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1. Netanyahu legt Justizreform auf Eis

Mit dem Generalstreik, den der Dachverband der israelischen Gewerkschaften Histadrut gemeinsam mit der Industriellenvereinigung am 27. Januar ausrief in Reaktion auf die Kündigung von Verteidigungsminister Galant durch Premierminister Netanyahu, nahm der seit Anfang des Jahres andauernde Konflikt um die geplante Justizreform eine Wende. Regierungschef Benjamin Netanyahu lenkte ein und verkündete den Aufschub der geplanten Justizreform bis nach der Sitzungspause der Knesset. Unter der Obhut von Staatspräsident Issac Herzog sollen Gespräche zwischen Koalition und Opposition zu einem Kompromiss führen. Galant hatte zuvor aus Sorge um Israels Sicherheit dazu aufgerufen, die Justizreform zu stoppen und einen breiten Konsens zu suchen. Sollte das passieren, so warnte wiederum Itamar Ben-Gvir, Minister für nationale Sicherheit, werde er aus der Regierung austreten. Netanyahu verständigte sich schließlich mit dem rechtsextremen Politiker, indem er ihm die Einrichtung einer Nationalgarde unter dem direkten Kommando des Ministers zusagte. Während die Histadrut den Streik nach Netanyahus Ankündigung umgehend beendete, setzten Demonstrant_innen ihren Protest fort. Die meisten Reformgegner trauen den Regierungsparteien nicht und halten die Gespräche bei Staatspräsident Herzog für einen Trick, der den Widerstand gegen die Regierung schwächen soll, ohne dass die Regierung jedoch von der demokratiepolitisch

gefährlichen Justizreform ablässt. Es wird befürchtet, dass die momentan auf Eis gelegten Gesetze ab Anfang Mai durchgepeitscht werden sollen.

Herzog's framework is capitulation, not compromise

President Isaac Herzog (...) spoke for a full 12 minutes in this vein without providing even an outline of the plan. Instead, he directed viewers to a website titled "The People's Framework." Seriously? After all the pre-speech hype and subsequent lengthy monologue, he told the public to look online for information? It was an odd way to unveil his highly touted blueprint for an accord between the coalition and opposition on the issue of judicial reform. Indeed, he could have published the link to the document in question and spared everyone the pontification. After all, Israelis across the spectrum are fully aware of the rift he described; they tuned in to hear his proposal for mending it, or at least for enabling dialogue. In the end, he left them no choice but to read it on the Internet. Too bad for those whose ability to do so is limited for one reason or another. (...) The "People's Framework" slants so far in the opposition's favor that it makes a mockery of the whole endeavor. For one thing, it maintains the very imbalance in the Judicial Selection Committee that the reforms aim to alter. For another, it leaves intact the unprecedented power of the attorney general over the government. (...) What Herzog

has done here (...) is prevent the government from implementing the main changes it desires, with a few minor tweaks. (...) In other words, the mass hate-fests must and will carry on as scheduled. Now that Herzog has proven he hasn't abandoned his Labor Party origins, however, the protesters might give him a break. (...)

Ruthie Blum, JPO, 16.03.23

The Likud must stop everything and talk

(...) the decision by the Likud and Religious Zionist Party (...) to approve a "softened" version of the government's bill to change the Judicial Appointments Committee was a positive development. (...) On the other hand, the decision to freeze the other bills and move ahead just with the appointments shows what this whole process has been about – helping Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu appoint the justices who will sit one day and preside over his criminal case. (...) Under the new proposal, High Court appointments would require a simple majority of six, which would give the coalition an automatic majority but would require the support of at least one opposition MK and one judge on the committee for further appointments. (...) What's required now is true leadership on both sides. The president has opened the door for both government and opposition leaders to engage in a dialogue and avert a civil war. It is now up to Netanyahu and Lapid to put aside their mutual acrimony for the sake of the country, and to lead by example. They should meet with each other as soon as possible, and then order negotiating teams to sit down and make one last genuine attempt to strike a balance in the legislation that could be the basis for national consensus. (...)

