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1. Blinken zu Gesprächen in Jerusalem und Ramallah

US-Außenminister Antony Blinken reiste mit der Hoffnung nach Israel und in die Palästinensergebiete, zu einer Deeskalation der angespannten Lage beitragen zu können. Bei Razzien im Westjordanland und Terror in Jerusalem war es erneut zu mehreren Toten gekommen. Israel reagierte auf die jüngsten Anschläge mit der Legalisierung sogenannter Siedlungs-Außenposten und unmittelbarer Bestrafung der Familien der Täter, darunter die Versiegelung ihrer Wohnhäuser. Zudem soll die Genehmigung von Waffenscheinen an Israelis künftig schneller vorstattengehen. Blinken kritisierte die israelische Siedlungspolitik und warnte vor unilateralen Schritten, die eine Zweistaatenlösung erschweren würden. Gleichzeitig forderte er in Ramallah Palästinenserpräsident Mahmud Abbas dazu auf, von seinem Vorhaben abzusehen, die Sicherheitskooperation mit Israel einzustellen. Gerade jetzt sei das Gegenteil nötig. Thema bei den Gesprächen zwischen Blinken und Israels Ministerpräsident Benjamin Netanyahu war auch die geplante umstrittene Justizreform in Israel, gegen die seit Wochen Hunderttausende israelischer Bürger_innen demonstrieren.

Abbas Wanted a Diplomatic Gesture. Blinken Offered a Cellular Network Upgrade
 (...) During Blinken's two-day visit to Israel and the West Bank this week, the Israeli conversation has

been focused on the plan by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Justice Minister Yariv Levin to weaken the judicial system, which the U.S. administration can influence to some degree, and, of course, on Iran. Without the attacks in Neve Yaakov and in Silwan, the Palestinian issue would likely not have garnered any attention. (...) If, several months ago, there was no readiness to talk about a diplomatic horizon, the door has now been slammed shut. (...) every Palestinian maneuver on the international stage, including turning to the United Nations and the International Criminal Court, is perceived as a defiant move that undermines trust. (...) Blinken raised the need for confidence-building measures. But instead of offering a strategically and diplomatically effective step, as expected of an official representing a power like the United States, he spoke of economic aid to the PA and civilian relief, including upgrading the cellular network – as if the average Ramallah or Jenin resident's highest expectations are playing on their phones and watching TikTok videos. Everything else was pushed aside. (...) Even declaring an opening date for the U.S. consulate in East Jerusalem or the PLO office in Washington weren't on the agenda. (...) The ceremony is over, and the visit is over, with no substance – and no hope.
 Jack Khoury, HAA, 01.02.23

Blinken's Trip Lays Bare Differences With Israel

(...) As U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken extolled the virtues of a two-state solution during his first trip to Israel following the formation last month of Benjamin Netanyahu's far right-wing government, the Israeli prime minister archly glared at him. (...) Clearly, there was no meeting of minds between the two men with respect to the Palestinian problem, which exploded into a cycle of violence yet again (...). Israel's relations with the PA, mercurial at best, remain cold and distant in the wake of Israel's recent decision to cancel some Palestinian VIP benefits and to withhold taxes it collects on behalf of the Palestinians. (...) In Ramallah, the seat of the PA, Blinken heard a litany of complaints from Abbas. (...) Blinken, in response, assured Abbas that the Biden administration would continue to oppose Israeli unilateral actions in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. (...) During his discussions with Netanyahu, Blinken stated his opposition to Israel's intention to pass judicial legislation to weaken the Supreme Court and strengthen the executive branch of government. The United States fears that it will undermine Israeli democracy and interfere with the principle of governance by consensus. (...) Differences over key issues (...) are pulling Israel and the United States apart. (...)

