



THE Hebrew Watchman

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Iran Launches Missiles, Drones at Israel, Marking Unprecedented Escalation of Regional Tensions



Iron dome anti-missile system fires interception missiles as rockets fired from Lebanon, as it seen over the Hula Valley, April 12, 2024. Credit: Ayal Margolin/Flash90

By Ron Kampeas

(April 13, 2024 - JTA – Iran launched missiles and more than 100 drones at Israel late Saturday, in an attack that marks the first time that Israel’s most powerful enemy has directed weapons directly toward Israeli territory.

Israelis in the north, the center and south were told to head to bomb shelters, and sirens and explosions were heard in much of the country, including in Jerusalem, as Israel’s missile defense system worked to shoot down the drones. The United States said it had shot down some of the drones as well.

Shortly after 1 a.m. Israel time Sunday, Iran said it had concluded its volley. But shortly thereafter Israel’s army spokesman said the army had identified surface-to-surface missiles fired from Iranian territory.

“A short while ago, Iran fired surface-to-surface missiles at Israel,” Israel Defense Forces spokesman Daniel

Hagari said. “There are multiple Israeli Air Force planes in the air and ready for every threat. You may hear explosions from interceptions.”

After the drones were launched, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Israel was ready to strike back, portending an escalation in a growing regional conflict surrounding the Israel-Hamas war.

“We are watching the threat. It will take hours to arrive,” Hagari said in a televised announcement of the launch of the drones from Iran and from territories controlled by actors allied with the regime.

Israeli media said the drones could take six to eight hours to arrive. It was not immediately clear what threat the drones posed, but experts speaking on Israeli media said that the drones could overwhelm Israeli air defenses, allowing entry to more lethal missiles timed to enter Israeli airspace at the same time.

In a brief address to the nation, Netanyahu said Israel was ready for the threat and thanked the United States, France and Britain, suggesting that those countries would assist in Israel’s self-defense. The United States said it had successfully shot down some drones headed toward Israel.

“We appreciate the U.S. standing alongside Israel, as well as the support of Britain, France and many other countries,” he said. “We have determined a clear principle: Whoever harms us, we will harm them. We will defend ourselves against any threat and will do so level-headedly and with determination.”

Israel closed its airspace, keeping scheduled flights from landing or taking off.

Iran was retaliating for an assumed Israeli strike on an Iranian embassy building in Syria last week that killed a number of Iranian officials. “The malicious Zionist regime will be punished,” the Iranian leader, Ali Khamenei, said on X, formerly known as Twitter, after the launch.

U.S. and Israeli analysts have said their assessment is that Iran does not want a major regional war but must demonstrate that it will not tolerate attacks like the one in Syria. Still, the launch of the drones could escalate the war that began Oct. 7 when Hamas terrorists massacred hundreds of people in Israel.

The drone attack already seemed to have the unintended consequence of bridging differences between President Joe Biden and Netanyahu over Israel’s conduct in the war, which has cost tens of thousands of Palestinian lives.

Before he left for his home in Delaware on Friday, Biden said he had a one-word warning for Iran: “Don’t.”

“We are devoted to the defense of Israel,” Biden said. “We will support Israel. We will defend – help defend Israel. And Iran will not succeed.”

Biden interrupted his weekend at his home in return to the White House on Saturday to be apprised of the threat by his national security team, the National Security spokeswoman, Adrienne Watson, said in a statement.

“This attack is likely to unfold over a number of hours,” she said. “President Biden has been clear: our support for Israel’s security is ironclad. The United States will stand with the people of Israel and support their defense against these threats from Iran.”

Weaponized drones have become more common in warfare, particularly in Russia’s war against Ukraine.

Hagari warned Israelis to heed any alerts to enter their secured rooms and to remain there at least 10 minutes. Israel’s government ordered schools closed for the coming days. On Thursday, the United States barred government personnel and their families in Israel from traveling outside several major urban areas.

“Out of an abundance of caution, U.S. government employees and their family members are restricted from personal travel outside the greater Tel Aviv (including Herzliya, Netanya, and Even Yehuda), Jerusalem, and Be’er Sheva areas until further notice. U.S. government personnel are authorized to transit between these three areas for personal travel,” the alert said. **HW**

As Iran Attacks, World Leaders Express Support for Israel

By Akiva Van Koningsveld and Amelie Botbol

(April 13, 2024 - JNS) – The U.S. is committed to upholding the Jewish state’s security, President Joe Biden reiterated on Saturday.

“Iran has begun an airborne attack against Israel. President Biden is being regularly updated on the situation by his national security team and will meet with them this afternoon,” read a statement from the White House.

“His team is in constant communication with Israeli officials as well as other partners and allies. This attack is likely to unfold over a number of hours. President Biden has been clear: Our support for Israel’s security is ironclad. The United States will stand with the people of Israel and support their defense against these threats from Iran,” the

statement continued.

Iran dispatched hundreds of unmanned aerial vehicles from its territory towards Israel on Saturday night, in a much-anticipated response to the April 1 killing of several IRGC officers in Syria.

European Union foreign policy chief Josep Borrell “strongly” denounced the “unacceptable” attack, describing it as “an unprecedented escalation and a grave threat to regional security.”

British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak on Saturday night condemned the Iranian regime’s “reckless” attack on Israel.

“Iran has once again demonstrated that it is intent on sowing chaos in its own backyard,” Sunak wrote in a statement posted to X.

The British premier vowed to “continue to stand up for Israel’s security and that of all our regional partners, including Jordan and Iraq.”

“Alongside our allies, we are urgently working to stabilise the situation and prevent further escalation. No one wants to see more bloodshed,” Sunak wrote.

France also condemned “in the strongest terms” the Islamic Republic’s attack against Israel.

“By deciding on such an unprecedented action, Iran is taking a new step in its destabilizing actions and taking the risk of a military escalation,” French Foreign Minister Stéphane Séjourné wrote on X.

“France reaffirms its commitment to Israel’s security and reinforces its soli-

arity,” he added.

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau “unequivocally” condemned the “Iranian regime’s disregard for peace and stability in the region.”

