U.S. economic aid*
- *Senior Iranian official confirms second round of indirect talks with U.S. will begin Tuesday*
 - *Settler to be prosecuted for fatal shooting of Palestinian in West Bank*
 - *Riots in ultra-Orthodox city: Police disperse crowds with stun grenades, 22 arrested*

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Please contact Jeffery @ Yachad Ministries

Phone 770-641-3000 ext. 6

E-mail yachad@mindspring.com



Standing with Israel!

Iranian Regime Executing Protesters in Hospital Beds, Sources Say; Reports from inside Iran on Tuesday, February 10, describe a chilling pattern of reprisals against anti-regime demonstrators, including allegations that security forces have entered medical facilities to carry out killings of wounded protesters. Accounts from activists and sources cited in media coverage suggest authorities have targeted people receiving treatment after being injured during the recent crackdown. These claims, together with broader documentation of arrests at hospitals and pressure on families of detainees, paint a picture of a regime using fear to suppress dissent and to deter the injured from seeking lifesaving care. The allegations follow weeks of unrest that have drawn international condemnation. Rights monitors say thousands have been killed or detained since late December 2025 and multiple organizations have highlighted violations of medical neutrality. Families of detainees have reported intimidation, and civic figures have alleged that intelligence units are coercing relatives to participate in regime rallies marking the revolution's anniversary. The unrest continues despite episodic gestures by authorities, and the fear of surveillance and arrest has reportedly spread from streets and campuses to clinics and emergency rooms. For Israel and the wider region, the reports reinforce concerns that Iran's leadership is willing to escalate repression at home even while signaling defiance abroad. The use of hospitals as hunting grounds would mark a particularly grave breach of ethical and legal norms, and the trauma inflicted on medical workers and families could echo for years. Observers warn that the longer such measures persist, the harder reconciliation will become, and the more likely that underground resistance will harden. (*NYP/VFI News*)

Fetterman: If Iran Strikes Are Needed, I'll Be the Only Democrat Who Backs Them; In a television interview aired Wednesday, February 11, 2026, U.S. Senator John Fetterman said he would support additional U.S. strikes on Iranian targets if military action were deemed necessary. Referring to last year's operation and the current climate of threats and proxy activity, the Pennsylvania lawmaker argued that force can be an appropriate tool to deter Tehran. He also voiced skepticism about the durability of any agreement with Iran, citing past enrichment levels and warning that the Islamic Republic must face clear consequences when it crosses red lines. Fetterman's stance sets him apart within his party and highlights how Iran's behavior reverberates in American politics. The comments land as the United States weighs diplomatic options with allies and considers how best to protect its forces and partners in the Middle East. For Israel, a firmer American posture is often seen as critical for constraining Iranian adventurism and for reinforcing deterrence across the region. While debate continues in Washington over the right balance of pressure and diplomacy, the senator's remarks signal that bipartisan support for stronger measures may grow if Tehran escalates. The messaging also underscores the close alignment many U.S. officials profess with Israel's security needs, even as they weigh the risks of broader conflict. (*BB/VFI News*)

Iran's Top Adviser: Missile Program is Non-Negotiable; On Wednesday, February 12, Ali Shamkhani an adviser to Iran's Supreme Leader declared that the country's missile capabilities are a "red

line” that will not be subject to negotiation. His comments, carried during rallies marking the revolution’s anniversary and as U.S. Iran contacts continue indirectly through regional intermediaries, signaled that Tehran intends to harden its military posture even while talks continue on other files. Iran’s insistence on retaining and improving ballistic capabilities complicates efforts to lower tensions. Missiles underpin the regime’s strategy for deterring adversaries, arming proxies, and projecting power. By publicly foreclosing discussions on this track, Tehran is challenging diplomats to find off-ramps that do not involve curbing a tool the regime views as essential to its survival. The pronouncement also carries implications for Israel and Gulf states, which have repeatedly faced missile and drone threats from Iran and allied militias. For Jerusalem, it reaffirms the need for layered defenses and for coordination with partners who share concerns about regional escalation. The messaging aligns with the regime’s broader narrative of resistance and may serve to rally hardline support at home. (*INN/VFI News*)