Sheldon Kirshner, TOI, 01.02.23

Netanyahu Expected a Gift From the White House, but Blinken Didn't Bring It

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken, who visited Israel this week, put his hosts through several types of embarrassment. It was obvious that the Biden administration is not pleased with the new government's line in the Palestinian arena and would seek to curb unilateral moves by Israel. But Blinken didn't confine himself to warnings in the foreign relations realm, he also addressed the battle over Israeli democracy. (...) In his visit to Ramallah, Blinken urged the top figures of the Palestinian Authority to resume the security coordination with Israel and to set in motion, at long last, activity by its security forces in Jenin and Nablus. For the present, the PA is hesitating to intervene. (...) Behind the scenes, the security ties continue, albeit at lower intensity than usual. (...) The most concrete danger is that Palestinian police officers will confront IDF soldiers who enter Area A, because someone in the PA's command units will decide not to order them to remain at their bases during Israeli activity, as has been agreed between the sides since 2007.

Amos Harel, HAA, 03.02.23

Blinken continues to misread the Middle East

(...) Secretary Blinken's well-intentioned, but misguided, human rights-driven policy has ignored the only choice facing the United States in the Middle East: that between pro-US human rights violating Arab regimes, or anti-US human rights violating Arab regimes. (...) As frustrated as Blinken is with the rogue conduct of Iran's ayatollahs, and notwithstanding the recently expanded US-Israel military drills, Blinken still opposes Israel's determination that the 43-year-old diplomatic option has dramatically failed. Blinken rejects the Israeli suggestion (...) that a credible threat to resort to regime-change and military action is the only way to abort the regional and global threats posed by the Islamic Republic. (...) During his visit to Israel, once again Blinken failed to distinguish between PA-incited Palestinian terrorists (...) and Israeli civilians (...). Inadvertently, moral equivalence energizes Palestinian terrorism, while aiming to constrain Israel's counter-terrorist efforts. His visit to Ramallah enhanced the legitimacy of the PA, while the latter has enshrined, since 1993, K-12 hate-education, which has brainwashed Palestinian youth against the existence of the "infidel" Jewish state. (...) Blinken ignores Middle East reality, which highlights the non-centrality of the Palestinian issue (...). Unlike Blinken, the pro-US Arab Sunni regimes are aware of the despotic, corrupt, and terroristic nature of the Palestinian Authority, and the rogue nature of the proposed Palestinian state, as evidenced by the Palestinian intra-Arab track record. (...) The bottom line is that a Palestinian state west of the Jordan River would topple the pro-US Hashemite regime east of the river, transforming Jordan into another platform for Islamic terrorism (...) and triggering a domino scenario into the Arabian Peninsula. (...)

Yoram Ettinger, IHY, 05.02.23

Grave concerns shared by many as Israeli coalition agreements turn into policy

Standing next to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Jerusalem (...) US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken could not have been more forceful in articulating that US-Israel relations is "rooted" in "shared values." (...) With the new Israeli government (...) which declared, "The Jewish People has inalienable right to an exclusive sovereignty over the entire Land of Israel" (...), and whose members include key players determined to exercise Jewish supremacy on Temple Mount, this is not the Israel of but a few months ago. (...) West Bank settlers increasingly engage in violence against Palestinians. Likewise,

with their leader, Itamar Ben-Gvir (...) in a senior cabinet position, Temple Mount activists talk of “our moment” to impose Jewish exclusivity and do away with the age-old status quo, best codified by Netanyahu (...) as “Muslims pray, others visit.” These processes constitute a prescription for an explosion awaiting the detonator. (...) The breadth and pace of destructive changes that threaten Israeli democracy and security, regional stability and other American interests, call for a (...) forceful application of brakes. Just as the prime minister was advised in no uncertain terms about Washington’s expectation that “shared values” are strictly upheld, so do his extremist coalition partners need to hear clearly that West Bank annexation by whatever means, benign response to settler violence, further undermining the PA and provocations in holy sites and elsewhere in Jerusalem are unacceptable. These open messages should be supplemented by private elaboration of the consequences should public warnings be ignored. (...) The US administration has its plate full of domestic and global priorities. However, to use another metaphor befitting the situation: Washington’s seeming reluctance to apply timely and effective medicine to the Israeli-Palestinian situation is likely to end up with the far greater and costlier challenge of dealing with the pandemic.

