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**1. IGH mahnt Israel zur Zurückhaltung**

*Der Internationale Gerichtshof in Den Haag sieht von einer Anordnung, den Krieg im Gazastreifen zu beenden ab, fordert Israel gleichzeitig jedoch dazu auf, direkte und öffentliche Aufrufe zur Verübung von Völkermord im Zusammenhang mit Mitgliedern der palästinensischen Gemeinschaft zu verhindern und zu bestrafen. Taten, die auf einen Völkermord hinausliefen, müssten geahndet werden. „Das Recht der Palästinenser, vor einem Völkermord geschützt zu werden, sei anzuerkennen“, meinte die vorsitzende Richterin Joan Donoghue. Israel müsse sicherstellen, dass sich die humanitäre Lage im Gazastreifen verbessere und die Menschen dort besser geschützt werden. Die 17 Richter\_innen des IGH folgten damit einem Antrag Südafrikas, Israel zu einer Einstellung seines Militäreinsatzes im Gazastreifen zu verpflichten, nicht. Das Gericht wies aber die Klage Südafrikas gegen Israel wegen Verstößen gegen die Völkermordkonvention nicht grundsätzlich ab. Regierungschef Benjamin Netanyahu reagierte zurückhaltend auf das Urteil. "Israels Respekt für das internationale Recht ist unerschütterlich", sagte er in einer Video-Botschaft. Zugleich werde sich das Land weiterhin "gegen die Hamas, eine völkermordende terroristische Organisation, zur Wehr setzen". In Israel stießen die Völkermord-Anschuldigungen auf breiten Unmut. Netanyahu bezeichnete sie als „empörend“.*

**The blood libel at The Hague**

(...) On Oct. 7, Hamas terrorists invaded Israel where they murdered as many men, women, and children as they could. In response, the South African government filed a lawsuit under the Genocide Convention to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague. You know the punch line: It is not Hamas but Israel that South Africa is accusing of genocide. (...) During multiple wars, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) have done more to avoid civilian casualties than any other army in the world ever has. (...) to accuse the Israelis of genocide is a lie and a blood libel. By contrast, Hamas is proudly genocidal. (...) Hamas instructs Muslims to "fight Jews and kill them." Yet South Africa isn't asking the ICJ to order Hamas to release the more than 130 hostages it's now torturing in its tunnels and lay down its weapons. (...) Genocide, it turns out, is an idea that didn't die in Hitler's bunker. It's alive and well and it's now being directed against Israelis defending themselves from genocidal enemies and their Jew-hating accomplices. Clifford D. May, IHY, 21.01.24

**Israel survived the display of hypocrisy at the International Court of Justice**

Israeli ears found it hard to hear the International Court of Justice's (ICJ) statements (...). The rhetoric used against Israel was harsh. The ICJ's primary

focus was directed at the Palestinian population in Gaza, and only a few words from the president were dedicated to the horrific massacre on October 7 and the hostages still held by Hamas. However, the bottom line is good for Israel – no order was given with practical significance in real-life situations. (...) none of the ICJ's 17 judges granted South Africa's request for an order to stop the fighting in Gaza. (...) Seventy-five years ago, the State of Israel and the Genocide Convention rose from the smoke and ashes in Auschwitz's crematoria, and now, Israel — who defends itself against a murderous terrorist organization openly declaring its intent to carry out mass killings and has committed acts of genocide and war crimes — finds itself accused of genocide. South Africa's cynical attempt to use the Genocide Convention against Israel and force an immediate cease-fire has failed. Israel's goal of completing the initial stage of the interim orders without facing specific injunctions or at most, with general orders compelling Israel to act in accordance with international law - has been achieved.

Matan Gutman, YED, 26.01.24

### **Hague's Ruling Rewards Terrorism**

While many in Israel are celebrating today's decision in the International Court of Justice in the Hague, the damage the decision has done will last generations. (...) Had the ICJ concerned itself with the well-being of civilians, the last thing it would do is reward those who embed themselves in civilian populations and punish those who struggle to weed out terrorist targets from among the civilian population. (...) The fact that judges on the court come from "Morocco, Lebanon, Somalia, China, France, Germany, Japan, Australia, Brazil, Slovakia, Uganda, India, and Jamaica", while China, Lebanon and Morocco do not protect the full free speech of their civilians, puts Western countries who do encourage free speech at a more vulnerable position than totalitarian dictatorships and terrorist ruled countries like Lebanon. (...) The court's failure to mention Hamas even once, despite Hamas being responsible for the outbreak of this war, means the court will not take into entities that are not countries. (...) The court has given Hamas a free pass and cleared it of all responsibility. This will incentivize other terrorist groups to commit crimes against humanity, knowing they will not bear any responsibility in the international sphere. (...) Future generations will mourn this dark decision.

