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**1. Steigende Kriegsgefahr an der israelisch-libanesischen Grenze**

*Lange ließ die Reaktion auf den verheerenden Hizbollah-Raketenangriff, bei dem zwölf Kinder und Jugendliche in dem drusischen Dorf Majd al-Shams auf den Golanhöhen getötet und viele weitere verletzt wurden, nicht auf sich warten. Bei einem gezielten israelischen Angriff kam zuerst der Libanese Fuad Shukr, ein enger Berater von Hizbollah-Chef Hassan Nazrallah, in Beirut zu Tode. Kurz darauf starb Hamas-Politbürochef Ismail Haniyeh in Teheran, was ebenfalls Israel zugeschrieben wird. Damit wächst die Gefahr eines möglichen Krieges zwischen Israel und der mit Iran verbündeten libanesisch-schiitischen Terrororganisation Hizbollah. Iran kündigte bereits einen harten Gegenschlag an. Zudem sinken die Chancen auf eine baldige Lösung für die in den Gazastreifen verschleppten Geiseln. Haniyeh führte für die Hamas die Verhandlungen, um eine weitere Feuerpause und den Austausch von Geiseln für palästinensische Häftlinge zu erreichen. Die diplomatischen Anstrengungen, um eine Ausweitung der seit Monaten andauernden Gefechte an der israelisch-libanesischen Grenze zu verhindern, wurden insbesondere von Seiten der USA intensiviert. Ein Krieg hätte für den Libanon wie auch für Israel katastrophale Folgen.*

**No illusions about Hezbollah's response to high-ranking general's assassination**

The defense establishment had no illusions about Hezbollah's reaction to the assassination of Muhammad Neamah Nasser, one of the senior generals of the Lebanese terror organization, also known by his call sign Abu Neamah (...). Indeed, Hezbollah spared no effort: over 200 rockets and drones were launched, resulting in the death of a reservist and forcing tens of thousands of civilians in non-evacuated communities into shelters. (...) one might question whether the assassination was necessary and what benefits it yielded compared to the costs, especially at this sensitive time on all fronts. Abu Neamah was indeed a highly influential and experienced commander, a "knowledge hub," as intelligence documents describe him and his peers. Yet (...) Abu Neamah is no Imad Mughniyeh, Soleimani or Nasrallah himself. The organization's role will not be affected by his death, despite its inherent value. Was the price worth it? Highly doubtful. (...) Despite the rising smoke on both sides of the border suggesting otherwise, the option of a truce remains preferred by both Israel and Hezbollah, though much depends on developments in the southern arena. (...)

Yossi Yehoshua, YED, 06.07.24

### **What I Learned in Beirut About How to Halt an Israel-Hezbollah War**

A visit to Lebanon (...) I had hoped, would help me better understand the prospects of war between Israel and Hezbollah. But it didn't. (...) The situation is so fluid along the Israel-Lebanon borders that it has frustrated even the most seasoned analysts and practitioners. (...) even if a ceasefire in Gaza is reached, and Hezbollah terminates its operations, Israel may not accept the new status quo on its northern frontier. Some 60,000 Israelis have been evacuated from their homes along the northern border since soon after the October 7 Hamas attack, with no path to return until their safety is fully assured. But going to war against Hezbollah to address the perceived threat it poses will come with an extraordinarily heavy and unprecedented price for both Israel and Lebanon. This approach has backfired in the past, and most likely will again today. Hezbollah boasts capabilities far more powerful than those of Hamas, and (...) won't fight alone. The Houthis, Iraqi militias, and possibly Iran will lend their support. So, by going after Hezbollah, Israel could trigger a catastrophic, regional conflict. The best it can do is temporarily degrade Hezbollah but at a very high cost. (...) both Netanyahu and Nasrallah are stuck in an escalating war of words (...) and the only way to get out of this combustible spiral is by establishing new facts on the ground that can show both men's allies and constituencies a political win or diplomatic achievement, even if it is imperfect (...) right now, Washington (...) must show that it is laying the groundwork for implementing a new, more robust UN Resolution 1701 by providing material and financial assistance to the Lebanese army to assume its new responsibilities, by forging international consensus on a beefed-up UNIFIL, and by pushing Israel to agree to a ceasefire in Gaza - reports that Hamas updated Hezbollah Friday it had agreed to a proposal for a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip is an encouraging sign - and abide by the new rules of an arms control agreement.

Bilal Y. Saab, HAA, 09.07.24

### **Bleeding children on the soccer pitch and the abandonment of the North**

The image is unbearable and heart-wrenching. Children, dressed in sports uniforms, who just moments ago were running on the field after the ball, shouting at each other, are now lying on the grass, injured, bleeding, dead. This is the picture of the abandonment by the Israeli government and its leader of the North. (...) It abandoned it decades

earlier, pushing it to the end of the line in health services, education, welfare, infrastructure, and protection. Far from the eye, the funds, and the heart. (...) The horror pictures from Majdal Shams must crack the unbearable conception of the North. (...) If the Israeli government cannot go to war in Lebanon - because of the campaign in Gaza, the hostage deal that is not happening, the arrangements for the day after, or any other excuse - it should hurry and immediately evacuate all the civilians from there. If they cannot be evacuated, place protected spaces everywhere. (...)

