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**1. Südafrika zitiert Israel vor den Internationalen Gerichtshof**

*Nichts Geringeres als Völkermord wirft Südafrika Israel vor. Die israelischen Militärationen gegen die Hamas im Gazastreifen hätten einen genozidalen Charakter. Ziel der Operation im Gazastreifen sei es, die Palästinenser zu vernichten, heißt es in der 84-seitigen Anklageschrift, die Südafrika Ende Dezember dem höchsten UN-Gericht vorlegte. Seit Mitte Januar laufen die Anhörungen in Den Haag. Südafrikas will, dass die Richter\_innen zunächst im Eilverfahren ein Ende der Kampfhandlungen im Gazastreifen anordnen. Beobachter\_innen halten die Aussichten auf einen Verfahrenserfolg Südafrikas allerdings für gering, wenngleich Israel aufgrund der hohen Zahl ziviler Opfer und der katastrophalen humanitären Lage im Gazastreifen zunehmend in die internationale Kritik gerät. Zudem hatten sich einige israelische Politiker\_innen nach dem Massaker am 7. Oktober auf extreme Weise geäußert. Von einer Vertreibung der Palästinenser\_innen aus dem Gazastreifen war unter anderem die Rede. In Israel stieß die Klage auf großen Unmut. Der Vorwurf, Israel verstoße gegen die Genozidkonvention von 1948, die als Reaktion auf den Holocaust verabschiedet worden war, wird in Israel als purer Zynismus empfunden. Regierungschef Benjamin Netanyahu sprach von einer „auf den Kopf gestellten Welt“, in der der Staat Israel des Genozids beschuldigt wird, während er selbst einen Genozid bekämpfe.*

**The Road to The Hague Is Paved With Israeli Calls for Genocide of Gazans**

(...) Israelis (...) have no idea what we have left behind in Gaza, and what is said about us in the world. Commanders and soldiers fighting in Gaza are talking about unprecedented destruction. (...) The bill will be sent. (...) The barbaric invasion of the Muslim jihadists, followed by the bloodthirsty looting mob, presented Israel with a very difficult challenge: how to respond with the proper strategic and deterrent power while still preserving a shadow of humanity and the ability to distinguish between the terrorists and the population in which they operate. How to beat our enemies without becoming like them. We have totally failed in this and the price will be painful. Uri Misgav, HAA, 03.01.24

**Netanyahu picks Aharon Barak for ICJ: A wise, but unexpected, move**

The fact that the current Netanyahu-led government has named former Supreme Court president Aharon Barak as its addition to an International Court of Justice (ICJ) panel due to hear a genocide allegation against the Jewish state could be defined as a brilliant and unexpected move. Barak, likely Israel's most prominent jurist, served as president of the Supreme Court of Israel for a decade. In the past year, however, during the toxic arguments about the

government's planned judicial reforms, he was considered one of the most hated figures among half of the country's Jewish population. (...) As president of the Supreme Court, Barak championed a judicial activist approach, empowering the court to engage in judicial legislation to fill legal gaps – a method that sparked considerable controversy and opposition. This approach was at the heart of the recent conflict between liberal and conservative Israelis up until the day before the October 7 massacre, which caused Israelis to reunite moments before the heated situation could have gotten out of control. (...) There are several reasons why this move should be applauded: (...) Netanyahu is signaling to Israelis (...) that he is putting the differences aside and focusing on the future of the State of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state. Secondly, Barak survived the Holocaust, the largest genocide known in history. Thirdly, the fact that he is considered to be a progressive legal expert and Israel's most known former justice worldwide can assist Israel in trying to emphasize its complicated yet just case. (...) This could be Barak's and Netanyahu's moment to unite Israel and turn what was a toxic ideological debate into a bridge between those who despise each other's views. It could be a moment when Israelis unite around the fact that Israel has a right to defend itself and that the IDF truly is the most moral army in the world.

