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1. Weiter Proteste gegen die Regierungspolitik

Die wöchentlichen Massendemonstrationen gegen die Politik von Israels rechts-religiöser Regierung dauern unverändert an. Medien berichteten über mehr als 100.000 Menschen, die sich auch vergangenen Samstagabend – in der 35. Protestwoche – in Tel Aviv versammelten. Auch in anderen Städten kam es zu erneuten Kundgebungen. Die Sorge um Gleichberechtigung für Frauen und Mitglieder der LGBTQ+ Community sowie der dramatische Anstieg von Gewalttaten im arabischen Sektor nahmen dabei zentrale Rollen ein. „Hände weg von meinen Rechten“, war auf Schildern zu lesen, nachdem sich Berichte über Versuche häuften, Frauen den Zugang zu Bussen gänzlich zu verwehren oder sie auf die hinteren Bänke zu verweisen. Der Oberste Gerichtshof will sich in den kommenden Wochen mit Petitionen befassen, bei denen es um die Beschneidung der gerichtlichen Möglichkeiten geht, Entscheidungen der Regierung und einzelner Minister für „unangemessen“ zu erklären, um die Weigerung des Justizministers die Richterauswahlkommission in ihrer momentanen Zusammensetzung einzuberufen und um eine Erschwerung der Amtsenthebung des Ministerpräsidenten. Zu Besorgnis in Militärkreisen führte der Protest von rund 13.000 Reservist_innen, darunter Kampfflieger und Spezialkräfte für die Cyberabwehr, die ihrem Dienst fernbleiben. Die Auswirkungen seien vor allem bei der Ausbil-

dung von Nachwuchskräften bereits spürbar, hieß es.

Let it go

The word dai, best known from the dayenu of the Passover service, has a simple and assertive meaning in modern Hebrew: Enough, stop it, let it go. Israel has reached the point of both dai and dayenu. With the passage of the first stage of the government's judicial reforms, the signs have become unmistakable. (...) A general strike is threatened. Israel's international credit rating will be lowered. High-tech companies are beginning the process of relocation. The economy threatens to crater. Reservists are refusing to serve and the IDF warns that its readiness could soon be in danger. (...) Israel's enemies are gloating and no doubt looking for ways to exploit the situation. (...) Israeli society is being torn to pieces. (...) One thing then, is clear: (...) the government must give up on further reforms and it must do so now. The (...) primary responsibility falls upon those who support the reforms and the Netanyahu government itself. (...) Supporters of reform can regroup, make their case again and attempt to do what they conspicuously failed to do this time: Forge a broad consensus in their favor. If they cannot, they should understand what this means. The pro-reform camp has gotten a piece of what it wanted. (...) If they persist in what must regrettably be

called a kamikaze mission, the situation will quickly become hopeless. (...)

Benjamin Kerstein, IHY, 02.08.23

Israeli lawmakers must stop toying with our future and compromise

(...) A Hebrew University survey estimates that 72.9% of Israelis blame the government for worsening economic conditions. Two-thirds say the government weakened security and society. (...) a Lazar Research poll found 58% fearing civil war. (...) Perhaps Israeli public opinion can do what (...) the IDF security establishment and the Biden administration and American Jewry and common sense failed to do – convince enough Likudnikim to halt this mad rush to national fragmentation and regime-maiming. (...) This country will calm down if Netanyahu unilaterally announces a yearlong freeze on the judicial reform, unless a grand compromise emerges first. So the negotiations must continue, while Benny Gantz and Yair Lapid should consider entering a national-unity government with Gantz's 12 seats or their combined 36 seats. (...) If, in 1967, Menachem Begin and Moshe Dayan could overcome resentments and rivalries to join Levi Eshkol's government (...) we need leaders ready to stretch and solve this national emergency, too. Negotiate many scenarios, including pardoning Netanyahu. (...) It's more important to see Bibi jump back into effective nation-building than to see Bibi in a prison jumpsuit. (...)