Liat Ron, JPO, 28.07.24

### **The Druze Tragedy**

(...) These are difficult days for all Druze communities in the Middle East. We are peaceful and patriotic people in any country we live in yet we always pay the highest prices in every war. (...) The outpouring patriotism of the Druze in Israel was used by Hizballah against the Druze of Lebanon. (...) The Druze situation in every country became a major indicator of the stability of these countries. Although they don't exceed a few percent of the population in each country the Druze always plays a political part greater than their size. In Israel, Syria, and Lebanon there are Druze generals in the military. They always push for a strong stable central government and oppose violence and aggression. Sadly, the influence of the Druze in the three countries has been weakening in the three countries as their central government is weakening. Iran and its proxy groups are using this window of opportunity to destabilize the whole region. Terror organizations became terror armies equipped with the best weapons and the most extreme ideologies. The Druze story was always tragic since the community lives on both sides of the Arab - Israeli conflict. For the last 80 years, we have not met our relatives in the different countries. Our patriotism and pride prevented us from even talking about this sad situation but this massacre in Majdal Shams opened this wound again. (...)

Reda Mansour, TOI, 28.07.24

### **How will Israel retaliate following Hezbollah's deadly rocket attack?**

(...) The main problem to be presented to the ministers is that no one in the IDF can guarantee that an Israeli response won't lead to an escalation that could result in a full-scale war within days, reversing the focus from Gaza to Lebanon. (...) In the Northern Command, there are no plans to

evacuate additional settlements near the border like Nahariya or Ma'alot, but the readiness at bases in the north and in the Air Force will be at its peak, on top of the high alert of recent times. (...) Until now, Israel has deliberately avoided attacking Lebanese civilian infrastructure indirectly used by Hezbollah, such as key bridges, central highways, power stations, and sea and air ports. Bombing such a target would signal the Beirut government, already fragile due to the sectarian division in the war-torn country, that it's time to rein in Hezbollah before all citizens—Maronites, Shiites, and Druze alike—suffer the consequences, following years of severe economic crisis. (...) The dilemma in the Northern Command is complex and daily, as certain strikes could expose intelligence sources. In a terror army with an arsenal of over 100,000 rockets across Lebanon, hundreds to thousands of precision missiles, tens of thousands of anti-tank missiles, and thousands of drones, it's a risky calculation made every day in planning strikes (...).  
Yoav Zitun, YED, 29.07.24

#### **How Do You Eulogize 12 Children All at Once?**

(...) A heavy, Iranian-made Falaq rocket, fired by Hezbollah, is all it took to transform Majdal Shams (...) into a fatal disaster area. (...) Children are the first to pay the price for wars. Everywhere. In Syria, in Iraq, in Ukraine, in Israel and in Gaza. (...) How do you eulogize 12 children all at once? (...) Families gathered outside Majdal Shams' "Sham" community center. Young people in black shirts. Most stood quietly amid a pall of silence. All were waiting for an announcement on funeral for 11 of the 12 children. (...) It's difficult to put into words the hours of terror (...). Majdal Shams distills every parent's deepest fear. (...) The writing was on the wall. The sense of abandonment is deep and painful, and is present in the eyes of parents who lost their children (...). Hezbollah is Iran's military arm. (...) But the Netanyahu government is also responsible for this tragedy. This is the price of having no diplomatic horizon and of a war that is dragging on for month after month. This time, it's the children of Majdal Shams who have paid the price. The great tragedy is that children and parents will go on paying the price for their abandonment by failed leaders on both sides – out of touch and cowardly, hiding behind 50 kilograms of explosives or more.  
Sheren Falah Saab, HAA, 29.07.24

#### **World on edge: How will Iran respond to Haniyeh assassination?**

Now, following the audacious assassination of Haniyeh, the Iranians will seek a more severe reaction against Israel to reassert their deterrence and restore their national honor. The question is what form this response will take. Should it lead to a full-scale confrontation involving Israel, Iran and Hezbollah, the Islamic Republic, which is closer than ever to nuclear capability, might find its nuclear project bearing the brunt of the repercussions. And perhaps, just perhaps, this thought will make the Iranians reconsider their response to Israel multiple times over. (...) The assassination is a significant moral blow to Hamas, especially considering the recent string of eliminations against the organization's leadership. One after another, top officials from the military wing (...) and the political wing (...) are being systematically eliminated in what appears to be Israeli operations. (...) Hamas is also vulnerable and fragile. (...) The relationship between Sinwar and Haniyeh had been reasonable over the years. Both are natives of the Gaza Strip and sought to neutralize competitors within the Hamas leadership abroad or in the West Bank (...). Yet, it should be remembered, Haniyeh was and remains a politician who over the years became corrupt and indulgent. He aspired to be the Palestinian president one day and despite disconnecting from Gaza and moving to a life of luxury in Qatar, he still enjoyed immense support among the Palestinian public. He was considered within Hamas to be a pragmatist compared to Sinwar and Deif, yet on October 7 he made sure to be photographed praying and thanking Allah for the massacre of Jews. (...)  
Avi Issacharoff, YED, 31.07.24

#### **Assassinations in Iran and Lebanon Have Pushed the Mideast to the Edge of a Regional War**

Shukr and Haniyeh are the two most senior Hezbollah and Hamas figures killed since Hamas launched the war (...). Both attacks attest to a skillful level of planning, intelligence gathering and execution; and are both directed at the country that supports and operates the organizations behind the scenes: Iran. (...) We may be on the verge of another escalation in the war, one that could lead to a larger regional conflict. (...) These latest developments exposed the Iranian axis' vulnerability. After the most recent assassinations (...) Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah and Hamas' leader in Gaza, Yahya Sinwar, find themselves almost alone at the top. Haniyeh's death is expected to have a negative impact on talks for a hostage deal, which

have all but hit an impasse since Israel toughened its stance. (...) Haniyeh is the second Hamas leader residing abroad to be assassinated, after Saleh al-Arouri was killed in a January strike in Beirut. In the Gaza Strip itself, Mohammed Deif was probably killed earlier this month. Before that, Israel assassinated Hamas' top military commander Marwan Issa, and three out of five Hamas Gaza divisions commanders. Haniyeh has a higher public profile than the other target, aside from Deif, and Israel is bracing for revenge attacks in the West Bank following his death. (...) It was clear that the attack on the Golan Heights – the deadliest strike since the war began – warranted a firm response. (...) Shukr was in charge of Hezbollah's strategic array of long-range missiles, aerial defense and the "precision project" of upgraded rockets. (...) Hezbollah's response will most likely stem from Shukr's fate. (...) From Hezbollah's perspective, the Israeli attack is probably also perceived as crossing a red line, and an incident that warrants a retaliation. (...) It seems that the alternate path – securing a hostage release and cease-fire deal in Gaza, followed by expedited U.S. efforts to quell the flames in the north – has hit a dead end. (...)