Rabbi Elchanan Poupko, TOI, 26.01.24

### **Court Recognizes Israel's Right To Self-Defence**

Israel's right to self-defence in the face of Hamas' massacre on October 7 was implicitly recognized by the International Court of Justice in its interim ruling on January 26. Significantly enough, the court's president, Joan Donoghue, did not call for an immediate ceasefire, which South Africa and its ally, Hamas, had demanded. This is no small victory for Israel, which is currently conducting a vitally important offensive in the Gaza Strip to eradicate Hamas and remove it from power. (...) Nonetheless, South Africa has managed to stain Israel's international reputation as a law-abiding nation.

In the meantime, Israel has every right under international law to press on with its campaign to destroy Hamas' military capabilities and to ensure that it can never govern Gaza again. (...) Israel's argument for continuing its military campaign is iron-clad. What self-respecting country in the world would possibly tolerate the presence of a malignant force bent on destroying it? (...) Ever since its complete takeover of Gaza in 2007, Hamas has turned Gaza into an armed camp and dedicated itself to one overarching goal — the destruction of Israel (...). From the very outset, Israel's fury has been aimed at Hamas command posts, array of tunnels, weapons storage facilities and arms manufacturing factories, all of which are embedded in civilian infrastructure. To state the obvious, Hamas has cynically used ordinary civilians as human shields. As a result, many civilians have been unnecessarily killed (...).

Sheldon Kirshner, TOI, 27.01.24

### **The ICJ ruling is a mixed bag**

Friday's interim ruling by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) at The Hague (...) has both negative and positive implications for Israel. (...) the United Nations' top court (...) did insist that Hamas and other armed groups immediately release the hostages still being held there. Then again, it did not order Hamas to halt its indiscriminate rocket and terrorist attacks against Israeli civilians (...). The ICJ ruling requires Israel to prevent and punish any public incitement to commit genocide against Palestinians in Gaza and to preserve evidence related to any allegations of genocide there, as well as take measures to ease the humanitarian situation for Gazan civilians. (...) The Palestinian Authority welcomed the ruling, with Foreign Minister Riyad al-Maliki saying the ICJ "ruled in favor of humanity and international law," whereby South Africa deemed it "a significant milestone in the search for justice for the Palestinian people." (...) Though there is now a

legal precedent for international pressure on Israel to comply with the ruling, experts say it is not practically enforceable, and the US is expected to veto any Security Council resolution calling on Israel to stop the war so long as 136 hostages are still being held in Gaza.

Editorial, JPO, 29.01.24

### **Israeli ICJ Judge Aharon Barak Is the Last Liberal Fig Leaf Masking Israel's Anti-liberal Reality**

(...) former Supreme Court President Aharon Barak (...) is the perfect liberal fig leaf, and probably the last one they had and ever will have (...) because he really believes in the substance of these orders, which Israel itself officially claims to comply with anyway. The Israeli establishment, and its mainstream, are not opposed in principle to aiding innocent civilians – after all, that is its public position. In the ruling, Israel was asked to submit the implementation of the orders. (...) Regarding the incitement, too, there is complete consensus regarding the "rash" remarks of public figures that "got us in trouble in The Hague." (...) The gap between Barak's position and Bibi-ism is the gap between the Israeli establishment that aspires to the liberal image that Barak symbolizes (...) and the parts of the right that seek to eradicate those liberal values (...). Barak's detractors can rest assured; at this rate, they will soon be represented in The Hague by the great jurists Simcha Rothman or Tally Gotliv. There will be no more fig leaves.

Noa Landau, HAA, 28.01.24

### **The case against Israel in the Hague is the ultimate blood libel**

(...) It's been 79 years since the end of World War II, and there are still fewer Jews in the world than before the Holocaust. For 78 years and eight months, we asked ourselves how the world could have let this happen. (...) Hamas' leader Yahya Sinwar, who is still holding and torturing over 130 innocent civilians (...) claims he plans to repeat October 7 again and again! Hassan Nasrallah, the Hezbollah leader in Lebanon, has said on several occasions: "This conflict will end only with the elimination of Israel and the death of the last Jew on Earth." (...) how come while Israel is being threatened from all sides - Hamas in Gaza, Hezbollah on the Lebanese border (...) - we, in Israel are dragged to the International Court of Justice in Hague, accused of genocide of the Palestinian people. (...) Throughout history, blood libels have been targeting Jews, falsely accusing us of engaging in harmful or ritualistic practices

involving the use of blood - especially children's blood. Blood libels made Jews the easiest scapegoat for any unexplained death, and were also simply used as an excuse to kill Jews. (...) The only difference between those pogroms and the October 7 massacre is that now we have a state, we have an army and we have the ability, the right, and the obligation to protect ourselves and our children. (...) the genocide lawsuit filed by South Africa's government, joined by other antisemitic or at least brainwashed and confused governments, against Israel at The Hague is the ultimate blood libel against the Jews. (...)

