

Date and Time: Friday, May 3, 2024 4:33:00PM EEST

Job Number: 223447161

Documents (100)

1. [How Gaza became a rich canvas for Palestinian art Art is flourishing in the carnage left behind by Israel 's military onslaught last year, as a new exhibition demonstrates. Donald Macintyre reports](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

2. [A land where tunnels bloom Lifelines bring food, fuel and financial hope from Egypt to the Gaza Strip](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

3. [Goldstone's unjust rush job has hurt the cause of peace](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

4. ['Hello, I am Gilad, son of Noam and Aviva Schalit.' Israel swaps 20 female security prisoners for video of captive soldier](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

5. [*IDF dismisses 'unreliable' claims that soldiers killed Gaza civilians. Human Rights Watch report quotes Palestinians as saying army killed 11 people waving white flags*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

6. [*Intl activists march in Gaza against closures*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

7. [*Israel killed Palestinians waving white flags, report says Human Rights Watch says IDF soldiers unlawfully shot 11 civilians dead during the Gaza war against Hamas, which HRW earlier accused of war crimes.*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

8. [*How come we don't have more colorful leaders?*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

9. [*IDF mulling self-defense course for all female recruits*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

10. [Letters](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

11. [Goldstone's Gambit: The Man Behind U. N. Report](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

12. [Jewish troops shoot Palestinian dead in Gaza confrontation](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

13. [Video shows kidnapped soldier alive and well](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

14. [Captured Israeli soldier makes plea for release; Proof-of-life video swapped for release of 20 Palestinian prisoners](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

15. [*Would-be suicide-bomber added to list of Palestinian women to be freed. Suspect and cousin, who plotted to blow up Israelis, will be released today*](#)
- Client/Matter:** -None-
- Search Terms:** Hamas
- Search Type:** Natural Language
- Narrowed by:**
- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| Content Type | Narrowed by |
| News | Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009 |
16. [*Lebanon protests condemn clashes at Al-Aqsa Mosque*](#)
- Client/Matter:** -None-
- Search Terms:** Hamas
- Search Type:** Natural Language
- Narrowed by:**
- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| Content Type | Narrowed by |
| News | Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009 |
17. [*At Gaza's only spa, the well-heeled find relief - Feature*](#)
- Client/Matter:** -None-
- Search Terms:** Hamas
- Search Type:** Natural Language
- Narrowed by:**
- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| Content Type | Narrowed by |
| News | Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009 |
18. [*At Gaza's only spa, the well-heeled find relief*](#)
- Client/Matter:** -None-
- Search Terms:** Hamas
- Search Type:** Natural Language
- Narrowed by:**
- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| Content Type | Narrowed by |
| News | Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009 |
19. [*Letters*](#)
- Client/Matter:** -None-
- Search Terms:** Hamas
- Search Type:** Natural Language
- Narrowed by:**
- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| Content Type | Narrowed by |
| News | Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009 |
20. [*Key US allies face succession issues that may split political elites*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

21. [Call to probe disappearances](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

22. [In short](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by

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23. [A debate worth noting](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

24. [Israel 's captured youths: Gilad Shalit and a Palestinian girl with braces In an interview, Baraah Malki - one of the first of 20 female Palestinian prisoners to be released by Israel in exchange for a video of kidnapped soldier Shalit - talks about her time in prison.](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

25. [PARALLAX: COSTUMED PEACE POLITICS? DIALOGUE OVER ISRAELI - PALESTINIAN ISSUES NOT SERVED BY LOCAL THEATRICAL PLAY](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

26. [Gaza activists begin hunger strike as they await entry into Egypt](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

27. [Pakistan : Obama agrees to keep Israel 's nukes secret](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

28. [Jordan :A debate worth noting](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

29. ['Real mediation'](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

30. [World - Communists slam Iranian repression Parties from 43 countries warn against Western intervention](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

31. [Mr. Netanyahu, it's time for a change of tack](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

32. [Seizing the moment](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

33. [Sixth convention Fatah's and the building of a nation](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

34. [Fatah vote gives boost to Abbas](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

35. [If you will it, David Grossman will bring peace](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

36. [*Palestinian women prisoners mistreated by Israel – report*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

37. [*How Turkey was lost*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

38. [*ATTACKS ON WOMEN RISING*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

39. [*International: Israel pressuring Gazan patients to turn collaborator in return for care: Palestinians interrogated and held without charge: Questioning is a security measure, government says*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

40. [*The human \(rights\) comedy*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

41. [TV news: Accessing the truth](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

42. [West Bank student blindfolded, expelled in handcuffs to Gaza, petitions Israel to return](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

43. [International briefs](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

44. [Divestment can work](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

45. [BOMBERS TARGET PAKISTANI SCHOOL](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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Narrowed by

News

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

46. [Letters](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

47. [World journal](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

48. [US, Israeli officials meet again to discuss reviving peace talks](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

49. [Palestinian MP accuses Israel of organ theft](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

50. [WORLD DIGEST](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

51. [*Svengalis behind the murderers*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

52. [*In brief: News from Sneyd green, ipstones, fenton and blurton*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

53. [*Amira Hass, a remarkable reporter*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

54. [*Poll shows Israelis pessimistic about universal compliance to Geneva Conventions. On 60th anniversary of treaties almost half of respondents don't think they've helped prevent abuses*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

55. [*Quds rally expresses solidarity with Palestinians*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

56. [*The Saudis are ready for peace - right after pigs fly*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

57. [HRW : Israelis shot Gazans waving white flags](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

58. [Where are the suicide bombers of Jerusalem?](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Content Type
News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

59. [U.N. Human Rights Council Autumn Session Begins](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

60. [Palestinian TV airs daring satire A rarity in the mideast, the political show spares no one - but even President Mahmoud Abbas is chuckling.](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

61. [Use of Muslim militancy to defeat Arab nationalism a massive strategic error](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

62. [*Shoot or not to shoot-- IDF discusses warfare*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

63. [*Mandelblit slams Goldstone Report, says Israel was right not to cooperate. Asa Kasher: Criticism was partially motivated by anti- Semitism*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

64. [*International: Israeli soldiers killed unarmed civilians carrying white flags in Gaza, says report: Eleven shot dead in seven incidents, group claims: Military says allegations by 'unreliable witnesses'*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

65. [*Amnesty accuses Israel of reckless use of weapons in Cast Lead*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

66. [*Gaza donkeys take on zebra role; Dye job cheaper than buying real*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

67. [Top Syrian comedian and Egyptian actress enter Gaza through Rafah](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

68. [In its assessment of UN Security Council's handling of Palestinian question, Great Jamahiriya: Arab right is wasted due to inability of Arab system and official Arab order to take a stance that meets challenges, and Arab position has been weak...First add](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

69. [Afghanistan : Ban Urges to Push Middle East Peace Process Back on Track](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

70. [International: Arab world rights abuses 'rising'](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

71. [Leading article: In praise of... Amira Hass](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

72. [*'Zebras' thrilling Gaza kids; Zoo owner says too expensive to bring in real thing*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

73. [*Rafah residents living on borderline economy*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

74. [*Who lost Turkey ?*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

75. [*World - World in brief*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

76. [*Killing civilians is fatal to our cause REALPOLITIK*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

77. [*World & nation in 60 seconds The world The nation*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

78. [*Links between JI and al-Qa'ida are news to some*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

79. [*Unlikely partnerships; Religion Pastor Rick Warren, major Jewish leaders befriend largest American Muslim group*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

80. [*A SORRY TALE OF CHRISTMAS ON ROAD TO GAZA*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by

Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

81. [*In Shift, Oren Calls J Street 'A Unique Problem'*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

82. [*The world this week*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

83. [*There's more anti-Christian hate speech around*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

84. [*Dutch City removes Tariq Ramadan from post*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

85. [*National and World briefs*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

86. [*Israeli soldiers shot dead 11 unarmed Palestinian civilians, claims report*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

87. [*ISLAMIC SOCIETY CONVENTION Pastor Rick Warren to address American Muslims*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

88. [*Where are all the usual suspects?*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

89. [*Guardian Weekly: International news: Arab world accused of rights retreat*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

90. [*Israel frees inmates for soldier's video; Tape from Gaza shows captive alive and well*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

91. [*World*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

92. [*Rights group says Israelis shot dead unarmed civilians carrying white flags*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

93. [*Turkey must lend full support to the Goldstone report*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

94. [*Why a private television channel in Palestine*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

95. [*Redeeming captives*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

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News

Narrowed by
Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

96. [*Feminist groups urge Britain not to cancel universal jurisdiction*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

Narrowed by:

Content Type
News

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

97. [*City at the crossroads on road to peace*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

98. [*One killed, 4 injured in Israel 's strike on tunnels*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

99. [*In Sudan 's collapsing moral order . . . the only way for westerners to survive is to go armed*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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Publication Type: Newspapers; Timeline: Jun 30, 2009 to Dec 31, 2009

100. [*Israeli 'war' on UN 's Gaza report*](#)

Client/Matter: -None-

Search Terms: Hamas

Search Type: Natural Language

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How Gaza became a rich canvas for Palestinian art; Art is flourishing in the carnage left behind by Israel's military onslaught last year, as a new exhibition demonstrates. Donald Macintyre reports

The Independent (London)

December 26, 2009 Saturday

First Edition

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The  **INDEPENDENT**

Section: WORLD; Pg. 36

Length: 1255 words

Byline: Donald Macintyre

Body

The prematurely ageing apartment block on the edge of Jabalya overlooks a forbidding stretch of wasteland. There is a lift shaft but no lift. But if this is no surprise in a Gaza starved of building materials and spare parts, the interior of the spotless and stylishly furnished fourth-floor flat, where Maha El-Daya lives and works, certainly is. The walls are covered with her own (and her artist husband's) paintings: haunting land and seascapes, a portrait of a child; the living room table on which coffee is served is covered with a dark red and black cloth she hand-stitched in the pattern of a chess board, the chairs scattered with cushions decorated with her own kaleidoscopic embroidery.

Ms El-Daya's studio and home in the northern neighbourhood of al Saftawi betrays little sign of the turbulence and bloodshed of the three-week Israeli military onslaught on Gaza which began a year ago tomorrow. Nor does the painting she chose for the annual auction of Palestinian art organised this month in Jerusalem by the UN Development Programme (UNDP), which sold for \$900.

At first sight, it is an abstract against a vibrant blue background but, examined more closely, it is pregnant with traditional Palestinian motifs: the feathers seamstresses attach to a needle and thread instead of a knot; the bag containing Koranic verses once worn by women, the grain used in baking bread. The blue is the colour of the Mediterranean; the brown that of the desert land it laps against.

Ms El-Daya, 33, is one of a growing, younger generation of talented painters helping to bring Gaza - and indeed Palestinian - art to the well deserved attention of a wider public. If Gaza's economy has ground to a standstill, its modern art appears to be flourishing. And remarkably, the majority of the richly varied works on display in the "Colours of Hope" exhibition at the Alhambra Palace this month make little or no overt reference to last winter's war.

In the case of Ms El -Daya, who has a daughter Salma, six, and a three-year-old son, Adam, this isn't because she was unaffected by the war; quite the opposite. "I couldn't draw anything," she says. "I was living in a depression during and after the war. I was very afraid and very worried by the bombardment and the Israelis came very near to us."

How Gaza became a rich canvas for Palestinian art Art is flourishing in the carnage left behind by Israel's military onslaught last year, as a new exhibition d....

Her husband Ayman was stranded in Egypt, where he is studying for a Master's degree in fine arts. The trade union headquarters near her flat was bombed. Twenty-two members of the extended El-Daya family were killed when an Israeli F16 fighter bombarded their four-storey family apartment block in one of the worst incidents of the war - later explained by the military as an "operational error". Practical as well as multiply creative, and mindful that a prominent **Hamas** figure and potential target, Ismail Radwan, lives in her neighbourhood, Ms El-Daya painstakingly removed the glass from her windows on the first day of the bombing, replacing them as soon as the war was over. She says she could see the white phosphorus used in the bombing of nearby Atatra, adding "We saw the ball of fire, like an octopus". But though her words testify to her painter's eye, she had no inclination to commit it to canvas, seeing such immediate events as unsuitable for the lengthy task of constructing a work of art.

It was two months after the end of the war before Ms El-Daya picked up her brush again and, if her work had a theme (though she denies it is political), it was that of recovery. Her first post-war painting was of a fishing boat being repaired on the Gaza City beach. Repeatedly, her work returns to scenes of Gaza's coast: boats, the sea, the decay of Gaza's old port. One Palestinian expert has suggested that some of her beach scenes specifically evoke the siege of Gaza imposed in June 2007 after **Hamas**'s enforced takeover. This Ms El-Daya rejects, saying only that "everyone can do his own translation" of the work.

She does admit, however, to wanting to record scenes that are vanishing, or threatening to, in Gaza's ever-changing landscape. "I want to tell the world that there was a harbour here." Similarly with her pastoral pictures of the now bulldozed farmland of Beit Lahiya. "It's not there any more," she says. "People are trying to get it back now but it won't be what it used to be."

Ms El-Daya has much in common with her fellow painter Shareef Sarhan. The work of both has been shown and sold as far afield as Britain and the US. But while the paintings can travel - often thanks to diplomats - their creators, because of the closure, could not even get to this month's show in Jerusalem. Both have difficulty in bringing in good quality paints from Israel and the West Bank. And both have jobs to help support their families - Ms El-Daya teaches children to draw in a programme run by the Palestinian Red Crescent and Mr Sarhan, also 33, is a photographer for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency.

But Mr Sarhan's painting - which fetched \$800 at the UNDP auction - is unmistakably of the war. Like Ms El-Daya, he did not paint during Israel's Operation Cast Lead; instead he alarmed his wife and four children by photographing its impact both in the streets and, even more dangerously, from the sixth-floor roof of the family home in Gaza City's Sabra district. Though he sold some photographs, others he posted for free on his website, attracting 40,000 hits in the process. It was only in the following weeks that he began to paint the series of war studies which culminated in the work for the UNDP auction. "Sometimes the artist looks to express the events he lives through immediately," he says. "Sometimes it's after a period."

He argues that his paintings of the "aggression", as he calls it, though informed by both his memory and the photographs he took from his roof, are essentially "from the imagination". But Mr Sarhan is also not, by preference, a war painter. His entry at the 2008 UNDP auction, which sold for \$1,100, was a cityscape with an environmental theme, buildings packed between two trees, in which he has painted - as he often does - the grey/brown urban housing of Gaza in startlingly bright colours.

Nor has he, Ms El-Daya or the other painters represented in this month's show, resorted for financial reasons, as some others have, to political murals and the "martyr" portraits of those killed in conflict, frequently commissioned by the armed factions. "I'm not angry with them; I found a job but maybe they had no other option. But I won't do it," Mr Sarhan says.

The problem he has is finding the time to paint as much as he wants. Not only does he need to earn his living but he is also, as a founder member of the "Windows from Gaza for Contemporary Art" group, a tireless champion of younger artists, helping to arrange two to three exhibitions a month. There were "difficulties" at first in attracting a Gaza audience for shows including video and installation art as well as paintings. But now, he says, 150 to 200 will routinely attend an opening.

How Gaza became a rich canvas for Palestinian art Art is flourishing in the carnage left behind by Israel 's military onslaught last year, as a new exhibition d....

Mr Sarhan says Hamas officials have nether intervened against nor encouraged the contemporary art movement here. He also points out that the painting sold in last year's UNDP auction by Ms El-Daya's husband, Ayman Eisa, included the outline of a nude woman. Though painted here, it almost certainly could not be exhibited in socially conservative Gaza, Hamas or no Hamas. Accepting that there are "differences between artists and the government" he remains politically neutral. "I am not Fatah or Hamas," he explains. "I am Shareef."

Load-Date: December 25, 2009

End of Document

***A land where tunnels bloom; Lifelines bring food, fuel and financial hope
from Egypt to the Gaza Strip***

The International Herald Tribune

October 22, 2009 Thursday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 6

Length: 984 words

Byline: Taghreed El-Khodary

Dateline: RAFAH, Gaza

Body

ABSTRACT

Tunnels from Egypt emerged as an essential lifeline for Gaza two years ago, when Israel imposed a political and economic embargo. Now they are a booming business.

FULL TEXT

Dusty sacks filled with cans of Coca-Cola were being loaded onto trucks by young boys, headed for supermarkets in Gaza City. Thousands of motorcycles were lined up on display in a nearby stadium, ranging in price from \$2,000 to \$10,000.

At the Nijma market, refrigerators, flat-screen televisions, microwaves, air conditioners, generators and ovens filled the tents, all at inflated prices; they had all been spirited into this town on the border with Egypt through tunnels under the sand. Some Gazans have even purchased cars smuggled into the isolated Palestinian enclave in parts.

The tunnels emerged as an essential lifeline for Gaza two years ago, when Israel imposed a political and economic embargo after **Hamas** took over the area. Israel did its best to obliterate them during its three-week military offensive in Gaza last winter, saying they were being used for smuggling weapons and explosives.

But the builders set to work immediately after that, and with little hope of the border crossings with Israel opening any time soon - and rich profits to be harvested - there are more tunnels now than ever, and Rafah has turned into a shopping mecca where the tunnel owners are kings.

"If the siege were to be lifted," said Osama, 22, a tunnel owner, "I would end up in intensive care." Osama would not give his family name, fearing he would never be able to travel legally out of Gaza if identified. Locally, he goes by the nickname of Doda, which means worm.

In the past, armed gangs roamed this frontier town; journalists and humanitarian workers were about the only visitors to venture here. Now, customers flock in from all over Gaza. What started as a few clandestine tunnels dug beneath houses has turned into a booming industry that nobody bothers to hide.

A land where tunnels bloom Lifelines bring food, fuel and financial hope from Egypt to the Gaza Strip

Before the Gaza war the tunnels numbered in the hundreds. Today about 1,500 of them are said to be crammed into a 13-kilometer, or 8-mile, stretch along the border, employing in the neighborhood of 30,000 Palestinians from all over the territory. A local merchant has opened a 24-hour grocery store called "Dubai" to cater to them. Only the milk and the yogurt come from Israel. The soft drinks, beans, chocolate, cookies and cooking oil come in consignments from under the ground.

Across the street, Abu Raed Alarja, 58, fixes tools that are used to dig the tunnels. Inside his dark store, he also stocks cement, generators and blue plastic barrels strung together with strong ropes, used to drag goods from the Egyptian side.

For the tunnel owners, profits are high, but precarious. Israel regularly bombs the tunnels in response to rocket fire, and some that are not well constructed simply collapse. Egypt also occasionally seals them from its side, a tactic it uses to keep Hamas in line.

Hamas runs some tunnels of its own, but locals say the group does not collect taxes from those that are privately owned.

A syndicate has been formed to supervise the tunnel system and to defend the rights of workers killed on the job - at least 116 to date, according to local human rights groups. Five workers between the ages of 17 and 20 were killed in one of Osama's three tunnels five months ago when it collapsed because of the dryness of the sand. Osama paid the five families \$2,000 each in compensation and has promised to pay an additional \$7,000 each in a few months.

Osama started out as a day laborer, digging tunnels from the age of 16. He graduated to running drugs and TNT through the tunnels into Gaza. Though he is a supporter of Fatah, the secular rival of Hamas, he says he supplied both parties. He was young but intimidating enough. He says he used to eat in restaurants in Gaza City and leave without paying. "Now it is different," he said. "We fear Hamas."

For the same reason, he no longer smuggles drugs or weapons, though the money he made from that illicit trade helped set him up in legitimate business. He says that each of his three tunnels cost about \$300,000 to build, and that four friends helped him finance the enterprise.

By night he brings in live animals, motorcycles, potato chips, Coca-Cola and clothing for women and children. But the most lucrative import is fuel, which he pumps through a pipe fixed on the ceiling of a kilometer-long tunnel and collects in a large tank on the Palestinian side. Like any smart businessman, Osama does most of his pumping after Israel has blocked fuel supplies from its side or has bombed a few competing tunnels, lifting prices in Gaza.

The tunnel owners, Gaza's nouveau riche, say they are each making more than \$1 million a year.

Sharif Abu Daf, 30, used to work as a contractor in Gaza City until Israel closed the commercial crossings and prevented concrete and construction materials from coming in. Now he is digging to feed his wife and his six children and making 120 shekels, about \$32, a day.

The tunnel owners have brought little change to Rafah, which they consider a conservative backwater. Instead, they prefer to invest their money in property in Gaza City and beyond.

"We make millions but we are not educated," said Imad, 29, one of Osama's partners. Some local men, he noted, marry more than one wife. "If I want to invest, I'll go to Morocco. I heard it is a beautiful place. They have a normal government."

"What's the point of having so much money when you are not able to travel?" said Hazim, 23, another partner who started out digging tunnels. He said he wanted to go to Egypt, study business administration and then invest in Cairo.

"They have never seen beyond Gaza," said Imad's father-in-law, Abu Muhammad, 57, of the younger generation. "They think like they are in a tunnel. They have never seen malls or real supermarkets like I saw in Dubai."

A land where tunnels bloom Lifelines bring food, fuel and financial hope from Egypt to the Gaza Strip

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Goldstone's unjust rush job has hurt the cause of peace

Business Day (South Africa)

October 20, 2009

Business Day Edition

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Section: UNREST, CONFLICTS & WAR

Length: 1337 words

Byline: Warren Goldstein

Body

Middle East Goldstone's unjust rush job has hurt the cause of peace IT IS important to deconstruct the Goldstone report into the Gaza war from a legal point of view, because it uses the veneer of respectability that comes with legal methodology, and the presence of an internationally respected judge, Richard Goldstone, to gain credibility. Law is a very powerful weapon to give respectability to contemptible actions and opinions. The apartheid government was very legalistic in its approach to racial oppression, and was punctilious about promulgating proper laws, and about maintaining a fully functioning judiciary to give the facade of respectability to its repugnant policies. The United Nations often uses the superficial veneer of law and legal methodology to give credence and credibility to its anti-Israel agenda. The Goldstone Mission is a case in point. Careful analysis reveals that the legalities used are merely a cover for a political strategy of delegitimising Israel. Goldstone claims that the mission "is not a judicial inquiry (but is) a fact-finding mission". This is a distinction without a difference. The mission's report makes numerous factual findings, and some legal, just as if it were a judicial body. The report could have salvaged some measure of integrity had it stated that its findings, both legal and factual, were only *prima facie*. It did not do so. Judges make factual and legal findings that have practical implications. There are very real consequences for Israel resulting from the findings of the mission. Apart from holding Israel liable in international law to pay war reparations, Goldstone refers the findings to the highest authorities of international law. Any civilised legal system requires that justice be done on two levels: procedural and substantive. The Goldstone Mission is replete with procedural and substantive injustices. From a procedural point of view, there are four main areas of injustice. First, the Human Rights Council's resolution S-9/1 establishing the mission expressly states that it "strongly condemns the ongoing Israeli military operation (in Gaza), which has resulted in massive violations of the human rights of the Palestinian people", and in so doing prejudices the guilt of Israel. The resolution refers many times to Israel's guilt in a very lengthy document, which is phrased in wide, undisciplined and aggressive language. The second procedural injustice is that the members of the mission publicly expressed beforehand their opinions on this conflict. The most explicit in this regard, Prof Christine Chinkin, was one of the signatories to a letter published in the Sunday Times of London, stating that "Israel's actions amount to aggression, not self-defence, not least because its assault on Gaza was unnecessary". The letter is published under the heading "Israel's bombardment of Gaza is not self-defence - it's a war crime." The other three members of the mission, including Goldstone, signed a public letter stating: "Events in Gaza have shocked us to the core." Due to the two procedural injustices referred to, Israel could not receive a fair trial, and, therefore, correctly refused to co-operate with the mission. This resulted in the third procedural injustice: the violation of another basic legal principle of fairness, *audi alteram partem* - let the other side be heard. The mission ought, if it were objective and fair, to have accepted Israel's right to remain silent and then ought to have desisted from making findings, whether factual or legal. But it did not and, as any lawyer knows,

Goldstone's unjust rush job has hurt the cause of peace

unanswered allegations often prove unreliable and in almost all conflicts there are serious disputes of fact, and often of law as well. The mission did not try to cross-examine or challenge the witnesses in any real way. Unproven allegations of Hamas officials were accepted as established facts. Even the most basic questions were not asked; when, for example, allegations were made of Israel's bombing civilian installations, witnesses were not asked whether there were Hamas fighters or weaponry in the vicinity, or whether any attacks had been launched from the area. There is a fourth procedural injustice that undermines the integrity and credibility of Goldstone and the three other members of the mission: there simply was not enough time to do the job properly. Any lawyer with even limited experience knows that there was just not sufficient time for the mission to have properly considered and prepared its report. One murder trial often takes many months of evidence and argument to enable a judge to make a decision with integrity. To assess even one day of battle in Gaza with the factual complexities involved would have required a substantial period of intensive examination. According to the mission's report, the mission convened for a total of 12 days. They say that they considered a huge volume of written and visual material running into thousands of pages; they conducted three field trips; there were only four days of public hearings; and yet, in a relatively short space of time, the members of the mission agreed to about 500 pages of detailed material and findings, with not one dissenting opinion. They made no less than 69 findings, mostly of fact, but some of law, and numerous sub-findings. All of this was quite simply physically impossible if the job had been done with integrity and care. The substantive injustices of the Goldstone Mission's report are too numerous to mention in this article, but one illustrates how far the mission was prepared to go, and that relates to the very important legal element of intent. Without any evidence, the Goldstone report imputes the worst of intentions to the actions of the state of Israel, finding that Israel's conduct was motivated by a desire to oppress, and to inflict suffering upon, the Palestinian people, and not for the purpose of self-defence. It also asserts, again without any evidence, that many of Israel's military operations, such as that in Lebanon, were motivated by the same goal. The mission fails to mention Col Richard Kemp, the former commander of British forces in Afghanistan, who said: "I do not think there has ever been a time in the history of warfare when an army has made more efforts to reduce civil casualties and deaths of innocent people than the IDF (Israel Defence Forces) is doing today in Gaza." By contrast, on the Palestinian side, there is very clear evidence as to Hamas's intentions - the Hamas charter openly calls for the destruction of Israel, irrespective of borders. It also calls for the murder of all Jews worldwide. Their clear intention was to murder as many Israeli civilians as possible and to use its own civilian population as human shields. But not a word of Hamas's expressly stated intentions appear in the report. One aspect of the evidence, presented to but not accepted by the Goldstone Mission, was that of Hamas leader, Fathi Hammad, who said: "This is why we have formed human shields of the women, the children, the elderly and the mujahideen, in order to challenge the Zionist bombing machine. It is as if we are saying to the Zionist enemy: we desire death while you desire life." These procedural and substantive injustices demonstrate the complete lack of integrity and fairness of the process. It looks like law, but it is not. It is just politics. The Goldstone Mission is a disgrace to the most basic notions of justice, equality and the rule of law. And it is dangerous. Injustice will only lead to more death and destruction. The Talmud says: "The world stands on three things: truth, justice and peace." These three values are linked. There can never be peace without justice and truth. The Goldstone Mission is unjust and wanting in truth. It has, therefore, harmed the prospects for peace in the Middle East. •Goldstein has a PhD in Human Rights Law and is the Chief Rabbi of SA. 'All of this was quite simply physically impossible if the job had been done with integrity and care'

Load-Date: October 23, 2009

'Hello, I am Gilad, son of Noam and Aviva Schalit.' Israel swaps 20 female security prisoners for video of captive soldier

The Jerusalem Post
October 4, 2009 Sunday

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Length: 952 words

Byline: TOVAH LAZAROFF; Jerusalem Post staff and AP contributed to this report.

Body

His skin was pale. His black hair was cropped short. He sat on a white chair against a white background, held a copy of a newspaper published in Gaza and pleaded for freedom.

In a clear voice, the 23-year-old read from a prepared text that was covered from view by the paper.

"Hello, I am Gilad, son of Noam and Aviva Schalit, brother of Hadas and Yoel," he said.

The two-minute video in which he told his family that he loved them and asked Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu to free him, was given to Gilad's parents on Friday afternoon as they sat in their Mitzpe Hilla home in the Upper Galilee.

It was their first sight of their son's face since he was kidnapped, at age 19, while patrolling the Gaza border on June 25, 2006. Since then the family has received three letters and an audio tape from Gilad.

In a move that is seen as a first step toward a deal to free Schalit, **Hamas** agreed to give Israel the video, taped on September 14, in exchange for 20 **female** security prisoners held by Israel. On Friday, 19 **women** were released to the West Bank and one to Gaza. The 20th will be sent home on Sunday.

Egyptian and German mediators brokered Friday's deal with **Hamas**, which holds Schalit captive in Gaza.

On Friday, Israeli mediator Hagai Hadas watched the video in Tel Aviv, to determine its authenticity, before ordering the Palestinian **women** released.

The video was then transferred to Jerusalem, where the prime minister viewed it.

A copy of the disc was delivered by helicopter to the Schalit family. They later agreed to make the video public. It was broadcast on Israeli television stations and Internet sites. It is also posted on YouTube.

Aviva Schalit, the kidnapped tank gunner's mother, said she hoped the video was a positive sign.

"I hope that [releasing] the videotape of Gilad is the beginning of the end," she told family friends.

Her husband, Noam, was more cautious, saying he worried that the negotiations could still drag out for years.

'Hello, I am Gilad, son of Noam and Aviva Schalit.' Israel swaps 20 female security prisoners for video of captive soldier

"We're not on the brink of a deal," he told reporters outside the Schalit home.

On Friday night, he called on the government to continue intensive negotiations until Gilad is free.

"Aviva and I and all of the Schalit family thank the negotiating team headed by Hagai Hadas for bringing us an authentic, updated sign of life from Gilad for the first time after more than three years in captivity. We thank the activists and public for their support and expect Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu to bring about our son's release," Noam said in a statement to the press several hours after the video clip was aired.

Gilad's father went on to stress that after watching the captive soldier in the video, the family was worried by his appearance.

"On the face of it he appears to be well, but he has been suffering almost 1,200 unbearable days and nights in Hamas captivity, paying the full price for the failed conduct and policies of recent years," he said.

While the two-minute clip was "an important step," Noam said, the family expects the intense negotiations to continue until Gilad returns home.

"The government and leaders have had plenty of time to look into all the alternative methods that could bring about Gilad's release," he said. "We await his return home in the very near future."

Shimshon Liebman, a family friend who heads the Campaign to Free Gilad Schalit, said the video showed that Gilad was alive, and that knowing that was helpful to his family and friends.

"What is most important is that he is more or less healthy," said Liebman, but he added there was reason for concern. "We can see that he is thin and pale. He does not see the light of day."

Every day that passes, something can happen to him, Leibman said.

The Campaign plans to continue to fight for Gilad's release under the slogan, "Bibi, you can do it, finish the job."

On Monday, several hundred teenagers who will soon be of draft age plan to march around Jerusalem, before heading to the protest tent for Gilad that is permanently set up outside the Prime Minister's Residence. They will meet there with Noam Schalit.

In the West Bank on Friday, jubilant Palestinians cheered and waved flags as the freed women returned home, some with prison-born babies in tow.

The ex-prisoners, wearing the head scarves of devout Muslim women, blew kisses to the crowd through the vehicles' open windows.

Later, they were greeted by Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas in his walled Ramallah compound as elated relatives threw fistfuls of candy in the air.

Zhour Hamdan, arrested in 2003, was reunited with her eight children and saw her first granddaughter, one-year-old Selina, for the first time. Her daughter Nasreen, 26, said she had not been able to visit her mother for more than a year because of Israeli travel restrictions.

"It's indescribable," Nasreen said of the reunion. "We are preparing a tremendous celebration."

Abbas told the women their "sacrifice will not go in vain," and prayed for the release of other prisoners.

In Gaza City, Fatima Ziq, 41, returned to her home with her youngest son, who was born in prison. She received a hero's welcome and was greeted by Ismail Haniyeh, the Hamas prime minister, in a chaotic scene.

'Hello, I am Gilad, son of Noam and Aviva Schalit.' Israel swaps 20 female security prisoners for video of captive soldier

Haniyeh called Friday's swap "a day of victory for the Palestinian will, for the Palestinian resistance, for Palestinian steadfastness."

The Palestinians want Israel to trade up to 1,000 security prisoners for Schalit, including many convicted of deadly attacks on Israelis. More than 9,000 Palestinians are jailed in Israel.

Dov Weissglas, once a senior aide to prime minister Ariel Sharon, predicted Israel and **Hamas** were heading toward a resolution of the hostage ordeal.

"This is creating enormous emotional pressure to get him released," Weissglas said.

Graphic

Photo: ST.-SGT. GILAD SCHALIT speaks in a video made on September 14, and released Islamic Jihad prisoner Fatima Ziq holds a rifle as she sits with her children in her Gaza City home on Friday. (Credit: AP)

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IDF dismisses 'unreliable' claims that soldiers killed Gaza civilians. Human Rights Watch report quotes Palestinians as saying army killed 11 people waving white flags

The Jerusalem Post

August 14, 2009 Friday

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Length: 1048 words

Byline: DAN IZENBERG and YAAKOV KATZ

Body

A Human Rights Watch report claiming IDF soldiers killed 11 Palestinian civilians holding white flags in the Gaza Strip during Operation Cast Lead is "based on unreliable witness reports," the IDF said in a statement released Thursday.

"Moreover," the statement continued, the international human rights organization "didn't bother to give the report to the IDF before releasing it to the public via the media, to allow for in-depth investigation."

The army stressed that soldiers were under orders to "honor the 'white flag' as a sign of surrender... and to avoid harming" anyone raising such a flag.

HRW presented its report at a press conference on Thursday morning, alleging that most of the 11 were women and children and that they were killed in seven separate incidents during Operation Cast Lead.

"In each case, the victims were standing, walking, or in a slow-moving vehicle with other unarmed civilians who were trying to convey their non-combatant status by waving a white flag," the 61-page report entitled "White Flags Death," said.

"All available evidence indicates that Israeli forces had control of the area in question, no fighting was taking place there at the time and Palestinian fighters were not hiding among the civilians who were shot."

According to Human Rights Watch, even if the victims had not been waving white flags, they were civilians who were not taking part in acts of war and should therefore not have been attacked, according to the laws of war.

Either the soldiers who took part in the shootings had failed to take necessary precautions, as required by the laws of war, to distinguish between civilians and combatants, or they deliberately fired at them, HRW charged. In the latter case, they had committed war crimes and should face criminal charges.

Human Rights Watch reported that it had not found in any of the incidents that the civilians were used as human shields and that in each case, at least one person had been waving a white flag.

IDF dismisses 'unreliable' claims that soldiers killed Gaza civilians. Human Rights Watch report quotes Palestinians as saying army killed 11 people waving whit....

In one of the cases mentioned in the report, on January 7, four days after the IDF land incursion into Gaza, Israeli soldiers shot and killed Amal Abd Rabbo, 2, and Su'ad Abd Rabbo, 7, wounded Su'ad Abd Rabbo, 54 and seriously wounded Samar Abd Rabbo, 4.

The grandmother, Su'ad, told HRW, "We saw one tank and we saw others behind. We were with the white flags in order to make them see that we were civilians. We spent seven to nine minutes waving the flags and we were looking right at them. And suddenly they opened fire and the girls fell to the ground."

HRW concluded that "eyewitness accounts, tank tracks, an ammunition box and bullet casings found at the scene, and an examination of the grandmother by forensic experts indicate that an Israeli soldier fired upon identifiable and unarmed women and children."

The organization called for an independent and impartial investigation into violations committed by Israel and Hamas during the fighting and charged that neither side until now had conducted credible investigations. Human Rights Watch has accused Hamas and other terrorist organizations in Gaza of committing war crimes by firing rockets and mortars at Israel's civilian population and said there was evidence that some terrorists committed war crimes by using Palestinian civilians as human shields.

It called on UN member states to establish a UN mechanism that would monitor and report on efforts by Israel and Hamas to conduct transparent and impartial investigations into war crimes and prosecute those responsible. If they failed to do so, the UN should press for international prosecutions, the group said.

HRW said it conducted extensive investigations into each of the incidents by visiting the sites of the attacks, examining ballistic evidence, collecting medical records and interviewing at least three witnesses, separately, for each attack. In one case, forensic pathologists examined a survivor.

The army, in its statement, stressed that "the IDF did everything in its power to warn the civilian population... by distributing more than two million announcements, including 300,000 phone calls to residential houses and media in the Strip, in order to keep civilians away from battle zones."

The IDF also said it was already investigating several similar allegations, including an incident that occurred on January 13 when four civilians were reportedly killed even though they were waving a white flag. Another incident took place on January 4, when a tank crew allegedly fired a shell at a group of civilians that were carrying white flags.

The incidents were brought to the IDF's attention by HRW as well as other NGOs, and even by Palestinians themselves.

The IDF is conducting more than 100 investigations of soldiers involved in Operation Cast Lead.

Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu's spokesman Mark Regev responded to the report by saying, "Human Rights Watch's public admission that it raised money in Saudi Arabia in tandem with official representatives of that authoritarian government, raises serious questions concerning the organization's objectivity, professionalism, integrity and credibility."

Also responding to the HRW report was Gerald Steinberg, the director of NGO Monitor, who said there was a fundamental problem with HRW's methodology.

"HRW had no people in Gaza during the war, so therefore everything they have to say is by definition based on hearsay and speculation - it is all based on secondary and tertiary reports," he said.

"A Palestinian says he took a white flag out, and says Israelis shot him. We don't know if that was part of tactics Hamas used, like Hizbullah did in Lebanon. Remember, Hamas used ambulances to smuggle in and launch rockets. HRW doesn't know," Steinberg continued.

IDF dismisses 'unreliable' claims that soldiers killed Gaza civilians. Human Rights Watch report quotes Palestinians as saying army killed 11 people waving whit....

Steinberg noted that all the organization's reports on Gaza were based on what Palestinians said, or what other NGOs reported, or on what some journalists - who for the most part were also not in Gaza during the war - heard about afterward.

"This is a basic methodological problem," he said. "If you are looking for a target, you will find people who will tell you what you are looking for."

Steinberg said that after it ended, HRW made similar allegations about the IDF firing at people waving white flags during the Second Lebanon War, but that these turned out to be false.

Graphic

Photo: PALESTINIANS WALK through the Jabalya refugee camp during Operation Cast Lead holding white flags. (Credit: AP)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

Intl activists march in Gaza against closures

AlArabiya.net

December 30, 2009 Wednesday

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Length: 640 words

Body

Hundreds of people including international activists protested on both sides of a Gaza Strip border crossing on Thursday against Israeli closures imposed on the Hamas-ruled territory.

"It's a non-violent, peaceful gathering and the aim is to show the international community the suffering of the people of Gaza," Amjad al-Shawa, a Gaza-based organizer, told AFP. Eighty-six international activists were allowed to enter the enclave on Wednesday from Egypt via the Rafah crossing, the only terminal not controlled by Israel, which has been mostly closed since Hamas seized power in June 2007.

Another 1,300 activists from around 40 countries remained in Cairo after the Egyptian authorities declined to allow the entire group to enter Gaza because of what they called the "sensitive situation" in the Palestinian territory.

The activists were joined by a few hundred Palestinians as they marched from northern Gaza to the Erez crossing with Israel, the main entry and exit point used by medical patients, journalists, diplomats and aid groups.

Among the protesters were a small group of bearded anti-Zionist religious Jews clad in traditional ultra-Orthodox clothing and holding signs that read: "Judaism yes, Zionism no... State of Israel must go."

On the Israeli side, a group of dozens of foreign, Israeli and Arab activists waved Palestinian flags outside the entry to the terminal, holding signs reading "Stop the siege now" and "Freedom for Gaza."

Many of the activists on the Israeli side had travelled on buses from a neighborhood in mostly Arab, occupied east Jerusalem that has been the site of recent conflict between Palestinians and hardline Jewish settlers.

Shawa said the location was chosen to highlight the effects of the siege and ties between the Gaza Strip and the occupied West Bank. It was also aimed at commemorating the first anniversary of Israel's massive offensive on Gaza.

Intl activists march in Gaza against closures

Brutality in Cairo

Meanwhile, police punched and kicked international activists during scuffles in the Egyptian capital on Thursday which left one person with broken ribs, protest organizers said.

"Members of the Gaza Freedom March are being forcibly detained in hotels around (Cairo) as well as violently forced into pens in Tahrir Square by Egyptian police and additional security forces," a statement from the organizers said.

Scuffles erupted between the police and the protesters which saw "women" being kicked, beaten to the ground and dragged into pens, at least one confirmed account of broken ribs and many left bloody," they said.

Witnesses at the protest outside the Cairo Museum told AFP that police punched several activists in the face.

At least 200 international activists had gathered in central Cairo on Thursday as part of a series of week-long demonstrations to protest at Egypt's refusal to let the 1,300 members of the Gaza Freedom March into the Gaza Strip.

"We are barricaded in our hotel. There is a police cordon and six riot police vans outside the hotel entrance and we were told we couldn't leave," one of the organizers, Portuguese Ziyaad Lunat, told AFP.

On Wednesday 86 international activists were allowed to enter Gaza from Egypt after intervention by First Lady Suzanne Mubarak, but organizers say they went as individuals and not in the name of the Gaza Freedom March.

"Some of them have family in Gaza so they went, but the Gaza Freedom March rejected the offer to let only a few in," Lunat said, adding that those left behind in Cairo were still trying to get into the impoverished enclave.

Israel and Egypt have sealed the Gaza Strip off from all but vital humanitarian aid since the Islamist Hamas group took control there in June 2007.

On December 27, 2008, Israel launched a massive military offensive on Gaza which killed 1,400 Palestinians. Thirteen Israelis were also killed during the 22-day conflict.

Load-Date: December 31, 2009

Israel killed Palestinians waving white flags, report says; Human Rights Watch says IDF soldiers unlawfully shot 11 civilians dead during the Gaza war against Hamas, which HRW earlier accused of war crimes.

The Christian Science Monitor

August 13, 2009 Thursday

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Length: 729 words

Byline: Ilene R. Prusher Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

Body

The New York-based Human Rights Watch (HRW) said Thursday that during Israel's offensive in Gaza earlier this year, its soldiers unlawfully shot and killed 11 Palestinian civilians, including five women and four children, who were in groups waving white flags to convey their civilian status. In a new 63-page report, the human rights watchdog called on Israel to investigate seven separate incidents in which it said Israeli troops shot and killed innocent Palestinian civilians who were flying white flags to try to escape to safety. Earlier this month, HRW published a separate report criticizing Hamas' rocket attacks against Israeli civilians, indicating that these acts amounted to war crimes. In a statement released Thursday, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) responded to the latest HRW report, saying the group's research was "based on unreliable witness reports" and that its forces are trained to avoid hurting anyone who waves a white flag as a sign of surrender.

The IDF criticized HRW for giving it inadequate time to respond, saying it "didn't bother to give the report to the IDF before releasing it to the public via the media, in order to allow for in-depth investigation." For its part, HRW said that the IDF declined repeated requests for a meeting to discuss the cases and did not respond to questions submitted in writing. Joe Stork, deputy Middle East director at Human Rights Watch, said in a statement along with the report that the Israeli military "is stonewalling in the face of evidence that its soldiers killed civilians waving white flags in areas it controlled and where there were no Palestinian fighters. These cases need thorough, independent investigations." In the wake of repeated reports of wrongdoing during the three-week war that ended Jan. 18, including a highly controversial one reported by the Monitor last month that suggested a policy of maximum force to avoid Israeli casualties, the Israeli military has said that it is conducting its own internal investigations into the behavior of soldiers during the offensive. Mr. Stork called most of those investigations "inadequate." "The Israel Defense Forces have for years permitted a pervasive culture of impunity regarding unlawful Palestinian deaths," Stork said in the release. "Field investigations may serve a useful military purpose, but they are inadequate to determine whether a soldier violated the laws of war, and serve as a pretext that a serious investigation is taking place." U.N. reports to follow Thursday's report also comes not far ahead of what are expected to be two critical United Nations reports about the Gaza war. Israel has refused to cooperate in the investigation that is expected to yield the harsher of the two reports. That investigation is headed by Judge Richard Goldstone, a former war-crimes prosecutor from South Africa who was appointed by the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva. Israel has criticized the council, which has a rotating membership that currently includes countries such as Saudi Arabia, Kyrgyzstan, and Angola, as biased and thus unfit to accurately assess its actions. Israel has provided assistance, however, to investigators working on a second report, being conducted by the UN Commission on Human Rights. Drafts of the two reports are expected to be supplied to Israel by the end of August, before being presented to the UN's Human Rights Council in mid-September. The Israeli center-left newspaper Haaretz reported last month that some in Israel

Israel killed Palestinians waving white flags, report says Human Rights Watch says IDF soldiers unlawfully shot 11 civilians dead during the Gaza war against Ha....

believe the reports could prompt legal action against Israel in The Hague; in preparation, the Foreign Ministry is said to be preparing an exhaustive defense brief. Public questioning IDF commanders' integrity The latest reports on the war in Gaza come amid a wave of public questioning of the behavior of senior IDF commanders, notes Eyal Ben-Ari, a Hebrew University sociologist whose specialties include the culture of the IDF and its relationship to Israeli society. This week, he noted, two senior officers have come under fire for private use of army vehicles. "Today in general, there's more and more focus on soldiers' morality and the strength of the army being built on that," says Professor Ben-Ari, "and you cannot disconnect that from that the allegations of human rights abuses and all the other discussions about morality in the IDF, about lying and disinformation."

Graphic

Members of a Palestinian Bedouin family hold white flags as a signal to Israeli troops after leaving their house near the area where Israeli soldiers and Palestinian militants exchanged fire outside Jebaliya refugee camp northern Gaza Strip, on January 5. Khalil Hamra/AP/File

Load-Date: February 19, 2010

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How come we don't have more colorful leaders?

The Jerusalem Post

September 8, 2009 Tuesday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 14

Length: 554 words

Byline: RAY HANANIA

Highlight: In terms of political drama, Israelis and Palestinians have got nothing on the Japanese. The writer is a columnist, stand-up comedian and Chicago radio talk show host. You can hear his program every afternoon at 16:00pm Israel time on-line at www.RadioChicagoland.com.

Body

In spite of all the news Palestinians and Israelis produce each day, we really are pretty boring people. I mean, we have nothing on the Japanese.

The big news in Japan last week is that Miyuki Hatoyama, wife of incoming Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama, says she traveled to Venus in the 1970s in a UFO. She's talking about the planet, not a 'happy place' or the local beauty spa.

Mrs. Hatoyama detailed the unusual trip in her book called Most Bizarre Things I've Encountered.

I have racked my brain to think of anything that even comes close to that in the many stories about Palestinians and Israelis.

There was a rumor once that during the peace process (remember that?), Yasser Arafat and Yitzhak Rabin wagered at the roulette table at the Jericho casino. Arafat offered Rabin double or nothing on "returning" the West Bank.

IN TRUTH, most of the stories about Palestinians and Israelis are about tragedies, missed opportunities, name-calling, the blame game and, sadly, continued violence.

I did read an Israeli press release reporting that a Palestinian prisoner in one of the country's many prisons had been killed by a "nonlethal weapon." I could only imagine what might have happened had the weapon been lethal.

On another occasion, **Hamas** leaders tried to explain that Martyr Mouse was merely an orphaned cartoon character whose family had been blown up by Israeli cartoon characters during a siege at a cartoon checkpoint near a cartoon settlement. And the mouse suffered from a slight lisp that distorted everything it said.

When Martyr Mouse urged kiddies to "do their best to kill the Jews," all it was trying to tell young Palestinians who watch **Hamas** television was to "do their best to fill the news." It must work, because **Hamas** does "fill the news."

Still, it would be kind of cool if we could get Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu to set aside all the heavy problems and talk about some of his own unusual experiences.

How come we don't have more colorful leaders?

I can see Netanyahu, cold and calculating as only a prime minister could be, playing a wildly romantic character in a Hollywood movie. For all his hard-lining, some Palestinian women have compared him to the late Paul Newman.

The same Palestinian women have told me they think Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas reminds them of Mahatma Gandhi, the fearless and nonviolent leader of India. Of course, there isn't any salt to fight over in Palestine like there is in India. And while Gandhi used to gum his own leather into soft shirts and wraps, Abbas leaves all the cooking to the women.