Amos Harel, HAA, 31.07.24

## **2. Netanyahus Rede vor dem US-Kongress**

*Wegen einer lange geplanten Veranstaltung in Indianapolis war die designierte Präsidentschaftskandidatin der Demokratischen Partei, US-Vizepräsidentin Kamala Harris, bei der Rede von Israels Regierungschef Benjamin Netanyahu vor dem Kongress nicht anwesend. Netanyahu besuchte die USA zu einem Zeitpunkt deutlich angespannter bilateralen Beziehungen. Politische Beobachter\_innen gehen allerdings davon aus, dass Harris, sollte sie US-Präsidentin werden, mit Blick auf den Nahen Osten und Israel keine deutlich andere Linie als der derzeitige US-Präsident verfolgen wird. Im Verlauf der Münchener Sicherheitskonferenz Anfang des Jahres hatte sie die Verpflichtung ihres Landes, Israel in Sicherheitsfragen zur Seite zu stehen, wiederholt sowie Israels Recht zur Selbstverteidigung betont und gefordert, dass die im Gazastreifen festgehaltenen Geiseln umgehend auf freien Fuß kommen müssten. Harris hat allerdings auch schon scharfe Kritik an der israelischen Kriegsführung und den hohen Opferzahlen im Gazastreifen geübt. Netanyahu kam zu separaten Gesprächen mit Biden und Harris sowie mit Ex-Präsident Trump zusammen. Der israelische Regierungschef hat sich*

*in der Vergangenheit wiederholt sehr deutlich auf die Seite der US-Republikaner\_innen geschlagen.*

## **Biden's legacy and Netanyahu's missed moment?**

(...) If Biden no longer needs to focus on the campaign, can he do something to enhance his legacy before the end of his term? Moreover, could this intersect with Netanyahu's visit? (...) there is no doubt that for Biden, a self-proclaimed lifelong Zionist, peace between the Jewish state and Saudi Arabia, the most powerful Arab state and guardian of the two holiest cities in Islam, would be a crowning accomplishment. (...) Netanyahu has often claimed isolating Iran as an organizing principle of his premiership. Yet, with the chance to advance just such a deal in his speech to Congress, it is a tragic irony that Netanyahu is likely to miss the moment due to Israeli domestic politics and fear of his far-right coalition partners. (...) The need to isolate Iran has never been clearer for those seeking stability in the Middle East. (...) The Houthi drone strike in Tel Aviv (...) is a stark reminder that Iran is orchestrating the regional effort against Israel. (...) The Kingdom's strongest reason for seeking peace with Israel is the instrumental political value of linking it to what Riyadh wants most: a US-Saudi defense treaty to safeguard against an Iranian attack. (...) time is short. Once Biden exits the stage, will the window of Saudi normalization with Israel be closed? (...)

David Makovsky, TOI, 22.07.24

## **A Zionist at heart: Biden, your support for Israel will not be forgotten**

(...) US president Joe Biden (...) has openly and proudly described himself as a Zionist, which is not to be taken for granted. (...) The past 50 years aside, there have been rocks and bumps along the way these last nine months. (...) Though his support was strong, there were moments, especially as the election race kicked in, where it seemed like personal political considerations were driving a wedge between Biden and that support, something critics picked up on quite fast. The noise made around the one weapons shipment that was held up, jibes back and forth regarding flexibility on a hostage deal, and apparent pauses in communication between Biden and Netanyahu did not help. All of this especially does not help Israel from a security perspective. (...) His position, right now and for the next six months, is that of a lame duck president, which means that any heat on closing a hostage deal and coalescing a united strong front against Iran will be shaken be-

cause of the change in leadership. The hostage deal has been standing on eggshells anyway – and the Iran threat, mostly through its proxies, continues to stand strong. (...) Though not all American Jews or Israelis agreed with all of his recent actions in the Middle East, Biden is a Zionist at heart in a way that is very much not a given these days – not in global leadership and not necessarily even within the throes of the Democratic Party, certainly not to this degree. For that, we say, todah – thanks.  
Editorial, JPO, 23.07.24

### **Netanyahu's speech was masterful - and flawed**

Benjamin Netanyahu (...) knows how to talk to the American public effectively; his speeches before the U.S. Congress are his crowning achievements. For him, a speech in Congress is a celebration. A guaranteed political success. A rise in the polls is all but assured. (...) His speech was smooth, catchy, and successful in every media aspect. (...) As a rhetorical master, Netanyahu delivered blow after blow: the climax was when he attacked and mocked pro-Palestinian protesters, comparing LGBTQ Hamas supporters to "chickens for KFC." It was a display of personal power; however, something was missing from it. A detail that Americans might fail to notice, but Israelis would understand immediately. They hear about hostages being killed or murdered almost daily, receive reports and recordings of the endless horrors of October 7, and feel the heavy burden of a country plunged into war due to a surprise enemy attack. One thing was missing from Netanyahu's otherwise very successful speech: the heavy load of a leader who had failed. (...) Where was this speech in relation to the abandoned northern border, a drone exploding in Tel Aviv, or the hostages' families being violently arrested during their protests? (...)

