

Israel Update

Volume 1, Issue 6

What happened in Israel this month

A monthly update for you

The world around Israel is going through many changes—stay updated

This update will be publicized once a month as an update about Israel

If there's any topic you wish to read about or want me to write about just E-mail me at

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Assaf

Israeli inquiry: Flotilla raid was legal

An Israeli inquiry commission defended the actions of its troops during last year's deadly raid on a Gaza-bound flotilla sailing from Turkey.

Israeli naval commandos killed nine Turkish nationals aboard the Turkish ship Mavi Marmara on May 31 after passengers resisted the takeover of the vessel. Commission said

the actions of the soldiers "were found to be legal pursuant to the rules of international law" and that they opened fire in self-defense. The commission cleared the soldiers of any use of unnecessary violence, stating: "It is possible to determine that the IDF soldiers acted professionally and with great presence of mind in light of the extreme violence which they hadn't expected. On the deci-

sion to use force, the committee members noted that: "The IHH members acted with violence towards the IDF soldiers on the Marmara by arming



Violence on board the Mavi Marmara

themselves with various types of weapons, including **iron rods, knives, axes, clubs and metal objects.** Meanwhile, the Commission also examined the legitimacy of the blockade on Gaza. Its conclusions reveal that the blockade is proportional and that human rights in Gaza weren't violated by Israel. The committee noted that in their statements before the committee, human rights organizations'

representatives, including those from the Doctors for Human Rights group, confirmed that during the relevant period, there was a sufficient

amount of food in the Gaza Strip and that the problem was mainly an economic one, meaning, the population lacked the necessary funds to purchase food. The commission, headed by a retired Supreme Court justice,

included five Israeli members and two international observers - Brig. Gen. Ken Watkin of Canada and Lord David Trimble of Northern Ireland. Washington gave a tail wind to the work of the committee members. State Department spokesman made it clear that the White House still awaiting the conclusions of the UN, but stressed: "The Report is independent, credible at the end of a transparent investigation"

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PM addressed U.S President to Pardon Pollard

For the first time in history an Israeli Prime Minister addressed an American president in an official and public request to pardon the Israeli-American spy Jonathan Pollard.

Pollard is a former civilian intelligence analyst who was convicted of spying for Israel. He received a life sentence in 1987. Pollard has at times claimed that he provided only information that, at the time, he believed was vital to Israeli security and that was being withheld by the Pentagon, in

violation of a 1983 Memorandum of Understanding between the two countries. The Government offered him a plea agreement, which he accepted. By the terms of that agreement, Pollard was bound to plead guilty, in return for Pollard's plea, the Government promised not to charge him with additional crimes. The prosecutor complied with the plea agreement



Jonathan Pollard

and asked for "only a substantial number of years in prison"; The Judge, not being obligated to follow the recommendation of the prosecutor, imposed a life sentence. He's projected to be released on Nov. 21st 2015. In Israel there has been a long running public campaign to free Pollard. Last week Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu addressed President Obama publicly in the Knesset declaring he sent a letter asking for his pardon.

How much does Israel's Prime Minister earns?

As part of a new decision in the Prime Minister's office for full disclosure, and after major public pressure against pay rise for government clerks, Benjamin Netanyahu's paycheck was published and it seems interesting: The Prime minister earns a gross pay of about 44,000 Shekels (about \$12,000) and the net salary is almost

15,000 Shekels (Just a bit more than 4,000 U.S Dollars). The reason for the big difference is of course a large sum deducted for taxes. In comparison American president Barak



Netanyahu and Obama

Obama 2009 yearly salary was more than \$374,000 and a total income of about 5.5 million Dollars. Mr. Netanyahu has a few more incomes from a few best selling books and from being a most wanted speaker in past years between two terms as Prime Minister of Israel.

Knesset to investigate political organizations

A report conducted by a right wing organization showing flow of funds from foreign pro Palestinian organizations to leftist organizations in Israel, led the Israeli parliament on a decision to conduct an investigation on this subject. The report showing cash flow from

organization linked to Israel boycott events, and support in Palestinian struggle against Israel. Tough the reactions in favor of such investigation were massive, the counter reactions, calling it a step closer towards a fascist regime were even more startling. Commo-

tion created by the decision led government officials headed by the Prime Minister to call for the establishment of a commission to investigate political organizations at both left and right. Number of Knesset factions have announced that they will not take part of such commission.

Next IDF chief was investigated- Term is canceled

Yoav Galant, who was expected to be next Chief of the IDF has been the center of an Investigation conducted by the Attorney General and aims to check whether he committed illegal actions of public land around his home in Amikam.

After thorough examination conducted both by the state comptroller and by the Attorney General, the Attorney General reached the conclusion that the existing data regard-

ing the conduct of Gen. Galant in this context raised significant legal difficulties in the decision to appoint him chief of staff. "I doubt whether it is appropriate in terms of value to leave the decision unchanged" he said. Af-



Will not be next chief of staff- Galant

ter these harsh words, the minister of defense Ehud Barak, had no choice but to cancel Galant's appointment and to ask the government for a 60 days period to appoint a new chief for the IDF, a period in which the deputy chief will serve as acting chief- another controversial decision made by Barak in this issue.

