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1. Campus-Proteste in den USA

Die Demonstrationen an zahlreichen Universitäten in den USA, die sich gegen die Militäroperation Israels im Gazastreifen richten, nahmen zuletzt zunehmend antizionistische Züge an. So kursierten Rufe, wie „Wir sind alle Hamas“ und „Zionisten raus“. An der Columbia-Universität in Manhattan lehnte die Leitung der Hochschule die Forderung von Studierenden ab, die Zusammenarbeit und die finanziellen Beziehungen mit Israel zu stoppen. An der Brown Universität in Providence einigten sich Demonstrant_innen mit der Hochschulleitung darüber, ihr Zeltlager im Gegenzug für ein Votum über die finanziellen Beziehungen zu Israel abzubauen. Die Polizei ging zum Teil hart gegen die Studierenden vor, die sich in ihrem Recht auf freie Meinungsäußerung beschränkt fühlten und das Vorgehen der Sicherheitskräfte als unverhältnismäßig kritisierten. Umgekehrt gerieten die Studierenden mit der gewaltsamen Besetzung der Hamilton Hall in die Kritik. Die Hamilton Hall war 1968 während eines Protests gegen den Vietnam-Krieg besetzt worden. Seit Beginn der propalästinensischen Studentenproteste im April wurden in den USA mehr als 1000 Demonstrant_innen vorläufig festgenommen.

Wake up: US wave of hate won't die down on its own

(...) Most Americans aren't antisemitic, certainly not Hamas supporters. Many of them, from the East Coast to California, don't differentiate between Hamas and hummus. (...) The U.S. government, de-

spite justified criticism of Netanyahu's government and its various Smotrich-like personae, still backs Israel with weapons and diplomatic support in international forums. But what will happen in another decade or two, when the enraged youth take key leadership positions? Israel, mired in the bog left by the war in Gaza and led by a failed government, is doing nothing. (...) The chance of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government forming a significant task force to combat the rising anti-Israel and antisemitic wave in the U.S. is smaller than the chance of Netanyahu abdicating of his own free will. Therefore, American Jews must understand the obvious: You can't rely on the State of Israel to save you from this bubbling antisemitism. Wake up before it's too late. Wake up, for yourselves and for us. For your children and for ours. (...) Jewish organizations must leave their comfort zone and establish a joint task force, allocate the necessary resources to it, and start fighting. (...) demand that law enforcement authorities take action against all racial incitement and against any organization that enables hate crimes and antisemitism within its circles, especially those inciting violence. (...) hold intensive dialogues with journalists and media outlets about the narratives of events in the Middle East and in the U.S. itself. (...) The war will be tough and exhausting, sometimes frustrating in the face of hypocrisy and stupidity, but it's a vital battle for American Jews and, of course, essential for Israel. In these terrible days we want to trust you.

Yoel Esteron, YED, 25.04.24

When campuses embrace terrorist organizations and Iran

The United States continues to grapple with an unprecedented wave of antisemitism that (...) began at Columbia University in New York and has spread to other educational institutions in the state. As a result, many Jewish students chose to leave Columbia's campus out of concern for their safety, and the university took the exceptional step of moving classes to a virtual format due to the escalating tension. (...) Chants like "Burn Tel Aviv to the ground" and "Al-Qassam Brigades, we are proud of you" were heard on campuses. The protest has exposed cracks in the Democratic coalition, with some political strategists fearing it could jeopardize President Joe Biden's re-election. The NYPD is eager to restore order in the area and remove protesters who have set up an encampment across Columbia University, yet it's facing ongoing refusal from the institution's administration to allow local officers to operate within the university. (...) FBI Director Christopher Wray announced that the agency has opened three times more investigations into hate crimes against Jews since Oct. 7 than in the four months preceding the Hamas attack.

Dor Malul, IHY, 25.04.24

Israel Has Lost America's Universities. It May Eventually Lose the Government

(...) It's clear the country will have a hard time surviving a term under the far-right government. (...) Israel has lost the universities. This happened in a sociopolitical struggle lasting many years in American society, a struggle largely rooted in the progressive concepts and culture that have swept up young Americans. (...) The new narrative identifies Zionism with oppression and imperialism, to the point of denying Israel's right to exist and the Jewish people's connection to the Land of Israel. All this, along with the multiyear failure of Israeli PR, which didn't seriously address the issue, has produced today's situation: a monstrous and funded call for the destruction of Israel. (...) Israel is now at a crossroads in its relations with the United States. (...) The undermining of American support and the chances that it might slow the flow of aid are a clear and present danger for Israel. (...) in Israel's current delicate situation, a weakening of the U.S. efforts is enough to seriously harm our defense. (...) Resources should be channeled to hire the best people – experts in foreign relations, especially relations with Washington – and task them with identifying sources of influence. Even if it's very late, these experts