Still, neither has ever taken a trip to another planet. Nor have they been kidnapped by aliens.

Although come to think of it, I wonder how Palestinians and Israelis might react if a UFO landed atop the wall (fence, barricade, whatever) and declared that the Holy Land belonged to them and they wanted it back.

DO YOU think that might be enough to push Palestinians and Israelis to join together against someone besides each other? Everyone says that if Palestinians and Israelis could just resolve their conflict, they could become the most powerful combined force in the Middle East.

Sadly, Palestinians and Israelis are not as lucky. All we have is run-of-the-mill conflict. Anger. Hatred. Violence.

Nothing unusual, strange or hard to believe, like visiting Venus in a spaceship.

We can only hope, though.

Graphic

2 photos: Mahmoud Abbas. No trip to Venus. Binyamin Netanyahu. Romantic lead? (Credit: AP)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

IDF mulling self-defense course for all female recruits

The Jerusalem Post

August 9, 2009 Sunday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 3

Length: 313 words

Byline: YAAKOV KATZ

Body

Citing fears of kidnappings and sexual assault, the IDF is considering establishing a special self-defense course for all **female** soldiers who enlist in the military.

The plan is the brainchild of Col. Dr. Avi Moyal, head of the IDF's Combat Fitness Division. Moyal has discussed the idea with Brig.-Gen. Gila Klifi-Amir, the General Staff's Adviser on **Women**'s Affairs and the two are hoping to secure a budget for the program.

Under the plan, all **female** recruits will participate in a week-long self-defense course to provide them with skills how to fend off potential attackers, rapists and kidnappers.

"This course will be aimed at providing the **female** soldiers with self-confidence to travel around the country in the framework of their military service as many of them need to" explained a senior officer in the IDF's Ground Forces Command.

Most **female** soldiers in the IDF serve in non-combat positions and undergo a very low-level basic training without receiving any real self defense skills.

"Very few **female** soldiers are given an introductory class in hand-to-hand combat but not enough to know how to fight off an attacker," the officer said.

The Ground Forces Command has also established a new training regimen to train soldiers how to fight off a **Hamas** or Hizbullah kidnapping attempt. The decision to establish the new course was made following Operation Cast Lead in the Gaza Strip earlier this year, during which **Hamas** operatives made a number of attempts to kidnap IDF soldiers.

Following the operation, the Ground Forces Command set up a team of officers to recommend changes to the current training regimen based on findings from the almost two-week ground offensive in Gaza. One of the recommendations was to sharpen troops' skills on how to fight off kidnappers not just with their rifle but also when the soldier's ammunition runs out or when he is taken by surprise.

Graphic

IDF mulling self-defense course for all female recruits

Photo: **WOMEN** SOLDIERS may soon receive self-defense courses as part of their army training to ward off possible attackers or kidnappers. (Credit: Ariel Jerozolinski/The Jerusalem Post)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

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Letters

The Jerusalem Post

November 26, 2009 Thursday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 14

Length: 1230 words

Byline: Daniel Tauber, Gershon Harris, JJ Gross, Jonathan Feldstein, Batya Koenigsberg, Moshe-Mordechai Van Zuiden, Ida Selavan Schwarcz

Highlight: Readers' Letters

Body

Ben-Gurion's 'pragmatism'

Sir, - Your reference to former prime minister David Ben-Gurion's "uncompromising" pragmatism ("Principle & pragmatism," November 24) is somewhat puzzling, as pragmatism in politics is the art of compromising on values and principles.

Ben-Gurion did believe in supreme loyalty to the state, but only when he ruled it. His socialism meant loyalty to a non-Zionist cause - the cause of the workers - which hurt Zionism. He led a movement that promoted class warfare between Jewish owners and workers even in the still-developing Yishuv, hindering economic development and foreign investment. His party could not accept even the concept of national arbitration to resolve strikes. As for loyalty to Zionism, until 1942 he refused to declare a Jewish state as the goal of Zionism, even denying this before the Peel Commission.

Ben-Gurion and his movement led a vicious smear campaign against Revisionists because they were perceived as enemies of the workers, despite the fact that on all major issues - the need for Jewish defense, operations against the British, the need to evacuate European Jewry, the need to openly declare the need for a Jewish state, the need for illegal Jewish immigration - Jabotinsky was right and Ben-Gurion was wrong and would later adopt Jabotinsky's positions.

You mentioned the travesty of the sinking of the Altalena, in which Jewish immigrants and fighters were killed by Jews, which Ben-Gurion had the audacity to praise. But what about the saison, during which members of the Hagana kidnapped and informed on members of the Irgun to the British? What about the Arlosoroff affair, where two obviously innocent Betarim were accused by the Labor establishment of killing Labor leader Haim Arlosoroff, even though Arabs had confessed to the killing? And Ben-Gurion's refusal to bury Jabotinsky in Israel? Was all this laudable pragmatism?

Of course, Ben-Gurion achieved much for the State of Israel, but it's time we stopped glossing over his campaign against any and all who disagreed, particularly some of the greatest Zionists like Jabotinsky and Begin, as holy pragmatism - which is, as you point out, often a justification for unbridled ambition.

DANIEL TAUBER

Letters

Jerusalem

An unorthodox arrest...

Sir, - Let me get this straight: The police arrest and detain a Jewish woman quietly praying in the women's section of the Western Wall because she disturbs Orthodox sensibilities by donning a tallit ("The offensive arrest," November 25), but they still have not found a way to control - never mind arrest - hundreds of haredi Jews who violently and publicly desecrate Shabbat and physically harm people and property? Am I missing something here, or has this country gone completely crazy?

GERSHON HARRIS

Hatzor Haglilit

...that misses

the real point

Sir, - One can take issue or agree with most of the points Gil Troy makes regarding women at the Western Wall. But this is beside the point.

The real issue, as Mr. Troy hints, is that the Western Wall plaza, "sanitized and cleansed of its rocky, rubbly history," is Judaism's "holiest site." The conventional wisdom that the wall is our holiest site does irreparable damage to the Jewish people, its state and its destiny. Judaism's holiest site is the area beyond the Kotel, with the wall being merely its outer perimeter, a stark scar that should only remind us of what once was and inspire us to pray for what will yet be.

By aggrandizing the Western Wall, we betray its essence and abdicate our claim to the Temple Mount - something the world is only too glad to accept as axiomatic.

JJ GROSS

Jerusalem

An oleh's business proposition

Sir, - I was pleased to see the front-page article on Nefesh B'Nefesh ("North American aliya is a good investment for Israel, study finds," November 24), which confirmed things I knew intuitively about the important work it had done to professionalize and attract aliya from North America. I am proud to be an oleh who arrived with a family of seven five years ago, and can attest to the great job NBN is doing.

However, if the government recognizes the importance of North American aliya and wants to encourage it, it would do well to heed a word of advice.

When we made aliya, we purchased a car shortly afterward and were "privileged" to pay only 50 percent of the tax. Between the loss we took in selling our old van in the US and the tax we paid, there was a net expense of close to \$20,000. We were lucky to have sold our house in the US and had the equity to make such purchases then.

However, there are numerous people like us with mortgages, car loans, school loans and other expenses. Aside from the economic difficulty these present, the prospect of uprooting one's life to make aliya and then trying to sell belongings in the US only to incur vast expenses here is enough to keep people in their Diaspora homes.

Further reducing, or eliminating, such taxes for new olim would be wise and a good business move, as the government surely is not getting rich on the limited tax revenues of selling a few hundred cars, at best. Conversely, if one large economic impediment preventing people from making aliya were removed, and 10 more families the size of mine were to immigrate, the income to the government over time would make up for the loss, simply through the VAT those families would be paying in building their lives here.

Letters

JONATHAN FELDSTEIN

Efrat

From 'Boney'

to **Hamas**

Sir, - The knowledge that the **Hamas** Web site is encouraging suicide bombing among children all over the world and especially in Europe should strike terror into the hearts of all parents ("**Hamas** kid's Web site encourages suicide bombers in Europe," November 25).

It used to be that mothers in England frightened their children with the statement, "Boney is coming," referring to Napoleon Bonaparte. Now parents will have to be aware that **Hamas** means to destroy their happy existence and make children participants in terror.

I cannot fathom what is driving the world to accept this kind of evil except sheer cowardice and a lack of values.

BATYA KOENIGSBERG

Jerusalem

A Schalit deal that speaks for itself

Sir, - The article "Peres: Progress made toward deal for Schalit release" (November 23), contained so many reasons not to exchange our most recent missing soldier for hundreds of convicted criminals. Let's list them neatly:

- * It makes a mockery of the clean, careful and costly court cases that put them in jail.
- * It takes away the deterrence that jail is supposed to give, inviting a new intifada.
- * It takes away the retribution that jail should be, cruelly opening survivors' wounds.
- * Giving in to the blackmail will encourage more kidnapping attempts - a vicious cycle.
- * Releasing murderers just like that cheapens the blood of the people they killed.
- * Every security prisoner set free puts many civilians' lives and limbs in jeopardy.
- * It is a disgrace to free a plotter of mass murder and war crimes such as Marwan Barghouti.
- * It would boost **Hamas**'s popularity and thereby ensure its election victory.

Shocking when you see this list, no? Rhetorically we can ask which one is the worst; it's hard to tell.

MOSHE-MORDECHAI VAN ZUIDEN

Jerusalem

A date to remember

Sir, - In her roundup of November dates of Jewish interest ("Grapevine: November notes," November 25), Greer Fay Cashman omitted a very important date: November 2, Balfour Declaration Day.

IDA SELAVAN SCHWARCZ , Ganei Omer

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

Letters

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Goldstone's Gambit: The Man Behind U. N. Report

The Forward

September 25, 2009

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Section: News; Pg. 1

Length: 1741 words

Body

Ask Richard Goldstone what possessed him, a Jew and self-described supporter of Israel, to accept the job of chief United Nations investigator of alleged war crimes committed in Gaza last winter, and the legendary South African judge invokes his past.

His decision in 1980 to accept the racist South African government's offer of a judicial appointment was the most difficult of my career, he has said. The government back then occasionally appointed liberals as judges in order to, as he described it, make good its boast of having an independent judiciary. The danger of lending legitimacy to an immoral system by serving it was very real.

But ultimately, the hope of liberals that the legal system could be expanded from within to effect social change was vindicated for him when one of his rulings effectively ended South Africa's policy of racially-segregated neighborhoods.

On September 15, Goldstone submitted his team's report on human rights violations in the Gaza conflict to the U. N. Human Rights Council. It is a 574-page review based on 188 individual interviews; 10,000 pages of documents; 1,200 photos, including satellite imagery, and 30 videos that blisters with specificity.

The report states that both Israel and **Hamas**, the Palestinian group controlling Gaza, committed war crimes and possibly crimes against humanity. It cites the many rockets launched by **Hamas** against Israeli civilians in the months preceding and during the conflict as war crimes; likewise, an instance of Israeli soldiers shelling a home in which

they had forced Palestinian civilians to assemble and seven incidents in which it says Israeli soldiers shot civilians while they were trying to leave their homes to walk to a safer place, waving white flags, in some of the cases, following an injunction from the Israeli forces to do so.

The report also found that despite its claims to have thoroughly investigated human rights allegations made against its military's conduct, the Government of Israel had not carried out any credible investigations into alleged violations. Nor, it found, had **Hamas**.

Goldstone's mission recommended that the Security Council require both parties to conduct such investigations and report back within six months on the results, and on any prosecutions they will carry out on the violations identified in its report. If either party fails to do so, Goldstone urged the Security Council to refer the matter to the prosecutor for the International Criminal Court in The Hague.

Goldstone's Gambit: The Man Behind U. N. Report

Condemnation of the report came quickly from Israel and its supporters. They especially lambasted Goldstone's effort to scrutinize both parties equally as, in the words of the Anti-Defamation League, a dangerous and totally unwarranted equivalence between the Israel Defense Forces and the terrorists of Hamas.

But the less predictable response will come from the U. N. Human Rights Council. Its repeated condemnations of Israel 15 times in less than two years, while condemning no other country have led to accusations that the body is inherently anti-Israel. The question that has yet to be answered is whether the council will now take up Goldstone's report in its entirety, or, as per its original resolution ordering the investigation, only address the alleged crimes committed by Israel.

The answer to that question will also determine whether Goldstone achieves his stated objective of expanding the U. N.'s purview of human rights, as he did South Africa's, or whether, as his critics predict, he will be shown up as a naive idealist, one who enabled an implacably Israel-obsessed body to use the findings of a distinguished pro-Israel Jewish jurist to justify its actions.

Interviewed just four days before the report's release, Goldstone was determinedly upbeat about the report's prospects and unapologetic about his decision to take up the job.

I was driven particularly because I thought the outcome might, in a small way, assist the peace process, he told the Forward. I really thought I was one person who could achieve an even-handed mission.

Goldstone is widely credited with having helped bring down the curtain on apartheid through a government-commissioned investigation he led that exposed the existence of covert state-sponsored terror units deployed by South Africa against its own black citizenry.

He was brave. He could've been killed, said Benjamin Pogrund, a former South African journalist and the founder of Yakar Center for Social Concern in Jerusalem.

Nelson Mandela, the country's first post-apartheid president, later appointed Goldstone to the country's highest court. More recently, Goldstone has served as the chief U. N. prosecutor of human rights and war crimes in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia.

Goldstone is proud of his Jewish identity and links it firmly to his human rights concerns. A president emeritus of World ORT, an international Jewish vocational training organization that maintains some of its biggest projects in Israel, he also serves on the Hebrew University of Jerusalem's board of governors.

Characterizing the struggle for human rights as a secular religion of our time, Goldstone once described the existence of the State of Israel as its Jewish embodiment. This struggle for human rights has been in the most profound existential sense very much the struggle for ourselves for our own Jewish destiny. For the creation of the State of Israel, he said.

I've been involved with Israel since I can remember, Goldstone told the Forward. My mother was very active in the women's Zionist movement. His daughter, Nicole, lived in Israel.

On human rights, Goldstone told the International Association of Jewish Lawyers and Jurists in 1995, We must not only insist that we be judged by those standards by our neighbors and by the international community. We should indeed object vehemently when any seeks to judge us by any other standards, he said.

But Goldstone denied that his religious identity was relevant to his appointment. I've no doubt the fact I'm a Jew wasn't the reason I was approached. Navi Pillay, a fellow South African judge and United Nations high commissioner for human rights, directly approached me because of my involvement in international criminal justice, he said.

In its original January 12 resolution, the human rights council called for an investigation of Israel's alleged human rights violations and only Israel's. Citing the grave violations of human rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, particularly due to the recent Israeli military attacks, the council's resolution charged its president to

Goldstone's Gambit: The Man Behind U. N. Report

appoint a mission to investigate all violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law by the occupying power, Israel, against the Palestinian people.

Given this one-sided condemnation, many were mystified when Goldstone accepted the offer to head up the probe. According to press reports, former U. N. high commissioner for human rights Mary Robinson described the council as guided not by human rights, but by politics when she herself declined the job, specifically citing the resolution's exclusive focus on Israel.

Richard was uncertain, but people encouraged him to accept, saying because he's a Jew with a legal background, he'd give a fair assessment, an old family friend said. He's never been a shul-goer, but his Jewishness has never been a question.

But according to Goldstone, when the council president, Martin Uhomoibhi of Nigeria, appointed him, he accepted only on the condition that Uhomoibhi expand the mandate to look at the actions of both sides of the conflict. Uhomoibhi agreed to this, he said.

Indeed, when Uhomoibhi released his official invitation for individuals with information about alleged violations to submit evidence, he noted that pursuant to the council's resolution, he had established the Goldstone task force to investigate all violations of International Human Rights Law and International Humanitarian Law that might have been committed at any time in the context of the military operations that were conducted in Gaza during the period from 27 December 2008 to 18 January 2009, whether before, during or after.

It was this change in the charge and the inclusion in its time-frame of the months preceding Israel's military campaign when **Hamas** was launching rockets into Israel that allowed Goldstone to frame his mission as one to examine abuses on both sides of the conflict.

Not everyone agrees this really changes anything. Irwin Cotler, an international law expert and former Canadian Justice Minister who is sympathetic to Israel's legal position, said, As a Supreme Court judge, he knows that the mandate still stands unless it is either altered or in some way repealed and replaced by a new resolution of the council, Cotler said.

I believe Goldstone himself wishes to engage in a fair-minded mission. But this mission has been tainted from the beginning, he said. I don't know why he has accepted such a flawed mandate, unless he believes he can alter the whole process single-handedly and redeem it.

Israel, citing the one-sided council resolution, refused to cooperate with Goldstone's probe; the council ultimately paid the expenses for Israeli witnesses to travel to Geneva to give testimony. Upon its release, Israel condemned the report for, among other things ignoring the deliberate strategy of **Hamas** of operating within and behind the civilian population and turning densely populated areas into an arena of battle. It dismissed the recommendations against **Hamas** as token.

The Israeli response did not address any of the report's factual findings.

The big question is what the U. N. does with the report, said Selma Browde, an anti-apartheid and Middle East Peace activist. Her husband, Jules Browde, an eminent human rights lawyer and former counsel for Mandela who has long known Goldstone, said, It would be tragic if the council misused it in a less than evenhanded way. They spoke shortly before the report's release.

Goldstone, his work now done, sounded resigned. What they do with the report is out of our hands, he said. I am not prepared to speculate on the consequences of an unevenhanded response.

Graphic

Goldstone's Gambit: The Man Behind U. N. Report

IMAGE: Driven:Richard Goldstone, arriving to inspect a destroyed home in Gaza City, says he hopes his controversial report will assist the peace process.; GETTY IMAGES

IMAGE: Assessing Actions:South African judge Richard Goldstone, who just handed in a controversial report on Israel's actions in Gaza, stood before a hearing for the report in Geneva this summer.; Getty Images

Load-Date: September 27, 2009

End of Document

Jewish troops shoot Palestinian dead in Gaza confrontation

The Daily Star (Lebanon)

November 14, 2009 Saturday

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THE DAILY STAR

LEBANON

Length: 892 words

Byline: Daily Star Staff

Body

Israeli soldiers shot and killed a Palestinian and wounded two others in a confrontation near a Gaza Strip border on Friday, the Israeli army and Palestinian medical workers said. A rocket fired from Gaza struck later in an open area near an Israeli town, causing no injury, the army said. There were no immediate claims of responsibility for that shooting.

Nidal al-Mughrabi

Reuters

GAZA: Israeli soldiers shot and killed a Palestinian and wounded two others in a confrontation near a Gaza Strip border on Friday, the Israeli army and Palestinian medical workers said. A rocket fired from Gaza struck later in an open area near an Israeli town, causing no injury, the army said. There were no immediate claims of responsibility for that shooting.

An Israeli military spokeswoman said the troops opened fire at Palestinians suspected of placing explosives near a security fence. One died of injuries, a second was taken to hospital and three others were seized, the spokeswoman said.

The fatality was the first since August along the tense border of the coastal territory ruled by **Hamas** Islamists that has remained largely quiet since an Israeli offensive that ended in January.

Gaza medics said they retrieved the body of a Palestinian who they described as unarmed and 20 years old after the incident at the Karni crossing in central Gaza, and that Israel had picked up another Palestinian, 16, who had been wounded critically.

A third wounded youth, listed as 15, was taken to a hospital in Gaza, the medics said.

Hamas police described those shot on Friday as youths who had gone to the area near a Gaza border fence with Israel to hunt for dogs, but did not say whether they were armed.

Jewish troops shoot Palestinian dead in Gaza confrontation

In a separate incident, Israeli police said they arrested a Palestinian man, 18, near the Al-Aqsa Mosque in occupied East Jerusalem, after he lunged with a knife at a group of Israeli officers, said a police spokesman, Shmuel Ben-Ruby.

There were no reported injuries in the incident in occupied Jerusalem, where tensions have led to sporadic protests in the past few weeks by Palestinians accusing Israel of allowing Jewish nationalists access to the holy site.

The site is the third holiest in Islam, while Jews revere it as the place where two ancient temples once stood.

Expelled West Bank student petitions court

Michael Barajas

Associated Press

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM: A **female** Palestinian student who says she was handcuffed, blindfolded and hauled off to Gaza by the Israeli Army in the middle of the night late last month asked Israel's supreme court Thursday to let her return to her studies in the West Bank.

The incident highlights a deep fear among the thousands of Palestinians originally from Gaza who now live in the West Bank - sudden expulsion by the Israelis to the **Hamas**-ruled coastal strip.

Berlanty Azzam, 21, was only two months away from finishing her business degree at Bethlehem University when she was stopped by Israeli soldiers at a checkpoint in the West Bank. After noticing her Gaza-issued identity card, soldiers detained Azzam and put her in the back of an army jeep.

When Israeli troops led her out of the vehicle around midnight, Azzam was shocked to see where she was - the border between Gaza and Israel.

"I was so surprised, I didn't know what to say," Azzam recalled. "I tried to ask the soldiers if there's any other solution than this, and they just said, 'No, you've reached Gaza, you have to enter.'" Yadin Elam, a lawyer with the Israeli human-rights group Gisha representing Azzam, said such incidents occur daily and constitute a removal "by force" on the part of Israel of Palestinians from West Bank to Gaza.

Elam estimated that there are as many as 25,000 Palestinians living in the West Bank in danger of being deported to Gaza because their ID cards list a Gaza address.

Rights group lawyers and university faculty members asked the Supreme Court Thursday to allow Azzam to return to the West Bank. Azzam, denied a permit to travel to Jerusalem, remains in Gaza.

Elam said during the hearing that Israel violated Azzam's basic legal rights by denying her access to a lawyer before deportation.

The Israeli Supreme Court ruled in 2007 that Gaza students had to obtain a permit if they wished to study in the West Bank. Elam said such permits did not exist when Azzam enrolled in Bethlehem University in 2005. At the time, she obtained a four-day permit to enter Israel so she could cross into the West Bank.

"How could they deport her for not having a permit that didn't even exist?" Elam asked.

The West Bank and Gaza lie on opposite sides of Israel. The Palestinians hope to form an independent state that includes both territories. Under the 1993 Oslo accord, both areas were to be considered a single territorial unit. But since **Hamas** militants seized control of Gaza in 2007 after winning the elections, Israel has branded Gaza an enemy entity and imposed a siege that includes strict travel restrictions on residents.

The Israeli Army says Azzam was living in the West Bank illegally, and was rightly returned to Gaza.

Jewish troops shoot Palestinian dead in Gaza confrontation

The court on Thursday remanded the case to a military hearing to be held at the Gaza border next week, where Azzam can attend.

"My priority, what's most important, is to get back to my studies," Azzam said, speaking by phone from Gaza. "I was so close to finishing, I just want to get back to Bethlehem and finish."

Load-Date: November 14, 2009

End of Document

Video shows kidnapped soldier alive and well

The Leader-Post (Regina, Saskatchewan)

October 3, 2009 Saturday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. D12

Length: 363 words

Byline: Lauren McNabb, Canwest News Service

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

Recent video of kidnapped soldier Gilad Shalit, shown tired but smiling, aired Friday, giving a relieved Israeli public their first glimpse of him since he was abducted more than three years ago.

The video, two minutes and 40 seconds long, was handed over to Israeli authorities in exchange for the release of 20 **female** Palestinian prisoners.

The swap, negotiated by Egyptian and German mediators, marked the first significant step in a seriously stalled negotiation process that has seen Israel call for Shalit's freedom and **Hamas** demand the return of at least 1,000 more Palestinian prisoners, some convicted of deadly terrorist attacks.

Dressed in olive fatigues and speaking softly, but coherently, the 23-year-old spoke of his love for his family and a desire to be returned home soon.

"I hope that the present government under the leadership of (Israeli Prime Minister) Benjamin Netanyahu will not at this time waste the opportunity to reach an agreement, and as a result I can at long last realize my dream and be freed," he said.

Shalit was captured and dragged into Gaza during a cross-border raid in June 2006. Since then, the International Red Cross has been barred from seeing him and, with the exception of a few letters to his family and one audio tape, news of his well-being has been scarce.

In Friday's tape, Shalit held an Arabic newspaper, marked with the date Sept. 14. At one point he even walked towards the camera on his own.

In exchange for that assurance that he was alive, and in apparent good health, Israel released 19 **female** Palestinian prisoners Friday, with one more to be freed on Sunday. Most were deemed to be "low-profile" and near the end of their two-year sentences.

Fatima Ziq was given a hero's welcome upon her return to Gaza. The mother was pregnant with her ninth child when she was arrested in 2007 for her role in a foiled suicide attack. There are more than 10,000 Palestinians currently being held in Israeli prisons.

Video shows kidnapped soldier alive and well

"We see that what happened was a small step in the hard process we are going through, but it brings hope to achieve a good deal between the Palestinian resistance and the Israeli occupation," said **Hamas** leader Ismail Hanieyh.

Load-Date: October 3, 2009

End of Document

**Captured Israeli soldier makes plea for release; Proof-of-life video swapped
for release of 20 Palestinian prisoners**

Ottawa Citizen

October 3, 2009 Saturday

Final Edition

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Israel has said Shalit's capture is the key sticking point in its refusal to lift its punishing blockade on the Gaza Strip. Israel essentially sealed its borders to Gaza after the election of **Hamas** in 2007.

Captured Israeli soldier makes plea for release; Proof-of-life video swapped for release of 20 Palestinian prisoners

Graphic

Colour Photo: Reuters/Handout; Captured Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit is seen in this video grab released Friday by Israeli television. ;

Load-Date: October 3, 2009

End of Document

**Would-be suicide-bomber added to list of Palestinian women to be freed.
Suspect and cousin, who plotted to blow up Israelis, will be released today**

The Jerusalem Post
October 2, 2009 Friday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 5

Length: 286 words

Byline: YAAKOV LAPPIN

Body

Israel will add a would-be suicide bomber to the list of 20 Palestinian **female** prisoners who will be released on Friday in exchange for a videotape of captive IDF soldier St.-Sgt. Gilad Schalit, following an objection from **Hamas**.

Hamas said a prisoner released on Wednesday, 15-year-old Bra'a al-Malaki, of the West Bank, who tried to stab a soldier at a checkpoint in 2008, appeared on the original list of **women** to be released in the deal, despite having served out her prison sentence.

As a result, Israel added 32-year-old Ruda Ibrahim Yunes Habib of Gaza, convicted of attempting to infiltrate Israel from the Strip on a suicide bomb mission, to the list.

Habib, a mother of four, was arrested on May 20, 2007, at the Erez border crossing together with her 39-year-old cousin Fatma Zek, following intelligence from the Israel Security Agency (Shin Bet).

The Shin Bet learned that Habib and Zek were planning to meet a terrorist operative from Ramallah inside Israel who was to provide them with suicide bomb belts. The **women** had undergone training with machine guns and explosives, the Shin Bet said.

Both **women** have been in custody awaiting a trial.

Zek, a mother of nine, will also be released on Friday, together with her two-year-old son, who was born in prison.

In an interview with Ma'ariv, Zek expressed surprise that she appeared on the list of prisoners who would walk away from jail.

Earlier Thursday, Red Cross officials arrived at the Sharon prison to meet with the prisoners going free on Friday.

The officials said they were meeting with the **women** to see whether they had "any special requests or fears ahead of their release." The officials added that Israeli authorities had asked them to make the visit.

Graphic

Would-be suicide-bomber added to list of Palestinian women to be freed. Suspect and cousin, who plotted to blow up Israelis, will be released today

2 photos: PALESTINIAN PRISONER Bra'a al-Malaki receives a kiss from her father after her release on Wednesday. Hanan Saba'neh of Kabatiya holds a portrait of her daughter Manal, one of the prisoners set to be released today. (Credit: AP)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

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Lebanon protests condemn clashes at Al-Aqsa Mosque

The Daily Star (Lebanon)

October 10, 2009 Saturday

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THE DAILY STAR

LEBANON

Length: 393 words

Body

Numerous protests were held Friday in various regions in Lebanon to condemn the violent clashes between Palestinians and Israeli soldiers at the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Occupied Jerusalem. The Future Movement staged a protest in the northern province of Akkar in which Future Movement MPs participated. MP Khaled Daher renewed his support for all Palestinians refugees in Lebanon.

BEIRUT/SIDON: Numerous protests were held Friday in various regions in Lebanon to condemn the violent clashes between Palestinians and Israeli soldiers at the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Occupied Jerusalem. The Future Movement staged a protest in the northern province of Akkar in which Future Movement MPs participated. MP Khaled Daher renewed his support for all Palestinians refugees in Lebanon and warned that the Israel was targeting both the Lebanese and the Palestinians at Al-Aqsa. "If injustice is not stopped, then radical and uncontrollable situations will emerge," warned Sheikh Osama al-Rifi, an imam of one of the mosques in Akkar.

Protests were also staged in the Ain al-Hilweh refugee camp in south Lebanon, where Osbat al-Ansar representative Sheikh Abu al-Sharif Aql called on Muslims to declare "jihad in order to save Occupied Jerusalem."

"If they want to call us terrorists, then we will become terrorists for Al-Aqsa and for our children and women," he said.

Hamas official in Sidon Abu Ahmad Fadel also gave a speech during the gathering at Ain al-Hilweh, saying Al-Aqsa was "not for sale." He asked that negotiations and compromises concerning the case completely stop and that the Arab League take a unified stand "against turning occupied Jerusalem into a Jewish city."

Protests were held as well in the southern city of Tyre at Al-Buss and at Burj al-Shamali refugee camps. Fatah organized the protest at Al-Buss camp where Hizbullah representative Khalil Hussein renewed the Shiite party's commitment to the Palestinian cause.

The protest at Burj al-Shamali was organized by Hamas, whose spokesperson Sheikh Mohammad al-Bajirmi condemned the decision to postpone voting on the Goldstone Report.

Also on Friday, student Committees from the Union of Palestinian Factions also expressed their anger in a statement. They demanded that "Arab and Muslim nations, especially Palestinians, stop all projects of compromise and commit to the project of resistance." - The Daily Star

Lebanon protests condemn clashes at Al-Aqsa Mosque

Load-Date: October 10, 2009

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At Gaza's only spa, the well-heeled find relief - Feature

Daily News Egypt

September 25, 2009 Friday

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Length: 866 words

Body

High above the pot-holed streets, donkey carts and militant graffiti that have come to define the besieged Gaza Strip sits Rosy, the territory's only spa and a refuge for its unlikely upper crust.

The spa's luxurious setting and its upscale clientele stand in stark contrast to the poverty gripping the war-battered Palestinian territory of 1.5 million people, the vast majority of whom rely on foreign aid.

"We have the highest quality services in the region," says Mohammed Faris, who launched the spa with his British wife in 1999.

"We had one customer, a woman who worked as an EU (European Union) advisor. She went to New York and called me from there and said she missed Rosy," he says as he smokes in casual defiance of the daytime abstinence practiced by the observant during the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan.

The spa is a sign of how, despite a two-year blockade maintained by Israel and Egypt, a reasonably well-off minority has found a way to endure amid Gaza's bleak landscape of toxic politics and economic paralysis.

A handful of upscale restaurants and hotels still serve lavish meals and fragrant waterpipes to businessmen, landowners, aid workers, journalists and even the occasional senior **Hamas** official.

Since the Islamist movement overran Gaza in June 2007, Israel and Egypt have sealed its borders, allowing in only basic goods in a bid to put pressure on the group.

But a thriving trade through tunnels beneath the border with Egypt has brought untold wealth to a new class of smugglers and hundreds of thousands of dollars in tax revenues to the **Hamas**-run government, which regulates the trade.

Meanwhile, above-ground businessmen like Faris - through ingenuity and a network of international contacts - have maintained their relative affluence.

Faris says he prefers not to use the tunnels, instead relying on friends -journalists, diplomats and international aid workers - who bring in beauty products and other necessities in their hand luggage.

At Gaza's only spa, the well-heeled find relief - Feature

It is not easy and, like nearly everyone else in Gaza, Faris fears for the future. Earlier this month he limited his spa to women because he could not bring in enough customers during men-only hours.

"If I want to expand, I can't. If I want to sell, I can't. I'm stuck," he says. "You are wasting your time, wasting money, wasting electricity and you don't make enough money to do anything."

People exercise more since the blockade

The spa offers a full range of amenities - a steam room, a sauna, a small gym and a beauty parlor. There used to be a Jacuzzi, but Faris had to drain it in 2006 because he could not import the right filters.

A facial runs from \$20 to \$75 dollars (EUR15 to EUR50), a one-hour massage is around \$40 and a monthly gym membership is around \$35 - small fortunes in a place where most people make less than 15 dollars a day.

Rosy's client base, like Gaza's middle and upper class as a whole, is largely an outgrowth of the political conflicts gripping the territory.

At the top of the pyramid are the international and local staff of UN agencies, aid organizations and human rights groups, and the journalists who cross in and out through Israel's Erez crossing on a daily basis.

Then there are the civil servants who work for the Hamas-run government - around 20,000 doctors, teachers and other government workers who get regular monthly wages.

And there are the 70,000 employees of the Western-backed Palestinian Authority (PA) based in the West Bank who - because of the internal political rivalry - are paid to stay home and boycott Hamas.

"When they told us to stop going to work, I had a lot more free time, so I decided to spend some of it on sports," says Dana Khaled, 26, who is employed by the finance ministry, during a recent workout.

Added to the absurdity of being paid not to work is the irony that PA employees enjoy what is essentially an open-ended paid holiday but are not allowed to travel anywhere.

"People have started exercising more since the blockade, because it is impossible to travel outside Gaza to get a breath of fresh air," says Safaa, a 30-year-old housewife, who declined to give her last name.

It may seem wasteful, but the PA salaries - mostly funded by international donors - provide a vital lifeline to Gaza's besieged economy.

"Without those wages they would be dead," Faris says. "It's a little straw in our throats that they use to feed us."

Virtually everyone else in Gaza is poor, according to a report published by a UN think-tank last week, which found that 90 percent of Gaza's 1.5 million residents live below the poverty line.

The UN Conference on Trade and Development's (UNCTAD) assistance program for the Palestinians found that the Israeli offensive on Gaza at the turn of the year caused four billion dollars worth of losses to the local economy.

The three-week war left more than 1,400 Palestinians and 13 Israelis dead before it came to a halt on Jan. 18, and entire neighborhoods on the outskirts of Gaza City were reduced to rubble.

The spa closed during the war but, after the dust cleared, Faris opened its doors once again.

"After the war I wasn't expecting anyone to come and then I got massive business ... The women come to relax, to feel pretty, to feel better."

At Gaza's only spa, the well-heeled find relief - Feature

End of Document

At Gaza's only spa, the well-heeled find relief

The Jordan Times

September 18, 2009 Friday

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THE JORDAN TIMES

Length: 895 words

Body

By Joseph Krauss and Mai YaghiAgence France-Presse

GAZA CITY - High above the pot-holed streets, donkey carts and armed resistance graffiti that have come to define the besieged Gaza Strip sits Rosy, the territory's only spa and a refuge for its unlikely upper crust.

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Load-Date: November 23, 2009

Letters

The Jerusalem Post

June 30, 2009 Tuesday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 14

Length: 1134 words

Byline: Ida Selavan Schwarcz, Josh Hasten, Menachem Samuel, Ester Zeitlin, Batya Berlinger, Josef Gilboa, Mervyn Doobov, Linda Kirshenbaum

Highlight: Readers' Letters

Body

50-shekel name

Sir, - Herb Keinon could have his Jewish name on his ID papers if he was willing to pay a fee ("Israeli progress," June 29).

When I made aliya in 1995, the clerk at the Ministry of Interior told me I had to have the name Ida on my ID certificate because that was the name on my US passport. However, for NIS 50, I could have my Jewish name, Haya; so I paid.

But my father's name, Morris, had to remain because I had no proof that his Jewish name was Moshe. If I could bring his birth certificate, I was told, the name would be changed.

I explained to the young clerk that my father was born in Pyatigory, Ukraine, in 1894, and while his birth may have been recorded there, he had never had a birth certificate. She seemed a bit surprised. So on my ID he remains Morris.

IDA SELAVAN SCHWARCZ

Ganei Omer

Control for security

Sir, - In "What Barak preaches, he doesn't necessarily practice (Analysis, June 29) Yaakov Katz wrote that "if the PA shows Israel it could effectively crack down on Hamas, the next step will be for Israel to transfer security responsibility over these areas (cities in area A) to the PA."

However, any recent supposed crackdown by the PA against Hamas is a well-orchestrated show. While Hamas and Fatah might have their differences, when it comes to fighting against Israel, both will be willing to let bygones be bygones and unite.

As Khaled Abu Toameh reported in "Dweik is real Palestinian president" (June 25), the PA leadership is planning on releasing hundreds of Hamas prisoners as a goodwill gesture. What is the purpose of having the US train PA forces to combat Hamas, only to see terrorists freed in a revolving-door policy?

Letters

Israel should not fall for this ruse, but realize that the only way to insure the security of its citizens is to allow the IDF to maintain total control of security throughout Judea and Samaria.

JOSH HASTEN

Jerusalem

Double-cross in the EU's name

Sir, - As Gerald Steinberg pointed out in his analysis of the Hebrew University's conference on Strengthening the Forces of Moderation in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: The Role of the European Union After the Gaza War, the EU is never asked the really tough questions about its duplicity in efforts to solve this conflict ("European funding for the narrative war," June 29).

Why do we not have a law to the effect that any organization receiving funds from any foreign government, either directly or through its NGOs, must register as an agent of that country? In addition, it should have to publicize at least once a year a short balance sheet showing the amounts it has received, as well as the salaries and emoluments paid to its leading advocates.

At least then everyone would realize the colossal amounts spent by these "friendly and even-handed governments" on manipulating our democracy, something they would never dare do in any Muslim country or any dictatorship.

It's high time our democracy stood up and called the EU's bluff. Many of the EU's own citizens will be shocked to learn of the "double-cross" committed in their name.

MENACHEM SAMUEL

Jerusalem

Hardly conformist

Sir, - Zeev Raphael (Letters, June 28) laments that five readers' letters about Zionists reclaiming Zion constitute frightful conformism - although five regular Jerusalem Post columnists insist that the end of the "occupation" will bring acceptance by all our neighbors and by world "opinion."

Jeff Barak, Gershon Baskin, Naomi Chazan, Larry Derfner and David Forman are crystal-clear about such a solution.

So, Mr. Raphael, you have 10 Jews with two opposing opinions, and scores more of every possible shade in between. That is conformism?

ESTER ZEITLIN

Jerusalem

Sifting and balancing

Sir, - While I agree with Gil Troy that calmer voices have to prevail in the parking lot war, I have two serious problems with his "Radicals aren't necessarily more authentic" (June 28).

The term "Taliban Judaism" is an insult to the majority of law-abiding haredi Jews who want to live in peace. They choose what they want from the modern world, sifting out the potentially harmful parts. (For example, they use a cell phone only for making calls, and avoid the "extras.")

Unacceptable is the public desecration of Shabbat in a municipal (i.e. government) lot. What a person chooses to do privately is his business; but when it comes to a public place, it's as if driving on Shabbat in the holy city of Jerusalem was officially condoned - and that cannot be allowed.

Letters

However, I do not approve of the method of protest, and some other way must be found.

Which leads me to my next problem with Mr Troy's thesis: that only the modern Orthodox and National Religious rabbis can help. They can't condone the desecration of Shabbat either!

The essence of being a religious Jew is feeling that this is how a Jew should live. And while we can't force each and every person to observe Shabbat in his own home, we can try to keep the Shabbat atmosphere in the public domain and maintain the special nature of Jerusalem.

For the record, we are not haredi, but sort of national-haredi. My eldest son is in the army, but my younger ones are in Talmud Torah.

BATYA BERLINGER

Jerusalem

'Care to dance?'

Sir, - It is not necessary for the police to resort to violence to control haredi rioters ("For haredi protesters, a free Shabbat ride to jail," June 29).

A few dozen **women** dressed in the finest Israeli beachwear and dancing in the street singing "Hatikva" should be sufficient to send them rushing back, eyes firmly shut, to their self-imposed ghettos.

JOSEF GILBOA

Jaffa

No, Prime Minister

Sir, - David Newman's "A flood of fictitious ministries" (June 29) makes a point that cannot be repeated too often: Israel's ridiculously bloated cabinet does not lead to good government.

Newman rightfully draws on the Yes, (Prime) Minister series to make this point, and as a former public servant, I can attest that this is probably the best text on how government actually works (although one of its authors credited his experience of working in the BBC as his model).

Newman derides the standard excuse for this grotesquerie as "the price we pay for democracy." Well, there are those who believe we won't have democracy until we have a Knesset whose members are all directly responsible to the electorate.

Sadly, the reforms that are commonly bruited about will not achieve this elementary and essential precondition for democracy.

MERVYN DOOBOV

Jerusalem

Missing Michael

Sir, - Was Michael Jackson so very isolated and alone that no one took the time to care and maybe prevent this? ("The tragic end of Michael Jackson," Shmuley Boteach, June 28.) It seems both a repetition and forewarning of what can happen to celebrities.

He needed to be hugged and accepted and loved better.

He left us too soon, and he and his talent will be missed.

Letters

LINDA KIRSHENBAUM

Suffern, New York

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

End of Document

Key US allies face succession issues that may split political elites

The Daily Star (Lebanon)

July 14, 2009 Tuesday

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THE DAILY STAR

LEBANON

Length: 1259 words

Byline: Inter Press Service

Body

Two key US allies in the Arab world, Egypt and Saudi Arabia, are now both facing succession crises that may absorb, or even split, their political elites. This may mean a period of political unpredictability is ahead in both countries. It may well also complicate President Barack Obama's Israeli-Arab peace diplomacy.

Analysis

Helena Cobban

Inter Press Service

WASHINGTON: Two key US allies in the Arab world, Egypt and Saudi Arabia, are now both facing succession crises that may absorb, or even split, their political elites. This may mean a period of political unpredictability is ahead in both countries. It may well also complicate President Barack Obama's Israeli-Arab peace diplomacy, which is based centrally on the role these two large allies – and one smaller one, Jordan – can play in solving inter-Arab problems, reassuring Israelis, and helping to tempt everyone to the peace table.

Since January, the head of Egypt's military intelligence, Lieutenant General Omar Suleiman, has been in charge of three key Middle East mediations. He has been mediating between Israel and the Palestinian movement **Hamas** over both strengthening the Gaza ceasefire and winning a prisoner exchange between them. He's also been mediating a chronically elusive reconciliation between **Hamas** and the other big Palestinian movement, Fatah.

Meanwhile, Washington is hoping this year, as always, that Saudi Arabia can buttress US diplomacy with cash and some political leadership. Saudi Arabia has now won the support of all the relevant Arab leaderships, including **Hamas**'s political bureau, for a key 2002 peace initiative that promises Israel normal political and economic ties in return for a full Israeli pullout from lands occupied in 1967 and a fair resolution of Palestinian refugee claims.

The Saudi king, Abdullah ibn Abdel-Aziz, will be 85 this August. His longstanding crown prince (and half-brother) Sultan ibn Abdel-Aziz, is 83, and was recently hospitalized for several weeks with suspected cancer.

Key US allies face succession issues that may split political elites

The big question regarding the Saudi succession hangs over whether, and how, the kingship will ever be transferred from the numerous ageing brothers and half-brothers who stand in line after Crown Prince Sultan, to the "next generation" of princes – some of the more senior of whom are already nearing 70 years old.

Earlier this year, King Abdullah named his 76-year-old half-brother Naif ibn Abdul-Aziz as "second deputy prime minister," a position that places him a likely – but not certain – second in line to the throne after Sultan.

When King Abdel-Aziz ibn Saud, the founder of the modern Saudi state, died in 1953, he left some 37 sons from his 22 wives. Several of these sons have ruled the kingdom in turn since then. Many of Abdel-Aziz's sons had a dozen or more sons of their own. Saudi Arabia has no system of "primogeniture" (first-son succession.) Thus, there are hundreds of possible eventual claimants to the throne.

Indeed, the youngest of Abdel-Aziz's sons, Prince Muqrin, is, at 64, some years younger than several of the next-generation princes who now hope to become king. There have been no reports that any possible successor monarchs might want to change a foreign policy stance that, since the 1930s, has aligned Saudi Arabia very closely with Washington. But among the country's political elite, including its princes, there are many differing views on domestic affairs, including oil policies, economic policies, the role of the country's powerful religious institutions, and the role of women.

These differences are inevitably hard fought over at times of succession, and could at the least distract Riyadh from playing the role in regional diplomacy that Obama wants it to play. (At worst, the kingdom could see a struggle between its many power centers that is even deeper and more debilitating than the one now rocking nearby Iran.)

In Egypt, meanwhile, there have been many recent reports that the country's 81-year-old president, Hosni Mubarak, is ailing and finally eager to quit. Some reports say he has already told the Saudi monarch he may not even finish serving his current six-year term in office, which ends in 2011.

Mubarak has led Egypt's 76 million people since 1981. Throughout those years he has always refused to name a vice president. Now, one of the two main contenders to succeed him is his 45-year-old second son, Gamal, who has held an important post in the ruling National Democratic Party (NDP) since 2002.

Behind the scenes in Egypt, though, the military is still almost the same big force in the political system – and economy – that it has been since 1952. There is a considerable question whether the shadowy power centers in the Egyptian military will support Gamal Mu-barak, an investment banker who has no record of service in the military.

The leading military man mentioned for possible next president is none other than Omar Suleiman, the intelligence chief who has been conducting so much of Mubarak's sensitive Israeli-Palestinian diplomacy. (It also remains possible that the military might throw its weight behind another "insider" candidate, not Suleiman.)

The fact that Suleiman has been tasked by Mubarak with diplomatic jobs that are so important to the broader progress of Washington's regional peace diplomacy means this diplomacy may well become entangled in any succession struggle that occurs in Cairo.

For example, if – as many well-placed Egyptians claim – Mubarak strongly wants his son to follow him in office, he may be less than eager to see Suleiman gain public kudos as a successful negotiator. Some have questioned whether Mubarak may have set Suleiman up for failure by giving him overly strict parameters for his diplomatic chores.

Certainly, though Suleiman has been heading all three of these building-brick negotiations since late January, he has not succeeded in any of them yet.

Egypt's succession struggle is connected to the broader diplomacy in another way, too. Hamas has nearly always been closely aligned with Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood (MB), a broad, nonviolent Islamist movement that is the main challenger to Mubarak's NDP.

Key US allies face succession issues that may split political elites

Mubarak has never allowed the MB to participate freely in Egypt's regime-dominated politics, though during a brief and very partial democratic opening in 2005, its candidates won 88 of the 444 elected seats in the Egyptian Parliament.

If Suleiman succeeds in one or more of his diplomatic tasks, then **Hamas** would immediately gain much more international legitimacy as a valid participant in the broader peacemaking. Many NDP insiders fear that could reflect well on the MB, too.

Ominously enough, the most recent round of reports about Mubarak's failing health has been accompanied by new arrest campaigns against MB leaders and activists. It is possible that Egypt might see additional political heat during the coming summer months. Jordan is smaller and weaker than Egypt and Saudi Arabia. There at least, the ruling monarch, Abdullah II, has laid to rest – for now – the questions that once swirled around his succession. On July 2 he appointed his son Prince Hussein as crown prince. Prince Hussein is only 15 years old. But since the king is only 47, there is a good chance the crown prince will not be taking over any time soon. (Or perhaps, ever. In 1999 when Jordan's King Hussein died of cancer, in his very last days he revoked the appointment that his brother, Hassan, had held as crown prince since 1965; and he named Abdullah II his successor, instead.)

But in Saudi Arabia and Egypt, political succession issues are now taking center stage.

Load-Date: July 14, 2009

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Call to probe disappearances

The Star (South Africa)

July 30, 2009 Thursday

e3 Edition

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Section: Pg. 4

Length: 674 words

Body

TOKYO: Rebiya Kadeer, a US-based Uighur dissident blamed by China for deadly ethnic riots, has demanded that Beijing allow an international probe into the disappearance of about 10 000 Uighur protesters she says went missing in one night. The July 5 riots, in which the minority Muslim Uighurs clashed with majority Han Chinese, were the country's worst ethnic violence in decades.

TEHRAN: About 20 protesters will be put on trial, starting on Saturday, in the first prosecutions from Iran's crackdown on the opposition following disputed presidential elections last month. The announcement comes as anger is growing over allegations of torture and abuse against detainees from the crackdown, with several young protesters dying in prison.