Tamir Pardo und Nimrod Novik, JPO, 06.02.23

2. Proteste gegen Schwächung der Justiz

Der Protest gegen die geplanten Justizreformen geht in eine neue Runde. Zusätzlich zu den seit Beginn des Jahres wöchentlich stattfindenden Demonstrationen landesweit mit zuletzt einer viertel Million Teilnehmer_innen kommt es verstärkt auch zu Streiks gegen eine Schwächung der Justiz und die Aufhebung der Gewaltenteilung. Zahlreiche Berufsgruppen legten am 13.2. temporär die Arbeit nieder, für den 19.2. sind weitere Streiks geplant. Begonnen hatten die Streiks Mitarbeiter_innen von IT-Unternehmen. Auch Staatspräsident Isaac Herzog warnte besorgt vor einem „verfassungsrechtlichen und sozialen Zusammenbruch“ Israels. Justizminister Yariv Levin möchte die Kompetenz des Obersten Gerichts beschneiden und die Zusammensetzung des Gremiums, das die Richter_innen ernennt, ändern, so dass künftig die Regierungsvertreter_innen im Gremium eine Mehrheit haben werden. Die Regierung wirft dem Obersten Gericht in Israel vor, sich in der Vergangenheit zu sehr in politische Entscheidungen eingemischt zu haben. Ins Visier scharfer Kritik der Regierungsparteien kam

Generalstaatsanwältin Gali Baharav-Miara, die Regierungschef Benjamin Netanyahu einen Interessenkonflikt vorwarf und ihn aufforderte, sich nicht in Initiativen einzumischen, die mit dem Umbau der Justiz zu tun haben. Netanyahu muss sich wegen Betrug, Untreue und Bestechlichkeit vor Gericht verantworten und könnte von den geplanten Reformen profitieren.

Protests Alone Won't Stop Bibi's Coup

(...) The overturning of our system of government, the destruction of the legal system, the sanctification of public corruption by ministerial lawyers, who will henceforth be called “the legal advisers representing them” – all this is likely to be irreversible. Once the land is thoroughly corrupted, once government corporations and ministries are infested with conformist rightists and judges are chosen by the Kohelet Policy Forum, the coup will be almost irreversible. Consequently, we must mobilize every possible effort to end the revolution now. What seems difficult to do today will be impossible tomorrow. (...) At least twice, Israel has experienced massive protests that didn't succeed in changing anything – the settlers' protests against the evacuation of the Gaza Strip settlements in 2005 and the social justice protests of 2011. (...) This time, the protests are more sweeping. The masses are certain that the battle now taking place is an existential one waged against an imminent threat of the country deteriorating before their eyes, and they are fighting a front comprised of disconnected ultra-Orthodox parties, delusional messianists and a Likud party whose character has changed utterly. (...) We must keep in mind that the goal isn't salving our conscience, but stopping the worst thing of all from happening.

Uzi Baram, HAA, 01.02.23

Zionists must return to values of civil debate to ensure a healthy democracy

(...) Israel has a healthy tradition of protest, it is a sign of Israel's robust democracy. (...) Many Israelis are alarmed by the direction of the government and they insist on being heard. These aren't concerns that can be brushed aside; Israelis on both sides of the issues want a healthy debate about their concerns. The desire for a debate is an encouraging sign for Israel. Zionists have always debated the future policies of the Jewish people. At the end of the debate, Israel and Zionists will come out stronger – just as they have during previous times of inner debate. (...) A healthy civil society aims to have polite discussions where logical and reasonable