would redirect the American dialogue. (...) Ultimately, the world wants a militarily strong – but democratic – Israel that doesn't work with far-rightists Itamar Ben-Gvir and Bezalel Smotrich. The damage of the "full right-wing government" is therefore immense also from a PR perspective. If the leadership isn't changed soon, Biden's team may be the last Democratic administration to support Israel.
Efrat Rayten, HAA, 26.04.24

Columbia University caves in to students supporting terrorism

Columbia University is being ruled by a student mob. (...) For seven days, Jewish students have endured endless antisemitic chants, personalized threats of murder with "more October 7s", and assaults. One pro-Palestinian protester proudly identified with a terrorist organization and another proclaimed "We are all Hamas". (...) Drove of students, including non-Jews, have fled the campus (...) expressing discomfort and fear for their own personal safety. (...) Such rabid hate and incitements to terrorism are a threat to every American and believer in the free and democratic world. Not every pro-Palestine demonstrator is antisemitic or dangerous. But the movement has shown its true face, devolving into open support of foreign and domestic terror. No protest on campuses today is about Gazan solidarity. Free speech will never again exist if a crowd of rowdy, disruptive, misguided protesters who hide behind masks is allowed to continue to assert its dominance over this university. Decisive action must be taken. We cannot let terror win.
Inbar Brand, YED, 27.04.24

From a Columbia alum Israeli peace activist

(...) As a graduate of Columbia College (...) and a peace activist who lives in Israel, I (...) believe strongly in the ability of grassroots movements and peaceful protest to change the world. (...) And so, if I were studying at Columbia today, I would ask myself: Should I join your protests? After all, I, too, am pro-Palestinian. But I am also pro-Jew. (...) You are calling for the violent destruction of the country where we live, and the murder of its citizens – including the Palestinian ones. (...) When you proudly declare, "I am Hamas!", you are showing no sympathy or compassion for innocent civilians, including children, women and seniors who were massacred and kidnapped by Hamas, nor for the women who are being raped in captivity (...). Israel is far from perfect. I am outraged at the Jewish-supremacist, messianic, theocratic, anti-democratic

direction in which the country is currently headed. But the answer is to try and change that direction, not call for the country's destruction. (...) Our political leadership on both sides are using us all as pawns in this bloody conflict. It must end. They must agree on a political solution, and we, the grassroots from both nations, must demand this. (...) My ideal is for us to all live in peace and dignity on this land from the River to the Sea. (...) Not Jewish supremacy or theocracy or even having a Jewish state; it is about having a safe place for Jews to live. But not at the expense of another nation. (...)

Haviva Ner-David, TOI, 27.04.24

Never again, they said. And then Columbia happened

(...) A strange fever is spreading across some of the finest institutions of higher learning in America. Throngs of young people (...) have left notebooks and lessons aside and (...) move around chanting, or rather shouting, strange slogans. (...) "we are all Hamas!" Worse, they no longer chant "Out with the Zionists" but "Out with the Jews!" They were all for freedom of speech -until they weren't. (...) those youngsters, the future of the greatest democracy on earth, have no understanding of the slogans they are spouting with such fervor. What we are seeing today is the result of decades of brainwashing. One after another (...) scholarly studies, doctoral theses, and press articles introduced alternative narratives on two crucial topics. The purpose of the first was to deny to Judaism and the Jews the slightest connection to the Temple Mount and to the Land of Israel: the many UNESCO resolutions to this effect are a case in point. (...) Secondly, and perhaps as a corollary, to question the legitimacy of the Jewish state and promote the myth of a "historic Palestine" that never was, turning Jews returning to the land of their ancestors into settlers usurping the land of others. Far from being terrorists, the Palestinians were presented as heroic resistance fighters. (...)