Gil Troy, JPO, 02.08.23

Conservative values can unite a divided Israel

(...) The large-scale protests that have swept across Israel since early 2023 (...) reflect a deeper concern about the very nature of our country. The question at the heart of these protests is: What should a Jewish and democratic state look like? Secular Jews fear that their lifestyle will be compromised, and thus, they oppose the reform. Similarly, religious and ultra-Orthodox Jews who desire the reform fear that their way of life may be threatened. (...) Israel is grappling with the legacy of its early leadership, which was far-Left and semi-communist. They believed in central planning, not only for economics but also for culture, aiming to create a new Jew through a melting pot. They favored a highly interventionist central government. (...) This central planning approach has had a profound impact on Mizrahi and religious Jews. The attempt to create a new Jew through the melting pot often marginalized these communities, as the central planners did not fully

represent their interests or respect their unique cultural identities. This has led to a sense of alienation and resentment, which (...) at the heart of their request today for judicial reform that will give more power to elected officials that they feel represent them more than the elites. (...) a shift towards more free-market and conservative philosophies could alleviate many of the internal conflicts in Israel. (...) the Likud should lead the way in this endeavor. By embracing conservative principles, we can address the concerns of all sectors of Israeli society, from secular to religious and from liberal to conservative. We can ensure that Israel remains a Jewish and democratic state, where every individual has the freedom to define their lifestyle and every community can shape its own character. (...)

Dan Illouz, JPO, 04.08.23

Israel must draw common rules, before it's too late

(...) In real-time and from a historical perspective (...) we showed each other that we accept certain rules the games should be played by, understanding that the price of a full-scale confrontation could be even more dangerous. (...) before we argue or even agree to hold honest dialog, let's first agree on the rules to which we must abide. Let's hold firm as we did in the past. (...) let's establish legal agreements on the right to protest and its limits, on what's allowed and prohibited in a demonstration and primarily on uniform standards of law enforcement. When the core issue of constitutional laws, including the concept of separation of powers and the interaction between them, is disputed, let's at least establish procedural agreements (...) for the Basic Law: The Judiciary so that we can better manage the debate. (...) Perhaps a "rule forum" is needed, a group of former politicians who know how to communicate and negotiate with the opposing political side, even during times of deep divisions. Together with a group of seasoned jurists (...), who specialize in shaping political procedures into legal tools, this forum could help all of us crawl back from the edge. Such a forum would not deal with ideological decisions, but only with the rules according to which things should be held; it wouldn't produce reports no one reads, but would prepare 2-3 practical legislative proposals that would help bring us back to common ground before it's too late.

Reuven Rivlin, YED, 07.08.23

The Basic Law Israel Is Missing: How to Fix Our Democratic Crisis

(...) this crisis has created a historic constitutional moment that obliges us to complete the missing piece of the Basic Laws project. We must enact the Basic Law on Legislation now, and it will set the guidelines for enacting the missing Basic Laws in order to complete the Basic Laws project and establish a full constitution for Israel. This is also the way to make the societal rupture the foundation for the beginning of unity. The state needs the Basic Law on Legislation to set the basic “rules of play” of the regime, to enable the continued adoption of the constitution and to keep the rift from advancing. This is the foundation that we lack. The Basic Law on Legislation must establish, among other things, three principles: One, that the Knesset is the Constituent Assembly of Israel, which has the authority to enact a constitution; two, that the constitution shall be based on the values of Israel’s Declaration of Independence as a Jewish and democratic state. (...) The third principle is that there shall be judicial review, which will guarantee the application of the first two basic principles. (...) we must hold comprehensive discussions that will lead to broad agreements over key issues, such as elections and the character of the system of government. Until these are reached, enacting a full constitution will be impossible. (...) The new Basic Law will guarantee a stable constitutional platform. It is important that the Basic Law stipulate that in order to change it, the Basic Law on Legislation must be amended, and that this requires four votes in the Knesset, the last of these with a special majority: 80 Knesset members. The current government’s legislative blitz misused the Basic Laws; this practice will be ended. The constitutional structure on which the constitutional platform stands will ensure the continuation of the democratic system and the proper separation of powers between the executive and the judiciary branches, as well as the continued operation of the Judicial Appointments Committee, while using seniority on the Supreme Court to determine its president and preventing politicians from controlling the appointment of judges in Israel. The judicial review that will be established in the Basic Law on Legislation will guarantee that Israel’s Declaration of Independence and the definition of the state as Jewish and democratic will be the DNA of the Constituent Assembly. (...)

Aharon Barak, HAA, 17.08.23

Navigating Israel's constitutional crossroads: Reform or rift?