Editorial, JPO, 21.03.23

Looking for freedom, equality, and peace in 2023

(...) The declared aim of ultra-Orthodox, settler, and certain right-wing and religious elements (...) is to carry out a structural overhaul by reducing the authority of the courts, concentrating power in the hands of the elected majority, and implementing Jewish control over the entire area between the Mediterranean and the Jordan River. (...) The February 2023 poll of the Israel Democracy Institute shows that (...) 45 percent of women oppose the introduction of an override clause that would enable the Knesset to defy a court order by a simple majority in contrast to 34.5% of men (...). The immediate focus of concern has centered on several issues: fear of a spike in violence against women, growing discrimination against women in the public sphere,

further limitations on women in particular sectors, a regression in the number of women in decision-making positions, and a general climate of misogyny, racism, and homophobia. The symbolic adoption of the red dress and white caps of the Handmaid's Tale has given graphic articulation to these sentiments and become a mainstay of the democratic pushback as the deteriorating status of women in Israel mirrors the rapid erosion of Israel's democratic trappings. (...) the root problems facing Israeli society are even more profound. (...) the rising dominance of security personnel and the defense establishment in opposition to government actions. The capacity of most women to play a major role in this discourse is constrained by their limited expertise, poor representation in the military, their own perspectives on these matters, and an understanding that decisions in this area have a differential gender impact. (...) Israel's Declaration of Independence rests on four essential values (...): freedom, equality, justice, and peace. (...) To achieve these objectives, no mere haggling over one or another constitutional issue can suffice. A new and updated civic pact (...) depends on a clear grasp of citizenship in the multi-faceted environment of what is Israel today, rooted in a Bill of Rights applicable to all the country's residents. The experience and insights of Israeli women over the years and their amplification in recent months provides the groundwork for such an updated and relevant version of foundational norms for dealing with the numerous challenges in the years ahead.

Naomi Chazan, TOI, 20.03.23

Words Matter: The Untapped Power of Rhetoric in Preserving Israel's Democracy

(...) Over 60 percent of Israelis have said they're against the proposed reform (...) yet week after week legislation has been cascading forward, aiming to get the anti-democratic amendments approved before the self imposed Passover deadline (...). It's time for our coalition leaders to speak up. Words matter, and as a persuasive weapon as old as time, words can be extremely effective. (...) Craft your statements to understand the pain and distraught of "the other side." Speak publicly about it, not only behind closed doors. Explain your intentions behind the so-called reform and why it's so crucial in your eyes. History has proven that non violent campaigns are usually resolved with words. People on both sides know that some sort of compromise will need to be reached, whether or not under the President's guise, but in today's political

climate, compromise is a dirty word. (...) No one on the protesting side will blindly put down their demands. No one will simply stop bringing themselves and everyone around them to the streets to defend democracy. But if we are ever going to start treating the bleeding wounds these few months have opened, it starts with those in power respecting the other side as the brothers and sisters they claim to be. The words said today will haunt these leaders forever. They will be their legacy. (...)
Yael Wissner-Levy, TOI, 21.03.23

There's no 'compromise' in the coalition's play for unlimited power

(...) If the coalition wants unlimited power, there is only one thing it has to do: control the appointment of judges at the Supreme Court. The Judicial Appointments Committee (JAC) is the keystone, the very heart of the story. Why? Because today, the Supreme Court is the only institution able to set limits on what the government can do. (...) According to the new proposal, the coalition (...) will appoint a chief justice who is in its pocket. And then, it will select two new justices. We should bear in mind that it is the court president who determines which justices sit on the panel that hears each and every case. (...) Under the new system, sitting justices would (...) be involved in appointments. Politicians would select justices who hear cases on wills, family matters, property disputes, contracts, taxes, traffic accidents, and criminal law. That is so because Israel's Supreme Court isn't only a constitutional court, but also, and primarily, the Supreme Court of Appeals. Even if the justices do take part in the appointments process (...), it would require the consent of only one justice, who could of course be the court president — who would just happen to have been appointed by the coalition. The chief justice could be the additional vote that gives the coalition full control over the choice of judges at all levels, including in magistrate and district courts. What would be the outcome? Total politicization — in fact, “coalitionization” — of the bench. (...) We would end up with a political court, no longer independent, and judges with less professional expertise. (...) almost every dictatorship in the world has a constitution with a dazzling list of human rights — including more than 50 articles in Russia, for example. But in dictatorships, citizens have nowhere to go if their rights are violated. There are no courts to go to. (...)