Nadav Eyal, YED, 25.07.24

### **Kamala Harris's absence from Netanyahu's Congressional address: A bad start**

Custom dictates that when foreign leaders address a joint session of Congress, the Speaker of the House and the vice president sit behind them on the rostrum. (...) Vice President Kamala Harris was not in that seat during Netanyahu's address. That (...) is a bad look and a problematic first signal on Israel in her position as presumptive presidential nominee. (...) Harris must know that everything she says and does now will be carefully scrutinized. (...) since the beginning of the war, she has (...) made some problematic comments regarding Israel. Herzog said that

overall, however, her record on Israel is positive. (...) By attending Netanyahu's speech in the vice president's role as president of the senate, Harris would have sent one message. By not attending, she sent another. It's a bad start.  
Editorial, JPO, 25.07.24

### **Netanyahu, a speech isn't enough to fix a country**

If only Benjamin Netanyahu managed the country as well as he spoke. (...) Netanyahu received resounding standing ovations, was met by thunderous applause upon entering and leaving the hall, and had a delivery that was full of charisma, suspense, and passion. It was a speech for the books. (...) It was a speech meant to highlight the brutality of Hamas's attack on October 7 but also the courage and heroism of Israel's soldiers. (...) He leaned forward at the right parts, put his hand in his pocket for others, placed his hands on the podium to make a point, and banged his fist for effect as needed. (...) The speech had everything except one key section that was missing – a vision for Israel. (...) Again, just slogans of complete victory and Hamas's elimination. Regarding the hostages, the situation was worse. (...) Netanyahu might have told Congress that he wouldn't rest, but even during this monumental speech, the clock was running out for the hostages. And in the end, as good a speech as it was, it was still just a speech. (...)

Yaakov Katz, JPO, 26.07.24

### **Israel's Political Reality Was Removed From the Hall During Netanyahu's Deceptive Congress Address**

While Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was addressing a joint session of Congress this week, at least three relatives of hostages were removed from the hall, handcuffed and arrested. (...) Not half an hour after the speech ended, we learned that the bodies of five hostages had been located and extracted from Khan Yunis (...). Israel's political reality was also left outside the hall – namely, the government's composition and the dangerous far-right winds that are blowing over Netanyahu's Israel, the radical Judaism that sees October 7 as an opportunity to realize the dream of Jewish control over the entire Land of Israel: apartheid from the Nile to the Euphrates. (...) Netanyahu also lost any connection to reality when he spoke about postwar arrangements in the Gaza Strip. In his view, Israel will retain security control of Gaza, while Palestinians "who do not seek to destroy Israel" will manage its civilian

affairs. This is a diplomatic delusion. (...) We must not let the sound of the applause drown out the bitter reality. (...)  
Editorial, HAA, 26.07.24

### **3. IGH erklärt Besatzung im Westjordanland für unrechtmäßig**

*Laut einem Gutachten des Internationalen Gerichtshofs in Den Haag (IGH) ist die seit knapp 60 Jahren andauernde israelische Besatzung im Westjordanland unrechtmäßig. Ebenso verstoße Israels Siedlungspolitik gegen internationales Recht. Israel mache sich faktisch der Annektierung schuldig. Zwar ist das Gutachten rechtlich nicht bindend, dennoch ist zu erwarten, dass der internationale politische Druck auf die Regierung von Benjamin Netanyahu weiter steigen wird. Es ist das zweite Rechtsgutachten des IGH zur Besatzungspolitik Israels. 2004 hatten die Richter\_innen bereits erklärt, dass die im Westjordanland von Israel errichteten Trennanlagen gegen internationales Recht verstoßen und abgerissen werden müssen, was bis heute nicht passiert ist. Informationen der Organisation „Frieden Jetzt“ zufolge erklärte Israel unlängst ein Gebiet im Umfang von 12,7 Quadratkilometern im Westjordanland zu Staatsland, um weitere Siedlungen in den besetzten Gebieten errichten zu können. Es handele sich dabei um die größte Landnahme seit Herbst 1993. Immer wieder kommt es zu gewalttätigen Auseinandersetzungen zwischen Siedler\_innen und Palästinenser\_innen sowie auch im Verlauf von Razzien der israelischen Armee.*

#### **Judea and Samaria are literally on fire**

Reading the international press, and reading much of the overwhelmingly left-wing Israeli press, you inevitably get the impression that the threats to stability in Judea and Samaria stem from "settler violence" and settlement housing starts. You wouldn't know, couldn't know much, about the real sources of instability – which are escalating Palestinian terrorism, surging illegal Palestinian construction in zones of strategic importance to Israel, and wildly out-of-control arson attacks. The arson attacks in particular have become a central tool in the terrorist assault on Jewish life in Judea and Samaria (the "West Bank"). Here is a reminder of some basic facts. (...) Israel has been forced to eliminate (...) terrorist groups, requiring nightly interdiction raids by IDF commandos with heavy engineering and air strike support. (...) are the multiple brush and forest

fires persistently being lit every day in Judea and Samaria by Palestinian terrorists in an attempt to literally smoke Israeli farmers, ranchers, and settlers out of the area. (...) every single day, Palestinians and their extreme left-wing Israeli anarchist allies torch the grazing grounds of cattle in the central Binyamin and Samaria highlands where pioneering Israelis have established a string of some 100 ranches (..); or as Western media and hostile NGOs call them, "wildcat settler outposts." (...) And in the face of exaggerated reports of "settler violence" and crassly misreported stories of settler "land grabs" – well, the reality of Palestinian terrorist violence and belligerence does not stand a chance of grabbing anybody's attention in Tel Aviv, Washington, or Brussels.