points are made to support their approach to how society should operate. The hope is that by having healthy discussions common ground can be found, nuance can be employed and divisions can be healed instead of enlarged. Making irrational and unreasonable points, along with exaggerations and blowing events out of proportion, causes society to regress. Instead of finding common ground, divisions are exploited for political promotion and society grows unhealthy. (...) Headlines scream hysterical news that consistently turns out to be exaggerated or even completely fabricated. Turning every political position into a hysterical alarm distracts people from honest analysis and debate over the issues by making every topic sound like an existential issue. (...) Journalists, commentators and politicians must take responsibility, look past the easy partisan wins and the attention that comes with hysterical shrieking on each issue. Rather, they must discuss the important issues with honest analysis, nuance and without vilification of the opposing side. Then a healthy civil society can host civil discussions where logical and reasonable points are made to support each sides' position and the community can reach a reasonable conclusion. (...) Zionists must return to their values of civil debate.

Uri Pilichowski, JPO, 05.02.23

Israel's AG Is in Danger - Not Netanyahu

(...) In the 75 years of Israel's existence, both political murders were committed by perpetrators from the right. The first claimed the life of Emil Grunzweig 40 years ago, and the second claimed Rabin. But Bibi keeps playing the victim card. (...) the one whose life is truly under threat is Gali Baharav-Miara, the attorney general. (...) In May 2020, 11 High Court justices made an erroneous ruling which is the original sin. They ruled that Netanyahu may form and head a government, despite the trial underway against him. It is absurd that a man indicted on [criminal] ethics violations should be prime minister. And to somewhat obscure the degree of absurdity, the justices ruled that Netanyahu must sign a conflict of interest agreement, so that he wouldn't be able to influence the conduct of his trial. But then Bibi embarked on a massive stalling maneuver (...). The conflict of interest arrangement was whittled down to pathetic dimensions, (...) this allows Netanyahu to claim that he is allowed to intervene in the regime coup, which is precisely what Baharav-Miara seeks to amend. This is why she submitted an opinion in which she states, for the second time, that Netanyahu is in a grave conflict of interest and may

not intervene in the "judicial reform." But Netanyahu has announced that he rejects this opinion as well – a brazen act against the rule of law. This is the moment in which the High Court should intervene and reverse its May 2020 decision. The High Court should rule that since Bibi is unwilling to accept any conflict of interest agreement, he must resign. (...) Nehemia Shtrasler, HAA, 06.02.23

Incitement to violence against Israeli politicians must stop

Emotions are running high over the proposed reform of the judicial system (...) Col. (ret.) Ze'ev Raz, a decorated former Israel Air Force pilot, posted on Facebook, "If a sitting prime minister assumes dictatorial powers, he is a dead man, it's that simple, along with his ministers and followers." (...) "My din rodef rules that if my country is taken over by a person, foreigner or Israeli, who leads it in an undemocratic manner, it is obligatory to kill him... it is better to kill the criminals first," Raz said. "... There's an obligation to kill them." (...) There is a difference between freedom of expression and disseminating incitement, and Raz crossed that red line. This is not a way to fight a perceived threat to democracy. On the contrary, threatening a democratically elected leader represents a clear danger to the democratic nature of the country. Protesters on the Left cannot be complacent. Violence is not restricted to one side of the political map. (...) Police have opened an investigation of Raz and we hope that all the relevant bodies will take the matter seriously. (...) Incitement and death threats are not acceptable. Period. Not from the Right and nor from the Left. That should be clear to all, especially in a country that has already suffered the trauma of a prime minister's assassination. Words can kill and toxic rhetoric is dangerous. It is legitimate to demonstrate, to protest against the government and the prime minister at its head. It is not legitimate – or moral – to call for violence or to create an atmosphere in which someone might get the impression that violence is an acceptable solution. (...) It is time for the prime minister to engage in a real dialogue to ease concerns over the reforms he is planning. Editorial, JPO, 06.02.23

Brothers at war, again?

