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Die Themen dieser Ausgabe

1. Gantz-Reise in die USA offenbart Spannungen mit Netanyahu	1
2. Krieg im Gazastreifen.....	3
3. Wehrpflicht für ultra-orthodoxe Männer.....	5
4. Weitere Themen.....	7

1. Gantz-Reise in die USA offenbart Spannungen mit Netanyahu

Ohne die Genehmigung von Israels Regierungschef Benjamin Netanyahu machte sich Benny Gantz, ehemals Generalstabschef und Verteidigungsminister, auf die Reise nach Washington und London. Gantz hatte sich infolge des Hamas-Massakers am 7. Oktober dem israelischen Kriegskabinetts angeschlossen. Doch die Rivalität der beiden Spitzenpolitiker erreichte mit seiner Reise zu Israels engstem und wichtigsten Verbündeten eine neue Qualität. So beauftragte Netanyahu das israelische Botschaftspersonal in den USA, nicht mit Gantz zu kooperieren. Gantz agiere hinter dem Rücken des Regierungschefs und fordere ihn heraus, so die Kritik. Tatsächlich steht der frühere Armeechef mit seinen politischen Positionen dem Weißen Haus deutlich näher als Netanyahu. Er traf die Vize-US-Präsidentin Kamala Harris nur einen Tag nach ihrer Kritik an Israels Kriegsführung im Gazastreifen und ihrer Forderung nach einem sofortigen Waffenstillstand, den Netanyahu strikt ablehnt.

Who does Bibi think he's hurting when he tells the embassy not to help Gantz?

(...) The standing of an ambassador and of his diplomatic mission are determined by his perceived proximity to the leaders of the country which sent him, and to the level of his contacts in his country of service. While time and effort are required to estab-

lish a professional reputation, it can be destroyed in the blink of an eye, as is happening now, with Prime Minister Netanyahu's instructions to the Israeli embassy in Washington not to cooperate with the visit of Minister Gantz. (...) If time is a rare commodity in the capital of the free world, then knowledge is its currency. You are not in the loop? You are irrelevant. We will smile at you and carry on because we do waste time. (...) Any minister, however wise, cannot be familiar with the details of all the subjects at hand, or know precisely how to approach a local interlocutor. For that, the embassy has well-informed staff whose job is to gather information and brief the visitor, and so ensure effective and efficient use of the visit. Who will perform these tasks during the Gantz visit? (...) Netanyahu began his climb to the top as deputy ambassador in Washington. Has he forgotten how important it is for the embassy to be well-informed, or does he remember and not care?
 Tova Herzl, TOI, 04.03.24

We need to talk about the Two State Solution

(...) The notion of establishing a Palestinian state within defined borders has been a prominent aspect of Israeli discourse since the 1990s. (...) negotiations have consistently aimed at achieving this goal. (...) almost every Israeli prime minister since then, including Shimon Peres, Ehud Barak, Benjamin Netanyahu, Ehud Olmert, and Ariel Sharon, has either publicly or privately expressed agreement with the idea of establishing a Palestinian state. (...)

What caused almost every Israeli prime minister at one time or another to express their willingness to agree to the establishment of a demilitarized Palestinian state? One answer could be a response to external pressures, mainly from the United States, when historic opportunities presented themselves to advance a political process and the incumbent prime minister did not want to be seen as obstructionist. (...) the idea of establishing a Palestinian state has been a feature of Israeli politics and rhetoric since the 1990s, and the majority of prime ministers since then have expressed willingness to agree to this outcome under certain conditions. The revival of this discourse following the October 7 attack should not be a cause for anxiety in Jewish society in Israel. It represents an opportunity to fundamentally address a painful problem we have been living with, for nearly a century. We need courageous and visionary leaders, on both sides of the conflict, who are willing to lead us (rather than being led) to a better future. Elie Podeh, JPO, 04.03.24

