

ISRAEL INTERCESSORY PRAYER ITEMS

January 24-31, 2020

1. ISRAEL WELCOMES WORLD LEADERS ARRIVING FOR WORLD HOLOCAUST FORUM - PM

Netanyahu on Tuesday (Jan21) greeted delegations from 49 countries, including 41 heads of state, who arrived in Israel for this week's Fifth 'World Holocaust Forum', an event that commemorates 75 years since the 1945 liberation of the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp in Nazi-occupied Poland. The leaders include numerous heads of state and government, including Russian President Vladimir Putin, French President Emmanuel Macron, US Vice President Mike Pence and British Prince Charles. "I welcome the leaders from around the world who are coming here, to Jerusalem, to mark with us 75 years since the liberation of the Auschwitz extermination camp," Netanyahu said in a video posted on social media. The Forum included a state dinner at Israeli President Reuven Rivlin's official residence on Wednesday night and a memorial ceremony at Yad Vashem on Thursday, where leaders from the four WWII Allied countries and Germany spoke. Putin also attended a dedication ceremony for a monument in Jerusalem in memory of the heroism of the soldiers and residents killed during the siege of Leningrad.

The turnout at the World Holocaust Forum points to the seriousness with which anti-Semitism is viewed in the West and in Israel, and offered representatives of countries considered hotbeds of anti-Jewish hatred a chance at least to demonstrate their revulsion for it on a global stage. Rivlin said the gathering embodies a commitment to pass on the awareness of what happened during the Holocaust to the next generations. He emphasized that attacks against Israel are a form of contemporary anti-Semitism, and that one cannot profess to love Jews and attack Israel.

Spain's King Felipe quoted 12th-century Jewish philosopher and Torah scholar Moses Maimonides, known as the Rambam, who was born in Spain, who wrote that "all evils originate from ignorance." Felipe added that there is no greater ignorance than not knowing the simple truth that all men and women are created equal.

The "Holocaust" refers to the period from 30 January 1933, when Hitler became Chancellor of Germany, to 8 May 1945, the end of the war in Europe. Millions of Jewish men, women, and children were murdered by Hitler and his brutal cohorts during this time. While it is impossible to ascertain the exact number of Jewish victims six million is the round figure. Auschwitz concentration camp was a network of concentration and death camps built and operated by the Third Reich in Polish areas annexed by Nazi Germany during World War II. Buchenwald was a German Nazi concentration camp established near Weimar, Germany, in July 1937, one of the first and largest of the concentration camps on German soil. It was in holes such as these that Jewish victims were starved, tortured, subjected to slave labor, beatings, inhumane medical experiments and murdered in gas chambers by the millions. Elderly Holocaust survivors in Israel suffer mental and physical torments to this day. Their children in many cases bear traumatic scars as a result of being raised by such emotionally and physically shattered parents. (**Note:** Monday, January 27, is the official 'International Holocaust Remembrance Day')

Israel lost 14,800 Holocaust survivors last year, bringing the total number living in the Jewish homeland to approximately 192,000. Of the remaining survivors living in Israel, 64% were born in Europe, including 36% who came from the former Soviet Union, 18% from Romania, and 6% from Poland. Many of the non-European survivors had their roots in the Middle East where persecutions were also rife. 18% were born in Morocco and Algeria, where Jews suffered under the French Vichy regime overseen by Nazi rule.

This week's historic gathering of the leaders of the Western World in Jerusalem to ostensibly combat anti-Semitism took a bit of an embarrassing turn on Wednesday (Jan 22) when French President Emmanuel Macron essentially kicked

a Jew out of a church. During a visit to the Church of St. Anne in Jerusalem's Old City, Macron was filmed yelling at an Israeli security guard who had dared to enter the compound, which is considered French territory. The Israel Police later issued a statement claiming that the French had apologized for their president's behavior, but Macron's office countered by vehemently denying any contrition on his part. Why? France, like many other European nations, denies Israel's right to exercise sovereignty over any part of the eastern half of Jerusalem, including the Old City.

Interestingly, Macron's meeting with Palestinian Authority (PA) head Mahmoud Abbas in Ramallah, on Wednesday (Jan 22) night, during his visit to Israel to commemorate the Holocaust, was considered a mockery by survivors of the Holocaust and their families. Israeli politician Sarah Beck stated in a letter, "Your visit there desecrates the event."

What Americans Know About the Holocaust (Pew Research Center)

- Only 45% of U.S. adults correctly answered a multiple-choice question about the number of Jews who were murdered in the Holocaust (6 million)
- When asked to describe the Holocaust, 84% mentioned the attempted annihilation of the Jewish people or concentration-death camps, Hitler, or the Nazis.
- 63% knew about Nazi-created ghettos where Jews were forced to live.
- 43% knew that Adolf Hitler became chancellor of Germany through a democratic political process.

Excerpts From Thursday Evening's Speeches at Yad Vashem: To view the full speeches go to:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v= yoaMDo51Js>

PM Netanyahu

"Israel is eternally grateful for the sacrifice made by the Allies. Without that sacrifice there would be no survivors today. But we also remember that some 80 years ago, when the Jewish people faced annihilation, the world turned its back on us. For many, Auschwitz is the ultimate symbol of evil. It is certainly that, but for the Jewish people, Auschwitz is more than the ultimate symbol of evil. It is also the ultimate symbol of Jewish powerlessness. It is the culmination of what can happen when our people have no voice, no land, no shield. The Jewish people have learned the lessons of the Holocaust: to take, always to take seriously the threats of those who seek our destruction; to confront threats when they are small; and above all, even though we deeply, deeply appreciate the great support of our friends, to always have the power to defend ourselves by ourselves. We have learned that Israel must always remain the master of its fate."

USA Vice President Mike Pence

"Today we pause to remember...the greatest evil ever perpetuated by man against man in the long catalogue of human crime. When soldiers opened the gates of Auschwitz on January 27, 1945, they found 7,000 half-starved, half-naked prisoners, [and] hundreds of boxes of camp records that documented the greatest mass murder in history. Before the war was over, in its five years of existence, more than 1.1 million men, women, and children would perish at Auschwitz. We must be prepared to confront and expose the vile tide of anti-Semitism that is fueling hate and violence all across the world....We must also stand strong against the leading state purveyor of anti-Semitism, against the one government in the world that denies the Holocaust as a matter of state policy and threatens to wipe Israel off the map. The world must stand strong against the Islamic Republic of Iran."

Russian President Putin:

"My country mourns all the victims of the Nazis, including 6 million Jews. The death camps were not just operated by Nazis, but by their henchmen in various countries. The Soviet Union paid the highest price, more than any other during World War II, with 27 million killed, price of victory. We need to find the courage not just to speak about anti-Semitism,

but also to do everything in our power to protect Jews...A dark stain on human history” (**Note:** Putin also claimed that 40 percent of the Jewish Holocaust victims were Soviet citizens, a figure disputed by historians.)

German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier:

"Here at Yad Vashem burns the Eternal Flame in remembrance of the victims of the Shoah....Germans deported them. Germans burned numbers on their forearms. Germans tried to dehumanize them, to reduce them to numbers, to erase all memory of them in the extermination camps. They did not succeed...Those who murdered, those who planned and helped in the murdering, the many who silently toed the line: They were Germans. The industrial mass murder of six million Jews, the worst crime in the history of humanity, it was committed by my countrymen. The terrible war, which cost far more than 50 million lives, it originated from my country...Germany's responsibility does not expire. We want to live up to our responsibility. By this, you should measure us."

Rabbi Israel Meir Lau, 82, who was sent with his brother to the Buchenwald concentration camp as a child, was liberated at the age of 8 by American forces, and rose to become the chief rabbi of Israel and a towering moral voice of his generation. He is now chairman of the Yad Vashem Council:

“At the age of 7, I had no name, only a number. I came especially to tell you I cannot forgive because I am not authorized." My parents, before they were taken away, did not ask me to forgive. They asked me to continue the chain, so the Jewish chain will be unbroken, unbroken forever. I can never forget."

Prince Charles – UK The Prince of Wales:

"The magnitude of the genocide that was visited upon the Jewish people defies comprehension and can make those of us who live in the shadow of those indescribable events feel hopelessly inadequate. The scale of the evil was so great, the impact so profound, that it threatens to obscure the countless individual human stories of tragedy, loss and suffering of which it was comprised. That is why places like this, and events like this, are so vitally important. I have long drawn inspiration from the selfless actions of my dear grandmother, Princess Alice of Greece, who in 1943, in Nazi-occupied Athens, saved a Jewish family by taking them into her home and hiding them. My grandmother, who is buried on the Mount of Olives, has a tree planted in her name here at Yad Vashem, and is counted as one of the Righteous among the Nations, a fact which gives me, and my family, immense pride."

Father, we thank You for this amazing forum and the impact that it can have. We pray that the words of the scholars, leaders and survivors will pierce the hearts of everyone in attendance, making possible a united, global front against anti-Semitism and extremism. We pray also for a hedge of protection around all the participants, their travel and every venue where they will be hosted. Abba, thank You for the sincerity and eloquence of the various political leaders who took responsibility for the evil of the Holocaust. May the fight against anti-Semitism be successful in bringing light into the darkness of hatred and racism.