David M. Weinberg, IHY, 07.07.24

#### **The Silent West Bank Settlers Are More Than Complicit in Violence Against Palestinians**

(...) The settlers aren't just silent in the face of this crime; they're encouraging it. The war of annihilation their representatives in the Knesset and cabinet are waging to free the criminals from the settlements of the threat of administrative detention; their cursing of officers (...) all of the above are not merely what one would expect of elected officials who see nationalist crime as a legitimate and even necessary tool for implementing their vision of Israeli control over the entire Land of Israel. It also relies on the active silence of the settlers, that "vast majority" who are "law-abiding citizens." This silence grants support and encouragement to nationalist crime (...). It also conceals the dangerous lie at the heart of the distinction between the lawbreaking minority and the normative majority, a lie meant to hide the fact that the settlements – all of them – are illegal. They are gross violations of international law. It's not just the wildcat outposts or the land-grabbing farms (...); the same is true of veteran settlements like Kiryat Arba, Ariel and Efrat. But thanks to that violent criminal minority, residents of the other settlements benefit from the illusion that they are law-abiding. (...) Soon dozens of new settlements will arise, properly funded by the government, and their residents will join that "vast majority" who are "law-abiding citizens."

Zvi Bar'el, HAA, 09.07.24

#### **Our demand for the right to settle in our land is legal**

(...) Once again, it has become clear that Jewish settlement is our protective barrier. As Machiavelli wrote, territory cannot be held solely by military

force. The army enters, operates, and exits; the moment it leaves (or even while it is present), the situation reverts to its original state. (...) We extended our hand for peace, purchasing peace with Egypt and Jordan at a full price, and did everything possible to secure peace with our immediate neighbors - the Palestinian Arabs. (...) from the Gaza Strip. International law did not compel us to sign these agreements or withdraw from Gaza; it was our hope that the establishment of the Palestinian Authority would end the conflict. (...) Instead of turning Gaza into a thriving, independent Singapore, we received the most severe blow to the Jewish people since the Holocaust. (...) The legality of Jewish settlement in Old Jerusalem and Judea, Samaria, and Gaza stems from the status of these territories in international law, which recognizes the historical connection between the Jewish people and the Land of Israel as the basis for re-establishing our national home. (...) The Jewish people yearn for true peace. Opponents of settlement who insist on calling the territories "occupied" do so out of an unfounded wish that Israel will bring peace closer this way, or because they believe the world will not accept otherwise. (...)

Talia Einhorn, IHY, 18.07.24

### **ICJ's Decision on the Occupation Goes Beyond Israel's Worst Fears**

(...) the International Court of Justice's ruling on Israel's occupation or administration in the West Bank and East Jerusalem is an unpleasant and dangerous statement. In fact, it probably eclipsed Israel's worst-case-scenario fears in that it demands that Israel end the occupation as quickly as possible, an occupation that the court deems illegal. (...) in fact, Israel's entire presence in the West Bank is illegal, the court opined. (...) the decision isn't legally binding (...). Still, the decision carries substantial political consequences, especially against the backdrop of the war in Gaza and crucial world opinion about Israel's prosecution of the war. The opinion further undermines Israel's basic arguments about the nature of its relationship with the West Bank and East Jerusalem. Individual countries, banks, pension funds and multinational corporations might use the opinion to expand sanctions against individuals, settlements, organizations and Israeli companies. More ominously, the court's ruling is bound to have an effect on the International Criminal Court, the sister court in The Hague that is considering further accusations of genocide and war crimes against Israel. It might issue warrants against more officials

than just the prime minister and the defense minister. (...) the court essentially armed countries, institutions and corporations with reasoned justification not only to admonish Israel, but to penalize it. No one thinks that this ruling will trigger a policy overhaul or political awakening. But the knee-jerk pontifications, condemnations and derision in Israel are equally unfeasible. The entire world may be wrong, sure, but ignoring it isn't policy or moral posture. It's the lack of them.

Alon Pinkas, HAA, 19.07.24

### **ICJ opinion was Israel's worst case scenario**

The opinion published (...) by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) was the worst outcome officials in Jerusalem feared the most. They estimated the chances that the court would accuse Israel of apartheid, to be low and thought there may not even be a call for sanctions to be imposed on Israel. But the opinion was the most extreme, even to the point of absurdity, in some respects and that may ultimately work in Israel's favor. (...) The ICJ determined that Israel must leave the West Bank and East Jerusalem. It must remove all "settlers" from East Jerusalem, when in fact hundreds of thousands of Israelis live in what is part of the capital, as do others in other sectors of the city, in Tel Aviv or any other Israeli town – under Israel's laws. (...) It said Israel must return all lands and assets in the territories to the Palestinians and even compensate them financially. (...) The ICJ also said the Palestinians must be given the right to self-determination and the UN must work toward the establishment of an independent Palestinian state alongside Israel. The practical meaning is that the Oslo Accords would be annulled and there is, therefore, no need for negotiations or agreements between Israel and the Palestinians. (...) The ICJ opinion could cause Israel to adopt more extreme policies and lose any confidence it still had in the UN. The decision is the final nail in the coffin of Israel's relations with the ICJ and the International Criminal Court (...).