Netanyahu insists on losing US support

It's somewhat strange that this is the achievement Benjamin Netanyahu boasts about. He, of all people, was considered one of the greatest minds when it comes to American politics and U.S. Jewry. He lived there for years. He was American in every sense of the word. (...) He knows that beyond all of the disputes, which no one doubt exist, after October 7, the U.S. proved that it was not only Israel's ally but its savior. (...) We know there was a tremendous and terrifying failure that led to October 7. A strategic and military failure. The problem is that this strategic failure persists. (...) Who would have believed that one-fifth of Americans would support Hamas? And yet, here we are. (...) Netanyahu insists on losing the U.S. He does everything possible to get into a confrontation with the Americans. (...) We didn't have to wait for the protesters, for Sanders, and now for Harris to propose a ceasefire. We should have proposed it ourselves, in exchange for the release of hostages and demilitarizing the Strip. (...) But we chose the "hammer and anvil strategy," which even if justified militarily, is foolish politically when it's the only strategy on the table. Harris is placing a huge warning sign in front of us. We can belittle it, or we can assume that just as Netanyahu led a policy of strategic blindness until today, he will continue to do the same. But we can't afford to allow ourselves the loss of American support. That would be suicidal. (...)

Ben-Dror Yemini, YED, 05.03.24

Gantz's trip exposes Israeli differences with US

Benny Gantz's unauthorized visit to the United States earlier this week is likely a reflection of the growing tensions between President Joe Biden and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu over the ongoing Israel-Hamas war and the future of the Gaza Strip. Gantz (...) visited Washington, DC – and London – without Netanyahu's approval. (...) the US wants Israel to move civilians out of harm's way before it launches a ground offensive into Rafah, Hamas' last urban stronghold. On a political level, Washington has promoted a two-state solution at a moment when mistrust of the Palestinians among most Israelis has never been higher. (...) Netanyahu is not cooperating. (...) Nevertheless, the United States has continued to replenish Israel's army, vetoed three United Nations resolutions demanding a ceasefire, resisted calls for a permanent ceasefire, or a reduction of military aid to Israel. On the eve of Gantz's visit, the US modified its policy in one major respect. While Harris restated Washington's support for Israel's right of self-defense, she called for an "immediate" ceasefire, "given the immense scale of suffering in Gaza." (...) It was the first time that a senior Biden administration official had publicly come out in favor of an immediate truce. (...) Sheldon Kirshner, TOI, 06.03.24

The U.S.' Ignorance Will Save Hamas

(...) If Jerusalem ignores our objections to invading Rafah, the Biden administration threatens, the U.S. will forbid the Israel Defense Forces to fight there with American weapons. Even after the lessons of October 7, the White House has returned to the slogan, "two states for two peoples," and if that weren't enough, it is also dictating to Israel how to run its military campaigns in Gaza and Lebanon at the tactical level. (...) We can love America and be grateful for all the good it has done for us, but we must not fall into acting like foolish disciples, as many politicians, defense officials (...), academics and media outlets have. (...) The pressure for a (...) cease-fire, which Vice President Kamala Harris has joined, reveals ignorance, which is worse than naivete. But the result is the same: Hamas will continue to rule Gaza and enjoy massive support – including in the West Bank – for its massacre in southern Israel. For Harris' information, Hamas vehemently objects to two states. You're trying to impose a policy without even knowing that. (...)

Israel Harel, HAA, 10.03.24

Because of Biden, the captives' return is going to take longer

The airdropping of aid to Gaza – and soon, also the special pier – solves a problem for President Joe Biden with the progressive wing of his party. It may even win back some of the Muslim voters who have voted against him or not shown up at the polls during the Democratic primaries. It is quite possible that this aid, which Biden has made into a top priority of his policy towards Gaza, would allow Israel to continue walking the tightrope between low-intensity conflict and an American administration whose embrace of us is gradually becoming a bear hug. There is one thing, in any case, this increased humanitarian aid will not do: It will not advance the release of the captives. Quite the opposite. It will only harm their cause. (...) Increasing civilian aid to Gaza provides more and more oxygen to Hamas, delays a real uprising of the residents there against the Palestinian organization, and achieves the opposite of what Biden says he desires. (...) If the US had a Middle Eastern mindset rather than a Western one, it would exploit the humanitarian disaster that befell Gaza, and make clear to both Hamas and the mediators that the condition for "saving the starving residents of Gaza" is the swift end of Hamas, both militarily and in civilian life, and the release of all captives. (...)