Michelle Mazel, TOI, 29.04.24

2. Iranisch-israelischer Schlagabtausch

In Reaktion auf den iranischen Angriff mit mehr als 300 Raketen und Drohnen Mitte April, attackierte Israel Ziele auf iranischem Gebiet. Medienberichten zufolge galt der Angriff einer Luftwaffenbasis in Isfahan. In der Stadt befinden sich wichtige Einrichtungen der iranischen Rüstungsindustrie. Auch das größte nukleare Forschungszentrum des Landes ist in der Kulturstadt angesiedelt. Hintergrund des ersten direkten Schlagabtauschs

zwischen den beiden sich offen feindlich gesonnenen Staaten war ein Angriff auf das iranische Botschaftsgelände in der syrischen Hauptstadt Damaskus, bei dem Anfang April mehrere Menschen, darunter zwei Generäle der iranischen Revolutionsgarden getötet wurden. Der sich in den vergangenen Monaten zuspitzende Schattenkrieg mit zahlreichen Angriffen durch Verbündete Irans, allen voran der islamistischen Hizbollah im Libanon, nimmt mit dem direkten gegenseitigen Beschuss eine neue gefährliche Dimension an. Aus der Reaktion in Teheran wurde indes deutlich, dass die Islamische Republik aktuell kein Interesse an weiteren Eskalationen zu haben scheint.

In its response to Iran, Israel must weigh new regional cooperation - editorial

Iran's massive drone and missile attack on Israel (...) is a seminal event that thrust the Middle East into a new era. (...) While Iran's nuclear program is still evolving, its extensive missile and drone capabilities elevated it to a regional powerhouse not to be overlooked. (...) The head-spinning success Israel and its allies had (...) in swatting Iranian projectiles out of the sky has shown that Iran's missile threat is not as dire and catastrophic as many thought. The ramifications of this will be felt for years in ways that may be hard to imagine today. One way is that what happened (...) might catalyze formal Israel-Saudi relations. If indeed this is one of the unintended consequences of Iran's attack, it will be a sweet irony, considering that one of the outcomes the ayatollahs were hoping for after Hamas's October 7 attack was that a strong Israeli response would thwart an Israel-US-Saudi deal that was being earnestly discussed and promoted. (...) the quiet role the Saudis played in helping Israel and the US thwart Iran's missile (...) would have been unimaginable a decade ago and is something that needs to be built upon to re-energize talk of a three-way Israel-Saudi-US deal once the Gaza war ends. (...) To ensure the success of this regional architecture, Israel must now carefully weigh its response to Iran, ensuring that it does not undermine this regional cooperation, which, in the darkness currently enveloping the Middle East, is one flicker of hopeful light. Editorial, JPO, 17.04.24

Israel's Muted Strike on Isfahan Shows Netanyahu Has No Strategy on Iran, as Well as Gaza

There's something almost coy about the Israeli government's silence (...) after the strike on an Iranian

air base near Isfahan (...). It's almost as if someone in Jerusalem hoped that the events of the past 19 days could be rolled back – as if the fact that Iran and Israel have been in direct conflict could be conveniently forgotten and we could all go back to the shadow proxy war. Five days of arguing in the war cabinet, of leaks, of counter-briefings and even rabbinical briefings seem to have yielded a limited and calibrated attack that Israel isn't taking responsibility for and the Iranians are also anxious to play down. (...) Benjamin Netanyahu wants this all wrapped up and put away (...). Netanyahu may have actually gained some ground (...) by restraining the ministers and generals who wanted a crushing counterattack on Iran. The polls show him starting to inch back up. Surveys showed that a majority of Israelis were against a strike on Iran that would have led to an all-out war. But any such gains will almost certainly be short-lived. If this round against Iran is indeed about the attention of Israelis, it will soon return to the quagmire in Gaza, the hostages still dying there and the stalemate up north with Hezbollah, which is preventing the return of tens of thousands to their homes near the border. The prime minister's almost complete silence this week has reflected the strategic and political headaches that the Iranian strike caused him. The man who made a career out of talking up the Iranian threat has had nothing to say about an actual Iranian attack on Israel. (...) Just like Netanyahu's resistance to presenting a day-after plan for Gaza, he has no plans for Iran now that Tehran has upended his strategy. (...)

Anshel Pfeffer, HAA, 19.04.24

Strike on Iran meant to end current crisis

The attack in Iran targeted one or more Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) air force installations and was limited in its scope to allow the Iranian regime to contain the event, without being forced to respond by attacking Israel again. This could be an indication that all parties involved would like to see that matter closed and tensions reduced. Iranian media reported a return to normality, indicating the leadership had no immediate intention of responding to the strike. Iranian officials have yet to determine what weapons were used in the strike or how it was carried out. According to international media reports, Israel gave the U.S. warnings hours before the attack, which Jerusalem has not officially claimed responsibility for. International media said that Israel struck military targets in Iran. Israeli security officials confirmed to the New York Times that Israel was

behind the strike on Isfahan. Iranian sources told the Times that an air base was hit without specifying who was behind the attack. There were also reports overnight of explosions in Iraq and in southern Syria, where IRGC forces had been deployed to man a radar that has repeatedly been attacked.