Itamar Eichner, YED, 19.07.24

### **The UN World Court war against the Jews**

(...) The Court is the "World Court" of the United Nations, a body controlled by an entrenched anti-Israel majority. (...) The man who read the non-binding "opinion" aloud to the world (...) was ICJ President Nawaf Salam. Salam is a Lebanese politician (...). The question posed by the hostile mob was framed as: Israel is guilty of the following violations of international law, so what are the conse-

quences? (...) There were no Palestinian violations of anything on the agenda. (...) Among the results, this grotesque kangaroo court said Israel was guilty of the crime against humanity of apartheid. (...) The case also calls for the ethnic cleansing of Jews from whatever land Palestinian Arabs and the UN say belongs to Palestinians. (...) a mere 75 years after the Holocaust, the UN Court twisted the laws written in response to the atrocities committed against Jews, to demonize the refuge of the Jewish people. The Court purported to use the law addressing the Nazi's criminal deportation of Jews from their homes to concentration camps as a means to criminalize the voluntary movement of Jews within the land of Israel. This isn't law. It is war by another name. It's the contorted face of modern antisemitism. (...) The so-called "peace process" is dead, killed off by alleged peace-loving UN judges. From now on, Palestinians have zero incentive to negotiate anything or finally accept the legitimacy of a Jewish state. (...) Professor Anne Bayefsky, TOI, 20.07.24

#### **The ICJ is using a political escape routes to avoid calling Israel out on apartheid**

The International Court of Justice in The Hague (...) calls, among other things, for Israel to immediately halt the settlement enterprise and cease illegal activities in the territories. It also calls on the international community, including states and the UN, to work toward ending the occupation. The opinion suggests (...) that the discrimination in the treatment of Israeli citizens (settlers) and Palestinians in the territories could amount to apartheid or unlawful segregation. The advisory opinion also determines that Israel must compensate all those harmed. (...) the court refrained from explicitly declaring the occupation itself illegal, addressing in its decision the illegal activities Israel conducts as an occupying power contrary to international humanitarian law, particularly the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949. (...) To calm international community tensions, Israel will need to find the right path that balances essential security needs with better adherence to the rights of the Palestinian population. After the hostilities in Gaza will decrease and all hostages are returned, a way must be found to resume negotiations for an actual solution. Failure to do so could worsen Israel's already fragile standing in the international community and increase international pressure for economic and security sanctions against Israel. (...) Ido Rosenzweig, JPO, 22.07.24

#### **4. Krieg im Gazastreifen**

*Bei den indirekten Verhandlungen über eine Feuerpause im Gazastreifen und einen weiteren Austausch von Geiseln gegen palästinensische Häftlinge schien zeitweise eine Einigung zwischen Israel und der islamistischen Terrororganisation Hamas näher zu rücken. Differenzen bestanden noch bezüglich des Philadelphi-Korridors, des rund 14 Kilometer langen Streifens entlang der Grenze zu Ägypten. Israel beharrt darauf, die Kontrolle über das Grenzgebiet zu behalten. Zudem will sich Regierungschef Benjamin Netanyahu das Recht vorbehalten, nach einer Feuerpause die Kämpfe wieder aufzunehmen. Von seinem seit Beginn des Krieges festgelegten Ziel der kompletten Zerschlagung der Hamas will der israelische Premierminister nicht ablassen. Die Hoffnung auf eine baldige Lösung für die in den Gazastreifen verschleppten Menschen wurde allerdings mit dem tödlichen Anschlag auf den Hamas-Politbürochef Ismail Haniyeh gedämpft. Bereits zuvor war es dem israelischen Militär gelungen, Mohammad Deif, den Kopf des militärischen Hamas-Flügels zu töten. Deif hatte in der Vergangenheit wiederholte Versuche, ihn zu liquidieren, überlebt.*

#### **Just say yes! A hostage deal is closer than ever**

We are closer than ever to a real deal to get the hostages home. (...) Thousands of Israelis wake up to another day of fighting for loved ones held in tunnels underneath the sands of Gaza. Thousands of displaced Israelis wake up in temporary homes, not knowing when they will be able to go home again. We are all held hostage, trapped in a world of uncertainty and pain. (...) Mr. Prime Minister, you have the power to make a deal. You wanted power – you've got it! You are the one with the power to relieve at least some of the misery of millions of Israelis. We are the people who elected you. We are the people who pay for your lifestyle. We are the people you are in office to serve. Serve us now, Mr. Prime Minister. Sign the deal. Just say yes. (...) Nili Bresler, TOI, 07.07.24

#### **Where hostage negotiations stand and Israel's non-negotiables**

(...) Here's what we know and what could still derail the chances for an agreement: The deal consists of three phases, each lasting 42 days, totaling 132 days of cease-fire. Phase one, the humanitarian phase, will see women hostages, female soldiers, the wounded, children and the elderly released in exchange for 600 prisoners named by Hamas, with



Israel having partial veto power. On day 16, negotiations for ending the war will begin and continue into the second phase. (...) In the second phase, Hamas will release male hostages, mostly young soldiers, estimated to be around 20, in exchange for prisoners released by Israel according to a yet-to-be-determined ratio. Negotiations for ending the war will continue. In the third phase, Hamas will return the remains of Israeli hostages in exchange for an undetermined number of Palestinian prisoners and possibly bodies. After 132 days, the temporary cease-fire will expire. Hamas demands a permanent cease-fire and an end to the current war, guaranteed by mediating countries, including the U.S. Hamas aims to prolong negotiations and retain some hostages, likely men, to ensure an end to the war. (...) IDF troops will remain along the Gaza-Egypt border and in the Netzarim corridor, though Hamas may demand their withdrawal. (...) The plan, approved by Israel (...) allows for the return of hostages without compromising other war objectives.