Nadav Shragai, IHY, 10.03.24

Defense independence impossible without the US

(...) The systems that Israel wants to be able to manufacture independently vary. (...) The IDF's reliance on US military platforms is not just an assault rifle and a one-ton explosive ordinance. When looking at the IDF today, software, cyber-ware, radars, sensors, drones, tanks, armored personnel carriers, and much more are developed and manufactured in Israel. (...) Almost every aircraft flown by the Israel Air Force (IAF) is American-made. (...) FOR A US administration to stop a war one day it doesn't have to refrain from supplying M4 carbines or JDAMS. All it has to do is stop the flow of spare parts for the IAF's fleet of F-15s, F-35s, and Apache Longbows. When a squadron is in combat, the planes require maintenance as well as a steady and regular flow of spare parts. To be clear, if a military does not have spare parts it can sometimes be forced to ground entire squadrons. As a result, while more independence is always a blessing, in this day and age it would be almost impossible to fight a sustained conflict without active US support. (...)

Israel should (...) be thinking about how to shore up support in the United States. (...) Israel needs to preserve its relationship with the US and must do more to ensure that it can outlast this president or another. (...)

Yaakov Katz, JPO, 10.03.24

Israel can utterly defeat Hamas while also caring for the innocents

(...) Biden gets us, he knows what Israel has gone through since October 7. But he also knows what he needs to say about what the world sees as the urgent issue of the humanitarian situation in Gaza. (...) Israel welcomed the announcement by Biden (...) that the US is planning to build an emergency port off the Gaza coast to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance. (...) It's possible to embrace two seemingly opposing concepts in regards to the war in Gaza: that Israel needs to decisively defeat Hamas to the point that they are no longer a threat and that Israel needs to proactively bring and enable more aid to reach the civilian population. The US is not going to forget that, and as Israel continues to fight Hamas and work for the release of the remaining hostages, it can't afford to forget it either. Editorial, JPO, 10.03.24

2. Krieg im Gazastreifen

Ungeachtet der internationalen Kritik an Israels Kriegsführung dauern die Kämpfe auch zu Beginn des muslimischen Fastenmonats Ramadan im Gazastreifen an. Wie aus dem Büro des Premierministers verlautete, hat Benjamin Netanyahu grundsätzlich grünes Licht für einen Angriff auf die Grenzstadt Rafah gegeben. Rund 1,4 Millionen Menschen sollen sich in der Stadt aufhalten. Die große Mehrheit davon sind Binnenflüchtlinge. In ungewohnt scharfem Ton forderte US-Präsident Joe Biden Israel dazu auf, von einer Bodenoffensive abzusehen. Es dürften nicht noch weitere 30.000 Palästinenser_innen sterben, meinte Biden. Mit dieser Zahl bezieht sich der US-Präsident auf Angaben des Gesundheitsministeriums im Gazastreifen. Die USA und andere Staaten haben die Lieferung humanitärer Hilfsgüter aufgenommen, die aus der Luft über dem Gazastreifen abgeworfen werden, um der sich zuspitzenden Notlage der Menschen dort entgegenzuwirken. Unterdessen liegt ein Angebot der Hamas für eine erneute Waffenruhe und den Austausch von Geiseln gegen palästinensische Häftlinge vor. Israel lehnt viele der von der Hamas

gemachten Forderungen ab, hat jedoch ein Verhandlungsteam nach Doha geschickt. Es wird davon ausgegangen, dass die Verhandlungen sehr zäh sein werden und es noch lange dauern wird, bis ein Einvernehmen erreicht werden könnte.