Ron Ben-Yishai, YED, 19.04.24

Iran may have lost the first round, but it's just the beginning

Bottom line, the current standoff between Israel and Iran is far from the endgame. (...) Iran is far from giving up. (...) It is highly likely that Iran will attempt to leverage cyber-attacks against strategic governmental and national targets, utilizing sophisticated and effective cyber warfare tactics (...) Iran is well aware of Israel's air defense capabilities, and the attack relied on psychological warfare aimed at inducing panic (...). We recognize similar techniques in the cyber realm as well. (...) during the drone launches, fake news originating from Iranian cyber groups circulated about a cyber-attack on Israel's electricity infrastructure. Psychological warfare has become an inevitable part of modern warfare. Understanding that, public resilience is the most significant factor in Israel's ability to continue fighting. (...) Awareness is key to preventing cyber events and significant consciousness. The public needs to understand the attack methods used by these hackers attempting phishing attacks or exploiting vulnerabilities where the citizen isn't cautious enough, such as by enabling two-step verification or using a common, easily cracked, or previously leaked password. Additionally, every post on social networks regarding suspicious activities should be taken with caution and, in any case of doubt, citizens can reach out to the cyber system by calling 119 or consult with experts in the field.

Osher Assor, YED, 19.04.24

Looking at an Extraordinary Night with Multiple Dimensional Lens

(...) The attack involved more than 120 ballistic missiles, 170 drones, and more than 30 cruise missiles, with the launches also coming from Iraq and Yemen. (...) Just trying to imagine this missile slamming into a major population center is too horrific to contemplate. The missile defense system that Israel deployed with some help from others far exceeded expectations with over a 99% success rate. (...) as a community of faith, we understand that this situation is not simply to be understood with a one-dimensional lens. It must be viewed with a multiple-

dimensional lens that includes a spiritual lens and understands the hand of God in the background. (...) There may have been millions of Jews reaching out to our Father in Heaven at the time of the attack. Anyone who is skeptical of the hand of God might dismiss this as a coincidence. (...) the Guardian of Israel neither sleeps nor slumbers.

Yaakov Fisch, TOI, 19.04.24

Iran redefines power balance with Israel

Seeing as Iran does not wish for further escalation, the last three weeks can be summarized with positive operational outcomes: the elimination of Iranian general Mohammad Reza Zahedi in Damascus, thwarting an unprecedented Iranian attack and allegedly striking in response an air defense node in Isfahan, designed to protect a nuclear facility. This is just the operational aspect, and it's not enough. In practice, a new balance of terror has emerged between Iran and Israel based on the dramatic downfall of Israel's deterrence on October 7. For years, the mullah regime refrained from directly attacking Israel, until its attack using hundreds of drones, cruise missiles and ballistic missiles. (...) Despite Iran's failure, which restored some of Israel's credibility that was damaged by the Gaza war, Iranian boldness set Israel on a new course. Iran decided to end its shadow war with Israel and respond directly to actions against its people in Syria and Lebanon. (...) The real test will come with the next chance to eliminate an Iranian general on Syrian soil or elsewhere. (...) Zahedi's assassination (...) in an Iranian consulate proved to be a mistake in hindsight. Israel's intelligence community didn't predict the extent of the Iranian response, which almost dragged Israel into a more complex war than the one it already faces. (...) Iran's attempt to downplay the operation points to its will to prevent further escalation but says nothing about Israeli deterrence. In this new reality, unlike before the war, covert assassinations on Iranian soil will no longer be contained by Tehran. (...) Israel needs to bring a swift end to the protracted war in the Gaza Strip, stop blustering with empty slogans about "total victory," reach a hostage deal and if not, execute the long-stalled ground operation in Rafah as soon as possible. (...)

Yossi Yehoshua, YED, 21.04.24

Should we wait for Iran to become nuclear?