Suzie Navot, TOI, 22.03.23

Gallant embraces need for judicial reform, but cautions against hasty rollout

(...) Defense Minister Yoav Gallant has recently advised Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to suspend the advancement of a bill that reshuffles the powerful judge selection committee in the governing coalition's favor. (...) he believes (...) the government would be well advised to suspend the process until the summer, using the hiatus to reach broad understandings with the opposition to simmer down tensions not only within the Knesset but the Israeli public at large. (...) at the very least, even if they do not reach an understanding, they can have a clear conscience that they have done everything possible to achieve said understanding. In political terms, Gallant is attempting to distinguish himself from Netanyahu and other coalition bigwigs without alienating loyal Likud voters. He is trying to present himself as a coalition member who possesses national awareness rather than strictly adhering to coalition ideology. (...) He prioritizes the state, the IDF, and the defense establishment over the judicial overhaul.

Nahum Barnea, YED, 23.03.23

Netanyahu's Losing It. He Can't Go on Any Longer

(...) Netanyahu doesn't look good. He has become a shadow of himself — burned-out, troubled, gloomy and angry at the entire world. This isn't the Bibi we knew. And it's only because the many blows he has absorbed have greatly undermined and weakened him. This is evident in his lack of control over cabinet ministers and his governing coalition. Levin doesn't take him into consideration at all. Bezalel Smotrich is destroying relations with the United Arab Emirates through his remarkably idiotic statements. Moshe Gafni submitted a bill that outraged evangelical Christians in the United States. (...) all this is happening while huge demonstrations protesting the coup against our system of government are continuing and intensifying, which seriously worries Netanyahu. He knows these demonstrations are eating away at the right. (...) Within three months, Bibi has managed to turn himself into a weak prime minister at home and a rag doll whom Western leaders gleefully kick around abroad. The problem is that we're the ones who end up with the bruises — a falling stock market, a high-tech crisis, capital flight, a freeze on investments, sharp depreciation, and a rise in inflation. When former Prime Minister Menachem Begin broke, he said, “I can't go on any longer.” Bibi, you can't go on any longer, either. (...)

Ahead of Summer Legislative Blitz, Netanyahu Keeps Israel's Crisis Rolling

(...) The prime minister promised in his speech to freeze the legislation until the Knesset's summer session, which ends in July. This is somewhat encouraging (...), but (...) the halt comes much too late, after immeasurable damage has already been wrought to the state, the army and the economy. The second reservation is that it's harder than ever to give credence to promises made by the prime minister, as was repeatedly proven recently. (...) This is classic Netanyahu: The crisis never ends (...). The Histadrut Labor Federation and the Union of Local Authorities, which launched a strike (...) announced a halt to the strike (...). Throughout the day (...) the prime minister passed his time trying to placate his ultra-extremist wing, in the coalition and at home. Itamar Ben-Gvir, the person Netanyahu refused to be photographed with just before the election, got his own sweet reward: a promise to establish a national guard subordinate directly to Ben-Gvir. It's hard to believe, but the prime minister is giving a disciple of Meir Kahane a private, armed militia, which will not be answerable to the police. (...) In the background, the issue of Yoav Gallant remains unresolved. (...) For senior members of the defense establishment, Gallant's conduct was a ray of light in an extremist government which is insisting on undermining stability on the internal front, thereby creating problems with friend and foe alike. (...) Netanyahu's speech was no more than a smoke screen used for tactical purposes, with no hint of a willingness for real dialogue. He continued his assault on patriotic reserve soldiers who work for their country, without bothering to explain his scandalous decision to fire Gallant. (...)