Israel must finish the business in Gaza

(...) It's disturbing to note that it has taken one hundred and fifty days for the UN to acknowledge that Hamas terrorists used rape as a weapon of war against Israeli women, and that they continue committing sexual crimes to hostages still held in Gaza. Equally unfortunate is the fact that so far, the UN is yet to condemn Hamas for the October 7th massacre. What a tragedy that the United Nations has insidiously evolved into one of the most anti-Semitic institutions in the world! (...) Israel should take serious lessons of the trending global reality. (...) As elections approach, instincts for political survival usually replace good judgement. This why the Biden administration has been groping in the miasma of indecision and doublespeak regarding the Middle East conflict. (...) Israeli interests should never again depend upon the pendulum of power between Democrats and Republicans. An aggressive strategy to ensure consistent American support regardless of the party in power is an imperative. (...)

Kanyi Ndewa, TOI, 07.03.24

Israel's unprecedented moment of truth

Israel stands at a crossroads. The decisions it faces in the near future will have dramatic implications. (...) The first is the matter of the captives and the possibility of another deal that would lead to the release of dozens of them. (...) The second decision is related to the planned operation in Rafah and the captives. If a deal is reached, it will include a cease-fire of about six weeks. (...) The military challenge it faces in the city is negligible compared to two other challenges: preventing harm to relations with Egypt and moving the 1.4 million Palestinians concentrated in Rafah and surroundings out of harm's way. (...) The third decision is also related to the first two, but exists independently of them: the humanitarian issue. The failure to bring in food last week, which resulted in the tragic incident in which dozens of Palestinians were trampled to death, led to harsh criticism of Israel and demands to increase aid. The US airdrops indicate a growing and dangerous disconnect between Washington and Jerusalem, which, if continued, may result in demands for a ceasefire that would undermine the Israeli effort to decisively defeat Hamas. The fourth decision con-

cerns the future of the strip. (...) The fifth decision concerns the campaign in the north. (...) The sixth decision is what to do during Ramadan (...) The most burning issue is the Temple Mount, which always holds the potential for conflagration. (...) Israel has never been required to make so many dramatic decisions at once in its history. They necessitate broad political consensus and great public trust in government decisions. (...) The accumulation of these issues and the loss of credibility at home and abroad requires the prime minister and government to get their act together immediately and remember that the country takes precedence over their political interests. Avoiding this or choosing wrongly could cost us dearly.

Yoav Limor, IHY, 03.03.24

The critical days ahead of Israel in the war against Hamas

The coming days are likely to be the most significant ones in the war against Hamas so far. (...) The terrorist organization and its leader in Gaza, Yahya Sinwar (...) hope that this time Ramadan (...) will make the difference. (...) Sinwar, a religious man who saw an "offense" against the Al-Aqsa Mosque before the war as an excuse to wage it, knows that if the other Arab fronts won't ignite even during Ramadan, the fate of Hamas and the Gaza Strip is sealed. The IDF will launch an operation in Rafah and other areas where it has yet to operate, and Hamas's military and political framework will be severely damaged. Significant damage to Hamas's military and political capabilities will pave the way for another ruling entity to take charge- one that, whether Israel likes it or not, will be associated with Fatah and the Palestinian Authority, thus completing Hamas's defeat. The other option facing Sinwar, namely reaching a cease-fire agreement and releasing the hostages in exchange for hundreds of Palestinian prisoners, probably means the terror organization's survival. However, Sinwar knows that at this point survival won't truly allow him to claim victory. (...) The immense destruction, and unimaginable human cost in Gaza, will cause Gazans to demand him to account for his actions and give answers he may not have. Even the release of several hundred Palestinian prisoners won't calm the situation in the Strip. Therefore, it seems that Sinwar is seeking something much bigger, something that will allow him to claim that he, Salah ad-Din of our time, has no less than defeated the Jews. Sinwar is driven by extreme religious ideology and believes that Ramadan will bring about the change he wants, and finally

succeeds in partially awakening those on the sidelines, the “Inner Arabs,” meaning the Israeli Arab residents, to act, if not in the form of a mass uprising, then in the form of hundreds of severe terror attacks across the country. This is the scenario that Sinwar envisions, and the fact there are some in Israel who’ll help him to achieve that — National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir — is a serious threat. (...)