Hadar Galron, YED, 30.01.24

## **2. Krieg im Gazastreifen**

*Der Krieg im Gazastreifen forderte nach Angaben der von der Hamas kontrollierten Gesundheitsbehörde bereits über 26.000 Menschenleben. 75 Prozent von ihnen seien Frauen, Kinder und ältere Menschen gewesen. Dementgegen spricht die israelische Armee von rund 10.000 Terroristen, die bei den Kampfhandlungen getötet worden seien. Berichten zufolge, plant Israel einen Vorstoß in die geteilte Grenzstadt Rafah. In der Stadt und ihrer Umgebung halten sich die meisten der aus dem Norden geflüchteten Palästinenser\_innen auf. Die Rede ist von weit über einer Million Binnenflüchtlinge. Regierungschef Benjamin Netanyahu hält daran fest, die Offensive „bis zum vollständigen Sieg“ andauern zu lassen. Der Ministerpräsident meldete sich im Netzwerk X, nachdem bei einer Explosion 21 israelische Reservisten im Gazastreifen zu Tode gekommen waren. Am gleichen Tag starben drei weitere Soldaten. Es sei „einer der schlimmsten Tage“ im Krieg gegen die Hamas, so Netanyahu, der eine Untersuchung ankündigte. Unterdessen dauert auch der Raketenbeschuss auf Israel weiter an.*

### **If Israel is 'winning the war' on Hamas, why are rockets falling?**

Gun battles in Gaza, more than 50 rockets launched at Israel in one day, a terrorist attack in central Israel, and still Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, and IDF top brass are boasting of winning the war. (...)

While aerial photos of the Gaza Strip (...) show that Israel has damaged or destroyed at least 70% of the buildings and infrastructure in Gaza, Hamas and its top leaders remain alive and well enough under-

ground. (...) the resilience of the remaining fighters and citizens appears high. They still have enough military power to launch rockets at Israel, and Hamas continues its unyielding ground fight, evident in the daily toll on our soldiers. (...) Flattening buildings, destroying tunnels, and killing Arab terrorists are short-term markers in a field with an unknown and possibly unachievable end goal. The people deserve to be given an accurate timeline by their leaders and a comprehensive understanding of what might be at stake if Israel intends to fulfill the mission it declared on October 7.

Maayan Jaffe-Hoffmann, JPO, 19.01.24

### **Only One Possible Ending to the War Would Be a Victory for Israel**

(...) war in the Gaza Strip alongside wars in the West Bank, with Hezbollah in Lebanon and even the Houthis in Yemen? It's clear these wars have been fanned by our disastrous government, which, since October 7 alone, has already killed 344 Palestinians in the West Bank – not Gaza – including 88 children. (...) systematic assaults on the Palestinians, including preventing them from harvesting their olives, ethnic cleansing and expulsion from their lands by settlers – are happening under the auspices of a government of settlers like Bezalel Smotrich and Itamar Ben-Gvir, under the leadership of a man whose continuance in office is more important to him than Israel's welfare. I'm talking about Mr. Iran, who turned Iran into a nuclear threshold state that's now making a laughingstock of him. It doesn't need nuclear weapons; it's enough for it to have agents like Hamas, Hezbollah and the Houthis. (...) Hamas' attack deserves the harshest language in the dictionary, and those who planned and executed it should pay the highest possible price. But it also served as a wakeup call for Israel: There is no solution other than the one former Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin sought to achieve, and which the entire world aside from Israel supports – the two-state solution, establishing a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza, in the 1967 borders. If that doesn't happen, we'll keep reading those horrifying headlines. (...) Israel must pay the high price of releasing all its Palestinian prisoners and ending the fighting in order to bring all the Israeli hostages back home. At the same time, it must announce that it accepts U.S. President Joe Biden's position, which calls for moving swiftly to establish a Palestinian state. Only an ending like this would be a victory for Israel as well.