The current political turmoil in Israel, which seems to intensify daily, is not new to Jewish history in the Promised Land. (...) The arrival of the Altalena, a ship dispatched from France by the right-wing Irgun, led by Menachem Begin, was filled with desperately

needed weapons and munitions. On board were more than 900 fighters prepared to defend the newborn Jewish state with their lives if necessary. But its arrival triggered a violent internecine conflict. Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion, claiming that the Altalena posed a menacing challenge to the legitimacy of the Israeli government – and to his authority – ordered the newborn IDF to destroy it. (...) Sixteen Irgun fighters and three IDF soldiers died during the fighting and the ship, with its desperately needed weapons, was destroyed. Ben-Gurion and his defenders insisted that force was justified to save the fragile new nation from self-destruction. (...) Israel now confronts an ominously deepening conflict between its newly elected right-wing government led by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his political opponents on the Left. (...) The looming question is whether Israelis on the Left can tolerate a right-wing government unlike any that has preceded it. Or whether, in the name of "democracy," their fury over a lost election will erupt in violent protest that could tear their country apart. (...) Can the Israeli Left reject David Ben-Gurion's appalling resort to violence against Jews and accept the result of a democratic election?

Jerold S. Auerbach, IHY, 06.02.23

Israel is at crossroads between judicial reforms and loss of democracy

(...) Since the inception of the State of Israel, the country has boasted a glorious judicial system with a Supreme Court that knew how to protect basic rights. (...) There was no need for a constitution and no need for Basic Laws to maintain basic rights. The change came in the 1990s when the Knesset passed two new Basic Laws: Human Dignity and Liberty and Freedom of Occupation. Aharon Barak, who was eventually appointed Chief Justice, himself determined that this was a "constitutional revolution." The judicial activism only increased. Not just judicial criticism of laws, but primarily recurring and repeated interferences with government decisions, citing "Reasonability" and "proportionality." In a process that continued for years, Israel's Supreme Court became the world's strongest judicial tribunal. Under Barak's leadership, all too frequently, the judges ruled in accordance with their own values, which seems right to them, in direct contravention of the law. (...) At times it seemed like there was no need for a government at all as the Supreme Court had taken its place. (...) Following the results of the November 2022 elections and the formation of the new right-wing, religious coalition, the new justice

minister, Yariv Levine presented his proposal for judicial reforms, including controversial clauses. (...) Until now, Israel's democracy has been stronger than politics. But for that to remain the case, the protests must continue. (...)

Ben-Dror Yemini, YED, 08.02.23

In Israel, a Civil War Is No Longer Unthinkable

(...) If the balloon goes up and civil war begins between supporters of Benjamin Netanyahu's government and loyalists of the Supreme Court and the judiciary, will law enforcement, the security agencies and the military take sides? And if so, which? (...) It sounds almost crazy to engage in such speculation in a 75-year-old country where there hasn't been anything close to a hint of a military coup. (...) the Gaza pullout (...) was a lot less violent and disruptive than many predicted at the time. The dismantling of the settlements in the Gaza Strip and the northern West Bank took just nine days (...). And while roughly a third of Israelis opposed the disengagement, most settlers only passively resisted and only a handful tried to violently obstruct the evacuation. So why should a constitutional change that doesn't involve anyone getting shot or being evicted from their homes constitute more of a risk of a violent upheaval pitting Israelis against each other? (...) An independent and strong Israeli judiciary has become a symbol for what relatively liberal and certainly most secular Israelis feel they belong to and can be proud of. And for that section of the public – generations that have "given" more to the country in the shape of military service, casualties in Israel's wars and tax bills – the solemn pact with the nation is being broken. That feeling is mirrored on the other side. (...) Among the ultra-Orthodox there is a feeling that the current government, which to them symbolizes the true Jewish spirit, is the historic dénouement of the secular fake Jewishness whose downfall was always inevitable. (...)