Avi Issacharoff, YED, 04.03.24

Hamas neglects human lives amid ceasefire, hostage negotiations

In the shadow of the escalating tensions and tragic human toll in the Gaza Strip, the deadlock in the Cairo ceasefire talks casts a spotlight on a critical issue: Hamas’s refusal to provide a list of surviving hostages. This refusal not only hampers progress toward a ceasefire but also highlights a broader, more troubling tactic – using human lives as leverage in geopolitical negotiations. (...) By treating human lives as bargaining chips to further political objectives, Hamas not only engages in morally reprehensible behavior but also significantly hinders any potential peaceful resolution, thereby intensifying the suffering of both the hostages and Gaza’s civilian population. (...) An agreement would bring the first extended truce of the war (...). Dozens of hostages held by the militants would be freed in return for hundreds of Palestinian detainees. (...) The unfolding tragedy in Gaza (...) calls for a more proactive role from the international community in ensuring that negotiations adhere to international legal standards and respect human rights. Only through a steadfast commitment to these fundamental principles can hope be restored for a resolution that not only ends the suffering but also paves the way for a durable peace in the region.

Editorial, JPO, 04.03.24

Sinwar's goal: Turning Ramadan into a regional Oct. 7

Hamas’ leader wants to set the region ablaze during the holy month. This is the reason (...) that he is obstructing the talks on a deal for the release of the captives. (...) Five months after the outbreak of the war, and even more so as we enter the month of Ramadan, the moment of truth for Israel’s campaign appears to be rapidly approaching. (...) For years, the despicable murderer Yahya Sinwar has been using this important period for Muslims as a tool to increase hatred. (...) In other words, Sinwar is banking on Israeli Arabs, Palestinians of Judea and Sa-

maria, Hezbollah and other regional players to do what they did not do on Oct 7 - actively join the war. (...) Instead of preparing, Israel seems to be signaling that the war is in its last throes: reserve forces are being sent home; the operation in Rafah is still a no-go; Nasrallah is getting a pass despite his provocations; Netanyahu is once again dealing with political infighting; and the IDF chief of staff is announcing new billets. Time is playing into Hamas’ advantage, and Israel is shrugging it off as if this bears no significance. (...) The situation should be reversed, and our only response should be to return to high-intensity combat. (...)

Ariel Kahana, IHY, 05.03.24

3. Wehrpflicht für ultra-orthodoxe Männer

Die Frage, ob es eine Wehrpflicht für ultra-orthodoxe Männer geben soll, spaltet seit Jahrzehnten die israelische Gesellschaft. Mit dem Krieg im Gazastreifen und der steigenden Zahl gefallener Soldaten nimmt der Diskurs an Brisanz zu. Verteidigungsminister Yoav Gallant meldete sich jüngst mit der Haltung zu Wort, dass alle Teile der Gesellschaft die Last des Dienstes an der Waffe tragen müssten. Umfragen des Meinungsforschungsinstitut IDI (Israel Democracy Institute) vom Februar zeigen, dass 70% der jüdischen Bürger_innen für eine veränderte und gerechtere Gesetzlage eintreten. Im ultra-orthodoxen Sektor sprachen sich nur 19% für eine Änderung an den Ausnahmeregelungen aus, die eigentlich seit Juni 2023 keine gesetzliche Grundlage mehr haben, bislang jedoch immer noch angewandt werden. Informationen der Armee zufolge sind seit Beginn der Bodenoffensive im Gazastreifen 251 Soldaten gefallen.

