Jewish Community News

The Publication of the Jewish Federation of the Desert

www.jfedps.org

Cheshvan/Kislev 5785 - December 2024

Community Gathers to Remember, Pray and Hope on October 7's First Anniversary

The Jewish Community of the Coachella Valley gathered on Sunday, October 27th at Temple Isaiah in Palm Springs to commemorate the first anniversary of the massacre of over 1200 Israelis by Hamas on October 7, 2023 and the taking of 254 hostages, most of whom are still in captivity, if alive.

Rabbi Steven Rosenberg of Temple Isaiah welcomed the several hundred Coachella Valley residents who came to honor Israel, remember those who perished and pray for those still in captivity on this afternoon of reflection, prayer and song. The voices of Cantor Joeseph Gole of Har El, Chazzan Dr. Sarah Sela of Temple Isaiah, Cantorial soloist Jerry (Ezra) Noriega of the Sun City Jewish Services, Madrikh Ruhani Ken Hailpern of Congregation Beth Shalom and Rabbi Andrew Bentley of Desert Outreach Congregation led prayers and brought cohesiveness through leading attendees in moving contemporary Israeli music. Palm Springs' Jewish Police Chief, Andy Mills, read a prayer for the welfare of the State of Israel.

Readings and prayers were led by our community's local clergy: Rabbi Richard Zionts of Congregation Har El, Rabbi David Novak of Temple Sinai, Rabbi J.B. Sacks and Madrikh Ruhani Ken Hailpern of Congregation Beth Shalom, Rabbi Rachel Axelrad and Rabbi Andrew Bentley of Desert Outreach Synagogue and Rabbi Steven Rosenberg of Temple Isaiah. Rabbi Andrew Bentley also shared the story of his son Nate, who has been fighting in Gaza as part of the 6310 Special Recon Battalion of the Jerusalem Reserve Brigade (16th) since October 8th of last year.

Rabbi Steven Rosenberg (Temple Isaiah), Rabbi David Novak (Temple Sinai), Rabbi J.B. Sacks and Madrikh Ruhani Ken Hailpern (Congregation Beth Shalom), Rabbi Rachel Axelrad and Rabbi Andrew Bentley (Desert Outreach Synagogue), Rabbi Richard Zionts (Har-El), Cantor Joseph Gole (Har-El), Chazzan Dr. Sarah Sela (Temple Isaiah) and Cantorial Soloist Ezra Noriega (Sun City Jewish Services).

JFNA General Assembly Report

Arnie Gillman

Jewish Federation Board President

Washington, DC is a beautiful place to experience, especially in the Fall, but my visit was to attend the November 10-12 Jewish Federations of North America's General Assembly (JFNA), along with Alberto Tejero, CFO, and Jackie Cohen, Past Board President of our Federation. The experience of being there was exhilarating, opening our eyes to what it means to be part of the JFNA.

The conference began with a rally, "Stand Together," at Nationals Park with speakers as actress/comedian Tiffany Haddish and Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer to amazing entertainment by Shulem Lemmer. What a way to start a convention!

The next day was filled with different support sessions, including how to combat antisemitism, and how to win public support through social media. We were able to connect with Joint Distribution Committee and Jewish Agency For Israel organizations who shared with us their many issues confronting the Israeli people since last year's October 7 massacre. Today they are dealing with PTSD in soldiers and families, with programs being developed to help via websites and psychologists. Also, programs have been created out of necessity to help the families that must relocate to new communities, setting up schools and facilities to help normalize life. Your contributions have helped them to accomplish their goals but there is much more work to be done.

One of the most gut-wrenching days was when we attended a panel of released hostages and family members of the hostages still in captivity. They shared their experiences and stories and thanked JFNA for allowing them to speak to the world and hope that this will help release the balance of hostages.

Countering those emotions, what truly inspired us was how many young people are working for JFNA and their commitment to the Zionist cause. Clearly, their goal is to unite the Jewish community and educate people about combatting antisemitism. JFNA has made a commitment that if your children or grandchildren attending college or universities have problems or feel unprotected in any way, contact JFNA and they will provide legal support at no cost.

The speakers, from Israel's President Isaac Herzog, to Sheryl Sandberg, Founder of Lean In, to Bari Weiss, Founder & Editor The Free Press and Host of Podcast 'Honestly', to Senator Joni Ernst, Senator Kirsten Gillibrand, and Congresswoman Haley Stevens, all shared one message that we must stand together as Jews and speak loudly to the world about what is going on in Israel and in Jewish communities. Hearing them made us feel proud to be a part of this wonderful organization that unites Jewish people throughout the world. I want you to know that your commitment to our Jewish Federation of the Desert makes this happen.

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Carol Fragen 2025 Kipnis-Wilson Friedland Honoree

By Miriam H. Bent and Leslie Pepper

Two women who serve on the Board of our Jewish Federation are being recognized by the International Lion of Judah at its conference in January 2025, receiving the prestigious Kipnis-Wilson Friedland Award. Jewish Federations are permitted to select one recipient for this biennial award, but our Desert community is blessed by having a second woman who is so active both here and in Minneapolis that we can proudly acknowledge her as part of our community while she is being honored by her Minnesota community. Lori Fritz is this remarkable woman, whose work with the Minneapolis Jewish Federation resulted in her being selected as their 2025 Kipnis-Wilson Friedland honoree. Meanwhile, she serves as the Allocations Chair of the Jewish Federation of the Desert Board.

We are honored to announce the woman selected by our desert community to receive the prestigious 2025 Kipnis-Wilson Friedland Award is Carol Fragen. Over the last few years, she not only has co-chaired our community's major fundraisers for both Women's Philanthropy and Major Gifts, but six months ago she became president of Temple Isaiah in Palm Springs.

Carol Fragen

Lori Fritz

The Lion of Judah is perhaps one of the most successful development vehicles of all time and is a symbol of today's Jewish Woman's strength, a symbol of her caring about the organized Jewish world and a symbol of her financial commitment of at least $5,000 to the UJA Federation Annual Campaign. More than 16,000 women world-wide are Lions of Judah. According to Fran Kaufman, our Federation's Women's Philanthropy Chair, as a group Lions of Judah are unquestionably the most dynamic philanthropic Jewish women in the world.

On January 12-13, 2025, a delegation of our Desert Lions of Judah will be going to Atlanta, Georgia, for the International Lion of Judah Conference, joining over 1200 other Lions from around the country and globally. In addition, Carol and Lori will also be recognized at our community's Lion of Judah Brunch on Monday, January 20th at Tamarisk Country Club. For more information about attending this prestigious event, contact Leslie Pepper at 760-324-4737.

The prestigious international Kipnis-Wilson Friedland Award recognizes and honors women who have set a very high bar in their communities. Carol and Lori certainly exemplify this! Women's Philanthropy extends a heartfelt mazel tov to both outstanding women!

Jewish Book Council Events

In-Person Event on December 3 with Alex Bruner, Nephew of Jozsef Debreczeni, Author of 'Cold Crematorium'

József Debreczeni (13 October 1905 – 26 April 1978) was a writer and translator, and a survivor and memoirist of the Hungarian Holocaust, with his book *Cold Crematorium: Reporting From the Land of Auschwitz*, first published in 1950.

Debreczeni was a pen name for József Bruner. He was born in Budapest in 1905, moving to Belgrade after World War II. He had been a journalist and newspaper editor, and was dismissed from his post during the War because he was Jewish. [1] In 1944, he was deported to Auschwitz concentration camp. Debreczeni endured forced labour in three concentration camps. .After settling in Belgrade in 1945, he published in newspapers and magazines, as well as translating literature from several countries. Several of Debreczeni's plays were staged, and he authored poetry and books. He died in Belgrade in 1978. Debreczeni's story sheds light on the horrors he endured and serves as a testament to resilience and memory.

Join us for an in-person presentation on Tuesday, December 3, at the Jewish Federation of the Desert by Alex Bruner, the author›s nephew and a child of Holocaust survivors. He will discuss the historical and family context for his uncle›s deportation to Auschwitz and the author›s hellish journey.

Please RSVP by contacting Leslie Pepper at 760-324-4737.

Unstuff Your Life – An In-Person Afternoon with Andrew Mellen December 11

Women's Philanthropy welcomes men and women to join us for an in person talk with Andrew Mellen, on Wednesday, December 11, at 3:00 pm at the Jewish Federation of the Desert. His latest book "Unstuff Your Life" will be the focus of his discussion.

Andrew is one of the country's most sought-after professional organizers, who makes his foolproof rescue plan available for everyone.

Arguably the most organized man in America, Andrew J. Mellen has created unique, lasting techniques for streamlined living, bringing order out of chaos for a client list that includes attorneys, filmmakers, and even psychologists. With *Unstuff Your Life!* he puts his powerful program in the hands of his widest audience yet. Acknowledging that it›s often the «stuff behind the stuff» that holds people back, Mellen offers an action-based

plan to redirect clutterers from dwelling on their feelings. This simple shift yields immediate results that will help everyone achieve organizational bliss. Mellen›s mix of humor, honesty, tough love, and foolproof strategies will motivates listeners to work through their feelings and make real behavior changes that will have long-lasting effects.

Written in Mellen's signature no-nonsense yet hilarious tone, *Unstuff Your Life!* brims with personality, along with approaches not found in other organizing books. Built on the principle that we must distinguish ourselves from our possessions, *Unstuff Your Life!* starts with truly achievable goals and works toward the nightmare projects everyone tries hard to avoid. From the basement to the bedroom, the kitchen to the car, and more, listeners will learn:

- Where to find a permanent home for your keys and wallet
- How to sort the mail in a manageable and time-effective way
- What it means to group "like with like"
- How to tackle bills and budget
- How to problem-solve with your skills, and more

The result is absolute freedom from the burden of clutter - and more free time than you ever imagined possible.

RSVP to Leslie Pepper at 760-324-4737.

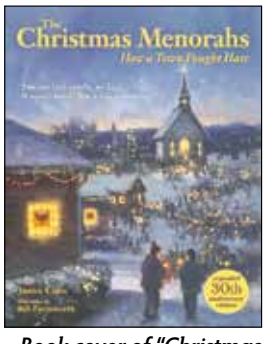
View Timely Book Review from Your Home via Zoom Sunday, December 15 at 3:00 PM

Join us virtually for the inspiring story of how Billings, Montana stood up to Antisemitism

This beloved and inspiring children's book, now updated and expanded for a new generation, recounts the true story of how an American town took a stand against hate and antisemitism during the holiday season of 1993.

Dr. Janice Cohn

When a rock is thrown through a young Jewish child's bedroom window in Billings, Montana, the entire community unites, working together to take action. Their response, inspired by the rescue of the Danish Jews 50 years earlier, shows how love and courage can conquer hate.



Book cover of "Christmas Menorahs"

This expanded 30th anniversary edition includes additional material on the events in Billings, including interviews and a discussion guide, and invites us all to be upstanders in the face of injustice. At a time of division and incivility in our country, with the alarming rise of antisemitism and other forms of bigotry, true stories like *The Christmas Menorahs* are needed more than ever to show children and adults alike what our "better angels" can achieve.

Author Dr. Janice Cohn is a psychotherapist with a doctorate in clinical social work. She's been dedicated to helping adults and children cope with grief, loss and life transitions and has lectured widely on these topics. Additionally, Dr. Cohn works extensively with people in the arts, an interest fueled by her experiences as an author, newspaper columnist and playwright.

Her former newspaper column for the Family Times Section of The Washington Times, which focused on raising compassionate children, ran for over two years and reached approximately half a million people.

Contact Leslie Pepper at the Jewish Federation, 760-324-4737, for the zoom link.

No One Said it Would be Easy

By Lynda Zionts

No one ever told us that being Jewish and living a Jewish life is ever easy.

Then why did I think, growing up in Pine Bluff, Arkansas, 38 miles from Little Rock, in a Reform-Jewish congregation started by my great-grandfather in 1866, that Judaism was my birthright?

Why did I think that all Jews in my Temple did everything as one?

At the same time, why did I feel comfortable going to Christmas Eve Mass with my good Catholic friend and to the United Methodist Church occasionally on a Wednesday night with a lifelong friend?

Why did I look forward to going faithfully every Friday night to Temple with my maternal grandmother? She would hold my hand through services and I would rub my fingers over her bright-red polished fingernails?

