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1. Krieg gegen die Hamas

Die israelische Armee weitet ihren Kampf gegen die islamistische Hamas im Gazastreifen aus. Während sich die militärischen Angriffe in den ersten Wochen des Krieges auf den Norden des palästinensischen Gebiets konzentriert hatten, wird seit dem Ende der siebentägigen Feuerpause verstärkt auch der Süden unter Beschuss genommen. Die Armee rief die Zivilbevölkerung in Khan Younis und Rafah auf, sichere Bereiche aufzusuchen. Umgekehrt feuerte die Hamas wieder hunderte Raketen auf Israel ab. Auch in Tel Aviv heulten erneut die Sirenen auf. Palästinensischen Angaben zufolge sind in den ersten acht Wochen des Krieges mehr als 15.500 Menschen im Gazastreifen zu Tode gekommen, darunter rund 6.000 Minderjährige. Die Zahlen lassen sich nicht unabhängig überprüfen. Das Weiße Haus bekräftigte unterdessen die Forderung an Israel, die palästinensische Zivilbevölkerung im Kriegsgebiet zu schützen. Gleichzeitig fordern die USA die Freilassung der 137 immer noch im Gazastreifen gefangen gehaltenen Israelis, die am 7. Oktober beim blutigen Hamas-Angriff auf Israel – mit über 1.200 Todesopfern und über 10.000 Verletzten auf israelischer Seite – entführt worden waren.

Defining victory will determine the Gaza war's future

(...) Israeli minister of Defense Yoav Gallant (...) now has the chance to finish what he wanted to do back in 2009: bring down the Hamas regime in Gaza

and create a new security reality for Israel's south. If up until 2009, Hamas had fired around 4,000 rockets into Israel, in the almost 15 years since Cast Lead, it has fired almost 25,000 rockets. The fact that it has taken Israel so long as well as the October 7 attacks to realize that this reality needs to change is itself an issue that will need to be dealt with. Israel fell in love with high fences and the belief that Hamas makes for good neighbors. Israel built safe rooms, invented the Iron Dome, and constructed entire schools and playgrounds in bomb shelters at astronomical costs. It now knows that it made a mistake. The question for Israel now is how to define success in this war, and whether a victory is even possible (...). Let's say, for example, that Israel manages to kill some of the top Hamas leaders in Gaza, but fails to secure the release of the hostages. Is that a victory? And let's say the opposite happens – Israel secures the release of most or even all of the hostages who are alive, but fails to kill Deif, Yahya Sinwar, or other top Hamas terrorists hiding in tunnels somewhere in Gaza. Is that a victory? (...) Hamas will not simply surrender, and it will not be possible to destroy every last rocket launcher, every last tunnel, and kill or capture every last terrorist. It also might not be possible to bring back every last hostage. Israel's leadership needs to look the country in the eye and tell people what to expect. After the trauma of October 7, people deserve to know where the country is headed and how long this will take. (...)
Yaakov Katz, JPO, 17.11.23

After October 7: Trials, tribulations and triumphs

(...) Indeed, our visage has been altered. (...) It's as though a gaping abyss opened in the heart of our existence, drawing us into its depths. Yet, on the flip side, the tales of bravery and self-sacrifice that have emerged during this time are astounding. Stories about the noble acts that individuals performed for their fellow humans. The extraordinary courage of those who literally risked their lives – indeed, gave them away – to safeguard others. (...) We shall hold in our hearts the vestiges of a world that vanished along with our dear ones. (...) We shall enshrine in our hearts their countenances, their facial expressions, the illumination of their visages, the rhythm of life manifested in their gestures, their laughter, their sorrow. (...) We are also confronted with the question: who will we become – what sort of people, what kind of society will we shape, on what principles will we rear our children henceforth once we arise from the ashes? (...) Over the past month, I have observed you, the residents of the Gaza border region, the inhabitants of the south. Like all Israelis, I have spent countless hours watching you on television, day and night. I have reflected on the fact that for nearly your entire existence, Israel has been engaged in war or in violent conflict, in one way or another, with its neighbors. And you, you have nearly always found yourselves on the frontline of these confrontations. You have paid an immense price for your life here. And yet, the war did not taint you. (...) You were, and still are, people of integrity. Individuals whose intellect and hearts are harmoniously aligned. People who yearn for peace, aspire towards goodness and frequently extend kindness even toward their enemies.