Everyone must serve

(...) the defense minister called for an end to military draft exemptions for members of the ultra-Orthodox community (...). This is a big deal! Many Israeli commentators are calling Gallant’s position “heroic.” (...) In the past year, 66,000 young men from the ultra-Orthodox community received a deferral. (...) The war has increased the need for more soldiers, and it increased the attention on those who do not carry their fair share of the burden. (...) Some Haredim themselves realize this. In the days following October 7, thousands of Haredim volunteered for service, and several hundred have been inducted into the IDF. This may be a new trend and reflect a major shift in the worldviews of some in Haredi

community who are expanding their roles in the Israeli workforce and broader society — even while remaining fully ensconced in the Haredi community. (...) everyone must do their part and share the burden. That's the Jewish way.
Elie Weinstock, TOI, 02.03.24

Haredi draft: When ultra-Orthodoxy meets the truth

The most veteran, corrupt, and profane deal ever struck in the Jewish state is ready to die. The 47-year-old pact, whereby ultra-Orthodoxy got wholesale draft exemptions, budgets, and subsidies in turn for joining Likud's coalitions will next month come to an end, due to a rare alignment of juridical, political, and social stars. (...) The war, which will be recalled as the Netanyahu era's aftermath and emblem, is exacting an exorbitant price from Israeli society: physically, economically, and emotionally. Millions of citizens follow anxiously the IDF's announcements of fallen soldiers' names. Mainstream Israelis have personal acquaintances among the war's fallen, wounded, hostages, and their families. Ultra-Orthodox Israelis do not. (...) Ultra-Orthodox Israelis' absence from the funerals and the hospital wards where thousands of other Israelis arrived over the past five months is making a critical mass of Israelis fume. (...) thousands of Modern Orthodox soldiers have proven, empirically, that military service is no obstacle to Jewish scholarship. (...) Chances that Netanyahu will change course after his lifelong tango with ultra-Orthodoxy are nil. (...) Well, ultra-Orthodoxy is not Likud's natural ally. The political center is. And now that center, embodied by Gantz and Gallant, is telling Likud: Your draft-dodging deal was all along a celebration of lies, hypocrisy, and deceit, and next month, with or without you and your Bibi, it will come to its end.
Amotz Asa-El, JPO, 08.03.24

Sephardi Chief Rabbi Yosef's words are a disgrace to IDF soldiers risking their lives

Sephardi Chief Rabbi Yitzhak Yosef stirred controversy by threatening a mass exodus, if the government enforces compulsory military service for the haredim (...) this is a horrible thing to say. Israel's defense equates Israel's existence, and the rabbi's comments not only reject that fact, they insult those who strive to defend their country, both in mandatory service and the reserves. (...) Yosef also questioned the secular community's appreciation for the spiritual contributions to national security, highlighting the perceived undervaluation of the yeshivas and

kollels. (...) There is no doubt that the defense of the Jewish people in the world's only Jewish state is a milhemet mitzvah. Hundreds of soldiers, from all backgrounds, have sacrificed their lives during this righteous war. Haredi leaders should ignore politics and be a part of the broader nation of Israel, in fighting for its survival. The threat of a mass departure by the haredim may not be an empty threat and it should not be acceptable. (...) If the threats are false, it is an cruel gesture. If they are real, they have misinterpreted the word of God.
Editorial, JPO, 11.03.24

In Israel, non-Orthodox Citizens Serve the State and the State Serves the ultra-Orthodox