U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres also “strongly condemn[ed] the serious escalation represented by the large-scale attack launched on Israel by the Islamic Republic of Iran.”

“I call for an immediate cessation of these hostilities. I am deeply alarmed about the very real danger of a devastating region-wide escalation. I urge all parties to exercise maximum restraint to avoid any action that could lead to major military confrontations on multiple fronts in the Middle East,” he said. **HW**

The Exodus Story You Know ‘All Too Well’ Gets Retold in New Taylor Swift Haggadah



A Jewish mother and an illustrator have teamed up to create an unofficial Taylor Swift Haggadah for Passover this year. (Courtesy Shelley Atlas Serber, Wikimedia. Design by Jackie Hajdenberg)

By Jackie Hajdenberg

(JTA) – Taylor Swift has (unofficially) entered her Exodus era. Swifties can now express their love for the pop icon while celebrating Passover, thanks to the “Unofficial Taylor Swift Haggadah,” written by author Na’ama Ben-David. Ben-David says the idea came from her teenage daughter, a big fan of Swift. “She loves talking about Taylor Swift,” Ben-David said in a statement. “Her music, her lyrics and the inspirational messages she gets from listening to the albums. When we started talking about Pesach, she remarked that there are a lot of parallels between the story and themes of Pesach, and Taylor Swift’s music – and the idea was born!” Illustrated by Shelley Atlas Serber, this edition of the Haggadah, or central text that guides participants through the Passover seder, joins a crowd of creative Passover Haggadahs published for the 2024 holiday. It begins by calling the seder, a word that literally means “order” or “sequence,” a “setlist,” and is steeped in Tay-Tay esoterica, including: a paper plane motif (a reference to a necklace mentioned in the song “Out of the Woods”); page numbers hidden in

friendship bracelets (a reference to a lyric in the song “You’re on Your Own, Kid” from her 2022 album “Midnights”) and a trend adopted by Swiftie concertgoers in recent years); hot pink cowgirl hats from the singer-songwriter’s early days as a teenage country artist; and trivia about Swift’s life and discography. Ben-David connects one especially famous metaphorical section of the Haggadah, the story of the four sons – the wise, the wicked, the simple, and the one who does not know how to ask – to four characters whose romantic entanglements are a theme of the 2020 album “Folklore.” “The vibrant and modern design of the Haggadah was inspired by Taylor Swift’s worldwide hits,” Serber said in a statement. “When we all sit down at our seder tables around the world, we share the same songs that we’ve enjoyed together for years – the hits of the Jewish people.” The book, which is printed in Hebrew and English, is available in paperback and costs \$19.89 –Taylor Swift’s birth year, and the name of her fifth studio album, released in 2014. First up on the list of the 10 plagues? Blood – or should we say, “Bad Blood.” **HW**

Demonstrators Rally in Jerusalem in Support of War Against Hamas

(JNS) – Some 1,000 demonstrators convened outside Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s residence in Jerusalem last Thursday evening, advocating for the continuation of military operations against Hamas in Gaza. The gathering, dubbed the “Victory Rally,” was spearheaded by IDF reservists, bereaved families and parents

of hostages, urging the government to launch a ground offensive in Rafah. Participants at the rally, organized by groups including the Tikva Forum for Families of Hostages, the Heroism Forum and Im Tirtzu, urged Netanyahu and his government to put military pressure on Hamas to release the 133 captives that remain in the Gaza Strip.

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Erev Shabbat, Fri. April 19, 2024 / 11 Nissan, 5784..... 7:18 p.m.
Havdalah, Sat. April 20, 2024 / 12 Nissan, 5784..... 8:16 p.m.

Weekly Torah Portion: Metzora



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The rally was called in the wake of the IDF's decision to withdraw most of its ground forces from Gaza.

In addition, relatives of Israelis currently held by the terror group, including Zvika Mor and Shimon Oron, called for decisive action. The lineup of speakers was rounded out by Yair Chetboun, Mayor of Ariel, the capital of Samaria, along with Alon Shvartzter and Matan Jarafi of Im Tirtzu, who are IDF reservists. The rally was called in the wake of the IDF decision to withdraw most of its ground forces from Gaza, in what Netanyahu has said was a move in preparation for an assault on the southernmost city of Rafah, where the senior Hamas leadership is believed to be hiding. The withdrawal has been faced with criticism from within Netanyahu’s government, with right-wing minister Itamar Ben-Gvir challenging the prime minister’s mandate to govern if the Rafah offensive does not happen soon. **HW**

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IAF Strike Kills Sons of Hamas Leader Haniyeh

(JNS) – An Israeli Air Force strike in the Al-Shati Camp on the northern Gaza coast killed six relatives of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh, the Israel Defense Forces confirmed on [April 11] Wednesday night.

“An Air Force aircraft, acting on the intelligence guidance of the Military Intelligence Directorate and the Shin Bet, attacked three military operatives of the Hamas terrorist organization on their way to carry out terror activities in the central Gaza Strip,” the IDF said in a post on X.

Hazem, Ameer and Mohammed Haniyeh were all members of Hamas. Ismail Haniyeh reportedly had 13 children.

Last Wednesday’s strike, which reportedly targeted a vehicle, also killed three of Haniyeh’s grandchildren, according to Gaza’s Hamas-affiliated “Shehab News Agency.”

The Doha-based terror leader confirmed their deaths, telling Qatar’s “Al

Jazeera,” “I thank God for this honor that he bestowed upon us with the martyrdom of my three sons and some grandchildren.”

A video circulating on social media showed the Hamas leader receiving the news while visiting wounded Palestinians from Gaza at a Doha hospital.

In October, Hamas claimed that an airstrike in Gaza City’s Sheikh Radwan neighborhood killed 14 relatives of Haniyeh. The terrorist leader’s brother and nephew died in the alleged strike, reports said.

Haniyeh’s sisters are Israeli citizens and live in a Bedouin town in the Negev. Earlier this month, Israeli security forces arrested one of them on suspicion of associating with and supporting Palestinian terrorists.