Why is one of my warmest memories is that of dancing with my paternal grandparents in their narrow hallway, celebrating the day Israel became a State.

Why did I take for granted the fact that I would always have Passover with forty relatives and close family friends and knowing that Rosh Hashanah would always be a festival at Temple surrounded by everyone I knew?

Temple Youth Group was my favorite activity that extended beyond our town to other Jewish communities in Arkansas, Mississippi, Louisiana and western Tennessee. So why did two of my friends marry rabbis and another became a director of Jewish Federation and yet another become a rabbi?

Why was I never confused as to who I was?

Now, the question is not why but rather why not?

Reader, I paused my writing here as I had to think about answering my own question.

Yes, indeed, why not?

My town and my experience in the South was similar to growing up Jewish in Palm Springs in the 1950s and 1960s. Most of us reading this had the same experience growing up in other Jewish communities. Certainly those raising their families here had Temple Isaiah as the center of Jewish activity with Rabbi Joseph Hurwitz as their spiritual leader.

Temple Isaiah became the soul of Jewish life in the Desert.

So what has happened here and across the cities and towns, the hills and plains of America? Families are scattered across the nation and the world, the cell phone is used for texting loved ones and Zoom is employed on special occasions. The busy schedule of young parents often dictates that Jewish activities are not primary.

In this mix, membership in congregations is not at the top of the list of priorities. Many members and non-members tune in for Shabbat services and Torah Study on Zoom. Bar and Bat Mitzvah students are trained on Zoom. The exceptions are people buying tickets for High Holy Day services and making reservations for a community Passover Seder.

Enrollment in rabbinical schools is down as well as cantorial schools. Congregations are merging and creating a new phase of Jewish life. Federations and other organizations are scrambling to meet goals.

Add to this the rise of extreme antisemitism and worldwide threats to the survival of the State of Israel.

Now that we have reached our years of wisdom, how can we re-create community?

We cannot re-create the America of the 1950s and 1960s--It is long past. We can, however, re-design our Jewish community to meet the America of the 21st century that we live in today.

We can do this together in the Coachella Valley.

We have the opportunity to re-design our community. We can do and support all things Jewish as ONE. We must begin by supporting and attending all Jewish community events and programs. This support will move our Jewish community in a more positive direction to become truly cohesive.

LET IT START WITH US--COME TO THE COMMUNITY AS FAR AS YOU CAN AND THE COMMUNITY WILL COME THE REST OF THE WAY TO YOU!

Rebuffing Ban Claim, Germany OKs $100M Arms Sales to Israel

Jewish News Syndicate

Germany has approved $102 million in arms sales to Israel since August, officials in Berlin revealed on October 24.

The German Foreign Ministry announced the figures after a far-left lawmaker in the country's federal parliament sought clarification regarding recent reports that Germany was holding up arms exports to the Jewish state, according to the *DPA* news agency.

The numbers show that German arms shipments vastly increased in 2023 ($352 million) over 2022 ($35 million). They then decreased drastically in 2024 ($48 million prior to August), still a high figure compared to previous years.

The authorization of another $102 million in exports brings the 2024 figure to roughly half that of the previous year.

In 2015, Germany supplied more than $500 million in arms exports to Israel, the highest figure in recent years, according to a report from April by the Berlin-based Forensis nonprofit.

The *DPA* report did not say whether Israel had expressed interest in purchasing more arms from Germany this year or the previous one.

Israel has been receiving vast amounts of weapons from the United States and other allies amid its year-long conflict with Hamas in Gaza, Hezbollah in Lebanon and Iran and its other proxies.

Although Germany did not join the United Kingdom and France in declaring a weapons export ban on Israel, in practice such shipments had been held up, at least temporarily, by German Economic Affairs Minister Robert Habeck and Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock, both from the left-wing Alliance 90/Greens political bloc, *Bild* reported in late October. That bloc is a coalition partner of German Chancellor Olaf Scholz's center-left Social Democratic Party.

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EDITORIAL
Miriam H. Bent, Editor
Bailey Communications,
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JCN STATEMENT
The Jewish Community News seeks to provide news and feature material of special interest to its readership, and to create a heightened sense of Jewish identity through the dissemination of information about people, events and issues at home and abroad. The JCN seeks to serve as a forum for the exchange of ideas and opinions in the Jewish community.

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Ken Hailpern Gala Luncheon Honors Years of Devoted Service

Certificate of "Madrikh Ruhani" alongside photo from his Bar Mitzvah

Ken Hailpern

Rabbi J.B. Sacks

From 2010 until this past summer, Ken Hailpern served as Spiritual Leader of Congregation Beth Shalom and as its representative to the Coachella Valley Jewish community. Ken brought over a half century of experience in Jewish education, administration, and congregational leadership when he assumed the helm at Beth Shalom, and skillfully guided it through the its many challenges, including the pandemic, relocating and meeting the changing needs of a dynamic congregation.

With his relinquishing the reins to Rabbi J.B. Sacks, it was with affection and profound appreciation that his congregation gathered to say "thank you" at a gala luncheon held on November 3rd. A highlight was the presentation of a certificate bestowing on him the honored title of Madrikh Ruhani, 'Spiritual leader.'

Israel First Attacked Radar Detection Systems to Weaken Iran's Ability to Intercept Strikes

By World Israel News Staff

Before Israel launched its retaliatory strike against Iran on October 12 the IAF carried out a mission to deactivate radar systems to prevent Iran from intercepting strikes, KAN reported.

During Israel's strike, it was apparent that radar detection within Iran's defense system was damaged and screens froze. With the deactivation of radar systems, the IAF was able to penetrate airspace more deeply since Iran's ability to respond was greatly impaired.

Israel carried out preliminary strikes on Iran's radar targets located in Syria to "blind" Iran's capabilities. Combined with the preliminary radar strikes in Syria, Israel's operation involved 100 aircraft covering over 2,000 kilometers.

Iran military officials confirmed that Israel used "very light warheads" to strike radar systems in Ilam, Khuzestan, and around Tehran. Israel struck within Iran in retaliation for 180 missiles the Islamic Republic launched into Israel in early October.

Although largely downplaying Israel's strike, Iranian media reported that four soldiers were killed.

Two Iranian officials, one a member of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC), reported that Israel struck the S-300 air defense of Imam Khomeini International Airport that provides defense for areas in Tehran. In addition, at least three IRGC missile bases were hit, and Israeli drones targeted the secretive Parchin military base on the outskirts of Tehran, with one drone hitting the base and the others intercepted.

Israel has insisted that nuclear activities are being carried out at Parchin, and the UN's IAEA nuclear watchdog in 2016 reportedly found evidence confirming this suspicion.

The IDF destroyed Iran's most advanced anti-missile systems among the air defenses it hit in its overnight air attack Saturday, leaving several major energy sites, a missile base, a port, and Tehran's airport defenseless, The New York Times reported Sunday. The paper, citing unnamed Israeli officials, said that three S-300 systems supplied by Russia and other radar systems were "severely damaged and rendered inoperative."

Israel's Strike on Iran is Rebuilding Deterrence it Lost on October 7

Israel's deterrence has also been reinforced by unprecedented cooperation with the United States, US Central Command, and numerous Arab countries in the region.

By Avi Benayahu, The Jerusalem Post

Israel's security deterrence is something that takes years to establish but only moments to lose. This hard truth hit home on October 7, 2023. In the wake of assaults across multiple fronts over the past year, Israel has displayed remarkable speed and efficiency in restoring—and even strengthening—its deterrence in the eyes of its enemies, neighboring countries in the Middle East, and the global community.

This resurgence isn't just about the resolve seen in ground maneuvers in Gaza and Lebanon or precision strikes against terror leaders in Lebanon, Gaza, and Tehran. It also speaks to the formidable capabilities of Israeli intelligence and the Air Force's reach, which enables strikes as far as 2,000 kilometers away in Iran, Yemen, and beyond. This demonstration of strength is the result of decades of collaboration and technological innovation within Israel's defense industries, the Air Force, and the Defense Ministry.

Scene in Iran after a series of Israeli retaliation strikes on October 26

Nurturing Israel's Ties

Israel's deterrence has also been reinforced by unprecedented cooperation with the United States, US Central Command, and numerous Arab countries in the region. These partnerships are vital and must be nurtured with a mix of transparency and discretion. Once achieved, deterrence requires continuous, deliberate upkeep, which the IDF and Israel's intelligence agencies have long mastered.

Israel carried out a triple-wave assault across three regions in Iran, sending a resounding message to Tehran and the entire "Resistance Axis." This operation resulted in critical strategic gains: severe hits to advanced radar and defense systems, which were supplied by Russia and others, have made Iranian skies more accessible for Israeli intelligence-gathering and operations. Additionally, the strike dealt a significant blow to missile production and storage sites in Iran, Syria, Iraq, and Yemen, targeting ballistic missiles that pose a direct threat to Israel. This is undeniably a major strategic achievement.

A few additional points are worth mentioning:

First, American aircraft outfitted with Israeli and American munitions effectively dismantled high-tech Russian defenses, which provided both a psychological boost to the American defense industry and a tangible win for Israeli-American collaboration.

Second, the road ahead remains challenging. Iran is a powerful adversary and can still respond, either directly or by targeting assets abroad. Hezbollah's capabilities are also formidable, and militias in Syria, Iraq, and Yemen add further complications.

Now, more than ever, "tightening the bolts" with the US and Sunni Arab states is critical, and this partnership demands wisdom and diplomacy to accompany military strength. Whether this careful balance is being fully achieved remains to be seen.

Four Female Air Force Crew Members Participated in Iran Raid

Finally, a point of Israeli pride: Four female Air Force crew members participated in recent missions targeting Iran. Their involvement represents a landmark moment in the IDF's evolving role for women in combat.

After this war, the debate over women in combat roles should be over. Their unique perspectives are now more vital than ever in Israel's national decision-making arenas—a shift that could significantly shape the country's future.

Documentary of Dr. Ruth Screened at Temple Sinai November 10

By Leslie Pepper, Jewish Federation Director of Community Engagement

Patti Kenner

The Jewish Federation of the Desert and Temple Sinai joined forces to show the remarkable story of Dr. Ruth Westheimer, who passed away on July 12, 2024, at the age of 96. What a morning over 100 members of our community shared! Patti Kenner, a personal best friend of Dr. Ruth, an Out-of-Town Lion of Judah of our community and in New York and longtime friend of Rabbi Novak and our Jewish Federation, brought us this most interesting documentary, also providing a lovely bagel and lox brunch to set the stage for the video.

Gail & Sol Jacobson, Marcia & Rick Stein

Dr. Ruth was a child of the Holocaust. From the age of 10, when she was separated from her parents to her years in an orphanage in Switzerland and then life in Israel before Statehood, she was always enthusiastic about life. She never considered herself a Holocaust survivor but was an orphan of the Holocaust.

Rabbi David Novak, Leslie Pepper and Talia Lizimer

For anyone who could not join us but wish to see Dr. Ruth's story, the documentary is available on HULU.

Trump Nominates Former Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee as US Ambassador to Israel

By Corey Walker, The Algemeiner

Mike Huckabee

US President-elect Donald Trump has nominated former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee to serve as the next US ambassador to Israel, adding another staunch ally of the Jewish state to a senior role in his incoming administration.

"I am pleased to announce that the highly respected former Governor of Arkansas, Mike Huckabee, has been nominated to be the United States Ambassador to Israel," Trump wrote in a statement on November 12. "Mike has been a great public servant, governor, and leader in faith for many years. He loves Israel, and the people of Israel, and likewise, the people of Israel love him. Mike will work tirelessly to bring about peace in the Middle East!" Trump continued.

Huckabee, an evangelical Christian, has long been a stalwart ally of the Jewish state. He has repudiated the anti-Israel protests that erupted in the wake of Hamas's massacre across southern Israel last Oct. 7 and criticized incumbent US President Joe Biden for sympathizing with anti-Israel protesters during his speech at the 2024 Democratic National Convention (DNC). The incoming ambassador also lambasted the anti-Israel encampments at elite universities, stating that there should be "outrage" over the targeting and mistreatment of Jewish college students.

