

05032026 NEWS SPECIAL Don't miss Lev U'Neshama NOTE at end!

Please Note:

I am now home from having triple bypass surgery. I will be sending news out 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

Trump said to nix Iran plan that aimed to end war in month, defer nuclear issue US president calls Tehran's offer 'not acceptable'; proposal would see Strait of Hormuz open as US lifts blockade, fighting end in Iran and Lebanon, while floating 15-year enrichment ban

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

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/trump-said-to-nix-iran-plan-that-aimed-to-end-war-in-month-defer-nuclear-issue/>

Israel braces for escalation, doubts US blockade strategy on Iran

Jerusalem is monitoring the talks between Washington and Tehran but believes the chances of a deal are very low because Iran has refused to meet Trump's demand to give up its enriched uranium in the first stage of any agreement

By [Itamar Eichner](#) | 14:46

<https://www.ynetnews.com/article/rjf4bqbabx>

Trump says US to begin escorting ships out of Persian Gulf through Strait of Hormuz

"This process, Project Freedom, will begin Monday morning, Middle East time," US President Donald Trump said in a statement published in Truth Social.

By [TOBIAS HOLCMAN](#) MAY 3, 2026 23:48

<https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/iran-news/article-895004>

Hezbollah MP vows terror group will 'thwart' Lebanon-Israel talks as clashes persist

Hezbollah fires rockets and drones at troops, no injuries caused; IDF razes 80-meter tunnel in south Lebanon, strikes gunmen and seizes arms

By [Emanuel Fabian](#),

[ToI Staff](#) and [AFP](#) Today, 6:26 pm

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/hezbollah-mp-vows-terror-group-will-thwart-lebanon-israel-talks-as-clashes-persist/>

Netanyahu says project to counter drone threat underway, but 'will take time'

Hezbollah's first-person view drones killed a soldier in south Lebanon last week and have caused dozens of injuries

By [Lazar Berman](#)

Today, 4:25 pm

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/netanyahu-says-project-to-counter-drone-threat-underway-but-will-take-time/>

IDF deploys new system against drones in southern Lebanon: 'We're trying everything'

The previously tested Iron Drone Raider System has not shown significant success in the past, but it has been deployed in southern Lebanon; It uses drones that launch a net to trap the hostile explosive-laden drone

By [Elisha Ben Kimon](#) | Updated: 14:30

<https://www.ynetnews.com/article/s12ujzr0wg#autoplay>

Israel approves purchase of 2 more squadrons of F-35I and F-15IA fighter jets from US Defense minister says procurement follows lessons learned from recent Iran war; shipments carrying 6,500 tons of military gear arrive in Israel

By [Emanuel Fabian](#)

Today, 10:51 am Updated at 6:09 pm

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-approves-purchase-of-2-more-squadrons-of-f-35i-and-f-15ia-fighter-jets-from-us/>

Air force expansion propels Israel to a major military power - analysis

Although Israel doesn't have aircraft carriers or the ability to project its air power globally, additional F-35 purchases makes Israel a global leader in the use of the aircraft.

By [SETH J. FRANTZMAN](#) MAY 3, 2026 17:15

<https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/article-894982>

Court extends detention of 2 Gaza flotilla activists accused of Hamas links

Spanish national Saif Abu Keshek, Brazilian Thiago Avila accused of 'assisting the enemy during wartime' and membership in terror group; Spain calls for release of its citizen

By [AFP](#) and [ToI Staff](#) Today, 5:12 pm

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/court-extends-detention-of-2-gaza-flotilla-activists-accused-of-hamas-links/>

Ministers set to discuss renewing Gaza war as Hamas refuses to disarm — report

Arab diplomats say Hamas only willing to discuss giving up its weapons as part of establishing Palestinian state; IDF says at least 3 terrorists killed in Gaza, one wounded approaching troops

By [Emanuel Fabian](#),

[Jacob Magid](#)

and [ToI Staff](#) 2 May 2026, 11:54 pm

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/ministers-set-to-discuss-renewing-gaza-war-as-hamas-refuses-to-disarm-report/>

Most Jewish Mamdani voters support 2-state solution, fear rising antisemitism: poll

Survey indicates mayor's Jewish constituents are not aligned with his anti-Zionism; most respondents link rejection of Israel with antisemitism and oppose anti-Israel Jews

By [Luke Tress](#)

Today, 2:03 pm

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/most-jewish-mamdani-voters-support-2-state-solution-fear-rising-antisemitism-poll/>