(...) Supporters of the reform (...) feel that for too many years, the judicial system has circumvented democracy and undermined it. These are not groundless allegations. Indeed, these were the claims raised by left-wing academia. (...) Understanding that the claims of reform supporters are not groundless might pave the way for national consensus. Israel needs a reconciliation committee, and it’s within reach. Reform can be achieved without a shadow of concern for undermining democracy. The path is much simpler than it may seem. After all, among us are judges, some of them labeled as conservatives or even right-wing, yet there’s no dispute about their integrity and expertise. (...) Netanyahu should invite three, four or five such judges and ask them to draft a Basic Law: Legislation that will regulate the separation of powers, the authority of the Supreme Court regarding the annulment of laws and more. (...) Likud leadership can initiate this step while freezing legislation until the reform plan is presented. Let’s say to that minority within the protest camp that opposes compromise and seeks capitulation – we can ignore them. But we must not ignore the majority, yes, a majority, which includes right-wing individuals who want a compromise. The ball is in Netanyahu’s court. A compromise is within reach. (...)

Ben Dror-Yemini, YED, 22.08.23

‘War of Brothers’ – Read Before Use

The frequent use of the term “civil war” or “fraternal war” in Israel in recent months has become a prominent element in public discourse following the Israeli government’s unilateral attempt to revolutionize the judicial system of the country. However, there is a significant gap between the current situation: violence, demonstrations, disputes, and even dark prophecies of rage, and the civil wars that other countries, not far from us, experienced a few decades ago. (...) The use of the term “fratricidal war” is intended to shock, perhaps to deter further deterioration of the current divide. (...) Fraternal war, whether in Africa or Yugoslavia, illustrate the name given to such atrocities: ethnic cleansing. Hundreds of thousands of refugees fled, chased from place to place, as the blaze of civil or fraternal war consumed everything in its path. (...) Civil wars never conclude happily; there are no winners, only losers. These conflicts scar nations and spare no one – friend or foe, brother or sister. The siege on Sarajevo, lasting nearly four years, resulted in thousands of casual-

ties. Such is the nature of a fraternal war; it leaves a mark that time can't erase, it never heals...

Hanani Rapoport, TOI, 22.08.23

For Israelis, Netanyahu's Judicial Coup Has Unleashed an Existential Fear

From its very beginning, Israel has had the character of a startup. Ever since the first command, "Lekh Lekha," go forth, there has been a drive of innovation, of going toward, of entrepreneurship and invention and creation. Israel has known hard times and existential risks, but the spirit that surged in it was that of a vibrant country, radiating originality, the unexpected, and the capacity to soar to new heights in every field. And then came the government coup, and Israel began to lose the free and harmonious movement of a healthy body. Everything that was natural and self-evident to most of its citizens – identification with the state, the near-familial sense of belonging – is now hesitant, riddled with doubt and anxiety. While the process predates the coup, it was the coup that caused it to erupt with so much force and entirely change Israel's reality. (...) Israel's sense of strength and of almost unlimited power are vulnerable to doubts and fissures and anxieties. For the first time in years, Israelis have begun to feel what weakness means. For the first time, perhaps since the Yom Kippur War, we encountered within ourselves the thin trickle of existential fear. (...) It is exactly those people who represent, in their own eyes, the strong, confident and powerful Israeliness who today evoke in Israelis a sense of fear, weakness and threat associated with the galut, the Diaspora. (...) Those who despair in the face of the aggression and rapacity of the right must be reminded over and over: The protest movement is the hope, the free motion within the fixation, the creative act, the mutual responsibility, the ideological courage. It is the lifeblood of democracy. It is our and our children's chance to live a life of liberty here. It must be maintained and fueled and adhered to, and a long-term commitment must be made to restore Israel, to rebuild it from its break, and also from its heart-break, to get it back on its feet – until we know whether it survived or whether our catastrophe, its disease, has turned malignant.

David Grossman, HAA, 27.08.23

2. USA streben nach Annäherung zwischen Israel und Saudi-Arabien

Nach offiziell bislang unbestätigten Berichten von US-Medien ist es zu einer Verständigung zwischen

dem Weißen Haus und der saudi-arabischen Führung gekommen über die Normalisierung der Beziehungen zwischen Jerusalem und Riad. Demnach würde Saudi-Arabien Israel anerkennen und dafür im Gegenzug US-Sicherheitsgarantien und Hilfe beim Aufbau eines zivilen Atomprogramms bekommen. Israel wäre zu Zugeständnissen an die Palästinenser_innen aufgefordert. Unter der aktuellen Regierungskonstellation in Jerusalem ist das allerdings ein eher schwieriges Unterfangen. Saudi-Arabien hatte 2002 einen Gesamtfriedensplan für den Nahen Osten auf den Tisch gelegt, der unter der Bedingung, dass Israel die Truppen zur Waffenstillstandslinie von 1967 zurückzieht und einen Palästinenserstaat anerkennt normalisierte Beziehungen zu den arabischen Staaten vorsah. Israel lehnte diesen Plan bislang ab.