Editorial, JPO, 09.01.24

### **The ICJ convenes for the most dangerous theatre in town**

(...) Behind South Africa, Israel knows well, are many other states and organizations who have been working intensively to diminish justification for Israel's war against Hamas. (...) There is a lot of sad ironies in this event. The first is that Israel is home to a people who have suffered the worst genocide in history. The second is the on October 7, Hamas carried out an exercise in genocide on Israel's south and but for the IDF, would have continued to murder, rape and commit its atrocities. But now, the first case brought before the international tribunal is an accusation against Israel and not against the murderous terror group and their funders and backers from Iran and Qatar. Another irony is that South Africa will claim that the victims are the perpetrators. (...) To prove the crime of genocide, there must be proof of intent. How can Israel explain to the world that members of the cabinet and the ruling coalition are only after "likes" on X and that the actual fighting conducted by the IDF is under the supervision of

legal advisors, ensuring that international law is not violated, at all times. (...) it is scaring Israeli leaders, more than they are willing to admit. Accusations of war crimes can be quickly directed at them and can expose them personally, to some risk. Amid those fears, Israel enlisted its greatest legal asset: former chief justice Aharon Barak. (...) Perhaps he would be able to explain to the others, the difference between the fierce fight against Hamas, which exacts a cost in civilian lives in Gaza, and a genocide. They may listen to him or they may not.

Nadav Eyal, YED, 10.01.24

### **Genocide Charge at ICJ Gives Bibi Chance to Pull an Old Trick**

(...) Barak has done much for the State of Israel. And he's also a Holocaust survivor. That's why we chose him as Israel's representative," answered (...) Netanyahu (...). In Israel he has spent over three decades inciting his supporters' base against the "weak left," maligning for "forgetting what it means to be Jews" and blaming it for all of Israel's troubles. Meanwhile, on the international stage, he has tried to represent Israel as the liberal high-tech marvel that is largely the creation of the Israelis he incited against back home. And of course, throw in the Holocaust whenever you can. (...) It's easy to say that Barak embodies a very different Israel, but in many ways he is the perfect avatar of Netanyahu's Israel. Because even Israelis who oppose this government and all it stands for with every fiber of their being want to believe in an Israel that can be both. (...) That we can learn the right lessons from the Holocaust and not just be haunted by its traumas. In short, we want to believe in Netanyahu's illusion. Even though we know it's a sham, we want to continue believing in an Israel that can be Barak's when it's actually Bibi's Israel. The South African government has done Netanyahu and his political partners a massive favor by accusing his government of carrying out genocide. (...) Netanyahu has been given what is likely to be his final opportunity to carry out his old trick of convincing the world that his Israel and the Israel of Aharon Barak are one and the same.

Anshel Pfeffer, HAA, 11.01.24

### **Israel Is Paying the Price for Its Bigmouths**

(...) it wasn't just the prattle from the right, which typically uses aggressive rhetoric, that served South Africa's case. President Isaac Herzog, who is supposed to act like a responsible adult, was also quoted as saying (...) We'll fight until we defeat them."

(...) South Africa's lawyer noted that Herzog had signed a shell that was fired at Gaza. When this is the situation among the country's top officials, what is there to say about the videos from the field of soldiers dancing and singing "Wipe out the seed of Amalek," (...) words matter, and real damage – legal, diplomatic and political – can be caused by reckless, irresponsible statements. But it seems unlikely that this wanton government, headed by a man devoid of responsibility, will draw the necessary conclusions. Consequently, we can only hope that Israel will make it clear – in Friday's hearing, but above all, through its actions on the ground – what its intentions in Gaza really are.

Editorial, HAA, 12.01.24

### **Genocide Again**

(...) To those of us who are following the war closely, the complaints of genocide (...) are deeply hurtful and enraging. Accusing Israel of genocide (...) when the other side did commit an act of genocide (...), is a form of Holocaust inversion, in which Israel is falsely accused of doing what the Nazis did to the Jews. (...) by charging Israel with genocide, those bringing the charge are saying that Israel is doing what it is doing in Gaza not in its own defense, not to destroy Hamas and their collaborators, but out of a deliberate desire to destroy the Palestinian people, in whole or in part as such. (...) even if the number of deaths in Gaza is accurate, the events don't meet the definition of genocide unless Israel is doing it with intent to destroy part of the Palestinian people as such. How can anyone claim this when the war was triggered by the October 7 atrocities and Israel undertook it with the declared intent of destroying the perpetrators? How can anyone look at the billions of dollars of infrastructure expressly designed to put civilians between Israeli forces and Hamas criminals and claim that Israel is deliberately targeting civilians? (...) I look forward with cautious hope that the International Court of Justice will look at the facts and the law and dismiss the case against Israel, but even the bringing of the charge has done a lot of harm, by seeming to justify the uninformed and hateful rhetoric being unleashed against Israel by its enemies. (...)