“In God is my salvation and my glory; the rock of my strength, and my refuge, is in God. God has spoken once, twice I have heard this: that power belongs to God. Also, to You, O Lord, belongs mercy; for You render to each one according to his work.” (Psalm 62:7,11–12)

2. ISRAEL ELECTION SNIPITS:

A news poll published Thursday (Jan 23) morning shows that Blue&White and the center-left-Arabs bloc maintain a slight advantage over the Likud and the right-wing-Haredi bloc. According to the survey, Blue&White will get 35 seats

while Likud will get 31. The center-left-Arab bloc will receive 57 seats, the right-wing-Haredi bloc 55, and Avigdor Liberman's Israel Beiteinu 8.

These are Thursday morning's results...which shows that the government remains in a stalemate position:

Blue&White – 35

Likud – 31

Joint Arab List – 13

Labor-Meretz – 9

Yamina – 8

Shas – 8

United Torah Judaism – 8

Liberman – 8

Knesset Speaker Yuli Edelstein will convene the Knesset plenum next Tuesday (Jan 28) for a vote on the final proposal needed to decide on the removal of PM Netanyahu's immunity. The plenum must be convened before authorizing the creation of a house committee to formally vote on removing the prime minister's immunity. The Blue and White faction was pressuring Edelstein to convene the plenum already a week ago; the prime minister had pressured him not to convene the plenum at all. In choosing to convene the plenum next Tuesday, Edelstein said he neither expedited nor delayed the meeting, making "all decisions based on the values I have had my entire life, the laws and the rules of the Knesset and legal judgments." The Speaker said it would be inappropriate to convene the plenum this week when dozens of world leaders were in the country for the fifth annual World Holocaust Forum, this time marking the 75th anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz-Birkenau death camps. Instead, he chose next Tuesday, the day after International Holocaust Remembrance Day.

PM Netanyahu is allegedly weighing the possibility of dropping his request for immunity, if Blue and White faction leader Benny Gantz agrees to support a bill in the Knesset next week to apply sovereignty over the Jordan Valley. The bill to be introduced in the Knesset next week by the Likud is in some respects also intended to "test" the Blue and White faction's commitment to a pledge made earlier in the day by Gantz, who said he would promote the annexation after the March 2nd election, "in coordination with the international community." Netanyahu immediately responded by calling on Gantz to support the move ahead of the polls.

Likud officials on Wednesday (Jan 22) claimed that PM Netanyahu approached the White House to get a green light to advance the application of Israeli sovereignty to the Jordan Valley, before the March 2 election and even before the publication of President Trump's Plan of the Century. According to the same Likud officials, that's the reason Netanyahu did not announce Tuesday night, during the launch of the Likud election campaign, that he intends to submit a sovereignty over the Jordan River bill to a Knesset vote next week. Israeli jurists disagree over whether Netanyahu has the legal right to annex the Jordan Valley, even if he gets permission from Washington. Israeli law does not explicitly limit the powers of a transitional government, but the Supreme Court has ruled that such a government, which does not enjoy the confidence of the Knesset, is compelled to "restrain the exercising of its powers over all matters which are not especially crucial or urgent during the transition period."

Senior officials of the 'Joint Arab List' are saying that although Blue&White has joined the petition to disqualify Arab MK Heba Yazbak from running, the Arab list does not intend to announce that they would not recommend Benny Gantz to the president after the election. Instead, the Joint Arab List decided to stick to issuing hints hostile to the Blue&White move, and deliberately blur their messages – but stay away from saying they would not recommend Gantz. In summary, the Joint Arab List does not rule out cooperation with Blue&White in its attempt to form a government on the day after the election. It all depends on how big their victory will be come March 2...and how much they can demand

in the way of concessions and ministry positions. (**Note:** This agreement would be absolutely disastrous to the future of Israel.)

Do not allow a government to be formed that depends on the anti-Zionist Arab parties (Neh. 2:20). Forbid any government over Israel that will further divide Your land (Lev. 25:23; Joel 3:1-2). Give Israel a government with a real heart for Aliyah – the ingathering of the Jews (Psa. 147:2). Raise up Israeli politicians who desire to do what is best for Israel – and not for themselves (2 Chr. 35:3; Jer. 23:3-4). We ask that You would deal with Avigdor Liberman for his divisive tactics against anything religious or Biblically based. Bring forth righteous men and women who will voted to positions of power in the Knesset. Strengthen and protect PM Netanyahu as he goes through this very hectic time in his life. Keep him and his family in Your care and protection, we pray! Bless Naftali Bennett with Your presence and protection as he leads the Defence portfolio. Thank You for his courage and leadership!

“First of all, I exhort that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence, for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who will have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.” (1 Timothy 2:1-4)

3. ISRAEL TERROR ATTACKS UPDATES:

A 22-year-old Israeli civilian was stabbed in the shoulder on Saturday (Jan 18) on the road designated for worshippers between Kiryat Arba and the Tomb of the Patriarchs in Hebron in Judea-Samaria. The Palestinian attacker was detained.

Earlier on Saturday (Jan 18), in a separate event, a woman in her 50s was arrested at Shechem Gate in Jerusalem after waving a knife at Border Police officers. A civilian who was on the scene quickly took control of her and a few seconds later, Border Police officers joined him and arrested the woman. There were no casualties in that incident. The suspect is a resident of the Old City. Her motive is unclear, and she was taken for questioning

A father and his daughter were hurt Monday (Jan 20) night in a terrorist attack that took place near the Arab village of Tuqu’a, located next to the Jewish community of Tekoa in eastern Gush Etzion. The 50-year-old father, who was driving the car, was hit by one of the rocks hurled by Palestinian Authority Arab terrorists when his vehicle came under attack as they traveled past the village. His 22-year-old daughter was injured by shards of glass and other items that were forced into the vehicle. Miraculously, the driver managed to keep control over the vehicle and continue traveling until he was able to reach the Jewish community of Nokdim. Medics with Hatzalah Without Borders in Judea-Samaria said both victims were treated in hospital.

The IDF carried out a special counterterrorism operation in Judea and Samaria over the past month and a half in Arab areas during which it discovered and confiscated dozens of illegal guns and other weapons. The forces seized 13 handguns, 25 Carlo sub-machine guns, two M16 assault rifles and ammunition. All weapons and ammunition were transferred to the security forces. In addition, the troops seized hundreds of thousands of shekels in funds meant for terrorism. Finally, the forces discovered and shut down five workshops throughout Judea-Samaria that were used to manufacture illegal weapons. Israeli forces have been conducting an ongoing campaign against the illegal weapons production and trade in the Palestinian Authority. The forces have shut down dozens of weapons production plants and have seized tens of machines and hundreds of weapons. Israeli forces have arrested hundreds of suspects tied to the production and selling of illegal weapons, used in many cases against Israel’s civilians in terror attacks.

In 2019, the Israel Security Agency (ISA) prevented upwards of 560 significant terror attacks, including 10 suicide bombings, four kidnappings and more than 300 shooting attacks. In 2018, the ISA foiling 500 terror attacks. Five Israelis were killed in terror attacks in 2019, not including Gaza rocket attacks, compared with 11 killed in 2018.

Thank You, Lord God, for the amazing accomplishments of Israel's security services and for the fact that the nations are recognizing those accomplishments and seeking Israel's input into their security needs. Lord, be glorified as the nations begin to recognize Your incredible faithfulness to Your covenant people. Give the IDF wisdom to use their technology more efficiently (Prov. 21:31). Guide them to place soldiers and equipment exactly where they need to be at this time (Prov. 16:1). Protect all soldiers during this wet and cold winter (Psa. 140:7). Remove all distractions so that the IDF and the police and the Border guards remain alert (Jam. 1:8)! Make the lines of communication between the soldiers and the commanders very clear (Prov. 1:3-4).

"Be exalted, O God, above the heavens, and Your glory above all the earth; that Your beloved may be delivered, save with Your right hand and hear me." (Psalm 108:5-6)

4. GOLAN HEIGHTS/SYRIA/LEBANON/IRAQ/TURKEY UPDATES:

Syria

The main threat facing the Syrian government of President Bashar al-Assad as he regains control over most of his country is not military but economic. The currency has plunged to half its value in 2019. The prices of some consumer goods have doubled, and those of staples such as meat and vegetables are up as much as 50%. The government plans to ration sugar, rice and tea. The steep drop in the Syrian currency is largely the result of an economic crisis in neighbouring Lebanon, which has seen the Lebanese pound's value decline significantly. Lebanon is a hub for Syrian traders and business executives.

Lebanon

More than 400 people were treated for injuries after last weekend riots in Beirut in the worst violence since Lebanese took to the streets in October to demand a new government. Lebanon is being pushed to the brink of chaos and anarchy. The protesters said they had decided on a more forceful approach because three months of peaceful demonstrations had failed. The value of the Lebanese currency plunged by half in three months, and ordinary people are prevented from accessing their savings. Employers have stopped paying salaries, hospitals are running out of medicines, and people are going hungry as the economy skids to a halt. The stone-throwing demonstrators who gathered in downtown Beirut were shouting "Revolution!"