An Israeli-Saudi Normalization Deal

(...) In what could be a diplomatic coup as significant as the United States' successful drive to end Israel's state of war with Egypt in 1979, Washington is making a concerted effort to normalize Israel's relations with Saudi Arabia. (...) Israeli Foreign Minister Eli Cohen claims that Israel is closer than ever to forging a historic normalization deal with the Saudis. (...) Is the Israeli government, the most right-wing since statehood 75 years ago, really prepared to make the kind of political and territorial concessions that would entice Saudi Arabia — the seat of Islam and the custodian of the holy Muslim cities of Mecca and Medina — to sign a peace accord with Israel? Saudi Arabia demands concrete progress toward a two-state solution to resolve the gnawing issue of Palestinian statelessness (...). Netanyahu realizes that an Israeli rapprochement with Saudi Arabia would be of stellar strategic importance in Israel's quest for regional acceptance and legitimacy. (...) An agreement with Saudi Arabia would expand the 2020 Abraham Accords, under which the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Morocco and Sudan agreed to normalize relations with Israel after it dropped its plan to annex the Jordan Valley and Israeli settlements in the West Bank. For Netanyahu, the Abraham Accords were a monumental step forward because he managed to decouple the burning Palestinian issue (...) from the normalization process with four Arab countries. (...) If Netanyahu ever decides that normalization with Saudi Arabia is more important strategically than clinging to the West Bank, he would have (...) to scrap his alliance of convenience with the Religious Zionist Party and the Jewish Power Party, which are respectively

headed by Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich and National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir. (...) Sheldon Kirshner, TOI, 01.08.23

Risky promises: Biden's Saudi normalization may cost Israel dearly

As one might recall, American weapons and military equipment were given to Egypt after the historic peace accord with Israel, and that was also the case for the United Arab Emirates following the signing of the Abraham Accords. It's clear for everyone to see that there is a deal going on, just as there was with the Moroccans who gave peace and received American recognition when it comes to Western Sahara. That's how peace works. It is not some Walt Disney fantasy, but a business in which each side benefits in one way and compromises in another. (...) However, in this particular instance, what's given in return cannot simply be summed up as tactical benefits for the Saudis, but a strategic move. (...) Practically speaking, the Biden administration did not only completely make a 180 turn in the Trump approach toward Iran, but completely flipped the Abraham Accords and expanded them, as a hostage of a newly designed nuclear pact. What they're saying is simple – We will bring Saudi Arabia to the table in exchange for Israel relinquishing the Iranian nuclear pact issue. That is the big prize Israel has to give the Americans, which makes the Saudi nuclear pact seem insignificant in comparison. It's not like Israel has a lot of to say in the matter. After it was made clear there wouldn't be enough pilots to protect the homeland (...), the deal Biden is proposing is the lesser of two evils. It comes with a heavy price tag. Iran will become a superpower, with all that entails. Israel will have its hands tied behind its back and would be unable to attack even if it wanted to. Iranian nukes will transform Tehran into a much fiercer beast than it currently is, and the only thing that can save Israel from this nightmare scenario is Iran itself kicking the bucket.

Dr. Doron Matza, YED, 08.08.23

Peace with Saudi Arabia is a real possibility

(...) Moving Israel-Saudi ties from the shadows into the light of day will require a triangular convergence of interests between Jerusalem, Riyadh, and Washington, and it is quite possible – perhaps even probable – that such a confluence is emerging. (...) Israel-Saudi normalization would (...) augment regional stability, with two of Washington's most important Middle East partners reaching a pro-Western and pro-American accord that would undoubtedly

serve US interests. (...) For its part, Riyadh could see the approaching presidential election as a window of opportunity to achieve a long-sought-after Saudi-US mutual security pact that would codify Washington's commitment to protect and defend the kingdom. (...) In addition, Riyadh believes that such an agreement will give its armed forces access to state-of-the-art American military hardware which until now has been denied the kingdom, especially the advanced F-35 stealth combat aircraft. Saudi Arabia is also demanding US support for its plans to build a civilian nuclear power program, including indigenous enrichment. (...) Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has declared Jerusalem-Riyadh normalization a key goal of his government, knowing full well it would be a geopolitical game-changer. (...) Presumably, the Palestinian issue cannot be sidelined. But if the Saudis once placed an Israeli withdrawal to the pre-1967 lines and the establishment of a Palestinian state as preconditions for normalization, today Riyadh (...) is no longer willing to accept a Palestinian veto over its foreign policy, a deal may nonetheless necessitate Israeli concessions in the West Bank. Netanyahu might be asked to publicly rule out any unilateral annexations, proclaim an openness to the possibility of eventual Palestinian statehood, and even limit settlement construction. Although difficult, these sorts of steps are neither unprecedented nor impossible (...).