NEW DELHI: Maharani Gayatri Devi, the former queen of the western Indian desert kingdom of Jaipur, died yesterday at the age of 90. Gayatri Devi was often described as one of the most beautiful women in the world. This picture was taken in 1977.

KHARTOUM: A Sudanese court yesterday adjourned the case of a woman journalist facing 40 lashes for wearing "indecent" trousers, with 10 women already whipped for similar offences against Islamic law. Lubna Ahmed al-Hussein, who works for Al-Sahafa newspaper and for the media department of the UN mission in Sudan, has waived the immunity given to UN workers.

MADRID: A car bomb exploded outside a police barracks in northern Spain yesterday, leaving around 50 people slightly injured in an attack authorities blamed on the Basque separatist group ETA. The powerful bomb in the city of Burgos destroyed the facade of the barracks of the Civil Guard police force and gouged a crater in front of the modern building.

TEL AVIV: An Israeli court yesterday convicted the former financial adviser to former Palestinian president Yasser Arafat of illegal arms dealing and of organising and financing a weapons shipment. The military court in the West Bank also found Fuad Shubaki guilty of bankrolling attacks against Israelis. When arrested by the Israelis in 2006, he allegedly said he was carrying out Arafat's orders.

PARIS: French President Nicolas Sarkozy sought to dispel worries about his health yesterday at his first official appearance since an overnight hospital stay following his collapse while jogging. "My health is good," he told reporters outside the Elysée presidential palace after a cabinet meeting. "I was really tired." The 54-year-old leader collapsed while running in the midday heat on Sunday.

Call to probe disappearances

LUANDA: Angola's parliament has allowed the group in charge of drafting a new constitution to extend work on the document until next year, effectively delaying the first post-war presidential elections another year. Public consultation of the document will take place in the first two months of 2010. The new charter, a precondition for the 2009 presidential poll, was due in September.

SYDNEY: Prime Minister Kevin Rudd yesterday said Australia's ban on gay marriage would remain, despite moves within his centre-left Labor Party to have it overturned. Rudd, who considers himself a moderate Christian, won the 2007 election on a platform that supported the former conservative government's legal definition of marriage as a union between a man and a woman.

MADRID: Two men have died in a forest fire that authorities suspect was started deliberately, the local government of the Castilla y Leon region in central Spain said yesterday. The fire has raged through at least 300 hectares of a mountainous pine-forested region near the town of Avila and is still out of control. One victim, a bulldozer driver, was sent by Madrid to help the firefighting effort.

GAZA CITY: The **Hamas** movement ruling the Gaza Strip said yesterday it would bar members of the rival Fatah party from leaving the territory to attend their first congress in 20 years. The travel ban would be lifted if Fatah freed all **Hamas** prisoners in the occupied West Bank, a senior leader of **Hamas** in Gaza said. "If they want their members to go to the congress, they must free all our prisoners."

Load-Date: July 30, 2009

End of Document

In short

The Irish Times

October 8, 2009 Thursday

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Section: WORLD; Other World Stories; Pg. 12

Length: 439 words

Body

A roundup of today's other world news in brief

Romanians march against public pay cuts

BUCHAREST Thousands of Romanian workers have marched against public sector pay cuts, a demonstration of growing anger at the government, which faces a no-confidence vote in parliament on October 13th.

Outcry against public pay reforms which include scrapping intricate bonus schemes and introducing mandatory unpaid leave split the ruling coalition last week, leaving prime minister Emil Bocs minority government with a weak grip on power.

Some 13,000 trade unionists gathered in Bucharest from across the country demanded a change in government. On Monday 800,000 civil servants went on a one-day strike. (Reuters)

Germany probes Russia attack plan

BERLIN German prosecutors are investigating three suspected Islamists they believe were involved in planning to attack Russia, after police launched dawn raids on apartments in Berlin.

Police searched 26 properties in the German capital early yesterday morning but found no concrete plans for an attack, they said. No arrests were made, but prosecutors said they were conducting investigations into the three people. (Reuters)

Greater Russian Afghan role urged

BRUSSELS Nato has urged Russia to expand its role in Afghanistan, including by equipping and training Afghan security forces fighting the Taliban.

While reiterating a call on European allies to step up their commitments in the country as the United States considers a further boost in forces, Nato secretary-general Anders Fogh Rasmussen said it was also in Russia's interests to do more. (Reuters)

Hamas bans women from motorbikes

JERUSALEM The Palestinian Islamist movement Hamas has banned women in Gaza from riding on motorbikes.

In short

The ban, posted on the movement's website, seeks to preserve citizen safety and the stability of Palestinian society's customs and traditions.

Given that few women ride on motorbikes in Gaza, the proclamation seems unlikely to have much effect, but it raises concerns that a new Islamisation campaign is starting up. (*Guardianservice*)

Woman (106) loses care home battle

LONDON One of Britain's oldest women has lost a legal battle to stop a local authority shutting her council-run care home. Appeal Court judges in London lifted an injunction yesterday blocking Wolverhampton City Council from closing the home where Louisa Watts (106) lives.

She is a former hospital cleaner who moved to the home five years ago.

They told her lawyer there were no grounds to allow the appeal, as reports showed Ms Watts faced no risk in being moved from Underhill House in Bushbury to a new home. (Reuters)

Load-Date: October 8, 2009

End of Document

A debate worth noting

The Nation (AsiaNet)

November 15, 2009 Sunday

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Section: Vol. XXIII; No. 285

Length: 1031 words

Byline: Dr James Zogby

Body

A story universally missed last week was the extraordinary debate that occurred in Congress in advance of a vote on a resolution against the Goldstone Report. It may have been that this story not seen as newsworthy as others playing out at the same time: the fallout over Secretary of State Clinton's "whip lash" performances in Jerusalem, Marrakesh and Cair

o; Palestinian President Abbas' announcement that he would not run in 2010; and Israel's seizure of a ship it claimed was transporting weapons from Iran to Hezbollah.

Then again, the significance of the Congressional debate may have been ignored given what appeared to be the lopsided vote in favour of the anti-Goldstone resolution.

It will be recalled that when the report was first released, members of Congress were quick to denounce it using, at times, near hysterical language. Since Goldstone had no vocal champions, when Foreign Affairs Committee Chair Howard Berman and ranking Republican Ileana Ros-Lehtinen introduced their AIPAC supported anti-Goldstone resolution, one might have thought that the matter would be quickly resolved with a near unanimous vote.

But that was not to be the case.

For his part, Justice Goldstone mounted a vigorous defence of his work. In an open letter to the Congressional sponsors, the justice offered a point-by-point rebuttal of what he detailed as the misleading and factually incorrect statements in the resolution. In addition, two members of Congress, Keith Ellison (D-MN) and Brian Baird (D-WA) who had visited Gaza after the war, wrote articles and pressed their colleagues urging a more thoughtful consideration of the Goldstone Report. And the NGO community (including leading human rights organisations, Arab American and American Jewish groups, and a coalition of Christian churches) mobilised their memberships and addressed letters to Congress.

As a result, instead of a quick and quiet vote, an extended debate took place. At least 16 members of Congress rose to speak eloquently and passionately about their opposition to the bill.

In their remarks, the members: defended the integrity of Justice Goldstone and the report; spoke of the importance of defending the rule of law; decried the efforts of some to cover up the horrors that occurred in Gaza; and expressed concern with the lack of any open and transparent process that rushed this anti-Goldstone measure to a vote.

What follows are a few excerpts from some of those who spoke:

A debate worth noting

Congresswoman Barbara Lee (D-CA): "The tragic deaths of innocent civilians in Gaza and the devastation brought upon their homes, schools, and infrastructure has worsened a humanitarian crisis that cannot be ignored. Residents of Gaza and the West Bank continue to lack appropriate access to the most fundamental needs, including food, fuel, water, sanitation, education, health care, and the basic materials needed to rebuild their communities."

Congressman William Delahunt (D-MA): "This resolution came to the floor on suspension without a hearing, despite the willingness of Judge Goldstone to come before the United States Congress and answer any questions that we might pose to him."

Congressman Brian Baird (D-WA): "My friends who have described the Goldstone Report, as a colleague just did, I'm not sure if they have read it. Unlike most of my colleagues here, I have been to Gaza and I have read in its entirety the Goldstone Report. And I will tell you he says many things that, though unpleasant, are true and must not be obstructed. Do not pass this resolution. Support this fine jurist. Give justice, true justice, a chance to be heard."

Congressman John Dingell (D-MI): "Neither Israel nor Hamas, nor any other country or other non-state political actor is exempt from international human rights laws or free of consequence for violations of them. If nothing else, the Goldstone Report should serve as a document that Israel, Hamas, and the rest of the international community can use to ensure that future human rights violations do not take place in civilian areas..."

Congressman Dennis Kucinich (D-OH): "Almost as serious as committing war crimes is covering up war crimes, pretending that war crimes were never committed and did not exist....Because if this Congress votes to condemn a report it has not read concerning events it has totally ignored about violations of law of which it is unaware, it will have brought shame to this great institution."

Congresswoman Betty McCollum (D-MN): "This resolution seeks to hide the ugliness of the Gaza war by covering up violent excesses committed against innocent civilians by both Hamas and the Israeli Defence Forces. Why does the US House want to reject an accounting of Hamas terrorism against Israeli civilians, as if thousands of rockets were not fired at Israel? And why would this resolution want to deny that hundreds of Palestinian women and children and elders were needlessly killed?"

Congresswoman Lois Capps (D-CA): "I think that in this body's haste, we've overlooked some of the depth of unspeakable tragedies that have occurred during the war on Gaza. Innocent Israeli and Palestinian lives were lost."

Congressman George Miler (D-CA): "I fully support efforts to provide clarity, honesty and accuracy to the debate about the conflict in Gaza, just as do many of my constituents who have contacted me this week urging me to oppose this resolution."

Following this extraordinary debate, with both Democratic and Republican leadership actively pushing their members to vote for the resolution, passage was a foregone conclusion. But, the final vote, though appearing to be lopsided, yielded more votes in opposition than in any previous similar vote on an AIPAC supported resolution, with: 344 For, 36 against, 22 present, and 30 not voting (against and present votes are opposed, and about one-half of those 'not voting' were also opposed).

What this debate and vote point to is the growing resolve of some significant members of Congress (a Committee Chair and several sub-Committee Chairs, the Chairs of the Congressional Black Caucus and Progressive Caucus, and some Jewish members) to speak out and challenge pro-Israel orthodoxy.

It should not go unnoticed.

Load-Date: November 23, 2011

Israel's captured youths: Gilad Shalit and a Palestinian girl with braces; In an interview, Baraah Malki - one of the first of 20 female Palestinian prisoners to be released by Israel in exchange for a video of kidnapped soldier Shalit - talks about her time in prison.

The Christian Science Monitor

October 2, 2009 Friday

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Length: 882 words

Byline: Ilene R. Prusher Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

Body

Baraah Malki, one of 20 Palestinian prisoners Israel released in exchange for a video of captured soldier Gilad Shalit, can hardly believe that she's home. Just as she could hardly believe what she'd done when she woke up in an Israeli prison cell on Nov. 29 last year. The day before, she'd gone out in the morning on a pretense of leaving for school, but instead headed for an Israeli military checkpoint with a large kitchen knife stashed in her knapsack.

She was planning to stab a soldier, but was spotted, she says. She dropped the knife and ran. She was quickly arrested and later convicted of attempted murder. The sentence was 3.5 years, but because she was only 14, her sentence was reduced to 11 months. Now in a bit of a daze that she's actually free, she is back home - one of the first of the 20 prisoners to be released, though the fact that her release was imminent anyway has prompted Israel to free another prisoner on Sunday. Baarah is also the youngest of the group - and probably the only one with braces on her teeth. Like Sergeant Shalit, who was 19 at the time he was captured by Hamas militants in a cross-border raid, her youth seems to underscore the extent to which young people here continue to pay the price of a conflict their elders have failed to solve. Why she plotted to stab Israeli soldiers Tall, veiled, and wide-eyed, Baraah is the youngest of eight children, two of them brothers in Israeli jails. More than a year ago, she recalls, the army came to their house here in the Jalazon Refugee Camp, north of Ramallah, in the middle of the night. The soldiers got the whole family up, and then she watched as they dealt roughly with her brother Mohammed, then 18, and ultimately arrested him. "All of this made me feel that it's not worth living," she says, telling of her decision to go on what she envisioned as a suicide attack, expecting to be shot by the soldiers after she stabbed one or two of them. "I wanted to do something, anything, to get revenge." When she woke up in Jerusalem's Russian Compound the next day, a place Israel often holds Palestinian prisoners immediately after arrest, she was shocked and confused. "There were times when I regretted what I did," she says. Minister of prisoner affairs pays a visit On her first day home, the Malki living room keeps filling with well-wishers and curious teenage girls her age - old friends from the camp who now seem young and immature to her. "What I saw in jail, a woman who's 50 has not seen," Baraah says. "Suddenly, I became older. In the interrogation, I was threatened and pushed around to the point where I admitted to things I hadn't done." One of those who has come to celebrate her homecoming is the Palestinian Authority's minister of Prisoners Affairs, Issa Qraque. With 7,430 Palestinian prisoners held by Israel on security-related charges, according the Israeli human rights group B'Tselem, Mr. Qraque's position involves arguing for prisoners' rights and releases, as well as helping the families of those in jail. Qraque says this week's deal appears to be a test of readiness for a more substantial exchange that would involve a much larger number of prisoners in exchange for Shalit. And, he adds, it's one area where Fatah - the faction that dominates the Palestinian Authority -

Israel 's captured youths: Gilad Shalit and a Palestinian girl with braces In an interview, Baraah Malki - one of the first of 20 female Palestinian prisoners t....

sees eye to eye with **Hamas**, the militant organization that ousted its rival from Gaza two years ago. "This is an indicator and a precursor to a bigger exchange deal," says Qraque. "In spite of our political differences with **Hamas**, prisoners is a subject that no one disagrees on." Mothers in prison - and out, waiting anxiously Many of the other **women** who went home Friday are older, and some were convicted of more serious offenses during the height of the second intifada, which exploded nine years ago this month. One, Gaza's Fatima al-Zeg, who is 40, was arrested by Israeli security forces in May 2007 and charged with being an accomplice to a suicide bombing. She was two months pregnant at the time. She arrived in Gaza to much fanfare with 18-month-old Yousef, having reared him so far in prison. **Hamas** proclaimed him "the youngest Palestinian prisoner." That having loved ones in prisons is a regular facet of life for many Palestinians is written all over the walls of the Malki's living room. The walls boast pictures of their imprisoned sons, a guns-and-glory photo of one of their sons' friends who died a shahid, or martyr, and a bevy of special 8 x 10 cards, provided by the Ministry of Prisoners Affairs, that look like awards. They go out to the mothers of prisoners each year during the major holidays with a small gift, thanking them for their sacrifices to the cause. Fathiye Malki, Baraah's mother, says she could deal with that much, but not with having her youngest daughter in jail. Her friend, sitting nearby, says Mrs. Malki had a breakdown when she found out about what her daughter had done. "I never brought them up to be this way, but the situation, the soldiers, provokes them," Malki says. "I spend my life making prison visits to my children. Maybe the Israelis hope it will change them, but I think it only makes them harder." To hear more on the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, watch this week's edition of the Monitor's "Talk to the Editor" with Ilene Prusher.

Load-Date: February 19, 2010

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PARALLAX: COSTUMED PEACE POLITICS?; DIALOGUE OVER ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN ISSUES NOT SERVED BY LOCAL THEATRICAL PLAY

The Taos News (New Mexico)

December 17, 2009 Thursday

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Section: TEMPO; Pg. TE-20

Length: 680 words

Byline: OPINION BY CARMİ PLAUT

Body

Opinion by Carmi Plaut

Regarding the Thursday (Dec. 10) cover story titled "Roots of Conflict," I question The Taos News giving a front cover Tempo position to this article. As founding president of the Taos Jewish Center and also of the Peace Hanukkah celebration this week, this article makes me question the journalistic orientation and integrity of The Taos News.

Many Jews and non-Jews, myself included, in our community have been hurt by the lack of sensitivity giving a platform and front cover coverage to distorted words and undertones that this article creates. I can only comment on the contents of this article since I would not consider attending the play after reading this.

Unfortunately, this sounds more like costumed peace politics? The words in this article are not words of healing or coming together, but rather relay accusation and assumptions from one side of the situation. Repeatedly calling the State of Israel a Zionistic regime? Curiously, we hear these exact words from **Hamas** and other terrorist groups every week.

This interview conveniently omits mention of the real illegitimate and oppressive regime of the terrorist group of **Hamas**, which has murderously removed the Palestinian Authority from power, routinely oppressed **women**, and sent thousands of bombs into Israeli towns and cities, which actually initiated the Gaza incursion.

The question quickly comes up, "What would you do if your neighbor threw endless bombs on your family and town or country?" I suspect the person interviewed has never lived in a situation where your neighbor seeks to harm or kill you for being a Jew, being an Israeli, or even an American. It is easy to point the finger from afar and embrace the atrocities and actions on either side as rational. Consistently, Israel is always held to a higher standard, even by Jews who have little experience or knowledge in their own Jewish world.

Fact: Jews have lived in the land of Israel for 5,000-plus years alongside other indigenous tribes. A two-nation solution will happen and should happen.

Fact: **Hamas** and many other Arab terrorist organizations seek the destruction of Israel and are actively and aggressively anti-American. No one can forget the news video of residents in the occupied territories dancing in the streets on 9/11. That does not imply that many Arabs or Palestinians or Israelis are not peace loving. The reality of the situation is complex as all agree.

PARALLAX: COSTUMED PEACE POLITICS? DIALOGUE OVER ISRAELI - PALESTINIAN ISSUES NOT SERVED BY LOCAL THEATRICAL PLAY

Many of us in the United States and Israel are not happy about the aggressive military stance sometimes taken. Peace politics is a sensitive creature. Implying that we don't understand or know where tax dollars are going or what the situation is on the ground is banter, not the words of mediation or healing.

Paradoxically, this article creates the exact opposite of its intent of coming together in peace. Colonization? The sensitivity of words and language are crucial elements to any peace-oriented dialogue. The topic of land and who owns what is at the root of peace talk.

The person interviewed in this article talks about "on the ground first hand experience." Ironically, I wonder if the people creating this production have even taken a second to look where their own homes reside. Giving back Native American lands rings close to home.

Double standard? I suppose that someone can even make a case that the land that the Taos Community Auditorium sits on has questionable ownership rights if we look back, but of course, this is a different costume.

Carmi Plaut is founding president of the Taos Jewish Center.

"Parallax" is an open forum for readers to express their opinions on the Taos County art, entertainment and cultural scene. "Parallax" columns must include the same verification information as letters, but can be up to 750 words in length. Names will not be withheld from publication. Writers are asked to submit no more than once a month. Submissions may be edited for style, grammar and taste. Address to Tempo, The Taos News, P.O. Box 3737, Taos 87571. They may also be sent by fax to (575) 751-3026 or e-mailed to tempo@taosnews.com

Graphic

See pdf's for exact rendition, caption, graphics and photographer info.

Load-Date: January 8, 2010

Gaza activists begin hunger strike as they await entry into Egypt

Daily News Egypt

December 27, 2009 Sunday

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Length: 422 words

Body

CAIRO: Members of the Viva Palestina convoy stuck at the Gulf of Aqaba began a hunger strike to commemorate the one-year anniversary of the Israeli offensive on Gaza as they awaited entry into Egypt.

Fifteen people from the convoy began the hunger strike at 11:35 am Jordan time to mark the exact moment when Israel began bombarding Gaza. For each day the convoy is not allowed to enter Gaza, another 15 people will join the hunger strike.

Convoy leader British Respect MP George Galloway made an appeal to allow the convoy to travel through to Gaza via Egypt, saying, "I am appealing to anyone and everyone to help us reach Gaza. Our medicines are in a race against the time of their expiry date and are spoiling in the desert sun whilst people in Gaza die for the want of them."

The third edition of the Viva Palestina convoy, named Lifeline 3, is currently in Jordan at the Gulf of Aqaba, having arrived there last Tuesday. The convoy consists of some 210 vehicles laden with aid for Gaza, accompanied by some 500 activists, including 150 from Turkey, 30 from the US and a number from Europe.

Egypt has continued to refuse permission for the Gaza aid convoy, which also includes Noam Chomsky and Holocaust survivor Hedy Epstein, to dock in the port of Nuweiba, insisting that it must head by sea to the port at the city of Al-Arish.

For the convoy to travel to Al-Arish as opposed to Nuweiba, it would need to travel all around the Sinai peninsula and up through the Suez Canal, instead of just traveling across the Gulf of Aqaba to dock in the port of Nuweiba.

On Saturday, CodePink member traveling with convoy Ann Wright, a former US army colonel, told AP that Egypt was refusing entry on "security" grounds and appealed to the government to rescind the decision, adding that it was not "in the best interests of Egypt."

The Israeli offensive on Gaza that began Dec. 27, 2008 led to the death of 1,400 Palestinians (including 400 children and 200 women) and the injury of another 5,000.

Gaza activists begin hunger strike as they await entry into Egypt

The Viva Palestina convoys have traveled across the globe to transport aid, food and medical supplies to people in the Gaza strip. Gaza has been under a blockade for two and a half years, since **Hamas** took control of the territory.

Meanwhile it was announced that Israeli Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu would visit Cairo Tuesday to meet with President Hosni Mubarak. Netanyahu stated that discussion would center on the peace process but it is believed talks would also encompass the prisoner exchange Egypt is mediating between **Hamas** and Israel.

Load-Date: December 27, 2009

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Pakistan: Obama agrees to keep Israel's nukes secret

Right Vision News

September 4, 2009 Friday

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Length: 753 words

Dateline: WASHINGTON

Body

WASHINGTON, Oct. 04 -- President Obama has reaffirmed a 4-decade-old secret understanding that has allowed Israel to keep a nuclear arsenal without opening it to international inspections, three officials familiar with the understanding said. The officials, who spoke on the condition that they not be named because they were discussing private conversations, said Mr. Obama pledged to maintain the agreement when he first hosted Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at the White House in May. Under the understanding, the U.S. has not pressured Israel to disclose its nuclear weapons or to sign the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which could require Israel to give up its estimated several hundred nuclear bombs. Israel had been nervous that Mr. Obama would not continue the 1969 understanding because of his strong support for nonproliferation and priority on preventing Iran from developing nuclear weapons. The U.S. and five other world powers made progress during talks with Iran in Geneva on Thursday as Iran agreed in principle to transfer some potential bomb fuel out of the country and to open a recently disclosed facility to international inspection. Mr. Netanyahu let the news of the continued U.S.-Israeli accord slip last week in a remark that attracted little notice.

He was asked by Israel's Channel 2 whether he was worried that Mr. Obama's speech at the U.N. General Assembly, calling for a world without nuclear weapons, would apply to Israel. "It was utterly clear from the context of the speech that he was speaking about North Korea and Iran," the Israeli leader said. "But I want to remind you that in my first meeting with President Obama in Washington I received from him, and I asked to receive from him, an itemized list of the strategic understandings that have existed for many years between Israel and the United States on that issue. The chief nuclear understanding was reached at a summit between President Nixon and Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir that began on Sept. 25, 1969. Avner Cohen, author of "Israel and the Bomb" and the leading authority outside the Israeli government on the history of Israel's nuclear program, said the accord amounts to "the United States passively accepting Israel's nuclear weapons status as long as Israel does not unveil publicly its capability or test a weapon." There is no formal record of the agreement nor have Israeli nor American governments ever publicly acknowledged it. In 2007, however, the Nixon library declassified a July 19, 1969, memo from national security adviser Henry Kissinger that comes closest to articulating U.S. policy on the issue. That memo says, "While we might ideally like to halt actual Israeli possession, what we really want at a minimum may be just to keep Israeli possession from becoming an established international fact." Meanwhile, An Israeli soldier held by **Hamas** in Gaza for three years appears healthy in a video handed over to the Israeli authorities, officials say. Gilad Shalit appeared in the video with trimmed hair holding a paper dated 14 September, Israel's Channel 10 said. Israel has released 19 **female** Palestinian prisoners in exchange for the video. Eighteen of the prisoners were handed over in the West Bank on Friday and another was released in Gaza. The prisoners were not to be freed until officials had seen the video. Israeli radio reported that the country's chief of staff, Gabi Ashkenazi, viewed the tape before it was delivered to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Jerusalem. These would be the first images seen of the 23-year-old since he was captured by **Hamas** militants three years ago. An audiotape and three letters have been released since his

Pakistan : Obama agrees to keep Israel 's nukes secret

capture in 2006, the most recent dated in 2008. Nearly three years of Egyptian-brokered talks have failed to produce a deal for his release. German mediators joined the talks, between **Hamas** and Israel, in July. Meanwhile, Israel and the Palestinians are taking a first, tentative step toward swapping a captive Israeli soldier for hundreds of Palestinians held in Israeli jails. Israel is to receive a recent videotape of the soldier - the first glimpse of Sgt. Gilad Schalit since he was captured more than three years ago. If Israel confirms the videotape is authentic and recent, 20 Palestinian **women** prisoners are to be freed to the West Bank and Gaza. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Right Vision News. For more information on news feed please contact Sarabjit Jagirdar at htsyndication@hindustantimes.com

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Load-Date: October 21, 2009

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Jordan: A debate worth noting

Right Vision News

November 18, 2009 Wednesday

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Length: 1062 words

Body

A story universally missed last week was the extraordinary debate that occurred in Congress in advance of a vote on a resolution against the Goldstone report. It may have been that this story was not seen as newsworthy as others playing out at the same time, Nov. 18 -- the fallout over Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's "whip lash" performances in Jerusalem, Marrakech and Cairo; Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas' announcement that he would not run in 2010; and Israel's seizure of a ship it claimed was transporting weapons from Iran to Hizbollah. Then again, the significance of the congressional debate may have been ignored given what appeared to be the lopsided vote in favour of the anti-Goldstone resolution. It will be recalled that when the report was first released, members of Congress were quick to denounce it, using, at times, near hysterical language.

Since Goldstone had no vocal champions, when Foreign Affairs Committee Chair Howard Berman and ranking Republican Ileana Ros-Lehtinen introduced their AIPAC-supported anti-Goldstone resolution, one might have thought that the matter would be quickly resolved with a near unanimous vote. But that was not to be the case. For his part, Justice Goldstone mounted a vigorous defence of his work. In an open letter to the congressional sponsors, the justice offered a point-by-point rebuttal of what he detailed as the misleading and factually incorrect statements in the resolution. In addition, two members of Congress, Keith Ellison (D-MN) and Brian Baird (D-WA) who visited Gaza after the war, wrote articles and pressed their colleagues, urging a more thoughtful consideration of the Goldstone report. And the NGO community (including leading human rights organisations, Arab American and American Jewish groups, and a coalition of Christian churches) mobilised their memberships and addressed letters to Congress. As a result, instead of a quick and quiet vote, an extended debate took place. At least 16 members of Congress rose to speak eloquently and passionately about their opposition to the bill. In their remarks, the members: defended the integrity of Justice Goldstone and the report; spoke of the importance of defending the rule of law; decried the efforts of some to cover up the horrors that occurred in Gaza; and expressed concern with the lack of any open and transparent process that rushed this anti-Goldstone measure to a vote. What follows are a few excerpts from some of those who spoke: Congresswoman Barbara Lee (D-CA): "The tragic deaths of innocent civilians in Gaza and the devastation brought upon their homes, schools, and infrastructure have worsened a humanitarian crisis that cannot be ignored. Residents of Gaza and the West Bank continue to lack appropriate access to the most fundamental needs, including food, fuel, water, sanitation, education, healthcare, and the basic materials needed to rebuild their communities." Congressman William Delahunt (D-MA): "This resolution came to the floor on suspension without a hearing, despite the willingness of Judge Goldstone to come before the United States Congress and answer any questions that we might pose to him." Congressman Brian Baird (D-WA): "My friends who have described the Goldstone report, as a colleague just did, I'm not sure if they have read it. Unlike most of my colleagues here, I have been to Gaza and I have read in its entirety the Goldstone report. And I will tell you he says many things that, though unpleasant, are true and must not be obstructed. Do not pass this resolution. Support this fine jurist. Give justice, true justice, a chance to be heard." Congressman John Dingell (D-MI): "Neither Israel nor Hamas, nor any other country or other non-state political actor is exempt from international human rights laws or free of consequence for violations of them. If nothing else, the Goldstone report should serve as a

Jordan :A debate worth noting

document that Israel, Hamas, and the rest of the international community can use to ensure that future human rights violations do not take place in civilian areas."Congressman Dennis Kucinich (D-OH): "Almost as serious as committing war crimes is covering up war crimes, pretending that war crimes were never committed and did not exist. Because if this Congress votes to condemn a report it has not read concerning events it has totally ignored about violations of law of which it is unaware, it will have brought shame to this great institution."Congresswoman Betty McCollum (D-MN): "This resolution seeks to hide the ugliness of the Gaza war by covering up violent excesses committed against innocent civilians by both Hamas and the Israeli Defence Forces. Why does the US House want to reject an accounting of Hamas' terrorism against Israeli civilians, as if thousands of rockets were not fired at Israel? And why would this resolution want to deny that hundreds of Palestinian women and children and elders were needlessly killed?"Congresswoman Lois Capps (D-CA): "I think that in this body's haste, we've overlooked some of the depth of unspeakable tragedies that have occurred during the war on Gaza. Innocent Israeli and Palestinian lives were lost."Congressman George Miler (D-CA): "I fully support efforts to provide clarity, honesty and accuracy to the debate about the conflict in Gaza, just as do many of my constituents who have contacted me this week urging me to oppose this resolution."Following this extraordinary debate, with both Democratic and Republican leadership actively pushing their members to vote for the resolution, passage was a foregone conclusion. But, the final vote, though appearing to be lopsided, yielded more votes in opposition than in any previous similar vote on an AIPAC supported resolution, with: 344 for, 36 against, 22 present, and 30 not voting (against and present votes are opposed, and about one-half of those "not voting" were also opposed).What this debate and vote point to is the growing resolve of some significant members of Congress (a committee chair and several sub-committee chairs, the chairs of the Congressional Black Caucus and Progressive Caucus, and some Jewish members) to speak out and challenge pro-Israel orthodoxy.It should not go unnoticed. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Right Vision News. For more information on news feed please contact Sarabjit Jagirdar at htsyndication@hindustantimes.com

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Load-Date: November 17, 2009

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'Real mediation'

The Jerusalem Post
July 14, 2009 Tuesday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 13

Length: 750 words

Highlight: Editorial

Body

Javier Solana has had enough. After 10 years as the European Union's foreign policy chief - and despite all the treasure and energy he has poured into Middle East peacemaking - the physicist-turned-diplomat is heading into retirement with Iran on the cusp of an atom bomb, Hamas solidifying its control over Gaza, and Mahmoud Abbas as recalcitrant as ever.

On July 11, Solana gave a speech to the Ditchley Foundation in London which made headlines.

Like many diplomats and intellectuals, Solana appears to regard a Palestinian state - whose establishment under viable terms, it apparently needs stressing, Israelis support - as some kind of regional cure-all. Reading between the lines, it's as if he believes that the mullahs in Iran will stop grabbing for regional hegemony, stealing (rigged) elections, and pursuing nuclear weapons; that Arab autocrats will guide their polities toward tolerance and representative government; that Shi'ites and Sunnis will stop blowing each other up; that Kurds, Copts and Baha'is will gain equality.

The Taliban in Afghanistan will liberate women from their burqas; North Africa's Islamists will lay down their weapons; al-Qaida will disband. And millions of restive, alienated Muslims throughout Europe will find a sense of belonging, allowing tranquility to prevail in the continent's inner cities... If only the Palestinians had a state.

THE FRAMEWORK for Palestinian statehood Solana referenced in his London speech included the Clinton Parameters and the Geneva Initiative. Israelis find these, whatever their imperfections, broadly acceptable as points of departure for negotiations.

It was on January 7, 2001 that then-president Bill Clinton called for the creation of a contiguous Palestinian state on most of the West Bank; for the incorporation of settlement blocs into Israel, and for land swaps as necessary. Palestinian refugees, he said, could "return" only to a non-militarized Palestine.

The European-financed Geneva Initiative similarly called for settlement blocs to be annexed to Israel and for a demilitarized Palestinian state. It also insisted that a solution to the refugee issue had to be found in "Palestine," not Israel.

Tellingly, Solana chose to ignore the fact that Ehud Olmert, at the end of 2008, had essentially offered Abbas a turbo-charged version of the Clinton Parameters. Abbas said no, insisting that Israel pull back to the 1949 Armistice Lines and permit itself to be demographically smothered by Arab "refugees" in their millions.

'Real mediation'

Solana's speech then went off on a tangent about settlements - about how many more Jews lived in Judea and Samaria today compared to when the Oslo Accords were signed. Solana knows that were Israel and the Palestinians to agree on permanent boundaries, settlements situated on the Arab side of the border would, in all probability, be uprooted. It is the Palestinian propensity for violence and intransigence that has robbed Israelis of any incentive to abandon the Jewish heartland.

Solana's fixation with settlements obfuscates and plays to the galleries, but does not genuinely illuminate why peacemaking has stalled.

Next, he turned to Hamas: "Whether we like it or not, Hamas will have to be part of the solution." Full stop. Not a word about the Quartet's principles on recognizing Israel, ending terrorism and abiding by past Palestinian commitments.

He did offer a circumspect critique of the "binary character - all or nothing" of the Arab Peace Initiative, which he admitted would have to be "nuanced."

SOLANA THEN offered a way forward toward creating a Palestinian state: "real mediation." By this, he appeared to mean imposing a solution, and a timetable for its implementation. If the parties didn't go along, he'd have the UN Security Council essentially codify the "real mediation" with its imprimatur.

The contrasting reactions to the Solana speech are instructive. The Palestinians' creative interpretation had Solana calling for the Security Council to recognize a Palestinian state - in line with their maximalist stance - by a certain deadline; even if Israel does not.

Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat said: "We do not object. It's time for the international community to stop treating Israel as above the laws of man."

The reaction of Israel's Foreign Ministry was that peace had to be built on negotiations, not imposed.

Plainly, the Palestinians trust that an internationally imposed "peace" would mostly ignore Israeli concerns, while catering to theirs.

Israelis do not disagree.

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

World - Communists slam Iranian repression; Parties from 43 countries warn against Western intervention

Morning Star

October 2, 2009 Friday

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Length: 466 words

Byline: Tom Mellen

Body

The international communist movement slammed Tehran on Wednesday over its bloody post-election crackdown, while rejecting Western efforts to exploit the crisis as an excuse for "humanitarian intervention."

At an extraordinary meeting in Damascus, representatives of 52 communist and workers' parties from 43 countries around the world expressed concern about the "comprehensive political crisis" that has engulfed Iran since the June presidential elections.

Delegates from as far afield as Bolivia, Slovakia, Palestine, the US, Sudan, Iraq, Russia and Ireland condemned the theocratic authorities for arresting over 4,000 protesters and torturing detainees.

They pointed to confirmed reports that nearly 100 protesters have been killed or died under torture "as a result of the attack of the military and armed militia of the regime against the people's peaceful demonstrations."

Delegates called for the unconditional release of all political prisoners and declared their "resolute solidarity with Iran's trade unions, working people, women, students and all of Iran's progressive and democratic forces struggling for human and democratic rights, economic and social justice, peace and democracy."

Wary of providing a pretext for "humanitarian intervention," the delegates also condemned "any intervention in Iran by the imperialist countries, who are trying to advance their plans for the creation of the 'Greater Middle East' at the expense of the peoples of the region."

The parties emphasised that "it is only, and only, the right of the Iranian people to determine the direction of future developments in their country."

The three-day meeting also voiced support for the Palestinian struggle as well as backing "resistance that confronts hegemonic powers which aim to seize the riches of the Middle East."

South African Communist Party general secretary Blade Nzimande charged that Israel is a racist country that has "outpaced the former apartheid system in South Africa in its unethical practices against the Palestinian people and the building of the apartheid wall that tears the occupied Palestinian territories apart."

US Communist Party activist Erwin Marquit emphasised that the road to peace in the Middle East lies through "solving the Palestinian issue and the return of Palestinian refugees."

World - Communists slam Iranian repression Parties from 43 countries warn against Western intervention

All participants called on Fatah and **Hamas** to "exert all efforts to achieve Palestinian national unity as the main guarantee of the Palestinian right to self-determination."

Algerian Communist Party representative Ali Mhebel said: "We do not support **Hamas**'s rejection of the two-state solution, but neither do we support the defeatism of Fatah and the "Oslo" group that rejects resistance and relies solely on negotiations and US-European initiatives biased towards Israel."

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Load-Date: October 2, 2009

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Mr. Netanyahu, it's time for a change of tack

The Jerusalem Post

September 7, 2009 Monday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 14

Length: 988 words

Byline: FRIMET ROTH

Highlight: Gilad Schalit must be freed now. Cold-blooded mass murderers - never. The writer and her husband founded the Malki Foundation (www.kerenmalki.org) in their daughter's memory. Malki Roth was murdered in the Sbarro restaurant massacre in 2001. The foundation provides concrete support for Israeli families of all faiths who care at home for a special-needs child.

Body

Once again, hope for the return of kidnapped soldier Gilad Schalit was raised and then dashed within days. The familiar roller coaster invites the question: Why have our leaders failed to free Schalit?

This year several high-profile missions were carried out to rescue Western hostages. Their success could be instructive for Israel. First, Ingrid Betancourt, a Colombian politician, was freed along with 14 other hostages from jungle captivity in July 2008 in a daring, Hollywoodesque infiltration of guerrilla camps.

Then, on August 5, 2009, former US president Bill Clinton's visit to North Korea scored the surprise release of two American journalists who had been sentenced to 12 years' hard labor by a Pyongyang court. The women were whisked to freedom with Clinton only 20 hours after he landed there.

Next, on August 16, 2009, a visit by US Senator Jim Webb of Virginia to Myanmar secured the return of an American imprisoned there.

Elation over these homecomings has been tempered by concern over the ramifications of the deals cut. As an Associated Press report put it: "Such visits, argue experts, can give regime leaders an aura of respect and recognition that may make it harder for the US to press for sanctions or continue isolation policies aimed at forcing change in everything from humans rights to nuclear power."

ISRAEL IS primed to pay astronomically more for Gilad Schalit. Yet our leaders are indifferent to the deadly ramifications. The release of mass murderers in return for Schalit's freedom poses an irrefutable risk. Yet for three years it has been touted as the single option available.

The day after Schalit's disappearance, his kidnappers offered information about him if Israel agreed to release all female and under-18-year-old Palestinian prisoners.

Since then, while the list of prisoners has grown, no other avenue of rescue has ever been shown, let alone rumored, to be on the cards. Not even the massive Operation Cast Lead produced evidence of any rescue attempt.

Mr. Netanyahu, it's time for a change of tack

Instead, Hamas has been sitting pretty all these years. The only pressure exerted on it has been to delete several prisoners from its list and to approve the exile of several others after release. Moreover, the sine qua non of any deal, the release of all female prisoners, has never been challenged. It is accepted by all as a compassionate stipulation.

One of those women is Ahlam Tamimi. This journalist- cum-university student was involved in the reconnaissance and planning of the August 9, 2001 terror attack on Jerusalem's Sbarro restaurant.

That morning, Tamimi, along with a suicide bomber and 10 kg of explosives, took a taxi from Ramallah. At the checkpoint between east and west Jerusalem, her accomplice, Izzadin al-Masri, got out and walked past the IDF soldiers empty-handed. Tamimi remained in the taxi, passing through unsearched, while the explosives lay beside her.

Once past the checkpoint, Tamimi rejoined Masri on foot. The pair then walked toward the center of Jerusalem. Tamimi carried a camera and the two conversed aloud in English to pass for tourists.

When they reached Sbarro, the target Tamimi had selected, she reminded Masri to wait 15 minutes before detonating the bomb. She didn't want to suffer any scratches herself.

At 1:50 p.m., Masri obeyed Tamimi. The ensuing inferno took the lives of 15 innocent Jewish men, women and children.

There were actually seventeen victims: One of the dead was pregnant. Another woman has been in a coma ever since.

My 15-year-old daughter, Malki, never made it to the hospital. She was among the first to die.

Tamimi was tried and sentenced in 2004 to 16 life terms. In an interview from her cell she said: "I am not sorry for what I did. We'll become free from the occupation and then I will be free." She smiled when an interviewer informed her that she had killed eight children, three more than she had presumed.

Does this sound like a weak, pitiable female prisoner?

LAST WEEK, when Schalit's liberation appeared imminent, we learned that a German mediator was activated at Israel's invitation. He has been commuting to Egypt since mid-July and is pressuring Hamas to clinch this deal.

Pressuring Hamas? Does a terrorist organization need to be cajoled to accept the return of hundreds of its hit men in return for one captive? Israel, on the other hand has been an amenable, or rather eager, party to the negotiations from the outset. Our politicians have been doggedly laying on the hard-sell rhetoric to convince us that the only choice is releasing mass murderers or losing Schalit.

"At this point we should not worry about the released terrorists going back to acts of terror and murder," wrote Eitan Haber on Ynet last week. "Findings from the previous swaps show that only a few go back to terrorism."

Haber is utterly wrong. Thirty of the terrorist attacks perpetrated since 2000 were committed by terrorists freed in deals with terror organizations. Their terrorism killed 177 persons and wounded hundreds of others, permanently disabling some.

Supreme Court Justice Edmund Levi eloquently confirmed those findings. In rejecting a past petition against a prisoner release, he wrote: "This is not the very first time that by virtue of agreements it signed, the State of Israel frees terrorists who sowed death and destruction in our midst. After every such prisoner release, the hope reverberated in many hearts that this time a change would ensue... this hope was in vain, and it might be more fittingly defined as a false illusion. If we needed further proof... one can find it in the bloody events that have accompanied us since October 2000. Many of those whom Israel had in the past set free participated in these horrific events."

Mr. Netanyahu, it's time for a change of tack

It is time Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu abandoned Ehud Olmert's misguided lead. Alternative strategies should at long last be resolutely pursued.

Schalit must be freed now. Cold-blooded mass murderers - never.

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Graphic

Photo: THE ONLY pressure exerted on **Hamas** has been to delete several prisoners from its list and to approve the exile of several others after their release. (Credit: AP)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

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Seizing the moment

The Jerusalem Post

October 16, 2009 Friday

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Section: FEATURES; Pg. 30

Length: 2350 words

Byline: HAVIV RETTIG GUR

Highlight: David Makovsky, American Mideast analyst and former 'Post' editor, explains why America is optimistic about peace and what it has gotten wrong on the Middle East

Body

If you want to know where America's Mideast policy is headed, David Makovsky is a good man to ask. It's not just his credentials - a senior fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, educated at Harvard and Columbia, 11 years in Israel as a Ha'aretz diplomatic correspondent and Jerusalem Post executive editor, a member of the Council on Foreign Relations - but his connections.

Makovsky counts among his friends his co-author for the recent book *Myths, Illusions and Peace: Finding a New Direction for America in the Middle East*, veteran diplomat Dennis Ross, a man who is neglecting his book tour responsibilities because he is serving as President Barack Obama's Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for the Central Region in the National Security Council.

The book jacket contains a blurb by another friend, Lt.-Gen. Keith Dayton, the United States Security Coordinator for Israel and the Palestinian Authority, or more simply, the man training the PA's forces to maintain sovereignty over the West Bank.

Dayton does not mince words. "I rely on the work of Dennis Ross and David Makovsky for deep strategic thinking. I value their research and analysis. I consider their work a national treasure of the United States."

So it is fair to say that Makovsky, more than most, can explain what's going on in the "mind" of the American administration.

In a recent conversation with The Jerusalem Post, he discussed the logic behind the strange optimism of the current administration over the prospects for Israeli- Palestinian peace - an optimism that seems sorely lacking outside Obama's immediate orbit.

THE BOOK IS not intended for audiences in the Middle East, but rather it is part of the raging debate in the United States over the country's Middle East policy. With "skin in the game," the questions of American support for Israel, democratization and Arab governance and dysfunction have become politically acute and urgent.

Myths, Illusions and Peace is at its core an argument against the theory that has been popular for many years among Arabists and policy wonks in Washington, one repeated by too many Arab leaders to ignore: That the Middle East's deep and abiding tensions draw much of their energy from the conflict with Israel, and specifically the unfair fight between Israel and the Palestinians.

Seizing the moment

This argument has profound ramifications for policymaking. Linkage can harm peace, as in the initial reluctance of the Carter administration to help launch the Israeli-Egyptian peace process because they were not convinced that Sadat's idea to break with the Arab consensus could work.

Furthermore, American policy that acquiesced to Arab warnings about US ties to Israel has historically failed to produce results favorable to America. Arab states kept their close ties to Washington despite the Israeli-American alliance, and their policy was never dramatically altered away from their own national interests based on the condition of the Palestinians.

"Too often, the United States neither won favorable Arab reciprocity when it did as the Arabs suggested, nor suffered a disaster when it did not heed Arab warnings," the authors note.

In fact, linkage is a tactic used by Arab states as "a way to shift the burden of peacemaking from themselves to the US. If only [America] could 'deliver Israel,' they are saying, the regional situation would be transformed. It's one more way the Arab states have used this conflict for their own purposes to make sure the burden is not on them," Makovsky explains.

Indeed, the Arab appeal to the linkage argument has been a primary tool for Arab regimes to defy calls for reform at home. It is an argument that has started to lose traction in the Arab public even while it has found new allies in Washington.

Makovsky and Ross quote Egyptian writer Hassan Hafez, who wonders "why we blamed Israel for every fault in [our] society.... [Blaming Israel] causes us to look ridiculous before the world and it makes the small Israeli state look great."

YET, DESPITE ITS call for placing proper responsibility on the Arab side, this book is no neocon treatise. The first sentence of the book sets the tone: "There can be little doubt that America's standing in the world declined dramatically during the administration of George W. Bush."

The authors argue against regime change as the best path to democratization and reject the view that the Iranian regime is insensitive to economic pressure. While harshly critical of those who claim Israel is a strategic liability for the United States - "if the US could renege on Israel, it's saying it could renege on anybody," notes Makovsky - it is profoundly optimistic about the potential for a negotiated settlement with the Palestinians.

Where does this optimism, which is apparently shared by the Obama administration, come from? Are the Americans impervious to the experiences of the past 16 years of peacemaking?

Don't believe everything you read in the papers, says Makovsky. "Sometimes the news is what isn't reported."

What isn't being reported is the quiet revolution taking place in the West Bank under Salam Fayyad, one that should impress even the more fatalist of cynics, he adds.

The **Hamas** takeover in Gaza in 2007 "was an unbelievable wakeup call that made the PA understand that **Hamas** is coming to the West Bank if they don't get their act together."

For the Israelis, too, "the alternative to Salam Fayyad is not the Hadassah **women** of Brooklyn. It's **Hamas** that will pick up the pieces."

This has created a whole new willingness to work together that has not been seen since Oslo.

"Since 1996, [in the wake of the **Hamas** terror attacks of that year,] we've been hearing about the 'revolving doors' of the Palestinian security services - that the Palestinians arrest the **Hamas** guys and let them go. They're not doing that anymore. There are 800 **Hamas** prisoners in [PA jails in] the West Bank."

Seizing the moment

In the religious sphere, too, "they're moving imams out of the mosques. There are 1,800 mosques [in the West Bank] and the PA is slowly changing their imams" from those sympathetic to Hamas' message of destroying Israel to others more willing to compromise in order to end the conflict.

"They're not doing this as a favor for Israel," Makovsky is quick to stress, "but as a favor to themselves."

He insists the Israelis should move forward, too, though "without taking reckless risks. I told Condoleezza Rice at Annapolis that the Israelis feel they read the book in Gaza and don't want to see the movie in the West Bank."

But, he continues, "the fact that the PA's actions are not in the name of Zionism, but for their own self-interest, means that it's sustainable over time. We're already seeing a lot of intelligence cooperation. A senior Israeli security official told me that the difference now is that the PA 'doesn't lie to us anymore' on security issues."

With that cooperation, Israel has been able to dismantle huge numbers of checkpoints and roadblocks, to open the flow of goods and people in the West Bank and to enable a massive 7% economic growth over the past year.