Lebanon managed at last to form a new government on Tuesday (Jan 21) night under newly-installed PM Hassan Diab. The Iranian-backed Hezbollah terrorist organization and its allies backed Diab, agreeing on a cabinet that would address as its first task the escalating economic crisis and the protests that overthrew the previous government. Diab was nominated last month by Hezbollah and its allies – including President Michel Aoun – after negotiations failed with Western-backed Saad al-Hariri, who resigned as prime minister in October 2019.

Israel's military announced on Sunday (Jan 19) the start of construction of an underground network of seismic and acoustic sensors along the Lebanese frontier to detect cross-border tunnels. Israel had informed UN peacekeepers in south Lebanon about the work to make sure everybody knows what it is doing and that it is operating on the Israeli side of the border.

The USA provided information to Argentina, Colombia, Brazil, Uruguay and Peru about "support and financing networks" affiliated with Lebanon's Hezbollah, as part of its efforts to restrict the party's activity in Latin America and to exert maximum pressure on Iran and its proxies. Diplomatic sources in Washington said the FBI arrested a number of persons involved with Hezbollah or suspected of planning to expand their activities inside the USA. These moves came in parallel with the Third Regional Conference Against Terrorism in Bogota, Colombia, where USA Secretary of State Mike Pompeo called on "all nations" on Saturday (Jan 18) to classify Hezbollah as a terrorist group.

USA Secretary of State Mike Pompeo tweeted on Monday (Jan 20). "We applaud the announcements of Colombia, Honduras, and Guatemala to designate Iran-backed Hezbollah a terrorist organization." Last year, Argentina and Paraguay blacklisted Hezbollah.

Britain expanded the scope of its asset-freezing measures against Hezbollah on Thursday (Jan 16) to cover the entire organization as well as its military wing. The finance ministry move follows Britain's decision last year to classify the whole group a terrorist organization.

Iraq

Dozens of Iraqi protesters were wounded in Baghdad and other cities on Monday (Jan 20) in clashes with security forces as anti-government unrest resumed after a lull of several weeks.

Most attacks on USA and allied forces in Iraq are being carried out by Shiite militias. Most of the attacks have come from those Shia militia groups, who are launching rockets at American bases...just trying to kill someone to make a point. There are more than 100 Shiite militia groups in Iraq, some of which take their orders from Iran. As a result of Soleimani's death, most USA efforts to train Iraqi security forces have been suspended. The USA and Iraqi governments are in discussions about when to resume full security cooperation.

Turkey

Turkey has received two S-400 battalions, more than 120 surface-to-air missiles, as well as auxiliary equipment, spare parts and tools. Turkey's National Defense Minister Hulusi Akar said on January 15 that the Russian-made air defense system would be operable by April or May.

Decades ago, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan prompted thousands to flee to neighboring Iran. Now, many of these refugees are once again seeking a new home in Turkey, desperate to escape the dire economic conditions in Iran. In the Turkish city of Van, 50 miles west of the Iranian border, a growing number of Afghan refugees are sleeping in public parks and bus terminals, barred by Turkish authorities from traveling farther. Turkey says 184,000 undocumented Afghans crossed the border last year - up from 100,000 in 2018.

Lord, we pray for the success of this tunnel initiative. Reveal any tunnels that might remain and we pray for their swift destruction. Sharpen the senses of those who guard the northern border so that any further attempts to create tunnels for the purpose of infiltrating northern Israel will be discovered and destroyed before they provide a threat to security. Thank You, Abba, for PM Netanyahu, DM Bennett and the IDF Chief of Staff Kochavi. Make them a strong three-fold cord to know what needs to be done for the security of Israel (Eccl. 4:12). Move upon their thinking to line up with Your plans (Prov. 19:21). Continue to cover and protect all of Israel's spies and other human sources of intelligence. Protect all Israel's artificial intelligence devices which expose the enemy's plans (Psa. 33:13). At the same time, please cover and protect all of Israel's plans (Psa. 17:8). If there are any IDF plans that are not from You, remove them (Prov. 16:9).

“Consider and hear me, O LORD my God; enlighten my eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death; lest my enemy say, “I have prevailed against him”; lest those who trouble me rejoice when I am moved.” (Psalm 13:3–4)

5. GAZA UPDATES:

Israeli police last Thursday (Jan 16) detained five Finnish citizens including Anna Kontula, a member of the Finnish parliament, for attempting to cross the fence separating Israel and Gaza. "We expect those who visit Israel, and especially public servants, to respect Israeli law," Israel's Foreign Ministry said. The Finnish Embassy in Israel said Kontula acted as a "private person."

Hamas has decided to resume its violent actions along the border with Israel. Islamic Jihad, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and the Democratic Front terror organizations are partners in this decision, which will lead to violent incidents. Hamas-led weekly riots may also resume. The reasons for this decision, which came less than a month after Hamas announced that the border riots would cease until March, are tensions between Hamas and Egypt and the delay in the realization of the understandings between Hamas and Israel on humanitarian relief for the Strip. Tensions between Hamas and Egypt have risen especially after Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh violated his pledge to Egypt and went to Iran for Qassem Soleimani's funeral. Egypt's latest measures against Hamas are focused on preventing or reducing the passage of goods through the Rafah crossing into the Strip, which hinders Hamas' revenue. Contacts between Egypt and Gaza have been frozen, which is causing concern in Hamas, which needs a breakthrough in the Gaza civilian situation.

Explosive and flammable balloon attacks have returned to haunt Israel's residents in the south in the past week after several months in which such attacks from Gaza ceased. The explosive devices are upgraded and are equipped with elements to increase casualties among the civilian population. The balloons belong to a new and much more advanced generation compared with the incendiary balloons were burning fields in the Gaza envelope communities over the summer. These new balloons carry more sophisticated explosives as well as shrapnel designed to maximize the range and severity of injuries to Israeli civilians. The IDF estimates that the Islamic Jihad terrorist organization is responsible for the renewed rocket fire and the explosive balloons attacks. The terrorists have vowed to continue with these airborne attacks.

Last Friday (Jan 17), more balloons carrying an explosive device were found on the Ashdod coastline, having been sent from the Gaza Strip. Police sappers handled the explosives that were attached to those balloons which landed on the beach. Police patrols closed off the city's beaches to prevent danger to the public until the sappers had completed their work.

A suspicious balloon cluster was located on Shabbat (Jan 18) in a neighbourhood in Sderot near the Gaza Strip border. Police arrived at the scene and a police sapper dismantled an explosive charge that was attached to the cluster. No one was injured. Earlier on Shabbat, another cluster of balloons from the Gaza Strip carrying explosives was documented.

Gaza terrorists continue to launch balloon bombs towards southern Israel, some of which explode before the bomb squad has time to defuse them, and some of which are neutralized. One of the balloon bombs arrived on Sunday (Jan 19) afternoon and exploded above a house in the border city of Sderot near a kindergarten. Miraculously, there were no physical injuries reported from the explosion. The IDF shelled a Hamas position in northern Gaza in response.

A balloon bomb from Gaza was spotted later on Sunday over a farmer's field near the southern Israeli border. It was the second such bomb of the day. The explosive was neutralized before it could cause injuries or damage

A cluster of balloons tied to an explosive device that was launched by terrorists from the Gaza Strip landed on Monday (Jan 20) in the town of Mesilat Zion, which is just north of Beit Shemesh and west of Jerusalem. A police sapper who was alerted to scene safety dismantled the explosive charge, with no injuries or damage. Police again reminded the public that extreme caution should be exercised when encountering such suspicious objects, kites and balloons, which may be connected to explosives or flammable materials and may "endanger public peace if it is not dealt with responsibly."

On Tuesday (Jan 21), a balloon bomb landed near the central Israeli city of Beit Shemesh, about 20 minutes outside of Jerusalem. Despite the fact that Hamas terrorists have renewed and escalated their attacks against Israel, Qatar once again delivered a fresh installment of cash to poor families in the enclave on Tuesday.

Three Palestinians were killed after they crossed the Gaza border into Israel and threw an explosive device at Israeli troops Tuesday night (Jan 21).

On Wednesday (Jan 22), there were at least two attacks by balloon-borne incendiary devices. One bundle of balloons attached to a "suspicious object" landed in a family's backyard. Israeli officials believe Hamas is behind the spate of balloon-borne bombs and incendiary devices launched into Israel in recent days.

On Thursday (Jan 23), balloons attached to explosive charges launched by terrorists from the Gaza Strip landed at several locations in Israel's south, the seventh consecutive day that Israel has been contending with this threat. IDF soldiers operating in the area of the border with Gaza found and neutralized an explosive charge that was planted inside a soccer ball connected to a balloon. In the city of Ashdod, a booby-trapped balloon landed near a shopping mall. A police sapper alerted to the site successfully dismantled the explosive charge. No one was injured and no damage was caused by the attacks. The IDF has not responded to any of the attacks in recent days.