David Roytenberg, TOI, 12.01.24

### **Hague prosecutors put on a show; Israel can rebut with facts**

(...) the presentation case made by South Africa at the International Court of Justice was unfortunately well thought out. It was one of those cases where

the lawyers managed to awe with their poetic language even if the legal argument was divorced from reality. Even three-year-olds would be able to conclude that accusing Israel of genocide is ridiculous and far-fetched, but why let the facts get in the way? Just ask Alfred Dreyfus. (...) Israel's representatives will show the opening event of the war – a chapter that the South Africans of course skipped over. The crimes against humanity committed by Hamas, which one can only hope will be presented in all their horror, will make it clear to any decent person who is striving for genocide if only it were in their power. (...) And yet, one cannot expect the judges to be persuaded. After all, the members of the Hague court were elected by the UN General Assembly, whose attitude towards Israel is well known. (...) we are all in the same boat here, from the Right, from the Left, and from all the other shades in between. Those who still fail to see this, those who still live in the bubble of the domestic blame game have apparently not grasped why the war broke out.

Ariel Kahana, IHY, 12.01.24

### **The Hague show trial (like any Jew-hate) is unlikely to help the Palestinians**

(...) the show trial in the International Court of Justice gives stage to the lie that Israel has genocidal intent against the Palestinians. (...) The word genocide seems to come easily to the lips of Israel haters as they nimbly play with language to distort factuality and causality. (...) many of the people who claim that they are protecting the Palestinians from genocide do not seem to care sufficiently about the very real risk of genocide to Israelis (...). They speak in the name of caring for the Palestinians—but the focus of their actions is to inflame hate against Israel—which works directly against the real interests of the Palestinians who want to live in peace. (...) The show trial in the Hague promises to be a sumptuous banquet to Israel haters. They can choose what they want from the buffet and ignore the inconvenient facts—for example, that Israel was forced into a tragic war by an enemy that systematically and mercilessly uses civilians as human shields and that harbors even more grandiose designs against Israel than those executed on October 7. (...)

Gefen Bar-On Santor, TOI, 13.01.24

### **Israel's appearance at the ICJ**

(...) former president of the Supreme Court, Prof. Aharon Barak (...) is viewed by most of this group as the ideological father of the liberal constitutional upheaval back in the early 1990s, following the

enactment of Basic Law: Human Dignity and Liberty. (...) members of the Right (...) actually went as far as to wish him, from the Knesset podium, to be imprisoned for life. (...) from my perspective, Netanyahu's mere decision to appoint Barak was a pleasant surprise, and a victory – at least a temporary one – for the Center/Left legal approach. (...) In the immediate aftermath of the atrocities of October 7, (...) some of our politicians (...) publicly expressed their hope that the Palestinians would vanish into thin air (...). It is agreed that in a democratic state, one cannot prevent anyone from expressing his or her views on controversial issues within the framework of free speech, as long as these expressions are not translated into illegal action. (...) What is worrying in the current situation is that (...) Netanyahu actually said that such sayings are simply of no importance, and what matters is only what the war cabinet decides. Hopefully, the ICJ will agree with Netanyahu on this. But what if it doesn't?  
Susan Hattis Rolef, JPO, 14.01.24

## **2. Über 100 Tage Krieg im Gazastreifen**

*Die Kämpfe im Gazastreifen dauern inzwischen über 100 Tagen an, und es werden auch noch immer Raketen aus dem Gazastreifen auf Israel abgefeuert. An eine Rückkehr Zehntausender Israelis, die ihre Wohnorte verlassen mussten, ist unter diesen Umständen noch nicht zu denken. Die humanitäre Lage im Gazastreifen spitzt sich unterdessen weiter zu. Die gesamte Bevölkerung des Gazastreifens ist nach Angaben der Vereinten Nationen unmittelbar von einer Hungersnot bedroht. Ein Bericht der UN-Menschenrechtsorganisation enthält den Vorwurf, Israel würde Hunger als Kriegstaktik einsetzen. Ungehinderter Zugang für humanitäre Hilfslieferungen müsse umgehend ermöglicht werden, so die Forderung. In Israel nehmen derweil Wut und Sorgen unter Angehörigen und Freunden der 136 von den Islamisten in den Gazastreifen verschleppten Geiseln immer mehr zu. Die Hamas veröffentlichte einen kurzen Videofilm, in dem drei Geiseln ihren Namen, Alter und Wohnort nennen. Zwei der Geiseln wurden in den 24 Stunden nach Veröffentlichung von der Hamas hingerichtet. Um erneute Verhandlungen um einen Austausch der Geiseln gegen palästinensische Häftlinge zu erzwingen, kündigten Angehörige und Freunde der Verschleppten weitere Protestaktionen an.*