"The occupation is still there, but the Israelis deserve credit" for their part in the slow improvement spreading throughout the West Bank. "This is a quiet revolution."

Yet the revolution does not seem to be changing the anti-Israel - and often anti-Semitic - rhetoric of official PA media. Is security cooperation enough to make peace?

"When you read the Israeli press, you get a sense of fatalism that the Arabs will never recognize Israel has a valid claim to this land," worries Makovsky. "I tend to think after meeting senior Palestinians that [withholding recognition] is a bargaining chip. Even Yasser Arafat for a time liked to talk about the Jews as 'our cousins.'"

Makovsky points to polls conducted by Khalil Shikaki, director of the Ramallah-based Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research, which show that about half of Palestinians say Israel is a Jewish state.

"Instead of being fatalistic, Israelis [should know] that each side is going to recognize the valid historical claim of the other. I don't think this is so hopeless." But "the more Israel talks about it," especially the Netanyahu government's focus on the issue, "the higher its value and its price."

"Let's remember that the Palestinians always speak of international requirements and UN resolutions. But the 1947 [UN General Assembly] partition resolution [number 181] mentioned no less than 30 times that the new state is a Jewish state."

THIS AMERICAN OPTIMISM underscores the extent to which linkage is not merely incorrect, but often the reverse of the reality on the ground. For Makovsky, the Arab states seem to have a greater difficulty accepting Israel than do the Palestinians.

At a recent dinner, Makovsky asked an Arab head of state "what mistakes the Arabs made and what lessons we could learn from the 1990s. [The Arab leader] said, 'Look, we're not elected by anybody, and we know that. So frankly we don't do peace any favors. We really hesitate.'"

Israel, explains Makovsky, "has this view that kings or emirs don't have to deal with public opinion because 'they're the king.' But my experience in the past nine years has been the opposite. These leaders fear public opinion. Democracy breaks a deadlock. In a democracy, if you get 51 percent on your side, you can claim a mandate. But these people need 100%, because they don't feel they are elected by anyone. And if you're waiting for 100%, you'll be paralyzed."

Thus, instead of shaping a consensus, instead of leading and prodding the Palestinians and their own peoples toward peace, Arab dictators are dragged down into the basest passions of public opinion.

The Arab leader's admission "was an indication that instead of shaping the consensus, they have to reflect it. Arab regimes feel too illegitimate to be cheerleaders for compromise."

Seizing the moment

That, he explains, is the logic behind the Arab Peace Initiative, "which says that if Israel does everything, the Arabs will normalize as a group, but not in parallel steps and not as individual states."

That offer - "which doesn't have traction in Israel because it's completely backloaded, with Israel doing everything first" - "is a missed opportunity. I think it makes much more sense that for every move Israel makes toward the Palestinians, there would be a step to integrate Israel into the region. That would create legitimacy [for integration] in the region." But there is a real fear among Arab leaders "that this is politically too hard for them."

MAKOVSKY AND ROSS are known as analysts with close ties to Israel. Among other roles they have filled, Ross was until recently the chairman of the Jewish People Policy Planning Institute, a Jerusalem think tank founded by the Jewish Agency, and Makovsky has been editor-in-chief of the Post. What is their response to those who say they are merely attempting to shift the blame away from the Israelis for stalled peace talks?

"These are not arguments against the peace process. We believe there needs to be a focus on Arab-Israeli peace," Makovsky says emphatically, "but we don't think it should be oversold as the 'open sesame' to solving the entire Middle East. That's just erroneous."

They "recognize that the Israeli-Palestinian issue is evocative, and its resolution might take a card out of the hands of Al-Qaida and others - but it won't eliminate the terrorism."

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict "is not the source of other conflicts, and therefore it's not the pathway to their resolution. It does not end the Iranian nuclear problem, sectarian differences in Iraq, or the problems that have plagued Yemen. We'd like to see the [Israeli- Palestinian] conflict resolved, but for the right reasons."

In the wake of the policy failures of Obama's first eight months - "I think it was a mistake to spend the last eight months focusing on the settlements issue almost exclusively" - Makovsky believes the administration has learned its lessons and is moving forward.

"I think President Obama genuinely believes that most Israelis and Palestinians want a two-state solution."

And even some of the trickiest problems are attainable. For example, demarcating the final borders with a land swap of just 5% of the West Bank will give the Palestinians a huge initial victory, while giving the Israelis closure on the settlements.

"For 40 years, [Jewish settlers] have been dangling bargaining chips. That's a rough way to treat your citizens. If you annex to Israel the 80% of settlers that live on 5% of the West Bank, largely adjacent to the Green Line, then these people would transform from a problem into a solution, because their legal situation would improve."

It's important to move forward in piecemeal but tangible steps, Makovsky insists.

"In the Middle East, whenever it's all or nothing, it's nothing. The public is cynical," he says of both sides. "It's heard every peace speech at every peace conference and doesn't believe anything anymore. The Israelis think they got out of Gaza and only got rockets. The Palestinians feel that for all the talk of Oslo there are still checkpoints and occupation. There's enough reason to be frustrated and cynical as a default, and not to believe any speech."

If Obama avoids falling into this trap - "an Annapolis II conference would be a kiss of death" - then there's a real chance to bring peace with a Fayyad-led PA.

According to Makovsky, "Salam Fayyad is redefining Palestinian nationalism away from defiance, resistance, armed struggle - what we call terrorism - and toward institution-building."

His model? Pre-state Israel.

"Fayyad told President Bush that Israel was successful because it was busy building institutions from the Balfour Declaration [in 1917] to the founding of the state [in 1948]."

Seizing the moment

Until recently, "Israeli leaders thought the Palestinian leadership was more interested in tearing down Israel than building Palestine." That's not true anymore.

And with a joint enemy, the window for peace is currently open, Makovsky says.

"Are we going to miss this moment and let **Hamas** pick up the pieces?" he wonders.

Graphic

2 photos: ANNAPOLIS TRIO. 'I told Condoleezza Rice at Annapolis that the Israelis feel they read the book in Gaza and don't want to see the movie in the West Bank,' says Makovsky. DAVID MAKOVSKY. 'Sometimes the news is what isn't reported.' (Credit: AP)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

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Sixth convention Fatah's and the building of a nation

Daily News Egypt

August 21, 2009 Friday

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Length: 808 words

Body

SAN DIEGO: After its long-awaited Sixth Convention, Fatah has inched a bit closer toward building the institutions needed to establish an independent Palestinian state. In spite of the power jockeying, participants renewed their commitment to a two-state solution, and the voices calling for resistance through economic development outnumbered those wishing to keep the status quo. Fatah's challenge now is to create a platform with new goals and a new interpretation of its charter, in order to become a movement that represents all Palestinians. In a true gesture of reconciliation, Fatah should extend an olive branch to Hamas and invite the movement to join in creating a new national platform.

It remains to be seen how effective the election of a younger generation of Fatah members will be in establishing a new national agenda, but the only way forward for Fatah is to boldly assume the responsibility for creating a developmental roadmap that will prepare all Palestinians to negotiate a two-state solution from a position of strength.

The idea of a development roadmap was born based on the Center for Human Emergence in the Middle East's work with third and fourth generation Fatah members over the last five years. We approached the problem using an innovative socio-political framework, such as the one that helped South Africa transition from apartheid.

First and foremost, our research pointed to the enormous asymmetry in societal capacities between Israelis and Palestinians. This has been a principal cause for the failure of previously-attempted peace treaties. The Palestinians simply did not have the capacity to self-govern or to develop a unified vision of a future state. Internal clashes generated by extremists on both sides have also continued to fuel the conflict.

Our work focused on guiding third and fourth generation Fatah members in creating a distinctly different party - transitioning from one that was out of touch with the Palestinian people, to a party that will lead the entire nation in a state-building effort. Because we understood the significance of the Sixth Convention, we designed a pre-congress conference for 700 members of Fatah, which took place in February 2008. This conference provided a unique forum for Fatah members to debate the future of the party and send recommendations to their leaders. Our focus was not merely on the success of Fatah, but on the viability of a future Palestinian state, which should be President Abbas' focus as well.

Sixth convention Fatah's and the building of a nation

To shift the focus away from both intra-party fighting and the defeat of Hamas, we created a platform whereby members offered their best visions and frameworks for building a Palestinian state - a country designed by its own people, for its own people. It turned out that professional women and young party members in their twenties offered some of the best suggestions for nation-building. They were most aware of the important issues affecting their people.

In order for Fatah to guide the emergence of a Palestinian state, the participants presented a number of pragmatic recommendations most of which could be initiated despite the restrictions imposed by the Israeli occupation. These include: accountability from all public officials; the ending of corrupt practices among government bureaucracies; the establishment of world-class educational and healthcare systems; development of the agricultural and industrial sectors; the creation of an IT sector, whereby young people could find gainful employment; and the instituting of a broad spectrum of socio-economic programs essential to a thriving state.

Based upon the results of our pre-conference event - and the challenges that the outcome of the Sixth Convention present - President Abbas should immediately hold a "nation-design conference" that would call on the brightest minds in Palestine and throughout the world to create a developmental roadmap for Palestine. This would be informed by the needs and aspirations of all Palestinians, and would put forth a vision of a thriving region. It would honor the past while building the infrastructure necessary for the younger generation to emerge socio-economically and overcome the region's historic conflict. For moderates in Israel, a plan such as this would provide the assurance they need to enter into a partnership of mutual peace and prosperity, while quelling Hamas' and Likud's extremist positions.

Elza S. Maalouf is an Arab-American futurist and cultural development specialist focusing her work on societal, business and political reform in the Arab world. She is the CEO and co-founder of the Center for Human Emergence Middle East, a research and strategic design centre that uses the emerging science of value-systems to address various challenges in the region. This article was written for the Common Ground News Service (CGNews).

Load-Date: August 21, 2009

Fatah vote gives boost to Abbas

The Jerusalem Post

August 12, 2009 Wednesday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 1

Length: 796 words

Byline: KHALED ABU TOAMEH

Body

Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas has emerged victorious from the elections for Fatah's Central Committee, as almost all his preferred candidates won seats in the key decision-making body.

The elections were held in the context of Fatah's sixth General Assembly, which convened for the first time in 20 years in Bethlehem last week.

The results of the vote were hailed by many Fatah officials as a victory for young guard activists who have long been engaged in a power struggle with old guard leaders.

Last week, Abbas's standing was enhanced when the more than 2,000 delegates attending the conference unanimously reelected him as head of Fatah. He was the only candidate.

Although final results were not formally announced by late Tuesday, sources in Fatah said that more than half of the Central Committee's new members were new faces.

These include jailed Fatah operative Marwan Barghouti and former security commanders Muhammad Dahlan, Jibril Rajoub and Tawfik Tirawi.

All four were among a group of young guard representatives backed by Abbas.

Other new faces included Hussein al-Sheikh, a PA minister and top Fatah activist in the West Bank, and Nasser al-Kidweh, a nephew of former PA chairman Yasser Arafat.

Prior to the vote, Abbas urged many old guard candidates to pull out of the race to pave the way for the emergence of new leaders. Most of those targeted by Abbas complied.

But others who refused to step aside, such as former PA prime minister Ahmed Qurei (Abu Ala), suffered a humiliating defeat when they were not reelected as members of the Central Committee.

Another victory for Abbas was seen in the apparent reelection of his most trusted aide, Tayeb Abdel Rahim, to the committee. However, some reports suggested that Abdel Rahim was among those who were not reelected.

Three other staunch Abbas loyalists who did make it to the committee are Saeb Erekat, Nabil Sha'ath and Ahmed Ghnaim.

Fatah vote gives boost to Abbas

Ghnaim is a veteran leader of Fatah who moved to the West Bank from Tunis only two weeks ago. He is widely seen as Abbas's successor as head of Fatah. He is believed to have gained the highest number of votes in the election.

The Central Committee has 23 seats. Only 18 members are elected by Fatah's General Assembly. Abbas is automatically a member, and he appoints the remaining four in coordination with the elected committee members.

A source close to Abbas said he may have to appoint a woman as a member of the committee since no **female** was elected. He may also have to appoint more members from the Gaza Strip to appease critics who accused him of sidelining the Fatah activists living there.

"The conference was in fact Abbas's battle and he seems to have won," said political analyst Ayman Taha. "Apart from being reelected, Abbas managed to secure spots for his main allies in Fatah."

The election of Dahlan came as a surprise to many delegates, particularly in wake of the fact that most of his loyalists in the Gaza Strip were either not present at the conference or did not cast their ballots.

Dahlan, who is banned by **Hamas** from entering the Strip, is reported to have established new bases of power in the West Bank over the past two years. Fatah activists said Dahlan poured millions of dollars on them in anticipation that they would support him in his bid to conquer the faction.

During the conference, many delegates condemned Dahlan and held him responsible for Fatah's defeat at the hands of **Hamas** in Gaza in the summer of 2007. Some even demanded that he and other senior Fatah figures be put on trial for the fiasco.

Husam Khader, a Fatah legislator from the Balata refugee camp near Nablus, expressed disappointment over the results of the election for the Central Committee.

"We were hoping to see new leaders whose hands are clean and were not involved in financial corruption," he said. "I don't think this new leadership is clean and sincere about reforming Fatah."

Ahmed Nasr, a top Fatah operative from the Gaza Strip, accused Abbas loyalists of stealing the vote. He said that the results don't reflect the general atmosphere that prevailed at the Bethlehem convention.

"What happened in Fatah is a real tragedy," he said. "Every Palestinian will pay a heavy price for this horrible political deterioration of our movement. The results show that massive fraud did occur."

He added that the results of the election would not only bury Fatah, but the entire Palestinian issue as well.

Sha'ath, who was one of the few old guard members who were reelected to the Central Committee, told The Jerusalem Post that the new leadership now faces three major challenges: reuniting Fatah and drawing conclusions from its previous mistakes, seeking reconciliation with **Hamas**, and working toward establishing a Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital.

Graphic

2 photos: Marwan Barghouti. Muhammad Dahlan (Credit: AP)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

Fatah vote gives boost to Abbas

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If you will it, David Grossman will bring peace

The Jerusalem Post

July 9, 2009 Thursday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 16

Length: 752 words

Byline: DANIEL DORON

Highlight: If only he and his fellows would formulate a new version of the Geneva peace initiative for us to consider. The writer is director of the Israel Center for Social and Economic Progress (ICSEP).

Body

David Grossman, one of our finest writers, is angry. In a recent article he said he feels Israelis accept with indifference "our stuck-up lives, devoid of all hope..." He believes we "coddle ourselves... in anxieties, lassitude and self-righteousness," give in to "self abnegation" and seek escape in "the sweet stupor of nationalism, militarism and victimhood." We deny, he avers, "the legitimate needs and just claims of the Palestinians." We refuse to understand that reality "requires flexibility, daring and vision." We, Grossman charges, refuse to take "any real step that will lead to a true change of consciousness," and bring about peace.

One could expect that Grossman, a sensitive writer and bereaved father, would not take out his frustration over the absence of peace by a blanket condemnation of most of the Israeli public. One would expect insights on why we have lost "the ability to achieve peace," as he claims, and what we must do to achieve his "true change of consciousness."

What change does he expect? Is giving in to "the legitimate needs and just claims of the Palestinians," no matter what danger this poses to our survival, what he has in mind? Please spell it out, dear distinguished writer. Please teach us how to deal with the dangers that may result from your "vision" - or do you think the possibility of a **Hamas** takeover in the West Bank is plain fantasy?

ONE COULD also expect that Grossman would not make do with complaining that Israelis and Palestinians "do not really understand, deeply, what peace means," but would try to describe to the stiff-necked inhabitants of this land the "option of true peace" he envisions. Is there any chance his vision would be accepted by most Palestinians? Would it make them abandon the militant "vision" of **Hamas** which most of them voted for?

This could be tested if Grossman and his fellow peace seekers - such as Shulamit Aloni, Yossi Beilin, Yossi Sarid, Yuli Tamir, most of the Haaretz publicists and many other prominent literary figures - would formulate an up-to-date, improved version of the Geneva peace initiative. We could then find out what we would be forced to give up and what kind of peace we would get in return.

Would it be a cold peace like the one with Egypt, which never misses an opportunity to undermine the State of Israel? As importantly, we would find out how many Palestinian and Arab leaders are willing to endorse an offer of peace that would meet most, but not all of their "legitimate needs and just claims" (like the right of return and a Judenrein West Bank?) as Grossman recommends. Would it be more than the very few who were willing to

If you will it, David Grossman will bring peace

endorse the Geneva Initiative? If not, will Grossman and his ilk stop charging that we are peace resisters because we refuse to share their well-intentioned illusions?

GROSSMAN COMPLAINS that we cannot transcend the conflict in the new peace spirit of US President Barack Obama. He might want to consider the possibility that this is because he and his fellow visionaries on the Left simply keep reiterating the mantra of "peace now," while dismissing the harsh realities. They keep ignoring the failure of all the instant peace initiatives they have advocated, from the Oslo agreements through the Ami Ayalon-Sari Nusseibeh "understandings," from the far-reaching concessions offered by Ehud Barak at Camp David and Taba to the Beilin Geneva Initiative. All these overtures were never accepted by the Palestinians, and therefore resulted only in greater bloodshed.

Grossman and his friends must also explain why, as zealous guardians of human rights, they seem so obsessed with Palestinian self-determination while remaining indifferent to the Palestinians' basic human rights? Why are they working for the establishment of what will surely become an Iran-style state led by Hamas that will cause its citizens only increasing misery, both social and economic?

How can they call for the establishment of a regime that will oppress women and children, devoting all its energies to jingoism? How can they support the creation of a state whose leaders are committed to the destruction of Israel? Is the right of political self-determination so supreme that it trumps all else?

Only time will tell, of course, whether our "anxieties" are realistic or imaginary, whether Grossman grasps reality or whether he indulges in fantasies. The record seems to advise caution. If a Palestinian state is irredentist and warlike, it will be a great tragedy for both the Palestinians and for us.

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

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Palestinian women prisoners mistreated by Israel – report

The Daily Star (Lebanon)

July 16, 2009 Thursday

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THE DAILY STAR

LEBANON

Length: 885 words

Byline: Daily Star Staff

Body

A Palestinian human rights group slammed Israeli treatment of Palestinian **female** prisoners in a UN-sponsored report re-leased on Wednesday, saying pregnant **women** are often shackled on their way to hospitals to give birth. The **women** prisoners are held in "Israeli prisons and detention centers which were designed for men and do not respond.

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM: A Palestinian human rights group slammed Israeli treatment of Palestinian **female** prisoners in a UN-sponsored report re-leased on Wednesday, saying pregnant **women** are often shackled on their way to hospitals to give birth. The **women** prisoners are held in "Israeli prisons and detention centers which were designed for men and do not respond to **female** needs," according to a report by the Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association, which was sponsored by the United Nations Development Fund for **Women**.

Pregnant detainees "do not enjoy preferential treatment in terms of diet, living space or transfer to hospitals," it said. "Pregnant prisoners are also chained to their beds until they enter delivery rooms and shackled once again after giving birth.

"The unbalanced diet, insufficient amounts of protein-rich foods, lack of natural sunlight and movement, poor ventilation and moisture all contribute to the exacerbation and the development of health problems such as skin diseases, anemia, asthma, prolonged stomach aches, joint and back pains."

In addition, the majority of the prisoners were "subjected to some form of mental pressure and torture through the process of their arrest," including beatings, insults, threats, sexual harassment and humiliation techniques.

The vast majority of Palestinian **women** in Israeli prisons are young – some 13 percent of those arrested in 2007-08 were under the age of 18 and 56 percent were between 20 and 30 years of age.

The detainees are often denied means to study, which violates their rights to a higher education and suffer from restrictions on visits.

In September 2008, some 60 percent had at least one family member who was not allowed to visit them. Open visits were restricted to mothers once their children reached the age of six.

Palestinian women prisoners mistreated by Israel – report

Female prisoners with a husband or other relatives also in jail were "accorded the right to family visits after months of delays."

In addition, the Israeli prison authorities do not provide gender-sensitive rehabilitation programs, it said.

The report was based on interviews with 125 Palestinian **women** who were detained or imprisoned in Israeli jails between November 2007 and November 2008. Of those, some 65 remain in prison – part of some 9,000 Palestinians currently incarcerated in Israel. – AFP

Abbas' government suspends Al-Jazeera in West Bank for 'incitement, unbalanced reporting'

Ben Hubbard

Associated Press

OCCUPIED RAMALLAH: The Palestinian government on Wednesday suspended operations of the Al-Jazeera news channel in the Occupied West Bank a day after a guest on the station accused the Palestinian president of playing a role in Yasser Arafat's death.

The guest, Farouk Kaddoumi, said on a talk show Tuesday – without presenting any evidence – that President Mahmoud Abbas had played a role in the 2004 death of Arafat, the revered founder of the Palestinian national movement.

Kaddoumi, a high-ranking, Tunis-based official in the Palestine Liberation Organization, is a longtime Abbas rival.

In a statement announcing the suspension, the Information Ministry did not mention Kaddoumi's comments, only accusing the popular Arab satellite TV station of incitement and unbalanced reporting from the Palestinian territories.

The statement added that the ministry took particular issue with an Al-Jazeera broadcast on Tuesday, without elaborating.

The ministry is suing Al-Jazeera, and the station's operations are suspended until the court has ruled.

The station's employees in Ramallah were seen piling files into black garbage bags and carrying them out with cameras, computers and other equipment before Palestinian security officials arrived to close the office.

The closure affected both the English and Arabic services of the channel.

Walid al-Omary, Al-Jazeera's bureau chief in Occupied Jerusalem, denied the accusations.

"We are sorry about this decision, which we consider a violation of freedom of expression and freedom of the press in this country," he said.

Al-Jazeera's Qatar headquarters issued a statement saying the station "has maintained strict, professional journalistic standards ... [the] Palestinian Authority's reaction reflects a repression of the freedom of media and a refusal to allow other opinions."

Abbas' aides have long alleged that the Qatar-based station, widely watched in the Palestinian territories, has been siding with the Islamic **Hamas** movement in the bitter Palestinian power struggle.

In Gaza, **Hamas** spokesman Fawzi Barhoum accused the West Bank government of trying to silence the media and "cover up what is going on in the West Bank," a reference to Abbas' crackdown.

In Gaza, **Hamas** has carried out similar arrest raids and shut down Abbas-linked media outlets.

Palestinian women prisoners mistreated by Israel – report

The Foreign Press Association, which represents international media operating in Israel and the Palestinian territories, said it was "deeply concerned" about the closure. It urged the Palestinian Authority to resolve the issue and uphold freedom of the press.

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How Turkey was lost

The Jerusalem Post

October 16, 2009 Friday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 24

Length: 1935 words

Byline: CAROLINE B. GLICK

Highlight: COLUMN ONE

Body

Once the apotheosis of a pro-Western, dependable Muslim democracy, this week Turkey officially left the Western alliance and became a full member of the Iranian axis.

It isn't that Ankara's behavior changed fundamentally in recent days. There is nothing new in its massive hostility toward Israel and its effusive solicitousness toward the likes of Syria and *Hamas*. Since the Islamist AKP party first won control over the Turkish government in the 2002 elections, led by AKP chairman Recip Tayyip Erdogan, the Turks have incrementally and inexorably moved the formerly pro-Western Muslim democracy into the radical Islamist camp populated by the likes of Iran, Syria, Hizbullah, al-Qaida and *Hamas*.

What made Turkey's behavior this week different from its behavior in recent months and years is that its attacks were concentrated, unequivocal and undeniable for everyone outside of Israel's scandalously imbecilic and flagellant media.

Until this week, both Israel and the US were quick to make excuses for Ankara. When in 2003 the AKP-dominated Turkish parliament prohibited US forces from invading Iraq through Kurdistan, the US blamed itself. Rather than get angry at Turkey, the Bush administration argued that its senior officials had played the diplomatic game poorly.

In February 2006, when Erdogan became the first international figure to host *Hamas* leaders on an official state visit after the jihadist group won the Palestinian elections, Jerusalem sought to explain away his diplomatic aggression. Israeli leaders claimed that Erdogan's red carpet treatment for mass murderers who seek the physical destruction of Israel was not due to any inherent hostility on the part of the AKP regime toward Israel. Rather, it was argued that Ankara simply supported democracy and that the AKP, as a formerly outlawed Islamist party, felt an affinity toward *Hamas* as a Muslim underdog.

Jerusalem made similar excuses for Ankara when during the 2006 war with Hizbullah Turkey turned a blind eye to Iranian weapons convoys to Lebanon that traversed Turkey; when Turkey sided with *Hamas* against Israel during Operation Cast Lead, and called among other things for Israel to be expelled from the UN; and when Erdogan caused a diplomatic incident this past January by castigating President Shimon Peres during a joint appearance at the Davos conference. So, too, Turkey's open support for Iran's nuclear weapons program and its galloping trade with Teheran and Damascus, as well as its embrace of al-Qaida financiers have elicited nothing more than grumbles from Israel and America.

How Turkey was lost

Initially, this week Israel sought to continue its policy of making excuses for Turkish aggression against it. On Sunday, after Turkey disinvited the IAF from the Anatolian Eagle joint air exercise with Turkey and NATO, senior officials like Deputy Foreign Minister Danny Ayalon and opposition leader Tzipi Livni tried to make light of the incident, claiming that Turkey remains Israel's strategic ally.

But Turkey wasted no time in making fools of them. On Monday, 11 Turkish government ministers descended on Syria to sign a pile of cooperation agreements with Iran's Arab lackey. The Foreign Ministry didn't even have a chance to write apologetic talking points explaining that brazen move before Syria announced it was entering a military alliance with Turkey and would be holding a joint military exercise with the Turkish military. Speechless in the wake of Turkey's move to hold military maneuvers with its enemy just two days after it canceled joint training with Israel, Jerusalem could think of no mitigating explanation for the move.

Tuesday was characterized by escalating verbal assaults on the Jewish state. First Erdogan renewed his libelous allegations that Israel deliberately killed children in Gaza. Then he called on Turks to learn how to make money like Jews do.

Erdogan's anti-Israel and anti-Semitic blows were followed on Tuesday evening by Turkey's government-controlled TRT1 television network's launch of a new prime-time series portraying IDF soldiers as baby- and little girl-killers who force Palestinian women to deliver stillborn babies at roadblocks and line up groups of Palestinians against walls to execute them by firing squad.

The TRT1 broadcast forced Israel's hand. Late on Tuesday, the Foreign Ministry announced it was launching an official protest with the Turkish Embassy. Unfortunately, it was unclear who would be coming to the Foreign Ministry to receive the demarche, since Turkey hasn't had an ambassador in Israel for three weeks.

TURKEY'S BREAK with the West; its decisive rupture with Israel and its opposition to the US in Iraq and Iran was predictable. Militant Islam of the AKP variety has been enjoying growing popularity and support throughout Turkey for many years. The endemic corruption of Turkey's traditional secular leaders increased the Islamists' popularity. Given this domestic Turkish reality, it is possible that Erdogan and his fellow Islamists' rise to power was simply a matter of time.

But even if the AKP's rise to power was eminently predictable, its ability to consolidate its control over just about every organ of governance in Turkey as well as what was once a thriving free press, and change completely Turkey's strategic posture in just seven years was far from inevitable. For these accomplishments the AKP owes a debt of gratitude to both the Bush and Obama administrations, as well as to the EU.

The Bush administration ignored the warnings of secular Turkish leaders in the country's media, military and diplomatic corps that Erdogan was a wolf in sheep's clothing. Rather than pay attention to his past attempts to undermine Turkey's secular, pro-Western character and treat him with a modicum of suspicion, after the AKP electoral victory in 2002 the Bush administration upheld the AKP and Erdogan as paragons of Islamist moderation and proof positive that the US and the West have no problem with political Islam. Erdogan's softly peddled but remorselessly consolidated Islamism was embraced by senior American officials intent on reducing democracy to a synonym for elections rather than acknowledging that democracy is only meaningful as a system of laws and practices that engender liberal egalitarianism.

In a very real sense, the Bush administration's willingness to be taken in by Erdogan paved the way for its decision in 2005 to pressure Israel to allow Hamas to participate in the Palestinian elections and to coerce Egypt into allowing the Muslim Brotherhood to participate in its parliamentary poll.

In Turkey itself, the administration's enthusiastic embrace of the AKP meant that Erdogan encountered no Western opposition to his moves to end press freedom in Turkey; purge the Turkish military of its secular leaders and end its constitutional mandate to preserve Turkey's secular character; intimidate and disenfranchise secular business leaders and diplomats; and stack the Turkish courts with Islamists. That is, in the name of its support for its water-downed definition of democracy, the US facilitated Erdogan's subversion of all the Turkish institutions that enabled liberal norms to be maintained and kept Turkey in the Western alliance.

How Turkey was lost

As for the Obama administration, since entering office in January it has abandoned US support for democracy activists throughout the world, in favor of a policy of pure appeasement of US adversaries at the expense of US allies. In keeping with this policy, President Barack Obama paid a preening visit to Ankara where he effectively endorsed the Islamization of Turkish foreign policy that has moved the NATO member into the arms of Teheran's mullahs. Taken together, the actions of the Bush and Obama White Houses have demoralized Westernized Turks, who now believe that their country is doomed to descend into the depths of Islamist extremism. As many see it, if they wish to remain in Turkey, their only recourse is to join the Islamist camp and add their voices to the rising chorus of anti-Americanism and anti-Semitism sweeping the country.

Then there is the EU. For years Brussels has been stringing Turkey along, promising that if it enacts sufficient human rights reforms, the 80-million strong Muslim country will be permitted to join Europe. But far from inducing more liberal behavior on the part of Turkey, those supposedly enlightened reforms have paved the way for the Islamist ascendancy in the country. By forcing Turkey to curb its military's role as the guarantor of Turkish secularism, the EU took away the secularists' last line of defense against the rising tide of the AKP. By forcing Turkey to treat its political prisoners humanely and cancel the death penalty, the EU eroded the secularists' moral claim to leadership and weakened their ability to effectively combat both Kurdish and Islamist terror.

At the same time, by consistently refusing to permit Turkey to join the EU, despite Ankara's moves to placate its political correctness, Brussels discredited still further Turkey's secularists. When after all their self-defeating and self-abasing reforms, Europe still rejected them, the Turks needed to find a way to restore their wounded honor. The most natural means of doing so was for the Turks writ large to simply turn their backs on Europe and move toward their Muslim brethren.

FOR ITS part, as the lone Jewish state that belongs to no alliance, Israel had no ability to shape internal developments in Turkey. But still, Turkey's decision to betray the West holds general lessons for Israel and for the free world as a whole. These lessons should be learned and applied moving forward not only to Turkey, but to a whole host of regimes and sub-national groups in the region and throughout the world.

In the first instance it is crucial for policy-makers to recognize that change is the only permanent feature of the human condition. A country's presence in the Western camp today is no guarantee that it will remain there in the future. Whether a regime is democratic or authoritarian or somewhere in the middle, domestic conditions and trends play major roles in determining its strategic posture over time. This is just as true for Turkey as it is for the US, for Iran and for Sweden and Egypt.

The loss of Turkey shows that countries can and do change. The best way to influence that change is to remain true to one's friends, even if those friends are imperfect. Only by strengthening those who share one's country's norms and interests - rather than its procedures and rhetoric - can governments exert constructive influence on internal changes in other states and societies.

Moreover, it is only by being willing to recognize what makes an ally an ally and an adversary an adversary that the West will adopt policies that leave it more secure in the long run. A military-controlled Turkish democracy that barred Islamists from political power was more desirable than a popularly elected AKP regime that has moved Turkey into the Iranian axis. So, too, a corrupt Western-dependent regime in Afghanistan is more desirable than a Taliban-al-Qaida terror state. Likewise an unstable, weakened mullocracy in Iran challenged by a well-funded, liberal opposition is preferable to a strong, stable mullocracy that has successfully repressed its internationally isolated liberal rivals.

Turkey is lost and we'd better make our peace with this devastating fact. But if we learn its lessons, we can craft policies that check the dangers that Turkey projects and prepare for the day when Turkey may decide that it wishes to return to the Western fold.

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How Turkey was lost

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

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ATTACKS ON WOMEN RISING

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette (Pennsylvania)

November 25, 2009 Wednesday

SOONER EDITION

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Section: WORLD; WORLD BRIEFS; Pg. A-4

Length: 526 words

Byline: Compiled from news services

Body

UNITED NATIONS -- Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon yesterday launched a Network of Men Leaders to act as role models in the global campaign to end the "pandemic" of violence against women.

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said it is unacceptable that about 70 percent of women experience some form of physical or sexual violence from men -- "the majority from their husbands, intimate partners or someone they know."

Mr. Ban spoke at the commemoration of the 10th anniversary of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, which is today.

Pakistani officer arrested

ISLAMABAD -- Pakistani officials have arrested a retired Pakistani army major for his suspected role in an alleged plot that was hatched in the U.S. to assassinate the creator of controversial Danish cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad.

The news will fuel growing fears about the radicalization of Pakistan's army, and particularly the links between former army officers and Islamic extremists

The Pakistani army said the major, who retired two years ago, was arrested a couple of months ago. An army spokesman, denied that any others were detained in connection with the Danish cartoons plot.

Animal sacrifice underway

BARIYAPUR, Nepal -- The ceremony began with prayers in a temple by tens of thousands of Hindus before dawn yesterday. Then it shifted to a nearby corral, where in the cold morning mist, scores of butchers wielding curved swords began slaughtering buffalo calves by hacking off their heads.

Over two days, 200,000 buffaloes, goats, chickens and pigeons will be killed as part of a blood-soaked festival held every five years to honor Gadhimai, a Hindu goddess of power.

Many Nepalis believe that sacrifices in Gadhimai's honor will bring them prosperity and that by eating the meat they will be protected from evil.

ATTACKS ON WOMEN RISING

Prisoner deal downplayed

JERUSALEM -- Seeking to lower expectations of an imminent deal with the Islamic group **Hamas** to exchange a captured Israeli soldier for hundreds of Palestinian prisoners, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel said yesterday that no agreement had yet been reached.

His remarks came as **Hamas**' leaders gathered in Cairo for talks mediated by Egyptian and German officials on the terms of a possible exchange, and they may have been partly intended as last-minute brinkmanship by the Israelis.

Suspected IRA dissidents

BELFAST, Northern Ireland -- Two suspected Irish Republican Army dissidents have been charged with attempting to kill an off-duty police officer near the province's border with the Republic of Ireland last week, police said yesterday.

IRA die-hards opposed to the outlawed group's 1997 cease-fire are at their most dangerous in recent memory, according to an expert panel that monitors the province's myriad paramilitary groups.

Flotilla of icebergs

WELLINGTON, New Zealand -- A flotilla of hundreds of icebergs that split off Antarctic ice shelves is drifting toward New Zealand and could pose a risk to ships in the south Pacific Ocean, officials said yesterday.

Large numbers of icebergs last floated close to New Zealand in 2006, when some were visible from the coastline -- the first such sighting since 1931.

Load-Date: November 25, 2009

International: Israel pressuring Gazan patients to turn collaborator in return for care: Palestinians interrogated and held without charge: Questioning is a security measure, government says

The Guardian - Final Edition

December 7, 2009 Monday

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theguardian

Section: GUARDIAN INTERNATIONAL PAGES; Pg. 23

Length: 825 words

Byline: Rory McCarthy, Jabaliya

Body

Israeli security agents held a Palestinian patient for three weeks without charge, interrogated him repeatedly and offered access to hospital care if he agreed to become an informant, the Guardian has learned.

The treatment of Abd al-Karim al-Atal, 28, is the latest in a series of cases over the past two years in which patients from Gaza referred for hospital treatment in Israel have been held without charge and pressed to become Israeli collaborators, human rights groups say.

Atal, who is losing his sight, is still waiting for a permit to travel from his home in the Jabaliya refugee camp, in Gaza, to an eye hospital in east Jerusalem for a cornea transplant operation now scheduled for today.

Physicians for Human Rights, a leading Israeli rights group, says the pressure exerted on these patients amounts to coercion, which is illegal under the fourth Geneva convention, and may even constitute a breach of the UN convention against torture. It says around one in five Gazans who apply for permits to enter Israel for medical care are now submitted to detailed interrogations.

B'Tselem, another human rights group, says Israeli security agents "exploited the questionings to exert inappropriate pressure on ill persons, with the aim of forcing them to collaborate with the agency".

Israel says such questioning is a necessary security measure to prevent terrorist attacks and says that 5,000 people - patients and their relatives - have been allowed out of Gaza for medical reasons this year. But Ami Gil, of Physicians for Human Rights, said while initial screening of patients referred for treatment in Israel was a legitimate security consideration, the problem lay in the pressure put on patients under interrogation.

"There is a screening process to prevent a security threat and another to pressure patients to gather intelligence information that has nothing to do with their own case or background," he said. "That is not about screening. It is about gathering information for intelligence purposes."

International: Israel pressuring Gazan patients to turn collaborator in return for care: Palestinians interrogated and held without charge: Questioning is a sec....

Atal has a referral from Gazan health officials supported by the St John Eye Hospital in east Jerusalem, which states that he needs a penetrating keratoplasty - a cornea implant. In the west that would be routine, but no hospital in Gaza can perform the operation.

He applied for a permit to enter Israel and in early September was called to the Erez crossing which leads into Israel. He was blindfolded and handcuffed for a time. An Arabic-speaking Israeli security officer accused him of falsifying his medical papers. In fact, his vision is so poor he can barely see out of his left eye and has limited vision in his right. Atal, a former member of Gaza's Fatah-led police force, was asked to give detailed information about his five brothers and an uncle living in Egypt. He was accused of involvement in the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, the military wing of the Fatah movement.

"They said if I accepted and gave them information they would allow me to return home and to get a permit in future. If I refused they said they would arrest me," he said. When he said he had no information to give he was taken to a detention centre in the nearby city of Ashkelon.

He was photographed, fingerprinted and then held for 19 days alone in a cell with no windows. He was interrogated for hours at a time while seated on a small chair with his hands cuffed behind his back underneath an air conditioner pouring out cold air.

Eventually he was questioned while attached to what he was told was a polygraph machine. He was asked about his relatives, about his neighbours and about any **Hamas** leaders he knew. Again he was accused of involvement in militant groups. "I looked around and said: 'Are you talking to me? I can hardly recognise people in the street?'

"They said if I collaborated with them it would be a good thing for the Palestinians, that it would help them target **Hamas** leaders, not accidentally kill civilians," he said. "They said I should call them and tell them about my neighbourhood: who is living where, is anyone from **Hamas** there. They said I would get a permit to enter Israel in return. They offered money, they said I would be allowed to travel abroad."

Israeli officials deny that entry to Israel for medical reasons is conditional on patients becoming informants but they say security is an issue. In June 2005 a **female** suicide bomber wearing an explosives belt tried to cross through Erez and Palestinians have used false medical papers in the past. Last year a government official wrote to Physicians for Human Rights saying the questioning was "intended to evaluate the degree of danger posed by the applicant".

"For us it is not only a legal issue, but a very basic moral issue," said Gil. "We are talking about patients here."

Captions:

The Erez crossing, where people from Gaza cross into Israel for medical treatment. Many say they have been pressed to become informants Photograph: AP

Abd al-Karim al-Atal needs an eye operation

Load-Date: December 7, 2009

The human (rights) comedy

The Pioneer (India)

October 17, 2009 Saturday

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Length: 1333 words

Dateline: India

Body

India, Oct. 17 -- The paraphrase on the William Saroyan (1943) masterpiece is indicative of the unfortunate state of one of the most important areas of international relations, human rights - check out the Goldstone report

Any Internet search for human rights organisations would reveal a long list of entities dedicated to the subject. Most consist of individuals devoted to a topical or geographic approach to the basic issue of upholding and guarding the principles of human rights. However, one organisation exists in a league of its own - the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC). This body was set up by the UN General Assembly in March 2006 to address human rights violations and make recommendations. Yet from its very inception it turned into a purely political institution, hijacked by a small number of member states whose own human rights records are nothing less than disgraceful.

A mere perusal of the list of members reveals an incredible degree of cynicism in assigning this body with the mandate of safeguarding human rights. How can Pakistan, a state which refuses to bring to justice the perpetrators of the Mumbai 26/11 attacks, investigate allegations of human rights which are far milder than its own transgressions? Can a state like the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, in which women are denied such basic values as voting or even the right to drive a car, pass judgment on human rights?

Can impartiality and objectivity be expected from them in any manner whatever? In this politically charged body, in which human rights themselves play no role whatever, political expediency has brought about an obsession with just one country in the international arena, Israel. Of the 11 special sessions that have been held by the Human Rights Council, five were dedicated solely to the condemnation of Israel. The resolutions that have been adopted are utterly devoid of even a minimal effort to present objective analysis. The human rights ideal has served as a fig leaf for cynical political horse-trading and Israel, the only Jewish state in the world, has become the whipping boy.

This biased and politicised approach adopted by the council has been condemned by global leaders. Former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan twice criticised the Council for "disproportionate focus on violations by Israel" and urged the same attention to other states. The current UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-Moon, issued a statement saying he was "disappointed at the council's decision to single out only one specific regional item given the range and scope of allegations of human rights violations throughout the world." Former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Mary Robinson expressed her opinion on the council stating: "This is unfortunately a practice by the council: adopting resolutions guided not by human rights but by politics. This is very regrettable." And the list goes on - including such entities as Human Rights Watch, an NGO that cannot be identified as being pro-Israeli, which accused the Human Rights Council of silence in the face of atrocities throughout the world and the UN watchdog, UN Watch, which declared that "No one has ever disputed that the Arab-controlled Human Rights Council deliberately selected individuals who had made up their mind well in advance - not only that Israel was guilty, but

The human (rights) comedy

that a democratic state with an imperfect but respected legal system should be considered the same as, or worse than, a terrorist group".

Under these circumstances it was hardly surprising when, in January 2009, the Council adopted a resolution establishing a fact-finding mission with a mandate which even transcended the already shockingly-low value system to which it had previously sunk. According to the mandate, the mission was to "investigate all violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law by the occupying power Israel, against the Palestinian people throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory particularly Gaza Strip".

This formulation represented a complete abandonment of a basic, or even a cosmetic, attempt to establish what really happened in the Gaza Strip. The mandate was unique in that it established in advance which party was to bear the guilt even before the investigation began. To add insult to injury, the mission comprised those who had publicly made their position against Israel known prior even to their appointment.

Needless to say, the report produced was not worth the paper it was written on. The fact that Israeli towns and villages had been under constant bombardment for eight long years and over a quarter of a million innocent civilians had been living under constant threat of the Hamas arsenal of weaponry did not even merit a passing mention in the report. Also conveniently omitted were the countless Israeli attempts to prevent the war by use of diplomatic measures that also included Egyptian mediation, which were met only by Hamas intransigence. The report also failed to mention the Hamas commitment to the destruction of Israel as well as its devotion to a rabid anti-Semitic ideology.

The Richard Goldstone report, therefore, became an unsophisticated distortion of reality and presented a biased and one-sided picture. It is apparent that "fact-finding" was not on its agenda, but rather designing an additional tool to cater the ambitions of some of its members to harness various international bodies for another political campaign against Israel. It squandered an opportunity to conduct a thorough investigation into the entire campaign. This has had the effect of further eroding the already besmirched reputation of the organisation in the eyes of the democratic world and highly compromised its future actions.

But there are even more dangerous ramifications. It drew an extremely dangerous parallel between the right to self defense by a state that has been continuously targeted and attacked unprovokedly and intentional killings of civilians by a recognised terrorist organisation. According to the conclusions of the report, terrorists operating from densely populated areas would enjoy complete immunity while any State which attempts to protect its citizens from such attacks is, in essence, powerless. As such, any terrorist organisation which wields de-facto control over a population is granted protected status. The report justifies the use of terror in the name of "self-determination" in flagrant contradiction of the accepted view of the international community regarding inadmissibility of terrorist acts under any circumstances.

Finally, in its accusation that Israel intentionally targeted civilians, the report disregarded all the measures taken by Israel aimed at reducing the civilian toll that had been acknowledged by all other serious independent inquiries. It made no mention, for example, of IDF precautions such as cross-verification of intelligence prior to targeting or the numerous incidents in which operations were aborted due to concerns about disproportionate civilian harm. And while the report did, reluctantly, acknowledge Israel's "significant efforts" to issue warnings before attacks, it dismisses these as not having been effective. It cast doubts on all the statements of Israeli officials and members of the armed forces barring those that supported the initial premises of the report.

It extensively quotes, for example, from the statement of a small group of Israelis for their criticisms of Israel and yet the assertions of the selfsame group are given no weight whatever when they confirm that Hamas booby-trapped civilian buildings.

The report even attempted to question the independence of the acclaimed and highly regarded Israeli judicial system, whose rulings often serve as guidelines for many democracies fighting terror.

The human (rights) comedy

- The writer is Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of Israel in India Published by HT Syndication with permission from Pioneer. For more information on news feed please contact Sarabjit Jagirdar at htsyndication@hindustantimes.com

For any query with respect to this article or any other content requirement, please contact Editor at htsyndication@hindustantimes.com

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TV news: Accessing the truth

The Jerusalem Post

September 11, 2009 Friday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 6

Length: 1181 words

Byline: DAVID J. FORMAN

Highlight: COUNTERPOINT. To combat the superficiality plaguing our news programs, we need a modern day Edward R. Murrow, who can wade through all the media hype and ask the tough questions

Body

In his new book, *No Sense of Decency*, prize-winning political correspondent Robert Shogan recounts the advent of TV news in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Its "coming-of-age" reached a high point in 1954, when this powerful new medium brought down the notorious Sen. Joseph McCarthy as millions of Americans watched in rapt awe - and disgust - the Army-McCarthy Hearings.

Indeed, television played a decisive role in other earth-shattering events that rocked the US, most notably the civil rights movement and the Vietnam War. Exposing the ugly face of racism in places like Selma, Alabama and Little Rock, Arkansas helped forge the 1964 civil rights bill. The daily intrusion of the Vietnam War into the living rooms of American households, with images of US soldiers returning home in body bags, the Tet offensive and that South Vietnamese girl running naked through the streets, her body charred from napalm, turned the tide against America's misguided adventure in Southeast Asia.

But, as Shogan points out, at the very incipient stages of this novel invention, news correspondents, editorialists, anchormen and commentators were mostly cheerleaders for government policy. Certainly during World War II, those short newsreels in movie theaters only trumpeted the victories and splendor of the allied forces fighting Nazi Germany. Such was also the case during the Korean War and throughout most of the Cold War.

Reporters tiptoed around government leaders, seldom asking them pointed questions; except for CBS's Edward R. Murrow, who defied McCarthy's intimidating and menacing assaults against anyone who dared challenge him.

THE WORLD of TV news has changed dramatically since Murrow's day. We are saturated with 24-hour-a-day news coverage. CNN, BBC, MSNBC, FOX News, Al Jazeera reach a global audience. One can overdose on round-the-clock satellite and cable news. Some stations pride themselves on balanced reporting, particularly Fox News; but any objective analysis indicates the opposite, as it unabashedly pushes its own conservative agenda.

CNN, while more subtle, heralds its professionalism with its pretentious I-Report, Back Story, Connect the World, which are no more than blatant gimmicks to draw in audiences. While less entertaining - and less infuriating than Fox - to read the news, it parades before us a bevy of international female beauties to compete with Fox's runners-up to the Miss Universe contest, all a chauvinistic exploitation of the female species in a cynical attempt to make the news more "attractive."

TV news: Accessing the truth

Such was the case with the attraction of "embedded" reporters with US troops in Iraq. They should have been labeled "in bed" reporters, as they transmitted to viewers what their government dictated.

Then there is the phenomenon of "experts." However, these so-called authorities are no more than political pundits. To fill hours of endless broadcasts, they parse every word of every politician, deciphering some idiotic meaning behind the meaning. In no place is this truer than here. Our self-important TV news personalities are more interested in hearing themselves as they incessantly interrupt the interviewee or answer their own questions, rather than listening for the answer. They pass off opinions as news. They don't report events of the day, they shape them.

RELATED TO matters in the Middle East, I would propose this line of questioning to some of the interlocutors involved. Let's do it in the order of US President Barak Obama, former US president Jimmy Carter and Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu.