Haniyeh’s niece gave birth to a premature baby in February, who was treated at the neonatal intensive care unit at Soroka Medical Center in Beersheva. **HW**

Fight Pancreatic Cancer at the Kick It Pickleball Tournament Benefiting the Kosten Foundation

The Kosten Foundation for Pancreatic Cancer presents the first annual Kick It Pickleball Tournament, taking place June 1-2 at Shadowlawn Park, in Bartlett, Tennessee. This exciting event aims to raise awareness and funds for pancreatic cancer research and the Kosten support group. Early registration is encouraged due to limited spots, as they are expected to fill quickly. Participants may register online at this link: <https://pickleballbrackets.com/ptd.aspx?eid=bb1558a5-7517-458f-a385-cc0a7f114b8d>.


“Pickleball is growing quickly in our community, and it reminds me of the tennis games my brother, Herb Kosten, loved,” said Kosten Foundation Chairman Alan Kosten. “Organizing this tournament aligns perfectly with our foundation’s mission and fosters unity in our fight against pancreatic cancer. We are grateful for the support of our sponsors, participants, and local pickleball experts who are helping make this event possible.”

Presented by Baptist Memorial Healthcare, the Kick It Pickleball Tournament accommodates players across various divisions, including men’s

doubles, women’s doubles and mixed doubles, all structured in a round-robin format. The tournament welcomes participants of varying skill levels, ensuring an inclusive and engaging experience for all attendees. Spectators are encouraged to attend and bring chairs and tents for added comfort during the event.

The Kick It Pickleball Tournament builds on the success of the Kick It 5K, which raised over \$160,000 for pancreatic cancer in 2023. The Kosten Foundation aims to continue this impactful legacy through the Kick It Pickleball Tournament, furthering its commitment to fighting pancreatic cancer.

Since 2003, the Kosten Foundation has donated more than \$2.5 million to pancreatic cancer research. The Foundation’s latest round of research grants helped fund research teams in Memphis, Dallas, New York City, and Edinburg, Texas. In addition to its research efforts, the Kosten Foundation hosts the only free, in-person and virtual pancreatic cancer support group in the Mid-South. For more information about the Kosten Foundation and their mission, you can go to their website at kostenfoundation.com. **HW**



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Pesach is the oldest and most transformative story of hope ever told. It tells of how an otherwise undistinguished group of slaves found their way to freedom from the greatest and longest-lived empire of their time, indeed of any time. It tells the revolutionary story of how the supreme Power intervened in history to liberate the supremely powerless. It is a story of the defeat of probability by the force of possibility.

Three thousand three hundred years ago, a group of slaves were liberated and began what Nelson Mandela calls the long walk to freedom. And ever since, at this time of the year, we've re-lived their story on what we call Pesach, Passover, the Jewish festival of the exodus.

To me it raises a fascinating question. Imagine we could travel back in time and meet the great Pharaoh himself, Ramses II. I know what I'd say. *Ramses, there's good news and bad news. The good news is that one people alive now will still be alive in thousands of years' time. The bad news is: it won't be yours. It will be that group of slaves out there, building your great temples, the people you call the habiru or Hebrews, the children of Israel.*

Nothing could sound more absurd. The Egypt of the Pharaohs was the greatest empire of the ancient world; and the Hebrews were nothing - slave labor, powerless, not even yet a nation. Yet it was they, not the Pharaohs, who survived, and still do to this day. How did it happen? The answer, I believe, is this.

Ancient Egypt and ancient Israel were two peoples who asked the most fateful question of all. How, in this all too brief span of years, do we create something that will endure? How do we acquire a share in immortality? The Egyptians gave one answer. Build great monuments of stone - temples, pyramids - that will outlast the winds and sands of time. And they did. What they built still stands. But only the buildings, not the civilization that once gave them life.

The Israelites gave a different answer. You don't need to create monuments. All you need to do is tell the story, generation after generation. You need to engrave your values on the hearts of your children, and they on theirs, so that you live on in them, and so on to the end of time. You need to build a civilization around the home, the school, and education as a conversation between the generations. *You need to put children first. That is what Jews did for thousands of years; and it's why we're here today.*

The Pesach story, more than any other, remains the inexhaustible source of inspiration to all those who long for freedom. Freedom is a moral achievement, and without a constant effort of education it atrophies and must be fought for again. *Nowhere more than on Pesach, though, do we see how the story of one people can become the inspiration of many.*

~ The Late Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks ZT'L

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To Protect Jewish Buildings, ‘Look at It from the Eyes of an Attacker’

By Andrew Bernard

(JNS) – A 25-year veteran of the FBI, Rusty Rosenthal had a front-row seat to understanding the difference between U.S. and Israeli approaches to security during his 11 years working in the bureau’s Tel Aviv field office.

“I worked with all the Israeli services – the Shin Bet, Mossad and the police – for all those years and really had an appreciation for their entire society’s culture of security, as opposed to ours sometimes, which is really a culture of freedom and privacy,” Rosenthal told JNS.

“Sometimes those are at odds with each other,” said Rosenthal, the Jewish Federation of Greater Washington’s executive director of community security since November.

In his new job, Rosenthal tries to inhabit those who would harm Jews.

“When you approach a building, for better or worse, you look at it from the eyes of an attacker,” he told JNS. “You start from the outside. What are they seeing? Somebody wants to do harm. What are they observing?”

Whether doors are closed and locked is elementary. “Are they walking around and seeing doors propped open?” he said. “Or is there one entrance, and there are ushers or greeters, so that everyone is being looked at and knows you’re there?”

Some measures that he recommends seem obvious or basic, considering how quickly the threat environment has shifted, Rosenthal admits. “A few years ago, we weren’t even thinking about these things,” he said.

‘A lot of pivoting’

The Washington Federation created Rosenthal’s role just before Oct. 7, in response to already spiking Jew-hatred.

The Federation is responsible for some 300,000 Jews and 250 institutions, including synagogues, Jewish community centers and office buildings for Jewish organizations.

“We have the entire spectrum of not only politics but religiousness, so it’s an interesting and nuanced region in that respect,” he told JNS. “You’re trying to meet the needs of a lot of different individuals.”

