

04142026 NEWS SPECIAL Don't miss Lev U'Neshama NOTE at end!

Please Note:

I am now home from having triple bypass surgery. I will attempt to start looking at the news and sending something out in the near future but it will be very abbreviated with only titles and links You can also subscribe to one of the many Israel reviews that are mailed out daily.

Thank you for your patience. rdb

IDF soldier killed as vehicle crashes in south Lebanon; 10 hurt in clash with Hezbollah

Sgt. Maj (res.) Ayal Uriel Bianco, 30, named as deceased, three others injured in apparent accident; separately, battalion commander seriously hurt; terror group keeps up rocket fire on Israel's north

By [Emanuel Fabian](#)

Today, 10:59 am Updated at 10:38 pm

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/idf-reservist-killed-three-injured-as-vehicle-crashes-in-south-lebanon/>

100 bereaved families ask coalition MKs to skip cemetery speeches on upcoming Memorial Day

Relatives reportedly urge lawmakers not to turn their loved ones' final resting place into a political platform, pan government policies as creating more bereavement

By [Tol Staff](#) Today, 11:17 pm

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/100-bereaved-families-ask-coalition-mks-to-skip-cemetery-speeches-on-upcoming-memorial-day/>

With memorial siren wailing, Israel remembers Holocaust victims in shadow of war tensions

State ceremony at Yad Vashem takes place without audience amid fighting with Hezbollah, ceasefire with Iran; March of the Living held in Poland, with most Israelis unable to attend

By [Tol Staff](#) Today, 4:35 pm

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/with-memorial-siren-wailing-israel-remembers-holocaust-victims-in-shadow-of-war-tensions/>

Israeli, Lebanese envoys hold historic summit in Washington to discuss peace deal Hezbollah bombarded Israel as two-hour meeting began; joint statement recognizes 'urgent need' to restore Nov. 2024 ceasefire, as Israel commits to working for 'durable peace'

By [Jacob Magid](#), [Nava Freiberg](#), [Lazar Berman](#)

and [Agencies](#) Today, 10:13 pm

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/israeli-lebanese-envoys-hold-historic-summit-in-washington-to-discuss-peace-deal/>

Three Hezbollah operatives surrender in close-range battle as fighting rages in Bint Jbeil

IDF says Givati Brigade commandos captured 3 Hezbollah operatives, including a Radwan Force member, after close-quarters clash in southern Lebanon while strikes continued on terror targets in Aadshit; battalion commander seriously wounded

[Elisha Ben Kimon](#), [Eitan Glikman](#), [Lior Ben Ari](#) | 15:30

<https://www.ynetnews.com/article/rj2c11m3hwl#autoplay>

Trump: Iran talks may renew in 2 days; Mossad chief: Our mission isn't over until regime falls

US president gives contradictory accounts about speed of progress in negotiations; Barnea says Israel planned for campaign aimed at regime change

'to continue even after strikes end'

By [Lazar Berman](#), [Jacob Magid](#),

[Toi Staff](#) and [Reuters](#) Today, 8:28 pm

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/trump-says-iran-talks-may-renew-mossad-chief-our-mission-isnt-over-until-regime-falls/>

Six ships turned around as part of Strait of Hormuz blockade, US military says

"No ships made it past the US blockade, and six merchant vessels complied with direction from US forces to turn around to re-enter an Iranian port on the Gulf of Oman," CENTCOM said.

By REUTERS APRIL 14, 2026 19:28

<https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/iran-news/article-893011>

Synagogue targeted in first such arson attack in modern N. Macedonian history

Alleged surveillance footage depicted two men climbing a fence before dousing a building with an accelerant. Police identified a fuel canister at the scene and evidence of fire damage.

By [MICHAEL STARR](#), [ALEX WINSTON](#) APRIL 14, 2026 21:06 Updated: APRIL 14, 2026 21:10

<https://www.jpost.com/diaspora/antisemitism/article-893016>

Rising antisemitism signals risk of second Holocaust, WJC Israel President warns at Auschwitz

"I was wrong," said Sylvan Adams, after describing how he once believed antisemitism had been relegated to the margins of modern life.

By [JERUSALEM POST STAFF](#) APRIL 14, 2026 17:16 Updated: APRIL 14, 2026 20:58

<https://www.jpost.com/diaspora/antisemitism/article-892999>

Swastika shown in Polish parliament during March of the Living

A Polish member of parliament described Israel as a "New Third Reich" as the March of the Living was held on Tuesday.

