

Yachad Ministries' Israel's News Update June 25, 2026 (Tamuz 9, 5786)



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Israel; Israel, Lebanon deny U.S. official's claim that IDF began withdrawing from 'buffer zone'

- *Israel denies report of partial withdrawal from southern Lebanon 'buffer zone'*
- *IDF fatally shoots Palestinian man inside West Bank home, says he 'threw objects'*
 - *Israeli strike kills two in southern Lebanon, medical and security sources say*
 - *Top Israeli defense official calls urgent meeting on plan to displace Gazans*
- *Shin Bet chief cancels agency's Pride Month events, shutteres LGBTQ employee group*
 - *Three Mamdani-backed candidates triumph in NY Democratic Party primary*

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Standing with Israel!

IDF Exposes Massive Hezbollah Terror Tunnel 10 Kilometers Inside Southern Lebanon; Israeli forces operating roughly 10 kilometers inside southern Lebanon have exposed a sprawling Hezbollah terror tunnel beneath the village of Majdal Zoun, the latest evidence that the Iranian-backed group fortified entire civilian communities into platforms for war against the Jewish state. Troops of the 551st Brigade, operating under the command of the 91st Division, found the village saturated with military infrastructure, capped by a significant underground tunnel embedded directly within the population. During the operation, soldiers eliminated more than 20 Hezbollah terrorists, including over 10 operatives of the elite Radwan Force, the unit groomed to spearhead a ground assault on the Galilee. Forces dismantled more than 50 separate terror sites across the area, among them observation posts and weapons-storage facilities. The military pointed to the find as a clear demonstration of Hezbollah's deliberate practice of hiding its war-making capability inside homes and civilian areas. Engineers of the Yahalom combat-engineering unit located the centerpiece of the network: an underground tunnel stretching more than 200 meters in length and reaching depths greater than 25 meters. Inside were four launch shafts and twelve rooms, including living quarters and chambers stocked with explosive devices, anti-tank missiles, and attack drones, all positioned to strike communities across the border. Uncovering and clearing the shafts removed a hidden, ready-to-fire threat that had been sitting within easy reach of northern Israel. (INN/VFI News)

Hezbollah Condemns Direct Lebanon-Israel Talks as 'Surrender'; Hezbollah lashed out on Sunday, June 21, against the direct negotiations underway between Lebanon and Israel, a sign of how far the Iranian proxy's influence has slipped as Beirut moves toward the bargaining table. The condemnation came ahead of a fifth round of US-hosted talks set to convene on Monday, June 22, in Washington. In a statement, the terror organization claimed it had become "clear and certain" that the talks were designed to impose dictates from the American administration that undermine Lebanon's sovereignty. It warned that the negotiations would push Lebanon toward those "reconciled with the Zionist occupation and its illegitimate entity," and insisted that "no good whatsoever can come from these conciliatory negotiations," whose "foundation is wrong and suspicious, and their goal is submission and surrender." The group reiterated its rejection of "the approach of direct negotiations with the Zionist enemy" and the rounds of diplomacy flowing from it, claiming they obstruct efforts to confront Israel and squander what it called the sacrifices of the Lebanese people. It accused the Lebanese government of merely carrying out "the daily orders issued by the US administration" and of acting unilaterally in a manner that, it argued, only increases the risks to Lebanon's stability, independence, and sovereignty. Despite the objections, the fifth round of direct talks was set to proceed in Washington, with the Lebanese delegation continuing along a diplomatic track that Hezbollah has been unable to halt. (INN/VFI News)

Survey Finds Most Israelis View Iran War and US Deal as a Setback; A new survey has found that an overwhelming majority of Israelis view the recent war with Iran and the United States-Iran agreement that followed it as a setback for the Jewish state, with 92.1 percent of respondents saying the Islamic

Republic emerged as the winner. The results, published Sunday, June 21, drew on responses gathered in the days immediately after the deal between Washington and Tehran was announced, and they paint a stark picture of public sentiment. The poll questioned 3,644 Israelis between June 17 and 20 and was conducted by the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in collaboration with the Agam Institute. The mood cut across the political spectrum: even among voters who support the right-wing bloc led by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, 93.1 percent said Iran had come out ahead. A further 82.9 percent believed the six-week campaign left Israel's long-term security weaker than it had been before the fighting began. Some 86 percent of those surveyed expressed a negative view of both the outcome of the war and the agreement reached between Washington and Tehran without Israeli input. A nearly identical share, 87.8 percent, felt that Israel had failed to achieve the objectives it set for the offensive, or had accomplished only part of them. Israel and the United States had said the operation was meant to dismantle Iran's nuclear program and ballistic-missile arsenal and to topple the regime in Tehran. *(TOI/VFI News)*

Huckabee Reaffirms 'Unbreakable Bond' Between US and Israel; United States Ambassador to Israel Mike Huckabee reaffirmed the "unbreakable bond" between Washington and Jerusalem and declared that Iran "will never have a nuclear weapon," delivering the keynote address at the JNS International Policy Summit in Jerusalem on Sunday, June 21. Opening on a lighter note, Huckabee joked that he had checked President Donald Trump's social media "to make sure this was not my last speech in Israel," nodding to the president's reputation for dismissing officials "in the middle of the night by way of social media." Turning serious before an audience of policymakers, journalists, and supporters of the Jewish state, the former Arkansas governor worked to ease concerns about the strength of US-Israel ties, stressing that Trump remains firmly committed to Israel's security and maintains a close relationship with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. "The one thing that I've always heard him say, always, and I've always seen him do, is that America has an unbreakable bond with the State of Israel, and I trust that he means what he says," Huckabee said. He noted that Trump has been consistent in pledging to keep Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons and to curb its support for regional proxies, among them Hamas, Hezbollah, and the Houthis. As evidence, the ambassador pointed to the administration's record of recognizing Jerusalem as Israel's capital, relocating the US embassy to the city, and recognizing Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights. *(INN/VFI News)*