David Grossman, YED, 20.11.23

What to do with tens of thousands of Hamas war criminals and their sympathizers?

(...) It's easy but too easy to say: Let's kill them all or jail them all. Capital punishment to me here seems appropriate for the pogrom leaders because their dedication to war crimes and genocide can be compared to that of Eichmann. But not every Hamas terrorist and sympathizer can be compared to them—let them not flatter themselves. Surely, all those infiltrators are collectively guilty of the genocide and war crimes, but that doesn't make them equal to the most central organizer of the Holocaust. It's also impossible to hold 50,000 trials. (...) What to do? (...) Keeping them in massive prisons. It's safe, yet prohibitively expensive. But we can't kill mass murderers because jailing them is too costly.

This is not the USA. Or Napoleon who in 1799 slaughtered thousands of prisoners of war in the Holy Land by bayonet because by bullet was too expensive, and so was guarding and feeding them! That's a war crime so not an option. (...) Let's work on it. (...)

Moshe-Mordechai van Zuiden, TOI, 20.11.23

Israel, Gaza and the Law of War

(...) several hundred legal academics published an open letter accusing Israel of committing war crimes in Gaza. (...) this lawyers' jeremiad is little more than a gossamer web of political arguments glued together by partisan animus against Israel. The customary international law that forms the basis for these lawyers' arguments is a nebulous collection of unwritten principles tainted by 'eye of the beholder' subjectivity. It is far more useful to assess Israel's military actions by the actual text of the international conventions countries negotiated to establish an authoritative law of war. (...) per the terms of the Hague Regulations, Gaza cannot be "occupied" as the lawyers' letter asserts, but constitutes a foreign enclave controlled by a terrorist army that was waging war against Israel. This means Israel is under no legal obligation under the laws of war to supply fuel and food to what, in essence, is hostile belligerent territory. (...) What does the law of war say about the misuse of civilian facilities for military purposes? (...) hospitals, schools, or residential buildings used to conduct military operations lose their legal immunity from attack and become legitimate targets of war. (...) It's demonstrable that the Israeli military is doing everything required by the law of war – and more – to minimize harm to the civilian population of Gaza. But because of the inherent chaos of the battlefield, compounded by the lawlessness of Hamas, it's an equal certainty that those efforts will fail. (...)

Ted Lapkin, TOI, 21.11.23

Hamas Leader Sinwar Is Making Laughingstock Out of Netanyahu

A single moment at Wednesday evening's televised press conference offered a distillation of the qualities of the most despicable man in Jewish history. (...) Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu blurted out, "I ordered the Mossad to take action against Hamas' leaders wherever they are." (...) He decided. He even instructed. (...) Now Hamas' leaders will go even more deeply into hiding. Now, all the hostages will be at greater risk. After all, they're being held captive by a Nazi organization that enjoys slaughter-

ing Jews. And it's even possible that this scoundrel's boast was the reason for the delay in the deal to bring some of them home. (...) Look at how different his conduct is from that of Prime Minister Golda Meir. Immediately after Palestinians massacred Israeli athletes at the 1972 Munich Olympics, she ordered the Mossad to kill everyone who participated in the killings. But she didn't announce it to the media. (...) Even though Hamas' leader in the Gaza Strip, Yahya Sinwar, has sustained harsh blows and Gaza is surrounded, he has managed to make a laughingstock of the scoundrel on the hostage issue too, because Netanyahu is a hesitant, cowardly appeaser. So if we want to win this war, we have to oust the most despicable man in the history of the Jewish people this very day.

