**05/07/2021 NEWS AM**

**Yismechu Hashamayim - Chassidic & Shabbat Songs**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ux8TsKn523o>

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| --- |
| **Let the heavens be glad and the earth rejoice, Let the sea roar and all that fills it** |

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| **"Nothing is easier than spending public money. It does not appear to belong to anybody. The temptation is overwhelming to bestow it on somebody." -- Calvin Coolidge (1872-1933) 30th US President** |

**Read the Prophets & PRAY WITHOUT CEASING!**

**That is the only hope for this nation!**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Please**  **Remember**  **These**  **Folks**  **In**  **Prayer-**  **Check often**  **They**  **Change!** | **Pray that the world would WAKE UP! Time for a worldwide repentance!**  **ALL US soldiers fighting for our freedom around the world**  **Pray for those in our government to repent of their wicked corrupt ways.**  **Pray for AB family – Wife just diagnosed with brain tumor**  **Pray for EL – multiple problems**  **Pray for AS – post knee replacement – some problems and another one scheduled.**  **Pray for TR – abnormal Mammogram having double biopsy – Mastectomy Scheduled**  **Pray for ZH - having trouble with PTSD**  **Pray for LAC – recurrent cancer getting treatment**  **Pray for KL – troubling spiritual situation.**  **Pray for Ella – emotionally disturbed abused child and brother with ? heart problem**  **Pray for JN – Neuro disease**  **Pray for MS – Job issues and change**  **Pray for BB – Severe West Nile Fever –still not mobile- improving!**  **Pray for RBH – cancer recurrence**  **Pray for Felicia – post op problems – continuing**  **Pray for SH and family – lady’s husband passed away and she is in Nursing home. Not doing well.**  **Pray for MP – Very complex problems**  **Pray that The Holy One will lead you in Your preparations for handling the world problems. – Have YOU made any preparations**? |

**Genesis 27:21And Isaac said to Jacob, Come near now and let me feel you, whether then you *are* my son Esau, or not. 22And Jacob came near to his father Isaac. And he felt him, and he said, The voice *is* the voice of Jacob and the hands *are* Esau's hands. 23And he did not know him, because his hands were like the hairy hands of his brother Esau. And he blessed him.**

[](https://static.timesofisrael.com/www/uploads/2021/05/E0xL5uFWQAIoXqu.jpg)**Police say cell opened fire toward military base; 2 attackers killed, 1 injured**

***No reports of Israeli injuries in attack on site straddling West Bank border; investigation underway to see if attackers breached fence; assault comes amid high tensions***

*By* [*Emanuel Fabian*](https://www.timesofisrael.com/writers/emanuel-fabian/) *Today, 11:24 am*

***A makeshift 'carlo' gun is seen on the floor following the attempted shooting attack in the northern West Bank on April 7, 2021. (courtesy)***

**Three Palestinians opened fire toward a Border Police base in Israeli territory near the northern West Bank on Friday, with two of the attackers killed and one wounded,** when officers on the scene returned fire.

**There were no reports of Israeli injuries in the incident at the gate of the Salem Border Police base, which straddles the West Bank bor**der.

According to the Kan public broadcaster, an investigation was underway to determine if the attackers reached the base through a breach in the border fence.

“The terrorists fired at the gate of the base. Border Police officers and an IDF soldier responded by firing and neutralizing the three terrorists,” police said in a statement.

**The injured attacker was taken by the IDF to the Emek Medical Center near Afula fo**r treatment.

Aside from the makeshift Carlo-style submachine gun each assailant used, knives were found on each of their bodies, media reports said.

**The attack came amid rising tensions in Jerusalem, the West Bank and along the Gaza border. Police** [**bolstered**](https://www.timesofisrael.com/amid-tensions-police-bolster-presence-in-jerusalem-ahead-of-ramadan-prayers/) **their presence in Jerusalem on Friday ahead of prayers to mark the final weekend of** Ramadan.

 It came a day after the [funeral](https://www.timesofisrael.com/at-least-we-had-time-to-say-goodbye-hundreds-at-terror-victims-funeral/) of Yehuda Guetta, a 19-year-old student who was shot in the head in a drive-by shooting attack at Tapuah junction in the West Bank earlier this week, and who [died of his injuries](https://www.timesofisrael.com/student-shot-in-west-bank-drive-by-shooting-dies-of-injuries/) on Wednesday night.

***Police make preparations amid tensions in Jerusalem for the last weekend of Ramadan, May 7, 2021 (Israel Police***)

Additionally, tensions are high in the East Jerusalem neighborhood of Sheikh Jarrah where there have been ongoing protests over the last week as dozens of Palestinians are [at risk of being evicted](https://www.timesofisrael.com/in-east-jerusalems-sheikh-jarrah-palestinians-brace-for-battle-over-evictions/) following a long legal battle with right-wing Jewish Israelis trying to acquire property in the neighborhood, just north of Jerusalem’s Old City.

**The clashes have raised fears of sparking a wider conflict w**ith the Hamas terror group and other factions in Gaza, [warning of renewed violence](https://www.timesofisrael.com/hamas-terror-chief-threatens-israel-over-east-jerusalem-evictions/) over the issue. **MORE -**<https://www.timesofisrael.com/police-say-cell-opened-fire-toward-military-base-2-attackers-killed-1-hurt/>

**15 arrested in fresh clashes in East Jerusalem’s Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood**

***Israeli opens fire after car set ablaze during late-night violence; Israelis pepper spray festive Ramadan meal gathering as tensions flare over upcoming evictions***

*By* [*TOI staff*](https://www.timesofisrael.com/writers/times-of-israel-staff/) *and* [*Agencies*](https://www.timesofisrael.com/writers/agencies/) *Today, 12:31 am*

[](https://static.timesofisrael.com/www/uploads/2021/05/F210506OF21.jpg)

***Firefighters put out a car of Jewish family that was set on fire in the East Jerusalem neighborhood of Sheikh Jarrah on May 6, 2021. (Olivier Fitoussi/Flash90)***

**Palestinians and Israelis hurled rocks and chairs at each other in the tense East Jerusalem neighborhood of Sheikh Jarrah on Thursday before Israeli police moved in to separate th**em, arresting at least 15 people, all of them Palestinians. In one incident, a Jewish Israeli man fired into the air after a vehicle was set on fire.

**Tensions have flared in Sheikh Jarrah over the last week where dozens of Palestinians are** [**at risk of being evicted**](https://www.timesofisrael.com/in-east-jerusalems-sheikh-jarrah-palestinians-brace-for-battle-over-evictions/) **following a long legal battle with right-wing Jewish Israeli**s trying to acquire property in the neighborhood, which is just north of Jerusalem’s Old City.

The tensions have raised fears of sparking a wider conflict, with the Hamas terror group in Gaza [warning of renewed violence](https://www.timesofisrael.com/hamas-terror-chief-threatens-israel-over-east-jerusalem-evictions/) over the issue.

**Pro-Palestinian protesters have been meeting for nightly Iftars** — the meal held after breaking the daylong fast during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan — at long tables set up outside. On Thursday, extreme-right MK Itamar Ben-Gvir set up a makeshift parliamentary office across the street from the Iftar meal.

Video circulating online later showed protesters on both sides hurling rocks and chairs at each other, and Palestinians tearing down the awning, before police moved in. There were no reports of serious injuries.

תיעוד: הקטטה האלימה בין יהודים לערבים בשייח ג'ראח בירושלים[@moyshis](https://twitter.com/moyshis?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [pic.twitter.com/tmRdzpCr4P](https://t.co/tmRdzpCr4P)

— כאן חדשות (@kann\_news) [May 6, 2021](https://twitter.com/kann_news/status/1390345363178016786?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Footage also showed an Israeli spraying what appears to be pepper spray at the Palestinian Iftar table, apparently leading to the violent clash.

זה התחיל ככה מתנחים מרססים גז לאנשים יושבים לשברת התסום [pic.twitter.com/Nr1yJOehGu](https://t.co/Nr1yJOehGu)

— חדשות ממגזר הערבי ירושלים اخبار مقدسية (@Essawi2050) [May 6, 2021](https://twitter.com/Essawi2050/status/1390392324925108224?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

“Police and border police are operating to prevent friction between the sides,” the police said in a statement. “At this stage, the event is under control.” It said 15 people were arrested for disturbing the peace and attacking police.

Later on Thursday, a number of vehicles were damaged by Palestinian protestors’ stone-throwing, and one car was set on fire. **MORE -**<https://www.timesofisrael.com/renewed-clashes-in-east-jerusalems-sheikh-jarrah-neighborhood-as-tensions-flare/>

**PM said to repeatedly dismiss US objections to building beyond Green Line**

***Senior Biden officials conveyed disapproval of East Jerusalem, West Bank construction 3 times in past month; in one exchange, Netanyahu responded, ‘Jerusalem is not a settlement’***

*By* [*Jacob Magid*](https://www.timesofisrael.com/writers/jacob-magid/) *Today, 11:11 pm*

[](https://static.timesofisrael.com/www/uploads/2021/05/AP21125758765910.jpg)

***Israeli police stand guard in front of a Palestinian home occupied by settlers during a protest on the eve of a court verdict that may forcibly evict Palestinian families from their homes in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood of East Jerusalem on May 5, 2021. (AP Photo/Maya Alleruzzo)***

**Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has repeatedly dismissed objections made by the Biden administration in the past month over Israeli expansion in East Jerusalem and the West Bank, according to a Thursday rep**ort.

**Three times since the beginning of April, US officials reached out to the Prime Minister’s Office to express their opposition to Israeli steps beyond the Green Line,** Channel 12 reported.

The first appeal came early last month after an Israeli planning committee [advanced](https://www.timesofisrael.com/in-1st-since-biden-inauguration-israel-advances-540-new-east-jerusalem-homes/) 540 new units in the East Jerusalem neighborhood of Har Homa, the first Jewish construction in the city’s majority-Palestinian eastern part since US President Joe Biden’s inauguration.

**The objection was issued by the chargé d’affaires of the US embassy in Jerusalem, Jonathan Shrie**r. Netanyahu dismissed the concern, according to the report.



***US National security adviser Jake Sullivan speaks during a press briefing at the White House on Feb. 4, 2021, in Washington. (AP/Evan Vucci)***

**Later that month, the more senior US National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan raised similar concerns over both construction approvals in East Jerusalem as well as in the West Ban**k. Netanyahu retorted that “Jerusalem is not a settlement, but the capital of Israel,” the report said, not specifying how the premier objected to US concerns over building in the West Bank.

**A third message by the US was sent on Wednesday expressing concerns in the East Jerusalem neighborhood of Sheikh Jarra**h, where ultranationalist Jewish groups are seeking to evict dozens of Palestinians from their homes.