(...) the relationship between state and its citizens as one of mutual obligations. (...) The state exists only as long as it is viewed as legitimate by the people, and it is legitimate only if it respects its obligations to its citizens. Failing that, its citizens have both the right and the duty to revolt against the state and overthrow its representatives. (...) for the contract to work, it needs to be applied equally to all citizens. (...) A state in which only a portion of the population pays taxes and performs its duty in the form of universal compulsory service, while another enjoys the privileges of leisure and safety, would be feudal. (...) And yet, this is exactly the grotesque sort of regime under which citizens of the State of Israel currently live. (...) The ultra-Orthodox do not know the hardship and risks of military service and war. Nor do they experience heartbreaking experiences of grief and the perpetual anxiety that someone close will die or be maimed in warfare. (...) the ultra-Orthodox get to live a life of leisure and security at the expense of the hardworking citizens who also fight for the defense of the state. (...) The fact that the ultra-Orthodox, while doing nothing and contributing nothing, in fact get more than the non-Orthodox in term of budgets and benefits is inconceivable. (...) De-facto inequalities in burdens and privileges exist in many, if not all, societies. But those described here differ profoundly from the norm: In all societies, inequalities are the involuntary outcome of economic structures; in Israel they are deliberately decided upon by political and coalition agreements. They are inscribed in the social system itself. Israel is the only case in the world where privileges of one group and inequalities are declared and written into law as part of an obscene social contract. (...) The non-Orthodox citizens serve the state and the state serves the ultra-Orthodox. (...) For years, Israelis who created and maintained both the

economy and its security have quietly accepted these injustices. But October 7 has revealed and exposed how the infrastructure of the state itself is crumbling and how it is threatening the nation itself. Therefore, the true people of Israel – the one without which the state could not exist – must retake possession of its country. It must reclaim its sovereignty as the Israeli people and rewrite a just social contract. (...)

Tamar Hostovsky Brandes, Eva Illouz, HAA, 11.03.24

The Real Reason Haredim Don't Want Their Children to Enlist in the Israeli Army

(...) It's time we recognized that the ultra-Orthodox simply don't see us. They teach their children to despise secular Jews. They do not recognize the state, they are anti-Zionist; to them, we are simply a cash register that must be robbed. (...) Over the years they have come up with all kinds of reasons to avoid conscription. This time it's the nonsense uttered by Sephardi Chief Rabbi Yitzhak Yosef (...). He says the Haredim are Levites, who are exempt from military service. Apparently he has knowledge of ancestry and race research. It actually seems to me that the Haredim are members of the tribes of Gad and Reuven, about whom Moses said: "Shall your brethren go to the war, and shall ye sit here?" – which shows there have always been draft dodgers. (...) It's time we realized that the real reason for Haredi draft evasion is the blunt and straightforward desire to protect their children's lives. The Haredi lawmakers are elected in order to make sure that no military funeral procession ever leaves from Bnei Brak. (...) the secular response must be (...) sharp and clear: Conscription of all of the Haredim, at the age of 18, without exemptions, without tricks and without contrivances like "alternative civilian service." The problem is that as long as Chamberlain is prime minister, it won't happen. He'll let the Haredim stay in their cities of refuge, without working, without enlisting, and receiving billions in return, to boot. And all on one condition: that they continue to be loyal to the governing coalition. (...)

Nehemia Shrasler, HAA, 12.03.24

4. Weitere Themen

UN-Bericht zu sexualisierter Gewalt der Hamas

The UN continues to exceed expectations

The UN finally released a report (...) on sexual violence in conflict. (...) the report minimizes the enormity and barbarity of the horrific sexual crimes committed against scores, if not hundreds, of innocent women, girls and young men by Hamas terrorists and their civilian supporters, many of whom were captured on their own video cams. (...) The UN report that was supposed to expose and confirm the horrific sexual crimes against innocent civilians by Hamas also said that it heard accounts of sexual violence against Palestinians by Israeli security forces. (...) And there you have it – unsubstantiated threats of rape against Palestinian terrorists or terror suspects, based on unconfirmed allegations, is the equivalent of Israeli female corpses raped and mutilated, video footage of sexual atrocities and eyewitness testimony of rape and sexual assault by the actual victims. Verbal and psychological, sleep deprivation, extreme noise used against captured terrorists vs. rape and mutilation against innocent girls attending a music festival. (...) Stripping down terrorists to make sure they are not strapped with explosives, or in an effort to extract information of impending terror attacks might be traumatizing, but it certainly cannot be equated on any level with the brutal gang rapes, mutilations and barbaric tortures perpetrated against innocent civilians by Hamas. (...)