Nehemia Shtrasler, HAA, 23.11.23

Israel's Leaders Must Tell Us About the War's Last Day

(...) The war is around 50 days old now. The northern Gaza Strip has almost been fully cleared of Hamas (...) concerns about sliding into a bloody, drawn-out phase, expanding the cycle of grief and bereavement, are only growing. (...) this war is being led by political and military leaders who espoused all the wrong conceptions, ones that shattered so tragically. And the main focus is Benjamin Netanyahu, someone whose personal considerations always come first. (...) We shouldn't succumb to worshipping the army and cabinet, a folklore that also finds its way into the media, which accepts any briefing as canon. We must now ask questions and no longer trust the wisdom of an apparatus that has failed us so miserably. (...) The toppling of Hamas is a worthy mission, more just than any other, even a necessary one after what Hamas wrought. But the leaders of this war must explain what this actually entails. (...) How do the army and government view the last day of the war (...) ? How do they envisage the first day after the war, and mainly, which security guarantees will be granted to Israelis in the south, the people who were so abandoned? We deserve honest answers to all these questions, first because policymakers must ask them of themselves. This must happen before we take one more step.

Ravit Hecht, HAA, 25.11.23

Israel was right about how Hamas operates

For years Israel has said that Hamas conducts its ongoing campaign of terrorism against Israel from within civilian sites in Gaza: homes, businesses, schools, refugee facilities... and hospitals. And for

years it had always been dismissed by the international community as paranoia or disinformation (...). The evidence that Israel had been correct all along about Hamas's nefarious mode of operation began to pile up soon after the IDF began its offensive. (...) The vastness of the tunnels (...) was testimony to how important this location was to Hamas. (...) Shifa was being used as a terror base (...).

The longer Israel stays in Gaza, the more it is discovering about Hamas's web of evil and its cynical use of civilians, especially the infirm, to provide a cover for their murderous actions. The world should be coming together to back Israel's actions and encourage it to continue its efforts to uproot the terror that has held Gaza captive for close to two decades.

Editorial, JPO, 26.11.23

2. Feuerpause und Befreiung der ersten Entführten im Gazastreifen

Eine von Katar, Ägypten und den USA vermittelte siebentägige Feuerpause ermöglichte die Freilassung von über einhundert Geiseln aus den Händen der palästinensischen Islamisten, darunter auch zahlreiche ausländische Arbeitskräfte. Israel entließ im Gegenzug 240 palästinensische Häftlinge. Zudem wurden während der Kampfpause Hilfslieferungen in den Gazastreifen gebracht. Fünf Wochen intensiver Verhandlungen waren der Feuerpause vorangegangen, bis man sich auf die Quote von jeweils drei minderjährigen oder weiblichen palästinensischen Häftlingen für jeweils eine israelische Geisel einigte. Die zunächst auf vier Tage angelegte Feuerpause wurde mehrmals verlängert, bis die Hamas als erste erneut Raketen auf Israel abschoss. Zudem hält die Terrororganisation entgegen vorheriger Vereinbarungen mehrere Frauen und minderjährige Geiseln weiter fest. Insgesamt sollen noch 137 israelische Geiseln im Gazastreifen gefangen sein. Unterdessen dauern die Kundgebungen von israelischen Demonstrant_innen an, die die sofortige Freilassung aller Geiseln im Gazastreifen fordern.

Bring them home now

(...) the suffering families (...) have been mostly kept in the dark and have not been given briefings by government representatives. Likewise, the country's leaders have not been forthcoming in reaching out to them or meeting them.

(...) The weeklong march seems to have changed the equation. (...) Netanyahu is reportedly set to

meet with the families this week (...). Despite the unbearable stench of dealing with Hamas and enabling its murderous regime to attain some of its goals, Israel's mission to return whatever hostages it can, whenever it can, should be paramount. Israel should not reject any deal out of hand, because not enough hostages are being released. Saving 50 of them – especially children – is the most immediate and urgent undertaking, even if it delays the ultimate goal of eradicating Hamas by a few days. After six weeks in captivity, with their families back home undergoing horrific mental suffering, it is time to do whatever is possible to recover whomever we can – now. (...)