In that exchange as well, American concerns were said to have been dismissed.

**The issue of Israeli construction in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, which Palestinians view as integral parts of their future state, was expected to be a point of contention between Jerusalem and the Biden administra**tion, which backs a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

However, Biden has been seen as less forceful in his criticism of the issue than some of his more progressive colleagues and those close to the administration say Washington is hoping to avoid public spats with Jerusalem on this and other issues. Such quarrels were rather common when Biden was vice president under Barack Obama, who prioritized the Israeli-Palestinian issue far more than the current president.

**But as the Biden administration vows to uphold a “rules-based international order,” it will likely come under increasing pressure from more progressive Democrats to come down harder on Israel over what they view as violations of international law being carrie**d out beyond the Green Line.

At least six Democrats in the House published tweets on Wednesday against the looming Sheikh Jarrah evictions and police crackdowns against protests over those rulings.

“The Israeli police violence against Palestinians in Sheikh Jarrah is completely unacceptable,” wrote Wisconsin Rep. Mark Pocan.

“The Israeli military is forcing hundreds of Palestinians out of their homes. US taxpayer dollars should not fund annexation of Palestinian land or destruction of Palestinian homes,” he added, apparently referring to legislation introduced by Rep. Betty McCollum which seeks to prohibit US aid from going toward arrests of Palestinian minors, demolition of Palestinian homes or the furthering of annexation of West Bank land.

**The bill is not expected to pass, nor even come to a vote, but has sparked massive backlash from mainstream pro-Israel gr**oups.

The Supreme Court will hold a discussion next Monday on an appeal by four Palestinian families — more than 70 people — against their evictions in Sheikh Jarrah.

**According to Ir Amim, a left-wing human rights group focusing on Jerusalem, around 200 families in East Jerusalem are under similar threat, with cases slowly moving through administrative bodies and Israeli courts. Around 70 of those families live in Sheikh Jarr**ah.

**The evictions are based in part on a 1970 Israeli law that allows Jews to reclaim East Jerusalem land owned by Jews before 1948. No similar law exists for Palestinians** who lost their homes in what is now Israel during the 1948 war and fled to what was then Jordanian-controlled territory.

Joining the US in its opposition to building plans in Har Homa on Thursday were France, Germany, Italy, Spain and Britain.

The **five European countries issued a joint statement urging Israel “to reverse its decision** to advance the construction of 540 settlement units in the Har Homa E area of the occupied West Bank, and to cease its policy of settlement expansion across the Occupied Palestinian Territories.”

**“If implemented, the decision to advance settlements in Har Homa, between East Jerusalem and Bethlehem, will cause further damage to the prospects for a viable Palestinian State, with Jerusalem as the capital of both Israel and a Palestinian State,” they ad**ded.

The Har Homa construction has been long-promised but long-delayed. The most recent push to build more units in Har Homa began last February, when Netanyahu announced on the eve of the March 2020 elections that he had lifted restrictions on construction there, sparking controversy. **MORE -** <https://www.timesofisrael.com/pm-said-to-repeatedly-dismiss-us-objections-to-building-beyond-green-line/>

**Joint team from police, internal affairs to probe Meron disaster**

***AG announces investigation arrangements a week after crush that killed 45; authorities yet to begin collecting testimonies***

*By* [*TOI staff*](https://www.timesofisrael.com/writers/times-of-israel-staff/) *Today, 8:28 pm*

**Attorney General Avichai Mandelblit announced on Thursday that a joint investigative team from the Israel Police and the Justice Ministry’s Police Internal Investigations Department will lead the probe into the deadly crush at Lag B’Omer celebrations at Mount Meron, in which 45 people were ki**lled.

**In a statement, Mandelblit said the team will also be assisted by the State Attorney’s Office,** including the stand-in state prosecutor, Amit Aisman.

**“It is difficult to overstate the severity of the disaster that occurred on Mount Meron and therefore everything must be done to strive to discover the truth through an effective and efficient investigation,**” Mandelblit said.

**As of now, a week after the disaster, those involved in the incident have not yet been summoned for questioning, and no testimonies have bee**n collected.

The disaster which began at 1 a.m. on Friday morning near the gravesite of the second-century sage Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai, took place when huge crowds of ultra-Orthodox pilgrims were making their way along a narrow walkway with a slippery metal flooring that ended in flights of stairs. People began to slip and fall, others fell upon them, and a calamitous crush ensued.

Forty-five people died and more than 150 were hurt. **MORE -** <https://www.timesofisrael.com/joint-team-from-police-internal-affairs-to-probe-meron-disaster/>

**‘Israel is hurting’: Lapid says coalition he’ll form will heal internal strife**

***In first speech since being tasked with forming government, Yesh Atid chief declares, ‘We’ve had enough of anger and hate,’ says will work to ‘start something different’***

*By* [*Raoul Wootliff*](https://www.timesofisrael.com/writers/raoul-wootliff/) *Today, 10:19 pm*

**In his first speech since being tasked by President Reuven Rivlin with forming a new government, Yesh Atid leader Yair Lapid on Wednesday presented the coalition he hopes to build as an opportunity to heal Israel’s internal strife, which he blamed on years of backhanded political de**alings.

**“I told the president, an Israeli unity government isn’t a compromise, it’s a goal,” Lapid said during his prime-time address, referring to his efforts to put together a government made up of parties spanning the political spe**ctrum.

**Rivlin announced Wednesday that he had tasked Lapid with forming Israel’s next government after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu a day earlier acknowledged he had failed** to build a coalition in the 28 days he was given to do so.

**While acknowledging the difficulties in forming a unity government, Lapid said: “It will have a simple goal: to take the country out of this crisis — the coronavirus crisis, the economic crisis, the political crisis and mostly the crisis within us, within the people** of Israel.”

**He said “internal arguments” are making it more difficult to address security challeng**es and to improve the economy and education system.

**“If we manage to form a government then it will also treat the opposition differently. We won’t attack or bel**ittle. We’ll respect them and we will deal with the challenges faced by those who didn’t vote for us,” he added.

[](https://static.timesofisrael.com/www/uploads/2021/05/AP21126647311689-e1620324798991.jpg)

***Yesh Atid leader Yair Lapid, speaks during a news conference in Tel Aviv, May 6, 2021/ (AP Photo/Oded Balilty)***

**Lapid and Yamina leader Naftali Bennett have been negotiating coalition terms in recent weeks, reportedly closing in on agreements in many areas, with the Yesh Atid leader saying he is ready to let Bennett serve first as prime minister** in a rotation agreement.

**Referring to Netanyahu’s Wednesday and Thursday speeches slamming his political rivals, Lapid said “that’s exactly what we want to ch**ange.”

“We’ve had enough of anger and of hate. We’ve argued enough. Israel is hurting and it needs quiet, it needs unity and it really needs a functioning government,” he said. “Israel is tired of fighting. Israeli society is looking to its politicians and asking when they will stop arguing and start working? Our answer is now.”

Speaking at a Likud faction meeting Thursday afternoon, the prime minister lashed out at Bennett for considering joining with Lapid. “Naftali Bennett is trying to hide the truth. This will be a left-wing government, a weak government that bows its head in the face of international pressure,” Netanyahu said.

**Noting Bennett’s remark Wednesday that a unity government would prevent fifth elections, Lapid said that was only part of the reason i**t’s needed.

“The main aim, the main challenge, is to start something different – cleaner, decent and which actually works,” he insisted.

**Referring to the disparate mix of parties that would be part of the unity government, Lapid acknowledged they are “different people with different views but the fact that someone doesn’t agree with us doesn’t make them an en**emy.”

**In addition to resolving their own differences, Lapid and Bennett must muster a majority coalition from an unlikely mixture of right-wing, left-wing and centrist parties as well as the Islamist Ra’am party,** which complicates matters and raises the question of how stable such a government would be to begin with. And they must placate their own party members, who will likely struggle to reconcile their views with their emerging coalition partners.

Referring to Bennett’s pledge before the March 23 election that he would not allow the formation of a rotation government with Lapid — a promise that Yamina MK Amichai Chikli said on Wednesday he would not go back on and [would therefore vote against such a government](https://www.timesofisrael.com/yamina-mk-doubles-down-on-opposing-coalition-with-the-left/) — the Yesh Atid head said he wasn’t looking to focus on the past.

“We’re not here to fight about the past but for the future. Whoever wants to fight and be angry can do that. We prefer to get to work for the Israeli public,” he said.

Asked following the speech if he was worried about any further lawmakers in Yamina deciding to oppose a prospective unity government, Lapid said that “it appears to me the situation is under control.”

**A number of Yamina Knesset members said Thursday that** [**Netanyahu has been attempting to persuade them to defect from the party**](https://www.timesofisrael.com/declaring-support-for-bennett-yamina-mks-allege-strong-likud-pressure-to-defect/) **and declare their opposition to entering a coalition with left-wing fa**ctions.



***Yamina chief Naftali Bennett speaks during a press conference at the Knesset on May 5, 2021. (Yonatan Sindel/Flash90)***

**After a meeting Thursday afternoon with the leaders of the ultra-Orthodox parties supporting him, Netanyahu and the right-wing bloc called on Bennett and the party’s lawmakers “to keep their promises to the voter and not join a government with Yair Lapid, Merav Michaeli** and Nitzan Horowitz,” the heads of the Yesh Atid, Labor and Meretz parties, respectively.

Likud blames Bennett and his party for Netanyahu’s failure, claiming Yamina did not agree to join with Netanyahu and his bloc of right and religious parties. **MORE -** <https://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-is-hurting-lapid-says-coalition-hell-form-will-heal-internal-strife/> **[This all sounds just wonderful but also sounds very familiar to something that we in the US heard about 3 months ago with the advent of the “Bi-dumb” group who kept talking about unity and resolving the problems and the discord but then you can look around you and see what happened to that – NOTHING. – rdb]**

**After outcry, government reaches compromise on funding for wounded veteran care**

***As Defense Ministry seeks to overhaul its much-criticized Rehabilitation Department, cabinet expected to approve NIS 300 million measure Friday or Sunday***

*By* [*Judah Ari Gross*](https://www.timesofisrael.com/writers/judah-ari-gross/) *Today, 7:48 pm*

**The government announced on Thursday that it reached a compromise on a Defense Ministry plan to reform treatment for wounded veterans, after a quarrel over funding halted the proposal earlier thi**s week.

**According to the Defense Ministry, the matter will be brought before the cabinet on Friday morning or, if that is not possible, on Sunday, where it is expected to receive** the necessary approvals.