Amos Schocken, HAA, 22.01.24

### **Don't just win**

(...) Peace is not something that falls from the heavens, and it does not magically appear the day we decide to end the war. A real peace will take vision, planning, negotiation and the creation of new safeguards. None of which I believe our present government holds. (...) The military can keep on winning. It can keep digging under Khan Younis, exploding tunnels half a kilometer at a time. But we have already seen, in over three months of war, that the military cannot free hostages. The military can stop the fighting, but it cannot bring the war to an end. It can patrol the border, but it cannot bring peace. (...) The Americans and Qataris are offering us an outline of a plan to end the war. It would free the hostages and replace the Gaza government with one that will be forced to accept the idea of non-hostile relations with a Jewish state. It will, however, involve Gazans ruling themselves – within the framework of a Palestinian state. (...) This is not only the peace-treaty-at-the-end-of-the-war we should be aiming for; it is the one we'll end up with in any case, due to a combination of American election season, foreign pressure and lack of alternatives. Still, we insist on "fighting to the end," hoping the picture will somehow look different a few months from now. (...) the longer we have leaders with tunnel vision who lack the ability and courage to think about how we'll end not just the fighting, but the war, we'll be stuck in a stalemate – gaining ground but losing traction. (...) We are told we are fighting to the end, but no one has yet been able to tell us what that end will be. (...)

Judy Halper, TOI, 23.01.24

### **After the Families of Hostages, It's Now the Soldiers' Families Turn to Shake Israel**

In this atmosphere, the families are likely to soon become enemies of the people, "dishrags" who prevent the IDF from winning or at least from completing its revenge campaign in Gaza. (...) They are already on track to shift the hostages' return from a goal of the war to an attack on morale, the reason so many soldiers are being killed. (...) the number of service members killed since the ground operation in the Gaza Strip began rose to 217, and to 552 since October 7. In the first Lebanon war, from 1982-2000, the IDF death count was 1,216. This means that in 107 days, the number of soldiers killed in Israel and the Strip reached 44 percent of the number killed in a war that went on for 18 years. These are shocking figures that are waiting for an

appropriate civilian response, like the one that erupted during the first Lebanon war. But such a response is slow to come. Israel was quickly captured (...) by a new "conceptzia," the one that promises it the elimination of Hamas, security for the Gaza border communities and the return of the hostages. (...) The second Lebanon war taught us that a protest movement cannot wait for the fighting to stop. The families of the hostages learned this lesson well; now it is time for the families of the soldiers to also ask pointed questions and to insist on receiving real answers.

Zvi Bar'el, HAA, 23.01.24

### **With our boots on Hamas' neck, we can't quit now**

(...) And if anyone thinks retreating now would somehow result in the release of the hostages, they are wrong. (...) Once IDF forces finish clearing Khan Younis, Rafah is next, as it would cause irreparable harm to Hamas, which is already dealing with a massive loss to its forces. Their capabilities are declining and the IDF estimates some 9,000 Hamas operatives have been killed since the offensive began, with likely the same number, or more, wounded. Effectively (...) they do have more than 10,000 fighters left. So with our hostages still languishing in Gaza, exerting more military pressure is the only thing that can expedite their release and help bring about a sense of security for Israelis who wish to live near the border, not to mention the peace of mind it would bring if Hezbollah escalates matters further in the north. But it seems many in Israel have come to believe in impending defeat. (...) No matter what, we cannot accept Hamas remaining the governing force in Gaza. And that's where the post-war strategy must come in, despite Netanyahu being unreasonably silent on the matter, compromising Israel's security. (...) Victory over Hamas isn't enough. Israel must formulate a post-war strategy, and then stick to it.

Avi Issacharoff, YED, 25.01.24

### **End the war now**

If a deal is put on the table which says return the hostages, end the war and Israeli withdrawal from Gaza, we should take it. (...) is no other and not taking a deal is a death sentence or worse for the over 100 hostages still alive in Hamas captivity. (...) it is not the War in Gaza which will prevent another disaster like the Black Shabbat, but a reboot of our defenses on our border with Gaza. (...) a deal which includes a ceasefire, with an Israeli option to renew

fighting down the road is a non-starter for Sinwar. He will hold our hostages and all that entails until he reaches his two goals of the war, the release of all Palestinian prisoners from Israeli prisons and the withdrawal of Israel from Gaza leaving Hamas in charge. (...) Agreeing to end the war will be an incredibly difficult and painful decision for the Israeli government. (...) The most difficult part of the decision, however, is (...) what to do afterwards. (...) Once Israel has made the decision in principle to end the war, the war will go on for many more months. First it will take time to reach a final deal, second the deal will include stages of release of the Israeli hostages and the Palestinian prisoners and multiple periods of a ceasefire. The months (...) must be used to negotiate an alternative governance body to Hamas in Gaza. If Israel manages to hand over the control of Gaza to a restructured PA or an international body, this would be a very important victory for Israel and signal hope for Israelis and Palestinians alike. (...) Israel cannot achieve its war goals to topple Hamas and at the same time free our hostages. The choice is ending Hamas or freeing the hostages. (...)