“That’s one of the reasons why the Federation decided to go this direction, so that we can tailor our services to the community as it needs, and that means a lot of pivoting sometimes,” he added.

Though the Anti-Defamation League and other Jewish groups have recorded record spikes in Jew-hatred since Oct. 7, Rosenthal sees the 2017 “Unite the Right” rally of alt-right and neo-Nazi extremists in Charlottesville, Va., as the marker of a shift in normalization of antisemitism.

“I always look back to Charlottesville, when white supremacists were marching brazenly and openly with Nazi paraphernalia and chanting Nazi chants and slogans,” he said. “Historically, when you see an increase in online hate, in the graffiti, in the harassment, there’s always an act of violence that comes along with it.”

Unique situations

“When I was overseas, we used to say, ‘If you’ve worked in one embassy, you’ve worked in one embassy,’

because every place operates differently,” Rosenthal told JNS. “Now I say the same thing when I go into synagogues.”

“Should we have security? Should it be armed security? How many? Where should they be staged?” he said. “These are the conversations that we’re having and need to have with every single institution.”

The Biden administration unveiled its U.S. National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism, which includes more than 200 policy proposals and hundreds of action items for the federal government and for companies, schools and local governments, in May 2023.

Over the past decade, the U.S. Congress has dramatically increased funding for the Nonprofit Security Grant Program, which helps bolster security for synagogues, day schools and other at-risk locations.

The 2014 federal budget included just \$14 million for the program, which has grown to \$274.5 million in the 2024 spending package, though that was a 10% cut from 2023. Jewish groups have said that at least twice as much funding is needed to meet the community’s security needs.

Rosenthal told JNS that every Jewish institution has to consider what level of security is appropriate for the threats it might face, and with which it is comfortable.

Many Jewish leaders refer sardonically to the enormous cost of these security measures as the “antisemitism tax,” which Jewish institutions must pay to protect themselves. Rosenthal sees

those costs as an unfortunate necessity.

“When you think about the amount of resources being put towards security amongst the Jewish community these days, and you think about what those resources could be going to otherwise, and all these other great things that organizations like the Jewish Federation of Greater Washington do, I think that’s disappointing,” he said.

“But I think it’s just part of the reality,” he said.

Programs like the Nonprofit Security Grant Program are largely intended to fund one-time grants for physical security improvements, such as concrete barriers, reinforced doors and alarm systems. Many institutions have also hired or are considering hiring costly armed security guards.

Rosenthal told JNS that he doesn’t recommend armed security guards for every institution. He also doubts that those who buy guns will end up improving security for themselves or their communities.

“I’m very skeptical of untrained people carrying weapons,” he said. “I know for a fact that no matter how much people think they’re training with their weapons, they’re not going to be trained to the extent it’s probably necessary to handle a weapon in the type of situation that we’re foreseeing.”

“There are so many other things than just going to a range and hitting a target when it’s going to matter,” he said. “A lot of things go out the window in the moment of true stress, heightened blood pressure, tunnel vision. It’s a very risky scenario.” **HW**



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Passover 2024: This Year Is Different From All Other Years

By Benjamin I. Wachtel, Esq. and David L. Mendelson, Esq.



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Traditionally, during the Passover Seder, we ask: “why is this night different from all other nights?” This year, in addition to those famous four (4) questions, we must also ask “why is this *year* different from all other *years*?” The poignant act of dipping vegetables into salt water is embedded within the Seder’s many rituals and serves as a symbolic gesture meant to evoke the tears shed by our ancestors during their enslavement in Egypt. This ritual serves as a visceral reminder of our collective past, a testament to the resilience of the Jewish people in the face of adversity. In other words, the salt water is there to inculcate in our minds and in our national psyche the pain afflicted by those who tried to annihilate us and how we rallied and prevailed. As we approach Passover 2024, however, we are confronted with a new reality – a reality drenched in fresh, modern tears.

It is important to focus annually on the tears shed in ancient Egypt because those tears first forged and birthed us into a nation. Due to “recency bias,” it is undeniable that the pain of our 2024 tears sting more profoundly as would salt over a fresh, open wound. During this year’s Seder, we must, therefore, pause and take a moment to reflect and focus on those who are missing from their Seder tables. We must recognize the thousands – yes, thousands – of empty chairs where, as recent as this time last year, heroes sat with their families and friends and discussed the same *Haggadah* that we will discuss this year. We must also recognize the tens of thousands of our brothers and sisters who sit at the Seder table this year while still grieving the loss of an immediate family member or best friend. Unlike fantastical Hollywood superheroes with capes and born on obscure planets far far away, our 2024 superheroes are everyday men and women – mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, grandfathers, computer programmers, college students, lawyers, doctors, accountants, etc.

Our national tears cried throughout the generations from our matriarch Rachel to the 2024 Rachels are the cornerstone of our pride, strength and, please God, eternal persistence. We are a people defined by our tenacity and ability to rise from the ashes of adversity time and time again. We will forever carry the weight of our heroes’ sacrifice upon our shoulders, a sacred responsibility on a personal and collective level. This Passover and for every Passover to come, it is incumbent upon us to honor our heroes’ memory and to strive each day to be worthy of the sacrifices made on our behalf. May the tears of our nation throughout the generations and, particularly, those shed since October 7 inspire us to work hand in hand to forge a future that reflects the magnitude of their selflessness. For in our collective endeavor to uphold their legacy, we will continue to unite and find purpose, strength, and the enduring promise of Israel and hope. Just as the tears of the people who were slaves in ancient Egypt evolved from tears of sorrow to tears of joy upon entering the land of Israel, may our tears of Passover 2024 evolve into tears of eternal peace and redemption.

מִי־יִתֵּן רֹאשִׁי מַיִם וְעֵינַי מְקוּר דְּמָעָה וְאֶבְכֶּה יוֹמָם וּלְיָלָה אֶת חֲלָלִי בַת־עַם

“O that my head were (full of) waters and my eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people” Jeremiah (8:23)

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Wells Fargo Advisors named Mike Stein, Managing Director, as a member of the 2024 Wells Fargo Advisors Platinum Council. The Platinum Council (previously known as Premier Advisor) distinction is held by a select group of Financial Advisors within Wells Fargo Advisors as measured by completion of educational components, business production based on the past year, and professionalism. Additional criteria, best practices and team structure, may also be used to determine recipients.