Israel has warned Hamas that it will respond forcefully to any attempt to disrupt this week's World Holocaust Forum events in Jerusalem. At least 47 world leaders, including 26 presidents, four kings and four prime ministers, will attend the event in commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp.

Despite the uptick in balloon bomb attacks on southern Israel from Gaza, the Israeli military facilitated more than 80,000 humanitarian crossings to and from Gaza last week so that Gazans could receive medical treatment in Israel. More than half a million Arabs entered Israel from the Palestinian Authority from January 12 to 18. More than 8,750 permits were issued for entrance into Israel by Palestinian Authority Arabs, and there were more than 372,860 entries into Israel by Palestinian Authority workers last week as well. In addition, 63,748 people traveled through the Allenby Bridge border crossing with Jordan.

Israelis and Palestinians in Gaza have brokered unwritten "understandings" that are already having a modest impact.

- Strawberries and snacks from Gaza may now be sold abroad.
- Gazan fishermen can venture farther into the Mediterranean for a better catch.
- 5,500 Palestinians are suddenly allowed to work in Israel after more than a decade.
- Israel is easing some restrictions on trade and travel out of Gaza on the condition that Hamas halts rocket fire into Israel and violent confrontations at the Israeli border.

- Gaza resident Mahmoud Ghaben secured a coveted permit last August to work plastering buildings in Israel. "It's like finding treasure," says Ghaben. "Like a prisoner being let free."
- Gazans say they can make ten times as much money in Israel as they can in Gaza.

Hamas' security forces have established a new military checkpoint in the proximity of the new soon to be opened international-sponsored hospital in the northern Gaza Strip. The new checkpoint established Sunday (Jan 19) is situated near an already active checkpoint that monitors all residents and delegations entering into the Strip. Reportedly, the new checkpoint was established due to the sensitivity surrounding the opening of the new hospital. The 10-acre hospital will consist of infrastructure dismantled from the IDF's military hospital established by Israel a few years ago on the border with Syria, and equipment donated by a USA organization, Friendship NGO. This project will also include support from Qatar, which has already invested \$1 million. **(Note:** The Palestinian Authority (PA) is opposed the project because it claims that it is part of the understandings which are currently forming between Israel and Hamas, and which are expected to deepen the split between the PA's government in Ramallah and Hamas' rule in Gaza. Ramallah claims that the hospital is "a crime committed by Hamas against the residents of the PA," part of a plan to kill the idea of a Palestinian state. The PA also fears that the hospital paves the way to direct US-Hamas relations and "the beginning of a campaign that will allow the establishment of a Gazan emirate sponsored by the USA.") Hamas supports the hospital's establishment because of the collapse of the health services in the Gaza Strip but is facing opposition from Gazan factions who oppose it because of its location, just 200 meters from the Erez Crossing, could facilitate a rapid Israeli takeover of the hospital. Gazan factions also claim that the site was chosen by Israel and the USA so that they can promote security interests through civilian organizations.

Lord, bring an end to this current surge in violence and allow calm to settle over the area again. In addition, we pray for a long-term solution to this conflict, one that will bring real peace—His peace—to the people of southern Israel. May Gazan Palestinians rise up and overthrow their corrupt and evil leadership. Thank You, Abba, for the resilience of Israeli soldiers and civilians who live and guard this area of the Gaza security fence. Increase the IDF's alertness to defend against all future border incursions (Mal. 1:5). Prevent any misunderstandings when orders are given. May the rules of engagement be made very clear to the soldiers (1 Cor. 14:8).

"Be my strong refuge, to which I may resort continually; You have given the commandment to save me, for You are my rock and my fortress. Deliver me, O my God, out of the hand of the wicked." (Psalm 71:3–4a)

6. PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY UPDATES:

Palestinians demonstrated in Gaza on Thursday (Jan 23) to protest the visit of world leaders to Jerusalem to attend the Fifth World Holocaust Forum. Another demonstration in Ramallah on Wednesday (Jan 22) condemned Russian President Vladimir Putin's visit to Bethlehem. Protesters carried placards denouncing Putin as a "murderer" and "criminal" and accusing the Russian Army of committing "massacres" against the Syrian people.

There's a new 'intifada' in the works, one that specifically targets the Temple Mount in Jerusalem and the Tomb of the Jewish Patriarchs in Hebron. Called the 'Great Fajr' (Muslim pre-dawn prayer), it's roused thousands of Muslims to converge on the Jewish holy sites for Friday prayers—which also double as anti-Israel rallies. The large turnouts, despite the cold and rain, have surprised police in both Jerusalem and Hebron. The prayer demonstrations are being organized by both Hamas and Fatah. Last Friday (Jan 17), a third jihadist organization, called Hizb ut-Tahrir (Party of Liberation), an Islamic State-like pro-Caliphate movement, led Temple Mount worshipers in chants of "O coward settler, Aqsa [Mosque] won't be humiliated" and "With blood and spirit, we will liberate Al-Aqsa." Arab leaders claim the

protests are aimed at stemming the growing tide of Jewish visitors to the Temple Mount and thwarting Israel's decision to build a new Jewish neighbourhood in Hebron.

The Israel Electric Corp. (IEC) said on Wednesday (Jan 22) it was ending power cuts to Judea-Samaria after the Palestinians' main power distributor paid off \$214 million of its \$519 million debt that has accumulated since 2016. Palestinians in Judea-Samaria rely on IEC for over 95% of their electricity.

Palestinians were told on official PA TV and in the official PA newspaper the Western Wall belongs only to Muslims and must be defended even to the death. PA TV said, "Since Islam's conquest [in the 7th century], the al-Buraq Wall [the Western Wall] has remained an Islamic waqf [an inalienable religious endowment in Islamic law]. The Muslims have the absolute right to it and there is not even one rock there that dates back to the period of King Solomon, as the Jews claim." (**Note:** The Western Wall, part of Judaism's holiest site, the Temple Mount, is a remnant of a large retaining wall built by King Herod to support the mount for the Second Temple. No part of Solomon's First Temple remains, although artifacts from that period have been found in the area.)

The Palestinian Press Association (PPA) has called for a boycott of the Al-Quds newspaper after it published an advertisement by the Israeli 'Regavim' organization concerning land expropriation in the southern Hebron area. Regavim monitors and pursues legal action against illegal Arab construction, primarily in Judea-Samaria. The PAA condemned Al Quds in light of the fact that this was not the first time the newspaper published ads that "serve the Israeli settlement and occupation policies." In the past, the newspaper published a series of announcements by the IDF's Civil Administration and was threatened by terrorist organizations. The Regavim Movement reported that the Palestinian Authority (PA) systematically promotes illegal Arab construction in areas under Israeli control with the objective of taking control of them, and in this case, areas in which the IDF trains, especially in southern Mount Hebron. As part of its petition to the court against the illegal construction, Regavim is required to advertise its legal action to the landowners in accordance with the law to allow the litigants to oppose the land confiscation and appear before a court.

Lord God, give the IDF clear understanding of what is happening in Judea-Samaria; give wisdom to know how to prepare for what is coming (Prov. 21:31). Enable the Jewish residents in Judea-Samaria also to be prepared (Psa. 18:34). We ask You for accurate information for the IDF concerning this situation. May they also have wisdom to know when to react and when to stand back (Prov. 26:17) Lord, thank You that the population in the biblical heartland is growing. Increase this growth for the sake of Your holy name (Ezek. 36:8-12, 32) Protect the scattered communities of Judea-Samaria (Jer. 31:10). Increase their recognition and response to danger (Isa. 30:17). Bless and protect those Palestinians who support Israel (Gen. 12:3a).

"Teach me Your way, O LORD, and lead me in a smooth path, because of my enemies. Do not deliver me to the will of my adversaries; for false witnesses have risen against me, and such as breathe out violence." (Psalm 27:11-12)

7. THE LIGHT SHINES INTO THE DARKNESS *(This weekly commentary documents incidents where God shines his light into the darkness and exposes pending attacks, injustices and terror incidents. It also documents situations where the goodness of God breaks through into evil circumstances)*

The Darkness

As world leaders gather in Jerusalem this week to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, Al-Hayat Al-Jadida, the official Palestinian Authority daily, published an op-ed on Saturday by columnist Yahya Rabah who wrote: "One shot will disrupt the ceremony and one dead body will cancel the ceremony." Rabah warned: "It can be assumed that they [Palestinians] will resist the ceremony being held in Jerusalem itself, as Jerusalem is theirs."

More than 120 members of Congress issued letters of support to the Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR), an anti-Israel organization that was an unindicted co-conspirator in the Holy Land Foundation terror case that proved connections to Gaza's ruling terrorist organization, Hamas, and other radical Islamic entities. The privately issued letters were revealed during CAIR's gala conference in November 2019 in Washington, DC, that was headlined by Rep. Ilhan Omar (D-MN) and former Women's March leader Linda Sarsour. Omar issued such a letter. The letters were mostly from Democrats, plus two Republicans. Democratic 2020 presidential candidates Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Sen. Michael Bennet (D-CO) and billionaire Tom Steyer issued letters of support.

