

Yachad Ministries' Israel's News Update July 27, 2026 (Av 12, 5786)



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Israel; Erdogan's Neo-Ottoman Dream: Why a Turkish Bid to Reclaim the Empire Should Worry U.S. Christians More Than Jews

- *Charges dropped against senior Israeli police officer accused of sexual harassment*
 - *Iran says negotiations with the U.S. are 'not in our DNA'*
- *About 600 former Israeli security chiefs warn Trump of West Bank escalation*
 - *Israeli NGO: IDF closure of Nablus preventing access to hospitals*
 - *Syria's al-Sharaa: Seeking security agreement with Israel*
 - *Israel arrests 7 Palestinians suspected of assault in West Bank*

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Standing with Israel!

Trump: Iran Will Face 'Major Military Punishment' for Houthi Attacks on Saudi Ships; US President Donald Trump warned Iran on Thursday, July 23, that it would be held responsible if the Houthis in Yemen continue to target Saudi shipping, after the terror group fired on two Saudi tankers overnight. The warning marked the clearest sign yet that a new front is opening in the regional war. On Monday, July 20, the Houthis, an Iranian proxy controlling western Yemen, announced a naval blockade of Saudi Arabia, which backs Yemen's internationally recognized government. A blockade on Saudi ports would further choke the flow of oil across the region, with Iran already obstructing the Strait of Hormuz. Writing on Truth Social, Trump recalled the powerful American bombing campaign waged against the Houthis in 2025, and said the group had acted responsibly since then. He declared that if the Houthis strike Saudi vessels again, Washington will hold Tehran accountable as the sponsor of its surrogate, and that severe military punishment will fall on Iran and on the Houthis themselves. Oman announced the same day that it was working with the United Nations envoy for Yemen to broker calm between Riyadh and the Houthis. European Union foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas likewise pressed the Houthis to stop threatening commercial traffic in the Red Sea. Israel has not taken part in the latest round of fighting or in the Washington-Tehran talks, but Israeli municipalities moved quickly to strengthen civilian readiness. On Thursday, July 23, the mayors of Ramat Gan, Kiryat Gat, Eilat and Karmiel announced that public bomb shelters in their cities would reopen. Ramat Gan Mayor Carmel Shama-Hacohen said the threat of Iranian missiles over the coming weekend has grown and can no longer be dismissed, and he called on apartment supers to open their buildings' shelters as well. He stressed that the step was a precaution rather than a response to any special military warning, and Home Front Command guidelines nationwide remained unchanged. (TOI/VFI News)

Rubio: Trump Will Take 'a Head for an Eye' if Iran Keeps Firing at US Interests; US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said the price for Iran's escalation in violence will rise every night until the leadership in Tehran comes to its senses, speaking with reporters on the sidelines of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Regional Forum on Thursday, July 23. He said Iran has been pressing for another agreement with Washington since the previous US-Iran Memorandum of Understanding collapsed, but that Tehran does not appear ready to make a deal. The difficulty, he explained, is that every time an agreement is reached, those in charge in Iran either break it or demand that it be changed. Rubio suggested Tehran may be prepared to move within days as it continues to absorb heavy losses. Asked about the American president's approach, Rubio said Trump would answer Iran with a head for an eye, a pointed reversal of Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi's earlier claim that Tehran operates by an eye-for-an-eye strategy. He asserted that so long as Trump holds office, Iran will never be permitted to develop or possess a nuclear weapon. Rubio described a nuclear-armed Iranian leadership as the single greatest threat facing the world, saying that some in that leadership are irrational, some are simply evil, and some are both. Rubio argued that Iran has the natural wealth to be the richest country in the Middle East, but that its rulers have chosen to bankroll terror rather than invest in their own citizens. Iranian money flows instead to Hezbollah, to Hamas, to the Houthis, to Shiite militias and to the sponsorship of terrorism around the

globe, he said. Pressed on whether Washington still seeks regime change after the killing of numerous senior Iranian officials during Operation Epic Fury, Rubio replied that the administration's top priority remains a denuclearized Iran that will never obtain a nuclear weapon. (JPost/VFI News)