“It’s an honor to receive this designation,” said Stein. “I am proud to have been given the opportunity to work with my clients and I am committed to helping them reach their financial goals.”

Mike has been with Wells Fargo Advisors for 25 years and has 42 years of experience in the financial services.

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How a Gift of Money Can Help Build Investing Habits

Provided by Mike Stein, Managing Director Investments - Wells Fargo Advisors Questions for Mike? You can reach him at 901.761.8151 Michael.Stein@WellsFargoAdvisors.com fa.wellsfargoadvisors.com/michael-stein

As a parent or grandparent, you likely want to teach children sound money habits and help them become financially successful adults.

There are a variety of ways to instill good financial habits. The following two approaches allow you to gift assets to children while providing them with hands-on investment experience that may prove useful in the future.

1. Custodial accounts Custodial accounts can be opened for your children before they turn 18. They can be a useful vehicle to teach them about the principles of money and investing.

With these accounts, custodians control how investments are managed. Sharing account statements and the way you make decisions on your children’s behalf can be an opportunity to teach smart investment principles.

There are a couple of considerations you will want to think about as you determine whether such an approach is right for you and your family. First, when funding these accounts, keep in mind that control of these accounts transfers to the child when the custodianship ends. This generally happens when the child reaches age 18, 19 or 21, depending on state law. You may not want your child to have control of more financial assets than they can handle at that age.

It is also important to know that special tax rules, the “kiddie tax” rules, may apply. The income and capital gains generated in these accounts could be taxed at the parents’ income-tax rates for children under age 19 (age 24 if a full-time student). This means your young child may be required to file an income-tax return of their own. Your tax advisor can help you determine how these rules would apply to your situation.

2. Gifting money in an IRA (Individual Retirement Account)

Helping fund an IRA can benefit adult children who are starting their career and can’t afford to contribute to a retirement account or don’t have a workplace

retirement plan. Even teens with earned income can fund an IRA.

The earlier your children start investing for retirement, the more their investments may accumulate over time. There are two types of IRA, a Traditional and a Roth.

• Traditional IRA: If eligible, your child may receive a tax deduction when they contribute to a Traditional IRA, which will also offer tax-deferred growth potential. Any earnings from the account may grow tax free until the money is finally distributed.

• Roth IRA: This type of account is not eligible for tax relief on the contributions, but any earnings could be distributed tax-free if taken after the Roth has been opened for more than five years and your child is aged 59½ or older. In addition, your child may be able to tap into these funds if they need them due to a disability or for use in purchasing their first home.

If you are thinking of gifting money, be sure to talk to a tax professional. Any time you give money to a child – including to a custodial account or an IRA – IRS gift rules apply.

Wells Fargo Advisors does not provide tax or legal advice. Please consult your tax and legal advisors to determine how this information may apply to your own situation.

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AJC New England Calls Warren’s Genocide Claims ‘Inaccurate and Hurtful’

(JNS) – The Boston-based office of the American Jewish Committee’s New England branch sent a letter from its regional director, Robert Leikind, to Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.), on April 11.

He acknowledged that the senator has been “a supporter of Israel’s right to defend its people against Hamas’s relentless efforts to destroy the world’s only Jewish state,” adding that the organization was “deeply troubled” by her remarks at a public event on April 5.

To that end, “we write to express our deep disappointment and concern about your recent comment regarding Israel’s defensive war in Gaza. You stated that there is ‘ample evidence’ that Israel is committing genocide in Gaza.”

The letter noted a clarification from the senator’s office that she intended

to comment only on the International Court of Justice proceedings, rather than state her own views.

Still, “we believe that your statement was inaccurate and hurtful and did not reflect what is happening in Gaza or the likely outcome of South Africa’s claim against Israel at the ICJ, which Secretary of State Antony Blinken called ‘meritless,’” wrote Leikind.

He noted that Warren’s remark “has provided cover to extreme voices who have been maliciously accusing Israel of genocide long before a single Israeli soldier entered Gaza.”

Leikind added that Warren’s voice resonates worldwide, concluding the letter with “our hope that moving forward, there will be opportunity to work together to judiciously assess these complex and difficult issues.” HW

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Thousands of Ultra-Orthodox Protest in J'lem Against IDF Draft



Thousands of ultra-Orthodox Jews protest against the military draft in Jerusalem, April 11, 2024. Credit: Yonatan Sindel/Flash90

(JNS) – Thousands of ultra-Orthodox Jews gathered outside an Israel Defense Forces recruitment office in central Jerusalem on Thursday [April 12] to protest against the enlistment of some yeshivah students into the military.

The protesters on Rashi Street, including members of the anti-Zionist “Jerusalem Faction,” held placards claiming that Israel is “persecuting Torah scholars” and declaring they would choose death over enlisting.

Following minor clashes with police officers, authorities led protesters away from the entrance to the IDF draft office, “Ynet” said. Surrounding streets were reportedly closed to traffic due to the demonstration.

Arutz 7 cited one speaker at the rally as stating, “We are rebelling against the state with strength and pride and announce: ‘We will die and not enlist.’ They deal in haredi souls like the Nazis dealt in Jews.”

“This is a decree to annihilate us,” the Jerusalem Faction rabbi proclaimed, according to the Arutz 7 report.

Two weeks ago, Israel’s Supreme Court ruled that haredi yeshivah students who did not obtain a deferral and who have failed to report to the IDF since July 1, 2023, will now be ineligible for financial stipends.

The court decided that an extended panel of nine justices would hear petitions demanding a universal draft for haredim starting in May.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had written to the court asking for a 30-day extension so he could reach an agreement regulating the draft. He told justices that while progress had been made towards reaching a deal within the coalition government, the “work is not yet complete.”