Huckabee has defended Israel's right to build settlements in the West Bank, acknowledging the Jewish people's ties to the land dating back to the ancient world. "There is no such thing as the West Bank — it's Judea and Samaria," Huckabee has said, referring to the biblical names for the area. "There is no such thing as settlements — they're communities, they're neighborhoods, they're cities. There is no such thing as an occupation." During Huckabee's 2008 US presidential campaign, he stated that "there's really no such thing as a Palestinian," and that land for a potential Palestinian state should be taken from other Arab states and not Israel.

Huckabee will replace the current ambassador to Israel, Jack Lew.

Trump's pick for ambassador to Israel during his first term, David Friedman, praised the president-elect's selection of Huckabee. "I am thrilled by President Trump's nomination of Governor Mike Huckabee as the next Ambassador to Israel. He is a dear friend and he will have my full support. Congrats Mike on getting the best job in the world!" Friedman wrote on X/Twitter.

During Trump's first term in office, his administration helped foster the Abraham Accords, a series of landmark normalization agreements between Israel and its Arab neighbors. Trump also recognized Israel's sovereignty over the Golan Heights, a strategic region on Israel's northern border previously controlled by Syria, and moved the US embassy in Israel to Jerusalem, recognizing the city as the Jewish state's capital.

Over the course of his campaign, Trump promised to resume efforts to strengthen the Abraham Accords upon his return to the White House. He has also urged Israel to move faster with its military campaign to eradicate the Hamas terrorist group from the Gaza Strip.

US Lawmakers Threaten UN Funding if Global Body 'Downgrades' Israel's Status

By Corey Walke The Algemeiner

A bipartisan group of 105 members of the US Congress threatened to reduce American funding to the United Nations if the organization successfully downgrades Israel's status in retaliation for the Jewish state's defensive military operations against the Palestinian terrorist group Hamas.

"We write to express our deep concern about prospective efforts of the Palestinian Authority (PA) to downgrade Israel's status at the UN General Assembly (UNGA) and strip the State of Israel of its key privileges in the body," read a letter to UN Secretary-General António Guterres that was co-signed by the lawmakers.

"Any downgrade in Israel's status or standing at the UNGA will result in a corresponding downgrade of US financial, material, and political support to the UN," the message continued.

The letter, spearheaded by US Reps. Mike Lawler (R-NY) and Jared Moskowitz (D-FL), was drafted as a response to what the lawmakers described as the Palestinian Authority's attempt to to strip Israel of "key privileges" within the UNGA.

The lawmakers also said they were "outraged" by the UNGA's recent adoption of a "one-sided" resolution to implement an advisory opinion by the International Court of Justice, demanding Israel withdraw completely from the West Bank and East Jerusalem "with no recognition or consideration of Israel's legitimate security concerns."

The letter, which was signed by dozens of Republicans and 12 Democrats, added that Congress has been alarmed by the "numerous UN actions to delegitimize Israel's right to self defense," arguing that the global organization's posture toward the Jewish state calls into question its fairness and impartiality.

"We remind you that the US is the largest donor to the UN. Our contributions account for one-third of the body's collective budget. We will not accept the UN's ongoing hostility to our ally Israel," the letter stated.

The members of Congress then reminded the UN of a recently introduced piece of American legislation which would "prohibit US funding to the UN" if the organization downgrades Israel's status or impacts its ability to "participate fully and equivalently with other member states."

According to Lawler's office, a slew of pro-Israel organizations endorsed the letter, including the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), Jewish Federations of North America, and the Combat Antisemitism Movement.

The letter came after the PA reportedly kick-started an initiative to get Israel expelled from the UN General Assembly.

US Sen. Ted Cruz (R-TX) warned that Congress would consider revoking funding to the UN if the PA were successful in its attempt to remove Israel from the UN General Assembly.

"If the Palestinians succeed in suspending Israel from the United Nations General Assembly, they may well end up disintegrating the US-Palestinian Authority relationship and triggering a full reevaluation of US participation in and funding of all parts of the United Nations," Cruz said earlier this month.

Kibbutz Be'eri

"And just as the Phoenix rose from the ashes, she too will rise. Returning from the flames, clothed in nothing but her strength, more beautiful than ever before." On October 7, Kibbutz Be'eri in Israel was one of the worst victims of the terrorist attack, with over 100 murdered and many taken hostage. Their home was completely destroyed, and survivors were all relocated to temporary housing in the Negev desert and around Israel. Desert residents Earl and Eve Beutler hosted community members to join them at the Jewish Federation on Monday, November 11, to join them to learn more about the efforts to rebuild Kibbutz Be'eri . The entire community was displaced following the October 7 terrorist attack. Their cousins who had lived there have been evacuated to a site near the Dead Sea. Although anxiety and fear are ever present, many of the residents would like to return to their homes. Government funds may be providing minimal physical construction and equipment costs, but the majority of needs are still not covered. For more about assisting Kibbutz Be'eri to rebuild, call the Jewish Federation of the Desert, 760-324-4737, through whom tax deductible donations can be given. More information is available at https://www.rebuildbeeri.org/

Pilots Who Led Strikes on Iran: 'An Honor to Fly Through the Dark for Israel'

On the night of October 26, Israeli pilots from 201 Squadron launched three waves of airstrikes targeting critical Iranian military sites.

By The Jerusalem Post Staff

"It was an honor to fly through the dark desert, knowing every moment in the air was a step toward a new dawn for Israel."

These are the words of Lt. Col. "Y.," commander of the 119 Squadron, breaking his silence on the harrowing details of Operation Days of Repentance, the mission that marked Israel's largest strike on Iran in decades.

On the morning of October 26, pilots from 201 Squadron launched three waves of airstrikes targeting critical Iranian military sites. The operation targeted air-defense batteries, a UAV production facility, and missile manufacturing sites.

This intense series of strikes was a direct response to Iran's ballistic missile attack on Israel earlier in the month, which escalated tensions between the two nations. By dawn, all Israeli aircraft had safely returned, in what the IDF described as a highly successful mission.

For the pilots involved, the mission was not just a professional operation but a personal testament to their commitment to the defense of Israel. "The Bat Squadron has operated continuously across all combat fronts this past year, day and night, through fog and haze," shared Lt. Col. "Y." "This mission was no different, but the stakes felt higher. Every second in that cockpit felt like a lifetime."

Alongside Lt. Col. "Y.," the mission was co-led by Maj. "N." and Maj. "S.," two of the squadron's most experienced pilots. Maj. "N.," who had recently served as deputy commander of the squadron, navigated this high-stakes mission – a role she first trained for under Lt. Col. "Y." years prior.

"Yesterday, we came full circle," she reflected, describing the unique partnership they shared during the operation.

For Maj. "S.," a lone soldier from Chicago, the mission was a realization of his Zionist values. "This is why I came here – to defend the country that has become my home," he said. "Flying through the darkness, carrying out this mission for Israel, is something I'll carry with me for the rest of my life."

'We Will Continue as Long as Necessary'

Their collective experience reflects years of commitment and training, qualities Lt. Col. "Y." credits for their skill in executing such a complex mission. "Their service has molded them into sharp, capable leaders and fighters. It was an honor to fly alongside them."

Operation Days of Repentance stands as a reminder of Israel's determination to protect its people in the face of growing threats in the region. As Lt. Col. "Y." put it, "We will continue as long as necessary until peace and security are restored for our citizens, the evacuees return to their homes, and the hostages are reunited with their families."

For these pilots, speaking out now brings into sharp focus the quiet resolve and intense dedication behind Israel's air force.

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We are honored to have Hadassah's 28th National President join us. She brings with her Michal Elon, a Hadassah-trained nurse and mother of 10, who was injured October 7 while treating an injured soldier before she was shot three times by a terrorist infiltrator. She was taken to Hadassah Hospital for specialized surgery and continues outpatient treatment today. We invite you to join us for this very special gathering.

$20 per person
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or RSVP to Treasurer Vivian Posner: 818-687-9446

Task Force Says UCLA Let Antisemitism Fester Amid Pro-Palestinian, Anti-Israel Protests

Report says Jewish and Israeli students, faculty and staff were assaulted and threatened; panel says administrators should have taken more action against campus rules violations

By Asaf Elia-Shalev, JTA and The Times of Israel

A new report from a campus antisemitism task force accused the pro-Palestinian movement at the University of California, Los Angeles of triggering a torrent of abuse directed at Jewish and Israeli students, faculty and staff.

The 93-page report, released Tuesday by UCLA's Task Force to Combat Antisemitism and Anti-Israeli Bias, said Jews on campus were assaulted and threatened while hateful expressions, including a swastika drawn on a classroom chalkboard and a protest sign that read, "Israelis are native 2 hell," proliferated amid last spring's pro-Palestinian, anti-Israel encampment movement.

Made up of students and faculty members, the Task Force to Combat Antisemitism and Anti-Israeli Bias at UCLA said the impact of antisemitism and anti-Israel bias on campus could have been lessened if administrators had taken more action against violations of campus rules, such as the ban on camping overnight on university property.

The report said administrators took a light hand out of respect for UCLA's tradition of free expression, but that this particular protest movement was an aberration of that tradition because it is the first in UCLA history to foster bias and hate against a national, ethnic or religious group.

"The post-October 7th protest movement is different from past movements: it claims to be aimed at protecting Palestinians and demanding greater accountability from the Israeli government, but it has at the same time unleashed hate speech and symbols, bias, and illegal and offensive behavior against Jews and Israelis on campus," the task force said in the report.

Almost simultaneously with the release of the report, a group of pro-Palestinian campus members condemned UCLA's leadership for being too harsh in its response to the protesters as they occupied parts of campus to demand the university divest endowment funds from companies doing business with the Israeli military.

Illustrative: Police patrol as workers clean up anti-Israel graffiti at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) campus after police evicted pro-Palestinian protesters, May 2, 2024. (Frederic J. Brown/AFP)

The American Civil Liberties Union of Southern California filed a lawsuit Tuesday on behalf of the group over what it regards as an illegal crackdown on free speech.

The lawsuit said protesters' First Amendment rights were violated by excessive security patrols and overly strict rules culminating in UCLA's summoning of police to break up the encampment and the arrest of 200 participants, some of whom are facing ongoing student disciplinary proceedings.

The lawsuit adds to the accusations of suppression of pro-Palestinian speech presented earlier this year in reports from UCLA's Task Force on Anti-Palestinian, Anti-Muslim, and Anti-Arab Racism.

UCLA emerged as a major focal point of campus protests last spring when a mob of counter-protesters attacked the university's pro-Palestinian encampment. Los Angeles' mayor and the local Jewish community criticized the university for not immediately summoning police to break up the melee. Several pro-Israel protesters have since been charged with crimes in connection with the violence, including two this week.

That incident is examined alongside other events since Oct. 7 of last year in the antisemitism task force's report. Protest activity that began soon after Hamas' attack intensified in the spring to a point that should not have been allowed by campus leaders, the task force said.

By late April, according to the task force, encampment protestors were controlling access to parts of campus, blocking the passage of people who were wearing the Star of David or were suspected of being Zionists.

In August, a group of Jewish students who sued UCLA for failing to ensure their equal access to campus during the encampment secured a ruling in their favor by a federal judge.

As part of its effort, the task force circulated a survey among Jewish students, faculty and staff, by writing to email addresses associated with registered campus Jewish groups. Of the university's estimated 3,000 Jewish students and an unknown number of employees, 428 responded to the survey.

Although a precise response rate and sampling bias could not be determined, the task force said it is nevertheless confident that the results reflect the range of experiences in the community because respondents come from a diverse array of backgrounds and beliefs.

The report noted that 28 respondents said they were physically assaulted and 74 said they were threatened over the past year. Considerable numbers of students, faculty, and staff members surveyed said they had considered leaving their employment or studies at UCLA because they had been maligned on campus over their Jewish or Israeli identities.

"I've chosen to work from home because I don't feel safe or comfortable on campus," one person told the task force.

To address the problem, the task force made a series of recommendations in the report, which was submitted to UCLA Interim Chancellor Darnell Hunt, including more training and education, an overhaul of the system for reporting discrimination, and stricter enforcement of laws and policies.

The university is reviewing the recommendations, a spokesperson told the Wall Street Journal.

UCLA joins several other universities in releasing findings of task forces formed amid the turmoil since last year. Committees at Columbia, Harvard and Stanford universities have all issued reports documenting antisemitism on campus, concluding that more could have been done to tamp down tensions and urging changes to head off similar problems in the future.