Ron Ben-Yishai, YED, 08.07.24

### **To Avoid Catastrophe, Netanyahu Must Not Delay Another Deal**

These are critical days before us. If Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu delays a deal with Hamas again, we will lose the hostages forever and be placed upon the precipice of a regional war that will exact heavy losses and destruction. It will be as if a nuclear bomb drops without the radioactive fallout. We continue fighting in Gaza, raiding territory we had already conquered over and over again. Purposeless raids that exact a price in blood. The Israel Defense Forces succeeds in destroying buildings but has not been able to stop Hamas, which survives in its tunnel city and has been restored to its pre-war ranks with young men who replaced the dead. The State of Israel cannot succeed in achieving even one of its war goals, because after cutting six divisions over the past 20 years it does not have the manpower to reoccupy the territories it has taken. Under the circumstances, Israel cannot defeat Hamas, and it is time to admit we lost. Continuing the fighting will not bring victory. On the contrary, Israel's defeat will be more painful. (...) The continued fighting in Gaza, which means continued fighting in the north, does not offer any solution. (...) Let's end the war in Gaza immediately. It will force Hezbollah to end its attacks and enable the hostages to be freed in a deal. It will also enable the army to rebuild and prepare for a regional

conflict. When the army is ready, it will be able to meet every challenge.

Yitzhak Brik, HAA, 09.07.24

### **Israel must prioritize hostages above all**

(...) Israelis are loath to think their prime minister would put personal political survival ahead of reaching a less-than-optimal deal that would free hostages who have been held in Gaza for over nine months now. (...) it's a sad situation in which many Israelis are unsure if their own government wants to reach a deal as much as Hamas does. It's clear Netanyahu's far-right flank does not want any deal (...). It's become increasingly clear that the twin objectives of freeing the hostages and ending Hamas's rule in Gaza cannot be both accomplished at the same time. (...) It would be a painful deal indeed for Israel, requiring the release of Palestinian terrorists from prison and, for the time being, enabling Hamas's weakened capabilities to remain intact. By stating the redlines up front, Netanyahu is boxing in Israel's position and minimizing the chances of actually arriving at a deal that is workable. (...) There must be no doubt that if the talks again fail, it's not because Netanyahu is letting his coalition partners turn the country's back on the hostages and their families for a fight that will continue indefinitely, but because Hamas is continuing its duplicitous ways of moving the goalposts and making new, impossible demands. Editorial, JPO, 09.97.24

### **The Philadelphi Corridor: A job only Israel can do**

For nearly 20 years, Hamas has smuggled enormous quantities of weapons and building materials through and under the Philadelphi Corridor, significantly advancing the construction of underground Gaza – the world's largest terror city, a modern-day Sodom. Anyone who still believes the Egyptians were unaware of this is deluding themselves. The Egyptians (...) under President Abdel Fattah el-Sissi (...) have taken some significant action against the tunnels (...). Before el-Sissi, but also during his tenure, cars, motorcycles, clothes, drugs, medicines, alcoholic beverages, and weapons were smuggled through the Philadelphi Corridor over the years, lots of weapons: improved RPG-29 rockets that killed our soldiers in the Iron Swords War, hidden rocket parts, machine guns, mines, and more. (...) The very thought of now erasing Egypt's sins and giving them a role again in overseeing the Philadelphi Corridor and Rafah

crossing is scandalous. Egypt bears significant responsibility for what happened in Philadelphi over the years, and even those who trust President el-Sissi now cannot guarantee that a new Mohamed Morsi from the Muslim Brotherhood won't rise to power in the future, as we saw happen in 2012 presidential elections in Egypt. (...)  
Nadav Shragai, IHY, 10.07.24

### **Deif's assassination would deal crushing blow to Hamas' military wing**

If Hamas' military chief Mohammed Deif was indeed killed in the strike in the Al-Mawasi area west of Khan Younis, it would be one of the most significant events in the war since it began more than nine months ago. (...) Deif stood above all, partly because he survived so many assassination attempts, and perhaps also due to his longevity. (...) But Deif stood out not only because he seemed to have nine lives like a cat but also because of his unique qualities. (...) Deif was both a field operative and a strategist, a military instructor, and a sort of supreme commander overseeing military procurement, training, intelligence and, of course, attacks and operations. This was despite suffering physical injuries from the various assassination attempts he survived. (...) His devious mind was behind the attack on October 7, but also the tunnels, rockets and more. He was the one who mapped out the "roadmap" for the military wing from its inception to the present day. He was responsible for transforming a small terror group into a trained terror army capable of capturing an Israeli settlement and holding hundreds of Israeli hostages. (...) If Deif was indeed liquidated, a successor will be appointed in the coming days. (...) Nevertheless, Hamas' military wing finds itself in a tough spot, with almost all of its senior leaders either eliminated or injured, and its leader hiding in one of Gaza's tunnels, likely surrounded by hostages. (...) the military wing is no longer operating as an organized, hierarchical entity. Its capabilities are degrading, and this trend will continue as long as the war persists. (...)  
Avi Issacharoff, YED, 13.07.24

### **Did Israel's Assassination Attempt in Gaza Kill the Hostage Deal? The Answer Lies in Qatar**

(...) If Deif was indeed killed this time, the key question now becomes how such an assassination will influence Hamas' behavior in the negotiations over a hostage deal. (...) In the wake of the attempted assassination, contradictory reactions emerged from Hamas on whether to continue with

the talks. (...) Meanwhile, however, new tensions have surfaced with Egypt. Cairo is angry at Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's repeated assertions about arms smuggling into Gaza from Egypt. Netanyahu has therefore emphasized the need for Israeli security control in the Philadelphi Corridor and the Rafah crossing. (...) Without a doubt, extremism is in the air. (...) Netanyahu receives the tightest security a prime minister has ever had from the Shin Bet. No attempt to harm him has occurred during the judicial overhaul controversy or during the Gaza war. By contrast, systematic violence by right-wingers against protesters and even against the families of the hostages has occurred. (...)  
Amos Harel, HAA, 15.07.24