Question: President Obama, when addressing the Muslim world, did you really mean to say that Israel deserves a country only because of the Holocaust? Are you, a believing Christian, unaware of the historical ties of Jews to this land? You fed the current argument that Arabs should not have to suffer for the sins of the Europeans. Was this not a colossal mistake, indicating that you may lack the skill to serve as an impartial negotiator between Israelis and Palestinians? You want a freeze in settlement building, but if the Israelis continue with the settlement enterprise, do you plan sanctions to pressure Israel?

Instead of showing Obama speaking of matters related to the Middle East, with images of the conflict being flashed across our TV screens for dramatic effect, and instead of propagandizing for right-wing policies, Fox's Bill O'Reilly should ask some of the above penetrating questions.

Question: President Carter, you met with Hamas leaders and reported their willingness to recognize Israel within the 1967 borders. You present Hamas as reasonable partners to peace negotiations. But how reasonable are they when they introduce Shari'a law and deputize a "God squad" to enforce it? Did you ask them about Gilad Schalit who, contrary to international law, is denied any rights? Does that sound reasonable to you? Isn't the protection of human rights your calling card?

Did you ask them to explain their violent takeover of Gaza or why more Palestinians have been killed by Palestinians than by Israelis, including during the war and the entire intifada, often in the most brutal fashion imaginable? What type of peace agreement do you envision, given the fractious division between Fatah and Hamas?

Even as we watch a grinning Jimmy Carter fawning all over Hamas's Ismail Haniyeh, praising his supposed moderation, CNN's Christiane Amanpour should be asking these piercing questions instead of advertising her own soon-to-be-aired self-aggrandizing program.

Question: Prime Minister Netanyahu, because of the West's insistence on halting all settlement activity, you have indicated that you have basically agreed to cease new settlement building. Yet, every week, stuffed in my mailbox, is a pamphlet from some modern Orthodox yeshiva discussing the weekly Torah portion. Each flyer includes advertisements for settlements - some newly formed, some well into different stages of development and some selling plots. None of them are existing settlements so one could argue "natural growth," and none are in the Jerusalem area so one could argue that they are not part of a settlement freeze.

What purpose do Channels 10, 11 and 22 serve when they show film clips of a smiling Netanyahu shaking hands with Obama, George Mitchell, Gordon Brown, Angela Merkel and Nicolas Sarkozy? Why doesn't Miki Haimovich ask him point blank about the bald-faced lies he sells to these leaders - not intervene before he answers or argue with him, but just let him squirm as he is confronted with incontrovertible facts when these yeshiva handouts are presented to him?

TV news: Accessing the truth

It is not enough to abide by the adage "one picture is worth a thousand words." Too often news stations use images for their sensationalistic value, and images can take on a life of their own, presenting a story that appears to be insightful, but possibly having no bearing on reality.

Instead of such superficiality, we need a modern day Edward R. Murrow, who can wade through all the media hype and ask tough questions so that we might have access to some semblance of truth.

Graphic

Photo: INSTEAD OF just showing Obama speaking of the Middle East with images of the conflict being flashed across our screens for dramatic effect, he should be asked some very penetrating questions. (Credit: Bloomberg)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

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**West Bank student blindfolded, expelled in handcuffs to Gaza, petitions
Israel to return**

Guelph Mercury (Ontario, Canada)

November 12, 2009 Thursday

Final Edition

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Section: Pg. 01

Length: 513 words

Dateline: ARTICLE

Body

JERUSALEM - A **female** Palestinian student who says she was handcuffed, blindfolded and hauled off to the Gaza Strip by the Israeli army in the middle of the night late last month, asked Israel's supreme court Thursday to let her return to her studies in the West Bank.

The incident highlights a deep fear among the thousands of Palestinians originally from Gaza who now live in the West Bank - sudden expulsion by the Israelis to the **Hamas**-ruled coastal strip.

Berlanty Azzam, 21, was only two months away from finishing her business degree at Bethlehem University when she was stopped by Israeli soldiers at a checkpoint in the West Bank. After noticing her Gaza-issued identity card, soldiers detained Azzam and put her in the back of an army jeep.

When Israeli soldiers led her out of the vehicle around midnight, Azzam was shocked to see where she was - the border between Gaza and Israel.

"I was so surprised, I didn't know what to say," Azzam recalled. "I tried to ask the soldiers if there's any other solution than this, and they just said, 'No, you've reached Gaza, you have to enter.'"

Yadin Elam, a lawyer with the Israeli human rights group Gisha representing Azzam, said such incidents happen on a daily basis and constitute a removal "by force" on the part of Israel of Palestinians from West Bank to Gaza.

Elam estimated that there are currently as many as 25,000 Palestinians living in the West Bank in danger of being deported to Gaza because their identification cards list a Gaza address.

Rights group lawyers and university faculty members asked the supreme court Thursday to allow Azzam to return to the West Bank. Azzam, denied a permit to travel to Jerusalem for the day, remains in Gaza.

Elam said during the hearing that Israel violated Azzam's basic legal rights by denying her access to a lawyer before deportation.

The Israeli supreme court ruled in 2007 that Gaza students had to obtain a permit if they wished to study in the West Bank. Elam said such permits did not exist when Azzam enrolled in Bethlehem University in 2005. At the time, she obtained a four-day permit to enter Israel so she could cross over to the West Bank.

West Bank student blindfolded, expelled in handcuffs to Gaza, petitions Israel to return

"How could they deport her for not having a permit that didn't even exist?" Elam said.

The West Bank and Gaza Strip lie on opposite sides of Israel. The Palestinians hope to form an independent state that includes both territories. Under the 1993 Oslo interim peace accord, both areas were to be considered a single territorial unit. But since **Hamas** militants violently seized control of Gaza in 2007, Israel has branded Gaza an enemy entity and imposed a blockade that includes strict travel restrictions on residents.

The Israeli army says Azzam was living in the West Bank illegally, and was rightly returned to Gaza.

The court on Thursday remanded the case to a military hearing to be held at the Gaza border next week, where Azzam can attend.

"My priority, what's most important, is to get back to my studies," Azzam said, speaking by phone from Gaza. "I was so close to finishing, I just want to get back to Bethlehem and finish."

Load-Date: November 24, 2009

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International briefs

Telegraph Herald (Dubuque, IA)

December 27, 2009 Sunday

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Section: A; Pg. 8

Length: 584 words

Byline: The Associated Press

Body

Explosion rocks Hezbollah stronghold BEIRUT - Three bombs planted under a car exploded south of Beirut on Saturday, killing one person and wounding several others in an attack that apparently targeted an official from the Palestinian militant group Hamas, the state-run news agency said. The official National News Agency said the explosion was caused by "three bombs tied to each other" that were placed under the car of an official believed to be from Hamas. It did not identify the targeted official or the victims.

One of the wounded was in serious condition, the report said. Explosions in the area, which is almost completely controlled by the Shiite Hezbollah, are rare. Hezbollah has its own arsenal with tens of thousands of rockets and missiles, which it says it needs to fight off any threat from Israel. The area was bombed out by Israel during the monthlong 2006 war with Hezbollah. India governor, 86, resigns after sex tape HYDERABAD, India - The 86-year-old governor of a southern Indian state resigned Saturday, a day after a television news channel broadcast a tape allegedly showing him in bed with three women, an official said. Gov. Narain Dutt Tiwari's office has denied the allegation, denouncing the tape as fabricated. Tiwari, a veteran governing Congress party leader in Andhra Pradesh state, sent his resignation letter to the Indian president on Saturday, citing health reasons, a state official said on condition of anonymity as he was not authorized to talk to reporters. The scandal hit as Andhra Pradesh is engulfed in social unrest. Outrage over a delay in creating a new state there erupted into violent demonstrations in several cities earlier this week. Meanwhile, more than 40 people are feared dead after a bridge collapsed during construction in western India, police said as hope faded for finding survivors. Rescuers had recovered the bodies of 12 workers from the site in Rajasthan state by Saturday, and they feared that the 30 others still missing could be dead. Report: Iranian forces, demonstrators clash TEHRAN, Iran - Iranian security forces beat protesters in central Tehran on Saturday while hardline activists disrupted a speech by the country's moderate former president, reformist Web sites said, raising tensions ahead of opposition rallies expected during a key religious mourning ritual. Several injuries were reported in Saturday's unrest, which came a day before the Shiite Muslim mourning ceremony of Ashoura. Opposition activists have held a series of anti-government protests since the death of a dissident cleric last week, and other rallies are expected during Sunday's Ashoura rituals. Last Sunday's death of the 87-year-old Grand Ayatollah Hossein Ali Montazeri, a sharp critic of Iran's leaders, has given a new push to opposition protests, which have endured despite a heavy security crackdown since disputed presidential elections in June. Morales moves to legalize small coca plots LA PAZ, Bolivia - President Evo Morales said Saturday that he plans to make it legal for Bolivia's farmers to grow small parcels of coca plants. Morales, who also heads a coca growers association, said he wants to permit individual farmers to cultivate coca plots of 40 meters by 40 meters (130 feet by 130 feet). Coca leaf is the key ingredient of cocaine. Bolivia's president has clashed with Washington over his efforts to allow some coca growing. Local authorities say they still are cracking down on large-scale cocaine trafficking. The Associated Press

International briefs

Load-Date: December 27, 2009

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[Divestment can work](#)

Guardian.com

September 7, 2009 Monday

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theguardian

Length: 929 words

Body

ABSTRACT

Seth Freedman: The targeted boycotting of businesses involved in Israel's occupation of the Palestinian Territories is legitimate

FULL TEXT

The Norwegian government's [divestment](#) from [Elbit Systems](#) is an entirely appropriate response to Elbit's business involvement with the occupation of the West Bank. Despite the howls of protest from Israeli officials, the Norwegians' decision is a principled stand, which bears the closest of scrutiny, especially when viewed in the context of previous decisions by the country's council of ethics regarding state investments.

Claims that Elbit is being unfairly singled out due to its being an Israeli company ring hollow given that Norway's public pension fund also refuses to invest in 30 other firms' shares, including Boeing, Wal-Mart and British Aerospace. Elbit's role in constructing and maintaining Israel's [separation barrier](#) - deemed illegal in its entirety by the [international court of justice](#) (ICJ), and in part by the Israeli supreme court - means that any fund interested in maintaining an ethical stance towards investment ought to steer well clear of Elbit's stock.

While an [indiscriminate boycott of all Israeli produce](#) is both wrong-headed and counterproductive, that does not mean specific sanctions ought to be proscribed in cases where the companies involved are clearly making money from piling misery on the Palestinians. It has been pointed out that Norway's fund managers could go even further than simply scratching their investment in Elbit, given that almost [two-thirds of the 41 Israeli companies](#) in which the Norwegian pension fund holds stock "have significant economic interests in the continued Israeli occupation", according to the [Coalition of Women for Peace](#).

Advocating a boycott of groups involved in illegal and immoral activities is in line with the policies of public and private equity funds the world over, not to mention those of the Israeli government when it comes to dealing with the likes of [Hamas](#) and its overseas supporters. Israel, backed by US and EU officials, has been boycotting [Hamas](#) for years, imposing collective punishment on every resident of the Gaza Strip in a crude attempt to topple the [Hamas](#) government.

Divestment can work

Given Israel's leaders' endorsement of boycotts as a legitimate strategy when it suits their aims, it appears their issue with Norway is not one of tactics, but rather of the target chosen. According to Norway's Finance Minister, "[We do not wish to fund companies that so directly contribute to violations of international humanitarian law](#)," by opposing Norway's actions, Israeli officials seem to believe that either Elbit does not contribute to such violations, or that the alleged violations do not, in fact, take place at all, despite clear evidence to the contrary on both counts.

While Norway's investment in Elbit was a mere \$5m, those backing the divestment decision hope the withdrawal will encourage other funds to follow suit and cause a snowball effect, which will cause Elbit's shareholders to think long and hard about the type of projects the company undertakes. [The BDS campaign has had some notable victories of late](#) - including Veolia's pulling out of the controversial Jerusalem light railway project, and [investment firm Blackrock's](#) divestment from Africa-Israel Ltd, one of Israel's largest real estate firms with a long track record of involvement in settlement construction.

Last week, [Africa-Israel announced](#) it was unable to meet its debt obligations, causing the price of its shares and bonds to [plummet](#), and sending shockwaves through the Israeli economy. While BDS supporters were quick to claim [Africa-Israel's woes were, at least partially, a result of their own efforts](#), in reality, the impact of the boycott campaign against the firm was dwarfed by the effect of collapsing property prices around the globe. Nonetheless, that the BDS movement considers itself able to claim even part of such a massive scalp is testament to the traction the campaign has gained in recent years, and Norway's investment decision will only grease the wheels of the boycott bandwagon.

Targeted boycotting of Israeli firms such as Elbit and Africa-Israel should be applauded, so long as those behind the actions are not minded to extrapolate their policies into a scattergun approach aimed at anyone and anything connected to Israel. This requires a fine balancing act, but it is infinitely preferable to the consequences of taking aim at Israel's companies and citizens in their entirety - which would undo all the good work undertaken by the more level-headed boycott campaigners, and guarantee an even more intransigent stance by Israel's leaders than they take today.

The strength of Norway's decision to divest from Elbit, likewise the British government's [refusal to lease property from Africa-Israel](#), lies in the unimpeachable arguments behind their actions. True, Elbit will not be brought crashing to its knees on the back of a few million of its shares being sold, yet the cost to the firm's reputation will be far more significant, especially if Norway's move is followed by similar withdrawals by other funds and individuals.

Companies' strategies are ultimately driven by their bottom line and share price. If Elbit's shareholders demand the firm ceases its involvement in the occupation in order to avoid future damaging imbroglios, then the boycotters will have proved their strategy's worth and had a tangible effect on challenging the harmful status quo in the West Bank - which can only benefit both Palestinians and Israelis in the long run.

Load-Date: September 7, 2009

BOMBERS TARGET PAKISTANI SCHOOL

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette (Pennsylvania)

October 21, 2009 Wednesday

SOONER EDITION

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Section: WORLD; WORLD BRIEFS; Pg. A-4

Length: 568 words

Body

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan -- Suicide bombers attacked an Islamic university popular with foreigners in Pakistan's capital yesterday, killing four people in apparent retaliation for an escalating army offensive on a Taliban and al-Qaida stronghold near the Afghan border.

An Associated Press reporter close to the battle zone in South Waziristan met a group of Taliban fighters who challenged army claims of progress in the four-day assault, saying they had pushed soldiers back from the strategic town of Kotkai.

Intelligence officials also said the army had been repelled from the town after being close to taking it. They asked that their names not be used for operational reasons.

The suicide bombers hit a faculty building and a women's cafeteria at the International Islamic University, where nearly half the students are women and hundreds are foreigners.

No group claimed responsibility for the attack.

Swiss alert snags Polanski

LOS ANGELES -- Swiss authorities set in motion the arrest of fugitive director Roman Polanski in his decades-old child sex case as he traveled to the country last month, documents obtained by The Associated Press show.

A series of e-mails obtained under a public records request show the Swiss Federal Office of Justice sent an urgent fax to the U.S. Office of International Affairs on Sept. 22 stating Mr. Polanski was expected in Zurich. The director was to be feted at a film festival, and Swiss officials wanted to know if the U.S. would be submitting a request for his arrest.

It took little sleuthing to figure out Mr. Polanski would be in Zurich -- the film festival had a Web site promoting its upcoming tribute to the "Rosemary's Baby" and "Chinatown" director. The new details again raise the question of why Switzerland decided to go after Mr. Polanski now, even though the 76-year-old director was a frequent visitor to that nation, where he owns an Alpine chalet.

After receiving the tip, federal officials alerted the Los Angeles district attorney's office, which immediately began drafting an arrest warrant.

Mr. Polanski was arrested Sept. 26 as he arrived in Zurich to receive a lifetime achievement award.

BOMBERS TARGET PAKISTANI SCHOOL

Iranian-American journalist

TEHRAN, Iran -- Iran ignored appeals by Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and even rock star Sting and sentenced an Iranian-American academic to 12 years in prison yesterday for his alleged role in anti-government protests after the country's disputed presidential election.

The sentence for Kian Tajbakhsh was the longest prison term yet in a mass trial of more than 100 opposition figures, activists and journalists in the postelection turmoil.

At the same time, Iran allowed another defendant to leave the country -- Canadian-Iranian Maziar Bahari, a Newsweek journalist arrested in the same crackdown who had been freed on bail over the weekend.

Palestinian elections

CAIRO -- The Palestinian president said yesterday he will set Jan. 24 as the date for presidential and legislative elections, despite objections from his rivals in the **Hamas** militant group.

Mahmoud Abbas told journalists in Cairo he will set the date in a presidential decree Sunday.

Hamas, which wants the voting delayed, dismissed Mr. Abbas' announcement as an attempt to pressure the group into an agreement to end a bitter two-year division between the two sides that has interfered with peace talks with Israel and hampered reconstruction of war damage in Gaza.

Load-Date: October 22, 2009

Letters

The Jerusalem Post

September 22, 2009 Tuesday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 14

Length: 1626 words

Byline: Jack Davis, S.L. Woolf, Tuvia Muskin, Frank J. Van Bers, Julia Hadar, Henry Kaye, David Goshen, Neville C. Goldrein, Dr. Anthony Luder

Highlight: Readers' Letters

Body

Middle Jewish ground?

Sir, - I disagree with Eliezer Whartman's proposal to establish a middle ground of Jewish observance ("There must be a middle ground," UpFront, September 11).

I agree that Judaism conducted in Israel, particularly by the Orthodox bloc, is fractious, fragmented and inhospitable. I agree that allowing militant, powerful ultra-Orthodox camps to continue on the same political path in parallel with expanding numbers of assimilated Israelis is a danger to our state and the Jewish people. I also agree there is an urgent need to reform our decadent and defective electoral system.

That reform should certainly include a complete separation between religion and state together with a well- worded, protective constitution - it would eliminate the political blackmail in which coalition governments make shady deals with rapacious Orthodox factions that use voice and power disproportionately, to the detriment of most of the electorate. It would bolster our democratic institutions, to the advantage of all.

But a "middle ground of observance" would only widen the conflict between Orthodox and secular.

JACK DAVIS

Jerusalem

Sir, - It is a shame that Eliezer Whartman chose to be so vitriolic in his comments about Orthodox Israeli citizens. I am one of those who waded through to his final suggestions. I agreed with most of them. I'm sure there are many religious Israelis who very much favor separation between government and religion and strongly support electoral reform.

Writers with good points to make should just make them and leave out their personal prejudices.

S. L. WOOLF

Ramat Beit Shemesh

Letters

Sir, - Eliezer Whartman and Uri Regev ("Break Israel's Orthodox monopoly" September 15) attempt to propagate the myth that "American Jewry is made up largely of Conservative and Reform Jews." They must base this on the fallacy that if a person professes to be Jewish and does not identify himself as Orthodox, he automatically falls into the other categories.

The truth is that the vast majority of US Jews are secular and adhere to little, if any, religious philosophy. Asked to classify himself, the traditional or minimally traditional Jew may respond that he is Conservative. Told that Reform has no observance commitments, the completely secular Jew may choose this option.

A more objective measure would be the total number of participants in Shabbat (or Sunday, for some) services; or take even three-days-a-year (two for Reform) Jews. Worshipers at Orthodox services outweigh Conservative and Reform combined, while those who attend no services at all are probably greater than all three.

In Israel, where over 70 percent of Jews reportedly fast on Yom Kippur, even the non-observant would probably reply, "The synagogue that I don't attend is Orthodox." It is thus the height of hutzpa for Reform, Reconstructionist and Conservative rabbis to demand equal representation on religious councils and in the media.

Whartman errs when he claims he is not accepted as an authentic and equal Jew by the Orthodox. He, as well as any born or duly converted Jew, is considered equal by all, irrespective of his level of observance. The Orthodox rabbis, however, do not accept him as a rabbi; every profession has its certification requirements, and they obviously believe that he doesn't meet these criteria.

Reconstructionism has redefined Who is a Jew, the approach to prayer, even the nature of God. In essence, its approach is much like The Ethical Culture Society. Although this society's chief supporters and its founder were Jewish, it never claimed to be an authentic stream of Judaism.

TUVIA MUSKIN

Rehovot

'A Zionist who

loves Israel'

Sir, - It speaks well for Nicole Goldstone that she believes her father to be a Zionist ("Goldstone's daughter: My father loves Israel," September 17). Ms. Goldstone would, however, find it hard today to find many Israelis who agree with her.

A true Zionist would be unlikely to have accepted the UN mandate that was so obviously intended to add to the long-standing, obsessively anti-Israel fulminating of that weak-kneed and increasingly destructive organization.

The best thing that could be said is that Judge Goldstone fell into the trap the UN had set: If they could get a Jew to head this thing up, it would greatly enhance its impact. After all, if a Jew signs the report, it must all be true.

FRANK J. VAN BERS

Moshav Zofit

Sir, - Many ex-South Africans living in Israel find it hard to decide what is more shameful: the fact that Richard Goldstone is South African, or that he is a Jew. It appears that he belongs with those self-righteous intellectuals worldwide who forget that Israel has been forced to fight for over 60 years to survive in a very hostile Middle East. His report has provided additional ammunition for those waging the present battle to delegitimize the existence of the State of Israel.

JULIA HADAR

Jerusalem

Letters

Sir, - The idea seems to have been propagated that Richard Goldstone was a good judge in the apartheid regime. I strongly challenge this concept. There were bad judges, and less bad judges, but it was impossible to be a "good" judge.

What Goldstone was, in fact, was the goat being eaten by the python of apartheid - he simply lay there and allowed himself to be consumed instead of fighting back. And he was duly rewarded by Mandela's regime for his complacency.

Now he is at it again, the goat being consumed by the chronically anti-Semitic UN snake. And, we can be sure, he will be rewarded again.

HENRY KAYE

Mazkeret Batya

Sir, - With all due respect to Richard Goldstone, he does not appear to be experienced in the way terror groups conduct their sophisticated war against Israel.

It was unfair to choose a judge with no previous experience of conflicts in the Middle East; to do justice to the assignment, he needed to have studied other conflicts prior to Operation Cast Lead - for example, the Second Lebanon War, to see how reliable, experienced media companies were "sold" stories such as the fabricated Kafr Kana massacre.

In the strangest phenomenon of all - possibly because it has not existed in other conflicts - civilians received prior notice via telephone and leaflets dropped from the air warning them of an impending attack and advising them to vacate to safe ground; and yet, in the main, they did not comply. There is substantial eyewitness evidence that Hamas prevented them, and that those who tried to leave were severely beaten or even killed.

The partial blockade of Gaza - never the sole initiative of Israel but of the EU and US, with the required cooperation of Egypt - was designed to force Hamas to cooperate with Fatah to enable plans to proceed for a Palestinian state. EU members undertook not to make contacts with Hamas.

Comparing 28 Israeli deaths with 1,250 Palestinian dead takes no account of the psychological damage done to thousands of Israeli men women and children who were subjected to shelling day and night for nearly a decade. The numbers, moreover, have to be investigated in depth: the Palestinian tally includes Fatah supporters summarily executed by Hamas gunmen while in hospital. No real attempt has been made to distinguish Hamas forces from civilians.

To sum up, Judge Goldstone was no match for Palestinian propaganda techniques, which allow the telling of untruths if it serves the cause. Possibly it did not occur to him that Gaza is a police state run with all imaginable violence and terror. Serious, in-depth investigation is not something its rulers would ever tolerate.

DAVID GOSHEN

Kiryat Ono

Sir, - For some years, I sat as a part-time Crown Court and Circuit Judge in England. The procedure, as in most civilized countries, was for the court to hear the evidence as adduced by all sides, and then to deliver a judgment in accordance with that evidence. It could, of course, only consider the evidence before it and could not take into account evidence which had been withheld.

The terms of reference of the Goldstone Commission were in accord with these precepts - indeed, no court system can give a judgment other than on the evidence before it. When that commission was convened, all interested and involved parties were invited to give evidence to enable the commission to consider all aspects.

Letters

Israel chose, for reasons which can well be understood, to refrain from presenting evidence - with the result that the commission was obliged to base its judgment only on the evidence before it. Its findings were, therefore, without reference to the Israeli viewpoint, which indeed was a very valid viewpoint; but which Israel had chosen to withhold.

NEVILLE C. GOLDREIN, CBE

Jerusalem

Prayer's efficacy, or not

Sir, - Last month the chief rabbis instituted a day of prayer and fasting in order to remove the threat of swine flu from the people of Israel. Unfortunately, it does not seem to have worked, as the number of cases is on the rise and is expected to continue into the winter ("Woman dies of swine flu," September 14).

In his book *The God Delusion*, Richard Dawkins describes a scientific study in the US designed to test whether the outcomes of cancer patients for whom vigorous prayers were said was any different from those unfortunates for whom no organized prayer effort was made. The results showed no statistical difference, although the non-prayer group showed a slightly more favorable tendency.

Perhaps our own home-grown experience of praying for the sick could be used as a basis for another scientific study? If prayer is effective, then it should be adopted as government policy, being much cheaper than tablets and immunizations. If not, then the reasons for the non- efficacy of such prayer should be investigated, and will no doubt in themselves be of great interest.

DR. ANTHONY LUDER

Ziv Medical Center, Safed

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

World journal

The Telegraph-Journal (New Brunswick)

October 1, 2009 Thursday

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Section: NEWS;NEWS; Pg. A7

Length: 557 words

Body

White House session assesses Afghan war

President Barack Obama assembled key members of his Cabinet, top military commanders and diplomats in the White House Situation Room on Wednesday as the administration wrestled with its strategy for the Afghan war and assessed the top commander's request for additional U.S. troops. Gen. Stanley A. McChrystal, in an assessment of the conflict commissioned by Obama, has said the United States would likely lose the war if the administration did not send more troops. White House spokesman Robert Gibbs said the hours-long meeting Wednesday was the second in a series of five in which officials were thrashing out U.S. strategy. Details of the meeting were not released.

Visit

Dalai Lama given white cowboy hat

CALGARY - The Dalai Lama has been welcomed to Calgary with a time-honoured Western tradition - the placing of a white cowboy hat on his head by the city's mayor. The Tibetan spiritual leader laughed Wednesday as he tried to figure out which way the hat fit on his head. He then posed for pictures wearing his traditional scarlet and gold robes, with the white hat perched atop his head and one furry mitten on his hand, one of a number of small gifts from First Nations groups. The Dalai Lama is in the city for the first time in three decades to take part in a conference organized by the University of Calgary.

Court

Ex-Peru president sentenced to 6 years

LIMA, Peru - A court imposed a six-year prison sentence Wednesday on disgraced ex-President Alberto Fujimori, who already faced the prospect of spending the rest of his life in a cell after three previous convictions. He also was fined \$9 million for authorizing wiretaps and bribes. The sentencing concluded two years of televised trials that forced a country still divided over its bloody past to relive the darkest days of Fujimori's authoritarian, corruption-riddled administration. Animated and unrepentant in early trials, the ailing 71-year-old former president appeared resigned in his later hearings.

Protests

Guinea's leader bans demonstrations

CONAKRY, Guinea - Guinea's military leader banned all gatherings and demonstrations Wednesday, as the United Nations pressed for an independent investigation into why troops opened fire on 50,000 pro-democracy protesters. UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay condemned the soldiers' use of live ammunition. A human rights group said 157 people were killed and more than 1,200 were wounded. The government maintains that 57 people died and said most of them were trampled.

Mideast

Video for prisoners swap planned

JERUSALEM - In a surprise deal announced Wednesday, **Hamas** will give Israel a videotape providing a first glimpse of a captured Israeli soldier to prove he is alive in return for the release of 20 Palestinian **women** held in Israeli prisons. It marked the first tangible sign of progress, and it could lead to an end to a crippling blockade of the impoverished, war-torn Gaza Strip, which is ruled by militant Islamic **Hamas**. Israel said the exchange would take place Friday.

Religion

Bishop arrested on porn charges

HALIFAX - A bishop based in Nova Scotia has been charged with possessing and importing child pornography. Raymond Lahey, 69, resigned from his post with the Roman Catholic diocese of Antigonish on the weekend before news of his arrest became public knowledge.

Load-Date: October 1, 2009

US, Israeli officials meet again to discuss reviving peace talks

The Jordan Times

October 1, 2009 Thursday

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THE JORDAN TIMES

Length: 566 words

Body

Agencies

US special envoy George Mitchell held talks in Washington on Wednesday with two Israeli envoys as part of efforts to revive Palestinian-Israeli peace negotiations, a spokesman said.

Philip Crowley, the assistant secretary of state for public affairs, said the talks follow up on the summit US President Barack Obama had last week with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas.

"Starting right about now here at the Department of State... we have a meeting between George Mitchell and an Israeli delegation, following up on the discussion and the trilateral meeting last week in New York," Crowley told reporters.

Representing the Israelis are a senior Netanyahu aide, Yitzhak Molho, and Defence Minister Ehud Barak's chief of staff Michael Herzog, he added.

Mitchell was due to meet with a Palestinian delegation on Thursday, Crowley said.

Obama's administration has been struggling to get the Israelis and the Palestinians to agree to relaunch their peace talks which were suspended in late December during the Gaza war, with the thorny issue of Jewish settlements the main stumbling block.

Obama announced last week as he met Israeli and Palestinian leaders that he had asked both sides to send negotiators to Washington for the talks, brokered by Mitchell.

Abbas has been told by his Fateh movement that he must not resume peace talks unless Israel freezes its settlement construction, a senior Fateh member said Wednesday.

Fateh's position could help Abbas stand up to US pressure to return to talks with Israel.

Abbas has repeatedly said he would not return to talks without a freeze in Israeli settlements, which is mandated by a US-backed peace plan. Israel refuses to comply, offering at best to slow construction for a limited period.

Fateh's Central Committee, the movement's key decision-making body, met late Tuesday with Abbas to discuss his options following last week's trilateral meeting with Obama and Netanyahu.

Mohammed Dahlan, a committee member, said the panel told Abbas he must not budge.

"Settlements and negotiations are two parallel lines that will never meet," Dahlan told the Associated Press.

The settlements are being built in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, areas captured by Israel in the 1967 Mideast war and sought by the Palestinians for a future state. Nearly half a million Israelis have moved to these areas over the past four decades.

Prisoners

US, Israeli officials meet again to discuss reviving peace talks

Israel will free 20 Palestinian women prisoners in return for a video of a soldier held in Gaza, in a breakthrough in nearly three years of indirect talks with Hamas, officials said on Wednesday.

"The Israeli Security Cabinet decided to authorise the release of 20 Palestinian women detainees and prisoners," the Israeli prime minister's office said in a statement.

"Israel will receive updated and clear proof on the health and condition of Gilad Shalit. This proof of life will be handed to Israel by the mediators in the form of a videotape that has recently been filmed."

The release of the prisoners and the handing over of the videotape to Israel will be done back-to-back on Friday, a senior Israeli official told reporters.

The Izzeddine Al Qassam Brigades, the armed wing of Hamas, confirmed the deal, which was proposed by Egyptians and Germans mediating the indirect talks between the Islamist rulers of the Gaza Strip and Israel.

Load-Date: November 23, 2009

End of Document

Palestinian MP accuses Israel of organ theft

AlArabiya.net

September 7, 2009 Monday

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Length: 577 words

Body

A Palestinian minister on Tuesday accused Israel of trafficking the organs of Palestinians, while an Israeli rights group reported that the Gaza war was responsible for the deaths of countless Palestinians including more than 300 minors.

Israel "is hiding the bodies of Palestinian martyrs to remove the proof of their crimes, including organ trafficking," prisoner affairs minister Issa Qaraqa said. He spoke at a rally held in the West Bank city of Nablus to demand the return to their families of bodies of dozens of Palestinians killed by the Israeli military.

A challenge to Israel

Arab-Israeli MP Mohammed Barakei challenged Israel to disprove the claim.

"It is our right to ask ourselves what Israel's reasons are for keeping the bodies of martyrs," he said at the demonstration marking the "national day for the restitution of martyrs' bodies" decreed by the Palestinian government.

"Have the bodies been mutilated? My answer is yes, barring proof to the contrary. Have their organs been stolen? My answer is yes, barring proof to the contrary," Barakei said.

Palestinian NGOs say Israel is holding the bodies of about 275 Palestinians.

Last month Sweden's Aftonbladet claimed that Israeli soldiers had snatched Palestinian youths to steal their organs, but the author of the report admitted he had no proof of this.

Israel angrily rejected the claims, comparing them to medieval blood libels against Jews.

Israeli human rights group reports Palestinian deaths

Israel's Gaza offensive killed 1,382 Palestinians, with more than half of them, including 320 minors, not having taken part in the fighting, an Israeli human rights group said on Tuesday.

B'Tselem said 773 of the Palestinians killed in the January-December offensive "did not take part in the hostilities," a figure that contrasts sharply with the Israeli military claim that most of the casualties were militants.

B'Tselem said 252 children under the age of 16 and 111 women were among those killed, while the military put the figures at 89 and 49, respectively.

Sixty-eight Palestinians aged 16 to 18 who did not take part in the fighting were among the fatalities, which also included 19 minors in the same age group "who took direct part in the hostilities," the rights group said.

Palestinian MP accuses Israel of organ theft

"The extremely heavy civilian casualties and the massive damage to civilian property require serious introspection on the part of Israeli society," a B'Tselem statement said, calling on Israel to conduct an "independent and credible" investigation.

It said 248 of the Palestinians fatalities were police officers, most of them killed when police stations were bombed on December 28, the first day of the three-week offensive.

The Israeli military, which put the Palestinian death toll at 1,166, includes the officers among the 709 "terror operatives" it says were killed in the offensive. Police in the Gaza Strip have been under the command of **Hamas** since the Islamist movement seized control of the enclave in June 2007.

B'Tselem said its figures were obtained by researchers who "visited homes and gathered death certificates, photos, and testimonies" for all the children killed.

The Israeli military had no immediate comment, but had previously stressed that its objective during Operation Cast Lead "was to target the **Hamas** terror organization and not the citizens of the Gaza Strip."

Gaza emergency medical services say 1,382 Palestinians were killed in the offensive, including 447 under the age of 18.

Load-Date: September 8, 2009

End of Document

WORLD DIGEST

St. Louis Post-Dispatch (Missouri)

July 19, 2009 Sunday

FOURTH EDITION

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A20

Length: 552 words

Byline: From news services

Dateline: 0

Body

IDs are difficult in suicide blasts

Indonesian officials struggled Saturday to identify the two suicide bombers behind the deadly attacks Friday at two American hotels here, even as they said more clearly that the two men appeared to have had ties to a Malaysian Islamic extremist.

Iraqis make arrest in bombing - Iraqi authorities have arrested a member of an Iranian-backed militia suspected in an attack that killed three U.S. soldiers in southern Iraq, police said Saturday. Maj. Gen. Adil Daham, chief of the Basra provincial police, said the militiaman confessed early Saturday to the attack.

AIDS drugs in short supply in Africa - Doctors Without Borders warned that a chronic shortage of drugs to treat AIDS in six African countries could cost thousands of lives and reverse progress made on the continent most afflicted by the disease. Medical coordinator Eric Goemaere said apathy of governments, donors and the organizations they work with, as well as the global economic crisis, were to blame.

Milan blocks wine for children - For the first time in Italy's wine-steeped history, a city government has banned alcohol for those under 16 in an effort to curb drinking problems among youths. A measure approved in Milan calls for fines of as much as \$700 for younger teens caught drinking and for those who give or sell them alcohol.

U.S. F-15 crashes in Afghanistan - A U.S. Air Force F-15E Strike Eagle fighter jet crashed in central Afghanistan, killing the two crew members, the U.S. military said. A statement by the Air Force Central Command said the crash was not attributable to hostile fire, and a board of officers would be convened to determine the cause.

Planes flatten Taliban hide-out - Government warplanes flattened a suspected Taliban hide-out in the northwest, killing nine associates of Pakistani Taliban leader Baitullah Mehsud, officials said. Early Saturday, jets destroyed hide-outs of Mehsud's deputy Hakim Ullah in the Orakzai region, part of Pakistan's lawless tribal belt.

Ecuadoran president calls video a 'sham' - Ecuador's President Rafael Correa dismissed as a "sham" a newly released video in which a Colombian rebel commander discusses contributing to Correa's 2006 election campaign. The video appears to dispel any doubts that the leftist Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia contributed to the Correa campaign.

WORLD DIGEST

Clinton defends U.S. in India - Off the injured list and back on the world stage, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton gave an impassioned defense of American demands that India and other countries do more to tackle terrorism and global warming. Opening a three-day visit to India, Clinton sought to emphasize common interests, symbolized by the terrorist attacks in this seaside city last November that killed 166 people.

Man dies at 113 - Henry Allingham, who was the world's oldest man when he died Saturday at 113 in England, attributed his remarkable longevity to "cigarettes, whisky and wild, wild women." Jokes aside, the World War I veteran served as Britain's conscience, talking about the true cost of war.

Lights, camera, action ... veils - The action movie Hamas leaders made for their people in Gaza has made its debut. There are no sex scenes, and the Hamas militants are the heroes. The audience was composed of bearded men and veiled women.

Load-Date: July 20, 2009

End of Document

Svengalis behind the murderers

The Australian

July 20, 2009 Monday

1 - All-round Country Edition

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Section: FEATURES; Pg. 10

Length: 927 words

Byline: Christopher Hitchens

Body

Suicide bombers are not driven by despair but by vicious old men, contends Christopher Hitchens

It is sometimes important to write about the things that are not happening and the dogs that are not barking.

To do so, of course, can provide an easy hostage to fortune, which is why a lot of columnists prefer not to risk it. For all I know, some leering fanatic is preparing to make me look silly even as I write. But I ask anyway: whatever happened to the suicide bombers of Jerusalem?

It's not that long since the combination of self-immolation and mass murder was a regular event on Israeli soil. Different people drew radically different conclusions from the campaign, which had a nerve-racking effect not just on Israeli Jews but on Israeli Arabs and Druze -- who were often among the casualties -- and on visiting tourists. It was widely said by liberals, including people as eminent as Tony Blair's wife, Cherie, that the real cause of such a lurid and awful tactic was despair: the reaction of a people under occupation who had no other avenue of expression for their misery and frustration.

Well, surely nobody will be so callous as to say that there is less despair among Palestinians today, especially since the terrible events in the Gaza Strip, the return to power of the Israeli right wing and the expansion of Jewish-zealot settler activity. And yet there is no graph on which extra despair can be shown to have eventuated in more suicide. Indeed, if there is any correlation at all, it would seem to be in reverse. How can this be?

Of the various alternative explanations, one would be the success of the wall or "fence" that Israel has built, or is building, approximating but not quite conforming to the "green line" of the 1967 frontier. Another would be the ruthless campaign of targeted assassinations, whereby Israeli agents took out important leaders of Hamas and Islamic Jihad, the two organisations most committed to martyrdom operations. A third might be the temporary truces or ceasefires to which Hamas (but not Islamic Jihad) have from time to time agreed.

But, actually, none of these would explain why the suicide campaign went into remission. Or, at least, they would not explain why it went into remission if the original cause was despair. If despair is your feeling, then nothing can stop you from blowing yourself up against the wall as a last gesture against Israeli colonial architecture. If despair dominates your psyche, then targeted assassinations of others are not going to stop you donning the shroud and the belt and aiming yourself at paradise, even if only at a roadblock.

If despair is what has invaded your mind, why on earth would you care about this or that short-term truce?

Svengalis behind the murderers

Even before the assault died away, there were good reasons to doubt that despair had been the motive or the explanation. For one thing, almost all the suicide attacks were directed at civilians in pre-1967 Israel ``proper": in other words, in the Jewish part of Jerusalem or in towns along the Israeli coastline (in one case, a hotel in Netanya on Passover). It can probably be said with some degree of confidence that nobody blows themselves up for a half-a-loaf compromise solution. These cold-blooded attacks did not just avoid well-defended West Bank settlements or Israeli army bases; they also vividly expressed the demand that all Jews leave Palestine or risk being killed. Despair cannot so easily be channelled so as to underline a strictly political/ideological

objective.

Another possible reason for the slump in suicide is that those who were orchestrating it came to find that the tactic was becoming subject to diminishing returns. Despair must have meant a roughly constant stream of potential volunteers, but the immediate needs of Hamas and Islamic Jihad may not have always required the tap of despair to be left turned on. Indeed, there must have been some quite intense private discussions about how to turn it off. Not every despairing person can make, at home, the necessary belts, fuses and lethal charges. These things require a godfather. And this, in turn, prompts the question: what will be said if or when the tap is ever turned back on? Surely it won't quite do to say that despair must have broken out all over again, though I can easily think of some fools who will be ready to say it.

There were children among the last wave of suicide-murderers, some of whom lost their nerve and surrendered at the last moment. There were also young women, some of whom, it seems, would otherwise have been killed for ``honour" reasons and who were offered the relatively painless alternative of a martyr's fate. Nasty, vicious, fanatical old men, not human emotions, were making the decisions and deciding the days and the hours of death.

And the hysterical ululating street celebrations when such a mission was successful did not signify despair at all but a creepy form of religious exaltation in which relatives were encouraged to make a feast out of the death of their own children as well as those of other people.

To have added the promise of paradise to this pogrom is to have made spiritual and mental sickness complete; to have made it a sexual paradise is obscene into the bargain. (Women martyrs are obviously not offered the same level of bliss and promiscuity by the Koran.)

Meanwhile, the wall still stands and grows, ironically expressing the much more banal and worldly fact that there are two peoples in Palestine. Sooner or later there will be two states as well.

Christopher Hitchens is a columnist for Slate magazine.

Load-Date: July 19, 2009

In brief: News from Sneyd green, ipstones, fenton and blurton

The Sentinel (Stoke)

October 13, 2009 Tuesday

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Section: Pg. 5

Length: 209 words

Body

Fenton: Nathan Tunstall, aged 24, of Whieldon Road, Mount Pleasant, pleaded guilty to assaulting Anthony **Hamas** occasioning him actual bodily harm and damaging property belonging to Maureen Payne.

Both offences happened on May 16 this year.

Tunstall also admitted possessing cocaine.

Judge Paul Glenn, sitting at Stoke-on-Trent Crown Court, adjourned the case for a report. He extended Tunstall's bail.

IPSTONES: A woman was treated for smoke inhalation following a house fire.

Firefighters from Ipstones and Leek attended the blaze at a property in Hamps Valley Road at 7.37am yesterday.

The fire broke out in a ground floor shower room and was started accidentally.

The woman did not need to be taken to hospital.

BLURTON: Firefighters were called out to a house in Allendale Walk after a washing basket was left on a cooker.

Crews from Longton and Hanley attended the incident, which happened at around 4pm yesterday.

The **female** occupant of the property was taken to the University Hospital of North Staffordshire suffering from smoke inhalation.

BLURTON: Stephen Bradburn, aged 18, of Seedfields Road, Blurton, has denied assaulting James Pleasure occasioning him actual bodily harm on June 7. The case was adjourned for a trial. Bradburn's bail was extended .

Load-Date: October 14, 2009

[Amira Hass, a remarkable reporter](#)

Guardian.com

October 22, 2009 Thursday

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theguardian

Length: 202 words

Byline: Roy Greenslade, guardian.co.uk

Body

Amira Hass has received the [International Women's Media Foundation](#) 2009 Lifetime Achievement Award for her remarkable bravery in being an Israeli citizen who lives and reports from Gaza.

She is a regular columnist with Israel's **Ha'aretz** newspaper and has been pilloried by both Israelis, who don't want to hear what she reports, and by **Hamas** leaders, who don't want the free media to report on what they are doing.

CNN's **Christiane Amanpour** describes Hass as "one of the greatest truth-seekers of them all."

Hass was born eight years after her parents arrived to Israel. Her mother was a survivor of the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp and her father was in ghettos in Romania and Ukraine. She credits them with instilling in her the principle of equality.

She says: "Both my parents were communists and Jews. For them, there was the connection of the principle of equality. How they saw communism was very different from what we now know was the reality."

Here is [a video of Hass accepting her award](#) on Tuesday. She did so in most self-deprecating of terms: "My lifetime achievement needs to be corrected," she says. "Because it is failure. Nothing more than a failure. A lifetime failure."

Sources: [Democracy Now](#)/[IWMF](#)

Load-Date: October 22, 2009

Poll shows Israelis pessimistic about universal compliance to Geneva Conventions. On 60th anniversary of treaties almost half of respondents don't think they've helped prevent abuses

The Jerusalem Post

August 13, 2009 Thursday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 3

Length: 1268 words

Byline: JUDY SIEGEL

Body

Exactly 60 years after the ratification of the Geneva Conventions - four treaties and three protocols that establish the standards of international law for humanitarian treatment of the victims of war - the vast majority of Israelis have heard of them but 46 percent don't think they have contributed anything to preventing wars from escalating.

The event was marked in Geneva on Wednesday at a ceremony headed by International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) president Jakob Kellenberger, and by public opinion polls conducted of citizens in nine countries - including Israel - that have been harmed by armed disputes or other types of violence.

Since 1949, the conventions have been ratified by 194 countries, and also by non-state actors such as the Palestinian Authority. Organizations that rule over territory, such as **Hamas**, are bound by "customary law" to observe all the treaties and protocols, according to Yael Segev-Eitan, a spokeswoman of the ICRC in Israel and the territories.

Nevertheless, she added, **Hamas** has consistently ignored these basic rules and repeatedly refused to allow any communication with IDF soldier Gilad Schalit, who has been held captive since being captured by **Hamas** on June 25, 2006 and whose 23rd (Hebrew calendar) birthday was marked on Wednesday.

"There is an unfortunate gap between what should be and what exists," Segev-Eitan told The Jerusalem Post. "Most of the countries in the world observe the conventions, but it has been violated by **Hamas**, by Iran which has targeted Israel for annihilation, in the Georgian-Russian war a year ago, in Darfur and elsewhere."

But they were observed in the Six-Day War, the Yom Kippur War, the Falklands War and the First War in Lebanon," she added.

The conventions were born out of the horrors experienced by millions of people during the World War II and its aftermath, Kellenberger said at the ceremony. "The essential spirit of the Geneva Conventions - to uphold human life and dignity even in the midst of armed conflict - is as important now as it was 60 years ago. Thank you for doing all you can to keep that spirit alive."

The articles of the conventions define the basic rights of those captured during a military conflict, establishing protections for the wounded and addressing protections for civilians in and around a war zone. They specifically

Poll shows Israelis pessimistic about universal compliance to Geneva Conventions. On 60th anniversary of treaties almost half of respondents don't think they've....

protect people who are not taking part in the hostilities - civilians, health workers and aid workers - and those who are no longer participating in the hostilities, such as wounded, sick and shipwrecked soldiers and prisoners of war.

However, even though they call for measures to be taken to prevent or put an end to all breaches, they continue to be violated, especially in the case of Schalit.

The third Geneva Convention applies to prisoners of war like Schalit and contains 143 articles that precisely define the conditions in which they are incarcerated and their right to receive humane treatment and medical care, as well as be in touch with their families.

The ICRC's survey of 500 Israeli Jewish adults who comprise a representative sample was conducted by the local polling company, Geocartography. It found that 52.6% think refusal to give medical care, necessary food and water to civilians is absolutely forbidden, while 36.3% said that military attacks on medical, religious and educational institutions is absolutely forbidden (even if they harbor terrorists).

But when asked whether contacts with family members who were separated as a means to weaken the enemy, 28.9% said this was permissible and 28.1% said it was absolutely forbidden.

Fifty percent of Israelis think it is prohibited to attack enemy fighters in populated areas knowing that many women and children would be killed, although they think that sometimes there is no choice but to go ahead and do so.

Among those who said that attacks on civilians were permissible in some cases, 49.1% said it was to enable soldiers to protect their lives or those of their comrades on the battlefield. Nearly 30% said that one could shoot a person coming at him in such circumstances even if not certain that the person is an unarmed civilian or an armed enemy.

When asked why they opposed certain actions forbidden by the conventions in an armed conflict, 32% said their view emanated from their personal values and principles, while only 7% cited the Geneva Conventions as the reason.

Pierre Wettach, the ICRC head of delegation in Israel and the territories, said that "many Israelis seem to think that civilian casualties are unavoidable, although when presented with specific scenarios, a majority believe that there are limits to what is permitted in war.