For nearly two decades, a cycle of hostilities has persisted between Israel and Iran. (...) Yet, both countries have been careful not to get to a direct and overt military confrontation between them, not

through proxies, and certainly not involving missile and aircraft attacks. (...) This long-standing paradigm underwent a seismic shift (...) when Iran launched a barrage of hundreds of missiles and drones from its territory toward Israel, an offensive intended to sow widespread devastation and incur substantial casualties. (...) the Hamas onslaught on Oct. 7 prompted a profound shift in Israeli policy. In its wake, Israel found itself enmeshed in a multi-front campaign spanning Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, and Yemen – a coordinated offensive orchestrated by Tehran, albeit while the Iranian regime maintained an outward facade of non-involvement. Consequently, it was a logical strategic decision for Israel to impose commensurate costs upon Iran in recompense for the afflictions it has perpetrated. This escalating confrontation with Iran is unfolding at a juncture when the regime has not yet attained nuclear weapons capability, a reality that inherently imposes limitations on its strategic planning and maneuvers. It is a profoundly unsettling contemplation to envision the aggressive actions Iran might dare to undertake, and the extent to which it might promulgate provocations were it to possess nuclear deterrence capabilities sufficient to dissuade Israel and the United States from launching retaliatory strikes or responding to Iranian instigation across the Middle East. (...) The dilemma currently confronting Israel in the forthcoming months and years is transparent. Should the nation await the proverbial sword to be placed upon its throat, as transpired on Oct. 7th thereby being compelled into a war of "no choice"? Or should Israel instead pursue a preemptive offensive, a war of "choice"? (...) The events of the past week, adding to the attack of Oct. 7, are a warning sign of what is to come, and require thinking ahead to the moment when we will find ourselves (...) a prospect that may be imminent sooner than currently anticipated.

Eyal Zisser, IHY, 21.04.24

Iranian attack shows Israel's right-wing gov't exudes

Whoever planned the attack on the Iranian Isfahan International Airport did a thorough job. It was a surgical strike with pinpoint precision, demonstrating Israel's capability to hit any point across Iran. (...) The attack zoned in on a target that would be interesting, challenging, and concerning in the eyes of Iranians but without causing significant damage, casualties, or public humiliation. The goal was to convey a precise message to the Iranians without completely belittling them, forcing them to react, or

taking unnecessary risks. (...) The Iranian attack failed to breach the Israeli defense system with 500 projectiles, in contrast with Israel's sleek attack, which penetrated the Iranian defense with just a few. Despite these positive aspects, last Shabbat, Iran made it clear to the whole world that it is no longer willing to hold back. The era of Israeli deterrence has ended. (...) The fact that Iran is still standing says a lot. According to recent reports, Israel responded minimally in order not to disturb the 'peace' and to avoid an Iranian counterreaction. This is the behavior of a frightened country. (...) In the balance between Israel and Iran, there is currently a stalemate: Israel has proven that it is protected from Iranian ballistic attacks, and Iran has been exposed as completely vulnerable to Israeli aerial attacks. On the other hand, Iran has proven that it is no longer deterred by Israel by daring to attack Israeli territory with maximum force, while Israel emphasizes that it is indeed deterred by Iran, as it opted for the most minor response. (...).
Ben Caspit, JPO, 22.04.24

3. Pessach 2024 im Schatten der Geisel-Tragödie

Das Pessach-Fest, mit dem Jüdinnen und Juden an den Auszug des Volkes Israel aus Ägypten gedenken, stand in diesem Jahr ganz im Zeichen der noch immer im Gazastreifen festgehaltenen Geiseln. Angehörige der Verschleppten riefen dazu auf, am Sederabend mit einem leeren Stuhl an das Schicksal der Hamas-Geiseln zu erinnern. Die Terrororganisation veröffentlichte unterdessen ein weiteres Video. Die verstörenden Aufnahmen zeigen Hersh Goldberg-Polin mit amputiertem Unterarm. Die Proteste für eine schnelle Lösung in der Geiselfrage und gegen die Regierung von Benjamin Netanyahu, der – so die Kritik - keine ausreichenden Maßnahmen für eine neue Vereinbarung ergreift, dauern an. Seit Monaten laufen Verhandlungen über eine Feuerpause und den Austausch von Geiseln gegen palästinensische Häftlinge. Mit einem aktuellen Vorschlag an die Hamas hat Israel, wie US-Außenminister Antony Blinken bestätigte, „große Zugeständnisse“ gemacht. Allerdings will Netanyahu mit oder ohne Geisel-Deal nicht von der angekündigten Offensive in der Grenzstadt Rafah ablassen.