**Israel needs a plan for the day after the war**

(...) it is natural that thinking about what happens when the war is over is taking place in many circles. This makes the absence of discussion where it is most vital – the government of Israel – all the more glaring. (...) three months after the outbreak of war, there has not been an official government discussion in Israel about what will happen when the war is over. After debates about the correct forum and assorted delays, a meeting of the political-security cabinet was finally convened last Thursday, but it exploded after several ministers attacked representatives of the IDF who were present at the meeting, including the chief of staff. (...) Absent a plan, on the day after the war, Israel, with its military boots on hostile ground, will have to immediately think and plan and do, while scrambling for partners. If and until it succeeds in finding them, Israel will be exclusively responsible for everything, from ensuring clean water to paying teachers to organizing medical care for some two million people. This cannot be an efficient operation and will not be a pretty sight, and it will come at great cost (...). Israelis – and the world – want to understand Israel's intentions for the day after. (...)

Tova Herzl, JPO, 09.01.24

## **War reaches day 100 and the heart refuses to believe it**

(...) 100 days that the sweet and innocent Kfir Bibas has been in a Hamas dungeon. The heart refuses to believe that soon he will celebrate his first birthday somewhere in a dark Gaza hole. (...) after 100 days, Hamas is still standing, is still able to fire rockets at Tel Aviv (...). There have been urban wars in the past, but never with such extensive use of civilian infrastructure like schools, hospitals, mosques, and homes and never with so many human shields. (...) no one has ever seen anything like the tunnel network in Gaza which goes on for more than 500 kilometers. Nevertheless (...) is it not time to consider what the options are for going forward? (...) A plan would be nice – for the North and the South. War, as military theorist Carl von Clausewitz famously said, is a continuation of politics by other means. (...) After 100 days of combat and a growing death toll on both sides, it is time for a frank discussion and an explanation by the country's leadership on where things are going and what should be expected in the coming months. (...)

Yaakov Katz, JPO, 12.01.24

**We Can Save Lives in Gaza, but Not With Empty Slogans**

It was heartbreaking to read the latest independent assessment of hunger in Gaza over Christmas. The situation is desperate – and projected to get worse. (...) In recent days, the Royal Navy made its first maritime shipment of aid into Egypt, sending in more than 80 tons of blankets and life-saving medical supplies. And France and Jordan have dropped some aid by air into Gaza. We and our partners are committed to being as creative as possible in getting lifesaving assistance to those in need. But the fact is the need is too great for direct delivery via air and sea to make a significant difference in the short term. What matters is simpler: more aid delivered by land, more quickly and more effectively. (...) With extended opening hours and capacity at the Nitzana screening facility and Kerem Shalom checkpoint, much more aid could enter Gaza. (...) Opening more routes for aid to come in and be loaded onto trucks would also be transformative. Ashdod Port in Israel is much closer to Gaza than Port Said in Egypt. The facilities for mass delivery are there now, ready to be used. (...) Israel could also restore water supply lines, reconnect electricity supplies and let in sufficient fuel to power critical infrastructure like bakeries. (...) These steps may seem technical, at odds with the scale of the human tragedy unfolding in Gaza. But our focus must be practical solutions that save lives, not empty slogans that make no difference on the ground. Such solutions exist. The time to act is now.