David Lehrer, TOI, 26.01.24

### **Israel May Not Destroy Hamas, but the Group Has Suffered the Worst Blow in Its History**

(...) The current war sometimes seems like a repeat of the Second Lebanon War. Another operation, more dead terrorists, another discovery and another tunnel, but the ambitious goal set by Netanyahu and Defense Minister Yoav Gallant – destroying Hamas – apparently won't be met. (...) The best (...) would be to stop the fighting, secure the hostages' return, withdraw from Gaza and call elections. And then, after the political and military leadership had been replaced, we could resume fighting with renewed strength, with trust between the people and its leaders and decent relations with the international coalition, without which a different Gaza will be impossible – the U.S., Qatar, Egypt, Jordan and Saudi Arabia. But this alternative isn't in the cards, because Netanyahu has no interest in endangering his grip on power. The best we can do under him is a more modest program – securing the release of all hostages who aren't considered soldiers by Hamas in exchange for a two-month cease-fire, withdrawing the army from urban areas and negotiating over a "permanent cease-fire and full withdrawal," meaning "the complete disarmament of Gaza and its reconstruction." And there should be no ambiguous wording that grants each side a lifeline with its own pub-

lic. (...) Only a new leadership, in the army as well as the government, could turn this war of attrition into a coalition of moderates that is trying to curtail the extremists' capabilities.

Raviv Drucker, HAA, 29.01.24

### **3. Weitere Feuerpause rückt offenbar näher**

*Bei den Bemühungen um eine erneute Feuerpause und die Freilassung weiterer Geiseln der Hamas, gibt es erste Anzeichen dafür, dass eine Einigung möglich ist. Aus dem Büro des Ministerpräsidenten verlautete, dass „echte Anstrengungen“ im Gange seien. Aus Katar, dass die Verhandlungen zusammen mit den USA und Ägypten vermittelt, verlautete, dass die Hamas "positiv" auf einen Vorschlag reagiert habe. Im Gegenzug für eine zweimonatige Feuerpause würden dann erneut israelische Geiseln und palästinensische Häftlinge freikommen. Zudem sollen größere Mengen an humanitären Hilfsgütern in den Gazastreifen gebracht werden. Unterdessen dauern die Protestaktionen und Demonstrationen, die die Freilassung der Geiseln fordern, unvermindert an. In der Kritik steht vor allem Regierungschef Benjamin Netanyahu für seine verfehlte Sicherheitspolitik und – so der Vorwurf – weil er die Geiseln im Stich lasse. Im November waren während einer einwöchigen Waffenruhe 105 Geiseln im Austausch gegen 240 palästinensische Häftlinge freigekommen. Aktuell werden noch 136 Geiseln im Gazastreifen vermutet.*

### **Israelis and Their Leaders Refuse to Pay the Price of a Hostage Deal**

There won't be a hostage deal. (...) What is required is an end to the fighting. And the withdrawal of the Israel Defense Forces from the Gaza Strip. That is what Hamas is demanding. (...) Many Israelis are unwilling to accept Hamas' conditions out of fear. (...) When they see the bodies of over 23,000 Gazans, many of them civilians, women and children, and the more than 60,000 who have been injured (...) they don't see traces of genocide, nor proof of rampant killing or war crimes. They see power. (...) Deterrence. Revenge. (...) It is not only the government that is unwilling to pay the price; neither are a significant number of Israelis. (...) The clear contradiction between bringing down Hamas and bringing back the hostages will be solved the classic Israeli way: The attempt to bring down Hamas and remove it from Gaza will continue, and it will fail. Whereas the attitude toward the hostages

will dwell on the level of yearning and self-flagellation. There the state will make ideological use of them as new symbols of Jewish martyrdom in the Land of Israel, the sacrifice, the innocence, the justice. Another 136 Ron Arads. Because of the prevailing worldview in Israel, a hostage deal is unfeasible. Fear and militarism will always win out. (...)