"The gap between the awareness of the rules and their perceived impact is perhaps an indication that people want to see better respect for and implementation of the law," continued Wettach. "We will continue our efforts to promote understanding of and compliance with instruments of international humanitarian law, including the Geneva Conventions, but it is ultimately the responsibility of political authorities and armed forces and groups to uphold the law and to ensure that even wars have limits."

Compared to citizens of the other eight countries, Israelis were much more aware of the Geneva Conventions and more pessimistic that they can prevent abuses.

The ICRC Web site at www.icrc.org did not mention the results of the Geocartography poll, but it did have the results of surveys in Afghanistan, Colombia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Georgia, Haiti, Lebanon, Liberia and the Philippines.

Segev-Eitan, an Israeli, explained that it was the only survey not to be conducted from Geneva and that publication of the results of the Israeli poll on the ICRC site was delayed "for technical reasons" until Thursday.

The questions covered people's personal experience of armed conflict and violence, the specific impact that it has on them, views on the acceptable conduct of combatants, the effectiveness and desired actions of related organizations and third parties, awareness of the Geneva Conventions and the role of health workers during armed conflict.

Poll shows Israelis pessimistic about universal compliance to Geneva Conventions. On 60th anniversary of treaties almost half of respondents don't think they've....

The aim, said the ICRC, was to "develop a better understanding of people's needs and expectations, to gather views and opinions and to give a voice to those who have been adversely affected by armed conflict and other situations of armed violence."

Some 75% of those surveyed across the eight countries feel there should be limits to what combatants are allowed to do in the course of fighting their enemies; just 10% say that there should be no such limits. The remainder are undecided.

All Colombians and 99% of respondents in the Philippines identify certain behavior that should be "off limits."

Percentages are somewhat lower in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (79%), Afghanistan (78%), Liberia (73%), Haiti (56%) and Lebanon (54%).

In Colombia and Georgia, more people today want civilians always to be left alone than those questioned in a 1999 poll. In Afghanistan and Lebanon the trend has shifted, with more people saying today that civilians should be left alone only "as much as possible" rather than "always to be left alone."

In Afghanistan, the percentage of people holding this view has risen from 32% to 47%, and in Lebanon from 29% to 63%.

Planting land mines, even though civilians may step on them, received the highest rejection in the countries polled by the ICRC. Almost all respondents opposed attacking religious and historical monuments. Virtually everyone (96%) accepts the principle that all wounded or sick during an armed conflict should have the right to health care.

Graphic

Photo: THE ORIGINAL document of the first Geneva Convention. Most people surveyed agreed that planting land mines should be outlawed. (Credit: AP)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

Quds rally expresses solidarity with Palestinians

Daily Times

September 19, 2009 Saturday

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Length: 203 words

Dateline: KARACHI

Body

KARACHI, Sept. 19 -- The World Quds Day rally was held on Friday as a referendum against the Zionist regime of Israel.

A large number of people including women and children participated in the rally that was staged from Numaish to Regal Chowk to express solidarity and support with the oppressed Palestinians.

President of the Imamia Students Organisation Hassan Zaidi, Allama Aftab Haider Jafari, Allama Qazi Ahmed Noorani Siddiqui, Maulana Baqar Zaidi, and Maulana Mirza Yousuf Hussain spoke at the rally.

Jamiat Ulema-e-Pakistan leader Qazi Ahmed Noorani Siddiqui paid tributes to Imam Khomeini for declaring the last Friday of Ramazan as the World Quds Day. All the speakers condemned the siege of Gaza and occupation of the Palestine by Israel. They vowed that Palestine including its holy sites, and in particular Quds Sharif (old Jerusalem), will be liberated and freed soon.

The rally unanimously adopted a resolution in favour of the Hezbollah and Hamas. Jafaria Students Organisation also staged a Quds Day rally from Regal Chowk to Empress Market. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Daily Times. For more information on news feed please contact Sarabjit Jagirdar at htsyndication@hindustantimes.com

For any query with respect to this article or any other content requirement, please contact Editor at htsyndication@hindustantimes.com

Load-Date: September 19, 2009

The Saudis are ready for peace - right after pigs fly

The Jerusalem Post

September 17, 2009 Thursday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 16

Length: 922 words

Byline: DOUGLAS M. BLOOMFIELD

Highlight: A pro-Western Arab ambassador once said that every Arab country may make peace with Israel some day, but never the Saudis. Washington Watch

Body

Had the United States not turned back Saddam Hussein in Kuwait, it's likely he would have marched into Saudi Arabia. The Saudis essentially sat back and watched the American-led forces protect and defend their enormous wealth, basking in the protection before and since of the American nuclear umbrella.

The billions they've spent on the latest weapons we have made them no less dependent on our protection; they were unable to stand up to Saddam in 1990, and today, after historic arms buying sprees, they are unable to defend themselves against their cross-Gulf rivals in Iran.

A senior Saudi prince once told an American defense secretary, "You're just a salesman and we pay cash." That sounded a lot like shut up and do as you're told, because the customer is always right.

After so many years of American presidents of both parties kowtowing to the Riyadh royals who by accident of geology sit on great lakes of oil, it is no wonder they have such high regard for themselves and such low esteem for the US.

THAT WAS in full display on the op-ed page of Sunday's New York Times in an article by Turki al-Faisal, the former ambassador to Washington. His message was clear: Despite Saudi talk about wanting peace, we shouldn't take them so literally. The 2002 Saudi peace proposal was essentially an ultimatum, he confirmed, noting that until all demands are met, there will be no talking to Israel.

As "the world's energy superpower and the de facto leader of the Arab and Muslim worlds," Saudi Arabia "holds itself to higher standards of justice and law," he said. Thus the Saudis refuse to engage Israel until it "ends its illegal occupation of the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and the Golan Heights" - and here he takes up the agenda of Hizbullah - "Shaba Farms in Lebanon." Until these and other Saudi demands are met, he insists, any steps toward normalization "would undermine international law and turn a blind eye to immorality."

This piety comes from a man who for 25 years headed one of the most brutal security forces in the world on behalf of a corrupt and autocratic monarchy which tolerates slavery, has been condemned for human trafficking, enforces and teaches and preaches religious bigotry, suppresses the rights of women. It is a country where homosexuality is subject to the death penalty and thieves have their hands cut off.

Saudi respect for human rights is like a bracha(blessing) for kosher pork on Yom Kippur.

The Saudis are ready for peace - right after pigs fly

No one will know how much money and other support Turki helped deliver to the PLO, Hamas, Islamic Jihad and other terror groups. He has admitted meeting repeatedly with Osama bin Laden and the Taliban, but says that stopped after September 11, 2001. And don't forget that 15 of the 19 hijackers on September 11 were, like bin Laden, Saudis.

Anyone except possibly a fund-raiser for Human Rights Watch will attest that the kingdom is a serial abuser of human rights with no right to lecture anyone on the subject, particularly Israel. Israel's human rights record is by no means perfect, it just tends to look that way next to Saudi Arabia's. In fact, Israeli Arabs have dramatically greater freedom in Israel than Saudis do in their own country.

MALCOLM SMART, Amnesty International's director for the Middle East and North Africa, said recently that in the name of fighting terrorism, the kingdom has undertaken "severe repression of all forms of dissent" to the point where "there is now an almost complete lack of protection of freedoms and human rights."

Turki rejected calls by President Barack Obama, the crown prince of Bahrain and others for "greater communication with Israel" by Arab states and moves to revive the peace process. Instead he insisted on adopting the all-or-nothing Saudi 2002 initiative and offered his own formula for peace: In Turki's view there could be no talks with Israel until it meets all Saudi demands. Step one would be "immediate removal of all Israeli settlements in the West Bank." Simultaneously "the international community must pressure Israel to relinquish its grip on all Arab territory." It is not clear whether he refers only to that land captured in 67 or more.

He dismisses criticism of the Hamas charter calling for destruction of Israel as "outdated," although Hamas, which the Saudis help finance, insists its position is unchanged.

Turki said Obama's Cairo speech "heightened expectations" in the Arab and Muslim worlds, and his call for an Israeli settlement freeze was "a welcome development." But he also seems to be telling the president to keep the pressure on Israel and don't call for Saudi help until you can deliver 100 percent of our demands. Until then any normalization with Israel amounts to a reward for the "theft" of Arab land, and we won't do that, he wrote.

Also this weekend, the Saudi ambassador to Washington, Adel al-Jubeir, rebuffed a bipartisan plea from more than 220 members of Congress for the Saudi king to "assert a strong leadership role" by making "a dramatic gesture toward Israel." He rejected all "incremental" moves in favor of a "final settlement" approach as proposed by his government.

In another recent article, this one in Foreign Policy, Turki accused Obama of "demagoguery" in advocating energy independence and said such calls are "political posturing at its worse" and aimed at demonizing his country.

A number of years ago a pro-Western Arab ambassador told me that every Arab country may make peace with Israel some day, but never the Saudis. If Turki's latest outpourings are any indication, that is truer than ever.

Graphic

Photo: US PRESIDENT Barack Obama greets Saudi Arabia's King Abdullah at the G-20 summit in April. Despite Saudi talk about wanting peace, the Arab kingdom has largely rebuffed Obama's calls for it to make overtures to Israel. (Credit: AP)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

HRW: Israelis shot Gazans waving white flags

The Daily Star (Lebanon)

August 14, 2009 Friday

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THE DAILY STAR

LEBANON

Length: 657 words

Byline: Daily Star Staff

Body

Human Rights Watch (HRW) called on Israel on Thursday to investigate seven incidents in which it said Israeli troops shot dead Palestinian civilians who were flying white flags during the war in Gaza in January. The US-based lobby group said other governments should press for prosecutions under international law over incidents in the conflict, if the Jewish state and Gaza's Islamist authorities failed to act themselves.

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM: Human Rights Watch (HRW) called on Israel on Thursday to investigate seven incidents in which it said Israeli troops shot dead Palestinian civilians who were flying white flags during the war in Gaza in January. The US-based lobby group said other governments should press for prosecutions under international law over incidents in the conflict, if the Jewish state and Gaza's Islamist authorities failed to act themselves.

HRW said it had statements and other evidence indicating 11 unarmed people, including five women and four children, were shot dead while in groups waving white flags.

"These casualties comprise a small fraction of the Palestinian civilians wounded and killed," it said.

"But they stand out because, in each case, the victims were standing, walking or in slowly moving vehicles with other unarmed civilians, and were trying to convey their non-combatant status by waving a white flag.

"All available evidence indicates that Israeli forces were in control of the areas in question, no fighting was taking place there at the time, and no Palestinian forces were hiding among the civilians or using them as human shields."

The Israeli military said in a statement the HRW report was "based upon the testimony of a number of Palestinians whose credibility has not been substantiated," adding that its soldiers were obliged to respect individuals presenting a white flag as a symbol of surrender or of non-combatant status, but that Hamas militants had exploited those with white flags for cover and protection.

"Any person who displays a white flag in this way acts illegally, does not enjoy protection from retaliatory action, and endangers nearby civilian populations," the military said.

HRW : Israelis shot Gazans waving white flags

A Gaza observer group said over 900 of more than 1,400 Palestinians killed in the conflict were civilians. Israel said just under 300 civilians, but it included policemen, defined as non-combatants under international law, in its civilian death toll. Thirteen Israelis, 10 soldiers and three civilians, died.

Israel has rejected international criticism of an offensive it said was launched to curb rocket attacks on its towns by **Hamas** in Gaza - attacks which HRW also condemns as war crimes. Israel says it is investigating allegations but has not yet found cause to prosecute any of its soldiers.

Mark Regev, a spokesman for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, accused HRW of bias.

The group's "admission of fundraising activities in Saudi Arabia in tandem with the Kingdom's authoritarian regime raises important questions about the organization's professionalism, impartiality, integrity and credibility," he said.

HRW said it had received no reply to detailed questions it had sent the army. It gave an account of an allegation that on January 7 a soldier shot dead two children: "Two **women** and three children ... were standing in front of their home after an Israeli soldier ordered them outside - at least three of them holding pieces of white cloth - when a soldier near a tank opened fire, killing two girls, ages 2 and 7, and wounding the third girl and their grandmother," it said.

The rights group concluded: "The evidence strongly indicates that, at the least, Israeli soldiers failed to take feasible precautions to distinguish between civilians and combatants before carrying out the attack. At worst, the soldiers deliberately fired on persons known to be civilians."

Defense Minister Ehud Barak has repeatedly insisted Israel has "one of the most moral armies in the world." - Reuters

Load-Date: August 14, 2009

Where are the suicide bombers of Jerusalem?

The Calgary Herald (Alberta)

July 14, 2009 Tuesday

Final Edition

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Section: THE EDITORIAL PAGE; Pg. A10; Christopher Hitchens

Length: 921 words

Byline: Christopher Hitchens, For The Calgary Herald

Body

It is sometimes important to write about the things that are not happening and the dogs that are not barking. To do so, of course, can provide an easy hostage to fortune, which is why a lot of columnists prefer not to risk it. For all I know, some leering fanatic is preparing to make me look silly even as I write. But I ask anyway: Whatever happened to the suicide bombers of Jerusalem?

It's not that long since the combination of self-immolation and mass murder was a regular event on Israeli soil. Different people drew radically different conclusions from the campaign, which had a nerve-racking effect not just on Israeli Jews but on Israeli Arabs and Druze --who were often among the casualties--and on visiting tourists. It was widely said by liberals, including people as eminent as Tony Blair's wife, Cherie Blair, that the real cause of such a lurid tactic was despair: the reaction of a people under occupation who had no other avenue of expression for their misery.

Well, surely nobody will be so callous as to say that there is less despair among Palestinians today--especially since the events in the Gaza Strip and the return to power of the Israeli right wing as well as the expansion of Jewish settler activity. And yet there is no graph on which extra despair can be shown to have eventuated in more suicide. Indeed, if there is any correlation at all, it would seem to be in reverse. How can this be?

Of the various alternative explanations, one would be the success of the wall or "fence" that Israel has built or is building, approximating but not quite conforming to the "green line" of the 1967 frontier. Another would be the ruthless campaign of "targeted assassinations," whereby Israeli agents took out important leaders of *Hamas* and Islamic Jihad, the two organizations most committed to "martyrdom operations." A third might be the temporary truces or ceasefires to which *Hamas* (but not Islamic Jihad) have from time to time agreed.

But, actually, none of these would explain why the suicide campaign went into remission. Or, at least, they would not explain why it went into remission if the original cause was despair. If despair is your feeling, then nothing can stop you from blowing yourself up against the wall as a last gesture against Israeli colonial architecture. If despair dominates your psyche, then targeted assassinations of others are not going to stop you from donning the shroud and the belt and aiming yourself at paradise, even if only at a roadblock. If despair is what has invaded your mind, why on earth would you care about this or that short-term truce?

Where are the suicide bombers of Jerusalem?

Even before the assault died away, there were good reasons to doubt that despair had been the motive or the explanation. For one thing, almost all the suicide attacks were directed at civilians in pre-1967 Israel "proper"--in other words, in the Jewish part of

Jerusalem or in towns along the Israeli coastline (in one case, a hotel in Netanya on Passover). It can probably be said with some degree of confidence that nobody blows themselves up for a half-a-loaf compromise solution. These cold-blooded attacks did not just avoid well-defended West Bank settlements or Israeli army bases; they also vividly expressed the demand that all Jews leave Palestine or risk being killed. Despair cannot so easily be channelled so as to underline a strictly political/ ideological objective.

Another possible reason for the slump in suicide is that those who were orchestrating it came to find that the tactic was becoming subject to diminishing returns. Despair must have meant a roughly constant stream of potential volunteers, but the immediate needs of Hamas and Islamic Jihad may not have always required the tap of despair to be left turned on. Indeed, there must have been some quite intense private discussions about how to turn it off. Not every despairing person can make, at home, the necessary belts, fuses, and lethal charges. These things require a godfather. And this, in turn, prompts the question: What will be said if or when the tap is ever turned back on? Surely it won't quite do to say that despair must have broken out all over again, though I can easily think of some fools who will be ready to say it.

There were children among the last wave of suicide-murderers, some of whom lost their nerve and surrendered at the last moment. There were also young women, some of whom, it seems, would otherwise have been killed for "honour" reasons and who were offered the relatively painless alternative of a martyr's fate. Nasty, vicious, fanatical old men, not human emotions, were making the decisions and deciding the days and the hours of death. And the hysterical ululating street celebrations when such a mission was successful did not signify despair at all but a creepy form of religious exaltation in which relatives were encouraged to make a feast out of the death of their own children as well as those of other people. To have added the promise of paradise to this pogrom is to have made spiritual and mental sickness complete; to have made it a sexual paradise is obscene into the bargain. (Women martyrs are obviously not offered the same level of bliss and promiscuity by the Quran.)

Meanwhile, the wall still stands and grows, ironically expressing the much more banal and worldly fact that there are two peoples in Palestine and that sooner or later there will be two states as well.

Christopher Hitchens is a columnist for Vanity Fair and the author of *God Is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything*.

Load-Date: July 14, 2009

U.N. Human Rights Council Autumn Session Begins

RTT News (United States)

September 14, 2009 Monday

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Length: 218 words

Body

(RTTNews) - U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillai, blamed the Gulf states, Sudan and Afghanistan the most for denying women their fundamental freedoms.

He was opening Monday the three-week autumn session of the U.N. Human Rights Council in Geneva.

The 11th session marks the presence of the United States as a full-fledged member of the Council for the first time.

The United States, elected in June to the 47-member body it has criticized for primarily denouncing Israel while ignoring abuses elsewhere, says it wants the U.N. Human Rights Council to become a "credible, balanced and effective" forum for advancing human rights.

The U.S. mission to the U.N. in Geneva said in a statement that "the United States looks forward to employing its voice in the promotion and protection of fundamental human rights and liberties."

U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Esther Brimmer addresses the council later in the day.

The Council will discuss issues such as modern slavery, children in war and the right to food and water.

The Council will assess violations around the world, including allegations of war crimes during Israel's invasion of the Hamas-ruled Gaza Strip in December and January.

For comments and feedback: contact editorial@rttnews.com

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Load-Date: April 17, 2010

Palestinian TV airs daring satire; A rarity in the mideast, the political show spares no one - but even President Mahmoud Abbas is chuckling.

The Christian Science Monitor

September 25, 2009 Friday

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Length: 989 words

Byline: Joshua Mitnick / Correspondent

Body

On "Saturday Night Live," which has long parodied politicians ranging from Jimmy Carter to Sarah Palin, these characters would be well within bounds: An Islamist judge who is a latent homosexual. A negotiator who emerges from peace talks stripped to his boxers. A president who worries about his Israeli-issued checkpoint pass. But this is Palestinian state TV.

Première during the holy month of Ramadan, the first-ever Palestinian political satire show turns national leaders and military strongmen into absurd protagonists on its nightly broadcasts, winning a growing viewership. A rarity across the Middle East, the comedic production known as "Watan a la Wattar" marks a seminal experiment in self-mockery and free speech in a society torn by internal politics and hemmed in by Israel's military occupation. "Through comedy you can reach the heart of the audience more quickly," says actor Manal Awad during a break in filming at an upscale Ramallah loft studio. "The Palestinian people deserve to laugh because we have enough drama. If you make people laugh at difficult topics, you force them to look at things with a different point of view." Palestinian introspection The show also holds potential to spark meaningful debate at a time when an easing of hostilities with Israel is allowing for greater introspection among Palestinians. The title - "homeland on a string" - refers to the precarious state of the Palestinian national project, which has been split for two years between rival regimes: **Hamas** in Gaza and the Palestinian Authority (PA), headquartered in the West Bank city of Ramallah. Based on a stand-up routine by writer-actor Imad Farajeen, the show explores the Gaza-Ramallah divide - albeit with trepidation, initially. "At first we were afraid people would not understand us, because this is new," says Mr. Farajeen, who, along with Ms. Awad, is one of three regulars in the show. "We are a very politicized society. They don't always like to talk about political problems." Producers insist that no party, no politician, and no institution will be spared - even its sponsors. A recent episode skewered PA President Mahmoud Abbas and his Fatah party. The president reportedly chuckled despite an imitation of him as stiff and dour, and the suggestion that it will take another 500 years for Fatah to hold a new congress (a meeting held last month was the first in 20 years). While some innuendo and curse words have been chopped by censors at the state-run channel, none of the political content has been altered, says producer Sami al-Jabber. The dissipation of the second Palestinian intifada (active resistance to occupation) and the withdrawal of Israeli forces from West Bank cities has allowed Palestinians to open up about their internal problems. "No one was allowed to talk about local issues when the Palestinians were busy confronting an outside enemy," Mr. Jabber explains. "Now in the West Bank there's kind of a normal situation. This gives us a chance to say things." Free speech was not respected when former Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat established self-government in the West Bank and Gaza in the 1990s, and many journalists critical of the Palestinian government found themselves in jail. TV official: Show should reflect 'good taste' Free expression is a work in progress, even under the reformist administration of Mr. Abbas and Prime Minister Salam Fayyad. Alleging bias, the PA shut down the Ramallah bureau of Qatar-based TV network Al Jazeera in July after a guest accused

Palestinian TV airs daring satire A rarity in the mideast, the political show spares no one - but even President Mahmoud Abbas is chuckling.

Abbas of collaborating with Israel in Mr. Arafat's death. Faten al-Wan, a television reporter for the US-backed Al Hurra satellite television network, says the satire show airs criticism that would provoke government protests if presented in a news broadcast. "They are giving [the government] a hard time in every possible way," she says. "This is incredible. We don't do that as journalists because if they don't like what you say, you get phone calls." The decision to air the political satire is part of a broader move by the PA to transform itself into a more liberal and transparent government. Last month, Mr. Fayyad laid out a vision for the reform of public institutions and economic development aimed at laying the groundwork for statehood by 2011. Yasser Abed Raboo, a peace -negotiator who heads the Palestinian Broadcast Company, says he wants to overhaul the television and radio station along the more independent public broadcast model of the British Broadcasting Corporation. "They have free rein. Nobody is excluded, alive or dead," says Mr. Abed Raboo. "We are seeking a healthy society where everything is open." Still, the transition is a gradual one. Abed Raboo says the show should reflect "good taste" and shouldn't try to prove "how liberal" it can be. "We are part of a market, not outside the market." While the airing of the show is "refreshing," the shock value of the criticism is only tepid, says Mohaned el-Hamid, a culture critic at the Al Ayyam newspaper. "It's not harmful to the regime. It's reflecting what people already think. The satire is saying what people cannot say, and that's important." Stuck and seeking alternatives Abed Raboo wants to make the show, currently being watched after iftar, the evening meal when Muslims break their fast during Ramadan, a weekly staple. Though some are skeptical, Palestinians say the show is one of the most talked-about programs on the state-run television. "If we continue to criticize Hamas, they will be more extreme," worries Abu Kamal Bashi, a Ramallah shopkeeper. Back at the studio, as the crew prepares to move to a new location for a shot, director Raed Hilu draws a link between the comedy and the tragedy of the Palestinian people's seeming political stagnation. "We are laughing at our pain, which is a very sad state," he says. "We are trying to motivate people to look for alternatives because we are stuck."

Graphic

At a recent Ramallah shoot, writer-actor Imad Farajeen (l.) parodied Hamas's requirement that female lawyers wear hijab in court as producer Sami al-Jabber (r.) looked on. Joshua Mitnick

Load-Date: February 19, 2010

End of Document

Use of Muslim militancy to defeat Arab nationalism a massive strategic error

The Irish Times

December 30, 2009 Wednesday

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Section: WORLD; Other World Stories; Pg. 13

Length: 701 words

Body

Young Muslims are easy recruits for liberation groups such as al-Qaeda, the Taliban or Hamas, writes **Michael Jansen**

AL-QAEDA IN the Arabian Peninsula has issued a chilling communique, couched in a medieval idiom, following its failed attempt to destroy a US airliner over Detroit on Christmas Day.

The organisation, dubbed Aqap, claimed responsibility, praised its agent, Omar Farouk Abdul Muttalab, a 23-year-old Nigerian, and boasted of its prowess with high-powered explosives.

Dismissing the failure of the Detroit device as God's will, Aqap pledged: We will continue on the path (God willing) until we achieve what we want . . . We call upon all Muslims . . . to kill every Crusader in the Arabian Peninsula, and to punish US citizens for supporting leaders who kill our women and children . . . We have come to slaughter you and have prepared for you men who love death just as much as you love life.

It is now nearly 70 years since the US initiated tentative contacts with the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, the mother-and-father of all militant Muslim groups.

The brotherhood, founded in 1928 as a revivalist, social reform and anti-imperialist movement, has inspired and indoctrinated thousands of young Muslims who studied at universities in Egypt, once the cultural capital of the Arab world.

Affiliates of the Egyptian brotherhood formed organisations in Palestine, Syria, Iraq, Kuwait and Jordan, and have served as mentors for militant organisations rising in the wider Muslim world.

Following the 1952 ouster of Egypt's king by Gamal Abdel Nasser, Washington courted the brotherhood in an effort to counter the tide of secular Arab nationalism engulfing the Arab world from Algiers in the west to Aden in the east.

Saudi Arabia was also encouraged to use a portion of its oil revenues to promote Muslim activism as a counterweight to the drive for liberation of Arab countries and the unification of the Arab front. These were seen as threats to western interests in the region and to Israel, established by war in 1948 at the expense of Palestinian Arabs.

At first, Washington and its western allies ignored the fact that the brotherhood's agenda included liberation, as well as calling on Muslims to return to their faith and abide by traditional social norms.

Use of Muslim militancy to defeat Arab nationalism a massive strategic error

However, the West exploited the liberation aspect of the brotherhood programme in 1979 when the Soviet Union invaded strategic Afghanistan. The US and Saudi Arabia conspired to oust the Soviet Union from the country by co-opting the native Afghan resistance and bolstering it with holy warriors from the Muslim world.

Arab, Asian, African and European veterans of this campaign have since formed the core of local militant groups as well as al-Qaeda and its franchises in Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Yemen, Somalia, Pakistan and Afghanistan.

After Shia clerics toppled the shah of Iran in 1979, oil-rich Saudi Arabia, aided and abetted by the West, strove to counter Iran's efforts to export its Shia Islamic Revolution. Sunni competitor Saudi Arabia projected its puritan religious ideology by building mosques and training preachers.

The Saudi aim was to convert congregations in the 85 per cent Sunni majority worldwide community, the Umma, to Riyadh's uncompromising Wahhabism.

However, a significant minority of converts adopted the liberation struggle as well as personal piety, and returned to traditional Muslim behaviour and practice.

Angry and frustrated by Israeli policies in the occupied Palestinian territories, US wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and the impotence of their US-allied rulers, young Muslims became easy recruits for liberation groups, whether al-Qaeda, the Afghan and Pakistani Taliban, or Palestinian Hamas and Islamic Jihad.

The conclusion that must be drawn from this experience is that the use of Muslim militancy to defeat Arab nationalism was a monumental strategic mistake.

The conflict between militant Muslims and the West is civilisational, with historical, religious, cultural, and nationalist dimensions, and is, consequently, nearly impossible to resolve.

The dispute between the Arab nationalists and the West was merely political, and might have been resolved if the western powers had addressed Arab grievances.

Load-Date: December 30, 2009

Shoot or not to shoot-- IDF discusses warfare

Heritage Florida Jewish News (Fern Park, Florida)

November 13, 2009

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Length: 695 words

Byline: Adam Kredo

Body

A Jeep brimming with explosives barrels down an Israeli road, destined for a crowded schoolyard or home.

An Israeli soldier spots the vehicle and aims his gun at the driver, yet hesitates to pull the trigger.

Why?

For those serving in the Israeli Defense Forces, the decision to shoot is not always self-evident. Warfare--even of the guerilla sort--is governed by a strict ethical code.

Rather than relying on gut instinct or a snap judgment, Israeli soldiers are directed to uphold an explicit "code of ethics," according to IDF Col. Ben-Tzion Gruber, speaking at an EMET--the Endowment for Middle East Truth--event.

Displaying video footage of the Jeep incident to a group of about 50 Hill staffers and onlookers in a Capitol Hill conference room recently, Gruber explained that soldiers have no more than "eight seconds" to spot an assailant, and react accordingly.

In the Jeep incident, the IDF soldier intercepted the vehicle, firing upon it from the cover of an armored Humvee. The decision likely prevented a horrific crime, but cost the soldier his legs.

"I found the driver 10 minutes later, without his legs, but still alive," said Gruber, who spent nearly three weeks in Gaza during Operation Cast Lead, commanding an armed division of about 20,000 soldiers.

Had the Jeep been carrying not only explosives, Gruber said, but also Palestinian children--a tactic often employed by **Hamas** terrorists--the IDF soldier would have been required to hold his fire until definitive evidence confirmed the driver's murderous intent.

Shoot or not to shoot-- IDF discusses warfare

The United Nations-backed Goldstone report, which accused Israel of numerous war crimes during last winter's war, blatantly ignored ethical distinctions such as this, Gruber said.

If necessary, "we'll shoot and kill the kids, but we won't shoot" if there is any doubt as to the immediate threat posed by an assailant, even if that person is a known terrorist, Gruber said, summing up the IDF's policy as "shoot or not to shoot."

Waging war within a densely populated city against an enemy who wears no uniform can be problematic, Gruber said, admitting that it leads to civilian casualties. (The IDF, he noted, went out of its way to inform citizens of attacks beforehand by dropping swarms of leaflets and placing phone calls to households.)

"The terrorists wear the same clothes as everyone else. So who's a terrorist?" he asked. "I thought Goldstone would deal with that question," but the report did not.

Further evidence of the IDF's combat dilemma was revealed in what Gruber said was rarely seen news footage.

As the camera focuses on a wounded Arab man with a Kalashnikov rifle lying by his side, an arm is suddenly seen removing the smoking weapon. This, said Gruber, is a media-savvy tactic that, if the camera had not captured the gun being removed, makes it appear as though the IDF has injured a civilian.

IDF statistics from Cast Lead, however, paint a different story, Gruber said.

According to military estimates, 295 civilians were killed during the war (including 15 women and 89 children under the age of 16), compared with 709 known combatants. One-hundred-and-sixty-two deaths still remain undetermined.

"The meaning of those numbers is that we work with a laser knife," Gruber said, labeling claims that the IDF intentionally targeted civilians nonsense. "Goldstone, in the beginning of his report, said Israel intentionally targeted civilians. No way! This [the statistics] is aiming at civilian targets? No way!"

Chaotic combat situations in Gaza were further complicated by several deceptive ploys, Gruber said, showing footage of armed Hamas militants emerging from the back of a U.N.-marked ambulance.

"They use almost every place "as a shield," Gruber said, as footage showed seven gun-wielding militants exiting the ambulance's rear hatch.

Marvin Klemow, a Fairfax, Va., resident, wondered why the IDF's moral dictates are not widely known.

"I don't see any of this presented in the media," said the 72-year-old during a question-and-answer session. "You know you're losing the propaganda war."

Gruber acknowledged that Israel is "losing the war outside," but said his presentations are "not for the media. We are doing it for us."

Load-Date: February 19, 2010

**Mandelblit slams Goldstone Report, says Israel was right not to cooperate.
Asa Kasher: Criticism was partially motivated by anti- Semitism**

The Jerusalem Post

September 17, 2009 Thursday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 3

Length: 672 words

Byline: YAAKOV KATZ

Body

The distorted and one-sided content in the United Nations report on Operation Cast Lead proves that Israel had been right not to cooperate with the fact-finding mission led by South African Judge Richard Goldstone, IDF Judge-Advocate General Brig.-Gen. Avichai Mandelblit told The Jerusalem Post on Wednesday.

"From an initial review of the report it is clear that it is biased, astonishingly extreme, lacks any basis in reality and is a sharp deviation from the mandate given to the mission," Mandelblit told the Post in an exclusive Rosh Hashana interview that will appear in Friday's newspaper.

"The baseless claim in the report that Cast Lead was planned and launched to intentionally harm the civilian population in the Gaza Strip and to punish it, effectively illustrates the radical distortion and one-sided character of the report and proves, in my opinion, that the decision not to cooperate with the mission was the right one," he said.

The IDF, Mandelblit said, was currently reviewing over 100 complaints that it had received regarding IDF activity during the operation - some of them from human rights groups - and he had already ordered the Military Police to launch 24 criminal investigations.

In the extensive interview, Mandelblit spoke of a new "legal front" that the IDF was facing and warned of attempts by numerous NGOs - and possibly European countries which support them - to deter Israel from launching future military operations by threatening its officers with legal action.

"There is definitely a strategic decision that was made by different organizations and even above them to attack Israel on the legal front," he said.

Meanwhile Wednesday, Prof. Asa Kasher, the author of the IDF's code of ethics, told the Post that the harsh and extreme criticism in the report was partially motivated by anti-Semitic views of Israel.

"Part of this criticism is an instinctive reaction that people have for Israel without really thinking," said Kasher, a professor of professional ethics at Tel Aviv University, academic adviser for the National Defense College and an Israel Prize laureate.

"Politics also play a significant role here, since this report was commissioned by the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva that unfairly deals mostly with Israel. These are anti-Israel politics that contain a level of anti-Semitism in them," he added.

Mandelblit slams Goldstone Report, says Israel was right not to cooperate. Asa Kasher: Criticism was partially motivated by anti- Semitism

Despite his sharp criticism of the Goldstone fact- finding mission, Kasher said that Israel needed to take the report seriously and prepare for the possibility that the charges will be brought before the UN Security Council and the International Criminal Court in The Hague.

"The mission was established by the UN and therefore we cannot ignore it," he said.

Kasher called the content of the report "unacceptable" and extremely "hostile" towards Israel. "While the report is critical of Hamas it is far more extreme with its criticism of Israel," he said.

One example, he said, was how the report opened with a detailed description of the Israeli blockade on Gaza.

"It is as if this is how it all started," he said. "They did not bother to ask why there was a siege which was done out of self-defense because of things Hamas was planning at sea, above ground and underground."

As the author of the IDF Code of Ethics, Kasher said he was not concerned with a possible moral breakdown in the military as portrayed in the Goldstone fact-finding report - and countless other NGO reports that have been published since Operation Cast Lead.

"I do not see in any of the reports a reason to change the values or ethics of the IDF or the military's doctrine, which places an emphasis on the value of life," he said.

"I also have no doubt that the claims of deliberate and disproportional killing are baseless. If they weren't, and IDF troops shot deliberately at innocent Palestinians, then there should have been thousands of dead Palestinians. If the IDF killed freely then the dead should be half women and half men like the population in Gaza. The fact is that the IDF did not do this."

Graphic

Photo: Prof. Asa Kasher

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

International: Israeli soldiers killed unarmed civilians carrying white flags in Gaza, says report: Eleven shot dead in seven incidents, group claims: Military says allegations by 'unreliable witnesses'

The Guardian - Final Edition

August 14, 2009 Friday

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theguardian

Section: GUARDIAN INTERNATIONAL PAGES; Pg. 16

Length: 646 words

Byline: Peter Beaumont

Body

Israeli soldiers shot dead 11 unarmed Palestinian civilians carrying white flags during Israel's offensive in Gaza earlier this year, according to a report from Human Rights Watch, which said Israel had failed to investigate the killings adequately.

The deaths - including those of five women and four children - took place in seven separate incidents across Gaza in areas controlled by the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF), where there was no fighting and no Palestinian fighters were nearby.

Human Rights Watch, a New-York-based organisation, said it informed the Israeli military of the cases in February. But the cases were not examined in an IDF internal investigation, which concluded that they "operated in accordance with international law." The group says at least three witnesses confirmed the details in each of the seven shootings.

Included among the cases is one first reported in detail by the Observer in Khuza'a, close to the fence surrounding Gaza. Rawiya al-Najjar, 47, was shot dead, and her relative Jasmin al-Najjar, 23, was wounded while the two women were attempting to escape an attack on the village that included the use of white phosphorus and the bulldozing of houses.

Three other incidents occurred around the northern Gaza village of al-Atatra, which had previously seen fighting between Israeli soldiers and Hamas fighters. By the time of the shootings, however, the fighting had stopped, and in each case the civilians were visible, unarmed, and displaying white flags, the report says.

In one case, the civilians were walking in a group on a street. In another, they were driving slowly on tractors and in cars, trying to leave the area with the wounded, according to the report.

International: Israeli soldiers killed unarmed civilians carrying white flags in Gaza, says report: Eleven shot dead in seven incidents, group claims: Military

"On the way we saw tanks and soldiers," said Omar Abu Halima, 18. "When we saw them (the Israeli soldiers) they told us to stop. After we stopped they fired at us. They killed my cousin Mattar. My cousin Muhammad was wounded and later died."

In another case - also in al-Atatra - two women holding white flags stepped out of a house that the IDF was demolishing to tell the soldiers that civilians were inside. "We opened the door and a sniper fired at us from a house," said Zakiya al-Qanu, 55. "Ibtisam was hit and I turned to go back inside and another bullet grazed my back. Ibtisam died in the doorway."

The Israeli military said that in some cases Hamas militants had used civilians with white flags for cover. It said yesterday the reports were based on "unreliable witnesses" whose testimony was "unproven".

Human Rights Watch said it could find no evidence of misuse of white flags or the use of civilians as human shields in the cases detailed. "These casualties comprise a fraction of the Palestinian civilians wounded and killed," the report says.

"But they stand out because, in each case, the victims were standing, walking or in slowly moving vehicles with other unarmed civilians, and were trying to convey their non-combatant status by waving a white flag."

Along with the use of white phosphorus on civilian areas, the shooting of unarmed civilians has become the most controversial issue of January's war. The report follows the publication last month of anonymous testimonies by more than two dozen soldiers who fought in Gaza, compiled by Breaking the Silence, an organisation of former Israeli servicemen, which accused the IDF of allowing an atmosphere of permissive violence against civilians.

The allegations of white flag deaths, collected by human rights groups and the media, have yet to be adequately responded to. Last month, the Israeli government released its own report defending its use of force in Gaza.

It said Israel was investigating five alleged cases in which soldiers killed civilians carrying white flags, incidents that it said resulted in 10 deaths. Two of the cases - the incident in Khuza'a and one in eastern Jabaliya - are among them.

Load-Date: August 14, 2009

Amnesty accuses Israel of reckless use of weapons in Cast Lead

The Jerusalem Post
July 2, 2009 Thursday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 3

Length: 694 words

Byline: DAN IZENBERG

Body

Amnesty International accused Israel of the reckless use of weapons and wanton destruction in a 105-page report on Operation Cast Lead released Wednesday.

In its report, entitled "Operation Cast Lead: 22 Days of Death and Destruction," it also accused terrorist groups in Gaza of committing war crimes by firing rockets at the Israeli civilian population.

Donatela Rovera, the Amnesty International chief researcher for Israel and the territories, said that although Operation Cast Lead was not an illegal operation per se, many of the attacks carried out by the IDF during the operation violated international law.

According to the figures published in the report, 1,400 Palestinians were killed during the fighting, which lasted from December 27, 2008 to January 18, 2009. Of these, 300 were children, more than 115 were women and about 85 were men over the age of 50.

Amnesty said that another 200 of the men who were under 50 were unarmed civilians who were not combatants. Some 5,000 Palestinians were wounded during the fighting.

Amnesty International also found that more than 3,000 Palestinian homes and hundreds of other properties were destroyed during the fighting and more than 20,000 structures were damaged. In addition to private homes, the IDF destroyed factories, workshops, animal farms, orchards, government buildings, police stations and prisons.

"Much of the destruction was wanton and resulted from direct attacks on civilian objects as well as indiscriminate attacks that failed to distinguish between legitimate military targets and civilian objects.

"Hundreds of civilians were killed in attacks carried out using high-precision weapons - air delivered bombs and missiles and tank shells. Others, including women and children, were shot at short range when posing no threat to the lives of the Israeli soldiers."

Rovera, who spoke to reporters before the report was released, said Amnesty was concerned by two aspects of the IDF's use of weapons.

One was the question of why such high-precision weaponry fired from tanks and aerial vehicles caused so much collateral damage and casualties to the civilian population, considering how accurate they are. The report charged that the IDF deliberately carried out direct attacks on civilian targets and medical personnel and vehicles using these high-precision weapons.

Amnesty accuses Israel of reckless use of weapons in Cast Lead

The other question was why, at the same time, the IDF used far less-precise weapons, including mortars, artillery and white phosphorus, in densely populated residential areas.

One section of the report rejected Israel's charge that **Hamas** systematically used medical facilities, vehicles and uniforms as a cover for terrorist operations, saying it had provided no evidence to prove its case.

The report quoted Israeli authorities as saying Palestinians had fired 571 rockets and 205 mortar shells during Operation Cast Lead. Three Israeli civilians were killed in these attacks. Since 2004, 18 Israeli civilians have been killed, including four children.

Regarding these attacks, Amnesty International wrote, "Whether or not attacks actually result in civilian casualties, they are in violation of international law, which also prohibits attacks aimed at spreading terror among the civilian population. The patterns of attacks and statements by members and leaders of Palestinian groups also indicated that they have no qualms about launching attacks against civilians and that they in fact carry out attacks intending to kill and injure Israeli civilians. Such attacks constitute war crimes."

During the press conference, Rovera criticized the Israeli government for not willing to meet with Amnesty International researchers during and after the fighting, and of having refused to answer any of the questions they submitted in writing.

The IDF was still formulating its response Wednesday night and did not release it by press time.

NGO Monitor, a non-governmental group that monitors human rights organizations, charged that the Amnesty International report "denies that **Hamas** used human shields, excuses their violations and supports a strategy for Israel's isolation. The Amnesty report blames Israel almost exclusively for the conflict."

Graphic

Photo: AN IDF bomb hits Beit Lahiya in Gaza during Operation Cast Lead. Amnesty's report yesterday said 3,000 Palestinian homes and hundreds of other properties were destroyed during the fighting and more than 20,000 structures were damaged. (Credit: Adel Hana/AP)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

Gaza donkeys take on zebra role; Dye job cheaper than buying real

The Calgary Herald (Alberta)

October 9, 2009 Friday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A22

Length: 208 words

Byline: Reuters

Dateline: GAZA

Body

Two white donkeys dyed with black stripes delighted Palestinian kids at a small Gaza zoo on Thursday who had never seen a zebra in the flesh.

With their long ears, drooping heads and sleepy eyes, the impostors probably would not have fooled a lioness. But the effect achieved by the zoo owners' dye job looks not so bad -- to the unpractised eye, and from a distance.

On closer inspection it resembles the classic striped convict suit of cartoon strips.

Nidal Barghouthi, whose father owns the Marah Land Zoo, said the two **female** donkeys were striped using masking tape and **women**'s hair dye, applied with a paintbrush.

"The first time we used paint but it didn't look good," he said. "The children don't know so they call them zebras and they are happy to see something new."

A genuine zebra would have been too expensive to bring into Israel blockaded Gaza via smuggling tunnels under the border with Egypt, said owner Mohammed Barghouthi. "It would have cost me \$40,000 to get a real one."

Gaza's Palestinians are impoverished by their isolation under an Israeli embargo against its Islamist **Hamas** rulers, who refuse to give up armed resistance against the Jewish state.

Barghouthi's zoo charged an entrance fee of just \$15 for a full busload of children.

Graphic

Photo: Mohammed Salem, Reuters; A Palestinian boy touches a dyed donkey at Marah land Zoo in Gaza City on Thursday. Two white donkeys dyed with black stripes delighted Palestinian kids who had never seen a zebra in the flesh. ;

Gaza donkeys take on zebra role; Dye job cheaper than buying real

Load-Date: October 9, 2009

End of Document

Top Syrian comedian and Egyptian actress enter Gaza through Rafah

Daily News Egypt

July 24, 2009 Friday

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Length: 250 words

Body

CAIRO: Syrian actor Dureid Laham and Egyptian actress Fardous Abdel-Hamid were permitted entry into the Gaza strip via the Rafah crossing Friday to attend a play and visit sites destroyed by the Israeli offensive last December.

Hamas had issued a statement Thursday that Laham, who is travelling with his wife, had been denied entry into Gaza via the crossing.

"Egyptian security refused to give the delegation permission to enter Gaza under the pretext that the Rafah border crossing is closed for the time being," the statement read.

"Egypt opens the crossing point for foreign delegations to cross from Egypt to Gaza, while the crossing is closed. Yet, it did not let Laham cross," it continued.

However sources in the area told Daily News Egypt that Laham and Abdel-Hamid were not present at the Rafah crossing on Thursday, but were still in Cairo. They were told they would not cross until they secured the required paperwork and permits, which they eventually did.

On Friday, Laham, his wife and Abdel-Hamid travelled from Cairo to Rafah and entered Gaza at 4 pm according to the sources. Laham had been in Cairo since Tuesday.

Laham and Abdel-Hamid are due to attend the opening of a Palestinian play entitled "The **Women** of Gaza and The Patience of Jacob" about the suffering of Gazans, specifically its **women**, under the two-year siege.

Laham is one of the Arab world's most celebrated comedians. Abdel-Hamid is a prominent Egyptian actress and is married to television and film director Mohamed Fadel.

Load-Date: July 26, 2009

In its assessment of UN Security Council's handling of Palestinian question, Great Jamahiriya: Arab right is wasted due to inability of Arab system and official Arab order to take a stance that meets challenges, and Arab position has been weak...First add

Jamahiriya News Agency (JANA)

December 18, 2009 Friday

Copyright 2009 JANA Syndigate.info, Al Bawaba.com



Length: 243 words

Body

New York, 18.12.2009 (JANA) The entire world acknowledges that what is happening in Gaza is a crime in the true sense of the word. What have we done?

Even in resolution 1860, the so-called Israel is still above the law...beyond accountability because you do not consider it as Gaza. For you, Gaza is governed by terrorists as **Hamas** is called, - even though they were elected by the Palestinian people. If the Palestinians elect a militant group, they are called terrorists. But if the Israelis elect terrorists, they are called democratic. That is not fair. - If any State tries to bring Israelis to justice for the crimes committed in Gaza, the Council seems to be trying to change the law so that criminals will not be prosecuted. - Three days ago, a photograph was published, which I am now displaying to members...It shows a young Palestinian tied up and blindfolded in the midst of a group of Israeli soldiers, and suddenly, an Israeli soldier kills him at close range...He was tied up and blindfolded, yet he was killed. Even worse, the occupation forces invaded his home and took these photographs inside his home. Is Shalit a Boy Scout who had gone for a picnic, or had he gone there to kill? You do not talk about the thousands of pregnant Palestinian **women**? You pass resolutions on Congo, Rwanda and Burundi and the rape, murder and violence against civilians, but what have you done about the Palestinians? Cont... / JANA /

Load-Date: October 28, 2010

Afghanistan: Ban Urges to Push Middle East Peace Process Back on Track

Right Vision News

December 17, 2009 Thursday

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Length: 277 words

Dateline: Pakistan

Body

Pakistan, Dec. 17 -- UNITED NATIONS - UN Secretary-General Ban Ki- moon Monday called for more efforts to push Middle East peace process back on track.

Ban told a monthly press conference at the UN headquarters in New York that the situation in Gaza, particularly the humanitarian crisis suffered by the Palestinian people is a great concern for him almost one year after the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. "I have been working very hard with Israeli leadership ... It is regrettable that we have not made much progress," Ban told reporters. Calling the peace process in Middle East almost stalled, Ban urged the international community particularly the Quartet - The United Nations, the European Union, Russia and the United States - to do more in making the peace process on track. He said he also made this clear in a Quartet teleconference last month. "This should be one of my top priorities," Ban said, adding he will continue to press the Israeli government to agree on the humanitarian protect to hospitals, schools as well as the sanitation facilities badly needed by the civilians in Gaza. Ban also said he has been "pushing (the Israeli government) very hard" for the compensation of 11 million U.S. dollars for the UN premises destroyed in the three-week Gaza military offensive. The Israel's offensive to the **Hamas**-controlled strip, from Dec. 27 last year to Jan. 18, killed more than 1,450 Palestinians, most of them **women** and children. Israel lost 10 soldiers and three civilians. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Right Vision News. For more information on news feed please contact Sarabjit Jagirdar at htsyndication@hindustantimes.com

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Load-Date: December 16, 2009

International: Arab world rights abuses 'rising'

The Guardian - Final Edition
December 9, 2009 Wednesday

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theguardian

Section: GUARDIAN INTERNATIONAL PAGES; Pg. 19

Length: 306 words

Byline: Ian Black, Middle East editor

Body

Human rights in the Arab world have deteriorated over the past year as governments flaunt progress on women's issues while evading and blocking broader reforms that guarantee dignity for all, says a report.