Hamas Hardened Its Position. We Should Still Say 'Yes' to a Deal

(...) in February Hamas agreed to a deal under better conditions and it's true that it has hardened its

positions. But why did Israel reject Hamas' offer in then? The original sin, of course, is Benjamin Netanyahu's refusal to allow armed forces belonging to the Palestinian Authority into the northern Gaza Strip, backed and supported by Arab and other countries, based on a willingness to resume diplomatic negotiations. Netanyahu left a vacuum in the region (...). Hamas is demanding that the IDF withdraw from city centers. What's the problem with that? We aren't in most city centers, and no one is preventing us from returning there after the deal is completed. (...) Hamas is demanding that every Gazan be allowed to return to their home. This isn't an easy demand, but in the absence of an alternative ruling agency in the foreseeable future, they will return to their homes at some point, unless someone is dreaming about establishing a settlement on the ruins of Gaza City. (...) Why is the Mossad in charge of the negotiations? It wasn't like that in the past. In the Gilad Shalit deal, it was the Shin Bet security service and a special coordinator. The reason (...) is only because the Mossad chief answers directly to Netanyahu, who feels comfortable with him.

Raviv Drucker, HAA, 21.04.24

This Passover Jews must fight for liberation -

(...) This year's Pesach has an obvious connection to the headlines of the day: Let Our People Go. This year, far too many seats around Seder tables will be empty because our hostages remain trapped in Gaza. (...) The story of the Exodus and its miracles may seem hard for some to relate to. No one is going to split the sea for us or afflict antisemites with boils or other plagues. But we can draw inspiration from Exodus's human elements, such as the midwives who refuse to drown the firstborn in the river, Moses's confrontation with Pharaoh, and Miriam's merit in the desert. Each of these actions reminds us that liberation, then and now, depends on us. (...) Every Jewish generation since biblical times has faced foes and crises that felt overwhelming, sapped our collective strength, and made us feel isolated and on the precipice of distinction. (...) The Passover Haggadah reminds us that b'chol dor vador omdim aleinu lechaloteinu, in every generation our enemies stand against us, ready to defeat us. But we are also reminded that, with courage and God's help, we can always overcome our enemies. (...) Take notice of the enemies who wish to destroy us, and take heart that we will always be strong enough to win. This moment, now, is our generation's turn to show our strength.

William Daroff, JPO, 21.04.24

Despite It All, Israel Should Celebrate the Holiday of Freedom

At the upcoming Passover seder, a confused, worried and disappointed nation will sit around holiday tables, confounded by the sense of dread that they feel in face of the multiple fronts closing in around them. One hundred thousand women, men and children, refugees in their own country, will not be able to recline around a festive table in their own homes, for the first time in the history of this country, when it is at the height of its military and economic power. Disappointment with political and military leaders is rife. (...) Underlying the current social and political rift, which also applies to the definition of this war's aims, is the fact that we still have not agreed on the purpose of our return to this land, or on the nature of life here based on main fundamental concepts such as "Judaism," "Eretz Yisrael," "Zionism," "sovereignty" and "freedom." (...) despite controversies (...) from the past, Israel has attained achievements which few older countries have reached, even in the West (...), and all this in a blink of an eye, in terms of history. Many families have said – and may they be blessed for this – that they will add a chair at the seder table for the hostages. (...)

Israel Harel, HAA, 21.04.24

This Pesach, let us remember our brethren in captivity

Human beings innately yearn for freedom, as independence constitutes a fundamental attribute intrinsic to every sentient being. Not merely individuals aspire to this, but indeed entire nations and peoples collectively strive for autonomy. (...) The State of Israel represents a juncture in the realization of prophetic visions about the ingathering of exiles and the revival of the desolate land of Israel. (...) At the Seder table, we shall recount the tribulations and slavery in Egypt, expressing gratitude for the redemption we merited. However, not every family shall be wholly complete around the table. For certain families, the haunting void left by absent loved ones cries out incessantly. The seats of those barbarically slain and abducted stand abandoned, bereft of occupants. Upon each of us rests the sacred obligation to be cognizant of the anguish of others, and pray explicitly during this seminal observance of reciting the Haggadah – to invoke remembrance and beseech the Divine on behalf of those presently enduring captivity and suffering

David Lau, IHY, 22.04.24

Here's why we must protest for the hostages at Columbia University

(...) As one of the leaders of the New York Hostages and Missing People Families Forum, I have experienced firsthand how hard it has become. Families have to beg for screen time and attention. (...) every step towards a solution in the region must first pass through the release of the hostages. (...) We can get drawn into other discourses - war, resolution, and the situation on campuses- but maybe we also need to remind ourselves that the captives come first. (...) I study at Columbia University and live near the campus. The reality here is alarming. It's even scarier for me as someone who has paid the price of terror personally. On October 7th, two family members were murdered, and four were kidnapped. Thanks to negotiation and a broad public campaign, four of our relatives were released from captivity. (...) we must continue to act and demonstrate on their behalf and ensure that no public uproar knocks them off the agenda. The world's eyes are now on Columbia; we must ensure the captives are also there. (...)