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Trump Taps Fiery Pro-Israel Congresswoman Elise Stefanik for UN Ambassador

By Dion J. Pierre, The Algemeiner

US President-elect Donald Trump has selected Congresswoman Elise Stefanik (R-NY) to serve as his ambassador to the United Nations, a decision which, if confirmed by the US Senate, would ensure that a staunch pro-Israel advocate represents the incoming administration in the international body.

"I am honored to nominate Chairwoman Elise Stefanik to serve in my Cabinet as US ambassador to the United Nations," Trump, who last Tuesday became the first former president elected to a nonconsecutive term in over a century, said in a statement first reported by the New York Post. "Elise is an incredibly, strong, tough and smart America First fighter."

Stefanik, chair of the House Republican Conference, confirmed the news and issued her own statement on the nomination.

"I am truly honored to earn President Trump's nomination to serve in his Cabinet as US Ambassador to the United Nations," he lawmaker said. "During my conversation with President Trump, I shared how deeply humbled I am to accept his nomination and that I look forward to earning the support of my colleagues in the United States Senate."

Stefanik continued, "President Trump's historic landslide election has given hope to the American people and is a reminder that brighter days are ahead — both at home and abroad … America continues to be the beacon of the world, but we expect and must demand that our friends and allies be strong partners in the peace we seek."

Elise Stefanik

As The Algemeiner has previously reported, Stefanik is one of the leading pro-Israel voices in Washington, DC, having defended both the US-Israel alliance and the civil rights of Jewish students on college campuses, where aggressive pro-Hamas activists have launched campaigns of violence, obstruction, and intimidation aimed at forcing Jewish life underground and severing higher education institutions' ties to Israel.

Stefanik, 40, a Harvard University alumnus from Albany, New York, currently serves on the US House committees for intelligence, armed services, and education and the workforce. In May, she delivered what her office described as a "historic" speech to the Knesset, Israel's parliament, an address she used to express support for the Jewish state's war with Hamas, as well as to explicate her views on the Islamic Republic of Iran's destabilizing activities in the Middle East.

"I have been clear at home and I will be clear here: There is no excuse for an American president to block aid to Israel — aid that was duly passed by the Congress," she said. "There is no excuse to ease sanctions on Iran, paying a $6 billion ransom to the world's leading state sponsor of terror, or to dither and hide while our friends fight for their lives. No excuse. Full stop."

She continued, "I'm proud to have sponsored, or backed, every measure to aid Israel that has come before the United States Congress. Every single on. It's why, I, as a senior member on the House Armed Services Committee and Intelligence Committee, we have helped secure billions of dollars for the Iron Dome, David's Sling, the Iron Beam, anti-tunneling technology, counter-UAS system, and further development of emerging technologies."

At home, Stefanik has sharply interrogated university presidents over what many observers have perceived as indifference to antisemitic hatred on college campuses and a refusal to quell riotous demonstrations which disrupted academic activities for weeks on end during the 2023-2024 academic year. Stefanik grilled Northwestern University president Michael Schill over the now-infamous Deering Meadow Agreement, which granted concessions to a pro-Hamas group that commandeered a section of campus and refused to surrender it unless the administration commenced a boycott of Israel. The agreement was a "unilateral capitulation," Stefanik said, claiming that Schill's actions created an impression that he opposed protecting Jewish students from violence.

"Let's talk about what has occurred on this encampment," Stefanik asserted. "Isn't it true that a Jewish Northwestern student was assaulted?"

Stefanik went on to recount several more incidents of alleged antisemitic violence — including one in which a Jewish student was spit on — and harassment at Northwestern, pressing Schill to estimate when the school will complete its investigations of the criminal behavior.

In July, Stefanik sponsored legislation which would punish universities that fail to protect Jewish students from antisemitism. The University Accountability Act (UAA) proposed levying a tax on universities which, in violation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, declined to punish perpetrators of antisemitic behavior. The Protecting American Students Act (PASA), prompted by reports that foreign students overwhelmingly contribute to antisemitism on college campuses, called for taxing the endowments of universities that admit more foreign students than American ones.

Stefanik is also one of several Republicans who did not oppose then-President Trump's effort to halt the transfer of power following his 2020 general election loss to Democratic Party nominee Joe Biden, who defeated Trump in the Electoral College and won the popular vote. Echoing claims of widespread voter fraud in key battleground states, she voted against Congress certifying the results of the race in Pennsylvania, which Biden won by a slim 1.17 percent margin.

Senators Introduce Bill, Which Passed House 422-2, Blocking October 7 Terrorists from Entering US

The "common-sense" bill "would ensure that no migrant tied to Hamas and the horrific terrorist attack on Oct. 7 is allowed to enter our country or receive immigration benefits,"

By Jewish News Syndicate

Sens. Jacky Rosen (D-Nev.) and Marsha Blackburn (R-Tenn.) introduced a bill on Wednesday that aims to block terrorists who participated in Hamas's Oct 7, 2023, attack from entering the United States.

The No Immigration Benefits for Hamas Terrorists Act, which Rep. Tom McClintock (R-Calif.) introduced last year and which passed the House 422-2—with Reps. Rashida Tlaib (D-Mich.) and Cori Bush (D-Mo.) dissenting—bars migrants who "carried out, participated in, planned, financed, afforded material support to or otherwise facilitated in any way the attacks perpetrated by Hamas against Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, from being admitted to the United States."

It also prohibits "any such individual from being eligible for any immigration benefits," the senators stated.

"Since January 2021, the Biden-Harris administration has released nearly 100 dangerous individuals on the terrorist watchlist into the country, as well as illegal immigrants from U.S. adversaries like Iran," Blackburn stated. "This common-sense, bipartisan bill would ensure that no migrant tied to Hamas and the horrific terrorist attack on Oct. 7 is allowed to enter our country or receive immigration benefits on the taxpayer dime."

Rosen stated that "no one who participated in Hamas's brutal Oct. 7 terrorist attack should be allowed to enter the United States."

"That's why I'm helping introduce bipartisan legislation to prohibit Hamas terrorists from being eligible to receive immigration benefits," she added. "I'll always work across the aisle to keep our nation safe."

Floyd Mayweather Praises Wounded IDF Soldiers as 'Brave Warriors, True Heroes' During Fourth Solidarity Trip to Israel

By Shiryn Ghermezian, The Algemeiner

Undefeated boxing legend Floyd Mayweather visited Israel in late October to show support for the country amid its ongoing war against Hamas terrorists in the Gaza Strip, and visited soldiers in the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) who have been wounded fighting on behalf of the Jewish state.

The boxing world champion met wounded IDF soldiers at Hadassah Hospital and wrote in an Instagram post that the visit "was deeply emotional." He shared several photos from his visit and said, "Witnessing the strength and courage of these brave heroes was truly inspiring. May God bless them all."

Mayweather also visited wounded IDF soldiers at the Belev Echad rehabilitation center in Kiryat Ono and told the soldiers "you guys are brave warriors, I take my hat off to everyone in here that go on that battlefield."

"Everyone can't do your job, just like everyone can't do my job," he added. "You guys are team players. I am proud of you all. Hold your head up high and just know every day is a blessing. We can't take nothing for granted and you guys are true heroes. You guys are warriors and I'm behind you guys 100 percent. I'll be back and you guys have my support."

Mayweather shared a photo with some of the soldiers from the Belev Echad rehab center in a separate Instagram post and said the visit was "a humbling experience." The Belev Echad center said Mayweather "spent time engaging with our heroes, sharing words of encouragement, and emphasizing the importance of resilience both in and out of the ring."

This is Mayweather's fourth visit to Israel since the Gaza war began, following the Hamas terrorist attacks in southern Israel on Oct. 7, 2023. Mayweather was one of the first outside of Israel to send supplies to the Jewish state — including medical equipment, food, and bulletproof vests for IDF soldiers — after the Oct. 7 massacre. The athlete landed in Israel earlier this week and shortly after his arrival wrote in an Instagram post that the country "feels like home away from home."

"There's nothing like returning to such warmth and hospitality!" he added. "A heartfelt thank you to the wonderful team at Ben Gurion Airport for the welcome back … Actions speak louder than words, and I'm here to support in every way I can. Here's to another great journey together."

Mayweather has made a number of stops in Jerusalem this week. He visited the Western Wall, the US embassy, where he met former US Ambassador to Israel David Friedman, and the Orthodox yeshiva Sha'arei Mevaseret Zion, where he told students, "I will continue to support Israel, I will be back, and I will continue to be a voice for the [Jewish] people." Mayweather was also gifted this week by JB Jewelers in Israel a limited edition $20,000 watch in the colors of the Israeli flag in honor of his support for Israel. The watch was created to mark the 75th anniversary of Israel's independence, and its back features an image of an Israeli flag.

Earlier this month, Mayweather pledged $100,000 to United Hatzalah of Israel so the emergency medical service organization can purchase 100 bulletproof vests to keep its volunteers safe.

Women of Sinai Invite Our Community to a Special Luncheon Event

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 5, 2024 AT 12 NOON

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Dr. James Danoff-Burg

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in the Coachella Valley, Africa, Mongolia & other Deserts

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January 17, 2025

Banned from France, Israeli Defense Companies Welcomed Warmly in DC

"There is still business to business operation in between Europe and Israel," an Israeli CEO told JNS. "I hope the public opinion will be changed."

By Mike Wagenheim, Jewish News Syndicate

As the three-day Association of the United States Army annual meeting and exhibition wound down on October 16 in Washington, word spread among Israeli defense companies that Emmanuel Macron, the French president, intended to ban them from the upcoming Euronaval defense fair outside Paris.

A spokesman for a major Israeli defense company told JNS at the Washington event that France's decision to bar Israeli companies "is not surprising," referring further questions to the Israeli Defense Ministry. A ministry representative at the event declined to comment.

That same day, Yoav Gallant, the Israeli defense minister, said Macron's "actions are a disgrace to the French nation and the values of the free world, which he claims to uphold."

"The decision to discriminate against Israeli defense industries in France a second time aids Israel's enemies during war. This builds on the decision to place an arms embargo on the Jewish state," Gallant stated. "France has adopted, and is consistently implementing, a hostile policy towards the Jewish people. We will continue defending our nation against enemies on seven different fronts, and fighting for our future—with or without France."

Paris also uninvited Israeli companies to the larger Eurosatory exhibit in June. A French court overturned that decision, but it was too late for the Jewish state to participate. The court further ruled that it was discriminatory to bar Israeli citizens from the show unless they signed a waiver declaring they were attending in personal rather than official capacities.

At the event in Washington, Israeli defense sector leaders told JNS that they felt welcome in the United States.

Rafael Advanced Defense Systems is "very proud of our relationships and very happy to present our products that help protect the forces of democratic countries," Yoav Turgeman, the company's CEO, told JNS. "Unlike perhaps Eurosatory—a very unfortunate event—we are very, very welcome here," Turgeman said. "We are received in a very good way." He cited the "quantity and degree" of potential customers who visited the company's display. "The powers in the world know how to appreciate this," he said. 'You feel more welcome here'

Asio Technologies was one of more than a dozen small-to-medium-sized businesses appearing at the Washington event under the banner of SIBAT, the Israeli Defense Ministry's international defense cooperation directorate, which bridges the ministry's work and that of the defense industry. David Harel, CEO of Asio, told JNS that his company was registered for the Eurosatory. "We were banned from participating, so we came here," he said. "You feel more welcome here."

Since Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022—and especially after Hamas attacked Israel on Oct. 7, 2023—Asio is "the center of it," Harel told JNS. "There is a large interest in our products, both in Israel and from all over the world."

Ariel Kandel, CEO of Imco Industries, told JNS that his company was also Eurosatory-bound before it was uninvited. "I am sorry for that, but I hope that next year will be a different place," he said. (Kandel spoke with JNS before the news broke that Macron was banning Israeli companies from Euronaval.) "There is still business-to-business operation in between Europe and Israel," Kandel said. "I think it will maintain like that, and I hope the public opinion will be changed day to day." He added that "most of the companies in the defense market are more into what's going on in the territory."