Danon Confronts UN Officials Over Israel's Inclusion on Sexual Violence Blacklist; Israel's Ambassador to the United Nations, Danny Danon, confronted senior UN officials in a fierce public exchange on Friday, June 19, refusing to let stand the world body's decision to place the Jewish state on a global blacklist tracking conflict-related sexual violence. The clash unfolded at a UN assembly marking the International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict. Danon aimed his criticism squarely at Pramila Patten, the secretary-general's special representative on sexual violence in conflict. His anger stemmed from Secretary-General António Guterres's move in May to add Israel to an official registry of parties suspected of perpetrating sexual violence in wartime, a list that includes an array of terrorist organizations. "Israel has been placed on a blacklist alongside Hamas, ISIS and Boko Haram," Danon declared, calling the designation "a moral disgrace" that would stain the secretary-general's legacy. The session grew heated when Vanessa Frazier, the UN's special representative for children and armed conflict, loudly interrupted the ambassador. Danon charged that Patten had lent official legitimacy to grave accusations against Israel without independently examining the evidence or giving Jerusalem a fair chance to challenge the claims. "You should have said no. You should have resigned," he told her. "You tried to stain Israel's name. But the stain is not on Israel. The stain is on you." He went further still, attributing the UN's findings to an institutional obsession with targeting the Jewish state and telling the official, "We are a member state, and you work for the UN, and you will be quiet now." *(INN/VFI News)*

Pro-Israel Candidate De la Espriella Declares Victory in Colombia; Abelardo De la Espriella, the pro-Israel conservative candidate in Colombia's presidential race, has declared victory after a razor-thin election, pledging to govern on behalf of every Colombian regardless of political affiliation. With more than 99 percent of ballots counted, he told supporters that national unity and reconciliation would be his first priority, vowing, "I will govern for all Colombians." De la Espriella held a narrow lead of less than one percentage point over his left-wing rival, Ivan Cepeda, though Colombia's Central Electoral Commission had not yet certified the final results. US President Donald Trump publicly congratulated him, sharing a report on social media and writing, "He won, by a lot!" Cepeda, for his part, maintained that the outcome remained unofficial until the electoral authorities confirmed it. Israeli leaders moved quickly to welcome the apparent result, anticipating a warmer relationship with Bogotá after years of strain. Ambassador to the UN Danny Danon congratulated the candidate and voiced hope for deeper cooperation between the two nations, while Foreign Minister Gideon Sa'ar hailed the result with the words, "The Tiger won, Colombia won," and extended an invitation for De la Espriella to visit Jerusalem. Outgoing President Gustavo Petro, however, rejected the apparent outcome, alleging irregularities and claiming, without offering evidence, that Israeli hackers had manipulated the country's election servers, adding that he would await a ruling from the courts. The warming ties nonetheless mark a notable shift after the cool posture of the departing government. (INN/VFI News)

Iran to Lash Prominent Female Singer for Performing Online Without Hijab; An Iranian court has sentenced the prominent singer Parastoo Ahmadi and seven fellow artists to 74 lashes each over an online concert streamed on YouTube, a punishment the regime justified as a response to "hurting public decency by producing and publishing vulgar and immoral content." Word of the sentence, which also carries two-year bans on leaving the country and on any artistic activity, became public on Thursday, June 18, through Ahmadi's videographer and Iranian media. The performance that provoked the authorities showed Ahmadi singing powerful, mournful songs to an empty hall, on a dimly lit stage adorned with a single large Persian carpet inside a traditional caravanserai complex. She was backed by a pianist, a drummer, a guitarist, and a bassist, all of them dressed in black. Ahmadi herself appeared in a long, flowing gown and deep red lipstick, performing with her hair uncovered. That presentation was a direct challenge to the Islamic Republic, where women are forbidden to sing in public and are required to dress modestly and wear the headscarf. Ahmadi had livestreamed the concert on her own channel in December 2024, and it has since been viewed roughly three million times on that channel alone, and many thousands more elsewhere. The lashing sentence handed to Ahmadi and her musicians is the regime's answer to a performance that has now been watched millions of times around the world. (TOI/VFI News)

Two 1,700-Year-Old Roman Statues Unearthed Near Haifa; Two remarkably preserved marble statues from the Roman period have been unearthed near the town of Binyamina, just south of Haifa, during excavations carried out ahead of a major expansion of Israel's coastal railway. The Israel Antiquities Authority and the MUZA Eretz Israel Museum in Tel Aviv announced the find on Monday, June 15. The two sculptures, known as protomes, depict the heads and upper torsos of figures from the Greco-Roman world, and were discovered face down inside the wine-collection pit of a Roman-Byzantine winepress. "Mysteriously, they were found neatly laid, face down, inside a wine-collection pit, meaning they were buried when it went out of use. At present, it is not known why the statues were hidden here perhaps to preserve them," said excavation directors Eliran Oren and Avishag Reiss, who called it "a once-in-a-lifetime discovery." One of the busts bears a Greek inscription naming Lycurgus, a name carried by two notable figures of antiquity Lycurgus of Sparta, regarded as the city's founder, and Lycurgus of Athens, a famed fourth-century BCE statesman and orator. Researchers believe the statues may once have adorned a luxurious villa near the ancient port city of Caesarea, the last comparable discovery having been made in the 1990s. The statues went on public display for the first time at MUZA during an archaeology conference on Thursday, June 18, and will remain on view throughout the summer. (JPost/VFI News)



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