“Ynet” reported last Thursday that the ultra-Orthodox parties in the coalition agreed to enter discussions regarding recruitment targets as part of negotiations for a new draft law. One of the government’s goals is to increase the number of haredi recruits by 25%, the report added.

Interior Ministry Arbel, a member of the ultra-Orthodox Sephardi Shas Party, told a Hebrew-language podcast this

week that there are currently some 1,500 haredi men in every age group who can be conscripted and who “must be part of those carrying the burden.”

“The reality after Oct. 7 is that the haredi public must understand and internalize that there is no moral option to continue this way,” said Arbel, in reference to the Hamas attacks in which 1,200 people, primarily Jewish civilians, were murdered and thousands more wounded.

Arbel was swiftly denounced by Shas, which noted that its stances are “expressed only by the Shas movement’s official organs” and politicians received instructions “not to speak at all on the topic.”

Meanwhile, Israeli Attorney General Gali Baharav-Miara in a statement reiterated her belief that, as of last week, the legal basis for exempting haredim from being drafted into the army has expired.

“There is no source of legal authority to grant a blanket exemption; they must be recruited according to law,” stated Baharav-Miara.

Currently, there are no plans to send the authorities into the yeshivot to catch draft dodgers and the pressure to be applied will be through cuts to the institutions’ budgets, the “Walla” news site reported last week.

Many haredi Jews frown on army service, considering it a distraction from Torah study and a threat to their tradition and way of life. However, Oct. 7 has heightened the demands of the larger public that the ultra-Orthodox contribute their share to the defense of the nation.

While most Israelis agree that the ultra-Orthodox community should play a more prominent role in Israel’s defense, some politicians have questioned the behavior and timing of the Supreme Court, the attorney general and certain members of the wartime government.

The number of haredi men studying in yeshivot who are deemed eligible for IDF military service is estimated at between 63,000 and 66,000. Since Hamas attacked Israel on Oct. 7, 1,140 haredim enlisted, of which 600 were over the age of 26, the current age of exemption for them. **HW**

OBITUARIES

Dr. Murray Sylvan Alperin

Dr. Murray Sylvan Alperin passed away peacefully on March 27, 2024. Murray was born on January 17, 1930, to Abe and Jennye Rose Alperin the middle of three siblings. Murray was a scholar and avid boy scout. He graduated from Christian Brothers High School, Vanderbilt University with a degree in chemistry, and completed his DDS from UT Dental School. Murray practiced dentistry for over 50 years in South Memphis and served on various Tennessee Dental Society Boards. Murray was married to Myra Alperin for 61 years.

Murray was preceded in death by Abe, Jennye Rose, Marshall and Howard Alperin; Lynn Just; and Richie Roberts.

Murray is survived by a son, Lon (Samantha) Alperin, and daughter Esther Roberts; grandchildren Parker (Rachel) and Leeya Alperin, Ben Roberts, and Joe (Becca) Roberts, and Jennifer and Stephanie Alperin; as well as great-grandchildren Sky, Bethany, Kol and Jesse Roberts. **HW**

Myra Bluestein Alperin

Myra Bluestein Alperin passed away peacefully on March 28, 2024. Myra was born on July 15, 1938, to Eddie and Madeleine Bluestein the oldest of three siblings. Myra graduated from Melrose High School. She loved baking and volunteering for Beth Sholom Synagogue serving as Sisterhood President. She was married to Murray Alperin for 61 years.

Myra was preceded in death by husband Murray, Edward and Madeleine Bluestein, Pat and Donnie Zeitlin, Marcia Notowich, Howard Alperin and Richie Roberts.

Myra is survived by a son, Lon (Samantha) Alperin, and daughter Esther Roberts; grandchildren Parker (Rachel) and Leeya Alperin, Ben Roberts, and Joe (Becca) Roberts, and Jennifer and Stephanie Alperin; as well as great-grandchildren Sky, Bethany, Kol, and Jesse Roberts. **HW**

Germany Will Redesign the Numbers on its National Soccer Jersey After Realizing They Look Like a Nazi Symbol

By Jackie Hajdenberg

(JTA) – The new line of German soccer jerseys by Adidas will be redesigned after customers realized the stylization of the number 44 resembled the infamous Nazi SS lightning bolt symbol.

The German Football Association, or DFB, shared in a statement [In early April] that the number designs had been submitted to the Union of European Football Associations for review, and “none of the parties involved saw any proximity to Nazi symbolism in the development process of the jersey design.”

Now the jerseys’ font is being refashioned so as not to evoke an association with the SS, the force that took a leading role in perpetrating the Holocaust.

“Nevertheless, we take the information very seriously and do not want to provide a platform for discussions,” the DFB said, adding that it “will develop an alternative design for the number 4 and coordinate it with UEFA.”

The number 44 is not currently used by any player on either the men’s or women’s teams, but Adidas, the German sportswear company that is the team’s official uniform supplier, allows customers to personalize their jerseys with a number from 00 to 99 and a name up to 10 letters long. That means people who buy the jersey could choose the number 44.

Adidas spokesperson Oliver Bruggen told German news outlet Bild that the company “will block the number 44 as quickly as possible.”

The company “firmly rejects any suggestion that this was our intention,” he told German publications, noting to one that the company employs people from 100 different countries and opposes antisemitism and other forms of hatred. “Any attempts to promote divisive or marginalizing views are not part of our values as a brand,” he said.

In addition, by that afternoon in Germany, DPA reported that “certain names relating to... National Socialism cannot be ordered.” An error message would appear instead: “This does not comply with our guidelines for personalization,” the message said. “Please try something else.”

By [the following day] Tuesday, no customization options were available at all, and jerseys for players number 4, 14, and 24 – Jonathan Tah, defense;



Jonathan Tah, defense for the German Football Association, wears the new controversial home team jersey with the troublesome number four. (Eurasia Sport Images/Getty Image)

Maximilian Beier, forward; and Oliver Baumann, goalkeeper, respectively – are not currently available on the online store. The other 20 players’ jerseys remain online and available for purchase.

The jerseys are also available on the Adidas website, but not customizable. Jerseys for other teams remain customizable.