Mark Regev, JPO, 10.08.23

Who is afraid of a Saudi-Israeli peace accord?

(...) the peace train has left the Riyadh station, but the Saudis and Americans are going to make us go through a treacherous road until we actually get to board it. (...) There is no doubt that the PA is under duress, prompting President Mahmoud Abbas to go to meet with a Hamas delegation in the desert under Egyptian auspices. (...) Abbas also paid a visit to Amman, which is also set to lose in the event of a deal between Israel and Saudi Arabia. Jordan could find itself caught in the middle between Riyadh and Jerusalem, with both pressuring it to take a more active role in regional cooperation, which could very well help its citizens but may not help it win over hearts and minds on the Jordanian street. What's most concerning for Jordan is that it would lose its special status on Temple Mount as the custodian of the holy sites for Islam, which will fall under Riyadh's domain. All this is taking place against the backdrop of the Palestinian Authority going through one of its most difficult periods. It is not just that it has lost the support among the Palestinian masses (...), or that

there are growing calls in Israel to have it toppled. The problem is mainly that there are succession battles that could destroy what's left. (...) What interests Abbas today is his legacy, and without any real chance of moving forward in the peace process with Israel, he seeks to cement the image that he had remained steadfast by not giving; not even a small concession. (...) A Saudi-Israeli deal can be the final nail in the coffin of the Palestinian cause, setting it back 100 years to square one. In other words, it will no longer be about a national struggle for self-determination but about the future of the Arab inhabitants of the Land of Israel.

Eyal Zisser, IHY, 13.08.23

The Iran-Saudi deal is a nightmare for Israel, the US, and the world

(...) The United States and Israel should be seriously worried about the renewal of talks, and the building of relationships, between Iran and Saudi Arabia. (...) Iran and Saudi Arabia, long-time nemeses, are expert gamers when it comes to international diplomacy. Saudi Arabia is simultaneously engaged in diplomatic liaising with Iran and engaged in navigating a US-brokered deal between their country and Israel. And not just any deal. This would be a deal that includes a resolution of the decades-old, until now unsolvable, Palestinian-Israeli issue. A deal that would, presumably, involve some form of Palestinian statehood or independence. Any diplomatic venture that includes Iran is extremely dangerous for Israel and the region. (...) The tensions that have existed between Iran and Saudi Arabia have been very important in keeping an equilibrium in the region. These two significant regional powers balanced one another. (...) Times have changed. Nowadays, the attraction of creating a working relationship with Iran has become very attractive to the Saudis. (...) Iran has many reasons for wanting to normalize relations with Saudi Arabia. And as important as access to the holy sites in Mecca and participation in the haj are, they don't top the list. Iran also wants religious superiority over the Sunnis. They want all Muslims to unite under their leadership. Their ultimate goal is to oust Saudi Arabia as the leader of the Muslim world. Of the 1.6 billion Muslims in the world today, 85% are Sunni, 15% are Shi'ites. Under normal conditions, Iran would never become a leader of the Muslim world. Mending ties with Saudi Arabia is, Iranian leadership hopes, the path to achieving that goal. For Israel, that alliance will be disastrous.

Micah Halpern, JPO, 21.08.23

What does the Libyan debacle teach Israelis ahead of Saudi talks

Media and politicians were justified in paying attention to the fallout (...) over the publicized meeting of Foreign Minister Eli Cohen with his Libyan counterpart Najla Mangoush in Rome. (...) The desire to claim credit for the meeting, while throwing caution to the wind, was in the interest of a quick political win at home, and in complete disregard of diplomatic considerations. It ultimately caused untold damage to any future contacts with the other nations in the Middle East and certainly raised concerns about them becoming public. But it also reveals a deeper understanding of how current and future contact with the Arab world would be accepted by their citizens. (...) The riots demonstrate the gap between the apparent welcome extended to Israeli officials based on strategic considerations, and the emotions held by most Arabs, when it comes to Israel. Public opinion polls show Israel is still considered an enemy in most Suni Muslim countries, even those as far away as Tunisia and Algiers. (...) This is a critical conversation to have, while efforts to forge Israeli-Saudi relations are ongoing. (...) The Libyan debacle should indicate to the decision-makers in Jerusalem that they should review the foundations on which Israel's Middle East strategy relies. Along with an abundance of caution regarding any public contact with regional leaders, and a deep understanding of public perceptions among their citizenry, Israel should examine the effects of the conflict with the Palestinians, on the Arab world. (...) if one-sided policies to change the reality on the ground continue, hostility in the Arab world will grow, ultimately foiling attempts for diplomatic agreements.