By [HAGAY HACOHEN](#) APRIL 14, 2026 18:07 Updated: APRIL 14, 2026 18:25

<https://www.jpost.com/diaspora/antisemitism/article-893002>

Knesset Finance panel debates transfer of NIS 98 million to haredi schools

The High Court ordered last month that the Finance Committee reconvene and hold a fresh deliberation on the matter before voting to approve the transfer of the funds.

By [KESHET NEEV](#) APRIL 14, 2026 20:46 Updated: APRIL 14, 2026 21:16

<https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/politics-and-diplomacy/article-893015>

Ukraine's drone revolution is transforming the landscape of the ground war - analysis

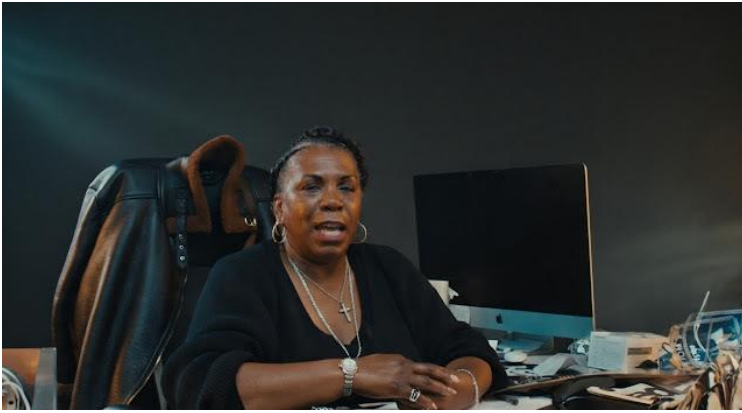
Necessity is the mother of invention, so the saying goes, and Ukraine has had to innovate. Like Israel, Ukraine is an innovator in drones and unmanned ground vehicles.

By [SETH J. FRANTZMAN](#) APRIL 14, 2026 13:07 Updated: APRIL 14, 2026 16:33

<https://www.jpost.com/international/article-892954>

The Homeless Fraud Everyone Saw Coming

Mon, 13 Apr 2026 6:43 PM PST by Daniel Greenfield



In 1997, Gwendolyn Westbrook [was arrested](#) after being accused of embezzling thousands of dollars from the San Francisco port parking lot collections that she had been hired to monitor.

By 2022, she was running a homeless nonprofit that took in \$36 million in grants while operating a tent city that took over a block and filled a neighborhood with violence and human waste..

Now she's under arrest. Again.

Westbrook, the CEO of the United Council of Human Services, is currently accused of misappropriating

\$1.2 million and a lawsuit claims that she told staffers about buying a Tesla for herself, handing out luxury cars to other family members, vacationing in Aruba and driving around for some unstated reason with a "a trunk full of high-priced jewelry".

"I guess it's because I'm a black woman," Westbrook had said of critics. "I think it's racism. They don't want a black woman running this organization."

Westbrook has been indicted by San Francisco DA Brooke Jenkins: also a black woman.

But the real question is why was Westbrook entrusted with millions of dollars and allowed to run a disastrous organization despite her past history at the San Francisco port? The answer lies with the reason why Westbrook got the job as an senior manager assistant at the Port of San Francisco in the first place.

The CEO of the homeless organization had been raised by Idaree Westbrook, an ally of the notorious Willie Brown, the former mayor and operator of the political machine that had turned the likes of Gov. Gavin Newsom and Kamala Harris, his former mistress, into statewide players.

Idaree had founded the San Francisco Black Leadership Forum which her adopted daughter took over and, as a San Francisco Chronicle story mentioned, its "endorsement is considered a key factor in local political races". Gwendolyn Westbrook was forced to step down after the port scandal, but six years later she was running a local soup kitchen named Mother Brown's Kitchen that morphed into the United Council of Human Services. By 2014, San Francisco authorized a homeless shelter with 100 beds next door over the protests of the neighbors.

Locals complained of screaming at all hours of the day and night, vomit, drunkenness, human waste and domestic violence. "They are just very mean people," Westbrook [accused](#), who "just don't want to help other people get one up."

Police shut down a charity gambling event that included [blackjack tables](#) funding the group.

An audit was requested in 2015 and released in 2017 which found that the 'Council' had received \$1.5 million in city funds and had not kept a proper record of where the money was going. Over \$88,000 in expenses couldn't be properly accounted for, the board lacked members and existing board members didn't seem to know what the organization was doing.