Omer Lubaton Granot, JPO, 24.04.24

Listen to Israeli-American Hostage Hersh Goldberg-Polin

The video that Hamas released (...) of Hersh Goldberg-Polin, 23, from Jerusalem, who was abducted from the rave near Kibbutz Re'im October 7, reminds Israelis, their government, and the man who heads it that we have no right to give up on them, and amplifies the urgent need to reach a deal for their release. (...) Israel must now provide what it failed to provide on that Saturday – protection for its citizens. For Hersh and the other 133 hostages who are languishing in Hamas captivity, this duty means one thing only – a deal that leads to their release. We must not dismiss Hersh's words as if they were mere psychological warfare. He is a real person, an Israeli hostage. (...) The claim that Hamas is unwilling to release the hostages is irrelevant, because the one who is responsible for the welfare of Israel's citizens is not Hamas' leader in the Gaza Strip, Yahya Sinwar, but rather the Israeli government. Israel must not give up on Hersh, nor on any of the other hostages. If the government refuses to meet its most fundamental duty toward its citizens, Israelis must take to the streets en masse to demand that it, and above all the man who leads it, bring them home and end the war.

Editorial, HAA, 26.04.24

The hostage deal hangs on Sinwar's call, not Netanyahu's

(...) Sinwar feels Israel is weaker than ever, both domestically and internationally. Hamas' main demand so far has been a complete cease-fire. The Egyptian proposal (...) does pave the way for a complete stop to the fighting in the future. (...) Thus, the pause in fighting will transition from temporary to somewhat permanent. (...) If Sinwar says no to the Egyptian proposal, he could spare Netanyahu a significant political headache, especially in light of threats from Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich, who threatened the prime minister that "if you cancel the directive to move into Rafah, your government won't have the right to exist." Indeed, the implication of progressing toward a deal with Hamas is, of course, the calling off of the operation in Rafah. If Sinwar agrees, and Netanyahu succumbs to the desires of Smotrich and his ilk in postponing the deal, then Benny Gantz and Gadi Eisenkot are expected to leave the emergency government, and this may also lead to a resurgence of public protest against Netanyahu to a greater extent. Netanyahu (...) has chosen (...) to do nothing. Neither the stick nor the carrot. Only hoping that his government will survive. Avi Assacharoff, YED, 30.04.24

Netanyahu, time to decide: Conquering Rafah or a diplomatic hostage deal - your time is up

(...) Each day that passes without resolution deepens the nation's wounds and magnifies the untenable situation, not only for the hostages, but also for the Israeli state itself which teeters at a crucial crossroads. The plight of the Israeli hostages, enduring unspeakable torture and living in dire conditions, underscores the urgency of the crisis. Despite the clear imperative for decisive action, our leadership hesitates at a juncture that demands a firm resolution: Should we intensify military efforts to defeat Hamas in their stronghold of Rafah, or should we strive to secure the immediate release of all hostages through negotiations? (...) As a nation committed to the sanctity of life, can we justify a prolonged military engagement with the likelihood of substantial casualties on both sides? Or is our moral imperative to prioritize the immediate rescue of our hostages, potentially at the expense of broader security concerns and justice? (...) The government, under Netanyahu's leadership, must choose a course of action that reflects both our immediate humanitarian concerns and our long-term national

interests. (...) Inaction or indecision is no longer acceptable.

Editorial, JPO, 30.04.24

Weitere Themen

Netanyahu-Regierung unter Druck

The IDF Must Not Be the Scapegoat for Oct.7. Netanyahu Must Resign

Maj. Gen. Aharon Haliva's resignation as director of Military Intelligence was necessary due to the enormous intelligence failure (...). Haliva is the first senior defense official to announce his resignation. In the coming months, he will presumably be followed by (...) other senior defense officials. This is a necessary process, but responsibility shouldn't stop at the military. The defense establishment must not become Israel's scapegoat. Yet that is exactly what Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and the irresponsible gang who led the country to the brink of the abyss along with him intend to happen. (...) He is the father of the failed doctrine, the father of the policy of pushing the Palestinian issue to the bottom of the national and global list of priorities, the one who implemented the policy of divide and rule. He bolstered Hamas in the Gaza Strip, appeased it by sending suitcases full of cash, and assumed that it was deterred. In the meanwhile, he weakened and humiliated the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank. (...) Netanyahu and the other members of his irresponsible government led Israel to a catastrophe. They are now obligated to resign in shame and leave public life. And until they grasp this, it's the public's duty to take to the streets to explain it to them.