Rogel Alpher, HAA, 16.01.24

### **The hostage dilemma**

The proposal to release all security prisoners in exchange for the liberation of the 137 Israeli captives held by Hamas has both captivated and unsettled the Israeli public. (...) Israel holds a supreme moral obligation to release its citizens. (...) public sentiment recoils at the notion that numerous Israelis, including babies and the elderly, are at the mercy of sadistic murderers, while Israel possesses the means to bring them home. (...) Releasing 539 prisoners with blood on their hands essentially translates to freeing abhorrent murderers, including some mass murderers. (...) their release may lead to the deaths of many more. Additionally, such a release will significantly undermine the deterrence of terrorists. This deal may serve as an incentive for many perpetrators to carry out future terror attacks, assuming they will be released in the next deal. (...) Finally, it must be acknowledged that releasing all prisoners would provide Hamas with the greatest achievement it could have hoped for. Undoubtedly, their prestige would soar, significantly increasing support for their murderous ideology. (...)

Dotan Rousso, IHY, 24.01.24

### **136 Hostages Are Still in Gaza. It's Time Israelis Get Off the Couch**

(...) But the hostages are not the problem only of their families. They are the problem of Israeli society at large. (...) Therefore, the burden of campaigning for the return of the hostages cannot be placed on the shoulders of the families. (...) It's time for the public in Israel to take ownership of the most tragic, tumultuous event that has happened here since the state was founded. (...) One needs to take to the streets for this and only this issue, right now. First and foremost, for returning the hostages. All the rest can wait. We don't have time to waste on elections now, since by the time the government is replaced, there will be no one to bring back. If you leave the hostages' families alone in this campaign, there will be a bitter end to this saga. If Israeli society does not join the struggle to bring its sons and daughters

home, now, as a burning mission, there will be no society to rehabilitate and heal. (...)

Gila Havron, HAA, 29.01.24

#### **Between the hostages and Hezbollah: Israel's strategy for a possible deal with Hamas**

(...) the terror group was very clear: There would be no more deals before the end of Israel's war in Gaza and the IDF's full withdrawal. (...) If indeed Hamas decided to remove its main condition of a cease-fire in Gaza, this would mean a significant Israeli achievement. It is a direct result of the successes in the war in Gaza (...). Israel would like the deal to happen. The critical reason for this is well known: the return of the hostages. (...) Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu faces sharp criticisms accusing him of delays and lack of determination in leading the deal. However, even he recognizes the significance of the captive's return. (...) Ultimately, considering the precedent set by the Gilad Shalit deal, where over 1,000 prisoners were exchanged for one IDF soldier, it's possible the number of released Palestinian prisoners will reach into the thousands (...). The deal also serves Israel strategically by providing an opportunity to reach a settlement in the northern border that'll prevent war and facilitate the Israeli residents' return home. While Hezbollah refrained from attacking during the prior pause in fighting, Israel (...) now seeks a long-term cease-fire lasting one and a half to two months. Israel hopes this will entice Hezbollah to become more flexible in its position. (...)

Nadav Eyal, YED, 31.01.24

#### **4. UNRWA-Angestellte unter Terror-Verdacht**

*Massive Vorwürfe gegen eine Reihe von UNRWA-Angestellten werfen ein düsteres Licht auf das UN-Flüchtlingshilfswerk. Unter Berufung auf ein israelisches geheimdienstliches Dossier berichtete die New York Times über zumindest zwölf UNRWA-Angestellte, von denen einige unmittelbar an dem Terrorangriff am 7. Oktober beteiligt gewesen sein sollen. So soll u.a. ein UNRWA-Arabischlehrer als Hamas-Befehlshaber an dem Massaker im Kibbutz Be'eri beteiligt gewesen sein, bei dem knapp 100 Menschen zu Tode kamen und 26 weitere in den Gazastreifen verschleppt wurden. Ein anderer Mitarbeiter der Hilfsorganisation soll Lastwagen und Munitionslieferung für den grausamen Überfall am 7. Oktober organisiert haben. Das „Wall Street Journal“ berichtete, dass rund jeder zehnte UNRWA-Mitarbeitende des Palästinenserhilfswerks*

*in der Region Verbindungen zur Hamas oder der Gruppe Islamischer Dschihad habe, und berief sich dabei auf ein israelisches Geheimdienst-Dossier. Mehrere Geberstaaten stellten daraufhin die Zahlungen vorübergehend ein, darunter die USA, Deutschland, Kanada, Australien, Großbritannien, Italien, die Niederlande, Finnland und die Schweiz. UN-Generalsekretär António Guterres zeigte sich schockiert und forderte eine umgehende Untersuchung der Vorwürfe. Die Weltgesundheitsorganisation WHO warnte vor einem Ende der UNRWA-Tätigkeit. Ohne die humanitäre Arbeit des UN-Hilfswerks sei mit einer Katastrophe zu rechnen. Keine andere Organisation habe die Kapazität, im gleichen Umfang Hilfe für die 2,2 Millionen Menschen im Gazastreifen zu leisten, deshalb sollten die Geberländer ihre Zahlungen fortsetzen, hieß es.*