'The Front Lines'

Representatives of Israeli companies presented their wares to JNS during the event in Washington. Turgeman showed a model of Rafael's Tamir ballistic missile interceptor, part of the Iron Dome, and the Stunner, which counteracts longer-range ballistic missiles. He also displayed part of the Iron Beam—the much-discussed, high-power laser system that can reportedly intercept cruise missiles, drones and rockets—he said the company aims to introduce next year.

The company also showed the Trophy, an "active protection system" that "is protecting our tanks and in armored vehicles all over the world, not only in Israel," he said. "This system is also evolving, countering new threats in a very efficient way," Turgeman told JNS. "If you can see the Israeli tanks in the conflict we have in Gaza, in Lebanon, they are fully protected. They are maneuvering quite freely, as opposed to what we have seen in Ukraine, where the tanks were heavily attacked and damaged." The Trophy is a symbol of cooperation between Jerusalem and Washington, and the system is installed on many of the U.S. Army's Abrams tanks, Turgeman said.

Harel showed JNS some of Asio's land forces some tactical solutions, including the Orion. "It allows the land commander—from a sergeant until the battalion level—to plan, to execute, to debrief, to navigate, to communicate to GIS, analyze GIS systems," he said, referring to geographic information systems that store, analyze and display data connected to specific locations. "It's currently widespread in the majority of the combat units in Israel," Harel said of GIS technologies.

Ariel Kandel, of Imco, took JNS through a mock-up of the inside of an armored personnel carrier, with screens stationed around the vehicle's inside, each with a touch screen, with a wealth of critical data and information available at an arm's length.

"We are using artificial intelligence to help the operator of the vehicle to recognize targets, to drive the vehicle and to open the internal system of the vehicle, from engine power up to a weapons system," Kandel said. He demonstrated to JNS how the operator can access a panoramic view to gain situational awareness. Soldiers in the vehicle have the system available at their fingertips. The gunner's screen, for example, can operate the weapons system.

Overall, each Israeli exhibitor JNS spoke to reported being welcomed at the Association of the United States Army meeting. Over the weekend, footage emerged of a man off-camera purporting to be from the fake company Levantine Defense Industries, asking Israeli company representatives about "baby-shredding technology."

UK's Conservative Party Elects New Pro-Israel Opposition Leader

By World Israel News Staff

Britain's Conservative Party on November 2 elected its new leader, voting in a former cabinet minister to replace Rishi Sunak, after he stepped down following the landslide Labour victory in July's general election.

In an internal party vote, MP Kemi Badenoch of North West Essex was elected leader of the Conservative Party, and by extension, Leader of the Opposition, defeating rival Robert Jenrick with 57% of the vote, or 53,806 ballots to Jenrick's 41,388.

Prior to her election as leader of the Conservative Party, Badenoch held a number of senior government positions in the Sunak and Truss governments, including Secretary of State for Business and Trade, Minister for Women and Equalities, and Secretary of State for International Trade.

Badenoch, a long-time supporter of Israel and backer of the war against Hamas, has criticized the Labour government's handling of Britain's relationship with Israel, warning Prime Minister Keir Starmer's government is "reversing" the country's ties with the Jewish state.

Britain's Kemi Badenoch New Conservative Party Leader

In a letter to the Conservative Friends of Israel last month, Badenoch lamented the rise of antisemitism in Britain after October 7th, and vowed to strengthen the UK's ties with Israel.

"If I am leader of the Conservative Party, we will continue to strengthen our ties with Israel and root out the tragic resurgence of antisemitism in the UK. We will be true to our values."

Badenoch publicly praised Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in an interview last month with *Sky News*, "congratulating Prime Minister Netanyahu" for confronting the "enemies of the West."

On the anniversary of the October 7th, Badenoch offered support for Israel's ongoing conflicts against Hamas and Hezbollah, and called on the British government to back both Israel and the local Jewish community.

"A year on from October 7 and Israel is fighting terrorism on multiple fronts. A year on from October 7 we need to show moral clarity, stand with our ally and recognise our enemy. We must never forget what happened…."

"We have also seen great courage and unity in the face of hatred and in the midst of grief. It is important that our government continues to stand strong with Israel and support the Jewish community in Britain."

Israeli Foreign Minister Israel Katz praised Badenoch in a tweet shortly after her victory was announced. "Warm congratulations to Kemi Badenoch on becoming the new leader of the Conservatives party in the UK. Kemi Badenoch, you are a true friend of Israel, and I congratulate you for breaking yet another glass ceiling."

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Poland Condemns Vandalism after Warsaw Ghetto Uprising Memorial Sprayed with Red Paint

Polish foreign ministry says 'such acts are an attack on history and the values that unite us as a society'

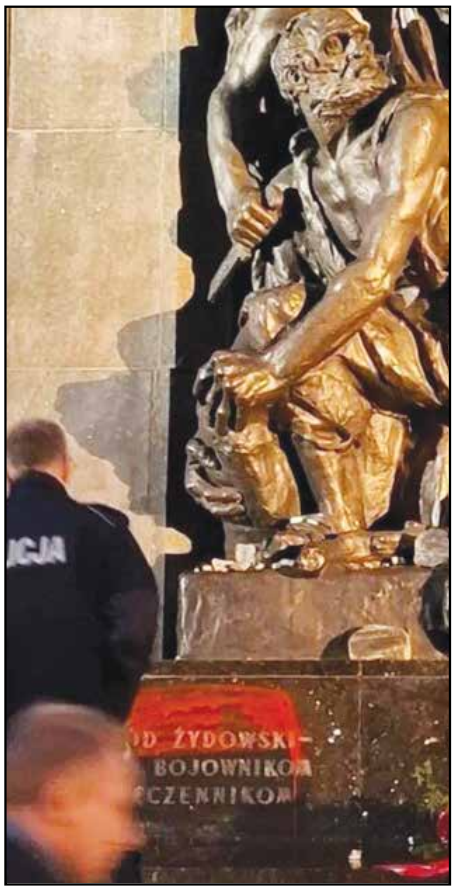
By AFPToday,

The Polish foreign ministry on November 15 condemned "an act of vandalism" after a monument to the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising was sprayed with paint, an incident that drew protest from the Israeli ambassador.

"Such acts are an attack on history and the values that unite us as a society," the foreign ministry said on social media platform X.

Israel's ambassador to Warsaw, Yacov Livne, posted a picture on social media showing a patch of red paint on the memorial, which was erected to commemorate the Jewish fighters who revolted against Nazi Germany in 1943.

An AFP photographer present at the scene saw cleaners removing the rectangle of paint about 50 centimeters (20 inches) long. Police were also at the site.



The 36-foot tall memorial is located at the site of several of the uprising's armed clashes and is outside the popular Polin Museum established to commemorate the history of Polish Jews.

Livne urged Polish authorities to "find the culprits" behind the incident "and bring them to justice. This isn't the first act of anti-Semitic vandalism here. Only determined action will put an end to it," he said on X.

Poland was occupied by Nazi Germany during World War II. Six million Poles died, including three million Jews. Up to around 450,000 Jews were crowded into the Warsaw ghetto, an area of around three square kilometers (one square mile).

When Nazi forces began deporting Jews to death camps, some of those in Warsaw put up armed resistance on April 19, 1943.

Event Highlights 2024/5

Jewish Federation of the Desert
Feast of Jewish Learning: Part 2
Sunday, March 23, 2025

Women's Philanthropy/
Community Engagement
Jewish Book Council Programs
Monday, January 20, 2025
Sunday, February 9, 2025
Wednesday, February 12, 2025
Wednesday, March 5, 2025
Wednesday, March 19, 2025
Wednesday, April 9, 2025
Wednesday, May 7, 2025

Tolerance Education Center
Jewish Book Council Programs
Tuesday, December 3, 2024
Sunday, December 15, 2024
Tuesday, January 21, 2025
Tuesday, March 18, 2025
Wednesday, April 16, 2025
Thursday, April 24, 2025
Tuesday, May 13, 2025

Tribute Card Donations

Sending tributes and memorials is a meaningful way to honor loved ones.

Honorarium Tributes In Appreciation For:

- **Nancy and Dennis Ditlove**, Happy Anniversary from Sherry Schor.
- **Carol Fragen**, Mazel tov on your family's wedding, from Barbara Platt.
- **Arnold Glass**, Wishing you a happy birthday, from Toby and Neil Stepner.
- **Susan Krevoy and Leo Spiwak**, Happy birthday, from Barbara Federman and Jim Levitas.
- **Larry Rabineau**, Happy birthday, from Barbara Federman and Jim Levitas.
- **Esther Shepard**, Happy birthday from Sherry Schor.
- **Arnie Simon**, Happy 90th birthday wishes, from Deana Hapip, Carol and David Hirsch, Norma and Ted Nelson, and Toby and Neil Stepner.
- **Jane Woldenberg**, Happy 90th birthday from Marnie Miller and Joe Noren.

Refuah Shleimah Get Well:

- **Loreen Jacobson,** Best wishes for a speedy recovery, from Cora Ginsberg.
- **Barbara Platt**, Best wishes for a speedy recovery, from Cora Ginsberg.
- **Nina Zale**, Wishing you a speedy recovery, from Margot and Jerry Halperin.

Memoriam Tributes Condolences Sent To:

- **Jeff Chickman,** In memory of your mother, Sandy Chickman, from Stuart Goldfine.
- **Lorraine Facktor and Family,** In memory of Jerry, from Marnie Miller.
- **Jewish Federation of the Desert,** In memory of Sydney Turk Porter, who your agency helped in her time of great need, from Nancy Federman and Family.
- **Carol Gerst and Family**, Please accept our sincerest condolences, from Barbara and Bernie Fromm.
- **Shelly Goldman**, My heartfelt condolences to you and the family, from Sherry Schor.
- **Steve Gottlieb and Family**, Condolences and love for the loss of your mother, Patty Bratter, from Sandi Geisler.
- **Ronnie Kahn and Family**, Barbara was a super, elegant lady. We will miss her, from Susie and Joel Cohen.*
- **Iris Mizahi**, We are so very sorry for your loss, from Toni and Bobby Garmisa and family.
- **Allan and Janie Murow**, In memory of Alan Potash from Shari Damlich.
- **Amy Nachman and Family**, In loving memory of Alan Potash, from Mr. and Mrs. Steven Bloch, Sheri and James Borax, Shari Damlich, Barbara and Bernie Fromm, Larry Gendler, Jennifer and John Glazer, Suzanne, Marc and Adam Harris, Fran Kaufman, Ian, Dylan and Samantha Lew, Harmon and Motoko Maples, Nancy Noddle, Toma Ovici, Barbara Platt, Denis and Betty Roberts, Tammy and Michael Rochman, James R. Vanhauer, Milton and Nina Zale.
- **Julie Potash**, In honor of your brother, Alan Potash, from Borsheims.
- **Michael Sacks**, Condolences on the passing of your wife Bobby, from Elaine Lichtsien.
- **Peter Warhit and Mark**, May the memories of your father, George Warhit, be a blessing always, from Justin and Rob Schneider
- **Funds earmarked for Israel Emergency Fund*

Israeli Terror Victims File Record Lawsuit Against PA

By Jewish News Syndicate

Attorneys for some 250 Israelis affected by the Hamas-led Oct. 7, 2023, massacre have filed a record-breaking lawsuit against the Palestinian Authority for its support for terrorism, it became known on Tuesday

The terrorism victims and families of those murdered during the Oct. 7 attacks, represented by the Jerusalem-based Arbus, Kedem, Tzur law firm, are demanding 1.75 billion shekels ($462 million) in compensation.

The claim comes on top of a 210 million shekel ($55 million) suit filed three months ago with the Jerusalem District Court by dozens of Israelis whose relatives were killed in recent years, including in the ax attack in Elad on Independence Day in 2022 and the Oct. 7 slaughter at the Supernova festival near the Gaza Strip.

The suits were filed under the "Compensation for Terror Victims Law," passed by the Knesset in March. The law requires courts to award punitive damages of at least 10 million shekels per fatal casualty.

"Not only did the P.A. fail to take steps to thwart terror acts, as it pledged to do in international agreements, but it also instigated, supported and financed terrorism," the claim submitted to the Jerusalem District Court this week states. "It continued to incite terror organizations, and, among other things, instigated the murderous attack in October 2023, while financing and supporting terrorists and their families."