David Cameron, HAA, 12.01.24

### **Stopping the war now would spell a security disaster**

(...) after a little over three months of war against Hamas, voices in Israel are calling for an immediate halt. This is in light of the organization's firm stance, stating there will be no negotiation for the release of Israeli hostages as long as the fighting continues and the IDF remains in the Strip. (...) It's impossible to stop the war now. It would be a grave mistake and a security failure. We will pay for it in the north against Hezbollah and shortly after, against Hamas in the south. We can't stop it because Hamas will only increase its demands in the negotiations over the hostages, and won't rush to release them in order to prolong the cease-fire as much as possible. It's impossible because a complete stop of the fighting and withdrawal from Gaza will lead to the restoration of Hamas' rule in the Strip, along with the recovery of its military capabilities while Israel's hands will be tied to an agreement. Then, we will see the next October 7 sooner than expected. It's

impossible to stop now because Israel has commitments to residents living close to the Gaza and northern borders, who need to return to their homes and be able to live there knowing they're safe. (...) The only way to bring Hamas to compromise in the negotiations with Israel is to target more of its senior members until a real threat to the organization's survival is clear. Until then, Israel can't agree to a deal that includes an absolute halt in fighting now, as it would pave the way for its own defeat.

Avi Issacharoff, YED, 15.01.24

### **3. Zugespitze Lage an der Grenze zum Libanon**

*Mit der gezielten Tötung des stellvertretenden Hamas-Politbürochefs Saleh al-Aruri, die Israel zugeschrieben wird, ist eine weitere Eskalationsstufe im Konflikt zwischen Israel und der libanesischen Terrororganisation Hizbollah erreicht. Die schiitischen Milizen betrachten die Ermordung des Hamas-Funktionärs auch als Angriff gegen den Libanon und kündigten Vergeltung an. Der Tod von Saleh al-Aruri und mehreren Kommandeuren der Hamas werde „nicht ohne Antwort“ bleiben, ließ die Terrororganisation verlauten. Bei einem Raketenangriff aus dem Libanon kamen in dem Grenzort Yuval eine israelische Frau und ihr Sohn zu Tode. Die Hizbollah erklärte sich für den Angriff verantwortlich. Beobachter\_innen fürchten, dass eine umfassende militärische Auseinandersetzung zwischen Israel und der Hizbollah näher rückt.*

### **Beirut assassination forces Nasrallah to make a choice**

Saleh al-Aruri played a major role in Hamas' activities, second only to the triumvirate that leads the organization in Gaza (...). He has a long history of sending terrorists to carry out attacks, although he never carried out attacks himself. (...) There were plenty of reasons to eliminate him (...). In the past, Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah warned that the elimination of al-Aruri or other senior figures would lead to a direct response from Hezbollah. Now Nasrallah has to make the most complex decision he has faced in the current conflict: To determine whether the assassination carried out in the heart of the Shiite stronghold in Beirut justifies expanding the fighting to the point of firing towards central Israel, under the equation he set in the past that Beirut equals Tel Aviv, knowing that this could lead to a broad campaign, which all signs indicate Hezbollah is not interested in. On the other hand, refraining

from such action or settling for a symbolic response will indicate that Nasrallah fears Israel and that he has no interest in combining the fronts, leaving Hamas alone in the campaign. (...) Israel's challenge now will be to (...) keep Hezbollah deterred. If this happens, Israel will be able to breathe a little air for the first time since Oct. 7, knowing that Hamas has started to pay the price.  
Yoav Limor, IHY, 02.01.24

### **Israel's Russian roulette on the northern border**

(...) For over a quarter century, Iran has attempted to consolidate its military presence in various territories to develop the capability to inflict devastating and paralyzing damage on Israel. Alongside the effort to obtain non-conventional military capabilities, Iran is building, through proxies, conventional capabilities in the region, which, when matured, will enable effective cumulative firepower strikes, equaling in effect a nuclear strike. Israel's response to this methodical Iranian strategy is a partial series of tactical operations that try "to delay the inevitable" and cover up the lack of adoption of a counter geopolitical strategy. (...) In Lebanon and Gaza, it relinquished even continuous tactical activity, and took an irresponsible decision to enable significant military force buildup and turning terror organizations into terror armies. (...) We should have initiated an offensive operation against Hezbollah's capabilities while it was mired in the Syrian mud, thus reducing it to merely a tactical threat. Lack of leadership and shortsightedness led to the ongoing decision not to act, allowing the almost-uninterrupted buildup of significant military forces. In literature, we could have called this "Israel's march of folly." (...) Israel is learning the hard way the price of relinquishing the "pre-emptive strike" tools and belittling the threat of a multi-theater conflict. It needs to realize that "intention-predicting technologies" can only go so far, as do purely defensive capabilities developments (...) this requires a paradigm shift in the upper levels of government and adopting strategic proactive steps rather than just a tactical approach. (...)  
Zvi Hauser, IHY, 08.01.24

### **Escalations in north prove Hezbollah should be moved far from the border**

A noticeable escalation in the fighting along Israel's northern border has been seen since the elimination of Hamas' deputy chief Saleh al-Arouri in Beirut (...). Israel (...) must demand the removal of Hezbollah's elite Radwan forces not only from their current position close to the border area but well beyond that.