Michael Milstein, YED, 29.08.23

3. Weiter Terror und Gewalt

Wieder kam es zu Toten bei Terroranschlägen und Militäraktionen. Zum vierten Mal in diesem Jahr gab es einen Anschlag in Tel Aviv, als ein Palästinenser einen Wachmann erschoss und kurz darauf selbst von einem zweiten Wachmann erschossen wurde. In der Nähe der palästinensischen Stadt Hebron erlag eine Israelin ihren Schussverletzungen. Bei einer Militäraktion in Jenin kamen drei Palästinenser ums Leben, die laut Angaben der israelischen Sicherheitskräfte einen weiteren Anschlag geplant hatten. In Tulkarem starb ein junger Palästinenser bei einer Razzia. Und unweit von Ramallah wurde ein Mann von israelischen Siedler_innen erschossen. Ronen Bar, Chef des israelischen Inlandsge-

heimdienstes, kommentierte den Vorfall besorgt. Jüdischer Terror stelle eine strategische Gefahr dar. Mit der Aussage: "Mein Recht, das Recht meiner Frau und meiner Kinder, sich in Judäa und Samaria zu bewegen, ist wichtiger als die Bewegungsfreiheit der Araber", hatte Itamar Ben-Gvir, Minister für Nationale Sicherheit und selbst Bewohner einer Siedlung im Westjordanland, zusätzlich provoziert.

The IDF Is the Face of the Israeli Settlers' Defense Forces

(...) the Judea and Samaria Division commander, Brig. Gen. Avi Bluth (...) was raised in the settlement Neveh Tzuf and went to the Eli yeshiva. He wears a kippa, lives in a religious community and is a father of six. His thinking and behavior reflect a complete fusion of his religious-settler mentality and his military approach. (...) A military commander is supposed to have a strategic interest in preventing such occurrences. But for Bluth it's an ideological imperative. (...). Something strange is happening in the Judea and Samaria Division on the intelligence level and the speed of response to pogroms against Palestinians. (...) this seemingly sleepy, stammering army undergoes a complete transformation when it comes to friction with the Palestinians, as well as with Israeli human rights activists. The forces' aggressiveness toward them rises sky-high. The number of Palestinian fatalities, and the considerable rate of children among them, is spiking dramatically. (...) The trigger happiness, the hilltop terrorists' use of IDF clothing and weapons, the dozens of rogue outposts that the army isn't evacuating, the guard posts decorated with revenge posters and fundamentalist slogans are all part of the complete blurring of borders between the army of a state of law and a settlers' militia. Bluth is merely a mirror image of the present and future of the IDF ground forces. And whoever doesn't want him in the Judea and Samaria Division will get him in the chief of staff's office.

Uri Misgav, HAA, 10.08.23

Terror in the Hebron area would further challenge the IDF

(...) If Hebron, where the Hamas terror group has infrastructure in place, will join in the violence, security forces will face a more challenging time that will require the deployment of many more troops and a massive call-up of reserves. (...) The military is faced with a perpetual dilemma, whether to impose restrictions that will harm the lives of innocent Palestinians, thereby prompting more to opt for terror or to

continue a policy that differentiates between terrorists and civilians wishing to get on with their lives. (...) Both the previous government and Netanyahu's current one, accept the position of the IDF and the Shin Bet on the need to bolster the Palestinian Authority. (...) Without the security services in the PA things would be much worse and the need to allot troops to the area would further reduce the military's ability to maintain their training regime. (...) Most terrorists in the recent wave, that began in March 2022, are not affiliated with any of the major terror organizations and do not have previous experience in such attacks and therefore cannot be considered soldiers in the service of an Iranian plot. The West Bank is full of illegal weapons, social media platforms are full of incitement and the streets are filled with youth that has lost all faith in the failing PA. Without a solution, the future looks bleak. Providing security for more than half a million Jewish residents of the West Bank, who live among 3 million Palestinians, is a mission bordering on the impossible. (...) Yossi Yehushua, YED, 22.08.23

Israel must stop Iran in the West Bank like it does in Syria

(...) in the past decade the IDF has been working with tremendous determination and firepower, and no small amount of success, to prevent Iran from turning Syria into a beachhead against Israel. As the recent wave of Palestinian terrorism in Judea and Samaria demonstrates, however, Israel is not having the same success in keeping Iran out of the West Bank. (...) In recent months, Iran has hosted senior Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad figures in Tehran on several occasions for talks that obviously were not centered on the weather. According to Netanyahu and Gallant, Iranian fingerprints are on the recent uptick of attacks. If Israel's long arm can prevent Iranian entrenchment in Syria, it should be able to curb its activities closer to home in Judea and Samaria as well.