Have you ever visited the seed bank?

It seems that in the 21st century nothing happens just naturally. It seems that nowadays the process of planting forests happens only after a step of selecting the most resistant seeds, performing a special improvement process and preparation for planting after a special planning procedure is being held at the Jewish Na-

tional Fund (JNF), the organization responsible for planting forests in Israel. Artificial insemination allows researchers to create a race. There is no requirement and blue eyes, but



Birth lab for trees

"Mother trees" has pre-determined genes whose composition are designed to provide high quality seeds for the next generation. They were selected by criteria checking stem shape, speed of growth, disease resistance and survival in dry conditions

Built a startup with a few Tens of thousands of Shekels and were bought for 15 million dollars

For the three founders of the Israeli Start-up company "Grouper" it was probably one of the best days of their lives. The Israeli company was established just last march with an investment of a few tens of thousands of Shekels. It spe-

cialize in the developing online coupons market and was bought by the shopping giant "Groupon" for 15 million Dollars. The buyer- Groupon- is now considered the world's largest online coupons company, and one of the world's

most sought-after brands in the Internet world. both companies offer online coupons that provide discounts ranging between 50% and 70% on a range of services. Transaction depends on a minimal set of subscribers within a fixed time, usually one day.

So... What's the news about riots in Israel's neighbor countries?

Riots in Egypt against ruler Mubarak

What started as an unavoidable riots in response to the "Tunisia effect" might turn out to be the end of Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak's 30 year regime and the most important revolution in the middle east since the 1979 Islamic revolution in Iran. No one imagined that a local riot in center Cairo with only a few thousands participators would grow to a one million people demonstration calling the President to leave Egypt and to whoever controls the 83 million citizens to create a democracy. A fear growing in Israel in the past few days from an Islamic overtaking over the country lead Israel

to allow a deploy of 2 army brigades in the Sinai peninsula for the first time since the peace treaty was signed. The last thing Israel wishes is for a second Iran to grow right across the street in its southern border and for the strongest most influential Arab country in the middle east to become an enemy again. The protes-



The tight curfew didn't prevent gathering

tors call for a true reform in their economical and social life, and of course for a political change, it seems the only one who can control how would the future of Egypt look is the army, that for now, though haven't decided against the President, refuses to fight the people. The next few days are crucial for Egypt and the entire Middle East's future.

Lebanese furious about course of deposing PM

A fast act by Hizb'alla ministers, that have resigned from office and inevitably caused the collapse of the Lebanese coalition, all in an alleged reaction to the UN comity for the investigation of the murder of former Lebanese PM Rafiq El-Hariri, which decide to accuse Hizb'alla in the murder, led to a sweep change in leadership. A week after those dramatic steps Lebanon has a new Prime Minister, that, as accused by some, is a poppet to

Hizb'alla and Syria. In a fragile status-quo like the one in



Pro Hariri protestor in Beirut

Lebanon, anything can drive the masses to the streets, and

they were not late to do so.

Large demonstrations in favor and against the new government spread in Lebanon's major cities. The fear is of course from a Hizb'alla control over the government which will lead to a growing Iranian presence in the country and possibly even to a new civil war, in the country which had known many wars in past years.

Israeli foods recipes

Orange is the national fruit of Israel and during the winter many dishes contain oranges in them.

Fennel and orange scraping salad:

Ingredients:

- 4 fennel bulbs
- 2 medium green Apples
- Scraping of 1 medium Orange
- Juice of 2 medium Lemons
- Juice of half a medium Orange
- 1/2 tea spoon coarse salt
- 2-3 tbl spoon extra virgin olive oil

Instructions:

1. Cut the base of the bulbs and the green stems in the upper part
2. With a very sharp knife cut the bulbs lengthwise to thin pieces
3. Cut the Apples on the sides so there is only a square core left and each piece to thin pieces
4. Mix the Fennel and Apples pieces and pour the juices on the mix
5. Add the thin Orange scrapings and mix everything together.
6. Add salt and oil and serve right away
7. Bete'avon!

One Jewish figure a month

Ilan Ramon was a fighter pilot in the Israeli Air Force, and later the first Israeli astronaut. Ilan Ramon was born Israel on June 20 1954. His mother and grandmother were survivors of the Auschwitz concentration camp.

He was one of the IAF's establishment team of the first F-16 Squadron in Israel. In 1981 he was the youngest pilot taking part in Operation "Opera", an Israeli military operation to bomb Iraq's unfinished nuclear reactor. The facility was destroyed. Ramon accumulated over 3,000 flight hours on the A-4, Mirage III-C, and F-4, and over 1,000 flight hours on the F-16.

In 1997, Ramon was selected as a Payload Specialist. STS-107 Columbia (January 16 - February 1, 2003) was a dedicated science and research mission. The mission ended abruptly when Space Shuttle Columbia was destroyed and its crew perished during re-entry, 16 minutes before scheduled landing.