Last Friday (Jan 17), a video was uploaded to the Internet of an event at the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem on the anniversary of the capture of Constantinople by the Ottoman Empire in 1453. Palestinian preacher Nidhal Siam said the anniversary of the fall of Constantinople brings tidings that Rome will be conquered in the near future. He said that three prophecies will soon be fulfilled: that a Caliphate will be established, that Jerusalem will be liberated and established as the capital of the Caliphate, and that Islam "will throw its neighbours to the ground" and its reach will span across the world. He told the crowd that their real task is to wage Jihad for the sake of Allah and to seek martyrdom for Allah.

PM Netanyahu told Matt Crouch from TBN, the largest Christian Network in the world, in an interview on Tuesday (Jan 21) night, that the world must unite in sanctioning the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague, which is mulling war crime charges against Israel over its possession of the liberated territories of Judea-Samaria and its rule over the local Arabs. "The US government under President Trump has spoken forcefully against the ICC for this travesty, and I urge all your viewers to do the same," Netanyahu told Crouch. "To ask for concrete actions, sanction against the international court, its officials, prosecutors, everyone. They're basically in a full-frontal attack on the democracies, both on the democracies' right to defend themselves, and on Israel's right, the Jewish people's right, to live in their ancestral homeland, the Land of Israel."

Rep. Ilhan Omar (D-Min) launched her re-election campaign Thursday (Jan 23) night largely unopposed and with \$1.56 million in the bank, having raised more than \$2.5 million by the end of last summer. Omar's fundraising is more than three times the House incumbents' average. She owes her success to President Donald Trump, who granted her enormous fame and liberal adoration, despite her negative views on Jews, Israel, US national values and human decency. Omar won in an overwhelmingly Democratic district, one of the most progressive districts in America, where she took 78% of the vote in the 2018 general election. Omar also continued to champion the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions movement. A black businessman named Lacy Johnson, a Republican, is probably going to run against Omar in November. And because his opponent is so disliked on the right, he has raised \$478,000 by summer's end – mostly from outside the district. It appears to be a steep uphill battle for this Republican candidate.

The Gray

Israelis rate National Security Threats in a new study by the Institute for National Security Studies at Tel Aviv University

- 31% of the Israeli public believes the northern sector, including Lebanon and Syria, poses the greatest threat to national security;
- 26% think Iran's nuclear program is the central threat,
- 14% view the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as the most serious security problem,
- 14% view Hamas in Gaza as a primary threat.
- 82% agree with the statement that "Israel can rely only on itself" in a war.

The Or Haganuz boutique winery on Sunday (Jan 19) held a festive ceremony for tithing their annual product – winner of countless international tasting competitions – which involved spilling about 4,000 liters (1,056 gallons) of the winery's fine wine. In the time of the Temple, this wine would have been sent to Jerusalem for the use of the Cohanim (priests), but since this cannot be done nowadays, the tithed amount is forbidden to use by its owner or any layman. The ceremony was attended by the rabbis of the Badatz—the rabbinical court of the Haredi community in Jerusalem which also supervises the kashrut of the winery. The winery's chief winemaker, Rabbi Aharon Ziv, was asked how he feels when he watches such enormous quantities of wine being poured into the gutter after having invested so much effort in producing them, and replied: “This is a special donation and tithing event. It is a time of very great joy. In a different context, just as the more income tax you pay, the more profit you made, likewise, the more wine you pour out, the more wine you made. However, what you poured out is actually what really belongs to you. Money comes and money goes, but the mitzvah you kept when you poured 4,000 liters of the wine's donations and tithing – this mitzvah will remain yours forever.”

Russian president Putin, who arrived in Israel on Thursday (Jan 23), had a back-to-back packed schedule that began with dedicating a spectacular new monument in Jerusalem in memory of those who were killed during the siege of Leningrad during World War II, together with PM Netanyahu. The dedication ceremony, which took place in Jerusalem's Sacher Park, was also attended by President Reuven Rivlin, the Mayor of Jerusalem, the Russian Foreign Minister, the Governor of St. Petersburg, ministers, deputy ministers, ambassadors and hundreds of additional guests who came specifically for the ceremony from Russia and other countries. Around 70 veterans and heroes of the siege of Leningrad, currently living in Israel, were also invited. A team of artists from Israel and Russia, architect Udi Kasif, sculptor Adam Peretz, architect Anatoly Wlada Chernov and Ladislav Manchinski collaborated on building the monument, from its artistic conception through its completion. The monument is 8.5 meters tall, and is made of copper and cast bronze to represent the flame of the candle. The movement of the flame finds expression in the form of a lit spiral at night to create the special effect of a perpetual flame. (Note: The Russian leader's schedule had just begun with the monument. Putin followed with an address at the World Holocaust Forum ceremonies, during which he proposed holding a summit this year (2020) between Russia, the United States, China, France and Britain, at which leaders would discuss global problems.)

This week, PM Netanyahu and President Putin discussed a number of issues, including the current status of the young Israeli backpacker who still remains in custody in Russia. (Note: Naama Issachar has been given a 7.5-year prison sentence in Russia for having marijuana in her possession when her flight was diverted to Russia due to airplane mechanical problems. Issachar is an Israeli-American citizen.) Following their meeting, Netanyahu told reporters, “We have just concluded an excellent working meeting between President Putin and myself. At its conclusion, President Putin asked to bring in Yaffa, Naama Issachar's mother. This was a very moving meeting. I am very grateful to you for this gesture, my friend the President.” In response, Putin said in a statement, “Honoured colleagues, friends. I just met with Naama's mother. It is clear that Naama comes from a very good family. The Prime Minister's position is known to me – to decide appropriately. All of this will be taken into account when a decision is made. Today, Naama will meet with the person responsible for maintaining human rights in Russia. Her mother was very moving and supports her daughter. I said to her and I will say it again – everything will be alright.”

The Light

The year 2019 saw a peak in Aliyah, Jewish immigration to Israel, with 34,872 Jews coming to Jewish State, a 20% increase over the 29,800 that came in 2018, data released by 'Ofek Israeli' shows. Ofek Israeli (Israeli Horizon) is a company that was established in 2015 that called for the establishment of “a national project to encourage immigration to Israel from all over the world.” Ofek Israeli is guided by the understanding that the State of Israel must take responsibility for the immigration issue and produce long-term plans and effective solutions for the potential Olim. The

company leads the policies on encouraging national immigration and the global activities on this issue, in full cooperation with the Ministry of Immigration and Absorption and with its support. The majority of the Olim who immigrated to Israel in 2019 came through Ofek Israeli projects operating in 24 countries across four continents.

- Over the past four years, Ofek Israeli activities included over 90 Aliyah fairs, 2,500 Ulpan classes for learning Hebrew, 250 seminars, 70 campaigns, as well as a network of advisors and other support services.
- In total, over 177,000 people have participated in Ofek Israeli's activities, and more than 120,000 Olim immigrated to Israel since the company was established.

Defense Minister Naftali Bennett ordered the IDF and security forces to issue restraining orders against violent left-wing anarchist activists from operating in Judea-Samaria. Bennett released a statement declaring, "The circus is over, we will take a hard hand against domestic enemies who damage IDF soldiers and state security." Until now, such orders have only been issued against Jewish activists and hilltop youths (whether guilty or not). The orders will be against activists from "Anarchists Against the Wall," who every week, in coordination with PA Arab activists and other extremist left-wing groups, carry out violent provocations in Judea-Samaria in four main locations: Bil'in, Na'alim, Kedum and Nabi Salah. Bennett ordered the IDF and the Shin Bet to formulate a restraining order against the group's activists, first and foremost against radical leftist activist Jonathan Pollak, who is currently in custody. Bennett also ordered the IDF to use a firm hand to quickly disperse the violent demonstrations to reduce injuries to IDF soldiers from those extended demonstrations.

The United Kingdom last Thursday (Jan 16) froze Hezbollah assets after the British government classified the entire group as a terrorist entity last year. Gilad Erdan, Israel's minister of public security and strategic affairs, applauded the move. Hezbollah had no immediate response to the decision. Last year the terror group said the decision of the UK to list the group as a terrorist entity showed London's "servile obedience" to Washington, which listed Hezbollah as a foreign terrorist organization on October 8, 1997.

There is a river in Israel nobody knew existed, until Sunday (Jan 19) night when it was revealed that there is a secret river, more than 6 miles long, flowing inside a huge canyon, between cliffs that are tens of meters tall, to the Dead Sea (The Sea of Salt in Hebrew). This river lies within the concession area of the Dead Sea Works, an Israeli potash plant in Sodom, on the Dead Sea coast. This is the reason the secret river's existence has been kept secret. Israel is adamant about warning enthusiastic Israeli nature lovers to stay away from the new discovery, because, "the place is full of mines – there is a real danger to life facing anyone trying to get there."