**The Defense Ministry’s treatment for wounded veterans has come under intense scrutiny in recent weeks after Itzik Saidyan, a former soldier suffering from post-traumatic stress disord**er, set himself on fire outside the ministry’s Rehabilitation Department offices in the town of Petah Tikva last month. He remains in serious condition with burns covering his entire body.

Veterans and their advocates have long-maligned the department as providing woefully insufficient care and subjecting applicants to a bureaucracy so convoluted and torturous that many were required to hire expensive lawyers to help them navigate the system. After Saidyan’s self-immolation and the accompanying outcry, the Defense Ministry sought to implement reforms that it had for years been considering but had not had the political will to carry out.

**That plan, dubbed One Soul, was released last month and is meant to be a major overhaul of the system, greatly increasing the number of staff in the department, making the process of being recognized as a wounded veteran easier and faster, and specifically improving the treatment for former soldiers with P**TSD.

Some aspects of the plan required only approvals from within the Defense Ministry, while others required cabinet consent or new legislation to alter certain protocols and designations.

However, after initial progress was made toward its implementation, the advancement of the One Soul plan was held up earlier this week because of a fight over its funding between Defense Minister Benny Gantz and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Finance Minister Israel Katz.

That prompted large protests by veterans groups, particularly the Organization of Wounded Veterans, which played a key role in formulating the plan.

After three days of continued negotiation, Gantz and Netanyahu announced that a compromise had been reached and that the plan would continue, but with slight changes.

“I have approved thousands of operations, attack plans and reforms in the IDF and defense establishment and yet this is one of the most important and most moral efforts I have led, and I will continue to lead the implementation of this reform and provide proper care for IDF veterans,” Gantz said in a statement. **MORE -**<https://www.timesofisrael.com/after-outcry-government-reaches-compromise-on-funding-for-wounded-veteran-care/>

**Netanyahus sue ex-PM Olmert for calling them mentally ill**

***Defamation suit seeks NIS 837,000 in damages; former premier shrugs it off as ‘amusing’***

*By* [*TOI staff*](https://www.timesofisrael.com/writers/times-of-israel-staff/) *Today, 9:31 pm*

**Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s family has filed a defamation suit against his predecessor Ehud Olmert for calling the premier, his wife Sara and eldest son Yair mentally ill in inter**views.

**The suit seeks NIS 837,000 (some $257,000) in damages for Olmert’s “obsessive efforts to harm their good name in public, out of jealously and deep frustra**tion.” **[Harm their good name? Wait a minute. I do believe that there have been significant law suits with Sara and now Bibi is in 3 major cases. Not really sure how good their name really is any more. – rdb]**

In two separate interviews, one with Channel 12 and another with the news site Democrat TV, Olmert leveled criticism at Netanyahu and said that “what is irreparable is the mental illness of the prime minister, his wife and his son,” referring to Yair Netanyahu.

“They are in need of psychiatric treatment,” Olmert told the news site in April.

In response to the lawsuit, the former prime minister said he was “amused by the band of wackos” the Maariv daily reported.

Olmert preceded Netanyahu as Israel’s prime minister, ending his term before being formally indicted on corruption charges. He was convicted of fraud in 2014 and served 16 months of a 27-month prison sentence. **MORE -**<https://www.timesofisrael.com/netanyahus-sue-ex-pm-olmert-for-calling-them-mentally-ill/>

**With virus cases down, Israel prepares to close drive-in testing centers**

***Health Ministry says it will shut down COVID testing facilities operated by Home Front Command despite objections from the IDF; Health Ministry is also working to scrap free coronavirus testing for inoculated, recovered***

*Adir Yanko | Published: 05.06.21 , 17:44*

 **As new coronavirus cases continue to decline, Israel is preparing to close down its drive in testing centers around the country, health officials said T**hursday.

The Health Ministry is set to shut down mobile COVID testing facilities operated by the IDF's Home Front Command despite some officials expressing opposition to the move.

***A drive-in testing facility in Jerusalem (Photo: AFP)***

**The decline in Israel's number of active and daily COVID cases looks to be the result of the country's fast-paced vaccination drive, which inoculated over 5.4 million Israeli**s with the first dose of the vaccine, and over 5 million with both shots.

**Coronavirus czar Prof. Nachman Ash also voiced his support for the closure of the drive-in centers du**ring a recent meeting of officials tasked with battling coronavirus. "I am asking the Home Front Command to prepare a plan in the coming weeks that would see the drive-in complexes reduce their activity until their final closure.”

**The IDF, meanwhile, opposed the decision. “Closing the drive-in centers will save little [money], and in practice will likely only impair our operational flexibility,” said the chief of the IDF’s coronavirus taskforce,** Col. Reli Margalit.

**“The drive-ins conduct about 6,000 tests every day. In addition, the interns working there are necessary because they are the ones deciphering tests** over the weekend since the health funds are closed,” Margalit added.

**The IDF Spokesperson's Unit said: "Along with the continued sampling carried out by the IDF at Ben Gurion Airport, in schools and in response to outbreaks, the Health Ministry is considering a reduction in mobile facilitie**s. When the decision is made, the locations of the testing stations and their hours of operation will be announced."

**Meanwhile, the Health Ministry is also working to scrap free coronavirus testin**g for those who have recovered or have been fully inoculated. "Today, a large portion of the tests performed are unnecessary and are performed for leisure and not medical needs," said a senior official.

“There is certainly no need for the state to fund them. It is time to stop these tests, close the facilities that are no longer needed and perform tests that are only medically needed in the health funds only."

Head of public health services, Dr. Sharon Alroy-Preis for her part, opposed the move. "The whole point is to do extensive tests for anyone who wants to, so that we do not find ourselves with a raging pandemic in a few months. If we look only at the money we will not be able to control the infection rate in the future.” <https://www.ynetnews.com/health_science/article/B12hZ00WO00>

**Israel’s COVID vaccine unlikely to hit market until Q1 2023**

***Made-in-Israel vaccines not expected before 2026.***

*By* [*MAAYAN JAFFE-HOFFMAN*](https://www.jpost.com/author/maayan-jaffe-hoffman) *MAY 6, 2021 20:29*

**The Israel Institute for Biological Research (IIBR) is in negotiations with Jerusalem’s BiondVax Pharmaceuticals Ltd. to manufacture its coronavirus vaccine, The Jerusalem Post has lear**ned.

**However, due to delays both with the clinical trials and signing a contract to enable the technology transfer, it is unlikely that any quantity of BriLife vaccines will be available for market distribution until the first quarter of 202**3.

The Defense Ministry said that it could not provide details on commercial contracts and would not confirm the timeline.

**BiondVax describes itself on its website as a “biopharmaceutical company focused on developing, manufacturing and ultimately commercializing products for the prevention and treatment of infectious diseases and related illnes**ses.” It is traded on Nasdaq.

**Although BiondVax CEO Amir Reichman declined to comment on any negotiations between his company and any other research institutions, he told the Post that if a tech transfer would occur between IIBR and a potential licensee, “it would take several months and up to a year to manage** before commercial batches would be available to the market.”

***Amir Reichman, CEO of BiondVax. (PR)***

**A source who is connected to the project told the Post that negotiations for commercialization of BriLife have been ongoing for several months but that the Israeli government was holding out in hopes it would secure a larger bidder or better t**erms.

**So far, Israel has invested around NIS 175 million in the development of BriLife, according to the Defense Ministry**. However, it is unclear how much of this investment was used directly for the development of BriLife and how much was used refurbishing IIBR’s facility in Ness Ziona. IIBR has said it has the ability to produce 15 million doses.

**Vaccine developers, such as BioNTech whose technology is being used by Pfizer for its coronavirus vaccine, usually make their money through royal**ties.

In “normal times” a developer can wait until the end of its Phase II clinical trial to start contracting and run Phase III in parallel with a tech transfer to a licensee. However, since a transfer can take more than a year to complete, IIBR’s delaying a manufacturing contract could mean its vaccine hits the market too late to be useful.

Israel has already inoculated the majority of its eligible citizens and purchased enough vaccines to last until the end of 2022. As such, Prof. Yossi Caraco, head of the Clinical Pharmacology Unit at Hadassah, told the *Post* that BriLife “can be used to vaccinate other countries that need a vaccine.” **MORE -** <https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/israels-covid-vaccine-unlikely-to-hit-market-until-q1-2023-667450>

**European Union recommends reopening to Israeli tourists**

***European Council adds Jewish state to list of countries whose citizens should not face entry restrictions to the bloc’s 27 countries due to COVID***

*By* [*TOI staff*](https://www.timesofisrael.com/writers/times-of-israel-staff/) *and* [*Agencies*](https://www.timesofisrael.com/writers/agencies/) *Today, 2:51 pm*

**Israel has been added to a European Union safe list for countries that the EU says should be allowed to freely travel to Europe for tourism, a statement said on Thursd**ay.

**The recommendation is not legally binding, and local authorities in member states of the 27-country bloc are responsible for implementing it, while having the right to decide which restrictions they want to** ease.

**The European Union has imposed a blanket ban on non-essential travel during the pandemic, t**hough with exceptions for a few individual countries, including Australia, South Korea and Thailand. Other recommended exceptions to the EU travel ban include New Zealand, Rwanda, Singapore and, as of Thursday, Israel.

Israel has since late December undertaken the most rapid per capita vaccination campaign in the world. As of mid-April, nearly five million people had received two doses of the Pfizer/BioNTech jab in Israel, more than 70 percent of the population, the threshold commonly seen for herd immunity. Israel has brought its daily virus caseload down from several thousand to a few dozen.

**Britain has not yet been added to the list by EU member states. Its vaccination drive has seen 65 percent of adults receive a first** jab of the vaccine.

“Following a review under the recommendation on the gradual lifting of the temporary restrictions on non-essential travel into **the EU, the Council updated the list of countries for which travel restrictions** should be lifted to add Israel,” the [European Council said](https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2021/05/06/travel-restrictions-council-adds-israel-to-the-list-of-countries-for-which-member-states-should-gradually-lift-restrictions-on-non-essential-travel/) in a statement.

China is to be added subject to confirmation of reciprocity, the statement said.

The move came after last week the European Commission [presented a proposal](https://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-expected-to-be-on-list-of-countries-to-be-granted-unlimited-travel-to-eu/) to further lift restrictions on nonessential travel from the listed countries due to the developing epidemiological situation and vaccination campaigns.

It suggested countries should allow travelers into the EU if they have been vaccinated with serums approved for use in the region. Member states could also individually decide to accept travelers immunized with vaccines listed by WHO for emergency use.

The Commission also proposed to raise the threshold related to the number of new COVID-19 cases used to determine the list of countries from which all travel should be permitted.