While moving Hezbollah's forces five kilometers from the border may be sufficient, its anti-tank guided missiles (...) have a much greater range. Currently, the accurate range stands at about eight kilometers, and in the future, it may reach an even longer distance. Therefore, Israel's post-war demands on the northern border must be more than initially believed. (...) Hezbollah's modern and precise weaponry provided by their Iran patrons requires Israel not only to demand the removal of the terror organization's forces from the border, but a disarmament of most of the region south of Bint Jbeil of UAVs, cruise missiles, and long-range anti-aircraft missiles. (...)

Ron Ben-Yishai, YED, 09.01.24

### **A War With Hezbollah Is Inevitable. But Should Israel Initiate It?**

(...) Israel and Hezbollah have both taken pains to keep hostilities below the "escalatory threshold" (...). But in practice, a major escalation is possible at any time, whether by design or miscalculation. The recent targeted killings of a Hamas leader and two senior Hezbollah commanders, and Hezbollah's attack on the Israeli Air Force's command post at Mt. Meron, added fuel to the already combustible setting. (...) there are weighty strategic reasons for believing that it is Israel that should take the initiative and that it should do so soon. Hezbollah has steadily built up its military capabilities for decades, leading to repeated limited conflicts with Israel, each of which has ended disappointingly from Israel's perspective. A major blowup is probably in the offing in any event and it is far better that it take place at a timing of our choosing and before Hezbollah's already mammoth rocket arsenal and its Radwan special forces unit whose mission is to infiltrate into Israel grow even more powerful. (...) the Israeli public has had enough of the never-ending limited conflicts with Hamas and Hezbollah and seeks solutions, not more conflict management and further attempts to simply prolong the time between the rounds. Furthermore, there is widespread support for the belief that the 80,000 Israelis displaced from the north cannot return to their homes unless Hezbollah is forced to withdraw its forces north of the Litani River. Given this public sentiment, broad support for a war with Hezbollah is essentially assured. (...)

Chuck Freilich, HAA, 11.01.24

### **Israeli war with Hezbollah is inevitable and necessary**

(...) Since the IDF's retreat from southern Lebanon in 2000, the Islamic Republic of Iran's proxy Hezbollah has entrenched itself on Israel's northern border, threatening the Jewish State's civilian communities. (...) Now that Hezbollah has decided to unilaterally attack the Jewish state once again, forcing Israel into evacuating around 100,000 of its citizens from the North, it is clear that this problem requires a military solution. (...) The major problem is that Hezbollah has (...) every interest to remain exactly where it is and provide a strong deterrent for its paymasters in Tehran, should Israeli leaders decide to act against Iran's nuclear weapons capability, which is an existential threat to the Jewish State. The ayatollahs require Hezbollah's threat against Israel to deepen and not weaken, so there is no possibility that it will divest its genocidal intentions and rid itself of its massive military capabilities. This really only leads us to consider a military solution to the problem with Hezbollah. Simply put, the IDF will have to fight and defeat them. (...) perhaps now is precisely the time to strike. Israel cannot return its citizens to the border until it does. (...)  
Naveh Dromi, JPO, 15.01.24

#### 4. Weitere Themen

##### Konflikt mit den Houthis

###### **For the Houthis, it's more than just about Israel**

(...) There is no doubt that (...) inside it are deep secrets, all of which are linked to the interests of the "Houthi" group and its regional financiers and sponsors. The idea of challenging the United States and its international allies is in itself one of the characteristics of the militia behavior of what is known as the "Axis of Resistance" led by Iran (...). The reality is that the Houthi threats have become a real dilemma for the global economy and not just the Israeli economy, as they have stopped major international oil transport companies such as BP and major shipping companies. (...) There is no doubt that the Houthi group is attracted by the spotlight that has been placed on it recently, as news of its illegal activities has become the forefront of international news bulletins. Its leaders have also become among the most prominent news items in the world, and this in itself represents a propaganda gain for the group that wants to extend its hegemony over Yemen and extract international legitimacy to rule the country, or at least part of it. (...) The Houthis also want to associate themselves with the Palestinian issue, which

they realize is extremely central to the Arab collective consciousness (...). Not to mention the Houthis' desire to strengthen their position in the peace negotiations that began some time ago with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (...).  
Salem AlKetbi, IHY, 09.01.24