It has been early 50 years since the late Rav Ovadia Yosef ruled that the Jewish status of Ethiopian Jews should not be questioned; last November, the Chief Rabbinate Council accepted his ruling, and recognized that Ethiopian Israelis are Jewish. This is just being formally released to the media now. Ethiopian Jews in Israel are immigrants and descendants of the immigrants from the Beta Israel communities in Ethiopia who now reside in Israel and have Israeli citizenship. The Ethiopian Jewish community in Israel is also composed of the Falash Mura, a community of Beta Israel which had converted to Christianity over the past 200 years, mostly under pressure from government and their neighbours, but were permitted to immigrate to Israel conditioned on their conversion to Orthodox Judaism. Rabbinical officials said the decision eliminated an old 1980s document that questioned the Jewishness of all Ethiopian olim and demanded various actions to confirm their Judaism, including Giur L'chumra – the same conversion that is offered to a complete gentile.

A never-seen-before secret Iranian government document dated November 28, 2002, proves the Iranian regime was trying to build a nuclear weapon. It shows scientists outlining their proposals for a "warhead fitted on a missile." A handwritten comment from Moshen Fakhrazadeh, Iran's nuclear science chief, is visible on the document. The document was seized as part of a raid by Israeli intelligence agents on a compound in Tehran in 2018.

Photos have surfaced of convicted Nazi war criminal John Demjanjuk in the Sobibor Nazi death camp, where he denied ever having been a guard. The recently discovered images come from the estate of a deputy commandant at the camp, Johann Niemann, one of ten SS men killed by prisoners in the October 1943 uprising. Demjanjuk, whose USA citizenship was revoked in 2002 for lying about his Nazi service, and who was deported to Germany in 2009, was convicted in Munich in 2011 as an accessory to the murder of 28,060 Jews at the death camp. He died in a nursing home at the age of 91 in 2012. (**Note:** Sobibor was constructed in German-occupied Poland in 1942. By the time it was shut down in November 1943, at least 167,000 Jews had been gassed there with carbon monoxide.)

Sultan Qaboos Bin Said al Said (who just died), Oman's ruler for fifty years, cultivated close relations with Israel's Mossad in great secrecy. Oman became the third Arab country - after Lebanon and Jordan - to maintain secret ties with the Mossad. In Jordan, those ties were with King Hussein; in Lebanon, with President Camille Chamoun. In 1975, forces from radical socialist South Yemen invaded Oman's Dhofar region in the south in support of a long-running insurgency. Britain and Iran, then ruled by the Shah, tried to quell the revolt but in vain. Israeli military advisers, coordinated by Mossad operative Ephraim Halevy, later head of the agency, rushed to Oman to help end the revolt. The episode was a classic example of the convergence of national interests between Israel and Oman. The Mossad was also instrumental in assisting Oman improve its water resources to irrigate its arid land. One of the more significant benefits of ties with Oman for Israel is the fact that Oman also has good relations with Iran. Through its close contact with Omani officials, Israel was offered a window into Iran's thinking.

The secretary general of the Muslim World League, Mohammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa, and the CEO of the American Jewish Committee, David Harris, led a delegation of 62 Muslims, including 25 prominent religious leaders, from 28 countries in a "ground-breaking" tour of the Auschwitz-Birkenau memorial in Poland on Thursday (Jan 23). Al-Issa said, "To be here, among the children of Holocaust survivors and members of the Jewish and Islamic communities, is both a sacred duty and a profound honour. The unconscionable crimes to which we bear witness today are truly crimes against humanity. That is to say, a violation of us all, an affront to all of God's children."

Lord, let Your light shine into the darkest areas of the earth. Expose all plots to harm Your people...both Jews and Christians. Thank You that there is increasing coordination between the agencies who are in charge of security and protection. We bless the security forces and police forces around the world...they have an impossible job to protect all the people all the time. Give them much wisdom and great alertness, we pray!

"YHWH discovers deep things out of darkness, and brings the shadow of death to light." (Job 12:22)

8. ANTI-SEMITISM UPDATES:

A delegation of over 100 European ministers and parliamentarians toured the Nazi death camps of Auschwitz-Birkenau on Tuesday (Jan 21), with a coalition of European Jewish leaders encouraging the legislators to strengthen anti-Semitism laws in their respective countries. The visit was part of a conference that ran January 20-21 — just ahead of the anniversary of the camp's liberation on January 27, 1945 — that urged attendees to amend or adopt laws regarding anti-Semitic stereotyping, educational initiatives, and the sale of Nazi memorabilia for profit or "personal macabre interest."

A Wisconsin man with Jordanian roots was arrested for vandalizing a synagogue as part of his involvement in a white supremacist and neo-Nazi hate group known as 'The Base'. Yousef Barasneh, 22, was arrested Friday as part of a nationwide investigation into the extremist group. Six other men were arrested last Thursday and Friday for their

involvement in the group amid fears that some of them planned to travel with firearms to a pro-gun rights rally in Richmond, Virginia, being held Monday (Jan 20). Barasneh is accused of spray-painting a swastika and other Nazi imagery, as well as the word “Jude,” German for Jew, on the building of the Beth Israel Sinai Congregation in Racine in September. He is charged in a federal criminal complaint with planning other acts of vandalism against minority residents with the hate group, which has been active in Wisconsin. Barasneh’s father immigrated to the United States from Amman, Jordan. His mother was born in Wisconsin, and the family lives in Oak Creek, located about 10 miles from Milwaukee.

Neo-Nazi graffiti was discovered outside a synagogue in Wellington, the capital of New Zealand. Yellow swastikas were spray-painted on and near Temple Sinai, also known as the Wellington Jewish Progressive Congregation. The word “Heil” was also painted. One swastika was painted on the synagogue, one on a nearby fence and several others on the footpath and a fence on The Terrace. The graffiti comes as Israel holds the Fifth World Holocaust Forum on Thursday (Jan 23) the 75th anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz concentration and extermination camp. New Zealand did not send any representatives to the event.

Last weekend, a Holocaust memorial in the city of Kryvyi Rih, in Ukraine, was desecrated. The damage, a mess of orange-colored spray paint slathered over the engraving on the monument, was discovered on Sunday (Jan 19), just a few days before the president of the country travelled to Israel to mark the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz. Zelensky was not asked to speak at the main event on January 23 at Yad Vashem: only heads of state from those nations whose countries won the Second World War, and the country that perpetrated the Holocaust – Germany – received an invitation to speak at the event.

Hundreds of Jordanians protested in the Jordanian capital of Amman last Friday (Jan 17) demanding that the government cancel a natural gas deal with Israel. Jordanian security forces stopped the protesters from reaching the Al-Nakheel Square, where the demonstration was expected to grow. Earlier this month, Israel began pumping gas to Jordan from its offshore Leviathan gas field as part of a 15-year, \$10 billion dollar deal with Texas-based Noble Energy and Israel’s Delek Group. Many Jordanians still view Israel as the enemy despite a peace treaty signed between the countries. At least half of Jordan’s population identify as “Palestinian”. (**Note:** Jordan’s parliament on Sunday (Jan 19) approved a draft law banning the import of Israeli natural gas. The motion was passed unanimously by all 130 lawmakers, but legal obstacles may prevent it from coming into force.)

Further Note: In 1994, as part of its peace treaty with Jordan, Israel agreed to give Jordan 50,000,000 cubic meters of water each year – a deal that has gone a long way to introduce an environmental crisis in the Kinneret (Sea of Galilee), which has since dropped more than 2 meters below its emergency red line. The deal also allows Jordan to own 75% of the water from the Yarmouk River. Israel also agreed to help Jordan use desalination technology in order to find additional water. So, when it comes to water, the Jordanians aren’t rejecting Israel’s offering. Jordanians do not need Israel for gas...so why should they help Israel?

As anti-Semitism in France continues to spiral, Jews and the general population in France agree on the magnitude of the problem. But alignment on the anti-Semitism threat to French society, and the government’s weak responsiveness, does not mitigate the fears of Jews about their safety and future in France.

- Nearly three-quarters, 73%, of the French public, and 72% of Jews, consider anti-Semitism a problem that affects all of French society.
- 47% of the general public and 67% of the Jewish respondents say the level of anti-Semitism in France is high, while 27% and 22%, respectively, say it is low.
- 53% of the general public say anti-Semitism has been increasing, and 18% decreasing, in recent years, 77% of Jews say it has increased and 12% decreased.

Jordanian singer Aziz Maraka, 37, performed last month in the Israeli Arab town of Kafr Yasif before an audience of 5,000 people. Right after the show there were calls from the BDS movement to boycott the singer because of his "support for the occupation." Maraka responded to the critics on Facebook: "I'm not willing to be dictated to about what to believe...I will go out and sing before any audience that's willing to hear me, and it doesn't matter at all where this audience lives. Now I can say that BDS will think twice before they touch an Arab singer...BDS people, as well as politicians and activists, have an interest in keeping me - and us, the artists - paralyzed and intimidated. I'm not willing to play into their hands." Local Arab fans commented that they appreciated that he had come to perform, and that from their point of view, the connection to the greater Arab world is more important than BDS, which leads to separation and isolation.