As part of the ongoing legal proceedings, the court approved the plaintiffs' request to seize 410 million shekels ($108 million) from frozen P.A. funds to ensure payment if the families win the lawsuit.

Under agreements signed with the PLO in the 1990s, Israel collects taxes and customs duties on behalf of the P.A.

To ease the collection of potential punitive awards by victims and their families, court judgments may be enforced against any property of the defendant, including any property seized or frozen by the State of Israel.

"This is the way to fight terror—by drying up its funding. By awarding punitive damages to the victims, we aim to end the financial and logistical support for terror," said Barak Kedem of Arbus, Kedem, Tzur.

The remarks referred to the P.A.'s "pay for slay" policy, under which it disburses monthly stipends to convicted terrorists and to the families of slain terrorists. This Martyrs' Fund is enshrined in Palestinian law, granting terrorists or their heirs the right to receive payment as long as they live.

Since the Oct. 7, 2023, massacre in Israeli communities near the Gaza Strip, the P.A. has added thousands of Palestinians to its list of those who qualify for terrorist stipends, an Israeli watchdog reported in January.

P.A. officials announced that 3,550 more terrorists imprisoned in Israel would qualify for payouts, as will the families of more than 20,000 slain "martyrs," according to Jerusalem-based Palestine Media Watch NGO.

Pioneering Genocide Researcher Father Desbois Denounces Mass Murder Charges Against Israel

French-Catholic priest behind 'Holocaust by Bullets' investigations visits Gaza border communities, decries anti-Israel 'propaganda' and pushes for trials for Hamas terrorists

By Matt Lebovic, The Times of Israel

After a recent tour of Gaza border communities devastated by the October 7, 2023, Hamas onslaught, pioneering Holocaust researcher Father Patrick Desbois said the Jewish state should bring the terrorists to trial.

"We have to show the crimes, but we [also] have to name the criminals," said Desbois. "Without criminals, you have no crimes," Desbois told The Times of Israel after returning home to France.

An internationally acclaimed expert on identifying modern-day genocide, the French-Catholic priest was in Israel to commemorate the Hamas massacre on October 7, 2023, in which 1,200 Israelis were murdered and 251 people taken into captivity.

He is known for his innovative methods in bringing truth to light and seeking justice for victims of mass murder — from the Holocaust to Yazidis murdered by the Islamic State.

In 2008, Desbois published, "The Holocaust by Bullets: A Priest's Journey to Uncover the Truth Behind the Murder of 1.5 Million Jews." Since then, historians have adopted the term "Holocaust by Bullets" to refer to hundreds of open-air massacres perpetrated by the Nazis in eastern Europe before the construction of extermination camps in 1942.

Given his expertise in mass murder, Desbois said he is outraged by allegations that Israel is committing genocide against the Palestinians of Gaza.

"I think the accusation of genocide is [anti-Israel] propaganda. Why does nobody ask if Bashar Assad in Damascus has committed genocide against his own people," said Desbois.

Father Patrick Desbois visits site of Hamas massacre at Kibbutz Be'eri

In his investigations into modern genocides, Desbois conducts eye-witness interviews and gathers physical evidence. To pin down the location of some Holocaust massacre sites, for example, his researchers looked for spent bullet casings based on guidance from eyewitnesses to the massacres.

Using the same techniques in the mountains of northern Iraq, Desbois has so far located 30 mass graves of Yazidis murdered by the Islamic State.

Some of the evidence collected by Desbois in Iraq has been used in Belgium to prosecute Islamist militants after they return to Europe. He recorded numerous examples of Islamic State members indoctrinating boys as young as seven into terrorism, as well as young girls sold into slavery more than two dozen times each.

In total, Desbois and his organization — Yahad-In Unum (Together in One) — interviewed 450 Yazidi refugees. The priest noted that many Islamic militants return home to Europe from the Mideast and attempt to wash their hands of atrocities they committed abroad in the name of the Islamic State. He drew parallels with the Nazis.

"[The militants] come back now [to Europe] and say they did nothing, like the Nazis did [after the Holocaust]," said Desbois.

During a slew of meetings in Israel, Desbois urged officials to apply some of the lessons he's learned in 25 years of investigations. Examples include identifying and naming perpetrators in public forums, as well as examining the motivations of "the neighbors," a term Desbois uses to refer to bystanders and eyewitnesses.

According to Alan Schneider of B'nai B'rith International — which hosted Desbois in Israel — the meetings raised "new potential avenues for the prosecution of anti-Israel terrorists."

'I try to do what nobody does'

Earlier in his career, Desbois publicized the names of 150 German men who were SS officers in charge of the largest Holocaust massacre. At a ravine outside Kyiv, called Babyn Yar, the SS men and collaborators shot 33,770 Jews in the course of two days.

Desbois said there was significant pushback regarding his decision to publish the names of former SS officers. But not to publicize the names of Holocaust perpetrators "helps deniers," he said.

In Iraq, many people believe that ISIS is an invention of the US or Israel, said Desbois. As such, identifying perpetrators in public forums helps prevent Islamist ideology from filling the vacuum, said Desbois.

One of his most disturbing visits in Israel, said Desbois, took place at Kibbutz Be'eri, where 132 Israelis were murdered. The priest walked through several homes that were burned to the ground by Hamas terrorists.

Spray-painted onto a wall in Arabic, Desbois saw the words, "Death to the Zionists under the name of Abu Ali," he said.

"He signed it," said Desbois, referring to the terrorist. "These people will be well-known in their families for generations for killing Jews," he said.

In part through deploying social media on October 7, Hamas "advertised a lot of what they did, and they showed it was easy to do it," said Desbois.

"There were large celebrations in Istanbul and Baghdad," said Desbois. "Ideology is destroying the brains of people who do it. They think it's a holy duty to kill Jews," said Desbois.

Desbois has visited Israel before and works closely with Israel's official Holocaust Museum, Yad Vashem. He said he loves the Jewish state and is disturbed by the multitude of enemies aligned against it.

"We are in a dangerous time," said Desbois.

Desbois said he would like to return to Israel to investigate the murder of Bedouin Israelis in the attacks of October 7.

"Fifty of them died that day. Hamas is killing not just the Jews," said Desbois.

Asked why he wants to focus on Bedouin victims, Desbois said, "Nobody cares about them. I try to do what nobody does."

HOLD THE DATE!

Chanukah Party at BOOMERS!

Monday, December 30, 2024

EVERYONE IS WELCOME!

BOOMERS • 67-700 East Palm Canyon Road
Cathedral City
For More Information call 760-325-8076

Shabbat Schedule - December 2024

BETH SHALOM, Palm Desert
(Member, United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism)
Rabbi Dr. JB Sacks (rabbi@congregationbethshalom.net).
42600 Cook Street, Second Floor, Palm Desert, CA 92211.
760-200-3636.
Shabbat Morning Services: 9:45 am, followed by light Kiddush lunch. Friday, December 13: Pre-Hanukkah Erev Shabbat Service at 5:00 pm, preceded by refreshments and Hanukkah treats at 4:30 pm. Visitors welcome with valid identification. For information, email info@congregationbethshalom.net or call 760-200-3636. www.CongregationBethShalom.net

CHABAD OF PALM SPRINGS & DESERT COMMUNITIES
Rabbi Yonason Denebeim & Rabbi Arik Denebeim
250 East Palm Canyon Drive, Palm Springs, CA 92264 www.chabadpalmsprings.com 760-325-0774. Shacharit services Monday-Friday at 7:30 am; Sundays at 8:00 am and Shabbat at 10:00 am. Evening services 10 minutes before sunset. Check website or call to confirm times.

CHABAD OF PALM DESERT
Rabbi Mendy Friedman
Located in south Palm Desert. Call for information and location: 760-969-2158; www.chabadpd.com. Shabbat morning services 10:00 am. Monthly Shabbat dinners.

CHABAD OF RANCHO MIRAGE
Rabbi Shimon Posner & Rabbi Benny Lew.
www.chabadrm.com
Weekly Shabbat Services start at 10 am, followed by a sit down lunch/kiddush.
Check online for weekday and Friday schedule of services Text 760-770-7785 or e-mail: info@chabadrm.com to be added to our mailing list. All programs and events are updated on our website.
Ckids Hebrew School 10:00 AM - 12:30 PM on designated Sundays throughout the school year. Check our schedule online Info: chabadrm.com/ckids or Chaya Posner: chaya@chabadrm.com or 760-272-1923.

CHABAD OF SUN CITY PALM DESERT
Rabbi Yonason Denebeim.
Call 760-848-8250 or e-mail: info@chabadsuncity.com for information. Monthly Social Happy Hour. Holiday dinners and celebrations. Zoom Torah classes. Contact Rebbetzin Sussie Denebeim to receive weekly "Chabad in Sun City Newsletter" with listing of all services and activities: sussiedenebeim@gmail.com.

CHABAD OF LA QUINTA
Rabbi Moshe Katz
50620 Eisenhower Drive, Ste. G103, La Quinta, CA 92253. 760-709-2431. Email: chabadlaquinta@gmail.com.
Chabad LQ offers weekly Torah studies, home visitations, Kosher meals, Shabbat Services, Women's Circle, Youth activities, Holiday programs and more.

CONGREGATION HAR-EL, a Contemporary Reform Congregation *(Member, Union for Reform Judaism),* offering year-round services, Torah study, youth and adult classes and events. Membership open for residents and non-residents.
Rabbi Richard Zionts, Ph.D.; Cantor Joseph Gole, D.Mus.
harelurjpd@gmail.com
760-779-1691.
Website: harelurjpd.org.
Shabbat Eve Zoom Services are conducted weekly at 5 PM. Rabbi Richard Zionts shares a D'var Torah on a timely topic based on our timeless tradition. Cantor Joseph Gole provides inspiring melodies and insights from our Shabbat Eve liturgy. Attendees are encouraged to click on the Zoom presentation early for a conversation with clergy and congregants. Har-El welcomes visitors from out of state as well as those in California and the Coachella Valley.
Rabbi Zionts holds Torah Study on Zoom every Saturday morning at 11 AM. For a Zoom link, contact harelurjpd@gmail.com.

DESERT OUTREACH SYNAGOGUE, Rancho Mirage
Rabbi Dr. Jules King; Rabbi Rachel Axelrad, Rabbi Chazzan Maseng and Sarah Lonsert, Cantorial Soloist.
760-449-0111. Mailing address: P.O. Box 982, Rancho Mirage, CA 92270.
Shabbat services held at 7:00 pm on the second Fridays at Unitarian Universalist Church of the Desert in Rancho Mirage. On second Saturdays: 10:30-11:30 am Torah study on Zoom with Rabbi Axelrad. *Check the calendar for updates.*
Adult Education: Adult B'nai Mitzvah, Hebrew—Beginning and advanced, Introduction to Judaism, Adult Confirmation, Adult Learning. Contacts: rabbi@my-dos.org; www.my-dos.org

OR HAMIDBAR
Rabbi David Lazar rabbi@orhamidbar.org
In-person services each 1st Friday of the month and 3rd Shabbat morning. Online services all other Friday evenings and Shabbat mornings of the month. Kabbalat Shabbat Service - Fridays 6:30 pm; Shabbat prayer and study - Saturdays 10:30 am.
For more information of in-person services, upcoming classes and Zoom links, visit orhamidbar.org.

SUN CITY JEWISH SERVICES, Palm Desert
Rabbi Dr. Kenneth Emert and Cantorial Soloist Ezra Yaron. In person services in Speaker's Hall in the Sunset View Clubhouse (second clubhouse) in Sun City Palm Desert the first and third Fridays at 7:15 pm. Information: Nadine Brinhendler, 707- 332-3947.

TEMPLE HAR SHALOM, Idyllwild
www.templeharshalomidyllwild.org Email: templeharshalomofidyllwild@gmail.com. Shabbat Candle Lighting on Fridays at 6:00 pm on Zoom. 1st Friday with Rabbi Malka Drucker; 2nd Friday with Rabbi Ilana Grinblat; 3rd Friday with Kerry Abram; 4th Friday with Rabbi Ilana Grinblat. Shabbat Book Study with Rabbi Malka Drucker on Zoom Saturdays 4:00-5:00 pm. Check our website for current info including Torah Study with Rabbi Ilana one Saturday morning per month. For more information and for Zoom link call 951-468-0004.