#### **UNRWA Is Riddled With Hamas. But Israel Has No Alternative**

After Hamas and the Palestinian Authority, the UN Relief and Works Agency is the biggest employer in the Gaza Strip. The news that Israel identified at least 12 UNRWA employees taking part in Hamas' October 7 massacre in southern Israel should therefore come as a surprise to no one. (...) UNRWA is riddled with Hamas; it couldn't have been otherwise. (...) the decision by major Western governments to suspend funding for the Palestinian refugee agency (...) is an empty gesture. All these governments have diplomats and intelligence experts who knew the basic facts about UNRWA and wouldn't have been surprised by the news. (...) Meanwhile, there's one government that continues to work very closely with UNRWA on a daily basis, facilitating its work in Gaza: Israel. Its Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories unit is closely monitoring every supply truck that goes into Gaza through the Israeli Kerem Shalom and Egyptian Rafah crossings, coordinating the supplies' distribution through UNRWA. That's the same COGAT whose base at the Erez crossing was hit by Hamas on October 7 with three of its soldiers killed, which continues to work closely with UNRWA, whose employees were among the attackers. Israel is not about to suspend its ties with UNRWA. (...) Until Israeli policy changes and unless Israel is willing to feed Gaza itself, it still has no alternative to UNRWA.

Anshel Pfeffer, HAA, 28.01.24

#### **UNRWA is rotten to the core**

(...) That is the root of the debate (...): Whether the sentiments and intentions that led to these staffers participating in the worst massacre the Jewish people have experienced since the Holocaust – on the UN's payroll – was a glaring exception or not. (...) Israel, and some Republicans, have long suspected the agency, arguing that it acts only to fuel the conflict and that the money going to food, education, and healthcare frees up Hamas to fund its hostilities against Israel. (...) The evidence that incitement, Israel-erasure, and antisemitism are prominent in the agency's educational materials is not new and is a long-standing Israeli accusation. (...) Halting funds though, as much as it serves to quench the anger that UN-funded textbooks included antisemitism and incitement against Jews, isn't the answer. (...) UNRWA isn't going anywhere, and calling for it to be defunded or canceled, as though an agency this large could be disbanded in a way, are both shortsighted, unrealistic calls. UNRWA (...) is irreplaceable in the level of aid that it provides. (...) Editorial, JPO, 29.01.24

### **UNRWA exists to help fight the war to eradicate Israel**

(...) No one who knows anything about UNRWA can pretend to be surprised by what happened. The notion put forward by some of its apologists that the people who took part in the terror attacks are just a tiny minority of its 13,000 employees is not to be taken seriously. (...) For years, it has been well known that UNRWA facilities (...) have been used by Hamas to store weapons or otherwise assist terrorists. Its education programs are as bad as those run by Hamas or the Palestinian Authority (...). UNRWA's creation in 1949, coupled with its actions and the infrastructure it has built up since then, is dedicated to perpetuating the conflict with Israel. (...) UNRWA has made itself indispensable to the business of caring for Palestinians in Gaza. It is, as it has been for the last 75 years, the primary conduit of assistance to a population that has been made dependent on the international community for all services, including employment. As such, it can and does present itself to the world as the embodiment of philanthropy, providing sustenance to an enormous number of people in need. (...) So, even when UNRWA is caught red-handed storing rockets to be fired at Israel or even having its staff actively taking part in the largest mass slaughter of Jews since the Holocaust, the odds that its parent organization or the various nations that have spent billions of their citizens' taxpayer dollars on funding it will do any-

thing other than slap it on the wrist are negligible. (...) UNRWA exists solely to ensure that Palestinian refugees are never resettled. (...) Jonathan S. Tobin, IHY, 30.01.24

### **Obstacle to Peace: Has the UN Outlived Its Welcome?**

Is it time for Israel to boot out all UN representatives? The sacking of several UN reps for their complicity with Hamas in the October 7th massacre is the most outrageous and duplicitous example of this organizations conduct towards Israel since 1948. And, now we hear it was only the tip of an iceberg, with a reported 10 percent of UNRWA personnel also working for Hamas. Ever since UN proclaimed Israel a member state in 1948 (...) the UN has been working against Israel's interests (...). It was the height of naivety, stupidity or a hatred of Israel for UNRWA to hire local people and Hamas supporters, as workers (...). Since the United Nations Human Rights Council was created in 2006, it has passed 45 resolutions against Israel, almost as many resolutions condemning Israel alone than on issues for the rest of the world combined. (...) This alone invalidates the UN's credibility as an honest broker (...). Dan Ehrlich, TOI, 30.01.24