Israeli Assessment: Iran's Buried 'Pickaxe Mountain' Complex Can Still Be Neutralized; New details emerged on Wednesday, July 22, regarding Iran's underground "Pickaxe Mountain" facility, located near Natanz. The site already houses centrifuges that have been transferred there, along with all of the components required to establish a uranium enrichment facility, though it is not yet operational. Assessments indicate that Iran is prepared to build an underground complex capable of carrying out the entire uranium enrichment process at the location. The introduction of enriched uranium into the facility would be treated as a bright red line, since it could signal the capability to enrich uranium to weapons-grade purity of ninety percent. Israeli defense officials believe that even with the military capabilities available to the United States, it would not be possible to destroy the underground facility outright. They assess, however, that the site can be neutralized, preventing it from ever becoming an active enrichment plant. Analysts point to real vulnerabilities in the complex, including its electrical, ventilation and supporting infrastructure systems, all of which could be targeted in a military strike. That assessment shapes Israeli planning as the facility moves toward completion. Research by nuclear expert David Albright fills in the picture. Construction of the tunnel complex began in 2020 inside a granite mountain and includes at least two entrances leading to a facility more than one hundred meters underground. The underground halls are large enough to eventually accommodate an enrichment plant housing thousands of centrifuges, as well as other activities tied to Iran's nuclear program. Throughout 2025, Iran strengthened the site's defenses by adding a perimeter fence, layering concrete and earth around the tunnel entrances, and sealing some of the access points. The facility remains under construction, but if completed and activated, it could become a central component of Tehran's continued nuclear ambitions. (INN/VFI News)

Israel Tracks Iran's Rush to Rebuild Bases and Missile Sites Struck in the War; Satellite imagery reviewed and published on Thursday, July 23, shows that Iran has restored much of the infrastructure destroyed during its war with the United States and Israel. The speed of those repairs helps explain how Tehran has sustained its confrontation with Washington since hostilities renewed in July 2026 over disputes relating to the Strait of Hormuz. One set of images showed an access road to an Iranian missile base at Kangavar in western Iran damaged by strikes in early March 2026; several weeks later a newly paved road ran to the entrance. Further imagery documented reconstruction underway in early July at the Bandar Anzali port linked to the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps. Israel announced in March 2026 that it had inflicted significant damage on that port, on an IRGC command center located there, and on an adjoining shipyard. Reconstruction was also documented at a missile production plant near Tehran. Imagery of a missile base in Dezful showed the site struck in June 2025 and again in March 2026, its entrance buried, with Iranian crews digging out the tunnels months later. Israeli military officials are monitoring each of these sites closely as Tehran attempts to reconstitute what was destroyed. The scale of the damage inflicted remains extraordinary. Gen. Dan Caine, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, reported that in the campaign's first five weeks American forces struck more than 1,500 air defense targets, 450 ballistic missile storage facilities and 800 drone storage sites. He said the campaign destroyed Iran's defense industrial base, hitting roughly ninety percent of its weapons factories and nearly eighty percent of its nuclear industrial base. The IDF dropped more than 18,000 bombs across over 1,000 waves of strikes on more than 4,000 targets, disabling around sixty percent of Iran's estimated 470 ballistic missile launchers. Iran has not fired on Israel since fighting between Tehran and Washington resumed in July 2026. (TOI/VFI News)

Greece to Buy \$3 Billion 'Achilles Shield' Missile Defense System From Israel; Greece has approved the purchase of a multi-layer air defense system from Israel, several types of drones and Embraer

C-390 military transport aircraft, Greek Defense Minister Nikos Dendias announced on Thursday, July 23. Athens is spending \$3.1 billion on the system, with the total cost estimated to reach as high as \$4 billion. The Greek security council, KYSEA, granted initial approval earlier in 2026 and signed off on the procurement contracts on Thursday. The program represents one of the largest defense agreements ever concluded between the two countries. Greece intends to build a multi-layer anti-ballistic, anti-aircraft and anti-drone system named "Achilles Shield," with Israeli radars and missiles produced by the state-owned firms Rafael and Israel Aerospace Industries forming the core of the architecture. Dendias said the system will be fully operational within thirty-five months and that Greek companies will manufacture at least twenty-five percent of it. KYSEA also approved the purchase of Israeli-made Heron unmanned aerial vehicles, along with three C-390 transport aircraft, ten British-built VICTA mini-submarines for special operations and American V-BAT drones. Multiple countries, including the United States and Ukraine, have sought to emulate Israel's missile defense systems, among them Iron Dome, after their heavy use during Israel's multi-front war. The agreement rests on an already deep partnership. Greece and Israel jointly operate an air training center on Greek territory, hold annual military exercises together and cooperate on anti-drone systems and cybersecurity. In 2025, Athens purchased thirty-six Israeli-made rocket artillery systems for roughly \$739 million. Greece has traditionally invested at least two percent of gross domestic product in defense owing to decades of tension with Turkey, and now spends nearly 3.5 percent, a higher proportion than many fellow NATO members. Athens plans to spend about \$32 billion by 2036 to modernize its armed forces, including the acquisition of up to forty F-35 fighter jets. (TOI/VFI News)