Arnie Singer, TOI, 06.03.24

If October 7 rape victims want justice, the UN is the wrong place to look

After 20 meetings on the war in Gaza, the UN Security Council met for the first time to discuss the crimes of sexual violence committed by Hamas terrorists on October 7 and the ongoing abuse of Israeli captives in Gaza. (...) The United Nations Security Council is determined to condemn Israel for every attack in which civilians were killed. It (...) did not say a word in the face of evidence and proof of the most shocking acts imaginable: rape, murder, acts of sodomy, and sexual violence against Israeli women, girls, and men. The closing of the eyes, the plugging of the ears and the thundering silence will continue. (...) Unfortunately, the organization that was established almost 80 years ago is no longer a relevant source of hope for sexual abuse victims. The outcome of the UN can be easily predicted: the continuation of closing their eyes, covering their ears, and the thundering silence that will not lead to freeing our sisters and brothers from the hell of Gaza or to the end of Hamas rule.

Hila Knister Bar David, JPO, 13.03.24

Ein Hafen für den Gazastreifen

US's Gaza pier will dampen criticism of Israel, gives Netanyahu breathing room

The United States has an interest in building a floating sea pier off the coast of Gaza for four main reasons. First, a sea pier would allow the unloading of large cargoes and quantities of humanitarian aid, which are 10 times or more larger than the quantities currently arriving in Gaza by trucks, most of which are plundered. The second reason is that a pier off the northern shores of Gaza (...) will ensure that the aid directly reaches the aid organizations operating inside the strip without the mediation of Hamas and crime families. The third reason is Biden's political conundrum. He has a vested need to placate the Democratic Party base, which has come to include Muslim Americans and various pro-Palestinian activists. Erecting the new pier, Biden hopes, will demonstrate the administration's seriousness when it comes to safeguarding the lives of Palestinian civilians, caught in the middle of the toughest war in the history of the Israel-Hamas conflict. (...) The fourth reason lies in the fact that the Biden administration has come to understand the stranglehold right-wing absolutists like Itamar Ben-Gvir and Bezalel Smotrich have over Netanyahu, and this is a way of alleviating some of the criticism about civilian casualties without forcing the Israeli premier to endanger his coalition's structural integrity. (...) This latest point is of some consequence since the presence of U.S. troops on the ground could put a damper on IDF efforts. (...) However, it is possible that, should these efforts prove insufficient, a more robust effort from the Biden administration could in fact see American troops set foot inside Gaza.

Ron Ben-Yishai, YED, 10.03.24

Thank you, President Joe, for the pier in the sea

Hello President Biden. (...) Thank you for stating to the world, finally, that maybe Israel doesn't have to do every single stinking thing related to the Gaza Strip by themselves. Israel has to rescue hostages, negotiate for hostages, eliminate a massive terror structure with global impact that, as you said, uses human shields, then prevent future terror, and monitor aid coming into the strip for homicidal contraband. (...) Thank you for giving IDF soldiers a break in the Gaza Strip. Thank you for not making them directly hand out aid in a chaotic swarm of humans

that are very possibly armed, and/or a member of Hamas. (...) I love your pier in the sea idea, by the way. It's not novel to transport goods by sea; that's how the terror infrastructure got into the Gaza Strip in the first place. (...) What a relief it will be for Israel to know someone else will create the security barriers, assure the safety of humanitarian personnel, and communicate calmly with people whose rage has been set too high for over 80 years, while Israel takes care of standing up to terror and freeing our hostages. I wish you Godspeed.

Nancy Goodman, TOI, 11.03.24

HAA = Haaretz

YED = Yedioth Ahronoth / Ynetnews

JPO = Jerusalem Post

IHY = Israel HaYom

TOI = Times of Israel

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