Editorial, HAA, 25.04.24

Time to rebuild the government before it's fully destroyed

(...) the lack of transparency in the decision-making processes is disturbing. Some argue that there is no decision-making process at all and that another thing we have not yet learned from October 7 is our addiction to pushing and postponing important issues. (...) Israel managed to prevent an unprecedented attack by Iran against Israel (...) thanks to two elements: its technological and scientific strength (...) and a defense coalition consisting of several countries that militarily aided Israel. (...) Israel has a strategic opportunity to create a regional strategic alliance (...). Political work, high-level foreign relations, harnessing partners, and diplomatic

work are required here – exactly the opposite of what our government has to offer. When a convicted minister tweets “dardale” (slang for “lame”) regarding an attack against Iran that Israel has yet to confirm it had conducted, you know we have a problem. The State of Israel currently needs to emphasize expertise in foreign relations and security, not only in response but also in warfare. (...) We need to recognize the good that international alliances provide, we need to free ourselves from the concepts of invincibility and make a real effort to improve, we need to integrate more diverse population groups into the leadership, including women, to increase perspectives and representation. We need to restore the public’s trust in the leadership. We need elections.

Moran Zer Katzenstein, JPO, 26.04.24

Mögliche US-Sanktionen gegen ultraorthodoxes Armee-Bataillon

Dangerous sanctions: Has the special Israeli-American relationship come to an end?

(...) the potential imposition of sanctions by the U.S. government on the Netzah Yehuda Battalion (...) would mean no less than the potential end of the special relationship between Israel and the U.S. and a loophole that could lead to the imposition of international, political, and personal sanctions by states and international organizations on any entity involved in Israeli activity in the West Bank - from Israeli officials, through IDF officers and soldiers, to Israelis living in settlements. (...) The significance of imposing these sanctions is essentially a public expression of distrust by the United States in the IDF’s military judicial system and its ability to enforce the law on its soldiers. (...) As long as a country demonstrates that it has a reliable and independent law enforcement system capable of addressing violations of international law, there’s no place for international judicial intervention in the country. (...) the imposition of sanctions on an IDF unit is a significant and serious escalation, as it marks the first time the U.S. imposes sanctions on an official Israeli body for actions carried out in Israel, which were supposed to be handled by Israeli law enforcement authorities. The implications of the new policy will be dramatic. (...) if this trend continues, the day when international arrest warrants will be issued against the prime minister, Israeli officials, and senior Israeli officers isn’t far. (...)

Matan Gutman, YED, 21.04.24

Targeting Netzach Yehuda is a grave injustice

(...) Netzach Yehuda, the only battalion of haredi (...) soldiers in the IDF (...) fight for our common ideals and the values of the Bible that inspired the founding fathers of our great country. (...) they form a highly motivated and high-achieving unit. Unfortunately, as can be expected, there have also been several incidents over 25 years of service, but all were dealt with by the army prosecution, with soldiers imprisoned and punished. (...) these incidents are truly regrettable (...). They are an inevitable by-product of combat situations in which soldiers are under constant attack by both civilian and paramilitary forces. They occur in many units in all armies around the world. (...) The voices rising against Netzach Yehuda come from anti-Israel NGOs. (...) If they succeed in delegitimizing Netzach Yehuda, these groups, which have a history of hostility toward Israel, will then set their sights on other IDF units. Netzach Yehuda, the only haredi battalion in the IDF, is the soft target. In Israel, some extreme leftist groups oppose the unit because it does not integrate men and women. (...) The United States has never placed similar sanctions on the military divisions of any other ally. While US support of Israel stands strong, these sanctions will threaten to undermine the close cooperation between the two countries, and, during a period of wartime and geopolitical instability, they send a dangerous signal to Israel’s enemies while jeopardizing every IDF unit. The current targeting of Netzach Yehuda is only the tip of a large and looming iceberg. (...)

Steve Rosedale, JPO, 27.04.24

HAA = Haaretz

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IHY = Israel HaYom

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