Adidas has its own Nazi history, founded by brothers Adolf “Adi” and Rudolf Dassler, who both formally joined the Nazi Party and signed their letters with “heil Hitler.” The emphasis on sports in the Third Reich contributed to an explosion in their company’s shoe sales.

The company was embroiled in an antisemitism controversy in 2022 when the rapper formerly known as Kanye West, who had a lucrative partnership with the brand, embarked on a stream of public antisemitic comments. Adidas broke off the partnership amid mounting pressure.

DFB and Adidas revealed the new jerseys on March 13, along with an ad campaign repeating the phrase “typical German” that “plays with well-known German clichés and stereotypes.” The team debuted the shirts in a friendly game against France on March 23, and they are set to be worn at the 2024 UEFA European Championship, hosted by Germany in June.

DFB announced less than two weeks ago that after more than 70 years, it would end its relationship with Adidas upon the expiration of their contract in 2026, turning to competitor Nike instead. This came as a blow to Adidas, which suffered financial losses after ending its relationship with West, with whom it had a line of sneaker and clothing products. **HW**

OBITUARIES

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How U.S. Jewish Summer Camps Are Preparing To Welcome Israeli Staff – Many Fresh From War



American Jewish camp directors at a Jewish Agency for Israel seminar. (Courtesy) By Jacob Gurvis

(JTA) – After spending three summers as an Israeli emissary at Camp Young Judaea Sprout Lake in upstate New York, Shahar Vaknin made a decision. “I was 100% sure I’m done with camp,” he said.

Then came Oct. 7, when one of Vaknin’s cousins was killed in the Nova music festival massacre. He returned home immediately, stepping away from his job as a long-term emissary at the Richmond, Virginia, Jewish federation to be with his family.

After he landed in Israel, he began hearing from his campers – around 20 of whom called, emailed or sent videos to check in. They said, “We love you and we miss you,” he recalled. “We hope to see you this summer,” some wrote.

“First of all, it made me cry,” Vaknin told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency. “Because I realized that – pardon my French – but it made me realize that, ‘F—, I love those kids so much. So much. I miss them so much.’”

Now, Vaknin plans to return to Sprout Lake. He’s looking forward to being in a “known familiar place.” But he also realizes that his time at camp will not be an escape from the war.

“Coming and talking about it as if it’s something that’s in the past because now we’re at summer camp – no,” Vaknin said. “And telling us, ‘Put it aside, you’re in a summer camp’ –

no. I don’t want to, and I will not, put it aside.”

That mix of feelings is common to the estimated 1,500 Israelis – most ages 20 to 23 – who will work at Jewish camps across North America this year, according to those tasked with placing and training the emissaries, known in Hebrew as shlichim. While the number of roles has remained steady, the Jewish Agency for Israel, which runs emissary placement, says more Israelis applied to work at camps this summer than in any previous year.

Those who are hired will arrive at camp after months of living under fire – and in some cases after fighting in Gaza. Once there, they will contend not only with their own mental and emotional burdens, but also with the challenge of explaining the war to campers and American staff. That’s in addition to the linguistic and cultural barriers emissaries face every year.

“The conversations I’m having with camps are mostly about, how are we going to take care of the shlichim? What do we need to know and how can we be more sensitive?” Gal Atia, who runs the shlichim program for the Jewish Agency, told JTA.

“A lot of them are coming right out of the army and from an intense experience, for everyone in Israel, but especially for that age group,” Atia added.

“They aren’t experienced educators, or experienced people, that they can handle, necessarily, to hear everything.”

Atia is in the midst of a series of seminars for American camp directors, many of whom visit Israel during the spring to meet prospective staff. Alongside his typical recruitment and training processes, Atia is also offering a webinar on how to welcome Israeli staff who may need extra support.

The Jewish Agency is working with a number of other Jewish groups – including the Foundation for Jewish Camp, the Anti-Defamation League and M², The Institute for Experiential Jewish Education – to offer resources for both the Israeli staff and the camps themselves. And the training isn’t only for Americans. One key component, Atia said, is helping the Israelis understand what American Jews have experienced since Oct. 7.

“We saw the importance of them understanding more about the current life of Jews in North America, especially, and in the rest of the world when it comes to exposure to antisemitism,” Atia said. “Because in the last six months, we were really busy with what’s going on in Israel. But not a lot of them are understanding of the importance of meeting their brothers and sisters from the other side of the ocean and meeting them where they are.”

Jamie Simon, the chief program officer at the Foundation for Jewish Camp, said the trainings will help camps understand “how to welcome Israelis in this moment – what does it mean to be helping them heal and grieve and feel supported while in a diverse community?”

Simon said FJC has guided camps on Israel programming in the past, but called this year’s offerings “a new approach” – both due to the war and the spike in reports of antisemitism that has come alongside it.

“In light of the rise of antisemitism and rise of the war in Israel and Gaza, the tragedies of 10/7, we’re really trying to think about, okay, what does this mean?” Simon said. “What is the current landscape? And how are we going

to really relook at Israel curriculum in camps and ensure that camps have the tools they need to be successful with this summer?”

The Israeli staff’s objective, Atia said, should be to connect with campers, not to act as representatives of their government or military. For Vaknin, it’s crucial that camps understand what Israelis are going through – starting with the fact that the war is ongoing.

“You want to be able to put your voice out there,” Vaknin said. “To come and say, firsthand, ‘You guys, I don’t know what you saw on social media, but I’m there.’”

He added that tending to Israelis’ needs may also mean not mentioning the war at all.

“Sometimes it’s a topic that we don’t want to talk about,” he said. “Some people go to summer camp as an escape. They don’t want to be in Israel experiencing everything right now.”

As criticism of Israel has grown in the months leading up to the summer, some camps have faced pressure from parents or staff to scrap activities focused on Israel or its food and culture. While Young Judaea is a Zionist organization, Vaknin said he, as well as shlichim at other camps, are encountering what he deems to be anti-Israel sentiments from fellow counselors.

But even if those conversations are uncomfortable, he said, they can still be meaningful.

“A lot of people are going to hear opinions that they are not going to like,” he said. “I can only hope that both sides will learn a bit from those kind of harsh conversations.”