Last Sunday (Jan 19), B'nai Brith Canada honoured the principles enshrined in the 2000 Stockholm Declaration on the Holocaust - the foundational document of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA). Welcoming the adoption by IHRA members of a special statement on the 20th anniversary of the Stockholm Declaration, B'nai Brith continues to emphasize the Declaration's principles through its ongoing work to ensure the lessons of the Holocaust are never forgotten. The Stockholm Declaration acknowledges that the Holocaust (Shoah) fundamentally challenged the foundations of civilization and commits IHRA members, including Canada, to promote education, remembrance and research about the Holocaust in order "to plant the seeds of a better future amidst the soil of a bitter past." The Ottawa Protocol on Combating Antisemitism, adopted by international parliamentarians in 2010, is an equally important instrument in acknowledging the global growth in antisemitism and recommending actions to counter it.

Lord, with anti-Semitism exploding in the West, please use it to shake up Jews who are too comfortable to ever consider coming home (Jer. 16:16). Confront all Jewish Zionists who stay in exile with the double-mindedness of their position (Jam. 5:12). Use the events and speeches in the world Holocaust Forum to make Jews in exile "exceedingly abundantly" homesick (Jer. 50:4-5)! Often children and grandchildren are the excuse to stay in exile. Show those who use this excuse, that for those very children's sake, it is imperative for them all to return (Jer. 31:16-17). Wake up the Church to its financial responsibility to help the Jews return (Isa. 60:3-6; Rom. 15:27). Give Israel a new government that will fling wide open the doors so that every type of Jew will be able to come home, including the Messianic Jews (Isa. 43:5-7). Speak to the Messianic Jews to be ready to return at Your command (Isa. 35:10; 51:11).

"Therefore behold, the days are coming," says the Lord, "that it shall no more be said, 'The Lord lives who brought up the children of Israel from the land of Egypt,' but, 'The Lord lives who brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north and from all the lands where He had driven them.' For I will bring them back into their land which I gave to their fathers. "Behold, I will send for many fishermen," says the Lord, "and they shall fish them; and afterward I will send for many hunters, and they shall hunt them from every mountain and every hill, and out of the holes of the rocks." (Jeremiah 16:14-16)

9. IRAN UPDATES:

This October, the UN arms embargo on Iran will sunset even though Tehran continues to attack its neighbours. The 2015 nuclear deal became part of UN Security Council Resolution 2231, which included a five-year international arms embargo. The USA Defense Intelligence Agency assesses that Tehran will likely import new conventional weaponry and military equipment from Russia and China. International law will no longer prohibit Iran from exporting such weapons to other countries or its proxy militias in Iraq, Syria, Yemen, and Lebanon. (**Note:** There is also an impending sunset on UN missile restrictions against Iran, which expire in 2023. At that time, Iran will be free to import missile-related equipment

and to buy and sell advanced systems. Also, in 2023, restrictions on Iran's advanced centrifuge capabilities will begin to sunset.)

Israeli Ambassador to the UN Danny Danon told the Iranian people in Persian that "Israel is on your side," in remarks at the Security Council on Tuesday (Jan 21). He displayed a photo of Nikta Esfandani, 14, who was killed by Iranian security forces during protests in November. Danon added: "Our Persian neighbors have a rich heritage that they should be proud of. The Persian people led the declaration of human rights, aided terminating slavery and granted people the right to choose their religion. The water systems, algebra, animation, chess - all Iranian inventions...It is absurd that the people that invented human rights and acted for freedom of religion is being ruled by a regime that is crushing those two rights."

An Iranian factory in Khomeini City, four hours south of Tehran, produces hundreds of thousands of USA, UK and Death to Israel flags and banners each year for burning by demonstrators. As tensions with Iran have intensified in recent weeks, the factory is doing a roaring trade.

Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei delivered a sermon in Tehran last Friday (Jan 17): "What is 'the day of Allah'? It is a day when a person can see the powerful hand of God in what is happening....The day when the IRGC missiles crushed the American base constitutes another one of the days of Allah....The day of Allah when the American base was crushed will never leave the minds of these people."

An Iranian lawmaker has announced a \$3 million reward for the assassination of President Donald Trump. Addressing the Iranian parliament, Iranian MP Ahmad Hamzeh on Tuesday (Jan 21) said, "On behalf of the people of Kerman province, we will pay a \$3 million reward in cash to whoever kills Trump." It was unclear if the reward was officially supported by the regime. The lawmaker also called for the production of long-range missiles capable of delivering "unconventional warheads," calling it Iran's "natural right."

Both Iran's foreign minister, Mohammad Javad Zarif, and the speaker of parliament, Ali Larijani, warned on Monday (Jan 20) that the country was considering exiting the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) if Europe takes Iran before the UN Security Council over its violations of the 2015 accord it signed with the West. Iran's foreign ministry on Monday also repeated their threat to nations hosting USA troops that they will be targets of Iranian reprisals if America uses their territory to stage attacks on the country. Moreover, Iranian officials announced two impending launches of its 'Zafer' surveillance satellites into space. Non-proliferation experts fear that the delivery systems for putting a craft into orbit around the earth can also be used to launch long-range missiles.

USA sanctions were imposed last Friday (Jan 16) against Brig.-Gen. Hassan Shahvarpour of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, who the State Department said commanded units in the Mahshahr region in Iran in November when troops opened fire on demonstrators, killing 148 people. The State Department barred Shahvarpour and his family from entering the USA under human-rights laws.

USA government-funded technology companies have recorded an increase in the use of circumvention software in Iran in recent weeks after boosting efforts to help Iranian anti-regime protesters thwart Internet censorship and use secure mobile messaging. The outreach is part of a USA government program dedicated to Internet freedom that supports dissident pressure inside Iran and complements America's "maximum pressure" policy on the regime. The USA-supported measures include providing apps, servers and other technology to help people communicate, visit banned websites, install anti-tracking software and navigate data shutdowns. Many Iranians rely on virtual private networks (VPNs) that receive USA funding or are beamed in with USA support.

The “beginning of the end” of the Iranian regime has started, former crown prince of Iran Reza Pahlavi said last week in a talk at the Hudson Institute in Washington. “People smell the opportunity for the first time in 40 years,” he added. “This time is very different from 2009, even very different from 1997. The people have had it. Today’s generation of young Iranians cannot take it anymore. They want to have an opportunity for a better future. They want to be on the path of modernity and freedom. The only thing that stands between them and the free world is this regime. To the forces that are employing repression as a tool, all I can say is that there are not enough people they can kill to maintain this regime in power. They better stand down and join with their brethren,” he highlighted. He called on Western nations not to take an approach of appeasement with Iran. “All such efforts have focused on changing the regime’s behavior. All have failed. It is time to recognize that this is not a normal regime and that it will not change its behavior.” He added: “For 40 years, the regime has shown that its agenda is not Iran and the Iranian people, it’s survival at the expense of oppressing people and repressing them to the point of killing.”

Iran is refusing to hand over the flight data recorders of a Ukrainian airliner it shot down, despite Ukraine's demand that the black boxes be sent back home for analysis. A perception that Iran is being obstructionist to an investigation into the causes of the crash could further isolate the country. Iranian officials had indicated they would accede to Western requests that the black boxes be sent to Ukraine or France where the data could be downloaded in a credible and neutral laboratory, since Iran didn't have the necessary technology to assess it. But on Tuesday (Jan 21), Iran's aviation regulator said it is asking for equipment from the USA and France to download data from the flight-data and cockpit-voice recorders.

The USA Department of the Treasury on Thursday sanctioned a network of companies helping Iran circumvent USA sanctions by selling products by the National Iranian Oil Company. The Treasury said hundreds of millions of dollars were traced to these companies, which repatriated revenues to Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and its Quds Force, enabling the Islamic Republic to finance "terrorist" proxies and activities throughout the Middle East

The EU Needs to Take Tougher Stance Towards Iran's Mullahs *(by Majid Rafizadeh who is a business strategist and advisor, Harvard-educated scholar, political scientist, board member of Harvard International Review, and president of the International American Council on the Middle East. He has authored several books on Islam and US foreign policy.)*
The European Union really needs to do two things as soon as possible: stop criticizing the Trump administration for its Iran policy, and halt its appeasement policies toward the ruling mullahs of Iran who have committed some of the worst crimes against humanity, not only in Iran but abroad. On January 19, 2020, British PM Boris Johnson and French President Emmanuel Macron reiterated their commitment to keep Iran nuclear deal alive. Europe has been working to implement a special purpose vehicle that will allow countries to continue trading with Iran, despite USA sanctions, known as INSTEX.

- It is worth noting that, the EU did announce a positive step. In light of the revelations concerning Iran's assassinations plots, minor sanctions were imposed on sectors of the Iranian Ministry of Intelligence, as well as on Saeid Hashemi Moghadan, the deputy intelligence minister.
- However, these do not go nearly far enough, particularly if the EU is inclined to continue its support for the JCPOA. It is incumbent upon the EU to stop softening its tone toward the Islamic Republic, and instead join the Trump administration in imposing maximum pressure on the ruling mullahs of Iran. The more the EU appeases the Iranian government, the more it empowers it to pursue aggressive and terrorist activities.

Note: President Trump has threatened to impose a 25 percent tariff on the import of cars manufactured in Europe if continental powers continue to back the 2015 multilateral nuclear deal. Reports to this effect were confirmed by the defense minister of Germany, which along with Britain and France earlier this week triggered the accord’s dispute

mechanism following a series of violations by Iran. The USA, in May 2018, withdrew from the agreement and re-imposed crippling economic sanctions on the Islamic Republic.