TEMPLE ISAIAH, Palm Springs
Rabbi Steven Rosenberg. (rabbisteven.rosenberg@gmail.com). Hazzan Dr. Sarah Sela joins Rabbi on the bima most weeks.
332 West Alejo Road, Palm Springs, CA 92262, 760-325-2281. Email: temple@templeisaiahps.com; www.templeisaiahps.com.
Shabbat services Friday evenings at 7:30 pm followed by Oneg. Saturday morning torah study, "Nosh and Drash," begins at 10:30 am. Once a month, usually first Shabbat, Nosh and Drash includes a Shabbat morning/torah service. Check website to confirm.
All services also streamed online. To access any activity, go to Temple Isaiah's website and click on link to desired service or program.
B'nai Mitzvah training with Rabbi Rosenberg held Shabbat afternoons online at 1:00 pm.

Shabbat Schedule Continued - December 2024

TEMPLE SINAI, Palm Desert
(Member, Union for Reform Judaism)
Rabbi David Novak rabbi@templesinai.org
73-251 Hovley Lane West, Palm Desert, CA 92260. www.templesinaipd.org 760-568-9699. Go to templesinaipd.org for access information. Shabbat services are in-person and online on Livestream at www.templesinaipd.org.

Friday evening services 5:30 pm, preceded by pre-service Oneg at 5:00 pm. Saturday morning Torah study 8:45 am; Shabbat morning services 10 am.

Temple Sinai's Avi Levine Religious School 9:30 - 12:00 AM on designated Sundays throughout the school year. Contact Talia Lizemer-Hawley, Community Educator, for more information, educator@templesinaipd.org

BIKUR CHOLIM
A project of Chabad of Palm Springs & Desert Communities (Community Outreach) www.BikurCholimPS.com Rabbi Yankel Kreiman - 760-325-8076, and Rabbi Mendy Kreiman – 760-567-6726.

Email (preferred) Miriam Bent at mhbentjcn@earthlink.net or call 760-835-1022 to have your events included in the community calendar.

Community Calendar of Programs - December 2024

Sundays:
11:00-11:30 am Chabad of Palm Springs/Sun City **Tanya Teachings.** For men and women.

Tuesdays:
5:00-7:00 pm – Chabad of Rancho Mirage weekly BBQ. Check website for details.
7:00 pm – Chabad of Palm Springs/Sun City: Tanya, a class for women, with **Sussie Denebeim.** Call 760-848-8250 for more information.
7:00 pm A Women's Class on Zoom with Sussie Denebeim " Living With the Times." Call 760-848-8250 for more information.

Wednesdays:
11:00 am Or Hamidbar. **Rabbi David Lazar** class: The Book of Proverbs on Zoom. For Zoom link visit orhamidbar.org.
7:00 pm Chabad of Rancho Mirage Tanya Class led by **Rabbi Shimon Posner.** For men and women. Hosted each week in Rancho Mirage and also available on Zoom.
8:00 pm – Temple Isaiah "Judaism 2.0 with **Rabbi Steven Rosenberg**. Online course on ZOOM: Judaism 2.0: New course: "What Jews Believe"." To participate, email Rabbi at rabbisteven.rosenberg@gmail.com.

Thursdays
7:30 pm – Temple Isaiah "Conversational Hebrew with Dr. Sarah Sela" begins again in January 2025. To register email Rabbi at rabbisteven.rosenberg@gmail.com.

Saturdays:
1:30 pm Temple Isaiah "Jewish University" features adult education classes as well as religious school learning opportunities and Bnai Mitzvah preparation for the Temple's growing group of young people. Check website for programs: www.templeisaiahps.com.

Tuesday, December 3
3:00 pm Jewish Federation of the Desert in-person Jewish Book Council Lecture: **Alex Bruner,** Nephew of Jozsef Debreczeni, Author of 'Cold Crematorium.' See article page XX (note program has been moved from the Tolerance Eduacation Center to the Jewish Federation Office).
RSVP requested: Leslie Pepper 760-324-4737. See article page 10.

Tuesday, December 3
5:30 pm Jewish Federation of the Desert "CABARET FOR A CAUSE." Tamarisk Country Club. Cocktail reception, Buffet Dinner and Show. Tickets: $366 a person. Contact the Jewish Federation at 760-324-4737 for information and ticket purchase.

Wednesday, December 4
2:00 pm Har-El invites community to program with Anthropologist **Rosa Weinstein** "Creating the Return of Light." Held at Jewish Federation Community Room. No fee but RSVP required: harelurjpd@gmail.com.

Thursday, December 5
12:00 pm: Temple Sinai Women of Sinai Luncheon with **Dr. James Danoff-Burg**. $45 members; $50 guests (includes $5 security fee). Reservation deadline December 3. See ad page 11.

Sunday, December 8
6:00-8:00 pm Jewish Family Service of the Desert **Patron Party**. Call 760-325-4088 for tickets. See ad page 5.

Wednesday, December 11
3:00 pm Jewish Book Council in-person program at Jewish Federation: **Andrew Mellen**, author of "Unstuff Your Life." See article page 3. RSVP to Leslie Pepper, 760-324-4737.

Thursday, December 12
9:30 am Sabra Hadassah of the Desert meeting at Sun City Shadow Hills. Special guest: **Carol Ann Schwartz**, Hadassah National President, and **Michal Elon**, recovering victim of Oct. 7 massacre. $20. To attend: RSVP to Treasurer Vivian Posen, 818-687-9446. See ad page 8.

Sunday, December 15
2:00 pm Har-El lecture with Temple Isaiah: Professor Steven Windmueller. Program held in home in Palm Springs. Address given with RSVP. Contact harelurjpd@gmail.com.

Sunday, December 15
3:00 pm Jewish Federation 'Jewish Book Council' event: Participate in book review of "The Christmas Menorahs" with author Dr. Janice Cohn, from your home via Zoom. See article page 3. Get Zoom link by calling Leslie Pepper at the Jewish Federation, 760-324-4737.

Saturday, December 21
7:00 pm Beth Shalom **Pre-Hanukkah Celebration & Gift Auction.** Sufganiyot, Fruit, "Gelt," Beverages and Gift Auction. Members - $5 / Non-members - $10 with a wrapped gift, minimum value $25. Newcomers welcome with valid identification. **Reservations REQUIRED** by Monday, December 16. Information and Reservations: 760-200-3636.

Sunday, December 29
3:00 pm Temple Isaiah's third annual **Chanu-Que** (barbecue) and celebration of Chanukah. $30 per person. For information/reservations go to templeisaiahps.com or call 760-325-2281.

Monday, December 30
5:00 pm Bikur Cholim and the Jewish Federation's **Chanukah at Boomers**. No charge. See ad page 17.

The Dance That Never Stopped

A Blog by Rachel Sharansky Danziger, published in the Times of Israel

"Live every day as if it were the last," declares the sign. Liron Barda, who chose to stay and treat the wounded right here, at the Nova site, on October 7th, smiles at us from the sign like starlight: by the time we see her smile, the star she was is gone.

So many last days and starlight smiles are squeezed into this limited space, into this finite piece of land. So many faces, explanations, stories — the guy who was too badly wounded to leave the car, the girl who was wounded but managed to start a different car and drive her friends to safety, but couldn't save herself and died here, right here, together with Liron and so many others. More and more and more of them stare at us from every direction. Names and quotes and loving memories, packed into this narrow strait of a place. This space that is too small to contain so much loss and headache.

"I recognize some of the smiles," I tell my children. "I remember them from Facebook posts in the early days, from people asking, 'Have you seen my daughter? My brother? My wife?' So many of them were replaced with death notices, in time."

My older children are attentive, solemn. My 7-year-old doesn't understand, though. He runs ahead to look at the young trees that were planted to commemorate the fallen. He wants to touch them, smell them. His arms and heart are open, eager to experience reality.

Everyone who died here was a child, once. Everyone who died here wanted to experience life.

"We drove from Haifa," says the smiling young man who wants to borrow our binoculars. Like us, he climbed up to this hill in Sderot to view Gaza. But his day started with a siren. Not to worry, though, he assures us, he is used to it all by now, and knows exactly how to lie down by the side of the road if rockets catch him on his way back, so he's all set, really. "*Besorot tovot* (may we hear good news), and thank you," he says cheerfully when it's time to depart. His easy smile seems to belong to a different reality, a more optimistic place.

When we look through the binoculars, Gaza's ruined homes loom large, bearing witness to what Sinwar's "flood" brought upon his own people. Without the binoculars, all I can see is a distant city, a bit of sea, a pastoral, open space. Maybe if I could view our reality from such a distance it would be easier to feel relaxed and optimistic, to smile with abandon. As it is, every shred of hope is an act of choice instead. * * *

"One of the Thai workers hid here in the cowshed, he buried himself in dung," says my friend Stanley Kay. We are walking through Kibbutz Alumim, where the green grass and quiet lanes hide stories of battle and carnage. "Here the other Thai workers were murdered," Stanley adds, pointing to what's left of their dwelling — a lonely, singed façade, with some dried-up wreaths below it.

"This is the street that Barak, a member of our *Kitat Konenut* (local response team), covered on his own on October 7th to stop the invasion. The others covered the perpendicular street but he worked alone. When the army arrived they told him to split his forces three ways and rendezvous with them at three points, and he said, 'It's only me! I can't split myself!›"

My friend keeps talking and pointing. Here is where the Slotki brothers, who came to help the kibbutz, fell in battle. Here is where the four soldiers from the *Shaldag* special unit hid and tried to get a helicopter to come and help them. Here is where the helicopter, which they finally got a hold of through friends instead of through official channels, shot at the packing facilities and killed numerous terrorists. Here and here and here.

All is peaceful now, and beautiful, and quiet. I listen to my friend while a young calf licks and licks my hand with the stubborn optimism of a young creature, wholly convinced that if he only tries enough, my hand will, in fact, yield sweetness. * * *

"Lift up your heads, O ye gates," the crowd sings around us. The members of Kibbutz Alumim are gathered to celebrate the completion of two new scrolls of Torah, dedicated to the memory of their fallen members. The lives and deaths of Oriya Mesh and Nitai Omer, Stevie Marcus and Shachaf Bergstein, are now forever woven into the ancient story we finish and begin every Simchat Torah, the same ancient story that, like the Nova site, seems too finite, too small, to contain what lies within it.

Like a portal to infinity, each Torah scroll contains the memory of countless encounters between individuals and text and the countless possibilities of others. It contains the countless life journeys that grew out of such encounters and the journeys that are still to come. And it contains our shared journey – the grand national journey that encompasses all the individual ones and yet transcends them, the journey that brought us to this day.

The journey we continue.

A year ago, Shachaf danced with the Torah here in Alumim on the eve of Simcaht Torah, before leaving for his home in Kfar Aza, where he was killed the very next day. The people who loved him remember this, remember him dancing. And tonight, they will dance with the Torah scrolls that commemorate him, continuing his dance. They will bring their memories into the dance, and with them — Shachaf. He will dance with them, in their motions, in their hearts.

Liron will be here too. And beautiful Bar, whom Liron treated before they both were murdered. And Tiferet and Aner and so many others, who can never dance again, but whose dance is now ours to carry on.

They will live on within us.

They will shed their own light on our journey with the Torah and beyond it.

They will forever be part of our song. * * *

I don't know what we will feel tonight and tomorrow over the Simchat Torah holiday. I don't know what it will be like to dance on the very day when a year ago so many beautiful people were killed in cold blood. How does one feel when the time of dancing and the time of mourning from Ecclesiastes are one and the same?

But after watching the people of Alumim gather themselves to commemorate through celebration, after exchanging smiles with a young man from Haifa and watching reservists' wives rise to the occasion and soldiers finding faith through their fatigue and parents of the wounded and the fallen finding it within themselves to offer others comfort and us, all of us, fighting so hard for a whole long year to keep hope alive in ourselves and in others, I do know that the true dance, the one that underlies all others, will continue.

Whether we physically dance or not tonight and tomorrow, the eternal dance of a people whose sons and daughters hold each other's hands through the dark times and find the strength to keep on going, keep on going, keep on hoping – it won't stop.

We won't let it stop.

Because Liron's dance, and Shachaf's, and ours – it deserves to – it must – go on.