Editorial, JPO, 20.11.23

All of Israel is being held hostage in Gaza

Decades from now, we will look back and realize we sacrificed the hostages. A sense of failure and guilt will haunt Israeli society more than any other stain or war. The fate of the hostages will shape who we become, more than the scars of the massacre. We will see their faces at every crossroads. We will try to convince ourselves we had no choice – but that is a lie. We did. We still do. We are, at this very moment, holding their lives in our wounded hands. (...) Whoever says “war before a deal” is gambling with the hostages' lives. Dozens or hundreds of them will not survive, or will be murdered by Hamas as the IDF closes in. Those who remain will be shadows of their former selves. Israeli may win the war in Gaza – but it will lose itself. (...) If the hostages die a brutal death, the monstrous rage within us, inflamed by guilt, will unfold decades of bloodshed, spiraling out of control. Hamas has made it clear this is its goal – a war lasting years, and an Israeli response that echoes the Nakba and forces other players in the region to join in with tens of thousands of advanced ballistic missiles. (...) how do we avoid playing into the hands of evil? (...) Yes, a deal that brings home children without their mothers is horrifying. A child who has just experienced Holocaust-levels of violence must not be forced to witness his mother getting left behind. If we cave to Sinwar's psychological game, we risk a slippery slope. But the question of Israel's conduct runs far deeper than the story of the mothers. (...) All of Israel is held hostage in Gaza. So long as they are not returned to us, home will never feel like home again. If we have abandoned them, Hamas has won, and forever changed us.

Ron Leshem, YED, 21.11.23

Freeing Hostages – At what Price?

There is no other nation or religion that has had throughout the ages to contend repeatedly with the quandary of whether to pay ransoms to release hostages. The Jewish People, however, has had to deal with the problem for at least the past two thousand years. (...) On the one hand, we are commanded to free hostages, but we are equally warned of the dangers involved in paying too high a price. (...) Israel will have to refrain from pursuing its military objectives until the middle of December. By that time Hamas will have had an opportunity to re-group and be better placed to attack IDF forces. Only time will tell whether the price that we shall pay for the release of those hostages will have been worthwhile. (...)

Michael Boyden, TOI, 22.11.23

The big test comes after the deal: Will Israel stick to its guns?

(...) The War Cabinet voted to approve the hostage deal with a heavy heart. (...) Hamas(...) expressed hope that the temporary truce would become permanent, meaning that the fighting would not resume at all – just as many in Israel fear. And, of course, the murderers in Gaza have a pressure lever that could push Israel into a corner: continuing the slow trickle of additional captives being released. (...) everyone knows that renewing the fire may not be simple. At the heart of the matter lies the question of which path the war will take. When Yahya Sinwar ordered the Nukhba forces on the morning of October 7 to kidnap Jews, he had a clear war plan in his delusional mind. He believed that we would cry mercy, plead for our people, and agree to release all the terrorists in exchange for all the abductees. This plan did not go well in his view. Israel embarked on the path of a war of attrition. It did not fall into the psychological terror trap he had laid for it and did not agree to scale down its military response in order to secure the captives' release. That was the situation until the government approved the deal. From the moment that the majority of ministers voted in favor, we essentially fulfilled what Sinwar wanted. And that, then, is dilemma number 2 that we must still deal with.

Ariel Kahana, IHY, 23.11.23

Israel-Hamas war: Ceasefire, hostage deal were necessary

(...) Trust is the crux of the matter. No one trusts Hamas or its leaders. They are evil terrorists (...). While all our leaders will have to face the music after

the war, it is crucial at this point to present a united front and trust that they are doing their best to do the right thing. (...) We all understand the need to return all the hostages as soon as possible. This deal is a necessary first step toward that goal. (...) At this challenging moment, it's incumbent on us to stand together and exhibit an attitude of gratitude – toward our leadership, the security forces, and those who helped mediate the deal for the gradual release of hostages, which is set to begin today.
Editorial, JPO, 24.11.23

Don't Stop

(...) Hamas have been an unbroken source of terror and Jew-hate (...) with absolutely no sign of stopping until every last Jew is killed or exiled from the land of Israel. (...) To give up now is to say to those murdered or kidnapped that the people responsible can get away with it. The message to the families of the 60 or so Israeli soldiers who have lost their lives in the recent fighting would be the same; that their loss had been incurred for nothing. (...) for Hamas there is no two-state solution and absolutely no prospect of peace for as long as they are in power. The message to Israel has to be that this is a vital long game and as far as defeating Hamas is concerned, don't stop.
Robert Festenstein, TOI, 25.11.23