Police block roads around Meron ahead of Lag B'Omer as pilgrimage canceled

Amid confusion over wartime restrictions on annual event, access to holy site blocked entirely, with police warning of 'zero tolerance' for violent resistance to guidelines

By [ToI Staff](#) Today, 4:03 pm

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/police-block-roads-around-meron-ahead-of-lag-bomer-as-pilgrimage-canceled/>

Haredi IDF enlistment continues to fall short as army faces manpower crisis

IDF prepared for larger numbers on the day of recruitment for the adapted Haredi tracks, but even fewer than those who registered arrived; 'You are students of Torah, and soon you will be armed with a sword'

[Shilo Freid](#) | 15:27

<https://www.ynetnews.com/article/sysjemrrze>

Man shot dead in Shfaram in 100th violent killing of 2026 in Arab community

Victim named as Hadi Su'ad, 28; report says his father and brother were killed in past year, in apparent gangland feud between families that has claimed the lives of 35 people

By [ToI Staff](#) Today, 10:51 am

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/man-shot-dead-in-shfaram-in-100th-killing-of-2026-in-arab-community/>

UK Jews turning to veterans from elite British units to guard community sites – report Sunday Times says organizations, including CST security group, hiring former members of Royal Marines and Parachute Regiment; institutions dipping into own funds to help cover cost

By [ToI Staff](#) Today, 12:27 pm

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/uk-jews-turning-to-veterans-from-elite-british-units-to-guard-community-sites-report/>

OP ED

Christians in Israel: The View of One Christian IDF Soldier

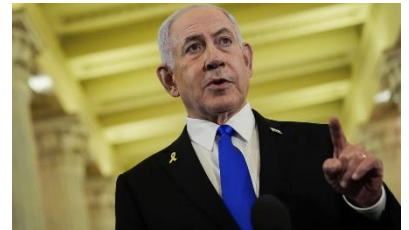


[Jonathan Feldstein](#) | Apr 30, 2026

The opinions expressed by columnists are their own and do not necessarily represent the views of Townhall.com.

AP Photo/Julia Demaree Nikhinson

I was pleased to see Prime Minister Netanyahu make a lovely gesture to Christian Israelis this week by meeting with Christians serving in the IDF. While he was meeting the group in his office, I was meeting with my son's former commanding officer, who is not just a Christian, but a Lebanese-born Christian. I'll refer to him as "N."



Books can — and should — be written about how and why there are Lebanese Christians living in Israel at all, much less serving in the IDF, and doing so as officers. Simply, during the Lebanese Civil War, a Christian military group known as the South Lebanon Army (SLA) took it upon themselves to fight back against the Palestine Liberation Organization and Hezbollah terrorists, for their own safety and the well-being and integrity of Lebanon.

Following the 1982 Lebanon War that saw the PLO forced out of Lebanon, the SLA allied with Israel to maintain security in the largely Christian southern part of their country. When Israel withdrew from Lebanon on May 24, 2000, knowing that those who fought alongside or in parallel with Israeli troops would face consequences, torture, and even death at the hands of Hezbollah, thousands of SLA fighters and their families were brought to Israel for their safety. That's how "N" ended up in Israel, where he considers himself a dual patriot of Israel and Lebanon, seeing no contradiction. Not only that, when he was deployed to Lebanon, he saw himself following the footsteps of his father, who fought to keep Lebanon free from Islamic terror and Christians free within Lebanon.

It is telling to see the picture of the Christian Israeli soldiers standing with the Prime Minister, but wearing masks as if it were still COVID. The reason for this is that Christian Israeli soldiers (and their families) are often harassed, and worse, by Muslim Israeli Arabs. Accordingly, they are given special treatment for their safety.

As an example, "N" and other Christian soldiers I have met have been allowed to leave their bases in civilian clothes, not in uniform, to go home where they could be identified. Some leave their IDF-issued guns on base, and others, like "N," take apart their guns and carry them in an innocuous duffel bag.

In addition to protecting themselves, they also need to be concerned for the well-being of their family still in Lebanon. Hezbollah knows no limits in the degree of people they will threaten or kill because of their association with, or in, Israel.

When speaking about the need to protect himself and his family in Israel, one thing that's clear is that threats emanate mostly from Muslim Arabs. This relates to Christian soldiers, but also to life in general. Within largely Arab communities, Christians are a small minority. Threats are not unusual, albeit shameful.