Travel to the EU is currently extremely limited except for a handful of countries with low coronavirus infection rates. But with the summer season looming, the European Commission hopes that the new recommendations will help dramatically expand that list. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/eu-recommends-easing-travel-limits-from-israel-to-member-states/>

**Israelis abroad angered by new 'forced' passports for their children**

***Many Israelis have been waiting for a year or longer due to the pandemic to visit family in Israel, and were hoping to bring their children this summer.***

*By AMY KLEIN   MAY 6, 2021 17:21*

NEW YORK – **Israelis living abroad who want to** [**travel**](https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/delta-to-increase-new-york-israel-flights-to-three-per-day-667274?_ga=2.240952007.554122765.1620223020-69175615.1556441868) **home with their children must commit to nationalizing them or get them Israeli passports, according to new guidelines from the Interior Ministry**.

**Many Israelis have been waiting for a year or longer due to the pandemic to visit family in Israel, and were hoping to bring their children to Israel this summer. But the new regulations may put those plans on hold for some, who bristle at the new requirem**ents.

**Previously, during the pandemic, parents had to apply for special dispensation to bring their children without Israeli** [**passports**](https://www.jpost.com/breaking-news/coronavirus-green-pass-extended-to-2021-no-need-of-third-shot-beforehand-667269) **into Israel (as did any foreigner who wanted to get into Israel). But as of May 2, according to the new guidelines, parents must commit to getting their child an Israeli passport within 60 day**s of their return trip.

“I was shocked when I saw that under the law, I have to apply for Israeli citizenship for my daughter in order for her to visit Israel,” says Charlotte Cohn, an Israeli citizen living in New York for the last 20 years. She was hoping to bring her 15-year-old-daughter to Israel for a family celebration and to visit her elderly mother. They’ve visited many times before and never had any demands to nationalize their daughter.

“It bothers me – it takes time, effort and money. It seems arbitrary,” she said.

**MANY ISRAELI parents are so upset and confused about what they call “enforced citizenship,” they’ve taken to WhatsApp and then Facebook Groups** (when WhatsApp reached its limit). This week, a new Facebook group was formed called (in Hebrew) “[Israelis in Israel – The Effort to Change – Admission of Minors Without Passports](https://www.facebook.com/groups/303004477845062/?ref=share%5d)” and has already garnered 1,500 members.

Some are Israeli parents married to non-Israelis who do not want their children to get passports; others are single parents who cannot take their children to Israel because their (non-Israeli) spouse will not give permission if the cost is an Israeli passport. Others simply do not have the time or energy to get all the documents together in time for a summer trip.

**“Look, we’re not talking about a leisure trip,” said Roman Pogorelov, one of the group admins. “We’re talking about reuniting families; grandparents who never met their grandchildr**en; people seeing old or dying relatives.”

He said the purpose of the burgeoning group is to help people understand the new guidelines and help them prepare for their trip, as well as pressure the Israeli government to change the new guidelines.

**“I think what will make them do something is when they realize that people don’t accept this coercion.** And when people flood the embassies with complaints and problems, it will prove to them they cannot infringe on our rights – maybe then something will change,” Sophie Matzner wrote in the group.

Some parents frame this as a civil rights issue, and talk about wanting to give their children the option to decide if they want citizenship. Others fear their young children will have difficulty entering and leaving the country when they are teenagers, or have a problem with the army. A few Israeli parents even talk about wanting to give up their own citizenship for this.

**BUT THE Interior Ministry spokeswoman says this is not a new law: “Any child born to an Israeli parent is Israe**li,” Sabine Hadad told The Jerusalem Post, citing paragraph 4 of the Law of Citizenship and Entry into Israel. “While many Israeli parents in the past have not registered their children or taken out passports, they are still considered Israeli according to the law.”

**But Israelis abroad say this hasn’t been enforced for decades. “I’ve been coming to Israel for years with my two children and have never had problems that they’re on American passports**,” said Shiri (who preferred not to give her last name).

Hadad says it’s actually an “easement” of the previous restrictions, allowing people to sign a declaration before travel, rather than complete the entire application.

According to the consulate guidelines, three weeks before travel, a parent must present the parent’s and child’s passports, the child’s birth certificate (preferably notarized), a “fruit of your loins” proof (hospital discharge letter or delivery doctor), which could also be difficult for adoptive parents, step-parents and parents who used surrogates.

They’re asking me for my religion and nationality and Hebrew birthday – What are we, Iran?” said one member of the group.

**Pogorelov said that local consulates are overrun right now with all these requests. “They can’t deal with the dozens of requests flooding in right now,”** he said, noting that people may not get approvals in time. **MORE -** <https://www.jpost.com/diaspora/israelis-abroad-angered-by-new-forced-passports-for-their-children-667402>  **[This is really unfortunate bureaucratic bilge. Are they trying to pad the census numbers of Israelis by requiring the Israeli passports for all kids even if they kid doesn’t live there and perhaps never has and won’t? – rdb]**

**Israeli spymaster visits Bahrain to discuss Mideast security**

***Bahraini state-run news agency in a brief statement says Yossi Cohen met with Bahrain’s heads of national intelligence and strategic security to discuss 'the most prominent security topics' as tensions with Iran heighten***

*Associated Press | Published: 05.06.21 , 22:22*

**The head of the Mossad intelligence agency visited Bahrain for talks with officials on Thursda**y, the Bahrain state-run news agency reported.

**The trip came amid heightened tensions in the region over Iran and followed Israel’s recent deal to normalize relations with the island king**dom.

**The brief statement carried by the news agency said only that Yossi Cohen met with Bahrain’s heads of national intelligen**ce and strategic security to discuss “the most prominent security topics, regional developments and issues of common interest.” It did not elaborate.

The two countries opened diplomatic ties last fall in a U.S.-brokered deal under the Trump administration and following the United Arab Emirates’ decision to normalize relations.

**The pacts, rejected by the Palestinians as a betrayal of their cause for statehood, signaled an increasingly explicit alliance between Gulf Arab state**s and Israel against mutual archenemy Iran.

Indirect talks between the U.S. and Iran over a return to Tehran’s 2015 nuclear deal with world powers, which former President Donald Trump abandoned, are now gaining traction in Vienna.

Israel and Gulf Arab sheikhdoms previously have voiced concern over a generous American rapprochement with Iran that doesn’t address the Islamic Republic’s ballistic missile program and support for regional proxies, in addition to its nuclear program. <https://www.ynetnews.com/article/HkbU1TWOO>

**Gaza incendiary balloons spark 6 fires in southern Israel**

***Terror group says ‘this is just the beginning’ as blazes reported in areas close to the border; slight damage caused to a wheat field in the Eshkol region***

*By* [*Emanuel Fabian*](https://www.timesofisrael.com/writers/emanuel-fabian/) *Today, 6:31 pm*

**At least six brush fires were ignited Thursday in southern Israel by balloons carrying incendiary devices that were launched from the Gaza Strip, the fire departmen**t said.

**Two of the fires ignited in the Be’eri forest, and another four in the Kissufim forest, two nature reserves located on the border of Israel and Gaz**a, a spokesperson for the Jewish National Fund said.

Slight damage was caused to a wheat field in one of the fires, a spokesperson for the Eshkol regional council said, confirming that there was no danger to any nearby towns.

**The Fire and Rescue Services said as the fires were small and were quickly gotten under** control.

**In Gaza, the so-called balloon unit, Ibna Al-Zuwari, said it had launched balloon-borne incendiary devices toward Isra**el.

[](https://static.timesofisrael.com/www/uploads/2021/05/WhatsApp-Image-2021-05-06-at-17.08.20.jpeg)

***Land in southern Israel, near the Gaza border, burnt by incendiary balloons sent from Gaza. (Moshe Baruchi/KKL-JNF/courtesy)***

**“This is just the beginning,” the group said** in a statement on Thursday.

On Monday, [two balloons carrying suspected explosive devices](https://www.timesofisrael.com/suspected-balloon-borne-bombs-from-gaza-land-in-south-for-first-time-in-months/) that were apparently launched from the Gaza Strip landed in southern Israel, local authorities said, in the first such attacks in months. The suspected bombs were found in agricultural fields in the community of Kfar Aza, east of Gaza City.

The practice of launching balloon-borne incendiary and explosive devices from the Gaza Strip toward Israel has waxed and waned over the past two years, though there have been relatively few launches of late as the Israeli government and Gaza-ruling Hamas terror group have reportedly been negotiating a long-term ceasefire.

Earlier this month, terrorists in Gaza launched dozens of rockets at southern Israel. Most of the rockets landed in open fields, where they caused no injury or damage, but a few struck inside Israeli communities, with shrapnel hitting buildings and vehicles. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/gaza-incendiary-balloons-spark-6-fires-in-southern-israel/> **[Maybe Israel should send to balloons into Gaze to set some blazes for them as well. – rdb]**

**Shin Bet: Palestinian terror group stole millions from European aid donors**

***Security service says PFLP counterfeited documents, invented projects to pilfer funds for its military activities; Israel calls on countries to not donate to PFLP-linked groups***

*By* [*Judah Ari Gross*](https://www.timesofisrael.com/writers/judah-ari-gross/) *Today, 6:51 pm*

**The Shin Bet security service on Thursday accused the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine of pilfering millions of euros from European aid organizations and governments to fund terrorist activities**.

**The Shin Bet in recent weeks arrested a number of those suspected of involvement and said that indictments against them would be filed shortly, including against a woman with Spanish citizenship, Juan**i Rishmawi.

**In light of the investigation, the Foreign Ministry met with European diplomats in Israel and sent Israeli diplomats in Europe to meet with representatives of their host governments to ask them to refrain from donating to Palestinian non-governmental organizations linked to the PFLP**.

“During these conversations, the **representatives of the Israeli Foreign Ministry explained to the European diplomats the severity with which Israel sees these issues and presented them with the findings of the investigation**, including proof that European government funds went to the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, which is recognized in Europe as a terrorist organization,” the Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

**According to the security service, the PFLP used its health organization, the Health Work Committee, to defraud various Europe organizations and countries of millions of euros over the course of severa**l years.

**“PFLP institutions deceived aid organizations in Europe through a number of methods – reporting on fictitious projects, transferring false documents, forging and inflating invoices, diverting tenders, forging documents and bank signatures, reporting inflated salaries, and more,” the Shin Bet said in a stateme**nt.

**According to the security service, that money was used to pay the families of slain members of the terror group, to recruit new operatives, and to spread the group’s messaging throughout the West Ban**k, Gaza and East Jerusalem.