###### **The Houthi's Activity is a Threat to Global Trade**

(...) Similar to the threat of Somali pirates in the early 2000s (...) the international naval coalition led by USA must take more decisive action than has been done so far, to secure the international shipping lanes. (...) The Houthis are not a rational player, and direct action against them will not create deterrence. Therefore, the coalition should send a clear message to Iran, holding them accountable for their support of the rebels from Yemen. It is necessary to clarify that military action against its assets will be considered if the diplomatic axes do not curb the Houthi activity. (...) The Houthi attacks in the Red Sea, which was perceived as an Israeli problem, is undoubtedly turning out to be an international problem and has enormous economic consequences. The Houthi's activities are dramatically disrupting the global supply chain from Asia to the Middle East and Europe and increases shipping costs. (...) Complete closure of the Bab al Mandab straits, with an estimated cost of \$9.6 billion per day and more than \$700 billion per year, would immediately shock the global oil market. Before another global shock hits, immediate actions by the international community to stop the Iranian subversion in the region, must be taken.

Noam Mor, TOI, 11.01.24

##### **Israels Oberster Gerichtshof schiebt Regierungsplänen einen Riegel vor**

###### **The Supreme Court Ruling Proves That Israel's Democratic Fortress Has Not Fallen**

(...) the Supreme Court (...) struck down the amendment of the Basic Law on the Judiciary, which barred the court from using the reasonableness standard regarding decisions made by the cabinet and ministers. This is a decision of historic precedence, the most important one ever made by the court. A clear majority of 12 out of 15 justices (...) determined that a Basic Law cannot impinge on Israel's core identity as a Jewish and democratic state. Such a Basic Law would violate its constitutional authority and is therefore void. (...) The majority rightly determined that the elimination of the rea-

sonableness standard would have caused serious harm to the separation of powers and the rule of law, as well as to the independence of the gatekeepers. Considering that Israel has so few checks and balances, any diminution of judicial review would have done fatal damage to Israeli democracy. (...) Those in power must respect the verdict. The legal system must be there to defend Basic Laws against opportunistic and zig-zagging legislation by virtue of the mere majority of 61 that is required for passage. The process should be done by broad consensus and a lengthy and considered debate, not through a predatory blitz. The decision proves that, indeed, the fortress did not fall: The court knows what is needed to protect Israeli democracy, thereby performing its most important role.

Editorial, HAA, 02.01.24

### **The Supreme Court vs Bibi's judicial reform**

(...) The Supreme Court's decision is considered positive news. (...) The judicial reform could have upset the delicate balance of Israel's social fabric, particularly concerning Zionism's vision of Eretz Israel as a Jewish and democratic state.

In the past, the Supreme Court has repeatedly defended values such as gender equality and the protection of sexual minorities against strict religious restrictions imposed by the ultra-Orthodox establishment. More recently, the Supreme Court has defended the Law of Return, which allows every Jew to immigrate to Israel, against attempts by the ultra-Orthodox to restrict Aliyah, subjecting it to the approval of the Rabbanut. The issue has also reached the armed forces. Mandatory service for men and women is the instrument for the melting pot of traditions and ethnicities and a social adhesive. Ultra-Orthodox Jews are exempt from military service, and the Supreme Court has repeatedly declared this exemption discriminatory. (...) Jerusalem is going through a politically complex moment, aggravated by the war against the Hamas terrorist group. But as President Isaac Herzog said to the joint session of the United States Congress on July 19, 2023, democracy is in Israel's DNA and will remain in it forever. (...) frequent elections and peaceful protests are not signs of a divided society but evidence of a robust democracy in action. The Supreme Court's pivotal role in this constitutional saga reflects the resilience of democratic institutions, offering hope for a united and inclusive future for all Jews in Eretz Israel.

Giuseppe Levi Pezzulli, TOI, 10.01.24

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

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