Hamas' goal - making cease-fire permanent and declaring victory

(...) if Israel does not continue fighting and fails to take control of all terror hubs and governance in the Gaza Strip, Hamas will continue its rule over the territory and its people. If this occurs, Israel will not achieve its most crucial goal of the war – undermining the military and civil control of the organization. The implications for Gaza border towns and Israel as a whole are clear. The second goal of Hamas (...) is perceptual: to declare victory in the war against the IDF (...). If the cease-fire (...) becomes permanent, this claim will be valid. The IDF has yet to take control of two major Hamas strongholds in the northern Strip - Jabalia and Shuja'iyya - while the organization freely controls the south, where its main military bases and the captives are located. (...) Hamas is cynically playing the hostage card to undermine the collective mental resilience of Israeli citizens. If we value life, we must be strong and not show Hamas, and its supporters in Iran, that their efforts to cause a mental breakdown are fruitful. Remember: a strong and menacing Israel will more

quickly and without paying an exorbitant strategic price release the captives - all of them.
Ron Ben-Yishai, YED, 25.11.23

Israel must fight on or Hamas will continue its manipulation

(...) at least 5,000 terrorists have been killed since the start of the war and thousands others were either injured or buried under the destroyed buildings in Gaza, reinforcing the position that the fighting should have been allowed to continue (...). The decision to start the war in the northern part of the Strip and not on Khan Yunis, was also a mistake, especially when an additional division was available to accomplish the task. (...) the forces in Gaza must defend against attacks in a hostile environment above and below ground. They have encountered terror squads and are deployed in an area that is once again filling up with civilians. (...) The IDF is realizing that only after operating in Rafah where Hamas has tunnels bringing in arms, will most if not all hostages be freed. The message must be that without the release of all captives, the entire strip would be destroyed as the north has been, so that international pressure would be placed on Hamas to make a deal. (...) Hamas must not be in control of events and have the unilateral power to decide if-and-when, hostages are freed.
Yossi Yehushua, YED, 26.11.23

3. Perspektiven für die Zeit nach dem Krieg

Die Gewalt nimmt seit Beginn des Krieges auch im Westjordanland stetig zu. Dabei kommt es wiederholt zu Übergriffen von Seiten israelischer Siedler_innen wie auch zu Gefechten zwischen bewaffneten Palästinenser_innen und dem israelischen Militär. Je länger der Krieg im Gazastreifen andauert, desto lauter melden sich Stimmen auch im Ausland, die nach langfristigen Strategien fragen. Israels Regierungschef Benjamin Netanyahu signalisierte, dass Israel auch nach einem Sieg über die Hamas weiter eine Rolle bei der Kontrolle des Gazastreifens spielen müsse. Das Weiße Haus warnte nachdrücklich vor einer erneuten israelischen Besetzung im Gazastreifen. Stattdessen solle die Palästinensische Autonomiebehörde unter der Leitung von Palästinenserpräsident Mahmoud Abbas im Westjordanland künftig auch wieder für den Gazastreifen verantwortlich sein. Aus dem Büro von Regierungschef Mohammed Shtayyeh in Ramallah verlautete indes, man wolle nicht „auf israelischen Panzern nach Gaza zurückkehren“. Fest steht, dass

die Region langfristig nur befriedet werden kann, wenn beide Völker wirtschaftliche und politische Perspektiven haben.

Through the smoke of war we can see a two states solution

(...) It is quite obvious that the Palestinians understand today that the "axis of resistance" leads only to calamity and destruction. The West Bank Palestinians understand now, that if Hamas succeeded to involve them in an armed conflict with Israel, as it forcefully tried, the pictures of West Bank cities could look like those of Gaza suburbs today. (...) Israel must continue the critical effort to deny Hamas' military and administrative capacities, to destroy its networks in the West Bank, to eliminate as possible its leadership outside Gaza. This is our task and we do it at the highest price :our children and our grand children. (...) When Israel elects a new government, it would be possible to offer a new horizon to the Palestinians, under the auspice of the international community. When Hamas is disarmed and its patron is boycotted, a responsible Palestinian leadership would emerge. With a broad Arab support it will attend the negotiations table. The goal of these negotiations is a two states solution. (...) Ephraim Sneh, YED, 16.11.23