But the director of homeless services claimed that, "I feel this is kind of a success story." And the money just went on pouring in.

Then came a 'Safe Overnight Parking Pilot Program' for vagrants to sleep in their cars.

A year later the pandemic hit and Westbrook came up with her greatest idea yet.

Westbrook set up socially distanced' tents for the homeless in a park to create 'safe sleeping villages.' Nobody cares about homeless people," she claimed. "They won't come to their rescue. We had to do something for our community and that's what we came up with."

San Francisco adopted the 'safe sleeping model' at a modest price of [\\$61,000 per tent](#) per year.

By 2021, taxpayers were paying \$16 million a year to keep the homeless in tents. Something that they were already doing on their own. As the Chronicle noted, the annual cost for one of these tents was "2½ times the median rent for a one-bedroom apartment in San Francisco."

A supervisor called the cost "eye-popping" and argued that "we need to understand why that is". Meanwhile the media and activists hailed Westbrook as a wonderfully compassionate genius.

"We're going to fight to keep what we got. We're going to keep our people in this neighborhood, and it doesn't matter who's going to like it," Westbrook warned.

A lot of people didn't like it.

By 2022, the 'safe sleeping site' with its tents, public toilets and showers had [taken over a street](#), blocking food deliveries to stores and intimidating the locals. Business owners couldn't get to their own shops and faced violence and ugliness. One man was threatened with a baseball bat, others complained about human waste, describing having to wash down the sides of their businesses after they were used as bathrooms.

Not to mention the garbage dumping and the drug dealing.

That same year, city auditors took a look at the organization's \$28 million in public funds and forwarded their results to the FBI. Housing was being used for employees of the organization and allegedly for Westbrook's family members. The organization had collected over \$100,000 in rent, even though it wasn't supposed to be collecting rent, and [\\$177,000](#) in credit card payments couldn't be documented. Westbrook meanwhile had been donating money to local politicians.

Including Mayor London Breed.

Westbrook claimed that it was all a "damn lie" and blamed racism. When asked how her original port case had ended, the CEO claimed that she did not remember despite having pled guilty.

But it was San Francisco officials who chose not to remember, to ignore every red flag along the way, to provide millions in funding to a woman who had been accused of embezzlement, to ignore the failed audits and the neighborhood complaints until the toll passed \$1 million.

The millions in the United Council of Human Services case are a drop in the bucket of billions in California. The Los Angeles Homeless Authority couldn't account for [\\$2.5 billion in spending](#). The story was a familiar one with an influential CEO who provided a multi-million dollar contract to her husband, hired her friends and protected Mayor Karen Bass.

The more money California spends on fixing 'homelessness', the worse the problem grows. But the money isn't going to the homeless. Had all the homeless spending gone to the homeless, they could have been buying themselves luxury cars, trunks full of jewels and trips to Aruba.

[Daniel Greenfield](#) is a Shillman Journalism Fellow at the David Horowitz Freedom Center. This article previously appeared at the Center's [Front Page Magazine](#).



BS"D

STEP BY STEP

STEP BY STEP: Good news is that many friends and supporters of Lev U'Neshama (Heart and Soul) donated towards the Education Fund project to provide basic school supplies for actually 350 children within our Lev U'Neshama families.

We are grateful that the school supply part of our effort has been successful.

According to the Israel Population and Statistics office, Tzfat's population is about 40,000, and one third

live at the poverty level. We do what we can so at least the children within our struggling LUN families can get the things they need.

Every week we are providing new sport shoes and eye exams/eyeglasses to the children on our request list. However, previous donations are rapidly dwindling. I am reaching out now before the fund has been emptied and we will have to say "no" to additional requests.

We work with two local shoe merchants who give Lev U'Neshama a discount but they advised us the cost of the shoes has increased. Also, we work with an accredited optician in town who also gives us a discount but his cost is stable.

Lev U'Neshama is an Israeli registered non-profit charity organization, volunteer run, no business expenses whatsoever and every \$ goes into our programs.

Shoes: \$45 per pair regular and \$60 for First Steps, baby shoes.

Eye Exam/Eyeglasses: \$60 per child.

Your support is urgently requested.

Or use the Zelle US to US bank transfer system (contact me at mortsmo@aol.com for bank information).

US Donors may also send checks made payable to

Simcha Smolensky, my son, who is also a volunteer. Send to:

Rabbi Simcha Smolensky, 6739 N Mozart St Chicago IL 60645

Your support will be appreciated.

Yaffa Smolensky