Ministers to Vote on Lapid’s Bill to Declare Qatar an Enemy State; Israel’s Ministerial Committee for Legislation is expected to take up a proposal on Sunday, February 15, that would designate Qatar as an enemy state under Israeli law. Introduced by opposition leader Yair Lapid, the bill asserts that Doha provides support and financing to Hamas, fuels propaganda networks aligned with the group, and causes strategic harm to Israel’s standing internationally. If adopted, the designation would apply the full range of legal constraints that Israel reserves for states formally deemed hostile. The initiative surfaces amid a broader debate in Israel over how to respond to Qatar’s role in regional diplomacy and its influence via media platforms. Supporters of the bill argue that clarity is overdue and that Qatar’s actions have undermined efforts to curb terrorism. Critics warn of diplomatic fallout and potential complications for hostage negotiations or third-party mediation. Whatever the outcome, the vote underscores how the Gaza war and its aftermath continue to reshape Israel’s legal and diplomatic approaches. It also reflects a view within parts of the Israeli political spectrum that sustained pressure on state sponsors of terror is necessary to achieve long-term security. (*INN/VFI News*)

Nearly One in Three US Jews Reported Being Targeted by Antisemitism in 2025, Survey Finds; A new report published Tuesday, February 10, by the American Jewish Committee indicates that 31% of Jewish Americans say they were targeted by an anti-Semitic incident in 2025, from verbal harassment and online abuse to vandalism and physical assault. The findings also show that 55% avoided behaviors that might identify them as Jewish, and two-thirds felt less secure than the previous year. While the numbers are similar to 2024, the persistence of these trends suggests a troubling “new normal” for Jewish communities across the United States. The survey conducted among more than 1,200 Jewish adults in late September and early October 2025 asked respondents about concrete experiences and perceptions of safety. Many reported adjusting routines, reconsidering public displays of Jewish identity, or skipping events out of concern for harassment. Respondents also registered strong feelings about national leadership and campus climates, with various high-profile attacks cited as drivers of insecurity. For faith leaders and community organizations, the data points to the continued need for security measures, coalition-building, and education that confronts anti-Semitic tropes across the ideological spectrum. The report also highlights how debates over Israel and Zionism have bled into public square rhetoric in ways that both normalize and mask age-old hatred leaving Jewish communities to navigate increasingly complex environments. (*TOI/VFI News*)

By 2050, Almost One in Four Israelis Will Be Ultra-Orthodox, Study Indicates; An analysis released Tuesday, February 10, by the Israel Democracy Institute projects that Israel’s Haredi (ultra-Orthodox) community could comprise roughly one in four citizens by 2050. Depending on the pace of educational and workforce integration, the report outlines sharply divergent outcomes for Israel’s economy and social fabric. If current trends persist, Israel could see declines in matriculation eligibility, university degree attainment, and overall employment rates; if integration accelerates, indicators improve markedly,

and GDP losses can be avoided. Demographics shape national readiness as well: the IDF's recruiting base is already shifting, and by 2050, Haredim could account for 40% of those designated for military service. That prospect has reanimated debates about conscription exemptions and the need for a new "social contract." Policymakers are weighing how best to pair support for religious communities with core curriculum benchmarks, military or national service, and incentives for full participation in the workforce. The study's authors argue that choices made now on education standards, service obligations, and targeted economic policy will ripple for decades. Communities across Israel already feel the strain between tradition and integration, yet many leaders see opportunity in charting a path that honors religious life while equipping the next generation to thrive in a high-tech economy. (*TOI/VFI News*)

US Soldiers Who Served Near Gaza Adopt Abandoned Dogs; Ten dogs three adults and seven puppies found near the Gaza border will soon fly to New York to be adopted by American soldiers who served in the area during the war, Israel's Let the Animals Live association announced. Working alongside SPCA International, the group is handling vaccinations, paperwork, and logistics so the animals can reunite with the troops who cared for them. The flight is scheduled for Wednesday, February 19, after which the canines will go to their new homes across the United States. Organizers say the rescue offers a glimmer of compassion in a harsh season. The soldiers now back home, selected names for the dogs and pledged to provide long-term care. For many, the bond formed during difficult deployments became a source of comfort and a commitment they wanted to keep. The partnership between Israeli and international animal-welfare groups underscores how small acts of kindness can bridge borders and bring healing amid conflict. (*TOI/VFI News*)



Robert I. Solomon: Messianic Rabbi

Jeffery Blalock: Ministries Coordinator, jeffery@yachad.com

Yachad Ministries, 950 Pine Grove Road, Roswell, Georgia 30075

E-mail: info@yachad.com, Web Page: <https://www.yachad.com>

Phone: 770-641-3000 (ext. 6)

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