Nauru to Open an Embassy in Jerusalem, Becoming the Tenth Country to Do So; The Pacific island nation of Nauru will open an embassy in Jerusalem, the office of Foreign Minister Gideon Sa'ar announced on Wednesday, July 22. Writing on X, Sa'ar called Nauru "a true friend of Israel" and said the opening will undoubtedly contribute to deepening relations between the two countries. He pledged that the Foreign Ministry under his leadership would provide all necessary assistance to open the embassy as swiftly as possible, and said Israel looks forward to hosting the Nauruan mission in Jerusalem, the nation's eternal capital. The embassy is expected to open within the coming months and will be Nauru's first in Israel. Sa'ar and Nauruan Foreign Minister Lionel Aingimea met in Fiji in June 2025 and agreed then on the opening. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had already said in 2023 that Nauru's leader expressed an intention to establish an embassy in Jerusalem. There was no immediate confirmation from Nauru itself as of Wednesday morning Israel time. Israel is represented in Nauru by a non-resident ambassador based in Fiji. Nauru is one of the smallest nations in the world, with a population of roughly 12,000, and it has been a firm supporter of the Jewish state for years. Israel has repeatedly thanked the island republic for standing with it at the United Nations and in other international forums, and Nauru formally recognized Jerusalem as Israel's capital in 2019. The United States, Guatemala, Honduras, Kosovo, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Fiji and Somaliland already maintain embassies in Jerusalem, while Colombia has announced its own intention to open one. Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovakia operate embassy branches in the capital. Most countries with an embassy in Israel still keep it in Tel Aviv, arguing that the status of Jerusalem should be settled in a future negotiated agreement. (TOI/VFI News)

Manchester Synagogue Terrorist Also Plotted to Kill Israeli Soldiers at a British Military Academy; The terrorist who carried out a deadly ramming and stabbing at a Manchester synagogue also planned an attack on a British military academy, believing Israeli soldiers were studying there, prosecutors told a court. On October 2, 2025, British-Syrian citizen Jihad al-Shamie drove his car into the gates of the Heaton Park Hebrew Congregation as congregants gathered for Yom Kippur Morning Prayer services. He stabbed 66-year-old Melvin Cravitz to death, and then tried to storm the synagogue before police shot him dead. Adrian Daulby, 53, died of a gunshot wound fired by an officer responding to the scene. Shamie's friend, 31-year-old delivery driver Mohammad Bashir, pleaded guilty on Wednesday, July 22, at

Manchester Crown Court to conducting hostile reconnaissance alongside him against the UK Defence Academy two months before the fatal rampage. Bashir was arrested in November 2025 over his links to Shamie, whom he had met at their local mosque. He was not accused of involvement in the synagogue attack itself, but prosecutors said he helped plan a similar assault on the Oxfordshire-based academy. Prosecutor Jonathan Polnay told the court the two had prepared "an attack involving weapons that would cause multiple fatalities," and that both regularly discussed violent jihad. On August 14, 2025, Bashir drove Shamie's car to Shrivenham in Oxfordshire, where the academy is headquartered, and back again, a ten-hour round trip. Investigators believe the pair lingered near the institute for roughly fifteen minutes, during which Shamie typed a phone note describing the base's reception area. Days earlier, mosque security camera footage captured the two in an empty prayer hall reading about IDF officers studying at the Royal College of Defense Studies in London, an arm of the UK Defence Academy. Shamie turned his attention to the Heaton Park synagogue on August 29, 2025, and by September 11 was searching for meat cleavers. Bashir flew to Pakistan two days after the attack and was arrested on his return. (TOI/VFI News)

Israeli Scientists Discover a Unique Immune System in Sea Anemones; The sea anemone, an ancient marine animal, developed its own distinct way of fighting off viruses, Israeli researchers have found in a groundbreaking study. Scientists from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, working in collaboration with the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, identified a previously unknown protein that has helped the immune system of *Nematostella vectensis*, the starlet sea anemone, defend against viral attack across all those millions of years. The peer-reviewed findings were published in the journal *Nature Ecology & Evolution*. The team discovered a CARD protein, a structural building block they named CARDIB, which prevents an unnecessary immune response by binding to the creature's sensor for viruses. Lead author Ton Sharoni noted that gene names are often highly technical and difficult to remember, and said the team was pleased to be able to build an acronym, standing for CARD Inhibitor Binding Protein, that actually reflects what the protein does. The discovery upends the long-held assumption that all animals inherited a single antiviral system from one common ancestor, pointing instead to more than one evolutionary solution to the same challenge. Sea anemones belong, along with corals and jellyfish, to the cnidarians, a large group of aquatic invertebrates. Because anemones are such close relatives of corals, the researchers believe these findings could open new avenues for confronting the threat facing coral reefs worldwide. Prof. Yehu Moran, who supervised the research and heads the Department of Ecology, Evolution and Behavior at the Hebrew University, observed that roughly thirty percent of life in the sea depends on corals, and that when corals die, the fish and invertebrates that rely on them die as well. Studying the antiviral system of the sea anemone, he said, offers a path toward saving the corals and saving life in the seas. (TOI/VFI News)



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