Iran's Weak Points, and How Israel and USA Could Exploit Them – (by Col. (ret.) Dr. Ephraim Kam who served in the Research Division of IDF Military Intelligence, and is Deputy Director of the Institute for National Security Studies at Tel Aviv University.)

The initial Iranian response to the killing of Qasem Soleimani is not necessarily the final one. We can assume that the Iranian regime wants to gain time in order to examine the alternatives to fulfilling its promise to inflict serious punishment on the USA. The leadership in Iran is committed to that. The firing of Iranian missiles at USA bases in Iraq, with minimal results, has to be perceived by Iran's rivals as a sign of weakness rather than strength.

- Israel is likely to be another target for Iran's retaliation campaign. But the Iranians should recall that Israel hit dozens of Iranian and Shi'ite targets in Syria and Iraq without Tehran daring to respond - with the exception of a few failed attempts - in recognition of Israel's aerial superiority.
- Although Iran has considerable deterrence capability against Israel, based on its huge missile systems and those of Hezbollah and the Shi'ite militias, using those systems against Israel means war. In that case, Iran has to take into account that the USA will help Israel, and that Israel will also exploit the confrontation in order to attack Iran's nuclear sites. Iran knows that Israel is looking for justification and a good opportunity to deliver such a blow.

Lord Yeshua, thank You for building Your church in the very presence of the gates of hell (Matt. 16:18). Guide our Iranian brothers and sisters to know when to speak and when to be silent (Eccl. 3:7b). Teach them how to intercede for their nation and for Israel (Luke 11:1; Gen. 12:3). Set them free from all anti-Semitic and anti-Zionistic spirits (Num. 23:8; 24:5). Raise up the Iranian church in exile to be strong encouragers of their brothers and sisters at home. Lord, in Your timing may the Iranian regime be dealt a fatal blow – preferably by You (Ex. 14:13-14). Yet, if You will use Israel as Your battle-axe and weapon of war (Jer. 51:20), then please guide it in such a way that You will receive the glory. Lord, please continue to dry up Iran's economy (Job 15:29-35). Prevent them from financing terror groups surrounding Israel and throughout the world (Isa. 42:15). If EU nations continue with their economic support of the Iranian regime, touch the EU's economy so that they no longer have finances to aid those who curse and threaten Israel (Num. 24:9b).

“I am going to break the bow of Elam, the mainstay of their might... And I will set my throne in Elam, and destroy their king and officials, says the Lord.” (Jeremiah 49:35,38)

10. TWO STATE SOLUTION UPDATES:

The Trump administration's plan for Israeli-Palestinian peace will open up a historic window of opportunity for the Jewish state, senior Israeli officials said on Thursday (Jan 23). According to the information currently available to Israeli officials, for the time being, the USA administration doesn't expect the Israeli government to recognize a Palestinian state, only to express willingness to discuss it in the future, and only if the Palestinians meet the American demands. Israeli officials were aware that the American initiative could lead to a security escalation in Judea-Samaria and Gaza.

President Trump said Thursday (Jan 23) he will release his long-delayed peace plan for the Middle East before Israeli PM Netanyahu and his election rival Benny Gantz visit the White House next Tuesday (Jan 28). Trump said Palestinians might react negatively to his plan at first, but that "it's actually very positive for them. It's a great plan. It's a plan that really would work. PA president Abbas, whose administration is boycotting Trump, immediately rejected the USA move. **(Note: Abbas cut off all ties with the USA in December 2017 after Trump broke with decades of international consensus**

and recognized Jerusalem as Israel's capital. The Palestinians see the eastern part of the city as the capital of their future state and world powers have long agreed that Jerusalem's fate should be settled via negotiations.)

Father, we pray for much wisdom as the American Peace Plan is unfolded. May Israel be wise in how it reacts. May Netanyahu and Gantz put aside their differences as they travel to the White House to meet President Trump. May no land be given up in this transaction. Be glorified, Abba, as the events to follow transpire.

"The voice of him that cries in the wilderness, 'Prepare the way of YHWH, make straight in the desert a highway for our God...And the glory of the YHWH shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the YHWH has spoken it.'" (Isaiah 40:3,5)

11. ISRAEL GOOD NEWS ITEMS:

Georgia's President Salome Zourabichvili, Jerusalem's Mayor Moshe Leon, Israeli Diaspora Minister Tzipi Hotovely and incoming Honorary Consul Yigal Amedi on Wednesday (Jan 22) officially inaugurated Georgia's honorary consulate in Israel's capital. Leon stated that "almost two years ago, we celebrated the opening of the American Embassy in the city, and now it's your turn, the Georgians, to upgrade the connection between the peoples and move the Georgian Embassy to Jerusalem." The USA and Guatemala have moved their embassies from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. The Czech Republic, Hungary, Australia, Honduras and Brazil have opened trade offices in Jerusalem, and Slovakia and Ukraine have plans to open similar diplomatic offices in the city as well. The Georgian leader met in Jerusalem on Wednesday with Israel's President Reuven Rivlin and discussed security, trade, investment, technology, culture and how to deepen their already close and historical ties.

In a move to foster academic exchange between Israeli and American universities, 28 professors from the USA recently traveled to Israel for the Jewish National Fund-USA's Faculty Fellowship Program. To date, the program has brought 300 full-time USA-based academics to Israel, seeking to link the scholars with Israeli professors from their respective disciplines. Michael Dutch, professor of business management at Guilford College in North Carolina, was struck by Israel's "innovation, resilience, friendliness of the people and the sheer history of the nation." He proclaimed, "The world hasn't given Israel any favors; they haven't treated the Jewish population well, but Israel is a thriving country nevertheless. I don't know how you could come to Israel and not be impressed. There are wonderful opportunities to interact academically; you need to come here and see it."

A new study published in 'Cell Reports' that has the potential to eliminate the future need for dialysis says it is possible to rejuvenate kidneys and improve their function by using the patient's own stem cells. This treatment is aimed at the millions of patients who have yet to require dialysis treatment, and focuses on improving their renal function. The new technology allows the extraction of healthy kidney cells from diseased kidneys, expands their numbers in a laboratory, and returns them to rebuild the organ. Relying on the patient's own cells circumvents problems with immune rejection.

From March 2020, the Israeli humanitarian aid organization 'Natan' will run two clinics in the new Gaza Health Center to provide trauma, medical and dental care to Gaza civilians. The health facility is located near the Erez Checkpoint at the Israel-Gaza border and was built and is managed by American NGO 'FriendShips'. Natan will recruit volunteers to participate in the project, excluding Israelis due to IDF regulations. Natan has provided assistance to victims of disasters from floods, earthquakes and typhoons in Asia and Africa. Natan sent medical care to Syrian civilians on the Syrian side of the Golan border.

A total of 27 IDF soldiers died over the course of 2019, compared to 43 in 2018, according to data published by the IDF's Manpower Directorate on Wednesday. Of these, two soldiers were killed in combat operations, one in a terrorist attack, five in car accidents, 12 in suicide, two died of disease and three in unspecified "other circumstances."

The British Army recently showed off a Challenger 2 main battle tank optimized for urban operations, dubbed Streetfighter II. The vehicle has an Israeli-made 'IronVision' system, which allows the crew to see in all directions while riding inside with all the hatches closed. 'IronVision' consists of an array of electro-optical and infrared cameras positioned around the hull of an armored vehicle, which then feed into a helmet-mounted display. The system "stitches" the feeds together, giving the individual wearing the helmet the ability to "see" right through the hull of the tank in any direction, day or night.

Israel's Ministry of Defense recently announced a "breakthrough" in its development of laser technology to intercept aerial threats. In 2006, the same Israeli committee that recommended the development of Iron Dome for short-range missile defense also recommended that Israel continue R&D to develop a solid-state laser for the same purpose. Israeli government scientists and industry partners have now developed a solid-state laser source capable of producing a coherent beam strong enough to intercept lower-tier rockets and missiles.

Israel is now developing three laser programs: a ground-based laser working as a supplement to Iron Dome, a maneuverable vehicle-mounted laser capable of protecting mobile forces, and an airborne version that could protect larger areas.

- While the development and production of the optics, mechanics and laser source for a single beam are admittedly expensive, the cost of a single laser shot is negligible.
- However, current technical realities present some limitations. While the laser beam would indeed reach the target at the speed of light, it would need to remain on the target for several seconds before destroying it.
- Moreover, while Iron Dome can launch a number of interceptors simultaneously, sending each one to a different target, a single laser could focus on only one target at a time. Consequently, this technology is currently ill-suited for countering salvos of aerial threats.

Thank You, that You continue to bless Israel. Thank You that You have chosen to bless the world through the Jewish people. May the world see these inventions and discoveries as a fulfillment of Your promise to Abraham!

"The LORD had said unto Abram, 'Get out of your country, from your kindred, and your father's house, unto a land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great. And you shall be a blessing...and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed'" (Genesis 12:1-3)