**According to the right-leaning Israeli group NGO Monitor, which tracks contributions to Palestinian organizations for possible terrorist connections, European governments and the European Union have donated upwards of 6.6 million euros ($8 million) to HWC from 2017 to 2020, with more than half — 3.6 million euros ($4.3 million) — coming from Sweden alone**.



***Photos released on May 6, 2021, showing, from left, Juani Rishmawi, Amro Hamouda, Said Abdat and Tayseer Abu Sharbak, who are suspected of stealing funds from European countries for the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine terror group. (Shin Bet)***

**The Shin Bet said the investigation was carried out in cooperation with the Israel Defense Forces and Israel Police**.

The security service identified the four suspected leaders of the financial scheme as Tayseer Abu Sharbak, 47, who works as an **accountant for the Health Work Committee;** Said Abdat, 46, who previously worked as an accountant for the HWC; Amro Hamouda, 46, the former head of purchasing for the HWC; and Rishmawi, 63, who was responsible for fundraising for the organization in Europe.

The Shin Bet said the four suspects “gave up extensive material that educates as to the scope of the fraud that PFLP institutions carried out against European countries.”

Spanish Foreign Minister Arancha Gonzalez Laya told reporters last week that the Spanish authorities were conducting “intensive dialogue” with Israel about the accusations against Rishmawi, who is also known as Juana Ruiz Sánchez.

Following a [deadly attack](https://www.timesofisrael.com/three-israelis-seriously-hurt-in-explosion-at-west-bank-spring/) by PFLP terrorists in 2019, which killed Israeli teenager Rina Shnerb and seriously injured her father and brother, the Shin Bet cracked down harshly on the group, [arresting dozens of its members](https://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-arrests-50-pflp-members-in-crackdown-following-deadly-august-bombing/) in December of that year.

Last year, the Dutch government [halted funding](https://www.timesofisrael.com/netherlands-suspends-aid-to-group-that-employed-suspected-palestinian-terrorists/) of a Palestinian group, the Union of Agricultural Work Committees, after it determined that some of the money was going to pay two PFLP members standing trial for their role in the attack that killed Shnerb. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/shin-bet-palestinian-terror-group-stole-millions-from-european-aid-donors/>

**Gaza reporter says she was beaten for not wearing headscarf**

***Rewaa Mershid, 26, reporter for a local radio station, was filming with a crew near the security fence when one of Hamas-run border patrol officers cut a branch off a lemon tree and struck her three times for not wearing hijab***

*Associated Press | Published: 05.06.21 , 21:51*

**A female Palestinian reporter said Thursday that a member of the Hamas-run border patrol in Gaza beat her with a tree branch for not wearing an Islamic headscarf last month, an incident that sparked a public out**cry.

 **The Islamic militant group has promised an apology and said it would punish the man. The incident highlighted Hamas' occasionally heavy-handed treatment of both reporters and women in Gaza,** where it seized power in 2007 from the internationally-backed Palestinian Authority.

***Palestinian journalist Rewaa Mershid works at the studio of ZMN FM radio station in Gaza City***

***(Photo: AP)***

**Rewaa Mershid, a 26-year-old reporter for a local radio station, was with colleagues filming at a privately owned farm near the heavily guarded Gaza frontier on April 25 when two members of a Hamas-run border patrol approached and asked them to identify themse**lves.

"The discussion took another turn, focusing on my way of dressing and why I'm not wearing a hijab," Mershid said, referring to the scarf that many devout Muslim women use to cover their hair in public.

**The militants called a female police unit, but then an argument broke out and one of them cut a branch off a lemon tree and struck her three times, she said. She shared a medical report saying she had "bruises in the lower back and the lower par**t."

The Palestinian journalists' union issued a statement condemning the attack, sparking a debate on social media in which some took her side while others condemned her behavior.

**Mershid had filed a complaint with the Interior Ministry, which oversees security services, on the day of the incident, but it said it was not directly responsible for the patrolme**n. The lines between Hamas' armed wing and the security services in Gaza are often blurred.

After the incident was widely publicized, the ministry said it carried out an investigation and concluded that the militant "violated instructions for dealing with citizens and beat Mershid with a tree branch." The ministry said it would "present an apology" to Mershid and punish the militant with "imprisonment," without providing further details.

A spokesman for the ministry could not be reached for comment Thursday.

The ministry's report said Mershid was on a personal photo shoot and did not have permission to film in the area. In Gaza, journalists must get permission to film in a growing number of locations - not just the border area, but also beaches, hospitals and even some markets.

**The International Federation of Journalists reported 76 cases of media rights violations by Gaza security forces** and 42 by PA security forces in the West Bank in 2020. The violations included arrests and barring coverage at some events, such as demonstrations.

Since seizing power in Gaza, Hamas has occasionally taken steps to impose Islamic values on an already conservative society, often backing off after facing public criticism. **MORE -** <https://www.ynetnews.com/article/SkNyD2Wu00>

**Nuclear deal possible in weeks despite gaps if Iran takes decision**

***Iran has "continued to take steps that are restarting dangerous parts of their program that the nuclear agreement stopped,” he told MSNBC.***

*By REUTERS,* [*OMRI NAHMIAS*](https://www.jpost.com/author/omri-nahmias) *MAY 6, 2021 22:54*

**While big gaps remain between Washington and** [**Tehran**](https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/iran-news/death-of-diplomat-in-iran-feeds-gossip-and-conspiracies-analysis-667289)**, there could be an agreement within weeks for both to resume compliance with the 2015 Iran nuclear deal if Iranian authorities decide to do so,** a senior US State Department official said on Thursday.

**“Is it possible that we’ll see a mutual return to compliance in the next few wee**ks, or an understanding of a mutual compliance? It’s possible yes,” the official told reporters on condition of anonymity during a telephone briefing. “Is it likely? Only time will tell, because as I said, this is ultimately a matter of a political decision that needs to be made in Iran.” **[That means money will flow from the US to Iran just like under the Obamanation administration. Someone needs to take these fools to task and blow their entire deal to smithereens. – rdb]**

**US officials will return to Vienna for a fourth round of indirect talks** with Iran on how to resume compliance with the deal.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said on Thursday that it is yet to be seen if the Iranians are ready to return to compliance with the JCPOA.

**“We’ve been engaged in indirect talks in Vienna – they’re starting up again now at the end of this week – and what we don’t know is whether Iran is actually prepared to make the decisions necessary to return to full compliance with the nuclear agreement,” he told Andrea Mitchell on MSN**BC. **[Think on this a minute. What kind of a deal can you make with people who will not even talk with your directly UNLESS you bow to their demands and submit initially? What idiots are in this group of trolls. – rdb]**

**“They, unfortunately, have continued to take steps that are restarting dangerous parts of their program** that the nuclear agreement stopped, and the jury is out on whether they’re prepared to do what’s necessary,” Blinken added.

The crux of the agreement was that Iran committed to taking steps to rein in its nuclear program to make it harder to obtain the fissile material for a nuclear weapon in return for relief from US, EU and UN sanctions.

**The US official quoted earlier said it might be possible to revive a nuclear deal before Iran’s June 18 election, but again put the onus on Iran to make such a political de**cision. **[So what good will Iranian elections do in June when all power is invested in the religious fanatic the Ayatollah who actually wants world submission to Islam not to mention the elimination of the entire world Jewish population. – rdb]**

“We think that it’s doable because it’s not rocket science,” the official said. “It’s not inventing a new deal... Is it possible to get a deal before the Iranian elections? Absolutely.”

**However, he said this would require Iran to avoid asking Washington to do more than what is envisaged in the agreement while Tehran would se**ek to do less.

“If there is a clear and realistic practical view about what this means, it can be done relatively swiftly, both in terms of reaching an understanding and then implementing it, but the pace would have to accelerate for us to get there in the coming weeks and no guarantee that that will be the case,” he said.

**All parties to the original deal – Iran, Britain, China, France, Germany, Russia and the United States – have joined the Vienna talks, with chiefly European diplomats shuttling between the US and Iranian d**elegations.

**The US official described recent inaccurate reports about there being an agreement to release US citizens detained in Iran as an “unspeakable cruelty,” and said there are separate talks about** this.

“We’re treating it independently,” he said, saying it was “a matter of utmost urgency to get the detainees home. And we want it to be resolved sooner rather than later – immediately.”

In addition, Blinken addressed the American hostages in [Iran](https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/iran-irgc-head-israel-can-be-destroyed-in-one-operation-667398).

“We are resolutely focused on Americans who are being arbitrarily detained or being held hostage in Iran or anywhere else,” he said. “I work on that, our team works on that virtually every day, and unfortunately around the world, because there are cases in a number of places.

“When I first got on the job, one of the first things I did was to meet virtually with the families of every American abroad who is being arbitrarily detained or is being held hostage, and this is a huge problem that I think increasingly you’re going to see countries take a stand against.

“Canada, which has two of its citizens being arbitrarily detained in China, has been helping lead an effort, and I think you’re going to see more and more countries coming together to make it clear that this practice is totally unacceptable. And if countries engage in it, there are going to have to be consequences.” <https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/nuclear-deal-possible-in-weeks-despite-gaps-if-iran-takes-decision-667466> **[It really is impossible to conceive the stupidity of this group. – rdb]**

**Iran ‘conceals illegal activities’ for WMD tech - German intel**

***The report said Iran’s regime can use “Detour deliveries over ‘third states’ in order not to identify the final buyer” and “the use and misuse of inexperienced freight deliverers and transporters."***

*By* [*BENJAMIN WEINTHAL*](https://www.jpost.com/author/benjamin-weinthal) *MAY 7, 2021 02:18*

**A new intelligence report from Germany’s northernmost state Schleswig-Holstein disclosed detailed information on Tuesday about the secretive methods which the Islamic Republic of Iran uses to cover up its attempts to secure illicit technology for the world’s most deadly weapons**.

**“Proliferation-relevant countries such as Iran, North Korea and Syria, but also Pakistan, try to circumvent safety precautions and legal export regulations and to disguise illegal procurement activities. To do this, they turn to mostly conspiratorial means and methods,” wrote the intelligence** agency.

**The intelligence document noted that “Proliferation is still one of the central tasks of counter-espionage in Schleswig-Holstei**n.”

**The report defines proliferation as the "spread of weapons of mass destruction** (ABC weapons) and the necessary know-how, as well as the products used for their manufacture and associated carrier technologies.”

"ABC" is acommonly used abbreviation for atomic, biological and chemical weapons.

**The Iranian regime’s methods to obtain illicit weapons of mass destruction technology, according to the intelligence report, include “The creation of a neutral firm to deceive the buyer about the true nature of the sale through a state-controlled company; the establishment of illegal procurement networks which belong to the front companies and middlemen**.”