Anshel Pfeffer, HAA, 09.02.23

Don't give up on Israel's democracy

(...) Despite our country's many challenges, this is our only home. (...) the future of our democracy is at stake. (...) it is now more critical than ever for pluralistic Jews around the world to stand in solidarity with the people of Israel. (...) Our vision of a Jewish and democratic state cannot be abandoned, and your support is imperative and genuinely urgent. (...) The so-called "national camp" is a misnomer, for their actions are anything but patriotic. They are leading us down a dangerous path that threatens to destroy

the very essence of our beloved nation. (...) Only together can we protect the ideals of justice and democracy for future generations and ensure that the Land of Israel remains a shining beacon of hope and optimism for years and generations to come. (...) Despite two millennia of exile and countless challenges, we have never given up. Despair is not a viable option, and optimism is a powerful political force, even in the darkest of times. (...) The younger generation is taking a stand and speaking out, as evidenced by the massive protests that have taken place across the country in recent months. (...) Those of us on the front lines of this battle need your support to ensure that our unity is not destroyed.

Yaya Fink, JPO, 10.02.23

Dialogue should prevent Israel's slide into civil war

(...) We have seen bitter clashes in the past: the Oslo Accords of the 1990s and the disengagement from Gaza in the 2006 are two most prominent examples from recent history. But the present crisis could prove even more serious. (...) The current crisis, in the eyes of many, puts the country's very character and future at stake. (...) this time the threat is alive and tangible from both sides. On the right, Israel's security forces assess that the attorney general — the legal adviser to the government — is under the highest degree of threat. (...) The only immediate way to stop this descent down the slippery slope is to join the call for dialogue — now. Anyone with eyes in his head realizes that what is taking place in the Knesset's Constitution, Law and Justice Committee is not real dialogue, but rather a gallop toward a predetermined destination. Most Israelis are not happy about this. Even among voters of the right-wing bloc, close to a third (31%) feel that the government lacks a legitimate basis for significant constitutional change without broad consensus. Our leaders must come to their senses and allow a serious dialogue process to take place, supported by legal experts with differing opinions, with the aim of achieving real, consensus-based reform. Compromise is necessary. (...) 35% — a third of the Israeli public — believe that the fear of civil war is real, not media spin. (...) All of us, from both camps together, must call for dialogue.

Yedidia Stern, TOI, 12.02.23

Black Monday: Anyone Who Cares About Israel Must Strike Today

(...) In a special address to the nation (...) President Isaac Herzog urged the coalition not to bring the

legislative changes up for their first Knesset vote and suggested a compromise. The fact that the number of people issuing warnings about this coup against our system of government is rising every day doesn't bother Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's coalition of madness. (...) As Israel is marching toward the abyss, Justice Minister Yariv Levin has accused Supreme Court President Esther Hayut and Attorney General Gali Baharav-Miara of perpetrating a coup (...). The goal of the coup against our system of government isn't just to bolster Netanyahu's government, but also to destroy the democratic side of the state's identity. That's why the government is also moving ahead with ultranationalistic legislation that undermines fundamental rights, like a bill to allow Arab terrorists to be stripped of their citizenship and deported, and an amendment to the Disengagement Law that would repeal the sections barring Israelis from entering or residing in territory evacuated in 2005. (...) Despite the problems and pitfalls, only large-scale public participation in both the demonstration and the strike can alter the path of destruction down which the government is marching. Only by standing strong in the state's defense can we save democracy from the people seeking to destroy it. Anyone who cares about Israel must strike in protest on Monday.