37 pages from the diary he was keeping while in orbit survived the crash and were returned to his widow, Rona- The papers remained white even though, exposed at high speed 37 miles above the Earth, they should have super-heated and burned.

Ramon's eldest son, Captain Asaf Ramon, perished on September 13, 2009, aged 21, during a routine training flight.

This month in history

2.1.2003 Space shuttle "Columbia" disintegrated over Texas during re-entry into the Earth's atmosphere. In the disaster the first Israeli astronaut Ilan Ramon was killed as well as other six astronauts

2.4.1997 The Helicopters disaster- Two Helicopters crashed on their way into Lebanon- 73 warriors were killed

2.5.1939 The first immigration ship "Exodus" arrived in Palestine

2.7.1947 The Dead Sea scrolls were discovered in the Judaea desert

2.9.1925 The Technion- Israel institute of technology was open

2.11.1989 Natan Shiransky arrives in Israel after being released from Soviet prison

2.14.1862 Theodor Herzl publish his book "The Jewish State"

2.14.1949 The Knesset- Israeli parliament was Born (on Tu Bishvat)

2.24.1921 The Chief Rabbinate of Israel was established

2.25.1994 Jewish fundamentalist Baruch Goldstein murders 35 Muslims in the cave of patriarchs in Hebron

2.27.1933 The Reichstag, German parliament was torched by Nazi soldiers

February 2011

Event's for you

Keep yourself up to date with Shaliach activities

What's going on in

Area in February

**Thinking of investing
in High tech?**

Keep this in mind:

In proportion to its population, Israel has the largest number of startup companies in the world.

In **absolute terms**, Israel has the largest number of startup companies than any other country in the world, except the US.



Israel is ranked #2 in the world for venture capital funds right behind the US.

Israel has the 2nd highest concentration of hi-tech companies in the world (apart from the Silicon Valley).

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Friday Services I plan to attend

- Friday 2/4 Alton
- Friday 2/11 Hillel SIUC
- Friday 2/18 Belleville
- Friday 2/25 Carbondale
- Friday 3/4 Hillel SIUC

**For information about events call Assaf at (314) 956-9247
or Email at assaf.shaliach@gmail.com**

Jewish Federation Activities:

- 2/6 kosher Super bowl XLV at the Shaliach's house (**Please call to Register**)
- 2/7 Myths and misconceptions in religions event at "Our lady of the snow"
- 2/8 Hebrew Lessons in Carbondale are back
- 2/11 Lecture on: "Warriors' debate- From confessions to Repentance at Hillel SIUC
- 3/5 Saturday afternoon movie at Beth Jacob in Carbondale
- 3/6 Sunday Movie and Lunch at the Federation Building in Belleville

St. Louis activates

Living at the St. Louis area?
Check this out...

- Feb 2- **Israel: start up nation**- Free lecture by Dan Senor, author of the best-seller, *Start Up Nation*
- Feb 8- **"Ethics in the field"** Lecture by IDF Col. Bentzi Gruber
- Feb 23- **Rick Recht Concert, "Tear Down the Walls"** at Maryville University Auditorium

Chicago activates

Spending a few days in Chicago?
Check this out...

- Feb 3-20 **"Conviction"**- A true story of faith and forbidden love in the shadow of the Spanish Inquisition
- Feb 7- **Israeli Cello Concert**- Tribute to Joachim Stutschewsky
- Feb 12- **Israeli Piano Concert**- By Pianist Alon Goldstein
- Feb 27- **Israeli World Music**- By Israeli group Yemen Blues

Books Lending

The Jewish Federation of Simoky has a vast selection of books right here at the Federation Building in Belleville.

Everything you're looking on Israel, Judaism and much more!

PLEASE JOIN YOUR HOSTS, REV. JOHN AITKEN AND MR. MIKE SMITH, FOR AN EXCLUSIVE
AMERICAN ISRAEL PUBLIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE (AIPAC) BRIEFING

Major Elliot Chodoff



Elliot Chodoff is an Israeli
Military & Political Analyst



“Israel: On the Front Lines of Freedom”

Thursday, February 10
7:00 P.M.
Mike Smith Toyota
3941 Mike Smith Drive
Paducah, Kentucky

We invite members of the Christian and Jewish communities to join us for a timely, expert briefing on Israel's indispensable value to the United States, not only militarily, but across all sectors of discovery and achievement. Major Chodoff will take you to the “front lines of freedom” with his gripping stories about the importance of the US-Israel relationship on the world's stage. Learn how you as an American can make a difference by educating your Members of Congress on the US-Israel relationship. With enemies on all sides, hear first-hand about Israel's contributions to their own security and how their expertise makes the United States safer and more secure. A lively Q & A will follow.

Mark Kleinman
Southeast Regional Director

Arlene Samuels
Southeast Outreach Director

Kate Sommers
Southern States Area Director

Jeremy Becker
SE Political Director

Joshua Karsh
Southeast Synagogue Initiative



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