Amos Harel, HAA, 28.03.23

Despite judicial overhaul pause, Netanyahu remains Israel's main problem

We are on a timeout. Nothing has been finalized but even now, gratitude is due to the hundreds of thousands of demonstrators who succeeded in maintaining a serious and non-violent protest, and to those from the right wing who joined the demonstrations, which without them would not have resulted in this timeout. (...) Netanyahu is well aware that should have elections been held (...), he would have been beaten. (...) But our problem is that we too are in trouble because of him. He is not a wanted guest by most world leaders and has therefore weakened

Israel's international standing, which has never been worse. There are countless problems facing the country in urgent need of his attention, Iran being first on the list, but the prime minister seemed intent to distance Israel's closest allies in Washington, without whom no action against Iran would be possible. (...) Every day that he is prime minister, Netanyahu causes Israel further harm. If he were a true patriot, he would resign and call a new election. (...) Ben-Dror Yemini, YED, 28.03.23

2. Kritik in Washington und Berlin an den Plänen der Regierungskoalition

Die USA und Deutschland appellierten an Israels Ministerpräsidenten, in dem Konflikt um die Justizreform einen Kompromiss voranzutreiben. Bundeskanzler Olaf Scholz hat sich im Verlauf von Benjamin Netanyahus Besuch in Berlin besorgt gezeigt, Israel aber gleichzeitig anhaltende Solidarität in Sicherheitsfragen zugesichert. Scholz und US-Präsident Joe Biden äußerten sich positiv zum Vorstoß des israelischen Staatspräsidenten Isaac Herzog, der Regierung und Opposition zu Verhandlungen einlud. Ungeachtet der Proteste im In- und Ausland verabschiedete die Knesset bereits ein Gesetz, das eine Drei-Viertel-Mehrheit erforderlich macht, um einen Ministerpräsidenten für amtsunfähig zu erklären. Dafür müssten psychische oder andere gesundheitliche Gründe vorliegen. Kritiker_innen werfen Regierungschef Benjamin Netanyahu, gegen den seit längerer Zeit ein Korruptionsprozess läuft, einen Interessenkonflikt vor. Das Gesetz sei „unanständig und korrupt“, verlautete es aus den Reihen der Opposition.

Is Germany and Israel's 'Special Relationship' About to Blow Up?

(...) If the Israeli government succeeds in pushing through the contentious legislation, Germany would find it more difficult to defend Israel based on the universalist lessons of the Holocaust which champion human and minority rights and warn of the peril of ignoring them, when Netanyahu's government is seeking to undermine them. (...) It's important to note that the reparation agreement (...) signed in September 1952 between Israel and West Germany played a crucial role in polarizing the Arab-Israeli conflict. That's because it was very much colored by the Cold War considerations of the time in which the Soviet Union and by extension, East Germany sided with Arab nations and the U.S and its allies more with Israel. (...) However, the ghosts

of the Nazi regime were not forgotten on a regional level after the reparation agreement was signed, nor even after reparations were paid to the Holocaust survivors. (...) Despite Germany's longstanding concerns regarding Israel's settlement building programs, Germany has always managed to stay committed to Israel's security while also protesting Israel's treatment of Palestinians in the West Bank and its lack of commitment to a two-state solution. Ultimately, if Israel were to adopt policies that erode its democratic institutions and undermine its commitment to minority rights, it could weaken Germany's ability to defend Israel's actions on the world stage which until now has been an essential tool of Israeli diplomacy.