**The intelligence agency said Iran’s regime can also use “Detour deliveries over ‘third states’ in order not to identify the final buyer” and “the use and misuse of inexperienced freight deliverers and transporte**rs.”

**According to the intelligence, the Islamic Republic can also “distribute the illegal procurement activities in many individual non-suspicious deliveries to avoid exposing the entire bu**siness.”

**Tehran can “conceal the end user” a**nd conceal the “individual, company or institution with which the goods ultimately remain,” wrote the intelligence agency.

Schleswig-Holstein, which borders Denmark, is a center of “many companies, but also universities, colleges and universities of applied sciences that have sensitive technical knowledge and know-how," said the report.

The intelligence agency said that in 2020 it conducted 12 conversations with companies and academic institutions to “sensitize” them about “counter-proliferation” attempts.

**Iran’s regime is cited 19 times in the 218-page intelligence report which covers security threats** to the state’s democracy.

Within the context of illegal proliferation procurement, the report stated that “Products that can be used both civilly and militarily is of particular importance (so-called dual-use goods) as they are supposedly easier to obtain. States like Iran, North Korea, Pakistan, Syria and Russia continue to strive to acquire such corresponding products, technologies and scientific know-how.”

The document stressed that “Proliferation is a serious threat to security in many regions of the world, including the Federal Republic of Germany and thus for the state of Schleswig-Holstein. The Federal Republic of Germany is one of the most important export nations in the world. The export of military as well as civilian goods (the export of so-called dual-use goods) are subject therefore to special control.” The report stated that merchandise such as software can used also be used for military purposes. **MORE -** <https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/iran-news/iran-conceals-illegal-activities-for-wmd-tech-german-intel-667494> **[So the US really thinks that they can create some form of agreement with these criminals and slow/stop the production of nuclear arms which ultimately will be used to keep the entire world enslaved to the radical Islamic state? Fools – YES! – rdb]**

**Merkel opposes Biden’s call to waive Covid-19 vaccine patent protections, as Spain says proposal ‘not enough’**

*6 May, 2021 20:48*

**The Biden administration’s endorsement of a proposal to waive intellectual property rights on Covid-19 vaccines is facing new opposition from German Chancellor Angela Mer**kel.

*“The limiting factor for the production of vaccines are manufacturing capacities and high quality standards, not the patents,”* a spokesperson for Merkel said Thursday, according to Bloomberg. *“The protection of intellectual property is a source of innovation and this has to remain so in the future.”*

**US Trade Representative** [**Katherine Tai**](https://thehill.com/people/katherine-tai) **announced this week that the Biden administration was supporting a proposal in the World Trade Organization to open up patents on Covid-19 vacci**nes.

Tai said the *“extraordinary circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic call for extraordinary measures.”* WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus called the announcement a “monumental moment in the fight against Covid-19.

**Supporters of the measure have said removing intellectual property protections will help low-income countries produce and distribute vaccines faster. Critics, however, like vaccine advocate Bill Gates, have argued that such a move presents difficulties and could hinder the safety of future vaccines**. **[Gates is a vile criminal and should be locked up for life. He has made a mint off of this fiasco not to mention the number of people who have died as a result of it because he and those in the wEC are using this for their reset. – rdb]**

After **Biden’s endorsement of the proposal, stock for companies like Pfizer and Moderna fell**.

Pfizer CEO Albert Bourla said on Thursday he is *“not at all”* in favor of the US’ stance.

*“The problem is that there are no facilities in the world outside the ones that we can build ourselves,”* he told AFP.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said earlier on Thursday that the EU is ready to have discussions on the proposal to remove patent protections from vaccines. Russian President Vladimir Putin has also expressed its support for waiving patents.

On Thursday, Spain’s government said the proposal is the *“way forward”* but does not go far enough to help poorer countries, Reuters reported. Madrid said waiving the intellectual property rights will take time and pharmaceutical companies should be flexible in granting licenses. <https://www.rt.com/usa/523115-merkel-covid19-vaccine-patents/> **[Gates or the Gates foundation group has major stock holdings in several vaccine manufacturers. – rdb]**

**Biden cuts 'God' out of Day of Prayer proclamation**

***Instead tells 'citizen' to follow 'their own faiths and consciences'***

*By* [*Bob Unruh*](https://www.wnd.com/author/runruh/) *Published May 6, 2021 at 11:18am*

**President Joe Biden this week cut "God" out of his proclamation for a National Day of Prayer**. Instead, he calls on "citizens" to follow "their own faiths and consciences."

[**Just the News**](https://justthenews.com/government/white-house/president-biden-issues-national-day-prayer-proclamation-does-not-include) **documented that "Lord" appears only once, when Biden uses boilerplate language regarding "In the year of our Lord two thousand twenty-one" and a reference to the "divine" only comes up only in a quote from the late Rep. John L**ewis.

The [Biden statement:](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2021/05/05/a-proclamation-on-national-day-of-prayer/)

*Throughout our history, Americans of many religions and belief systems have turned to prayer for strength, hope, and guidance. Prayer has nourished countless souls and powered moral movements — including essential fights against racial injustice, child labor, and infringement on the rights of disabled Americans. Prayer is also a daily practice for many, whether it is to ask for help or strength, or to give thanks over blessings bestowed.*

*The First Amendment to our Constitution protects the rights of free speech and religious liberty, including the right of all Americans to pray. These freedoms have helped us to create and sustain a Nation of remarkable religious vitality and diversity across the generations.*

*Today, we remember and celebrate the role that the healing balm of prayer can play in our lives and in the life of our Nation. As we continue to confront the crises and challenges of our time — from a deadly pandemic, to the loss of lives and livelihoods in its wake, to a reckoning on racial justice, to the existential threat of climate change — Americans of faith can call upon the power of prayer to provide hope and uplift us for the work ahead. As the late Congressman John Lewis once said, “Nothing can stop the power of a committed and determined people to make a difference in our society. Why? Because human beings are the most dynamic link to the divine on this planet.”*

*On this National Day of Prayer, we unite with purpose and resolve, and recommit ourselves to the core freedoms that helped define and guide our Nation from its earliest days. We celebrate our incredible good fortune that, as Americans, we can exercise our convictions freely — no matter our faith or beliefs. Let us find in our prayers, however they are delivered, the determination to overcome adversity, rise above our differences, and come together as one Nation to meet this moment in history.*

*The Congress, by Public Law 100-307, as amended, has called on the President to issue each year a proclamation designating the first Thursday in May as a “National Day of Prayer.”*

*NOW, THEREFORE, I, JOSEPH R. BIDEN JR., President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim May 6, 2021, as a National Day of Prayer. I invite the citizens of our Nation to give thanks, in accordance with their own faiths and consciences, for our many freedoms and blessings, and I join all people of faith in prayers for spiritual guidance, mercy, and protection.*

*IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this fifth day of May, in the year of our Lord two thousand twenty-one, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and forty-fifth.*

**"In contrast, former President Donald Trump mentioned God about a dozen times in his final National Prayer** Day proclamation last year," Just the News reported. "David Brody, host of The Water Cooler inquired, **'How do you release a proclamation about prayer and not mention God at** all?'"

In fact, Biden notes that the First Amendment "protects the rights of free speech and religious liberty, including the right of Americans to pray."

He said that's resulted in "diversity across the generations."

**Biden then turned his message to his politics, insisting that the "challenges of our time" are "a reckoning on racial justice" and well as "the existential threat of climate change**."

He said, "I invite the citizens of our Nation to give thanks, in accordance with their own faiths and consciences, for our many freedoms and blessings, and I join all people of faith in prayers for spiritual guidance, mercy, and protection."

Biden has described himself as a faithful Catholic, but has been criticized by multiple faith leaders for his extreme advocacy for abortion, which violates church teaching. His press secretary, appearing to turn the issues of Christian faith and biblical teaching into a list of multiple choices, recently calmly claimed that the White House "disagrees" with the church on the issue. <https://www.wnd.com/2021/05/biden-cuts-god-day-prayer-proclamation/> **[“Bi-dumb” and most of the leftist demon-rats are fundamentally pagan and they are their own gods. The idea of a true Supreme Being is actually foreign to the vast majority of them. – rdb]**

**Tucker Carlson pokes hornet's nest by spotlighting vaccine deaths**

***'What is the real number of people who apparently have been killed or injured?'***

*By* [*Art Moore*](https://www.wnd.com/author/amoorewnd-com/) *Published May 6, 2021 at 7:35pm*

**Fox News host Tucker Carlson prompted a sharp reaction from critics Wednesday night after addressing the issue of how many people have died after receiving a COVID-19 v**accine.

[Carlson explained](https://www.foxnews.com/opinion/tucker-carlson-how-many-americans-have-died-after-taking-the-covid-vaccine%22) he is "completely in favor of vulnerable people taking **vaccines" (The CDC profile is a person older than 70 with an average of 2.6 "comorbidities," such as diabetes and heart disease). But he argued that the vast majority of the population, with a survival rate of more than 99%, should have as much information as possible to make a risk assessment**.

**In a typical flu season, more than 160 million Americans are vaccinated and only a small number die after receiving a shot. in 2019, it was 203 people and in 2018 it was 11**9.

"Every death is tragic, but big picture, we don’t consider those numbers disqualifying," he said. "We keep giving flu shots, and very few people complain about it."

But the question is how do those numbers compare to the death rate from the experimental, emergency-use coronavirus vaccines.

**Between late December 2020 and April 23, a total of 3,362 people were reported to have died after receiving COVID-19 vaccines in the U.S., an average of 30 people every da**y, according to the federal Vaccine Adverse Events Reporting System, or VAERS.

VAERS is managed by the CDC and the FDA, Carlson noted, and "has received a lot of criticism over the years, some of it founded."