Israel's Next Surprise Is Coming From the West Bank

(...) The next pressure cooker about to blow up in our faces is boiling in the West Bank. The IDF knows this; its commanders won't stop warning about it. (...) Pretending that we might find ourselves fighting on another front just because of the settlers is disingenuous and duplicitous. Had the IDF wanted to, it (...) would have acted against the settlers, like a normal military is required to treat local militias and armed groups. Israel's enemies in the West Bank include the settlers, and the IDF is doing nothing to stop them. Its soldiers actively take part in pogroms (...). Almost 200 Palestinians have been killed there since the war started, and nobody is stopping them. (...) The settlers are ecstatic. The smell of blood and destruction rising from Gaza is spurring them to run riot like never before. (...) What's happening in the West Bank reflects an unbelievable state of affairs. (...) The West Bank is moaning in pain, and nobody in Israel is heeding its cry for help. (...) How much more can the Palestinians take? Israel will have to pay the bill for whatever happens. (...) Gideon Levy, HAA, 16.11.23

Now more than ever: Absolutely no to a two-state solution

(...) Under Sharon, Israel seemed prepared to withdraw from close to 95% of West Bank territory, to abandon a significant percentage of the settlements (...)involving the movement of tens of thousands of settlers into pre-1967 Israel, and to compensate Palestinians for the retained territory by some equivalent portions of Israeli territory. (...) Until the Oslo agreement in 1993, Israel refused to deal with the PLO because its charter required the elimination of Israel and its policies included frequent recourse to terrorism. (...) Hamas represents the mind-set that prevented the full recognition of Israel's legitimacy by the PLO for all previous decades, kept Yasser Arafat from accepting partition of Palestine at Camp David in 2000, and produced 2 intifades and consistently supported terrorism. (...) A diplomatic frame work is needed within which Israel can carry out those parts of the road map capable of unilateral implementation, and the world community could strive for an international status that ends violence while leaving open the prospect of further progress towards permanent peace.

Alex Rose, TOI, 24.11.23

The One Move That Can Save Netanyahu's Legacy

Benjamin Netanyahu will be remembered as Israel's worst prime minister. He failed in stopping Iran's nuclear program (...). For the citizens of Israel, he is a divisive leader, not a uniting one. The fascist nation-state law he promoted is a serious blow to one-fifth of the country's population. Israel has recently relied on Druze and Bedouin fighters, as well as on Arab medical teams in hospitals. Netanyahu has shamelessly related to them as inferior citizens. Netanyahu also failed in his policy toward the Palestinians. His support of Hamas only so as not to hold negotiations with Mahmoud Abbas over establishing a Palestinian state led to the October 7 disaster. He cannot evade his responsibility for this debacle. (...) There may be one move, however, Netanyahu should consider. He could announce that he accepts Biden's position and agrees to a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza, taking vigorous practical steps to realize this together with the Palestinian Authority. (...) If that happened, Israel would make a huge leap forward, giving Biden a good chance for being re-elected, as well as getting a Nobel Prize for two or three leaders. Netanyahu would be invited to Beirut and Tehran, and despite all his failures, he

would be remembered as one of Israel's and the world's most important leaders.

Amos Schocken, HAA, 30.11.23

4. Weitere Themen

Israels Wirtschaft in der Krise

Thanks to Israel's Far-right Finance Minister, We're on the Brink of Economic Disaster

(...) Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich (...) decided on a budget increase of some 35 billion shekels (\$9.3 billion) but an offset of only 4 billion shekels, of which just 1.6 billion comes from the coalition funding. This is an irresponsible decision that will severely undermine Israel's credibility on international capital markets. The loss of the markets' faith will lead to a financial crisis that could well turn into an economic disaster. (...) Treasury professionals proposed cutting 10 billion shekels from the 2024 budget, with 6 to 7 billion of this coming from the coalition funding. Smotrich (...) is procrastinating. If Smotrich, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and the other members of this coalition of folly don't come to their senses over the next month and a half, the 2024 budget will collapse (...). The government will lose its ability to function during wartime because the ministers, first and foremost the prime minister, are refusing to take responsibility for managing the budget. Netanyahu (...) knows that responsible budgetary management requires deciding on priorities for the 2024 budget now, first and foremost by getting rid of the complete waste known as coalition funding. But he is tired and weak and capitulates to every demand by his coalition partners. He is unfit to lead the country.