Eldad Ben Aharon, HAA, 20.03.23

Israel must strengthen its ties with Diaspora Jewry

(...) The divisiveness within Israel is reflected also in the strained ties with communities abroad (...). At a time of increased antisemitism and the acts of the BDS movement, Israelis need to remember that our fates as members of the Jewish people are intertwined. We should, however, also be careful not to base our relationship only on combating antisemitism together. (...) the Jewish Diaspora – half of the Jewish people – live in communities across the globe. Care must be taken not to equate the Diaspora only with Jews in North America, even if they are the majority. Similarly, there are Ashkenazi and Sephardi Diaspora communities, and a range of other special communities with unique customs and traditions, just as the Jewish majority in Israel is not homogeneous. We can learn from the diversity. (...) The ties between Israel and the Diaspora are special. There is a connection that crosses continents, languages and customs. This special affinity needs to be fostered and furthered. (...) we in Israel must make sure that Israeli Jews realize the importance of those bonds and ensure that schoolchildren are taught about them. (...)

Editorial, JPO, 20.03.23

The BB Government and the relationship with the US

(...) despite the strong protest sweeping the country, the legislative train of the regime revolution has gone out of control and is speeding with us all inside towards a dangerous dictatorial abyss. The loss of brakes endangers not only our freedoms as citizens but the very existence of the state of Israel. (...) We can already see the buds of this ostracism. The

White House is dragging its legs in inviting Netanyahu for a state visit (...); Saudi Arabia effectively blocked the foreign minister from attending a UN conference in the kingdom; and the Emirates announced they were putting on hold the procurement of Israeli security systems. (...) Yet the future might bode much darker times. Without the checks and balances of a democracy, the door will open to an unruly wave of discriminatory and exclusionary legislation against the rights of women and LGBT, and those of the Arab minority. (...) All these place the USA in a position that is different from what we are used to. (...) The EU too, Israel's largest trade partner, is expected to distance itself from Israel leaving behind a small country whose productive elite has been hurt badly and whose economy is shrinking, without any real international support. (...) If the nation state of the Jewish people turns into a dictatorship, it will distance not only young progressive Democrats but also the absolute majority of American Jews, and with it the strongest lobby Israel has overseas. (...) Still, the crisis might create opportunity (...). This is the time to translate empty statements in favor of a two-state solution into an international move to restore the solution of two states to the world of reality. (...)

Nadav Tamir, TOI, 22.03.23

Israel is becoming isolated on the world stage

(...) the two invitations Netanyahu wanted to receive by now – from the US and the United Arab Emirates – are not coming and it is not because of Israel's notorious postal service. Both countries are not extending invitations to Netanyahu and Likud members are openly admitting that Israeli-American ties – alongside Israeli-Jordanian ties, Israeli-Moroccan ties and Israeli-Emirati ties – are all now in a state of crisis. (...) Imagine that Israel will decide in the year to come that it has no choice but to take unilateral military action against Iran's nuclear facilities (...): Can Israel do it without the United States? It may have the operational capability but will it be able to do it without diplomatic support? (...) while an attack would be important, it alone will not be enough. Israel cannot afford for this situation to continue. It is a country that is highly dependent on its diplomatic ties, not to mention how much its economy relies on the global market. (...) Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu knows all of this (...). It is time he retakes control of the country and stabilizes the situation. This is no longer just about the judicial reform and how Israel will appoint Supreme Court justices, this is about the greatest potential

existential threat that Israel faces and how it will be stopped. (...)

Yaakov Katz, JPO, 23.03.23

Netanyahu's government at risk of alienating Israel's allies

(...) a government whose ministers either do not care or do not understand – and it is not clear which is worse – about the ramifications and repercussions of their words and actions (...) is worrying because it gives the impression that no one is in control, that every minister or MK can sound off as he/she sees fit, that there is no discipline or self-restraint. That's no way to run a government or a country. (...) if Netanyahu had two hands on the wheel his ministers would not be taking steps and making comments that alienate friends. Forget two hands on the wheel, at this point even one would be an improvement. Netanyahu needs to take control of his ministers and instill discipline and order before they cause more gratuitous damage to Israel's relations with key countries and constituencies around the world.