Atia also anticipates moments of tension once the Israelis arrive at camp. But while no one can say what will happen in the war between now and June, he hopes to prepare Israelis for tough conversations – even in a place where they feel at home.

“It’s tools we’re trying to give them before they come,” he said. “We’re trying to have them listen to things that are challenging here before they hear them there.” **HW**

Christian Allies Caucus Presses Germany to Keep Funding Freeze on UNRWA

By Etgar Lefkovits

(JNS) – The heads of the Knesset’s Christian Allies Caucus last Wednesday urged German parliamentarians in the Bundestag not to lift the funding freeze on the U.N. Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) in light of its terror ties with Hamas in the Gaza Strip, and offered government officials alternatives to funnel humanitarian support to Palestinian civilians.

The diplomatic meetings in the German parliament in Berlin come 10 days before the U.N. agency is due to issue a report on their malfeasance aiming to have foreign aid fully restored.

“Continuing with funding for UNRWA, an organization marred by collaboration and terrorist entrenchment, hinders any prospect of advancement in the Middle East,” said Knesset member and Christian Allies Caucus co-chair Sharen Haskel. “It is imperative to permanently halt funding for UNRWA and redirect resources towards initiatives that genuinely promote peace and stability.”

A bombshell Israeli intelligence report in January shared with the U.S. administration showed that dozens of UNRWA employees actively participated in the Hamas atrocities in southern

Israel on Oct. 7, and that the agency has 450 “military operatives” belonging to Hamas and other terrorist groups on its payroll.

The revelations initially prompted 18 countries – led by the United States and Germany, UNRWA’s biggest donors – to suspend funding. Some of them have since voiced concern over the increasingly dire humanitarian situation in Gaza and amid an agency pushback started resuming their donations.

The United States – the largest donor to UNRWA – provides about 30% of the agency’s budget and has frozen its donations until at least next year. However, European countries, including Germany, are likely to resume their funding this month following the investigation, some with caveats attached.

“UNRWA is, as we know, not a part of the solution but a fundamental part of the problem,” said German MP Frank Müller-Rosentritt. “The findings about the heinous involvement in Hamas’s terror must lead to a stop of all payments to UNRWA.”

The cross-party parliamentary body, which has been an outspoken voice for dismantling UNRWA through its

network of dozens of sister caucuses around the world based on faith-based diplomacy, has faced an uphill struggle working to convince allies to keep the funding freeze in place amid growing global criticism of the six-month war in Gaza.

“Funding for UNRWA was rightfully suspended when connections to Hamas and the Oct. 7 attacks were brought to light, and must be defunded permanently,” said Leo van Doesburg, Europe director of the Israel Allies Foundation. “Israel and the international community should agree on other humanitarian organizations that will help Palestinians in need.”

The meetings in Berlin were particularly sensitive due to Germany’s history during World War II and the Holocaust, as the country juggles its foreign-policy commitment to Israel’s security and the fight against antisemitism while also pulled towards international organizations such as the United Nations and a shared worldview of a two-state solution for the Palestinians.

The atrocities that occurred in Israel on Oct. 7 have placed renewed international focus on UNRWA’s terrorism ties, leading to calls from across the

Israeli political spectrum to break with the organization. Meanwhile, the heads of the agency – backed by the E.U. foreign-policy chief Josep Borell – are attempting to rescue it and placate international donors with the investigation into its wrongdoing.

After decades of on-again off-again criticism of the agency for perpetuating the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the wealth of intelligence information uncovered during Israel’s military operation in the Gaza Strip has called the continued existence of the organization into question as never before, setting off an intense diplomatic showdown over the organization’s future.

Last month, a former legal adviser to the agency told the Knesset that Israel can prevent UNRWA from operating in Gaza and should be using this time while the international spotlight is on its malign activities to plan for its closure. The revealing remarks highlighted that Israel could unilaterally act to stop the agency’s activity in Gaza, irrespective of the continued foreign funding it receives.

“The longer UNRWA exists, the further away we are from coexistence,” Haskel said. **HW**

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**Young Israel Shares
Purim Pizza with
a Platoon of IDF
Soldiers**



**IDF soldiers receiving Young Israel
of Memphis’ uplifting Purim gifts.
By Rabbi Akiva Males**

For me, one of the most rewarding aspects of being a congregational rabbi is being privileged to administer my Rabbi’s Discretionary Fund (RDF). The RDF is a vital way for Young Israel to assist members of our local Jewish community – and even some in Israel – who at times can use a helping hand. The Purim season might be when the fund keeps me busiest – as many entrust the RDF with their special donations to be shared with those in need on Purim. I’m proud to say that thanks to the generosity of many donors, this past Purim, Young Israel’s RDF was once again able to help lighten the burdens felt by many of our brothers and sisters.

This Purim, YI’s RDF was also proud to engage in another uplifting project. For the eighth consecutive year, YI decided that Purim would be the perfect time to reach out and thank the brave soldiers of Israel’s Defense Forces (IDF) who are doing their best to protect our extended family in Israel. While away from the festive Purim atmospheres of their own homes and locales, those soldiers work hard to keep their fellow citizens safe and sound. Toward that end, YI once again partnered with www.BasketstoIsrael.com to supply an entire platoon of active-duty IDF soldiers with enough pizza and soda to make their Purim festive.

This refreshing treat served as a long-distance embrace from our congregational family. Knowing that a caring synagogue in far-away Memphis, Tenn., was thinking of them on Purim surely provided this IDF platoon with a much-appreciated morale boost. YI thanks the generous sponsors who made this gift possible.

With the festival of Pesach (Passover) just around the corner, I know that YI’s RDF will soon be busy assisting others again. On behalf of all those who benefited / will benefit from YI’s RDF, I thank the fund’s many donors for their generous ongoing support. In the merit of your acts of Tzedakah, may G-d bless you and your families with a happy and healthy Pesach!

Young Israel’s Rabbi Akiva Males can be reached at rabbi@yiom.org [HW](#)



Happy Passover

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being held in captivity by Hamas.

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