Beyond issues facing individual countries, the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies blames Arab governments and member states of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference for working in concert within UN institutions to undermine international mechanisms and standards for the protection of human rights.

The CIRHS is an independent body whose work is respected by western-based human rights groups such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch.

Its report, entitled Bastion of Impunity, Mirage of Reform, attacks the Arab League for supporting the Sudanese regime, which is criticised for "blatant contempt for justice, impunity and a lack of accountability, and President Omar al-Bashir, who refuses to appear before the international criminal court in connection with war crimes in Darfur. It accuses the 21-member league of using the principle of national sovereignty as a pretext to remain silent about or collaborate on grave human rights violations in several Arab states.

While only limited progress has been made in gender equality, Arab governments use this "to burnish their image before the international community while simultaneously evading democratic and human rights reform measures".

The report highlights "grave" Israeli violations of Palestinian rights, especially in the Gaza Strip, in a year which witnessed the continuing blockade of the territory and an Israeli offensive which led to 1,400 deaths, 83% of them civilians. It also accuses rival Palestinian factions Fatah and Hamas of "grave abuses" against their opponents, including arbitrary detention, lethal torture, and extrajudicial killings.

Load-Date: December 9, 2009

Leading article: In praise of... Amira Hass

The Guardian - Final Edition

October 24, 2009 Saturday

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theguardian

Section: GUARDIAN LEADER PAGES; Pg. 38

Length: 255 words

Byline: Editorial

Body

Only Amira Hass could have received the International Women's Media Foundation lifetime achievement award by saying her life as a journalist had been a failure. By her standards maybe, but then she sets them high.

If her aim is to stop successive Israeli governments lying about what they do in the occupied territories, then it is true that the language laundromat, as she once put it, keeps on turning. But make no mistake, the Haaretz columnist fully deserves this award. She is the only Israeli journalist to have lived in and reported from Gaza and Ramallah for much of the last two decades. In describing the effects of the occupation on the lives of Palestinians, she has been pilloried by Israelis and fallen foul of Hamas. Her moral anchor is firmly rooted in painful collective memories. Her mother survived a concentration camp and her father the ghettos of Romania and Ukraine. "What luck my parents are dead," Hass wrote at the height of the Gaza operation in January. Her parents could not stand the noise of Israeli jet fighters flying over the Palestinian refugee camps in 1982, and nor could they have tolerated going about their daily chores in Tel Aviv with the knowledge of what was going on in their name in Gaza: "They knew what it meant to close people behind barbed-wire fences in a small area." Only a Jew can invert the "never again" logic of the Holocaust that is used to justify Israel's least justifiable actions. It is that very experience, Hass argues, that should teach Israel to behave differently.

Load-Date: October 24, 2009

'Zebras' thrilling Gaza kids; Zoo owner says too expensive to bring in real thing

The Vancouver Province (British Columbia)

October 9, 2009 Friday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A36

Length: 219 words

Byline: Reuters

Dateline: GAZA

Body

Two white donkeys dyed with black stripes delighted Palestinian kids, who had never seen a zebra in the flesh, at a small Gaza Zoo on Thursday.

With their long ears, drooping heads and sleepy eyes, the impostors probably would not have fooled a lioness. But the effect achieved by the zoo owners' dye job looks not so bad -- to the unpractised eye, and from a distance.

On closer inspection it resembles the classic striped convict suit of cartoon strips.

Nidal Barghouthi, whose father owns the Marah Land zoo, said the two female donkeys were striped using masking tape and women's hair dye, applied with a paint-brush.

"The first time we used paint but it didn't look good," he said. "The children don't know so they call them zebras and they are happy to see something new."

A genuine zebra would have been too expensive to bring into Israel-blockaded Gaza via smuggling tunnels under the border with Egypt, said owner Mohammed Bargouthi. "It would have cost me \$40,000 to get a real one."

Gaza's Palestinians are impoverished by their isolation under an Israeli embargo against its Islamist Hamas rulers, who refuse to give up armed resistance against the Jewish state.

Bargouthi's zoo charged an entrance fee of just \$15 for a full busload of children.

MORE ON THE WEB

For breaking world news, go to www.theprovince.com

Graphic

'Zebras' thrilling Gaza kids; Zoo owner says too expensive to bring in real thing

Colour Photo: Reuters; Palestinian boys ride dyed donkeys at Marah Land Zoo in Gaza City on Thursday. Two white donkeys were dyed with black stripes. ;

Load-Date: October 9, 2009

End of Document

Rafah residents living on borderline economy

Daily News Egypt

November 2, 2009 Monday

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Length: 685 words

Body

RAFAH: A harsh wind lashes at the tattooed wrinkled face of Selma Suleiman. Dates, olive oil and nuts lay in front of her as Gazans move across the Rafah border.

She is part of the temporary economy that springs up in the desert like rainstorm vegetation every time the border opens.

But the infrequency of the border openings has made life harder for this fragile economy.

"We are getting by," says Suleiman. "But last year was a lot better."

Egypt opened the Rafah border crossing with the Gaza Strip for three days this week starting Sunday.

For the last several years, the border policy has been erratic, changing with the shifting political winds. The border was open more or less consistently between November 2005 and June 2006. Beginning in June, 2007, the border was effectively shut down with the Hamas takeover of the Gaza Strip.

This unpredictability has meant a great deal of economic instability for those depending on border traffic for income.

"On a good day I'll make LE 10 but sometimes I don't make anything," says Suleiman.

But Suleiman faces another problem. The lack of water has led to a poor harvest, which has increased the price of her goods.

"Last year this bottle of olive oil would go for LE 35," says Suleiman. "But because there isn't any water we don't have many olives, so it is LE 45."

With the increase in price, she says, people are less likely to buy from her.

Nearby, Mohamed Jamal Mohamed seems to have cornered the food market at the largely barren crossing zone. His kiosk, built under a mosque and a stone's throw from the border terminal, serves as a watering hole for stranded travelers.

Rafah residents living on borderline economy

He serves up tea, coffee, packaged foods and a little conversation to anyone who stops by.

On Sunday, he said, when the border was clogged with travelers, he made around LE 200 profit.

Since the war in January between Israel and Hamas, the border crossing has been open for only about three days a month. Those three days represent something of a mad dash for cash for vendors whose livelihood depends on traffic here.

They're "very important because of the children," said Mohamed, taking his young daughter by the arm. For the 27 days each month the border is closed, he says almost no business comes his way.

As with so many vendors at the border, Mohamed says he misses the day when the border was open full time. Then, he said, business boomed.

Changes in Egyptian border policy have also hurt him. Now, the security forces keep travelers some ways down the border road, only letting them approach the terminal when it's time to cross. As a result, there are fewer people loitering around his shop.

Early Sunday morning, the first formal day of the border opening, a line of baton-wielding police kept throngs of Palestinians returning to Gaza several hundred yards from the border crossing.

Littered throughout the ranks of these impatient travelers were porters, who had appeared in order to make a few pounds helping the Palestinians maneuver the border area with, in some cases, their mountain of bags.

Some of the porters were Bedouin women, standing by a Palestinian family - and a donkey cart with the luggage. Young children also pitched in, offering their services to lug a couple of bags.

"If the border's not open, we don't do any work," said Islam Adel, one of the young porters, noting that he tries to do odd jobs around Rafah when the border is closed. The three days of cross-border travel, though, are his biggest paydays of the month, he said.

On a good day working with the luggage, Adel makes up to LE 100. But the Egyptian security forces have, more and more, taken to ferrying Palestinians on buses for the last stretch of the trip. Because of the buses, Adel says he can make as little as LE 20 in a day.

For LE 100 per day, he said, he can buy permission to work inside the terminal itself. By doing that, he said, he can earn up to LE 300 in a day. It's not something he's saved the money to do yet.

The border will again close at the end of the day today, and neither side has announced when it might open again. And for those who work here, the long wait will begin again.

Load-Date: November 2, 2009

Who lost Turkey?

The Jerusalem Post

October 16, 2009 Friday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 13

Length: 757 words

Highlight: Editorial

Body

Could Israel have done anything to avoid the apparent rupture of its relationship with Turkey? Could we have made it inconceivable for the Turks to air, on state television, a serial portraying the Palestinian-Israeli conflict as a struggle between sociopathic Zionists and wholesome Palestinians?

No doubt, had Israel responded to the violent Palestinian "resistance" not with an Operation Cast Lead but with Gandhi-like passivity, with a declaration that so long as there were women and children in Gaza, our army would not shoot back - had Israel, instead of imposing a "siege," responded to Hamas's takeover of Gaza by supplying concrete for an airstrip that would accommodate Iranian cargo planes - Israeli and Turkish jets might now, we suppose, be conducting joint maneuvers.

But let us go further.

If tomorrow, Israel withdrew to the 1949 Armistice Lines, redivided Jerusalem, abandoned Judea and Samaria, strategic settlement blocs, the Jordan Valley - the whole kit and caboodle - in the name of "ending the occupation;" if we came down from the Golan Heights, accepted the influx of millions of Palestinians "returning" to our newly truncated, 15 km.-wide state; agreed not to contest the extradition of the IDF General Staff to The Hague to face trumped-up war crimes charges; and if the Jews held their tongues as their state was dismantled while Palestinian factions fought it out for supremacy - comity would likely reign in Turkish-Israeli relations. We can even imagine the UN General Assembly deferring discussion of "the Question of Palestine."

Plainly, what is inhibiting this nirvana is Israel's stiff-necked insistence on the same right to self-defense other sovereign states enjoy.

THE TRUTH: Turkey's turn against Israel is best understood in the context of its evolutionary transformation from the secular, nationalist and Western- oriented ethos of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk to the dogmatic, radical, pan-Islamic and Middle Eastern attitudes of its current rulers. This is most clearly reflected in Turkey's apparent decision not to actively pursue membership in the European Union because it has given up trying to reconcile what it wants for itself with what the West wants for it.

On Wednesday, Olli Rehn, the EU official in charge of enlarging the community, sharply criticized the Islamist government in Ankara for imposing punishing taxes on media outlets critical of the regime. But today's Turkey feels the EU needs it more than it needs the Europeans.

As for the military, which has historically served a homeostatic function whenever Turkish governments strayed from Ataturk's path, it has been politically neutered and made subservient to the regime.

Who lost Turkey ?

IT IS senseless for Israelis to ask ourselves what we did to cause Arab, Persian and now Turkish rulers to ascribe the most villainous of intentions to us - for example, conspiring to demolish Muslim shrines on the Temple Mount, or relishing the systematic murder of Arab children. While not wishing to disregard the damage caused by this or that Israeli policy of commission or omission, in the final analysis, Israel did not lose Turkey any more than it lost Iran or the "moderate" Palestinians.

The Palestinian national movement, for all its self- destructive obduracy, appeared under Mahmoud Abbas and Salaam Fayad to be glacially inching toward grudging acceptance of a two-state solution. But it has been outmaneuvered by **Hamas**. Any move Abbas now makes in the direction of moderation - agreeing to temporarily shelve the reprehensible Goldstone Report for instance - gets pounced upon as perfidy. This environment has led even a sensible man like Fayad to hold cabinet deliberations on whether Israeli soldiers are stealing the organs of Palestinian youths. This week, he referred to a Palestine born of territorial compromise as a potential "Mickey Mouse state."

THE overriding explanation for what is happening in Turkey and among the Palestinians (and happened decades ago in Iran) is that these polities could not make peace with modernity. Instead, to varying degrees, they turned to radical Islam, which promised an end to ethnic and national rivalries and the promotion of socioeconomic equality.

These fragmented societies succumbed to the opiate of radical Islam because it provides absolute answers about right and wrong and uplifting distinctions between believers and infidels.

But it also ensures never-ending estrangement from those who have chosen another path.

Since this predicament stems from within Muslim civilization, so, too, must any solution.

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

World - World in brief

Morning Star

August 5, 2009 Wednesday

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Length: 282 words

Body

Pilot dies in Thai aeroplane crash.

THAILAND: A plane skidded off the runway and crashed into an air traffic control tower after landing on the resort island of Samui yesterday, killing the pilot.

About 10 people were hospitalised with minor injuries after the Bangkok Airways flight landed in rainy weather and hit the tower.

The twin-turboprop had 68 passengers, two pilots and two crew members on board and was flying from Krabi, another popular resort area in southern Thailand.

Women defend **female** journalist

SUDAN: Dozens of **women** rallied outside a Khartoum court yesterday as a **female** journalist went on trial for wearing trousers in public, a violation of the country's Islamic laws.

Lubna Hussein faces 40 lashes on the charge of "indecent dressing."

Protester Amal Habani, a columnist for the daily Ajraa Al Hurria said: "We are here to protest against this law that oppresses **women** and debases them."

Gaza-Egypt tunnel collapse kills one

PALESTINE: A smuggling tunnel running under the Gaza-Egypt border collapsed yesterday, killing one person and injuring two.

Gaza's **Hamas** administration reported that three other people are missing.

Gaza residents use a network of tunnels to bring concrete, food, medicine and, according to Tel Aviv, weapons into the coastal enclave since Israel and Egypt blockaded Gaza in June 2007.

Iraqi oil exports return to normal

IRAQ: An oil official announced yesterday that oil exports increased in July to the highest level since the 2003 US-led invasion.

Oil Ministry spokesman Assem Jihad said that exports averaged 2.037 million barrels per day, an increase from 1.925 million barrels in June.

World - World in brief

Before the invasion, Iraq exported about 2.4 million barrels a day.

Load-Date: August 5, 2009

End of Document

Killing civilians is fatal to our cause; REALPOLITIK

Sunday Herald

September 13, 2009 Sunday

Final Edition

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sundayherald

Section: OPINION; Pg. 3

Length: 747 words

Byline: TREVOR ROYLE

Body

WHEN Colonel Georg Klein called in a US airstrike to take out two fuel tankers hijacked by the Taliban in Kunduz province he was probably the first German army officer to take offensive action of that kind since the end of the second world war. But that's for the history books. What matters most about this incident is the consequence of his action. As the F-15 strike aircraft roared overhead the pilots could not tell if the figures surrounding the vehicles were armed gunmen or civilians. Tragically, they were the latter - local villagers keen to liberate the tankers' cargo - and when the missiles hit their targets at least 125 local people were killed. It was the worst incident of its kind since US and coalition forces invaded Afghanistan in 2001.

Also caught up in the farrago was journalist Stephen Farrell and his translator Sultan Munadi but let's put the New York Times man to one side. He was doing his job as were the soldiers who liberated him; now Farrell will have to live with the consequences of whether or not he made the right call. So too will Klein. Throughout Nato's operations, fatal airstrikes against the Afghan population have become depressingly familiar and they are something which Nato's new commander General Stanley McChrystal is desperate to eradicate. As a keen student of counter-insurgency warfare he knows only too well the importance of winning hearts and minds among the local population and he recognises, too, that any amount of reconstruction work will not make good even one life lost to Nato weapons.

In the aftermath there has been much soul-searching in Germany. With less than three weeks to go before the federal elections and with opinion polls showing that 71% want to end the German deployment, the Kunduz incident has produced an embarrassment for Chancellor Angela Merkel. The operation in Afghanistan was sold to the people of Germany as being necessary to help rebuild the infrastructure, ensure democratic elections and improve conditions for Afghan women. Not many believe that any more and the official explanations of military necessity will not bring any comfort, not even to those who are prepared to give Merkel the benefit of the doubt.

The twisted wreckage and the burned and maimed bodies are also reminders that in modern asymmetrical war civilians are once again on the front line - just as the people of Coventry or Dresden were seven decades ago. In fighting of this kind the enemy is almost impossible to detect, combat takes place in built-up areas and civilians can

Killing civilians is fatal to our cause REALPOLITIK

find themselves in the cross-fire. That's what happened at the beginning of this year when the Israeli defence forces moved into Gaza to interdict and destroy positions used by Hamas gunmen.

No-one would deny a country's right to protect its people from attack - in this case from terrorist rockets used against civilian targets - but the operation came at a cost. At the time it was clear that the death toll was going to be high but the exact figure only became clear last week when B'Tselem, an Israeli civil rights group, produced its findings based on a rigorous cross-checking of all the available evidence. If they are right the death toll was 1387 Palestinians, half of whom were civilians, including 252 children under the age of 16.

Those who carried out the research for B'Tselem are anxious not to take sides. They understand the dynamics of this type of operation and know only too well that civilians were often isolated in the middle of a fire-fight and that Hamas fighters used civilian positions for offensive operations. Even so, they were forced to admit that Israeli military operations, however carefully executed, "cannot legitimise such extensive harm to civilians by a state committed to the rule of law".

There you have it. The same message should be applied to Afghanistan or to Uganda, where government forces are engaged in a bruising war against the Lord's Resistance Army. Or to Ethiopia where thousands of ethnic Somali civilians living in the remote Ogden province are caught up in a long-running battle. Or to South Ossetia last summer when Russian forces indiscriminately shelled buildings in Tskhinvali.

Even earlier, during the Napoleonic Wars, the problem was given hideous meaning by Goya's great etching This Is Worse, showing an armless civilian impaled on a branch. But we just don't get it, do we? If we want to legitimise military operations, don't go killing innocent civilians. They should have rights too.

Load-Date: September 15, 2009

End of Document

World & nation in 60 seconds The world The nation

Chicago Daily Herald
August 16, 2009 Sunday
L2 Edition

Copyright 2009 Paddock Publications, Inc.

Section: NEWS; Pg. 2

Length: 714 words

Body

Car bomber targets NATO:

KABUL — A suicide car bomber struck near the front gate of NATO headquarters in Kabul on Saturday, killing seven people and wounding nearly 100 in a brazen daylight attack less than a week before Afghanistan's landmark presidential election. Also Saturday, Marines pushed deeper into the strategic Helmand province town of Dahaneh for a fourth straight day, meeting fierce Taliban resistance as surface-to-surface missiles and Harrier fighter jets pounded insurgent positions in the surrounding hills.

Fire claims 41 wedding guests:

KUWAIT CITY — A fire at a wedding tent Saturday has killed at least 41 women and children guests and injured 76 others, authorities said.

British war toll at 200:

LONDON — A British soldier wounded in an explosion in Afghanistan died Saturday, the defense ministry said, bringing the country's military death toll there to 200.

Gaza opposition leader dies:

RAFAH, Gaza Strip — Hamas crushed an al-Qaida-inspired group in an hours-long standoff that came to a fiery end when a large explosion killed the radical Muslim group's leader inside his Gaza home on Saturday. The fighting was sparked by a rebellious sermon by the group's leader, and his dramatic death put an end to the greatest internal challenge to Hamas' rule since it took control of Gaza two years ago.

Men wander into artillery zone:

BAGHDAD — Three Iraqi men herding cattle were killed Saturday after wandering into the middle of a U.S.-Iraqi mortar training exercise north of the Iraqi capital, the U.S. military said.

Police chief escapes attack:

MONCLOVA, Coahuila — An ex-general serving as police chief of a northern Mexican city escaped an assassination attempt that killed three of his bodyguards, the latest attack on an official appointed to step up the fight against drug cartels.

Coming home with pirates:

CAIRO — The crews of two Egyptian fishing vessels that overpowered pirates off the Somali coast have sailed into Red Sea waters on their way home along with eight of their former captors, an Egyptian official said Saturday. The 34 fishermen, who were held for captive for four months, captured eight of the Somali pirates and were bringing them to Egypt.

Official says U.S. aided coup:

TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras — A top aide to Honduras' ousted president accused the United States of involvement in the coup, saying Saturday that the plane that flew Manuel Zelaya into exile stopped to refuel at an airfield where hundreds of U.S. troops are based. Patricia Valle said the Honduran military plane carrying Zelaya took off from the capital's Toncontin airport, then stopped for fuel at the Soto Cano air base before heading to Costa Rica.

Hostages traded for fertilizer:

LIMA, Peru — Farmers freed 13 police officers and four civilians seized at a hydroelectric dam in Peru's Andean region after local officials agreed Saturday to provide them with fertilizer. Authorities said the hostages were held for nearly 24 hours at a church in Huallamayo, northeast of the capital.

Wisconsin governor won't run:

MADISON, Wis. — A person who was informed of the decision tells The Associated Press that Wisconsin Gov. Jim Doyle will not seek re-election in 2010. The source told The AP that Doyle would make his decision public in a Monday news conference. The person says Doyle will serve out the rest of his four-year term.

Dodd leaves hospital:

HARTFORD, Conn. — Connecticut Sen. Christopher Dodd, 65, has been released from the hospital after undergoing surgery for prostate cancer. The five-term Democrat announced last month he had been diagnosed with an early, treatable stage of cancer.

Two tropical storms:

MIAMI — Tropical Storm Bill has formed in the far eastern Atlantic and the government of the Netherland Antilles has issued a tropical storm watch for St. Maarten, Saba and St. Eustatius because of Tropical Storm Ana. The Hurricane Center says residents there and in the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico should monitor Ana's progress.

Can't have too many firetrucks:

CASSELTON, N.D. — A southeastern North Dakota town believes it has set a new world record for having the most fire trucks in a parade. The town of Casselton recruited 181 fire trucks from throughout the Upper Midwest to take part in Saturday's Cass County Summerfest parade. The old record was 159 trucks.

Load-Date: August 17, 2009

Links between JI and al-Qa'ida are news to some

The Australian

July 24, 2009 Friday

1 - All-round Country Edition

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Section: FEATURES; Pg. 13

Length: 749 words

Byline: Kevin Rudd

Body

On Sunday Kevin Rudd links the bombings in Jakarta with the war to rout Islamist terrorists in Afghanistan

IT'S important for us all to remember here in Australia that Afghanistan has been a training ground for terrorists worldwide, a training ground also for terrorists in Southeast Asia, reminding us of the reasons that we are in the field of combat, and reaffirming our resolve to remain committed to that cause.

Jakarta is not in Afghanistan, The Age informs the Prime Minister in an editorial on Tuesday:

MR Rudd has no excuse, then, to conflate what is happening in Afghanistan with last week's events in Jakarta. Apart from a shared jihadist ideology, there is no evidence linking the perpetrators of the Jakarta bombings -- according to Indonesian police, a faction of the regional terrorist group Jemaah Islamiah, led by Noordin Mohammed Top -- with the Taliban. The rhetoric of a single, overarching "war on terror" was always misleading and implausible, and Mr Rudd should follow the example of the Obama administration in discarding it. Indonesia's political discontents must provide the primary context for interpreting the bombings.

But as Lindsay Murdoch reports on the front page of The Age yesterday:

INVESTIGATORS believe the terror network behind last week's Jakarta hotel bombings received help from Pakistan-based al-Qa'ida leaders. "This kind of operation is not a domestic kind of work," said Surya Dharma, former head of Indonesia's Detachment 88 anti-terror squad. "This is al-Qa'ida."

Nasir Abbas, a former JI member, told journalists he believed the Jakarta bombings were related to international issues. "The actions [bombings] were related to the US's action towards Iraq, Afghanistan or [the] Taliban," he said.

Sinophobia rears its ugly head. ABC1's The Movie Show reviews the new Chinese epic Red Cliff:

DAVID Stratton: In Asia, the film was released in two parts, six months apart, with a total running time of four hours. The decision to release only an international cut-down version, combining the two original films and almost halving the running time, is a terrible one. It's like saying they're only going to show, let's say, a three-hour version of Lord of the Rings.

Margaret Pomeranz: A truncated version. Yeah.

Links between JI and al-Qa'ida are news to some

Stratton: I mean, it's really bad and there's a touch of racism about it, too. Why do this to a Chinese film?

Uighurphobia rears its ugly head? It has been a troubled week for cinematic diplomacy. Xinhua reported on Tuesday:

THREE Chinese films have been withdrawn from this year's Melbourne International Film Festival in protest [against] the inclusion of a documentary about Rebiya Kadeer, the leader of the World Uighur Congress. The films had been expected to be screened in the mid-August festival but in a letter to the festival, Jia Zhangke, producer of the film Perfect Life and whose company also produced Cry Me a River, said he decided to withdraw both movies to protest [against] Kadeer's attendance at the event. An official in the Chinese embassy in Canberra told Xinhua on Wednesday they are opposed to a screening of the documentary about Kadeer and are strongly against her attendance at the event.

Israelphobia? The New York Times reports on another withdrawal from the Melbourne International Film Festival:

BRITISH director Ken Loach has withdrawn his film Looking for Eric from the Melbourne International Film Festival in protest against the Israeli government's sponsorship of another filmmaker, AFP reported. The Israeli government provided airfare for Tatia Rosenthal, whose film 9.99 is an Israeli-Australian co-production.

The Jerusalem Post reports on a film Loach may approve of:

THE first feature film produced by **Hamas** made its debut this weekend. The action-packed thriller is being shown to segregated audiences of bearded men and veiled **women**. ``It's Hamaswood instead of Hollywood," Fathi Hamad, Gaza's **Hamas** Interior Minister said. ``We are trying to make quality art that is Islamic and about the resistance, without provocative [sexual] scenes." Hamad doubled as producer and the screenplay was penned by Mahmoud Zahar, the Gaza strongman seen as one of the architects of the group's violent takeover of Gaza two years ago [and who] has always had an artistic streak, with three novels and two screenplays to his credit. Gaza's cinemas were closed down in the late 1980s because activists across the Palestinian territories felt entertainment was inappropriate at a time of struggle.

cutpaste@theaustralian.com.au

Load-Date: July 23, 2009

**Unlikely partnerships; Religion Pastor Rick Warren, major Jewish leaders
befriend largest American Muslim group**

The Telegraph-Journal (New Brunswick)

July 4, 2009 Saturday

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Section: LIFE; Pg. H6

Length: 766 words

Byline: Rachel Zoll THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Body

Sayyid Syeed remembers an interfaith event several years ago when a Jewish leader went to embrace him, saw someone snapping a photo, then suddenly pulled back.

"He said to the man, 'Stop,'" Syeed recalled, "'I'll lose my job.'"

Times have changed for the Islamic Society of North America and for Syeed, who leads the group's interfaith outreach. In a sign of growing acceptance of U. S. Muslims, one of the most prominent religious leaders in the country, evangelical pastor Rick Warren, will speak at the Islamic Society's annual convention this weekend. Representatives from the two largest streams of American Judaism, the Reform and Conservative movements, will also be there to highlight their recently formed partnerships with the Muslim group.

"The landscape of religion in America is changing," Syeed said. "America itself has reached a certain level of fulfilment in terms of diversity of faith. "

The Islamic Society, an umbrella association for tens of thousands of Muslims, has worked for years to persuade leaders of other faiths to attend its convention, a massive family reunion in its 46th year that draws about 30,000 people.

Major American Jewish groups had largely stayed away from the event, mainly due to hostility between U.S. Muslims and Jews over Israel, the Palestinians and the role of Hamas in the region.

Many conservative Christians did the same. They viewed Islam through their experiences with Muslim countries where Christian minorities have been targets of violence and discrimination.

Also, suspicions over the origins of the Islamic Society lingered.

The organization grew from Muslim Students Associations, campus groups that had received funding from Saudi Arabia.

In recent years, the society has prominently denounced terrorism, including terror by Hamas, and has endorsed a two-state solution for Israel and the Palestinians. The organization also elected its first female president, Ingrid Mattson, who participated in the National Cathedral service for U.S. President Barack Obama the day after his inaugural.

Unlikely partnerships; Religion Pastor Rick Warren, major Jewish leaders befriend largest American Muslim group

"In terms of acceptance of Muslim Americans generally, I do believe this has increased in some ways, despite the large segment of Americans who hold unfavourable views of Islam," Mattson said. "Muslim Americans have, in recent years, decided that they have the major responsibility to counter the extremists' views of Islam with their own mainstream views, and so have put time into public education and outreach to their neighbours, on a local and national scale."

Syed said that he and Warren, a Southern Baptist and author of *The Purpose Driven Life*, have worked together on projects fighting malaria and advocating for people with HIV and AIDS.

This year, Conservative Judaism, the second-largest American Jewish movement, will show its support at the assembly. Rabbi Burton Visotzky, a prominent professor at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, the Conservative movement's flagship institution, will be a featured speaker. Conservative rabbis and the Islamic society have also been building relationships between local mosques and synagogues. Next year, along with Hartford Seminary in Connecticut, they plan a conference on Judaism and Islam in the United States.

"I think there has been a change in general perceptions," of American Muslims, said Mark Pelavin, associate director of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism.

"When you look at the kind of symbolic participation of Muslims in public life, and you see Rick Warren and Rabbi Yoffie coming, those are all things you wouldn't have seen five years ago."

The Islamic Society, based in Plainfield, Ind., still has its opponents.

A stigma remains from the years immediately following Sept. 11, 2001, when the millions of U.S. Muslims, their mosques and charities came under intense public scrutiny in the search for domestic terrorists. None of the investigations yielded any finding of wrongdoing or penalty against the Islamic Society.

Visotzky said he is concerned about the potential for criticism of Conservative Judaism's work with the Muslim group. Bloggers who closely follow Warren already are denouncing his appearance at the convention, scheduled for Saturday night.

But Visotzky said he feels a sense of religious duty. He views the assembly as a chance to show American Jews that Muslims are reaching out to them despite differences over Israel, and explain to Muslims his support for the Jewish state.

"We are commanded to love our neighbours," Visotzky said, "and my friends at ISNA are good neighbours."

On the Net:

Islamic Society of North America: <http://www.isna.net>

Load-Date: July 4, 2009

A SORRY TALE OF CHRISTMAS ON ROAD TO GAZA

Daily Record

December 28, 2009, Monday

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Section: FEATURES; Pg. 13

Length: 283 words

Byline: George Galloway

Body

DATELINE Aqaba. It was Christmas Day and there was no room for the weary travellers.

As is traditional amongst tyrants in these parts, the Egyptian government turned our 500 supplicants away.

So Christmas was spent in a car park, Turks, Arabs and British, who formerly fought each other in this town in World War I, played football instead.

Local people streamed into the arena bearing gifts of food, blankets - even a Santa roamed between the vehicles distributing good cheer.

Christmas Mass was celebrated at one of many beautiful churches here and in the evening candles and a fire were lit. It's not something any of us will ever forget.

The Turkish prime minister has sent his envoy as has the former prime minister of Malaysia to try to resolve the matter.

Ten members of the convoy, bound for Gaza with hundreds of tons of medicine, have begun a hunger strike in the town led by a Tyrone man whose relative was the sixth hunger striker to die in Long Kesh.

A demonstration took place yesterday to mark the begining of the massacre of the innocents in Gaza by Israel exactly one year before.

One thousand four hundred were killed - hundreds of them on the first day of the war - more than 400 of them were children and another three hundred and 50 were women.

Almost none of them were Hamas fighters. It was as if the British airforce had decided to reduce west Belfast to rubble slaughtering everyone in it because the IRA had armed men therein.

Meanwhile, our medicines race towards their expiry date and spoil in the midday sun while those whom it is meant to assist die for the want of it.

It is a sorry Christmas story to be sure.

You can follow progress, or the lack of it, at www.vivapalestina.org

A SORRY TALE OF CHRISTMAS ON ROAD TO GAZA

Load-Date: December 28, 2009

End of Document

In Shift, Oren Calls J Street 'A Unique Problem'

The Forward

December 18, 2009

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Section: News; Pg. 1

Length: 790 words

Body

Breaking with his previous restraint, Israel's ambassador to the United States delivered an unprecedented blast against J Street, the new dovish Israel lobby that has made waves in Washington and throughout the Jewish community.

Addressing a breakfast session at the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism's biennial convention December 7, Ambassador Michael Oren described J Street as a unique problem in that it not only opposes one policy of one Israeli government, it opposes all policies of all Israeli governments. It's significantly out of the mainstream.

After a speech that touched on the spiritual basis for and the threats to the state of Israel, Oren issued an unscripted condemnation of J Street.

This is not a matter of settlements here [or] there. We understand there are differences of opinion, Oren said. But when it comes to the survival of the Jewish state, there should be no differences of opinion. You are fooling around with the lives of 7 million people. This is no joke.

Oren's blunt comments contrasted with his reaction in October, when J Street invited him to address its first Washington conference. After an extended delay, Oren declined the offer. The embassy issued a statement saying that it would be privately communicating its concerns over certain policies of the organization that may impair the interests of Israel. Instead, it sent a lower-level diplomat to observe the conference.

Meanwhile, Israeli President Shimon Peres and Tzipi Livni, leader of Israel's parliamentary opposition, sent warm personal greetings to the J Street conference. Several senior members of Livni's

Kadima party traveled to Washington to address the gathering, as did Deputy Knesset Speaker Yuli Tamir of the Labor Party.

Shortly after the conference, Oren told a New York City audience that if the organization addressed some of his concerns, there's no reason why we can't have a constructive dialogue.

But at the USCJ breakfast, Oren criticized J Street after an audience member asked him how synagogues should respond if congregants requested that the group be invited to make a presentation.

Engage with them, he said. But I think it's very important that you be up-front with them and say why these policies are outside the mainstream and why they are inimical to Israel's fundamental interests.

In Shift, Oren Calls J Street 'A Unique Problem'

Oren cited J Street's criticism of Israel's military campaign in Gaza in December 2008 and last January, and its support for talks with the Islamist militant group Hamas, which has engaged in terrorism, as examples of positions that were outside the Jewish mainstream; however, an opinion poll sponsored by the Israeli daily Haaretz in November found that 57% of Israelis favored talks with Hamas under certain conditions. Oren also accused J Street of failing to reject the UN's Goldstone report, which found Israel had committed war crimes during the Gaza campaign. Finally, he charged that the group opposed sanctions against Iran.

In an October interview with The Atlantic writer Jeffrey Goldberg, J Street's executive director, Jeremy Ben-Ami, endorsed the main Iran sanctions bill sponsored by California Democratic Rep. Howard Berman. In an ironic twist, J Street issued a statement advocating its passage on the day that Oren made his remarks.

Perhaps if he would meet with us, he could actually find out what we stand for, rather than having to misrepresent our position, Ben-Ami said. I don't quite understand how it is in the State of Israel's interest to look at J Street as a problem, to write off an organization that represents a large number of American Jews.

Also at the USCJ breakfast, Oren was asked about the November incident at Jerusalem's Western Wall, when police detained Nofrat Frenkel of the prayer group Women of the Wall after she wore a tallit and carried a Torah in the women's section of the main Kotel plaza.

It is not a perfect situation. Oren said. We in Israel have to strike a balance between our respect for pluralism and our respect for tradition.

Oren said that original reports stating that Frenkel had been arrested were mistaken, and that she was simply led away from the Kotel area.

This contradicted a first-person account by Frenkel, published in the December 9 issue of the Forward, in which she described being taken to a police station and interrogated.

As we were exiting, with me carrying the Torah, a policeman met us and began pushing me forcefully toward the nearby police station, Frenkel wrote. Our pleas and explanations that we were on our way to the alternative site were of no use. I was transferred for questioning to the station at David's Citadel.

Graphic

IMAGE: Blunt Words:Michael Oren, Israel'sambassador, slams the dovish lobby.; GETTY IMAGES

IMAGE: CourtesyRebel:Jeremy Ben-Ami, theleader of J Street, has been atarget of criticism.; of J Stret

Load-Date: December 16, 2009

The world this week

Waikato Times (Hamilton, New Zealand)

October 10, 2009 Saturday

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Section: NEWS; INTERNATIONAL; Pg. 1

Length: 313 words

Body

Israeli Corporal Gilat Shalit, 23, appeared on a videotape for the first time since he was captured by **Hamas** in the Gaza Strip 3 1/2 years ago. German and Egyptian mediators brokered an exchange of the proof-of-life film for the release of 20 **women** Palestinian prisoners held in Israeli jails.

IRAN

The "secret annexe" to this year's International Atomic Energy Agency report on Iran said Iran had the know-how to make a nuclear bomb and may already have tested a detonation system small enough to fit into the warhead of a medium-range missile. The agency is to inspect Iran's new uranium enrichment site in Qom on October 25.

NORTH KOREA

North Korea said it was ready to return to international talks on ending its nuclear weapons programme but demanded negotiations first with the United States. The offer came during a visit to North Korea by Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao. North Korea argues it is US hostility and the US presence in South Korea that are pushing it towards a nuclear arsenal. It has long sought a peace treaty with the US to formally end the 1950-53 Korean War and reinstate full diplomatic relations, which would give it access to international aid.

ITALY

Italy's highest court overturned a law granting Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi immunity from prosecution while in office. The Constitutional Court ruled the law, passed last year by the Centre-Right leader soon after he returned for a third term in power, violated the Constitution. The verdict could reopen trials against him on charges that include corruption and could undermine his Government.

THEY SAID IT

"It is important for us to have comprehensive co-operation over the Qom site. We had dialogue, we had talks on clarification of the facility in Qom, which is a pilot enrichment plant."

- International Atomic Energy Agency chief Mohamed ElBaradei comments on his talks with Iran over its nuclear plant.

Load-Date: October 15, 2009

The world this week

End of Document

There's more anti-Christian hate speech around

The Star (South Africa)

July 27, 2009 Monday

e1 Edition

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Section: Pg. 9

Length: 285 words

Body

I READ AK Mia's letter ("Christians are full of hatred, not Muslims", The Star, July 21) and wish to enlighten him, because his letter shows how misinformed he is.

Mecca and Medina are no-go areas for non-Muslims as these are the sacred cities of Islam. But that does not apply to the Vatican or any other sacred Christian site.

St Peter's is a Catholic shrine and only Catholic Masses are held there. But that does not mean that Muslims, Protestants, Jews, members of other faiths or even atheists are forbidden from entering.

Mr Mia, while you will be welcomed at any Christian church service - even in the Vatican - neither I nor any other non-Muslim will be extended this courtesy in any mosque or in Mecca or Medina.

You said the pope hated Muslims. Well, you are wrong. John Paul II and Benedict XVI have tried to reconcile Catholics with members of other faiths, and the pontiff has never once made anti-Muslim remarks. But I have heard more anti-Christian hate speech from Hamas and Hezbollah clerics in Lebanon. Even Osama bin Laden has said both Jews and Christians are to be wiped out. Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has made anti-Christian remarks and denied that the Holocaust happened.

John Paul II prayed at the Wailing Wall, a holy site for Jews, and even attended the opening of a mosque in Rome. Would the Saudi king allow him to worship in Mecca? I doubt it. Please don't compare the Vatican or Italy with Saudi Arabia. Italy's human rights record is better than Saudi Arabia's. There is no death penalty and women are treated with dignity.

The Saudi royal family rule like dictators. In Italy, freedom of speech is enshrined in the constitution, as is freedom of religion.

Paul Pompa

Boksburg

Load-Date: July 26, 2009

Dutch City removes Tariq Ramadan from post

Daily News Egypt

August 19, 2009 Wednesday

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Length: 796 words

Body

THE HAGUE: The Dutch city of Rotterdam said Tuesday that Muslim intellectual Tariq Ramadan would no longer serve as an adviser for hosting a program on a television channel it claims is backed by Tehran.

Rotterdam's Erasmus University has simultaneously dropped him as a guest lecturer on citizenship and identity, said a joint media statement.

"The reason is Tariq Ramadan's involvement with the Iranian television channel Press TV, which is incompatible with his functions." Ramadan has been an advisor to the mayor of Rotterdam on issues of multi-culturalism since 2007.

"Press TV is a channel that is financed by the Iranian government," said the statement. "We find (his) indirect relationship with this repressive regime, or even the appearance of such, to be unacceptable."

Ramadan said he would take the council to court.

"I am going to sue the municipality. It is a question of honor and dignity," he told public broadcaster NOS.

Ramadan said he took offence to being labeled a supporter of the Iranian government.

"To put me in a position where I am supporting the regime is just unacceptable," he said, adding that his television program was of a "religious, philosophical" nature.

The dismissal was "more about the political climate in the Netherlands than anything else", said Ramadan — referring to the rise of far-right parties in Rotterdam and elsewhere.

In response to his removal, Ramadan posted "An Open Letter to my Detractors in The Netherlands" on his website. In the text Ramadan made clear that he was critical of the Iranian government.

"I have never supported either dictatorship or injustice in any Muslim majority society, or anywhere else for that matter."

Dutch City removes Tariq Ramadan from post

Ramadan also insisted that he had only undertaken the position on the condition that he would have full freedom to discuss any issue during his appearances. He clarified that during his appearances he had discussed religious and philosophical issues not Iranian politics.

Ramadan also questioned why his detractors choose his involvement with an Iranian TV program to make a statement about the situation in Iran. He wondered why they did not call for complete political and economic ban of all Dutch interaction with "Iran, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Israel or China?"

In the letter Ramadan framed his removal from office in the context of rising Islamophobic sentiment in the Netherlands "when they single out a 'visible Muslim intellectual' for attack their real agenda is the politics of Muslim-baiting and fear. When it comes to seeking votes, all options are on the table, even the most dishonest and the most scurrilous" he argued.

A Swiss citizen of Egyptian origin, Ramadan is considered one of Europe's leading Muslim thinkers.

He is known for promoting a modernized form of Islam and for his opposition to the 2003 US-led invasion of Iraq.

Ramadan, whose grandfather was a founder of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, has been barred from entering US territory since 2004.

In July, Dutch elections to the EU parliament saw the anti-immigrant Freedom Party win four of Holland's 25 seats.

The city of Rotterdam in particular has become a battleground over Dutch immigrant issues. Rotterdam is home to Europe's biggest port and home to many of the Netherlands' 800,000 immigrants.

These tensions have intensified since the appointment of Ahmed Aboutaleb, a Dutch-Moroccan as mayor. Aboutaleb is the first immigrant mayor of a major European city. Aboutaleb began serving in January and has been called Europe's answer to Barack Obama. His appointment and Ramadan's involvement with the city have angered far-right Dutch nationalists.

The news of Ramadan's sacking followed a series of controversies that have centered on the Muslim intellectual this year.

In April, Ramadan was cleared of allegedly making anti-homosexual comments and as result was allowed to maintain his position with the city of Rotterdam.

In July, a federal appeals court in New York overturned the 2004 ban on Ramadan's entry into the United States. At the time Ramadan had been banned because of a charity contribution to a Palestinian organization later linked to **Hamas**. Ramadan has always maintained it was unreasonable for him to know in advance the ultimate destination of his donation was **Hamas**.

Ramadan's breakout book "Western Muslims and the Future of Islam" makes only a single passing reference to Iran as a locality in a rising movement of what he terms "Islamic feminism" – a theme Ramadan mentioned again in his letter Tuesday when he stated, "For the past 25 years, while observing that compared to the Arab countries Iran has made substantial headway in **women**'s rights and democratic norms, I have been critical of the lack of freedom of expression there." – AFP with additional reporting by Daily News Egypt's Joseph Hammond.

Load-Date: August 19, 2009

National and World briefs

Telegraph Herald (Dubuque, IA)

August 15, 2009 Saturday

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Section: A; Pg. 7

Length: 790 words

Byline: The Associated Press

Body

Student imprisoned in Iran returns to L.A. LOS ANGELES - A graduate student imprisoned for a month in Iran and barred from leaving the country for nearly a year has returned home to Los Angeles, her professor said Friday. Esha Momeni, 29, was charged with acting against Iran's national security and held mainly in solitary confinement after conducting research on the Iranian women's rights movement for her thesis at California State University, Northridge. Momeni, who has dual U.S. and Iranian citizenship, was freed in November but the Iranian government barred her from leaving the country by holding her passports, said CSUN Journalism Professor Melissa Wall. In an interview with college newspaper the Daily Sundial, Momeni said she was pulled over by intelligence agents Oct.

15. She was later taken to Iran's notorious Evin prison. Obama denounces emphasis on protests BELGRADE, Mont. - Trying to lower the temperature of the health care fight, President Barack Obama on Friday denounced news media emphasis on angry protesters at town hall meetings. Obama ventured west for the latest of his own town hall-style events, fielding polite but occasionally tough questions - one man declaring the president couldn't pay for his plan without raising taxes. The president didn't deny that there have been angry outbursts by foes of his plan at town halls this month. But he said that was hardly the whole story. "TV loves a ruckus," Obama said. "What you haven't seen on TV and what makes me proud are the many constructive meetings going on all over the country." Jury convicts mom of mutilating infant son HOUSTON - A Houston mother was convicted Friday of mutilating her infant son by cutting off his genitals two years ago during an attack she blamed on the family dog. A Harris County jury deliberated for about three hours before finding Katherine Nadal guilty of first-degree felony injury to a child. Nadal had claimed the family dog, a 6- to 7-pound dachshund named "Shorty," was responsible for mutilating her then-5-week-old son, Holden Gothia, as she slept next to him. But prosecutors told jurors the 28-year-old mother was high on drugs when she mutilated Holden with an unknown sharp instrument in their suburban Houston apartment in March 2007. Couple forced boys, 6 and 9, to fight ARENTUM, Pa. - Police say a western Pennsylvania woman and her boyfriend forced the woman's sons - a 6-year-old and a 9-year-old - to fight each other as the couple watched. The boys told officials their mom's boyfriend said the fights were training to toughen them up. Thirty-year-old Joyce Sabotka and her boyfriend, 32-year-old Steven Meyer, of Tarentum, face a preliminary hearing Aug. 19 on child endangerment and simple assault charges. They were arrested Thursday because police say the couple forced the fist fights at least 20 times. If the boys refused, police say they got smacked. Police: Man left mom on floor for 2 days FREEPORT, N.Y. - A nursing home worker let his ailing mother lie on the floor of their home for two days, stepping over her when he had to and not calling 911 until she was malnourished and dehydrated, police said Friday. When he finally called 911 and officers got to her, the 64-year-old woman was soiled with her feces and urine, according to police in Long Island's Nassau County. She suffered cardiac and respiratory arrest on the way to a hospital; she was in critical condition and on life support Friday. Lacy Reid, 45, of Freeport, was arraigned Friday on a charge of first-degree reckless endangerment, which carries as

National and World briefs

many as seven years in prison. Quadriplegic man granted right to die CANBERRA, Australia - Christian Rossiter has proven his legal right to die and declared himself a champion of other quadriplegics who no longer find life worth living. An Australian state Supreme Court ruled Friday that a nursing home must respect the 49-year-old patient's decision to starve to death. His case adds to international arguments among euthanasia advocates, religious groups, lawyers and ethicists about where the state's duty to preserve life ends. "I'm happy that I won my right to die," the former stockbroker and mountaineer told reporters from his nursing home bed where he is fed by a tube. 13 killed in shootout GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip - Islamic radicals from an al-Qaida-inspired group battled **Hamas** security in the Gaza Strip on Friday in shootouts that killed at least 13 people. The fighting began when **Hamas** forces surrounded a mosque in the southern Gaza town of Rafah where about 100 members of Jund Ansar Allah, or the Soldiers of the Companions of God, were holed up, including some armed with suicide belts and rifles, according to residents of the area. The Associated Press

Load-Date: August 15, 2009

End of Document

[Israeli soldiers shot dead 11 unarmed Palestinian civilians, claims report](#)

Guardian.com

August 13, 2009 Thursday

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theguardian

Length: 807 words

Body

ABSTRACT

Human Rights Watch says Israel has failed to properly investigate 'white flag' killings during Gaza offensive

FULL TEXT

A new report alleges that Israeli soldiers shot dead 11 unarmed Palestinian civilians carrying white flags during Israel's offensive in Gaza earlier this year - yet Israel has still failed to adequately investigate the killings, as required under international law.

The 11 deaths - including those of five women and four children - took place in seven separate incidents across Gaza in circumstances where, it is claimed, the victims were displaying white flags to indicate their status as non-combatants.

The incidents are alleged to have taken place in areas controlled by the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF), where there was no fighting or Palestinian fighters nearby.

The New York-based organisation Human Rights Watch, which published [White Flag Deaths: Killings of Palestinian Civilians during Operation Cast Lead](#) said it informed the Israeli military of the cases in February. But the cases were not examined in an IDF internal investigation into the conduct of its forces, which concluded that IDF forces "operated in accordance with international law."

The group says at least three witnesses confirmed the details in each of the seven separate shootings.