Editorial, JPO, 24.03.23

Why Biden Won't Lash Out Against Netanyahu - for Now

(...) the Biden administration is angry and aggravated by the policies of the new Israeli government. (...) But governing is about choosing. And there are so many other priorities and matters on his presidential plate. (...) Then there's Biden pro-Israeli sensibilities. Biden's ties with Israel goes back decades and he views himself inextricably intertwined with its history. (...) like Clinton, Biden's inclination is to get mad, get over it and then more frequently than not, because he's not looking for a fight, to give Netanyahu some room to maneuver. (...) When the Biden administration looks at Israel today, it sees a hopelessly complex Israeli-Palestinian conflict and an historic internal battle for the future character of the State of Israel and wonders understandably how pressuring Israel would make a significant difference on either front. At best, it's a finger in the dyke. And even that might prove woefully insufficient to hold back the flood. (...) Right now we have a crisis of one hand clapping. (...) a real crisis won't be at hand until the president makes a decision that imposes real costs and consequences on Netanyahu. (...) The U.S. administration's tools (...) are quite limited. (...) It's hard to see the administration conditioning U.S. military assistance to Israel. (...) More likely, the administration would abstain or even vote for a UN Security Council Resolution. (...)

Aaron David Miller, HAA, 26.03.23

Why did Washington oppose Israel's judicial reform?

(...) Washington is as determined as the anti-Bibi resistance not just to stop judicial reform but to oust a democratically elected government by any means possible. Biden's interest in toppling him is disconnected from any purported concern about Netanyahu's alleged shortcomings. What the White House and State Department want is a more pliable Israeli prime minister who will keep quiet about the nuclear threat from Iran and who can be intimidated into not acting to forestall that deadly threat to Israel's existence. (...) the hypocrisy of Biden's stand is epic in nature. Democrats and their liberal Jewish supporters are vocal critics of the U.S. Supreme Court because of its current conservative majority and its willingness to enforce constitutional limits on the power of the state. Biden and the Democrats have been assailing the independence of the court for years (...). Equally hypocritical is their talk about Netanyahu being at fault for not seeking a national consensus before trying to enact change with a narrow parliamentary majority. That never stopped Democrats from advancing ideas that they considered to be progressive innovations, like Obamacare, with no consensus, compromise or broad congressional support. (...) The Biden foreign-policy team (...) bears a grudge against Netanyahu. (...) While Biden seems to have wisely disabused himself of myths about the Palestinians wanting peace, he (...) is still eager to avoid any confrontation with Tehran over the fact that, thanks to the Democrats' appeasement policy, it is fast approaching the status of being a threshold nuclear power. (...) So while there is nothing new about American governments seeking to intervene in Israeli politics, the brazen nature of Biden's attack on Netanyahu says nothing about the virtues of judicial reform. It does, however, speak volumes about how much the administration wants an Israeli government that won't cause trouble over Iran.

Jonathan S. Tobin, IHY, 29.03.23

3. Israels innenpolitischer Konflikt birgt Sicherheitsrisiken

Angesichts der instabilen innenpolitischen Lage wächst die Sorge, dass gegnerische Kräfte Israels die Gunst der Stunde für Angriffe nutzen könnten. So warnen Sicherheitsexpert_innen allen voran vor den Handlangern Teherans, wie den Hizbollah-

Milizen im Libanon und in Syrien, wo die israelische Luftwaffe jüngst verstärkt wieder Angriffe flog. Auf großes Unverständnis im Ausland stieß deshalb auch die Knesset-Entscheidung, ausgerechnet jetzt das Gesetz über die Räumung von Siedlungen aus dem nördlichen Gebiet des Westjordanland und dem Gazastreifen, dass 2005 verabschiedet worden war, außer Kraft zu setzen. Das Bundesministerium für Auswärtiges ließ über eine Sprecherin die Sorge verlauten, dass die entsprechende Gesetzesänderung „einen gefährlichen Schritt hin zu möglichen erneuten Siedlungsaktivitäten“ darstelle und möglicherweise die ohnehin angespannte Lage zusätzlich verschärfen werde. Aktuell rät das Bundesaußenamt, von Reisen nach Israel und die Palästinensergebiete abzusehen. Bei Zusammenstößen im Westjordanland und Ostjerusalem ist es erneut zu Toten und Verletzten gekommen. Unmut löste zudem die Äußerung des israelischen Finanzministers Bezalel Smotrich aus, es gebe „keine Palästinenser und kein palästinensisches Volk“. Um die angespannte Lage auch mit Blick auf den islamischen Fastenmonat Ramadan zu beruhigen, waren Vertreter_innen Israels und der Palästinenser_innen zu Gesprächen in Ägypten zusammengetroffen.