Carlson's segment was blasted Thursday [by Sanjay Gupta, CNN's chief medical correspondent,](https://news.yahoo.com/cnns-sanjay-gupta-blasts-tucker-140649146.html) who called it "reckless" and "dangerous." **MORE -** <https://www.wnd.com/2021/05/tucker-carlson-pokes-hornets-nest-spotlighting-vaccine-deaths/> **[Obviously Gupta can’t do the math OR he is just a wicked and vile puppet of the deep state. I think it is the latter. I have been following the VAERS reports for quite some time and Carlson is on target. I had the link to his segment on yesterday’s news report. – rdb]**

**Commentary:**

**‘Public Education’ as a Car: A Parable**

*By* [*Lee Duigon*](https://newswithviews.com/author/lee/)*|May 6th, 2021* Suppose the government decided you had to buy a new car every year, whether you want to or not. If you already have a car, you can keep it. You don’t have to take possession of the government car, but you’ll still have to pay for it. They suck the money out of your taxes, so you’re stuck.  
 What kind of car would you like? The question is irrelevant: Government Motors manufactures the cars and you have to take what they decide to give you. They’ll choose the model, the color, the options, and everything else. You just pay for it. They’ll also decide how often you can use it, how far you can drive, and where you can or can’t go. You have no ownership rights: none at all. You just pay for it. Every year. Out of your taxes.  
 Does that sound like a raw deal to you? But it’s exactly the same kind of deal you get with what they like to call “public education.” Pay for everything; own no part of it.  
 Once upon a time we owned our public schools. Before anyone got hip to what was happening, the government sucked away our ownership rights to our schools.  
 The U.S. Dept. of Education (thank you so much, Jimmy Carter!), your state’s department of education, and the teachers’ unions—they now own your schools. You don’t. You just pay. They decide who teaches in those schools, not you. They decide what gets taught, not you.  
 Critical Race Theory? You don’t want it, but there it is; and you pay for it. Anti-American “teachers” who go on junkets to Venezuela to learn more about socialism? You don’t want them, but there they are. You pay their salaries, and really sweet pensions.  
 How did we ever get suckered into this? It’s like we woke up one day and that was how it was. Did they ever ask us if we wanted a Dept. of Education? Did they ever ask us if we wanted our kids to be taught that all white people are evil racists, that America is an evil racist country, or that you can be a boy one day and a girl the next, depending on how you feel?  
 Yeah, well, they never ask us, do they?  
 Especially in the Democrat-run inner cities, kids come out of public school barely able to write their names and knowing virtually nothing about history, literature, civics—and all they know about Science is that it’s always right so just shut up about it and obey.  
 And then millions of them go on to… “college,” I think they call it… which finishes the job of turning them into useful idiots for the Far Left Crazy.  
 This is a really rotten deal. We’ve been had. We’ve been taken to the cleaners. And still there are Americans who send their kids to those wretched schools because they think, “But it’s free!” Because the money comes out of their taxes before they even see it, and they don’t have to write checks—so they think it’s free. But then they, too, have been “educated” in those schools and never been introduced to the art of thinking.  
 Years ago, before the situation was anywhere near as bad as it is now, I told a class of high school kids, “For the first time in recorded history, the vast resources of the state are used to teach a whole generation that their country’s no good and unworthy of their loyalty. How well do you think that’ll play out, down the road a piece?” One girl in the class came up to me a few months later and said, “I can’t stop thinking about that thing you said to us.”  
 Well, at least she was thinking.  
 They’ll do that, if you give them half a chance.  
 Even in the public schools.  
 We have to get out from under this raw deal before it ruins us. This is a car that won’t run.  
 I have discussed these and other topics throughout the week on my blog, <http://leeduigon.com/> . Click the link and stop in for a visit. My articles can also be found at [www.chalcedon.edu/](http://www.chalcedon.edu/) . <https://newswithviews.com/public-education-as-a-car-a-parable/>

**Clean House in 2025**[*Kurt Schlichter*](https://townhall.com/columnists/kurtschlichter/) *Posted: May 06, 2021 12:01 AM* When President DeSantis is sworn in at 12:00 pm on January 20, 2025, he should give a short speech and by 12:10 be firing people. Lots of people.  
 Okay, it might not be the current Florida governor – we do know it’s not going to be Gov. Nikki! Haley (R – Establishment) or Kristi! Noem (R-NCAA) – but whoever beats Kamala Harris like a drum needs to come into the Oval Office ready to clear-cut the bureaucracy.  
 Just level it.  
 Every keen observer understands that Donald Trump’s first and foremost failure as president was personnel. He did not get it right until the end, and then it was far too late. There are two reasons for this. The first is that for all his iconoclasm, Trump used to believe in our institutions and it took him a while to see how totally corrupt they truly are. For years, he gave the NYT interviews even as it trashed him because, well, it was the Times and the Times was prestigious. For much of his term, he had that same kind of deference to establishment figures. He thought Rex Tillerson would be great because he was a rich head of a huge corporation. He thought generals were impressive because they had medals, and he famously got shafted by each and every one of them that he relied upon. He thought, for too long, that the DoJ and FBI and other agencies really had America’s interests at heart instead of the liberal establishment’s priorities.   
 It was all baloney.   
 They were all terrible, and they all worked ceaselessly to undermine and even imprison him. It was only at the end that Trump found trustworthy folks who would do their jobs instead of pursue outside agendas. For example, Trump’s third National Security Advisor, Robert O’Brien, was the best National Security Advisor maybe ever – gee, he only oversaw peace achieving in the Middle East – and the reason you might not recognize his name is because he never became the story like McMaster or Bolton. Mike Pompeo – who also will never be president, sorry – was likewise a loyal and effective Secretary of State. But it took almost four years to get the team on-board.  
 The other issue was that Trump had no Rolodex. The Bush cabal had thousands of loyal obedient minions/potential staffers to call upon in the off-chance that hell froze over and Jeb! got elected to something other than “Most Likely to Fail.” Trump had no one to call. That’s a big part of why his administration was staffed with people who had zero loyalty and spent their time undermining him and his policies.   
 President De Santis will not have that problem – there’s a whole generation of experienced conservatives out there to call upon to staff his administration. And they will to be ready to separate the wheat form the chaff when they take up their places.  
 He needs to get to firing. And right away.  
 He needs to fire Christopher Wray at the FBI and most of the failed Bureau’s leadership.  
 He needs to fire much of the Justice Department, in particular the Stasi cells that are persecuting political opponents of the Asterisk regime.   
 And he needs to combine this with pardons, lots of pardons, to ensure their outrageous attempts to punish and silence conservatives come to naught.  
 He needs to fire whoever the idiot was at the CIA that decided [that ad with Intersectional Sue](https://townhall.com/tipsheet/leahbarkoukis/2021/05/04/cia-recruitment-vid-n2588911/print) was a good idea. “I’ll have a vodka, shaken not stirred. Oh, and my pronouns are ‘xir’ and ‘xem.’” Putin and Xi must be busting a guy right now.  
 Then there’s the Pentagon – there’s a lot of firing to be done there. Like the whole Joint Chiefs of Staff. Trump was always impressed by generals. That was a huge mistake. DeSantis was in the Navy. He gets it. The next GOP prezzy needs to understand that by the time generals pin on that fourth star, they are all-in on the establishment. Why do you think they are so eager to invoke the woke? Because that’s who they are. Fire them. Then reach down in the ranks to find the guys who aren’t poisoned by leftism and promote them. And take a serious interest in who gets promoted in the future – don’t rubber stamp the promotion lists the Pentagon generates. Obama and Asterisk both understood that if you want a broken, woken military – which they do – you need to promote the lickspittles and suck-ups, not the Pattons. Do the opposite.  
 Then he needs to rampage through the rest of the bureaucracy, firing to and fro. The libs will howl – let them. MSNBCNN and the WaPo will scream that President DeSantis is creating a conservative bureaucracy – and he will be. Own it. We tried a neutral bureaucracy devoted to the country first and that didn’t work, so we'll take the second-best option, which is one that supports our policies.   
 Time to play by the new rules, and those are the new rules, folks – we didn’t make them, but we need to play by them. <https://townhall.com/columnists/kurtschlichter/2021/05/06/clean-house-in-2025-n2588969>

**Are Americans becoming Sovietized?   
*By Victor Davis Hanson*** *Published May 6, 2021* What ultimately ended the nihilist Soviet system?  
 Was it not that Russians finally tired of the Kremlin's lies and hypocrisies that permeated every facet of their falsified lives?  
 Here are 10 symptoms of Sovietism. Ask yourself whether we are headed down this same road to perdition.  
 1. There was no escape from ideological indoctrination — anywhere. A job in the bureaucracy or a military assignment hinged not so much on merit, expertise or past achievement. What mattered was loud enthusiasm for the Soviet system.  
 Wokeness is becoming our new Soviet-like state religion. Careerists assert that America was always and still is a systemically racist country, without ever producing proof or a sustained argument.  
 2. The Soviets fused their press with the government. Pravda, or "Truth," was the official megaphone of state-sanctioned lies. Journalists simply regurgitated the talking points of their Communist Party partners.  
 In 2017, a Harvard study found that over 90% of the major TV news networks' coverage of the Trump administration's first 100 days was negative.  
 3. The Soviet surveillance state enlisted apparatchiks and lackeys to ferret out ideological dissidents.  
 Recently, we learned that the Department of Defense is reviewing its rosters to spot extremist sentiments. The U.S. Postal Service recently admitted it uses tracking programs to monitor the social media postings of Americans.  
 CNN recently alleged that the Biden administration's Department of Homeland Security is considering partnering with private surveillance firms to get around government prohibitions on scrutinizing Americans' online activity.  
 4. The Soviet educational system sought not to enlighten but to indoctrinate young minds in proper government-approved thought.  
 Currently, cash-strapped universities nationwide are hiring thousands of diversity, equity and inclusion staffers and administrators. Their chief task is to scan the admissions, hiring, curriculum and administration at universities. Like good commissars, our diversity czars oversee compliance with the official narrative that a flawed America must confess, apologize for and renounce its evil foundations.  
 5. The Soviet Union was run by a pampered elite, exempt from the ramifications of their own radical ideologies.  
 Now, woke Silicon Valley billionaires talk socialistically but live royally. Coke and Delta Airlines CEOs who hector Americans about their illiberality make millions of dollars a year.  
 What unites current woke activists such as Oprah Winfrey, LeBron James Mark Zuckerberg and the Obamas are their huge estates and their multimillion-dollar wealth. Just as the select few of the old Soviet nomenklatura had their Black Sea dachas, America's loudest top-down revolutionaries prefer living in Martha's Vineyard, Beverly Hills, Montecito and Malibu.  
 6. The Soviets mastered Trotskyization, or the rewriting and airbrushing away of history to fabricate present reality.  
 Are Americans any different when they indulge in a frenzy of name-changing, statue-toppling, monument-defacing, book-banning and cancel-culturing?  
 7. The Soviets created a climate of fear and rewarded stool pigeons for rooting out all potential enemies of the people.  
 Since when did Americans encourage co-workers to turn in others for an ill-considered word in a private conversation? Why do thousands now scour the internet to find any past incorrect expression of a rival? Why are there now new thought criminals supposedly guilty of climate racism, immigration racism or vaccination racism?  
 8. Soviet prosecutors and courts were weaponized according to ideology.  
 In America, where and for what reason you riot determines whether you face any legal consequences. Politically correct sanctuary cities defy the law with impunity. Jury members are terrified of being doxxed and hunted down for an incorrect verdict. The CIA and FBI are becoming as ideological as the old KGB.  
 9. The Soviets doled out prizes on the basis of correct Soviet thought.  
 In modern America, the Pulitzer Prizes and the Emmys, Grammys, Tonys and Oscars don't necessarily reflect the year's best work, but often the most politically correct work from the most woke.  
 10. The Soviets offered no apologies for extinguishing freedom. Instead, they boasted that they were advocates for equity, champions of the underclass, enemies of privilege — and therefore could terminate anyone or anything they pleased.  
 Our wokists are similarly defending their thought-control efforts, forced re-education sessions, scripted confessionals, mandatory apologies and cancel culture on the pretense that we need long-overdue "fundamental transformation."  
 So if they destroy people in the name of equity, their nihilism is justified. <http://www.jewishworldreview.com/0521/hanson050621.php3>

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**ARUTZ SHEVA**

**Biden weighing unfreezing $1 billion for Iran**

***Sources say Biden administration is weighing unfreezing $1 billion in Iranian funds that the country could use for humanitarian relief.***

*Elad Benari , May 07 , 2021 2:14 AM*

**The Biden administration is weighing unfreezing $1 billion in Iranian funds that the country could use for humanitarian relief, CNN reported on Thursday**.