Editorial, HAA, 13.02.23

3. Erneut Tote in Israel und in den Palästinensergebieten

Die Welle der Gewalt in Israel und den Palästinensergebieten reißt nicht ab. Drei Menschen, darunter ein sechsjähriges und ein achtjähriges Kind, kamen in Jerusalem zu Tode, als ein palästinensischer Attentäter sein Auto in die Menge der an einer Bushaltestelle Wartenden lenkte. Minister für die nationale Sicherheit Itamar Ben-Gvir ordnete die Sicherheitskräfte an, eine Sonderoperation in Ostjerusalem vorzubereiten. Regierungschef Benjamin Netanyahu ließ das Haus des Attentäters versiegeln, um es zeitnah abzureißen. Mehrere Angehörige der Familie des Attentäters wurden festgenommen. In einem Flüchtlingslager bei Jericho kamen fünf Palästinenser bei dem Feuergefecht während einer Razzia des israelischen Militärs zu Tode. Zwei der Männer, die offenbar der Hamas angehören, seien an einem versuchten Anschlag in einem Restaurant beteiligt gewesen, ließ die Armee verlauten. Nach Raketenbeschuss aus dem Gazastreifen griff die israelische Luftwaffe verschiedene Ziele in dem von der Hamas kontrollierten Gebiet an.

Israel needs a new offensive policy against people who incite

(...) Judea and Samaria form the core of the terrorist escalation that Israel faces. The region is saturated with firearm attacks (...). It is filled with terrorists who are not affiliated to any one faction, thereby constituting a new trend. (...) On the other hand, the majority of Palestinians in Judea and Samaria vote with their feet every morning by not taking part in terrorism and instead, going out to work – including over 130,000 of whom work in Israel or in the settlements. The economy is restraining mass terrorism and is distancing us from scenarios of a full-blown third intifada. Such an intifada is still, however, on the horizon (...) Contact between eastern Jerusalem Palestinians and Israelis has not brought them closer together and even though many work in Israel, when they return home, they switch from economy mode to hatred mode. (...) In response, Israel's government and security cabinet must immediately formulate a strategy and policy for the short-term and medium-term regarding eastern Jerusalem. (...) a thickening and reinforcement of the security presence are required in areas bordering eastern Jerusalem and for the protection of sites that are prone to attacks. (...) the organizational structure and the technological and intelligence means used by the Israel Police must be upgraded (...). Israel must decide on an offensive policy against those leading terrorist incitement from Hamas, PIJ and others, whether they live in Gaza or Lebanon. This will certainly lead to escalation but they are necessary in order to foil and deter terrorism.

Eitan Dangot, JPO, 01.02.23

For some, not even an attack on a synagogue is terror

Seven Jewish souls were massacred by a Palestinian as they left their synagogue in Jerusalem on Shabbat. An act of terror? (...) Our friends at the New York Times, for one, found it more important to interview the father of the murderer than the families of the victims. Jerusalem bureau chief Patrick Kingsley mentioned that grieving Israeli families sat shiva while the family of their Palestinian killer expressed pride. "He's a legend and hero," the terrorist's father told Kingsley. "I raised him well." Kingsley regurgitated the usual Palestinian justification for the murder of Jews – the Palestinians are being mistreated. Like other apologists for the Palestinians, it would never dawn on Kingsley that murder is not the only possible response to "occupation." Nor does it occur to him that decades of terror have not brought the

Palestinians any closer to statehood. (...) It's easier for the media to talk about a "cycle of violence," which suggests terrorism and counterterrorism are identical. But the media never suggests that a US drone strike on a terrorist (never a "militant") perpetuates a cycle of violence. The "cycle" idea also implies there was no first shot that required a response. Journalists who believe history begins with their arrival on assignment don't know that the murder of Jews in the Land of Israel did not begin with the "occupation." It can be traced back to the religiously inspired murders instigated by the Mufti of Jerusalem in the 1920s. (...)

Mitchell Bard, IHY, 03.02.23

Will the world listen to the plight of the Palestinians in Gaza?

