

Yachad Ministries' Israel's News Update September 3, 2026 (Elul 20, 5786)



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Israel; Dr. Amy-Jill Levine, An Orthodox Jewish woman who has spent nearly five decades defending Christianity from misreading of Judaism was just accused online of hating Christians and killing Jesus.

- ***Israel releases Lebanese civilians in exchange for info on bodies missing since 1980s***
 - ***IDF: Two Palestinians Killed After Crossing Into Israeli-controlled Side of Gaza***
 - ***House Passes Bill to Restrict University Boycotts of Israel***
 - ***Rahm Emanuel and Brothers to Fund Training of Palestinian Doctors in Israel***
- ***Iran Threatens U.S. With Forceful Response if Israel Attacks South Lebanon Ridge***

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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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Standing with Israel!

IDF Eliminates Hamas Commander Who Held Hostages Edan Alexander, Matan Zangauker, and Avera Mengistu; The IDF on Wednesday, August 26, struck and eliminated Ismail Mohammed Ibrahim Barim, a commander in Hamas' military wing, in the Khan Yunis area of the southern Gaza Strip. Barim was the terrorist who held hostages Edan Alexander, Matan Zangauker, and Avera Mengistu in a tunnel in southern Gaza. Before his elimination, Barim had been advancing attacks targeting IDF troops and Israeli civilians and had attempted to rehabilitate the terrorist organization, while systematically violating the ceasefire. The strike was conducted in order to remove the threat he posed. Einav Zangauker, the mother of captivity survivor Matan Zangauker, thanked the forces involved. "On my behalf and on Matan's behalf, we would like to thank the IDF for all its regular and reserve soldiers and all the security forces who closed the circle and led to the elimination of the murderous terrorist who held Matan and other hostages captive in Gaza," she said. (INN/VFI News)

Six Months Into the War, Iran's Hard-Liners Brace for a Long Confrontation as Sanctions Squeeze the Economy; After six months of war, Iran's leadership has coalesced around a hard core of military generals and clerics long entrenched in the ruling theocracy, ready for a potentially long confrontation with the United States and determined to prevent any unrest at home. It is a far cry from US President Donald Trump's initial hopes of toppling the Islamic Republic, and from his subsequent claims that "regime change" had brought more compromising officials to the fore. Iran's new leaders evince little faith in any agreement with Trump after coming under attack twice while holding talks, and they may be bracing for another assault once the US replenishes its supplies of interceptors. They have also threatened to escalate the war as a continuing American blockade, and Trump's plans for new sanctions threaten to suffocate Iran's already worsening economy. "If [Trump] wants to do something, we will retaliate in a seismic manner," the new secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, Mohsen Rezaei, said over the weekend of August 22–23. In a post on X, he said that "if the economic war continues, not a single drop of oil will be exported" from the Persian Gulf. Rezaei's appointment came in a set of decrees by Supreme Leader Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei that formally set Iran's new senior leadership, including top military posts. Khamenei's father and much of the regime's highest echelon were killed in the bombing campaign launched by the US and Israel on Saturday, February 28, 2026. Perhaps most telling was the newly named head of the Basij, the Revolutionary Guard's volunteer street force that played a major role in crushing January's nationwide protests, when thousands were killed. That post went to Hossein Taeb, a hard-line cleric and longtime intelligence chief who led one of the first major crackdowns on protests, in 2009. (TOI/VFI News)

US Embassy in Beirut: Hezbollah is Taking Orders from Iran and Must Disarm; The United States said on Saturday, August 29, that Hezbollah must surrender its weapons, accusing the Iran-backed terror group of refusing negotiations because it is acting on orders from Tehran. In a post on social media, the US Embassy in Beirut said, "Hezbollah so far does not want to talk to the Lebanese state, nor talk to

us, nor talk to Israel, because it is simply taking orders from Iran." The embassy identified the Lebanese government as the "sole legitimate interlocutor" for negotiations concerning Lebanon's future and said it represents the interests of the Lebanese people. "The United States stands with the Lebanese people and wants Lebanon to be a safe and sovereign country. For that to happen, Hezbollah must disarm," the embassy stated. "It's time for Hezbollah to do what's best for Lebanon and the Lebanese people." The US statement comes amid a dispute over a framework agreement reached by Israel and Lebanon in June under American mediation. The deal provides for a gradual Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon in exchange for the complete disarmament of Hezbollah, and it calls for the Lebanese Armed Forces to deploy in designated "pilot zones" once Israeli troops withdraw. Hezbollah was not a party to the agreement and has continued to reject direct negotiations with Israel as well as demands that it surrender its arsenal. (INN/VFI News)

Hezbollah Chief Again Rejects the Israel-Lebanon Framework as 'Illegitimate and Illegal'; Hezbollah leader Naim Qassem on Friday, August 28, again rejected the US-mediated framework agreed upon by Israel and Lebanon in June, opposing both the proposed Israeli withdrawal and the disarmament of the terror group. Under the framework, Israel would gradually withdraw its forces from Lebanon in return for the complete disarmament of Hezbollah, and the Lebanese Armed Forces would deploy in designated "pilot zones" after Israeli troops leave those areas. "We reject the framework agreement with Israel and call for its cancellation. We do not agree to the pilot zones or their outcomes. The framework agreement is illegitimate, illegal, humiliating, and undermines Lebanese sovereignty," Qassem said in televised remarks. "The Lebanese authorities have chosen a path that dishonors them, Lebanon, and the sacrifices of the Lebanese people. Say no for once. Try to show that you have what it takes to achieve something in the future," he added. Qassem also claimed that Hezbollah had blocked Israel's territorial ambitions. "We have thwarted the so-called 'Greater Israel' project and prevented it from reaching Beirut and undermining Lebanon's power and capabilities," he said. (INN/VFI News)