Photos taken at Nova site.

Israeli Researchers Identify Protein That Stops Immune Cells from Attacking Tumors

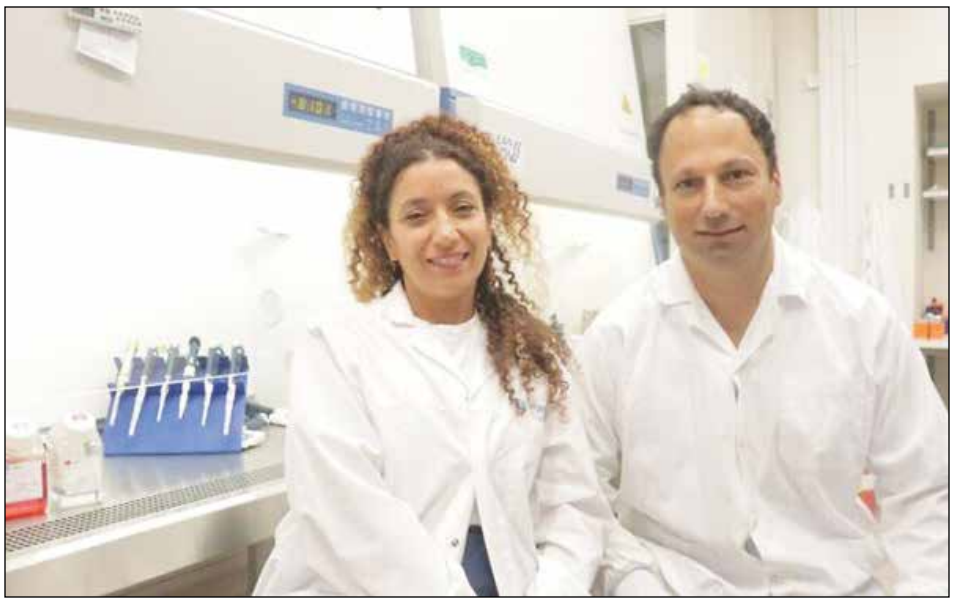
Tel Aviv University team finds Ly6a protein 'puts the brake' on the immune system, in discovery that points to a cure for cancers, including those resistant to immunotherapy

By Diana Bletter, The Times of Israel

For the first time, researchers at Tel Aviv University say they have identified a protein that prevents the body's immune system from attacking tumors. The discovery of the protein has enabled the scientists to modify its activity, allowing them to stimulate the immune system to fight cancer cells.

The breakthrough could lead to new treatments for cancer, including types that are resistant to immunotherapy.

"We found a protein mechanism that puts a brake on the immune system, and we were able to remove it so that the immune system worked again," said Prof. Carmit Levy, who co-authored the study with Prof. Yaron Carmi and PhD student Avishai Maliah, all of TAU, and other researchers in Israel and Massachusetts.



Prof. Carmit Levy, left, and Prof. Yaron Carmi of Tel Aviv University.

Tel Aviv University PhD student Avishai Maliah found Ly6a protein with Prof. Levy and Carmi.

Here Comes the Sun

The breakthrough occurred by coincidence, Levy said. As a cancer biologist, she usually studies cancer and the effects of UV radiation — or sunlight — on the skin.

In a healthy immune system, she explained, the body knows when there's a virus inside it and works efficiently to counter it. But in an autoimmune skin disease like psoriasis, the immune system sees the body's own skin cells as harmful and triggers a response against them.

Doctors use ultraviolet light therapy, known as phototherapy, to help treat psoriasis by "putting a brake" on the immune system so that it stops overworking.

Levy said that she and Maliah made the connection between one system — phototherapy — and another, cancer.

"Phototherapy lessens the immune system's over-activation," Levy said. "Cancer cells also inhibit the immune system so it doesn't work properly, making it under-act."

Sunlight is far different from cancer, she said, yet both have a distinct impact on the functioning of the immune system.

"Let's say you know that running makes you tired and reading makes you tired," Levy said. "These are two very different activities, but both make you tired. What are the markers they share?"

On the Hunt for a Protein

In 2020, Levy and Maliah joined forces with Carmi, an immunologist, to proceed with their research. "After the initial discovery, we wanted to go deeper into the immunology field, so we all started investigating together," Levy said.

To understand the process of how an immune cell can fight a cancer cell, Levy suggested thinking about it like a Hollywood movie.

"You can imagine that the immune cell is coming, ready to kill the cancer cell," Levy said. "But a tumor cell stops the immune cell, so it's just standing there without the ability to kill. The cancer cells keep growing."

In the first part of their experiment, the scientists observed the effect of UV exposure on various proteins.

The team discovered a significant increase in one specific protein, Ly6a. Little was known about this protein's role in the immune system's ability to recognize and fight cancer cells.

Levy said that after the skin was exposed to UV radiation, immune cells called T cells — a key to fighting cancer — began producing high levels of the Ly6a protein. The protein was "telling the immune cells to slow down," she said.

The role of the protein was positive when it came to an autoimmune disease. But with cancer, the protein played a negative role. The team suspected that Ly6a might be sending signals to the immune system's T cells to stop attacking tumors.

After they discovered Ly6a's possible impact on immune cells, Carmi called Levy one night at 11 p.m. "He was so excited and told me, 'I've never seen something like this in my whole career,'" she said.

Testing the hypothesis

To test whether Ly6a protein might be the cause of the immune system's slowdown, the scientists treated it with an antibody. Without its presence, "the brakes were released," Levy said. "The immune system was free to attack the cancer cells."

The tumors were significantly reduced. Moreover, she said, even cancers that usually didn't respond to treatment began shrinking.

Hope for cancer treatment

The researchers discovered an uptick of Ly6a protein in melanoma skin cancer and colon cancer, Levy said, and they "have reason to suspect that it exists in other cancers as well."

However, the Ly6a gene was found only in mice. It doesn't exist in humans, but "there might be another gene that comes close that we will be able to use," she said.

Levy believes that scientists will be able to find the right gene, she said. "As in life," she joked, "we just need to find the right guy."

The scientists began working on human genes two years ago, hoping to develop their findings into a drug that could become a new cancer treatment for people. She said the process could take another five to 10 years.

"We are highly motivated to find a solution," Levy said. "We have some hints, and that brings hope."

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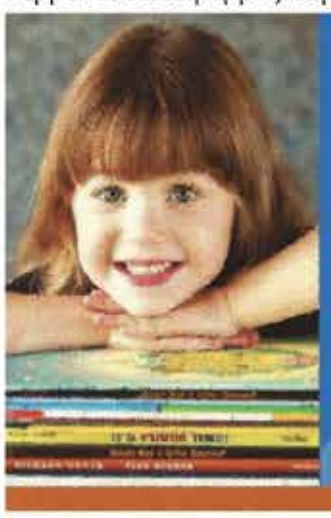

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HAVE A NOSH: Latkes for Chanukah

Last year I gave you recipes for what has become the Israeli traditional food for Chanukah, sufganiyot (jelly donuts), so it is back to Ashkenazi tradition: potato (and other vegetable) latkes! I'm starting off with a tried and true recipe, because we need to know the original before experimenting with options. The traditional accompaniment is sour cream and/or appplesauce … but I recall about 20 years ago when the in-house caterer at Temple Isaiah called me, asking what could he serve with his latkes at a fleishig (meal) cocktail party. We decided on guacamole, which proved to be a huge hit, and I know there are households that continue to serve guacamole to this day! Wishing you a happy … and delicious … Chanukah! MHB

CRISPY TRADITIONAL POTATO LATKES *(PARVE)*

2 lbs. Russet or Yukon Gold potatoes
1 medium onion
1/2 cup chopped scallions (green onions)
2 large eggs, beaten
Salt & pepper to taste
Vegetable oil for frying

Peel potatoes and drop in cold water until all are peeled. Using a grater or food processor, coarsely grate the potatoes and onion. Place together in a fine-mesh strainer and press out all the water over a bowl. The potato starch will settle to the bottom. Carefully pour off the water and retain the potato starch, adding it to the potato/onion mixture in a bowl. Add the scallions, eggs, salt and pepper. Mix well.

Heat a thin film of oil in a non-stick frying pan. Use about 2 tablespoons of the potato mixture per latke and add to pan, flattening the mixture out with the back of the spoon or spatula.. Fry until golden then flip and brown second side. Drain on paper towels. Ideal to serve immediately, but can be kept in a warm oven until you've made enough to serve everyone! Makes 24-28 latkes.

SWEET POTATO LATKES *(PARVE)*

1/4 teaspoon cloves
2 1/2 teaspoons fresh ginger
1 teaspoon Tamari or soy sauce
2 scallions, finely diced
1 teaspoon baking powder
2 lbs sweet potatoes or yams
2 Tablespoons matzah meal or flour
2 eggs

Peel and grate sweet potatoes and remove any excess moisture (can put in dish towel or cheesecloth and squeeze out moisture). Beat eggs and add one at a time, mixing well. Add matzoh meal or flour and baking powder. Add spices and mix well. Heat oil until hot and put large spoonful for each pancake. Cook until brown and flip.

ST. LOUIS JCC CARROT LATKES *(PARVE)*

1-1/4 lb. carrots
1/2- small onion
1 large egg
1/2- teaspoon salt
1/2- teaspoon ground ginger
1/4 teaspoon white pepper (optional)
3 Tbsp. flour
About half cup oil for frying

Coarsely grate the carrot and onion. Transfer to large bowl. In a small bowl, beat egg with salt, ginger and pepper. Pour over carrots. Add flour and mix well. Heat half the oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Drop batter by two spoonfuls into oil. Flatten slightly with spoon. Fry about 4 minutes per side, until golden brown. Keep temperature of oil at medium, so carrots will have time to cook, not burn. Add more oil to pan as needed. Stir batter for each new batch. Remove from pan to large cookie sheet covered with paper towels, to blot off excess oil. Place in warm oven to keep hot until all are cooked. Makes about four servings. Good with onion marmalade.

ONION MARMALADE TOPPING

2 Tbsp. olive oil
2-1/2 lbs red or sweet onions, halved and sliced thin
Salt and fresh ground pepper to taste
1 to 2 Tbsp. brown sugar
1/3 cup red wine vinegar
2/3 cup dry red wine
1/4 cup cranberry or cranberry apple juice

Heat oil in saute pan over medium heat. Add onions and cook, stirring often, for five minutes. Season with salt and pepper. Cover and cook at medium-low heat for another five minutes, until golden brown, stirring often. Lower heat if onions are browning too quickly. Add 1 Tbsp. sugar. Stir until dissolved. Add vinegar and bring to boil, stirring. Add wine and again bring to boil. Cook over medium-high heat until most the liquid has evaporated, stirring often. Add cranberry juice, stirring, until it is absorbed and onions are soft. Taste for seasoning and add last tablespoon of brown sugar, if needed, cooking for an additional minute for sugar to dissolve. May be served warm or cold.

Simchas

Kudos to our Federation's Director of Women's Philanthropy and Community Engagement, **Leslie Pepper**, for putting together the outstanding, truly meaningful program for our community's one year observance of the Hamas

Massacre, held at Temple Isaiah October 27 (see page 1). All of our community's clergy who were in town participated, as did Palm Springs' Police Chief **Andy Mills.** Also in attendance, with his wife, was Riverside County Sheriff **Chad Bianco**. A special thank you to **James Laque** of Temple Isaiah for his coordination of physical arrangements....*Share your simchas with us. Email Miriam Bent at mhbentjcn@earthlink.net or call 760-835-1022.*

Classifieds

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WRITER, EDITOR, PROOFREADER, COPYWRITER ... I have a *'whey' 'weigh' 'way'* with words. Contact Tina Levine at prunehaven@protonmail.com or call or text 310-993-1668.

Candle Lighting Times

Friday, December 6	Shabbat Vayetze	3:54 pm
Friday, December 13	Shabbat Vayislach	3:55 pm
Friday, December 20	Shabbat Vayeshev	3:58 pm
Wednesday, December 25	First night Chanukah	
Friday, December 27	Shabbat Miketz	4:02 pm

We Mourn the Passing of...

Alan Richard Elson, Robert Rose, Roberta "Bobby" Sachs, and **Jeanne Sassoon.** *Our deepest sympathies to their families and friends. May their memories endure as a blessing.*

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