## **5. Weitere Themen**

### **Weiter angespannte Lage and der Grenze zum Libanon**

#### **Israel is at war with Hezbollah**

(...) Israel is at war not only against Hamas in Gaza; for all intents and purposes, we're also at war with Hezbollah. It's a muted war in the North, however, with each side careful not to overshoot (...) and, in this way, preventing large-scale hostilities from breaking out. (...) Since the Gaza war began, there has been a general government and military policy in place to hold off launching another front in the North and to focus most of the IDF's attention on the effort to eliminate Hamas. (...) When the Gaza war ends and the US and the international community can broker a deal that would push Hezbollah back from the border and across the Litani River, as demanded in UN Resolution 1701 following the 2006 war between Hezbollah and Israel, then there's a chance that the status quo could return to the region and the residents of the North could return home. But that's a big if. More likely, the day will come sooner rather than later, when, to prevent an October 7-type invasion, bring security back to the North,



and allow its residents to return home, Israel will have to unleash its full firepower against Hezbollah. (...)

Editorial, JPO, 16.01.24

#### **IDF commanders want to alter situation in north**

(...) the question Israel must consider is how to fundamentally alter the reality created in the north in the past three months after Israel in effect created a security zone within its own borders leaving communities abandoned. (...) When the war against Hamas began, the IDF adopted a policy of tit for tat and responded only to attacks from across the border. That policy has changed, and the military has been initiating air raids against Hezbollah military targets in Lebanon daily. The commanders believe the IDF should announce that it would hold its fire for 48 hours, but warn that the next missile, rocket or bomb that lands in Israeli territory, especially on a civilian target, will prompt a massive response that would wreak havoc on south Lebanon, including on homes of Hezbollah operatives in the Shi'ite villages in the area, that have thus far been mostly spared. Quiet will be met by quiet but fire will be met by a disproportionate response, they suggest, adding that the IDF's hands have been tied by the politicians and that the current situation is dangerous. (...) Now all they need is for Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defense Ministry Yoav Gallant to agree. (...)

Yossi Yehoshua, YED, 21.01.24

### **Streit um Zweistaatenlösung**

#### **Israel-US Tensions Escalate As Gaza War Rages**

Israel and the United States are increasingly at odds over the direction of the current war in the Gaza Strip and what comes after it. (...) While Netanyahu satisfied the US by asserting that Israel has "no intention of permanently occupying Gaza" or displacing its Palestinian residents, he upset Blinken by rejecting the notion of Palestinian statehood, even if it leads to a normalization of relations between Israel and Saudi Arabia. (...) Netanyahu has also said that the Palestinian Authority, which controls the Fatah faction and which has been accused of inefficiency and corruption, cannot govern Gaza in the future. Netanyahu's refusal to discuss Gaza's postwar future is also rooted in domestic politics. The extremist faction in his cabinet, which props up his government, fervently believes that Israel should reoccupy and resettle Gaza (...) the US' patience with Israel is wearing thin, despite its unaltered view

that Hamas is a malignant and destabilizing force that must be uprooted from Gaza.

Sheldon Kirshner, TOI, 19.01.24

#### **How can anyone who supports Israel call for a two-state solution now?**

(...) three months later, with a whole country still processing trauma and large numbers of Israelis requiring mental-health support, a different take on October 7 keeps gaining traction. In this view (...) October 7, with the multifront war and ongoing hostage ordeal that have followed, is being seen as... a doorway to a Palestinian state and a final, definitive Israeli-Palestinian peace. Amid mounting pressure for such an outcome from the Biden administration and the EU, a group of 15 Jewish Democrats in the US House of Representatives have chimed in with statements such as this, from Representative Jerry Nadler of New York: "We strongly disagree with the [Israeli] prime minister...a two-state solution is the path forward." (...) Apart from the fact that US members of Congress would never have to live beside the envisaged Palestinian state and hence can blithely advocate it without incurring any risk whatsoever to themselves and their loved ones, there's also the fact that Netanyahu's stance on the issue is not a right-wing phenomenon, but actually shared by a wide majority of Israelis. (...) this does not mean it is desirable for Israel to rule over hostile Palestinian populations forever. It does mean that, given fundamental Palestinian animosity toward Israel that has not changed in 75 years, solutions that would not ensure Israeli security are infeasible in the foreseeable future. (...)

P. David Hornik, TOI, 22.01.24

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

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