I've had many conversations about this in the past, hearing personal stories of Christians in Israel increasingly serving in the IDF, breaking with the association of being "Arabs" despite their language and culture being Arabic, and referring to themselves as Christian Israelis.

Leaders of the Christian Israeli community have established organizations not just to promote IDF recruitment, but to provide a range of services to guide and protect them. As an example, I've heard of Christian Israelis having their children expelled from certain (Arab) schools because their father, or another relative, serves in

the IDF.

Recently, I prepared soup to bring to a local base near my home in the Judean Mountains. I walked in with a steaming pot of hot soup, fresh baguettes, and dessert sponsored by the [Genesis 123 Foundation](#) to the glee and appreciation of a group of hungry soldiers. I was pleased to learn that one of the soldiers was a Christian from Nazareth. He shared with me why he's serving in the IDF proudly, and the precautions needed not to jeopardize himself or his family. Like "N," he's allowed to leave base in civilian clothes and not bring his weapon, despite most soldiers carrying them even when they are off base.

"Who are the people who would threaten you?" I asked. "The (Muslim) Arabs," he replied. I knew the answer, but didn't want to presuppose. I wanted to hear it in his own words.

Telling the truth about Christians in Israel becomes especially important with lying pundits like Tucker Carlson and others making a sweeping range of claims that Christians are persecuted in Israel. The inference, even libel, is that Israeli Jews make life for Christians unbearable. The truth is that while there are Israeli Jews who think and act inappropriately toward Christians in Israel, to suggest that this is widespread, or the primary or exclusive cause of persecution, is a complete fabrication. Any Israeli Jew guilty of persecuting or discriminating against a Christian ought to face consequences. But the reality for those who want to know the truth, unlike Tucker and his ilk, who [monetize the lies at the behest of their Qatari Islamist masters](#), actual persecution of Christians in Israel is overwhelmingly from Muslim Arabs.

Don't get me wrong, that's criminal on all levels. It's unacceptable to allow any Israeli — Jew or Arab — to persecute Christians. Where there are crimes committed, the perpetrators need to bear the consequences. Not doing so allows it to happen more.

I have heard cases from Christian Israeli friends talking about how Muslim Arabs threaten and even firebomb their businesses, drive out Christians from their homes and communities, only to find graffiti celebrating their Islamist conquest, homes being squatted in — taken over — by Muslim Arabs. In one particularly egregious and incomprehensible case, I heard of Christian Israeli women being employed by Muslim Arabs in various businesses, and using these as a front to traffic the women. Because of the stigma of shame and honor in the Arab community, the women being trafficked have no place to turn inside their own communities for fear of becoming victims of an "honor killing," or of their "employer."

If Tucker really cared about the truth, and cared about Christian persecution more than as a vehicle to blame Israel while turning a blind eye to the non-monetizable truth of the treatment of Christians across the Islamic world, and wanted to make a difference, he could [donate](#) to support these women and others. I can show him the evidence and the need, and we could make sweeping changes.

"N" and I spoke about the recent destruction of the statue of Jesus in the Lebanese town of Debel. Obviously, he was upset, but he also noticed that over many years in the IDF, he had seen other outrageous behavior from individual soldiers. None of this, he noted, represented the IDF or State of Israel and its values, or how its soldiers are expected to behave. There are many reasons why such behavior might occur, but it's dishonest to blame Israel as a whole.

He also rejected a petition to Israeli President Herzog asking for clemency for the soldiers involved. As a soldier, when someone acts inappropriately, there are consequences. That should not be in question, nor is it the place of Western Christians to forgive and ask clemency for an act against personal religious property that is not theirs. Finally, echoing a Jewish theme of forgiveness, "N" noted that people need to ask for forgiveness themselves and if they do not face direct consequences, they will never learn from their mistakes.

As Christian Israelis become more integrated into Israeli society on the whole, breaking with associations of being "Arabs," and as the opportunity to leverage relationships with Christians in Lebanon for the first time in decades to be a bridge to peace between Israel and Lebanon, the role of Israeli Christians has never been more important. Propagating lies about Christians being persecuted as if it were a state-sponsored policy only lets people who actually persecute Christians off the hook. Turning a blind eye to the actual persecution of Christians in the wider Islamic and Arab world and hyper-focusing on lies about Israeli treatment of Christians with no care for how Christians are persecuted in that world exposes the anti-Israel hatred that makes Christians less safe everywhere. "N" is a cornerstone for a hopeful future and a role model for us all.

This is part one in a series planned to explore the factual status and nature of Christians in Israel.



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