(...) in an unprecedented series of video testimonies called "Whispered in Gaza," the entire world can hear the voices of actual Gazans speaking out about what life is like under the terrorist dictatorship in Gaza. (...) for years, many outside of Israel have not understood the barbarity and cruelty that Palestinians in Gaza face – not at the hands of Israel, but at the hands of their own tyrannical leaders: Hamas. It's hard to ignore the truth when Gazans themselves are speaking out, uncensored. In these clips, you can hear Palestinians sharing for the first time how Hamas steals money from civilians and private businesses, how they crush and imprison any person or group that calls for policy changes, and how, just as in the Islamic Republic of Iran, women are not allowed to sing, dance, or even hold hands with men in public. (...) The videos expose who Israel is fighting against – not the Palestinian people, but rather a terrorist group that is not just terrorizing Israeli civilians with rockets, but also terrorizing their own people through their daily oppression of women, prohibiting freedom of speech and the right to protest, and infesting Gaza with corruption and exploitation. Hamas controls the people of Gaza, depriving them of basic rights and freedoms. (...) many Palestinians are trapped under the brutal rule of Hamas, which is why these testimonies are so powerful and important globally. (...) Palestinians are being subjugated by Hamas day and night, and they're saying this in their own words. Now the only question that remains is, will anyone in the free world actually listen? Or do Palestinian lives only matter when Israel can be blamed?

Yoseph Haddad, JPO, 05.02.23

Peace – at what cost?

Giving land to the Palestinians does not bring peace, as we learned from the Gaza Strip. Israelis were pulled out of Gaza by force, even requiring the Israeli army to act against its own people. (...) In return, the Arabs (...) have used hundreds of rockets to attack Israel's civilian population. To all those who advocate so drastically for two-state solution, you likely have no idea what it is to live in a tiny patch of land with a built-in group of the population who is sworn to the destruction of Israel. The two-state solution will be a good move if and when the Arabs decide that they had enough of the "military" (terror) solution. As long as Iran is calling the shots for Hamas and the other terror groups to confront Israel and pumping arms and money to back it up, there is little chance for peace. (...) A hawkish resolution to all aspects of its relations towards Palestinians is perhaps a non-starter for any reasonable dialogue. The declarations from the new far right government of using a fist in dealing with the West Bank is likely the wrong path for this government to make any progress. The cycle of violence will not subside, as the Israelis cannot stop a lone suicide attacker anywhere in the country. (...) A cooling-off period would go a long way towards a more calm future.
Jack Molad, TOI, 07.02.23

4. Medienquerschnitt

Hüllenloser Protest

Not all heroes wear capes. Some don't even wear clothes

(...) in the last bitter throes of a frigid Jerusalem winter, a woman put on a bathing suit under a coat and went to the Western Wall. (...) She did it in protest against the rising tide of religious Jewish extremism that's encroaching on our holy site. Was her protest extreme? Absolutely. But no more extreme than the Shas proposed legislation to (...) "make it a criminal offense, punishable up to six months in prison or a NIS 10,000 (\$2,900) fine, to dress immodestly at the Western Wall or to pray there in a manner not recognized by the Chief Rabbinate." Some have said that she desecrated our holy site. I say that the real ones who threaten to desecrate our holy site are the politicians and religious leaders looking to impose their brand of Judaism on every Jew (...) thugs who interrupt egalitarian prayer and who spit on Women of the Wall. (...) She's a Jewish woman protesting Jewish extrem-

ism. And like the women in Iran removing their hijab, this woman is doing something in a similar vein (...) things are so freaking bad right now that a grown-ass woman would show up in the freezing dregs of winter in a bathing suit to make a point. (...) Not all heroes wear capes. Some don't even wear clothes.
Sarah Tuttle-Singer, TOI, 12.02.23

HAA = Haaretz

YED = Yedioth Ahronoth / Ynetnews

JPO = Jerusalem Post

IHY = Israel HaYom

TOI = Times of Israel

GLO = Globes

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