### **If Netanyahu's Letting the Hostages Die Isn't a Red Line for Israelis, Nothing Will Be**

When will we shut down the economy, close down the stores and barricade the streets? What else needs to happen? (...) A society that holds the weak, the old, the disabled and the poor in contempt also has contempt for the hostages. The hostages are an obstacle to "total victory." They are the enemy in the civil war that is to follow. They are a human reminder of failure, and nobody likes it when their failures are waved in front of their faces. The thrill is gone. (...) Empathy and compassion have become hatred (...). When they are finished off in Gaza, we will breathe easy. (...) A weak society does not want to be reminded how weak it is. (...) Netanyahu wants the hostages dead. There's nothing in his personality or actions to indicate otherwise. (...) We gave up on democracy. (...) Why do we allow him to cross every red line we ever drew? (...) The man who endangered national security goes on endangering it (...).  
Yossi Klein, HAA, 21.07.24

### **The complexity of Israel's hostage predicament: balancing humanity and national security**

(...) the hostage predicament Israel finds itself in is complicated in that dozens of civilians, including babies, youngsters, and the elderly, are among those being held. They aren't soldiers who are expected to pay the ultimate price. (...) after a too brief hiatus during which the "Kaplan Force" crowd sought to distance itself from the public's reaction to their call for halting military service as a protest against the proposed judicial reform – their emotional prime-mover opposition to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has resurged. The "Brothers in Arms" group recreated itself as a volunteer group to

provide soldiers with clothes, food and even non-military equipment. But by the end of November, their drums and horns once again took the streets demanding elections and a state commission of inquiry. (...) The 116 hostages remaining, of whom at least 44 have died, should be released from the political rancor in which they have been caught up. Yisrael Medad, JPO, 25.07.24

## 5. Weitere Themen

### Angriff auf Tel Aviv aus dem Jemen

#### Israel showcases long-range strike capability, hits Houthi lifeline

The strike in Yemen demonstrates Israel's capability to conduct long-range operations with surprise. (...) The attacked Hodeidah port is strategically significant as it is nearly the sole lifeline for Houthi-controlled Yemen, providing their only major link for receiving and exporting goods. Humanitarian aid also flows through this port, making the Americans hesitant to strike it. The attack is expected to disrupt life in northwest Yemen, including the capital city of Sanaa. (...) As for Iran, it remains on the sidelines, although the IDF indicates a message in the strike, given the target's distance beyond parts of Iran. The Houthis do not coordinate every action with Tehran and have their own agenda. (...) Nonetheless, Iran significantly aids the Houthis with weaponry, especially for manufacturing drones. It is likely that today's strike also targeted drone-related sites. Ron Ben-Yishai, YED, 20.07.24

#### With Israel's First Ever Attack in Yemen, the War Takes a Dangerous New Turn Nine Months In

(...) This was the first time Israel struck in Yemen, after leaving military responses to previous Houthi attacks on it to the United States and the international coalition it led. (...). Israel strikes in Yemen were preceded by lengthy preparations by the air force, which has prepared for the possibility of striking Yemen since the Houthis first launched drones and missiles at Israel at the beginning of the war. The Houthis have launched about 220 aerial targets toward Israel to date. Many were intercepted by U.S. forces in the Red Sea, and some by Israeli fighter jets and air defense systems around the Gulf of Eilat. (...) Israel's defense establishment is aware that the chances of deterring the Houthis from further attacks are low. (...)

Amos Harel, HAA, 21.07.24

### Beginn der Rekrutierung ultraorthodoxer Männer

#### The boomerang effect: How anti-Haredi campaigns set Israel back

In Israel's charged political landscape, a new target has emerged: the ultra-Orthodox community. (...) public anger over military draft exemptions intensifies (...). Ironically, this push against ultra-Orthodox conscription comes at a time when Israeli society is experiencing a resurgence of traditional values. We're witnessing a broadening spectrum of religious observance, from Ashkenazi traditionalism to Sephardic customs, proving there's more than one way to make Kiddush. (...) In recent years, more ultra-Orthodox are enlisting, believing more in the state, and participating more in social processes and the job market. The ultra-Orthodox society went above and beyond since October 7. It takes a rare combination of stupidity and malice to turn good intentions into a civil war. (...) Linking military service with disrespect for the study hall (...) turns the issue into a battle between sectors (...). The campaign against the ultra-Orthodox is a boomerang that sets us back years. (...) The orchestrated campaign against the ultra-Orthodox (...) pushes away the day when change will mature. The dominant style of protest is violent and negates the possibility of thinking freely and engaging in genuine dialogue. You don't solve anything with violence. (...)

Moria Kor, IHY, 01.07.24

#### Haredim unwilling to draft are the new Zealots in Israel

(...) For haredi society, the state is, at best, a vehicle for just being in the land that God swore to our forefathers. In their mindset, haredim have never left exile; for them, learning Torah is their only raison d'être, and the secular state holds no ultimate value. (...) Non-haredim are willing to sacrifice everything for the state, the land, and the people of Israel. Haredim are willing to sacrifice everything to preserve their exilic world of Torah until the Messiah comes to redeem them. (...) There are all-haredi units where there is much less exposure to the "outside world" that is deemed so toxic to haredi society. Times are allocated for prayer and study, as the situation allows, and the standards of kashrut have been significantly raised. Could the army and the state do more to accommodate? Of course they could, but major steps have been taken. Sadly, the response from the haredi (...) is intransigence, sedition, and failure to consider any viewpoint other

than their own, which has characterized their leadership for decades, and which is so reminiscent of the Zealots of old – only without the violence. (...)  
Jonathan Lieberman, JPO, 24.07.24

HAA = Haaretz  
YED = Yedioth Ahronoth / Ynetnews  
JPO = Jerusalem Post  
IHY = Israel HaYom  
TOI = Times of Israel

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