The Pogrom Against Palestinians That Brought the Occupation Home to Jewish Israelis

(...) For decades, Israelis turned a collective blind eye to innumerable settler pogroms targeting Palestinians. (...) Until Hawara. For the first time, the reaction of many Israelis was profound shock, anger, shame, and, for some, even the radical realization that the Hawara pogrom embodied the very meaning of occupation – a vulnerable Palestinian population deprived of the most basic rights and protections, oppressed and under direct attack by state-supported and state-shielded Israeli settlers. (...) For the first time, there was (...) disgust and disgrace over the enormity of the onslaught, the savagery of the destruction, the wholesale failure of Israeli security forces, and, no less, the sight of pogromists (...). The assailants grinned and howled, safe in the correct belief that there would be no arrests, no punishments, no consequences. (...) Ben-Gvir and the other extremists who have since taken over the government, hinted at their long-range solution for a one-state solution and the millions of non-Jewish residents of the West Bank: Girush. Expulsion. (...) Finance Minister Betzalel Smotrich declared that Hawara needed to be wiped out altogether (...). Something has, in fact, shattered

here. (...) everyone in Israel is on their own to make and act on moral decisions. To defend human rights or trample them. To fight for democracy or to vote for dictatorship. (...) After Hawara, we are beginning to see the occupation for what it is. (...)

Bradley Burston, HAA, 19.03.23

Amid risk of violence, Israel's gov't makes unnecessary provocations

(...) No matter what restrictions are lifted or measures taken, all it takes is an incendiary sermon by an imam, a rocket from Gaza, a ticking human bomb in Jenin or a terror attack just about anywhere to turn the region into a battlefield. (...) ultimately the only real allegiance Israel has is the promise to keep its citizens safe. Given that, there is certainly no need to make the situation worse with unnecessary provocations. But that's where members of the Netanyahu government seem to have an acute problem. (...) Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich added fuel to the fire by dismissing the existence of the Palestinian people in a speech he delivered in Paris. (...) Statements like Smotrich's, coming on the heels of both the Aqaba summit and yet another terrorist attack in Huwara (...) only create ground to continue the conflict as well as a veneer of an excuse by Palestinians to launch terror attacks. Israel must make it clear that quiet will be met with quiet, and that if that's not the case, neither Ramadan nor international appeals will prevent the country from taking action against terrorism. (...)

Editorial, JPO, 20.03.23

With mounting political instability, Israel's defenses being stretched thin

(...) there were threats from the northern front, as a terrorist from southern Lebanon planted an explosive device at a major junction in northern Israel. The (...) mysterious assassination of Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) operative Ali al-Aswad in Damascus was attributed to Israel, whose forces supposedly shot him at the entrance of his home. Earlier that day, a rocket fired from the Gaza Strip by the PIJ was intercepted by the Iron Dome missile defense system. That same afternoon, an Israeli man was shot in front of his wife by a Palestinian gunman in the West Bank town of Huwara (...). Meanwhile, on the northern front, PIJ Deputy Secretary-General Ziyad al-Nakhalah met with Hezbollah Secretary-General Hassan Nasrallah in Beirut (...). Nasrallah also met with Saleh al-Arouri, a prominent Hamas leader and a founding commander of its military wing, Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades. It's highly