Included among the cases is one [first reported in detail](#) by the Observer, in the rural village of Khuza'a close to the fence surrounding Gaza. Rawiya al-Najjar, 47, was shot dead, and her relative Jasmin al-Najjar, 23, was wounded while the two women were attempting to escape an attack on the village that included the use of white phosphorus munitions and the bulldozing of houses.

Three other incidents all occurred around the northern Gaza village of al-Atatra, which had previously seen heavy fighting between Israeli soldiers and Hamas fighters. By the time of the shootings, however, the fighting had stopped, and in each case the civilians were visible, unarmed, and displaying white flags, the report says.

Israeli soldiers shot dead 11 unarmed Palestinian civilians, claims report

In one case, the civilians were walking in a group on an open street. In another, they were driving slowly on tractors and in cars, trying to leave the area with the wounded, according to the report.

"We were driving the tractor and on the way we saw tanks and soldiers," said Omar Abu Halima, 18. "When we saw them [the Israeli soldiers] they ordered us to stop. After we stopped they fired at us. They killed my cousin Mattar. My cousin Muhammad was wounded and later died."

In another case - also in al-Atatra - two women holding white flags stepped out of a house that the IDF was demolishing to tell the soldiers that civilians were inside. "We opened the door and a sniper fired at us from a house," said Zakiya al-Qanu, 55. "Ibtisam was hit and I turned to go back inside and another bullet grazed my back. Ibtisam died in the doorway."

Responding to the claims, the Israeli military said its soldiers were obliged to avoid harming anyone waving a white flag but added that in some cases Hamas militants had used civilians with white flags for cover. It added that the reports were based on "unreliable witnesses". Human Rights Watch said it could find no evidence of the misuse of white flags or the use of civilians as human shields in any of the killings detailed.

"These casualties comprise a small fraction of the Palestinian civilians wounded and killed," the report says. "But they stand out because, in each case, the victims were standing, walking or in slowly moving vehicles with other unarmed civilians, and were trying to convey their non-combatant status by waving a white flag."

Along with the use of white phosphorus on heavily populated civilian areas, the shooting of unarmed civilians has become the most controversial issue of January's war. The report follows the publication last month of anonymous testimonies by over two dozen soldiers who fought in Gaza, compiled by Breaking the Silence, an organisation of former Israeli servicemen, which accused the IDF of an atmosphere of permissive violence against civilians.

The allegations of white flag deaths first emerged during the conflict, collected by both human rights groups and the media and have yet to be adequately responded to.

Under the Geneva conventions, combatants are obliged to distinguish between soldiers and civilians (as well as fighters who are hors de combat) and also have a legal obligation to protect civilians. They are also required to investigate any alleged war crimes committed by their own troops.

Last month, the Israeli government released its own report defending its use of force in Gaza. The report said that Israel was investigating five alleged cases in which soldiers killed civilians carrying white flags, incidents that it said resulted in 10 deaths. Two of the cases - the incident in Khuza'a and one in eastern Jabaliya - are among them.

Load-Date: August 13, 2009

ISLAMIC SOCIETY CONVENTION; Pastor Rick Warren to address American Muslims

Charleston Gazette (West Virginia)

July 4, 2009, Saturday

Copyright 2009 Charleston Newspapers

Section: NEWS; Pg. P1C

Length: 864 words

Byline: Rachel Zoll, The Associated Press

Body

NEW YORK - Sayyid Syeed remembers an interfaith event several years ago when a Jewish leader went to embrace him, saw someone snapping a photo, then suddenly pulled back.

"He said to the man, 'Stop,'" Syeed recalled, "'I'll lose my job.'"

Times have changed for the Islamic Society of North America and for Syeed, who leads the group's interfaith outreach. In a sign of growing acceptance of U.S. Muslims, one of the most prominent religious leaders in the country, evangelical pastor Rick Warren, will speak at the Islamic Society's annual convention this weekend.

Representatives from the two largest streams of American Judaism, the Reform and Conservative movements, will also be there to highlight their recently formed partnerships with the Muslim group.

"The landscape of religion in America is changing," Syeed said. "America itself has reached a certain level of fulfillment in terms of diversity of faith."

The Islamic Society, an umbrella association for tens of thousands of Muslims, has worked for years to persuade leaders of other faiths to attend its convention, a massive family reunion in its 46th year that draws about 30,000 people.

Major American Jewish groups had largely stayed away from the event, mainly due to hostility between U.S. Muslims and Jews over Israel, the Palestinians and the role of **Hamas** in the region.

Many conservative Christians did the same. They viewed Islam through their experiences with Muslim countries where Christian minorities have been targets of violence and discrimination.

Also, suspicions over the origins of the Islamic Society lingered. The organization grew from Muslim Students Associations, campus groups that had received funding from Saudi Arabia.

In recent years, the society has prominently denounced terrorism, including terror by **Hamas**, and has endorsed a two-state solution for Israel and the Palestinians. The organization also elected its first **female** president, Ingrid Mattson, who participated in the National Cathedral service for President Barack Obama the day after his inaugural.

"In terms of acceptance of Muslim Americans generally, I do believe this has increased in some ways, despite the large segment of Americans who hold unfavorable views of Islam," Mattson said. "Muslim Americans have, in

ISLAMIC SOCIETY CONVENTION Pastor Rick Warren to address American Muslims

recent years, decided that they have the major responsibility to counter the extremists' views of Islam with their own mainstream views, and so have put time into public education and outreach to their neighbors, on a local and national scale."

Syed said that he and Warren, a Southern Baptist and author of "The Purpose Driven Life," have worked together on projects fighting malaria and advocating for people with HIV and AIDS.

The convention will not be the first time Warren has addressed an American Muslim group. Last December, he spoke at a meeting of the Muslim Public Affairs Council, a policy organization based in Los Angeles. But the Islamic Society gathering is by far his most dramatic display of friendship with U.S. Muslims. Warren would not comment ahead of the event.

Two years ago, Rabbi Eric Yoffie, president of the liberal Union for Reform Judaism, the largest American branch of Judaism, became the first major Jewish leader to address the convention. The two groups have pledged to fight extremism and build ties between mosques and synagogues nationwide.

This year, Conservative Judaism, the second-largest American Jewish movement, will show its support at the assembly. Rabbi Burton Visotzky, a prominent professor at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, the Conservative movement's flagship institution, will be a featured speaker.

Conservative rabbis and the Islamic society have also been building relationships between local mosques and synagogues. Next year, along with Hartford Seminary in Connecticut, they plan a conference on Judaism and Islam in the United States.

"I think there has been a change in general perceptions," of American Muslims, said Mark Pelavin, associate director of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism. "When you look at the kind of symbolic participation of Muslims in public life, and you see Rick Warren and Rabbi Yoffie coming, those are all things you wouldn't have seen five years ago."

The Islamic Society, based in Plainfield, Ind., still has its opponents.

A stigma remains from the years immediately following Sept. 11 when the millions of U.S. Muslims, their mosques and charities came under intense public scrutiny in the search for domestic terrorists. None of the investigations yielded any finding of wrongdoing or penalty against the Islamic Society.

Visotzky said he is concerned about the potential for criticism of Conservative Judaism's work with the Muslim group. Bloggers who closely follow Warren already are denouncing his appearance at the convention, scheduled for Saturday night.

But Visotzky said he feels a sense of religious duty. He views the assembly as a chance to show American Jews that Muslims are reaching out to them despite differences over Israel, and explain to Muslims his support for the Jewish state.

"We are commanded to love our neighbors," Visotzky said, "and my friends at ISNA are good neighbors."

Load-Date: July 6, 2009

Where are all the usual suspects?

The Jerusalem Post

July 1, 2009 Wednesday

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 13

Length: 749 words

Byline: SETH J. FRANTZMAN

Highlight: The writer is a PhD student in geography at the Hebrew University and runs the Terra Incognita Journal blog.

Body

Following the contested Iranian election, the green armbands of the opposition and pictures of bloodied and dying Iranian protesters were being held aloft by Iranians from Los Angeles to Paris. Noticeably absent from the international scene were Westerners, particularly students.

The reaction to events in Iran has shown once again the double standards and hypocrisy of those in Europe and the West who jump at the slightest opportunity to protest Israel but remain stoic in the face of events in Iran.

While many have compared the outpouring of anger in Iran to what presaged the 1979 revolution, there is one key difference; this time around, no Western students care. Before the shah fell from power, he often visited the capitals of major European and North American cities. Every time he did, tens of thousands of progressive students and human-rights activists poured out onto the streets calling him a fascist and protesting his visit.

In one such protest on June 2, 1967 a German student, Benno Ohnesorg, was even killed.

But now there is no such outpouring of emotion. Neither is there any interest from the UN or from Jimmy Carter.

YET IN January, when Israel was embroiled in a war with **Hamas**, the anger directed at her in Europe was apoplectic. When Israel fought a war against Hizbullah in 2006, Western students even proudly wore the symbol of Hizbullah, a clenched fist holding an AK-47.

So where were the Western students to hold aloft the green armbands of Iranian opposition leader Mir Hossein Mousavi?

Why will Western students who call themselves progressives wear green for **Hamas** and Hizbullah - terrorist organizations that murder civilians - and not for Iranian dissidents?

Why have CNN and other major media been so coy when it comes to covering the outrages perpetrated by the regime in Iran?

Describing the deaths of protesters, CNN never once, in the coverage I watched, mentioned who had killed them. It simply said they were "shot." But when Iranian dissidents in Washington were interviewed with "death to the dictator" placards, the CNN reporter challenged them, demanding to know if they were calling for "murder."

Where are all the usual suspects?

Murder? The only murder that has taken place so far is the murder of Iranian protesters.

For members of my parent's generation, protesting the shah was one of the things you did as a sign you were a good person. It was up there with the civil rights movement. So where is this generation in its opposition to the modern shah of Iran, the ayatollahs and their lackey, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad?

THE REASON for the disconnect on Iran has strange roots. It was encapsulated in the support that Michel Foucault, a major figure in Western philosophy, gave the Islamic revolution.

Foucault, angry at what he found to be a conservative Western attitude toward his homosexuality and feminism, came to support Iranian Islamism in the warped belief that it was the newest "revolutionary" idea.

Even when women were smothered in chadors and gays were executed by the ayatollah, he didn't admit that he was wrong.

During the years of the second Bush administration, there was a belief among some on the extreme Left that "the enemy of my enemy is my friend." Even the indefensible Ahmadinejad was rewarded by those choosing to see his evil through the lens of "realism," "interests" and "historical meddling by the West."

The BBC claimed that should Mousavi win the election, it would be "hard for Israel to ratchet up opposition to Iran" and CNN claimed that "Iran's main enemy, Israel," was watching the protests closely.

Those who oppose Israel therefore justify supporting Iran. This strange logic has led to support for Ahmadinejad's right to "free speech" by inviting him to Columbia University and supporting his "right" to speak at Durban II.

It is a disgrace that those who don keffiyehs as a fashion symbol in universities and fiercely protest Israeli actions in Gaza and Lebanon will not lift a finger in defense of democracy in Iran.

It is a sad testimony to the warped logic of "human rights" that it was a cause celebre to riot against the shah in the streets of Europe in 1978, but that no one can be called away from their coffee houses and belly dancing classes to raise their hands against the rigged election in Iran.

There are many in the West who are on the wrong side of history, and just as Iranians did not forgive the West for coddling the shah, neither will Iran's next generation forgive us for our silence on this momentous crackdown.

sfrantzman@hotmail.com

Graphic

Photo: IRANIANS IN FRANCE demonstrating against Teheran's violation of human rights. Neither the UN nor Jimmy Carter nor Westerners in general showed much interest. (Credit: AP)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

Guardian Weekly: International news: Arab world accused of rights retreat

Guardian Weekly

December 18, 2009 Friday

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TheGuardianWeekly

Section: Pg. 10

Length: 379 words

Byline: Ian Black

Body

Human rights in the Arab world have deteriorated over the last year as governments flaunt progress on women's issues while evading and blocking broader reforms that guarantee dignity for all, says a report.

The Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies blames Arab governments and member states of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference for working in concert within UN institutions to undermine international mechanisms and standards for the protection of human rights.

The CIRHS's report, Bastion of Impunity, Mirage of Reform, attacks the Arab League for supporting the Sudanese regime, which is criticised for "blatant contempt for justice, impunity and a lack of accountability", and President Omar al-Bashir, who refuses to appear before the international criminal court in connection with war crimes in Darfur. It further accuses the 21-member league of using the principle of national sovereignty as a pretext to remain silent about or collaborate in grave human rights violations in several Arab states.

It says that while only limited progress has been made in gender equality, Arab governments use this "to burnish their image before the international community while simultaneously evading democratic and human rights reform measures required . . . for all of their citizens". The report highlights "grave and ongoing" Israeli violations of Palestinian rights, especially in the Gaza Strip. Strikingly, it also accuses the rival Palestinian factions Fatah and Hamas of "grave abuses" against their opponents, including arbitrary detention, lethal torture and extrajudicial killings.

Elsewhere in the region, it expresses concern about the possible collapse of the Yemeni state in the context of war in the northern province of Saa'da, a crackdown in the south and social and political unrest throughout the poorest country in the Arab world. The Cairo-based organisation also said Egypt in 2009 used emergency laws to repress freedom of expression, including detaining or abducting bloggers.

After criticism of restrictions in Tunisia, Morocco, Syria and Saudi Arabia, the CIRHS report also accuses Arab governments of supporting attempts to legalise international restrictions on freedom of expression through the pretext of prohibiting "defamation of religions".

Load-Date: December 17, 2009

End of Document

Israel frees inmates for soldier's video; Tape from Gaza shows captive alive and well

The Calgary Herald (Alberta)

October 3, 2009 Saturday

Final Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A22

Length: 287 words

Byline: Lauren McNabb, Canwest News Service

Dateline: JERUSALEM

Body

Recent video of kidnapped soldier Gilad Shalit, shown tired but smiling, aired on Friday, giving a relieved Israeli public their first glimpse of him since he was abducted more than three years ago.

The video, two minutes and 40 seconds long, was handed over to Israeli authorities in exchange for the release of 20 female Palestinian prisoners.

The swap, negotiated by Egyptian and German mediators, marked the first significant step in a stalled negotiation process that has seen Israel call for Shalit's freedom and Hamas demand the return of at least 1,000 more Palestinian prisoners, some convicted of deadly terrorist attacks.

Speaking softly, but coherently, the 23-year-old spoke of his love for his family and a desire to be returned home soon.

"I hope that the present government under the leadership of (Israeli Prime Minister) Benjamin Netanyahu will not at this time waste the opportunity to reach an agreement, and as a result I can at long last realize my dream and be freed," he said.

Shalit was captured and dragged into Gaza during a cross-border raid in June 2006. Since then, the International Red Cross has been barred from seeing him and, with the exception of a few letters to his family and one audio tape, news of his well-being has been scarce.

In Friday's tape, Shalit held an Arabic newspaper, marked with the date Sept. 14. At one point he even walked toward the camera.

In exchange for that assurance that he was alive, and in apparent good health, Israel released 19 female Palestinian prisoners Friday, with one more to be freed on Sunday. Most were deemed to be "low-profile" and near the end of their two-year sentences.

There are more than 10,000 Palestinians currently being held in Israeli prisons.

Israel frees inmates for soldier's video; Tape from Gaza shows captive alive and well

Graphic

Colour Photo: AFP-Getty Images; a photo from the video shows captured israeli soldier Gilad Shalit at an undisclosed location in the Gaza Strip. ;

Load-Date: October 3, 2009

End of Document

World

The Toronto Star
August 14, 2009 Friday

Copyright 2009 Toronto Star Newspapers, Ltd.

Section: NEWS; Pg. A08

Length: 362 words

Body

Pakistan

Taliban support tumbles, but U.S. is also disliked

Pakistanis' views on the Taliban have shifted dramatically in the past year, with 70 per cent now opposing the militants, a poll released yesterday said. The United States doesn't fare well either, with 64 per cent of Pakistanis seeing Washington as an enemy. Support for Al Qaeda was just 9 per cent.

In 2008, 27 per cent of those surveyed by Pew Global Attitudes viewed the Taliban favourably, and 33 per cent unfavourably. The rest had no opinion.

Israel

Troops accused of killing

civilians under white flag

A new report by Human Rights Watch charged yesterday that Israeli soldiers killed 11 unarmed Palestinian civilians - including children - who were carrying white flags in seven separate shooting incidents during Israel's Gaza offensive in January.

The group urged Israel to investigate the deaths, which it said occurred when the civilians were "in plain view and posed no apparent security threat." In a response, the military said its soldiers were obligated to avoid harming anyone waving a white flag but **Hamas** militants had been known to hide behind civilians with white flags.

Palestinian militants claim soldier abducted

A little known Palestinian group calling itself Al Quds Army said it has kidnapped a **female** Israeli soldier. In an email to Palestinian news agency Maan, the group said it would provide details later.

North Korea

South Korean deported after months in custody

The government yesterday deported a South Korean worker it had detained for months for allegedly denouncing its political system.

World

Yoo Seong-jin, 44, worked as technician at a joint industrial park in the North. His release followed that of two jailed American journalists who were handed over to former U.S. president Bill Clinton.

Scotland

No decision on freeing

Lockerbie bomber

The government said yesterday it has made no decision on releasing the man convicted of the 1988 Lockerbie bombing that killed 270 people. The statement followed reports Abdel Baset Ali al-Megrahi, serving a life sentence, would be released next week on compassionate grounds. The 57-year-old Libyan national is suffering from terminal prostate cancer.

Load-Date: August 14, 2009

End of Document

Rights group says Israelis shot dead unarmed civilians carrying white flags

The Irish Times

August 14, 2009 Friday

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Section: WORLD; Other World Stories; Pg. 9

Length: 354 words

Byline: PETER BEAUMONT

Body

ISRAELI SOLDIERS shot dead 11 unarmed Palestinian civilians carrying white flags during Israel's offensive in Gaza earlier this year, according to a report from Human Rights Watch, which said Israel had failed to investigate the killings adequately.

The deaths – including those of five women and four children – took place in seven separate incidents across Gaza in areas controlled by the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF), where there was no fighting and no Palestinian fighters were nearby.

Human Rights Watch, a New-York-based organisation, which yesterday published *White Flag Deaths: Killings of Palestinian Civilians during Operation Cast Lead*, said it informed the Israeli military of the cases in February. But they were not examined in an IDF internal investigation into the conduct of its forces, which concluded that they operated in accordance with international law. The group says at least three witnesses confirmed the details in each of the seven separate shootings.

Included among the cases is one in Khuza'a, close to the fence surrounding Gaza. Rawiya al-Najjar (47) was shot dead and her relative Jasmin al-Najjar (23) was wounded while the two women were attempting to escape an attack on the village that included the use of white phosphorus and the bulldozing of houses.

Three other incidents occurred around the northern Gaza village of al-Atatra, which had previously seen fighting between Israeli soldiers and Hamas fighters. By the time of the shootings, however, the fighting had stopped, and in each case the civilians were visible, unarmed, and displaying white flags, the report says.

In one case, the civilians were walking in a group on a street. In another, they were driving slowly on tractors and in cars, trying to leave the area. Human Rights Watch said it could find no evidence of misuse of white flags or the use of civilians as human shields in the cases detailed.

The report follows the publication last month of anonymous testimonies by more than two dozen soldiers who fought in Gaza which accused the IDF of an atmosphere of permissive violence against civilians. (*Guardian* service)

Load-Date: August 17, 2009

Rights group says Israelis shot dead unarmed civilians carrying white flags

End of Document

Turkey must lend full support to the Goldstone report

Right Vision News

August 29, 2009 Saturday

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Length: 861 words

Dateline: Pakistan

Body

Pakistan, Sept. 29 -- Eight months have passed since the three-week Israeli attack on Gaza. The United Nations Fact Finding Mission on what happened in Gaza released its report on Sept. 15. The four-member panel found that both Israeli and Palestinian groups committed 'war crimes and possibly, in some respects, crimes against humanity.' The 575-page report, to be discussed at the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) tomorrow, is based on 188 interviews, 10,000 pages of documentation, 1,200 photographs and satellite imagery. The Israeli government had boycotted the panel and refused it entry into Israel. Panelists entered Gaza via Egypt for interviews and investigations, met in Jordan with Palestinian Authority officials from the West Bank, and heard testimonies from Israelis, including some victims of Hamas attacks, by flying them to Geneva. The report accused Palestinian groups of rocketing civilian areas in Israel but made its harshest judgments against Israel. The Israeli attack was 'directed at the people of Gaza as a whole,' not just at Hamas militants, as Israel claimed. It concluded that Israeli operations were 'carefully planned in all their phases as a deliberately disproportionate attack designed to punish, humiliate and terrorize a civilian population, radically diminish its local economic capacity to work and to provide for itself, and to force upon it an ever increasing sense of dependency and vulnerability.' According to the panel, Israel was pursuing its Dahiya Doctrine, which is 'the application of disproportionate force and the causing of great damage and destruction to civilian property and infrastructure, and suffering to civilian populations.' Upon releasing the report Justice Richard Goldstone, South African Supreme Court and Constitutional Court judge and former chief prosecutor with the war crimes tribunals for Yugoslavia and Rwanda, who presided over the fact-finding mission, said: 'As a Jew with a long-standing affiliation with Israel, it's obviously a great disappointment to me, to put it mildly, that Israel behaved as described in the report.' In response to the smear campaign against the report conducted by Israel and its defenders Goldstone said that 'it is grossly wrong to label ' a report critical of Israel as being anti-Israel,' and urged 'fair-minded people' to read the report (available at the UN Web site) for themselves. The panel recommended that the UN Security Council ask both the Israeli and Palestinian authorities to conduct transparent investigations and prosecutions with regard to the violations identified in the report. It further recommended that the Security Council set up a body of independent experts to report to it on the progress. If the experts do not indicate within six months that proceedings are taking place in good faith, the Security Council should refer the matter to the International Criminal Court prosecutor. In his address to the UN General Assembly last Thursday, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan said: 'I would like to draw your attention to the fact that the aggression against Gaza at the end of 2008 rapidly transformed into a human tragedy. Due to phosphorus mortar bombs dropped on Gaza nearly 1,400 people, children and women, died, and more than 5,000 were injured. The infrastructure of Gaza was totally destroyed. Not even the United Nations buildings could escape the destruction. Mr. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has personally observed this destruction and expressed his reaction to it. 'I am sorry to say that the human tragedy in Gaza is still continuing today. People are living in tents, cannot find even drinking water. ' Are we fulfilling our human duty towards these people? What can the United Nations or the Security Council do about this situation? Has it the power to do something or not? We should not fail to ask these questions. ... 'The Palestinian problem

Turkey must lend full support to the Goldstone report

cannot be solved on the basis of considering the demands of only one side. The security of the Palestinian people is as important as that of Israel. The Palestinian people's demand for freedom and peace is as legitimate as Israel's demand for stability. ... We, as the Turkish government, have repeatedly said that we cannot close our eyes to the tragic human condition in Gaza, and will continue to do so. The ending of the human drama and establishment of permanent peace in Gaza is a conscientious responsibility. ' We are calling on all parties concerned not to remain indifferent to the situation, and not to condone continued suffering. " I fully agree with Prime Minister Erdogan's remarks, and thus call on the government of Turkey, currently a member of the Security Council, to lend its full support to the Goldstone recommendations. If Prime Minister Erdogan really means what he says, what could be a better way of proving it than backing the Goldstone recommendations that there be a full investigation of war crimes committed on both sides, and those responsible be brought to justice. Published by HT Syndication with permission from Right Vision News. For more information on news feed please contact Sarabjit Jagirdar at htsyndication@hindustantimes.com

For any query with respect to this article or any other content requirement, please contact Editor at htsyndication@hindustantimes.com

Load-Date: September 28, 2009

Why a private television channel in Palestine

Daily News Egypt

August 24, 2009 Monday

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Length: 893 words

Body

RAMALLAH: A state-run television channel and a few domestic terrestrial stations, which mostly re-run programs from other satellite channels, are almost all that is on offer in the Palestinian Territories. Two other outlets - Al Aqsa, set up by Hamas in Gaza, and Al Quds, which many brand as Hamas-light - are partisan stations. The private sector, so far, has shown very little interest in television broadcast, probably due to the uncertainty that characterizes the situation in Palestine and the considerably high risks involved in launching a private television channel.

Today, after years of state-run or partisan media outlets in Palestine, the time has come for a new satellite television channel that is entirely private: a channel that does not belong to a particular political party or governmental body but one that aspires to reflect the interests of the overwhelming majority of Palestinians, those living in the Palestinian territories and in the Diaspora. Such a channel would also provide the Israeli enemy/neighbor with a unique window onto aspects of Palestinian society with which it is completely unfamiliar.

For years, Palestinians have been stereotyped all over the world as terrorists or religious fundamentalists, and accused of being incapable of coping with the changing world around them. And when the second Palestinian uprising against Israel broke out in 2000, images of death, wounded people, destruction and wailing women dominated the screens and came to represent Palestinian society in peoples' minds. But are these the only images? Do Palestinians live only one mode of life? These were the questions asked when deciding to launch the first truly private television channel in Palestine.

For all of their anguish, Palestinians know how to live a normal life. For the overwhelming majority of them, life goes on, for the good and bad. And while people cannot change their past, they can surely shape their future, provided they have the tools. An objective and highly professional television channel can help provide at least some of these tools.

Such a station can also play a very significant role in bridging gaps and mending fences with the "enemy/ neighbor" next door. For years, the Israeli public has been subjected to one kind of Palestinian media discourse, one that focuses more on the conflict and less on its resolution. In my opinion, most of the efforts made over the past years to solve the Palestinian-Israeli conflict have failed only because of the lack of understanding between the two nations. Failure to understand the other exacerbates the conflict and makes it harder to achieve reconciliation.

Why a private television channel in Palestine

A private television station that can show the Israeli public a different angle on life in Palestine can help counter many of the antagonistic perceptions that Israelis have about Palestinians and vice-versa.

A modern, state of the art and open television channel in Palestine can open doors for a more civilized debate between the two nations, as well as within their own constituencies. Palestinians need a professional media outlet that tells their Israeli neighbors that across the Green Line, the Separation Barrier or the Israeli army checkpoints lives a nation that aspires to freedom and liberty no less than the Israelis themselves.

Palestinians living inside Israel are by default an integral part of the targeted audience of such a station. Their experience of life in Israel should, therefore, become part of the program grid of any private television channel that strives to reach out to as many interested audience members as possible.

The station should strive to feature locally produced cultural, educational, arts, sports and entertainment programs, covering various aspects of Palestinian life in the Palestinian territories, inside Israel and abroad. It should also guide the Arab and Palestinian public toward a promising future by promoting a free, democratic, open and tolerant community, while at the same time advocating a culture of life, joy and promise, as opposed to a culture of death, tears and pain.

With 65% of the Palestinian population below the age of 25, a television channel should dedicate considerable programming time to a young audience. The youth factor is very important for every nation that looks towards a better future. This is why the Palestinian public needs programs that address religious extremism and promote enlightened thinking, encouraging the youth to adopt a culture of open dialogue and acceptance of the other. Young Palestinians could also be encouraged to produce their own dramas and documentaries that address their interests and concerns which could then be aired on TV.

We have high hopes that our new private satellite channel, Palestine Tomorrow, will be capable of achieving these goals and attracting viewers from all over the world. For such a vision we require a self-sustaining and profitable business model that can generate revenues through the sale of advertising, public participation in television contests and other sponsorship, and sale of locally produced programs and reports.

Setting up the channel is indeed an expensive Endeavour, but doable and well worth the effort.

Elias Zananiri is the CEO of Palestine Tomorrow TV Satellite Channel in Ramallah, Palestine. This article was written for the Common Ground News Service (CGNews).

Load-Date: August 25, 2009

Redeeming captives

The Jerusalem Post

July 3, 2009 Friday

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Section: FEATURES; Pg. 41

Length: 882 words

Byline: SHLOMO BRODY

Highlight: The writer, on-line editor of Tradition, teaches at Yeshivat Hakotel and is pursuing a doctorate in Jewish philosophy at the Hebrew University. Ask the Rabbi

Body

Does Halacha mandate releasing hundreds of terrorists to free captured soldiers? - A.L., Nahariya

The dilemma over what price to pay for redeeming captives has, alas, engaged the Jewish people since antiquity. The capture of soldiers like Gilad Schalit and the demand to release terrorists only further complicates this quandary. I will try to present the debate's parameters, without giving an opinion, in hope that clarity of the issues can aid public dialogue.

The Talmud praises redeeming captives (pidyon shevuyim) as a great mitzva, superior even to charity because it liberates a person from the emotional (and sometimes physical) pain of captivity (Bava Batra 8a-b). Consequently, Jewish law allows communal leaders to reallocate money dedicated to different causes, like synagogue building funds, toward collecting ransom money, with some going so far as to permit selling Torah scrolls to raise money (Tosafot). Maimonides lists no less than seven biblical mandates fulfilled by liberating a captive (Matanot Le'ani'im 8:10), while Rabbi Joseph Kolon conversely compares one who needlessly delays in freeing a captive to a murderer (YD 252:3). The Bible further highlights stories about redeeming captives, including Abraham's rescue of Lot (Genesis 14) and Moses's (Numbers 20) and David's (I Samuel 30) liberation of war captives.

Nonetheless, the sages limited, in the name of tikkun olam (repairing the world), the sum of the ransom, asserting that one cannot pay more than the person's market value (Gitin 45a). Some believed that this decree aimed to limit the financial burden on the community, thereby allowing a wealthy individual or community to voluntarily pay an exorbitant sum to free a captive. Most medieval commentators, followed by Rabbi Yosef Karo, adopted an alternative talmudic explanation that these limits prevent providing lucrative incentives for further kidnappings, thereby forbidding excessive payments even from people with deep pockets (YD 252:4).

However, a number of exceptions were made to this rule. While Rabbi Menahem Hameiri contended that one cannot overpay even to redeem himself, normative Halacha asserted that one can use an unlimited amount of his own money to buy himself liberty. Despite Maimonides's protest (Hilchot Ishut 14:19), similar dispensations were granted for redeeming one's spouse (Tosafot Ketubot 52a). Indeed, part of the marital contract ordains that men must redeem their wives, with Halacha further ruling that, in general, communities should give preference to freeing female captives to prevent ignoble acts against them (Horayot 13a). While the community can force a wealthy member to pay for the fair-rate redemption of his other relatives (YD 252:11-12), it remains forbidden for a person to voluntarily overpay, although the Talmud testifies that some did not follow this stricture (Gitin 45a).

Redeeming captives

The Talmud further relates that after the Roman conquest, Rabbi Yehoshua ben Hanania redeemed for an exorbitant price a promising youth who grew into the great sage Rabbi Yishmael. Some medieval authorities explained that given the preponderance of wartime captives, it remained futile to try to prevent future kidnappings, which inevitably happen in such periods (Tosafot Gitin 45a). As such, some believe that the sages' rules do not apply to contemporary prisoner swaps following wars, especially since these exchanges follow conventional protocols.

A more controversial interpretation asserted that one may redeem scholars for inflated sums, since their value to the community is immeasurable and irreplaceable. In one celebrated incident, Rabbi Meir of Rothenburg (Germany, 13th century) died in prison after refusing to be redeemed for Emperor Rudolph I's inflated ransom demand, fearing that other despots would imprison fellow scholars (Yam Shel Shlomo Gitin 4:66).

Others contended that the ransom limitations did not apply in cases where the captive's lives are endangered, as in Yishmael's case (Tosafot Gitin 58a). Nahmanides (Gitin 45a) and others disputed this interpretation, contending that one cannot save the captive's life by threatening the lives of future captives. By the 16th century, however, it remains clear that Jewish communities throughout the world created special funds to redeem as many captives as possible, fearing for both their lives and the future of the nation (Shu"t Radbaz 1:40).

Israel has particularly suffered from this dilemma, which culminated in the 1985 "Jibril deal" that released 1150 prisoners for three living soldiers captured during the First Lebanon War. At the time, Rabbi Shlomo Goren vociferously criticized the deal for endangering soldiers by providing incentives for future kidnappings. He further warned of the prisoners returning to terror, fears borne out by Ahmed Yassin (future head of Hamas assassinated by Israel in 2004) and other released terrorists later engaging in massive terrorist activities. When Goren later republished his essay, however, he concluded like Rabbi Shaul Yisraeli, who believed that the government must take full responsibility for its soldiers, deeming it analogous to someone paying an exorbitant price to redeem himself. Which position is right? Perhaps both, and hence the continuing debate.

Submit a question to JPostRabbi@yahoo.com

Graphic

Photo: Noam Schalit, father of soldier Gilad Schalit, who was captured by Hamas-allied militants in Gaza in 2006, walks to a Likud faction meeting in the Knesset last month. (Credit: AP Photo/Sebastian Scheiner)

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

Feminist groups urge Britain not to cancel universal jurisdiction

The Jerusalem Post

December 23, 2009 Wednesday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 6

Length: 420 words

Byline: DAN IZENBERG

Body

Almost 100 Israeli, Palestinian and international feminist organizations wrote a letter on Tuesday to Prime Minister Gordon Brown and Foreign Secretary David Miliband, urging them not to take action to change the law granting courts universal jurisdiction in Britain.

"Universal jurisdiction is an essential legal device, symbolizing the responsibility of the global community to prevent crimes against humanity wherever they occur, to bring justice to the victims and to protect the citizens of the world from tyranny, persecution and institutionalized violence," the signatories wrote.

"The United Kingdom played an instrumental role in establishing these principles in the aftermath of the Second World War, and should commit itself to protecting and maintaining them. The British government's intent to undermine universal jurisdiction sets a dangerous precedent in defending criminal government officials, rather than the victims of their crimes."

Eilat Mazor, coordinator of the Israeli-based Coalition of Women for Peace, said her organization had initiated the letter after reading reports that Brown and Miliband wanted to change the law, which currently allows private individuals to ask British courts to issue detention orders against suspected war criminals and to try them as such.

Recently, a court issued an arrest warrant against Kadima Party leader Tzipi Livni, who served as foreign minister during Operation Cast Lead last year. Brown later apologized for the warrant and said Livni was always welcome in Britain, while Miliband reportedly told her he would take action to prevent such incidents in the future.

But Mazor and the other organizations had precisely Livni and the other former members of the Olmert government in mind. Declaring that Israel "has yet to conduct a thorough, independent and reliable investigation of the war crimes" it committed in Cast Lead, the letter called on the international community "to ensure that Israel will comply with international human rights and humanitarian law. Issuing arrest warrants against Israeli officials responsible... among them Ehud Olmert, Ehud Barak and Tzipi Livni, is an important means to this end."

Asked why the organizations had not demanded that Britain apply universal jurisdiction to Hamas leaders even though the Goldstone Report had concluded that they, too, may have committed war crimes and crimes against humanity, Maoz said there was no comparison, as the rocket fire on Israeli towns in the Gaza periphery was "a popular uprising."

Load-Date: October 4, 2011

Feminist groups urge Britain not to cancel universal jurisdiction

End of Document

City at the crossroads on road to peace

Weekend Australian

November 14, 2009 Saturday

1 - All-round Country Edition

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Section: WORLD; Pg. 21

Length: 900 words

Byline: JOHN LYONS, MIDDLE EAST CORRESPONDENT

Body

Life is beginning to return to normal in the Palestinian flashpoint region around Nablus

FOR all the talk of road maps and roads to peace, if ever harmony comes to the Middle East, it will need to travel along Highway 60 -- the road that winds north from Jerusalem towards the troubled Palestinian city of Nablus.

It is in Nablus, one of the oldest and most important cities on the West Bank, that so many of the tensions of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict intersect.

A frail ceasefire exists between three Palestinian factions -- Hamas, Fatah and the Islamic Jihad -- while the Israeli Defence Forces stand at the main checkpoint into Nablus.

This city of about 200,000 people still has many problems but it has made great progress. During the worst of the second intifada, in 2002 and 2003, this was a war zone.

Palestinian youths clashed nightly with Israeli troops.

Nablus is rebuilding after the disaster of the intifada. These days, its youths seem more interested in turning up to An-Najah University than confronting Israeli soldiers.

During a tour for foreign journalists led by the Israeli non-government organisation Media Central this week, the centre of Nablus was thriving.

Markets were doing well, building was going ahead and if the standard of cars -- four Mercedes in one block -- is anything to go by, at least some people were doing well.

It is impossible not to notice on the top of a mountain overlooking Nablus the palace of the wealthiest man in the West Bank, billionaire Munib al-Masri, whose company Padico owns the lion's share of the Palestinian Securities Exchange.

Cities such as Nablus, Jenin and Ramallah have become important beacons for two key players -- the Palestinian Authority and Israel.

City at the crossroads on road to peace

The PA points to Nablus to argue that their more moderate positions -- which include doing business with Israel -- lead to economic benefits as opposed to Hamas's "armed resistance" model under which 1.5 million Gazans live in despair.

The Israelis point to Nablus to argue that for any peace to hold, Palestinians need to have a stake in economic benefits.

There are some bright spots, such as the first new cinema in Nablus in 22 years. Cinemas were closed during the first intifada, in 1987, as people stayed at home at night to avoid the fighting.

Cinema director Bashir al-Shakah says opening such a complex five years ago would have been impossible. "No one will invest money in a war zone," he says.

Attendances at the 175-seat cinema have been good and it has already hosted a film festival. Nudity is a no-no on screen but violence is permitted.

Shakah says since the cinema opened in June, Muslim women, dressed in hijabs, have come to see what it's like watching a film in public.

Many businesses, he says, closed during the second intifada. Whom do those people blame? "Both sides," he says.

Today, Nablus is improving but the recovery is tenuous.

Palestinian businessman Ahmad Aweidah wastes no words when asked the state of the Palestinian economy: "It's in tatters."

Aweidah, 38, runs the Palestinian Securities Exchange, which has more than \$US7 billion in deposits and \$US2bn in loans.

The stock exchange receives 15 per cent of its funds from foreign investors.

Aweidah is contemptuous of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's claim he is trying to bring peace by boosting the Palestinian economy.

"It's bull," he says. "It's just for media consumption."

"Netanyahu doesn't want to pay the price for peace. He's not interested in removing settlements, he's not interested in a two-state solution but he has to say something. What he actually believes in is that Palestinians should pick up and go to Jordan."

Aweidah says contrary to a professed desire to assist the Palestinian economy, Israel has introduced obstacles.

"If Israel wants to see economic development on the West Bank, why do they keep all those restrictions on the Palestinian economy and the Palestinian Authority to do business?"

"If Israel is so interested in helping the Palestinian territories, why was the biggest direct investment into the Palestinian economy -- \$US700 million for another phone system -- delayed for three years by Israelis?"

The theme of deliberate obstruction is echoed in another meeting with a deputy mayor of Nablus, academic Hafez Shaheen.

He says the world soccer federation, FIFA, has told Nablus it will pay the entire construction cost of a new football and sports stadium on the edge of the city.

City at the crossroads on road to peace

But Shaheen says the site approved by FIFA is part of "Area C" of the West Bank, which means that under the Oslo accords it is under Israeli army control. Nablus has paid for the site to be levelled but Israel, he says, has refused to approve the soccer stadium.

"We are still under occupation," Shaheen says. "The Israeli army are only 10m from Nablus.

"I can't leave the country without their permission, I need their permission to dig a well, I need their permission to construct a football field."

But nor does Shaheen speak well of the Palestinian Authority.

PA security officers turned up to the council one day and took him away, detaining him for two days. They also took away two of his sons.

One son was held for months and still will not tell his father what happened in detention.

Somehow, through all of this, Nablus and the West Bank more broadly need to find peace in their own ranks before they can bring about a peace with Israel that will hold.

Load-Date: November 13, 2009

End of Document

One killed, 4 injured in Israel's strike on tunnels

AlArabiya.net

October 13, 2009 Tuesday

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Length: 405 words

Body

Israeli warplanes attacked two smuggling tunnels along the Gaza Strip border with Egypt on Wednesday, killing one tunneller and wounding four others, as Israeli rights groups revealed that hundreds of Palestinians are being held by Israel without trial in violation of the international laws.

An Israeli army spokeswoman said the attack came in response to a rocket fired by Gaza fighters into southern Israel late on Tuesday. It landed in an open field causing no casualties, the army said.

The Palestinian medical source said one Palestinian was killed and four others were wounded. No Palestinian group claimed responsibility for firing the rocket.

Rocket attacks on Israel have tapered off since a December-January war between Israel and Gaza armed groups. Israeli defense officials have credited Islamist Movement Hamas, which controls the coastal enclave, for stopping fighter from launching them. Held without trial

Two Israeli human rights groups meanwhile said on Wednesday that Israel is currently holding 335 Palestinians without trial in breach of international law.

Of the 335 Palestinians held in so-called administrative detention, one is a minor and three are women.

One of the prisoners has been held for more than four and a half years without trial and another 28 have been in detention for between two and four years, HaMoked and B'Tselem said.

Israel's policy of "extensive detentions breaches international law which permits use of administrative detention only in very extreme cases," the groups said.

They said judicial reviews of the cases of Palestinians held under administrative orders present "a semblance of a fair judicial process, but in fact denies the detainees any possibility to reasonably defend themselves against the allegations made against them."

In most case, judges declare evidence to be privileged and rely on reports by the Israeli security agencies submitted in the absence of the detainee or his attorney.

"Consequently, the detainees cannot refute the allegations or offer alternative evidence," the groups said.

Between August 2008 and July 2009, military court judges approved 95 percent of the detention orders brought to them, they said.

One killed, 4 injured in Israel 's strike on tunnels

"HaMoked and B'Tselem call on the government of Israel to release the administrative detainees or to prosecute them according to the standards of international law regarding due process."

Administrative detention is based on a 1945 British mandate law.

Load-Date: October 14, 2009

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***In Sudan's collapsing moral order . . . the only way for westerners to survive
is to go armed***

Irish Independent

October 22, 2009 Thursday

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Section: ANALYSIS

Length: 917 words

Body

SO the government jet finally got a deserving passenger, Sharon Commins, after her three months' captivity at the hands of some incomprehensible band of terrorists in Sudan. Good.

But there was one really telling moment during her first press conference. Wearing a headscarf -- though not, I think, because of the cold -- she thanked everyone who had worked so hard for the release of herself and her friend, Hilda Kawuki, and for all those people who had kept the. . .

Then she paused. She seemed to have been about to say, "kept the faith", but how would that term go down in Sudan? This was a country which had imprisoned a British aid worker for allowing a child in her care to name a teddy bear Mohammed.

So never mind that we use the term "keep the faith" in a non-religious way, or that it was John McCarthy's watch cry during his years being chained to a radiator. What would her Islamic hosts make of the words? She kept smiling, and then apparently reconstructed the sentence -- "who had kept the story in the headlines".

Sharon is not going back to Darfur. Wise girl. Sudan is now part of that collapsing moral and political order in which a proselytising barbarism is washing at the gates of civilisation. The only way for westerners even to survive in such places is by going armed. Sudan is not alone. Whereas it would have been possible for Caucasians to have visited almost anywhere in the globe in relative safety 25 years ago, there are at least a dozen countries where kidnap and or death would be the immediate reward for the white outsider. This barren crescent reaches round much of the globe and includes large parts, or all, of Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, Yemen, Saudi, Somalia, Sudan, Egypt, Algeria, Gaza and Morocco.

And Western Europe, in all its sublime intelligence, has made a point of accepting huge numbers of immigrants from these countries. Wherever they were not accepted as "immigrants", they promptly turned themselves into "asylum seekers", a legal camouflage that was promptly accepted by a generally witless media. "Illegal immigrant" gets no tearful headlines, but "asylum seeker" rings all the liberal bells so that suddenly asylum seekers they then became.

In Sudan 's collapsing moral order . . . the only way for westerners to survive is to go armed

Saudi and Somali "asylum-seekers" have been a primary source of terrorist activity in Britain. In Holland, Moroccans ditto. And how has European civilisation faced down the rising tide of Islamic fundamentalism? This way: Brussels police officers in Muslim areas have been ordered to comply with the public stipulations of Ramadan.

This is all part of a collapse of cultural and ethnic self-confidence in Europe. No Asian, African or Arab city feels the necessity to complete its cosmopolitan image by importing hundreds of thousands of foreigners. Tokyo, Peking, Bombay, Madras, Cairo and Lagos are ethnically pretty much the same as they were half-a-century ago. But in Europe, it is now obligatory for any self-respecting modern city to have a large proportion of its population from other continents. This is called "diversity", and an ideologically multicultural state like Britain has set itself "diversity targets", which reward visible displays of ethnic difference, and punish their opposite. A couple of years ago, local government funding was withdrawn from hill-walking programmes in the Lake District because the uptake had been confined to white people. What a shame that no one knew Islamicists had opened a terrorist-training camp in the Lake District -- for that would certainly have qualified for a government grant.

EUROPE'S cultural defeatism causes the maddest inversion of standards. Many Irish people now effectively support the Hamas government in Gaza, even though its primary activity is a campaign of indiscriminate terrorist rocket attacks on Israeli civilians. Needless to say, just about the only public stances Irish politicians make on the region are condemnations of Israel's attempts to defend itself against this theo-fascist regime.

Amongst many other colourful policies, Hamas recently made it a criminal offence for women in Gaza to ride bicycles. Whereas in Europe, bicycles are now almost mandatory. So what is one to make of the presence of the then-Green leader Trevor Sargent at a Dublin rally in support of the Islamicist insurgency in Iraq? Eco-Green meets Islamo-Green. But I can't see the suicide-bomber arriving by bike just yet.

Now, in the real world, this is what happens next. By 2015, what we may call Euramerica will probably have deployed troops in Kenya, Sudan, Ethiopia and Saudi to help native governments contain Islamic insurgencies. The strategically vital Horn of Africa will have fallen, with Islamic regimes controlling both Somalia and Yemen, as the Gulf of Aden, the Red Sea -- and thus the Suez Canal -- are kept open solely through the efforts of the Euramerican navies.

Meanwhile, Muslim immigrants in Europe -- to which they have supposedly fled to enjoy European values -- will be agitating for the legal enforcement of non-European standards within their own newfound communities. These communities will, meanwhile, have birth rates at least twice those of the indigenous populations, whose political leaders (to judge from recent performances) will probably be more concerned about ethnic diversity targets being met, and not alienating their immigrant communities, than they will about the protection of indigenous European cultures.

So, all in all, a pretty picture. Oh yes, and welcome home Sharon.

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Israeli 'war' on UN's Gaza report

The Mercury (South Africa)
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E2 Edition

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Body

JERUSALEM: Israel is launching a diplomatic and media war against a highly critical UN report on its Gaza offensive, in a bid to prevent the document from being brought before the Security Council and the International Criminal Court in the Hague.

The 547-page report concludes that both Israel and Palestinian militant groups committed war crimes - and possibly even crimes against humanity - during three weeks of deadly and devastating fighting in Gaza last winter.

Some 1 400 Palestinians were killed in the 22 days of fighting. Israeli fatalities were three civilians and 10 soldiers.

Human rights groups say almost 60 percent of the Palestinian deaths were non-combatants - including more than 400 women and minors, and in several instances large parts of entire families.

Israel's relentless bombardments from the air, sea and land also left widespread destruction.

Released on Tuesday in New York and Geneva after a months-long investigation by a UN fact-finding commission, the report recommended that the Security Council demand that Israel launch an independent investigation of its own into alleged crimes committed by its forces, and report back to the UN with the results within six months.

If it failed to do so, the Security Council should refer the Gaza case to the prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC), the report said.

But Israel, which had refused to co-operate with the fact-finding commission headed by South African judge Richard Goldstone, rejected out of hand its findings.

The report, said President Shimon Peres, "makes a mockery out of history" and fails to "distinguish between attacker and defender".

He said it was the radical Islamist Hamas movement ruling Gaza which had brought on the conflict, because it and other militant groups had fired a total of more than 12 000 rockets and mortar shells into southern Israel from the coastal salient in the years leading up to the offensive.

Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister Danny Ayalon, in Washington, yesterday said he was examining ways to control the damage the report was likely to cause.

Israeli 'war' on UN 's Gaza report

Ayalon justified Israel's decision not to co-operate with the UN investigation, charging its conclusions had been predetermined.

"Had we co-operated, we would not have changed even a single word, and only granted it legitimacy," he said. - Sapa-DPA

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