Palestinian terrorism will persist without Iranian financial, moral, and material aid. But the terrorists might not exhibit the same level of boldness demonstrated in recent weeks without the inflow of support from Tehran. (...)

Editorial, JPO, 23.08.23

Israel has no solution for terror, crime; just more blame shifting

(...) Since the Netanyahu government took office at the end of December, 35 people have been killed in terrorist attacks. That is more than all of 2022 and

there are still four months left until the end of the year. (...) politicians do not really have solutions to offer the public. (...) the attacks, which had been mostly focused on the northern Samaria area of Nablus and Jenin, are now moving into the area of Hebron, one of the biggest Palestinian cities in the West Bank, and a known Hamas stronghold. (...) On the Palestinian front, there has not been a serious initiative to genuinely try and change the situation for almost 20 years now. The freeze in 2010, the release of prisoners in 2014, and the Trump peace plan were just tactical moves on the chessboard. Nothing fundamental.

And while Israel is not alone here – the Palestinian intransigence is the biggest obstacle to peace – the idea that we are dependent on someone else to decide what is in our best interest is also fundamentally flawed. (...) But instead of having a real conversation about the issues that are causing this bloodshed, government ministers like Ben-Gvir call for Band-Aid-like solutions, such as getting the Shin Bet to operate in the Israeli-Arab sector, at a time when the security agency is already stretched thin fighting its main focus – Palestinian terrorism. (...) Comprehensive plans are required that need to look at issues holistically. Another checkpoint is not a solution and having the Shin Bet investigate a few murders in the Arab sector will not stop this unprecedented murder wave of Israeli citizens. The government needs to get serious about the immense challenges that Israel is facing. Blame and Band-Aids will not be enough.

Jaakov Katz, JPO, 24.08.23

4. Gewalt in der arabischen Gesellschaft

Vier Tote in nur einer Nacht, die Zahl der Gewaltopfer in der arabischen Gesellschaft stieg seit Jahresbeginn auf über 160 Menschen – mehr als doppelt so viele wie im vergleichbaren Zeitraum des Vorjahres. Zu den jüngsten Todesopfern gehört ein Lokalpolitiker, der bei der anstehenden Kommunalwahl auf das Amt des Bürgermeisters kandidieren wollte. Erst am Vortag war der Generaldirektor der Stadt Tira erschossen worden. Der Knesset-Abgeordnete Ayman Odeh berichtet über Morddrohungen. Regierungschef Benjamin Netanyahu sprach von einer „landesweiten Plage“ und kündigte an, alle Mittel einzusetzen, um die Verbrechen zu bekämpfen. Im Gespräch sei auch die sogenannte Administrativhaft, die bislang nur in den besetzten Palästinensergebieten zur Anwendung kommt. In der arabischen Bevölkerung wächst der Unmut über die

Diskriminierung und die Tatenlosigkeit der israelischen Sicherheitskräfte. Der dramatische Anstieg von Verbrechen in der arabischen Gesellschaft war auch Thema der wöchentlichen Protestmärsche gegen die Regierungspolitik.

Hear the Cry of Every Arab in Israel, Living in the Shadow of Death

(...) This is a day of mourning. (...) What's happening in Arab society from north to south, Abu Snan to Rahat, is not a matter of culture. It's not a matter of choosing to live or die by gunfire. The number of people dying day after day – people who've worked hard to succeed, build a home and raise a family – is not and cannot be due to negligence. It's due to the policy of a fascist and poisonous government. To Itamar Ben-Gvir (...). Every new report of a murder in Arab society strengthens the cycle of bloodshed. (...) Arab society is soaking in its own blood, weak and without representation or trust in the law enforcement. The Israel Police must take the blame for the lack of personal security in every Arab locality. (...) Years of neglect, the paucity of educational and employment opportunities for the young, the lack of infrastructure and the difficulty of integrating into Israeli society only intensify the crisis that plagues Arab society. The endless cycle of bloodshed is the inevitable outcome, and it will continue as long as the Israeli establishment continues to ignore all these factors. (...)