possible that they are currently scheming against Israel. The recent judicial changes in Israel have made it vulnerable, and this weakness can be sensed from miles away. In order to respond to this, actions taken by the Shin Bet, such as their involvement in the recent assassination in Damascus, can be effective in deterring and intimidating potential attackers. However, instead of focusing on things like this, IDF Chief of Staff Herzl Halevi is busy dealing with reservists ditching duty in protest of the government, which comes at the expense of combat readiness. (...) It's wrong of the political echelon to put more on his plate and add political and social issues to his to-do list. If the objective is to keep the IDF out of politics, then the politicians must not pass on its responsibilities, of dealing with protests against judicial reforms to the military chief. Yossi Yehoshua, YED, 20.03.23

4. Medienquerschnitt

Offener Rassismus

Look Who's Giving Tips on Fighting Terror

(...) Meir Rubinstein, ordered that Arab passengers be banned from buses in the settlement. (...) Rubinstein, a mayor in Israel, is convinced that all Arabs (...) potential terrorists (...). You could be an Arab ambassador or an Arab heart surgeon, but if you get on the wrong bus, Rubinstein will kick you off. (...) We Arabs have long gotten used to this ugly practice. It doesn't faze us. If anything, I feel bad for all those Mizrahim who were unjustly made to suffer. To the point that some of them would rather wear a kippa just so no one will think they're Arabs, God forbid. (...) Whichever way you look at this story, it is both ridiculous and realistic. Because this same Rubinstein – who knows all about Arabs with or without blue ID cards – was arrested in November 2021 on suspicion of involvement in the 1990 Haredi cult murder of Avraham Edri. Police suspected that he had disguised himself as a woman to lure Edri and also drove the car that brought Edri to the scene of the murder. But since the statute of limitations had passed on the kidnapping offense, he was released after just three weeks. In other words, a person suspected of involvement in a murder is giving tips on how to fight violence and terror. Makes a lot of sense, like everything else in this country. Hanin Majadli, HAA, 17.03.23

Sauerteig an Pessach

New chametz restrictions: We can still be human on Passover

(...) the final approval of the Chametz Law (...) allows hospitals to ban the entry of leavened grain products during the festival of Passover. (...) the Chametz Law was meant to spite Israelis who feel that the country is becoming increasingly more religious and that Halachah (...) is being forced upon them. (...) Anyone wishing to bring a loaf of bread into the facility during Passover will find a way to do so, and no law or sign will prevent them. The only thing the Chametz Law will achieve is foster more antagonism. (...) Even from a practical standpoint, it is hard to imagine how this law would work. (...) This is a toothless and useless law that will only lead to more hostilities. (...) we must go back to being human. (...) We must learn to respect one another and be human: in traffic, on social media, and in hospitals. Dear secular Jews, do not force us to see chametz on Passover. Dear ultra-Orthodox Jews, stop forcing secular Jews to eat kosher on Passover. Let's respect one another. (...) Hanan Greenwood, IHY, 30.03.23

Annäherung zwischen Teheran und Riad

Iran-Saudi deal: Riyadh wants to play both sides

(...) Iran and Saudi Arabia announced the resumption of diplomatic relations on March 10, a day after the surprising news emerged of advanced Israeli-Saudi normalization talks. (...) It can be assumed (...) that MBS had played China and the US against each other. (...) China as the mediator obviously cashed in on the deal. The renewal of Saudi-Iran relations is clearly a blow to relations between Riyadh and Washington. (...) the countries of the region and especially the wealthy Gulf states, which face a variety of dangers and challenges frequently switch alliances. For the most part, they prefer risk-free and by implication, unaligned policies. (...) instead of an either-or policy, the Gulf states prefer a both-sides policy and especially avoid military support for either side of a conflict. (...) the Saudi-Iranian rapprochement could serve as a basis for dialogue to end the decade-long war in Yemen. In the short term, it will also stop Houthi attacks from Yemen on Saudi targets. (...) Elie Podeh und Onn Winckler, JPO, 24.03.23

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

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