Editorial, HAA, 23.11.23

Israel's finance minister can't handle a wartime economy

(...) At its current pace, the war is expected to quadruple the budget deficit, from a planned 1% of GDP to 4% of GDP. The cost of accommodating the evacuees from the Negev and Galilee is estimated at a monthly NIS 1.7 billion. These expenses are astronomical, and (...) the national coffers must be managed these days with extra care. That is not what the finance minister is doing. A wartime treasurer's first imperative is to create resources. In the Israeli system, that means blocking transfers of government funds to coalition deals that are outside the formal budget. Put differently, these are the billions with which the current ruling party bribes its

ultra-Orthodox and ultra-nationalist partners. When the war broke out, there was NIS 1 billion available from this reservoir. Smotrich (...) chose to expand the deficit by selling bonds. That's like a jobless man taking out loans instead of looking for a new job. (...) For Smotrich, the government's sectarian spending is not merely a technical commitment. It's the reason he is in politics. Funneling special funding to his narrow constituency's communities and institutions comes to his mind before the national interest. That's what sectarianism is all about. (...) Such funding is scandalous any day, but at a time of an expensive war, it is altogether reckless. (...)

Amotz Asa-El, JPO, 24.11.23

Angriffe aus dem Jemen

Houthi provocations will need to be dealt with

Until the October 7 massacre and the ensuing war, the Yemen-based, virulently antisemitic Houthis were a distant threat to most Israelis. Most people had heard the Iran-backed Houthis in the context of the ongoing civil war in Yemen but did not pay them much attention. (...) Since the beginning of the war, the Houthis have fired cruise missiles and attack drones toward Israel that have been shot down by the IDF, the US, and, according to some reports, even once by Saudi Arabia. (...) Israel does not believe the Houthis acted on their own. The hands that hijacked the ship might have been those of the Houthis, but the motivating force came from Iran. (...) the US should immediately place the Houthis back on its list of foreign terrorist entities. (...) Now is the time for the US to reclassify the Houthis as a terrorist organization. (...) Israel, too will eventually need to make the Houthis pay. The time to do this might not be now, in the midst of a full-scale war in Gaza, but it will come at a later date. Israel does not live in a neighborhood where enemies will refrain from attacking just because they are asked not to. (...)

Editorial, JPO, 21.11.23

The Houthis — Israel's Newest Enemy

(...) The Houthis, a Zaydi Shi'a sect in Yemen backed financially and militarily by Iran, Israel's deadliest foe, have declared war on Israel in a bold gesture of solidarity with Hamas and the Palestinians. (...) Having acquired an arsenal of drones and ballistic missiles from Iran, the Houthis pose a potential strategic threat to shipping lanes in the Middle East and to Eilat, Israel's gateway to the Red Sea.

(...) Houthis have been accused of harassing the few remaining Jews of Yemen, the vast majority of whom immigrated to Israel in the early 1950s. (...) Israel and Iran have been engaged in a shadow war on the high seas for the past few years. Starting in 2019, Israel began attacking ships carrying Iranian oil and arms to Syria through the eastern Mediterranean Sea and the Red Sea. Israeli cargo ships, in turn, came under Iranian or Houthi fire. Two years ago, for example, the oil tanker Mercer Street was attacked by Iran off the coast of Oman, resulting in the deaths of two sailors. (...) More such incidents are expected to take place should the Israel-Hamas war resume following the release of Israeli hostages kidnapped by Hamas and Palestinian prisoners held in Israel jails.

Sheldon Kirshner, TOI, 29.11.23

HAA = Haaretz

YED = Yedioth Ahronoth / Ynetnews

JPO = Jerusalem Post

IHY = Israel HaYom

TOI = Times of Israel

GLO = Globes

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