Sheren Falah Saab, HAA, 23.08.23

Arab lives matter, too

(...) Of some 750 murders in Israel over the past four years, 70% of victims have been Arab Israelis, more than triple their proportion of Israel's total population, which is around 21%. (...) Finally, the government launched "Stop the Bleeding," an innovative program developed in partnership with the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), which promoted a community-based approach to stemming the tide of violence and criminal activity in several Arab localities. (...) The murder rate in the Arab community dipped in 2022 for the first time in years (...). Community groups applauded the government's efforts, while stressing that they needed to continue in order to drive the violence down even further. Enter Itamar Ben-Gvir. The former far-right activist and lawyer for suspected Jewish terrorists, who had campaigned on a platform that centered on restoring law and order (...) renamed his new fiefdom the National Security Ministry and immediately set about rolling back many of the previous govern-

ment's policies. Operation "Safe Track" was discontinued; eight months into the job, Ben-Gvir still has not appointed a deputy to oversee it. The Israel Police's Department to Fight Crime in the Arab Community – which the police said had improved its engagement with the community and "played a significant role in bolstering the Israeli Arab community's faith in the police" – was ordered shuttered. The "Stopping the Bleeding" program was shut down, reportedly because Ben-Gvir considers JDC to be a "leftist organization" (...). Ben-Gvir has one job: keeping the people of Israel safe (...) all the people of Israel, Jews and Arabs alike – safe, and he is failing miserably. (...)

Avi Mayer, JPO, 24.08.23

Don't leave me to bear this alone

(...) How can one remain indifferent to the cry of the girl who lost her father? The boy who lost his mother? Do the same girl and boy imagine that if they were not Arabs it's possible that their parents' murders could have been avoided? Is this the society we want to live in? There will be those who will say it is our culture or those who will blame our religion. There may even be quite a few who are not sad at all by the spilling of Arab blood. How did we lose our humanity – do we no longer care about human life? (...) In many of these murder cases, the victim's family live next to the murderer who is not charged by the police because there is a lack of evidence or proof. Imagine a situation where a despicable murderer walks free alongside relatives of the murdered. (...) If I could file an indictment against the Israeli government and its leader for disrespecting our lives, I would do so. After the severe wave of violence in May 2021, many of us – social and educational activists – warned that idle, inactive young people will fall captive to criminal activity and can, in an instant, turn their weapons from crime to nationalistic violence. We warned about the ubiquity of weapons. We warned of the lack of educational resources, of frameworks for youth guidance, and the lack of encouragement of education and values. (...)

Ghadir Hani, TOI, 31.08.23

5. Medienquerschnitt

Israelisches Raketenabwehrsystem für Deutschland

Israel's Slide Toward Illiberalism Challenges Germany's Unconditional Support

(...) at the end of 1957, (...) 12 years after the Holocaust, the German defense minister promised to supply the Jewish state with weapons from the stocks of the Bundeswehr (...). And now? Israel has concluded the largest arms deal in its history, selling its Arrow 3 missile defense system for around 3.2 billion euros (...) – with the Germans. (...) What began as unilateral German aid to the State of the Jews, which was fighting for its survival, has long since become a two-way street, one that has now reached an unprecedented climax to the benefit of both states. (...) There could not be anything better for German politics. The Arrow 3 is the most spectacular example, but by no means an isolated case. For training purposes, the German air force maintains a permanent presence in Israel; for many years, Israeli Heron reconnaissance drones have been protecting German soldiers on missions abroad. (...) Germany has also been making a very decisive contribution to Israel's security. Since the beginning of German arms deliveries, Israel has wanted one thing above all: German submarines. (...) In April, the current government even sent German Air Force "Eurofighter" planes to Israel to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the Jewish State's founding. These German planes flew side by side with Israeli F 16 fighters over Jerusalem to demonstrate the strong bond between the militaries of both countries. The signal was clear: Germany stands by Israel. However, how this commitment can be maintained vis-à-vis a country whose government, in the opinion of millions of Israelis, is moving away from its democratic roots is a question that is causing a lot of headaches in Berlin. (...) Berlin remains unambiguous. Scholz reiterated that Germany's top priority would always be Israel's security. This continues to be the "German Staatsräson". It will be interesting to see how long a rather skeptical German public will remain willing to continue supporting this commitment, both financially and morally should Israel become an illiberal democracy.

Werner Sonne, HAA, 23.08.23

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

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