Israel Hits Back at 15 Countries and the EU Over Criticism of the UNRWA Compound Seizure; The Foreign Ministry on Thursday, August 27, sharply criticized a joint statement by 15 countries and the European Union condemning Israel's entry into a UNRWA training center in Kalandia and the seizure of the agency's facilities in eastern Jerusalem on Tuesday, August 25. The countries called on Israel to "honor its commitments" and immediately stop what they described as interference with UNRWA's operations. The statement, signed by the UK, France, Germany, Canada, Italy, Spain, Japan, and other countries, reaffirmed their support for UNRWA and argued that Israel's entry into the facilities was illegal. They said UN facilities are protected under international law and called on Israel to allow UNRWA to carry out its work without obstruction. In response, the Israeli Foreign Ministry said: "Your facts are wrong. You support an organization that is a breeding ground for terrorism, and you prefer to attack Israel with baseless accusations instead of acting for the benefit of Arab children in Kafr Akab. This is a disgrace." The ministry also pointed to a report by the USAID Office of Inspector General, which US President Donald Trump referenced on Thursday, August 27, concluding that more than 100 UNRWA employees participated in the October 7 Hamas attack. (JPost/VFI News)

Finland to End Funding for UNRWA; Israel Welcomes the Decision; Finland will stop providing financial support to UNRWA once its existing funding agreement with the United Nations agency for Palestinian refugees expires, the government announced on Thursday, August 27. Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Ville Tavio of the Finns Party said he had decided not to approve additional funding for the agency. Finland currently provides UNRWA with €5 million annually under an agreement covering 2023 through 2026. Tavio said Finnish assistance to Palestinian Authority-assigned territories will continue at the same overall level, but will be distributed through other organizations. "The level of funding will not decrease, but it will be provided through other channels, such as the World Food Programme," he said. Israel welcomed the Finnish decision. In a statement released on Friday, August 28,

the Foreign Ministry said, "Israel welcomes Finland's decision to end its multi-year funding for UNRWA. It is good to see more countries recognizing the undeniable truth in light of the conclusive evidence of UNRWA employees' involvement in the October 7 massacre and UNRWA's inseparable links to Hamas." The ministry added, "UNRWA is a hotbed of terrorism. It is part of the problem, not part of the solution." (INN/VFI News)

Four Plead Guilty to Burning Four Ambulances Owned by a London Jewish Charity; Four young men admitted in a UK court on Friday, August 28, that they were behind a March arson attack in London that destroyed four ambulances owned by the Jewish charity Hatzola that were parked outside a synagogue. British nationals Hamza Iqbal, 20, Rehan Khan, 19, Judex Atshatshi, 18, and British-Pakistani Saif Ali, 18, all pleaded guilty to criminal damage linked to the attack on Monday, March 23, 2026, in the Golders Green neighborhood, home to a significant Jewish population. Three of the men set fire to the ambulances while the fourth waited in a getaway car. The arsonists destroyed four ambulance vehicles, causing damage valued at £1 million (\$1.4 million). Iqbal, Khan, and Atshatshi entered their pleas by video link, while Ali, wearing a white shirt, was present in the dock at London's Old Bailey central criminal court. The men were remanded in custody and are expected to be sentenced in spring 2027. Defense lawyers denied charges that the four defendants had any "terrorism" connections to groups proscribed in the UK. A fifth defendant, Subhan Ahmed, 18, pleaded not guilty to assisting an offender and is due to go on trial at the Old Bailey in January 2027. (TOI/VFI News)

Former Hostage Omer Shem Tov: 'In Hamas Tunnels I Surrendered to God and Found Light in the Darkness'; More than eighteen months after returning from Hamas captivity, former hostage Omer Shem Tov has chosen to tell his story in a different way. In a video interview, he explained that rather than documenting the horrors he endured, his new book, "Meeting Myself in Hell," explores an internal journey: a choice to embrace life, faith, and hope. The book was born only after much hesitation. "I didn't want to publish yet another book by a hostage," he admits. "I told myself there would soon be an entire shelf of hostage books, and I didn't want to be just another one on that shelf. Eventually, I realized that I didn't just want to tell people what happened to me. I wanted to talk about how you can rise from the darkness and find light within it." One of the most painful chapters deals with the sense of responsibility he carries for his friends Maya and Itay, whom he convinced to come to the Nova festival. "Maya was my best friend. I was the one who convinced her to come to the festival, and Itay decided to come because of her. Knowing that they ended up there, were wounded and kidnapped because of me was incredibly difficult. Neither of them ever blamed me, but deep down, it's a feeling that is very hard to let go of." That sense of responsibility also stays with him when he meets families of fallen IDF soldiers and wounded troops who fought during the war. "There are people who went into hell to save me. Some were seriously wounded, and some never came back," he said. "When wounded soldiers tell me, 'I would do it another thousand times,' it shakes me. It's hard to comprehend that someone was willing to pay such a price for you." (INN/VFI News)

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