**It is not clear whether the release of the funds would occur unilaterally, but one line of thought is that it could serve as a useful goodwill gesture to Tehra**n, said three people briefed on the internal deliberations.

The report comes amid negotiations for the US to reenter the 2015 nuclear deal and bring Iran back into compliance with its terms.

**The funds would not be provided in cash; instead, they'd be allocated to a Swiss channel, known as the Swiss Humanitarian Trade Arrangement, which was set up last year to allow humanitarian aid like food and medicine to be sent to Iran without violating US sanctions, according to C***NN*.

The plan is facing opposition from Iran hawks in Congress who are privy to the discussions, said one Republican congressional staffer. The staffer said that some on Capitol Hill view the idea of unfreezing any of Iran's money as a concession that would diminish the US' leverage.

Iran [has gradually scaled back](https://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/264672) its compliance with the 2015 deal in response to former US President Donald Trump’s [withdrawal from the agreement](https://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/245626) in May of 2018.

It has continued to do so even as current US President Joe Biden has indicated a desire to return to the deal.

The talks in Vienna have involved diplomats from Britain, China, France, Germany, Iran and Russia who met the Iranian representatives, while US diplomats participated indirectly in the talks from a nearby hotel.

The US and European Union [both said](https://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/304732) recently that more work was needed to revive the 2015 deal, while Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said the "negotiations have achieved 60-70 percent progress." **MORE -**<https://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/305723> **[Are you angry yet? I am! – rdb]**

**'Unity government negotiations are making progress'**

***Yair Lapid and Naftali Bennett meet as work continues to form unity government. Likud working to undermine formation of coalition.***

*Hezki Baruch , May 07 , 2021 10:01 AM | updated: 10:06 AM*

**Yamina chairman and former Defense Minister Naftali Bennett, Opposition Leader Yair Lapid (Yesh Atid), and New Hope chief Gideon Sa'ar met Friday morning as unity government negotiations continu**e.

**Representatives from Yamina and Yesh Atid also met for negotiations Friday m**orning.

**Friday morning's meeting comes after Bennett and Lapid met Thursday night for coalition ta**lks.

Yesh Atid released a statement Friday, saying that the “talks are making progress in a cordial atmosphere”.

According to reports Thursday evening, [the two sides have reached preliminary agreements](https://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/305726) ahead of the formation of a unity government.

**According to one report, the first agreement is on the issue of the Finance Committee. In order to balance between the designated Finance Minister, Avigdor Liberman, while seeking to appease the haredim**, Bennett and Lapid agreed that the committee would be headed by a representative from the right-wing bloc, or at least a right-leaning Knesset member.

In addition, the forthcoming agreement between Bennett and Lapid will stipulate that even if the state budget is not passed, the Knesset will not be dispersed. In order to do so, they will have to pass amendments to the Basic Law of Government, and this will be done only after the coalition is sworn in. **MORE -**<https://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/305742>

**'Social Justice ideology is pernicious, antithetical to Judaism'**

***50 prominent American Jewish figures, including Stephen Pinker and Bret Stephens, denounce 'social justice' ideology as 'pernicious'.***

*Asaf Shalev, JTA , May 07 , 2021 1:47 PM*

**An open letter signed by about 50 prominent Jewish Americans is warning of the rise of “social justice ideology,” which is described as a “pernicious” force that is “antithetical to Judaism” and threatens to stifle free debate and democratic values in the United** States.

**The group that organized the letter and many of its signatories say they were inspired by last year’s Harper’s letter, which made a similar argument about censorship of unpopular opinions in the public sph**ere.

Signatories of the so-called “Jewish Harper’s letter” include prominent center-right writers Bret Stephens, Bari Weiss and Seth Mandel, major academics and authors such as Stephen Pinker and Daniel Gordis, as well as rabbis like David Wolpe of Sinai Temple in Los Angeles.

**They were brought together by a new initiative called the Jewish Institute for Liberal Va**lues.

The **letter calls on Jews to take action against the “suppression of dissent”** that is said to be dominating the United States.

“Jewish tradition cherishes debate, respects disagreement, and values questions as well as answers,” the letter says. “We members of the Jewish community add our voices to the growing chorus supporting our liberal principles, opposing the imposition of ideology, encouraging open discussions of challenging topics, and committing to achieving a more just America.” <https://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/305750>

**Canada confirms it will not take part in Durban IV**

***Canadian lawmaker says the federal government will not be taking part in Durban IV.***

*Ben Ariel , May 07 , 2021 5:59 AM*

**A Canadian lawmaker said on Thursday that the Canadian federal government will not be taking part** [**in Durban IV**](https://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/299164)**, which will mark the 20th anniversary events of the international conference that singled out Israel for condemnation, The Canadian Press repor**ted.

Liberal MP Anthony Housefather wrote in a Twitter post that Ottawa confirmed it will avoid the gathering in South Africa which “continues to be used to push anti-Israel sentiment and as a forum for anti-Semitism.”

The event, slated for September 22 and authorized by the United Nations, will mark 20 years since the World Conference on Racism in Durban.

**With Thursday’s announcement, Canada joined the United States and Australia in boycotting Durban** IV.

**Canada’s announcement that it will not participate in the conference came a day after B’nai Brith Canada and the Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center (FSWC)** [**called on the Canadian government**](https://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/305659) **to take a principled stand in defense of its core values by disavowing the Durban IV c**onference.

Both organizations on Thursday welcomed Canada’s decision.

"By publicly stating it will not participate in Durban IV, Canada is making it clear that it stands against the ugly antisemitism and anti-Israel hate the conference is known for," said Jaime Kirzner-Roberts, Director of Policy at FSWC. "We commend Canada for its principled position and for joining other countries, including the U.S. and Australia, in boycotting the upcoming conference."

“We’re very encouraged to see that the government is adhering to its own values and maintaining the standards of its past record of boycotting the profoundly flawed Durban process,” said Michael Mostyn, Chief Executive Officer of B’nai Brith Canada. “Anti-Semitism must never be dismissed or ignored, no matter what forum it’s coming from.”

<https://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/305730>

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**05/06/2021 NEWS AM**

**יונינהיונינה- חי | Yonina- Chai**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JDHwA72PXiw>

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| **Ani Od Chai Chai Chai, Ken Ani Od Chai, Ze Hashir Shesaba Shar Etmol Le'aba, Vehayom Ani**  **Translation: I am still alive, yes I am. This is the song that my grandfather sang yesterday to my father, and today I sing it as well.** |

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| **"To achieve world government, it is necessary to remove from the minds of men, their individualism, loyalty to family traditions, national patriotism and religious dogmas." -- Dr. G. Brock Chisolm (1896-1971) Canadian World War I veteran, medical practitioner, first Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO), first head of the World Federation of Mental Health** |

**Read the Prophets & PRAY WITHOUT CEASING!**

**That is the only hope for this nation!**

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| **Please**  **Remember**  **These**  **Folks**  **In**  **Prayer-**  **Check often**  **They**  **Change!** | **Pray that the world would WAKE UP! Time for a worldwide repentance!**  **ALL US soldiers fighting for our freedom around the world**  **Pray for those in our government to repent of their wicked corrupt ways.**  **Pray for AB family – Wife just diagnosed with brain tumor**  **Pray for EL – multiple problems**  **Pray for AS – post knee replacement – some problems and another one scheduled.**  **Pray for TR – abnormal Mammogram having double biopsy – Mastectomy Scheduled**  **Pray for ZH - having trouble with PTSD**  **Pray for LAC – recurrent cancer getting treatment**  **Pray for KL – troubling spiritual situation.**  **Pray for Ella – emotionally disturbed abused child and brother with ? heart problem**  **Pray for JN – Neuro disease**  **Pray for MS – Job issues and change**  **Pray for BB – Severe West Nile Fever –still not mobile- improving!**  **Pray for RBH – cancer recurrence**  **Pray for Felicia – post op problems – continuing**  **Pray for SH and family – lady’s husband passed away and she is in Nursing home. Not doing well.**  **Pray for MP – Very complex problems**  **Pray that The Holy One will lead you in Your preparations for handling the world problems. – Have YOU made any preparations**? |

**Genesis 27:18And he went in to his father and said, My father. And he said, Behold me. Who *are* you, my son? 19And Jacob said to his father, I *am* your first-born, Esau. I have done as you said to me. Rise up now, sit and eat of my game, so that your soul may bless me. 20And Isaac said to his son, How then have you *quickly* found *it*, my son? And he said, Because Jehovah your God made it come to me.**

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| **If you missed last nights Tucker Carlson you missed an amazing “REVEAL” on the status of the JAB and what it is doing to people. Here is a link – well worth the listen!**  **Tucker Carlson How Many People Have Died After COVID Vax No Questions Allowed**  [**https://www.bitchute.com/video/D31L66lJ3KvX/**](https://www.bitchute.com/video/D31L66lJ3KvX/) |

**IDF carries out attacks on Hezbollah outposts - Syrian reports**

***This is the second consecutive night that Syrian media reports an attack attributed to the IDF in Syria.***

*By* [*JERUSALEM POST STAFF*](https://www.jpost.com/author/jerusalem-post-staff)*,* [*TZVI JOFFRE*](https://www.jpost.com/author/tzvi-joffre) *MAY 6, 2021 01:36*

**The IDF carried out attacks on Hezbollah outposts near Quneitra on the Syrian border Wednesday night, according to Syrian reports cited by Israeli media**.

**This is the second consecutive night that Syrian media reports an attack attributed to the IDF in S**yria.

On Tuesday, an alleged Israeli airstrike [targeted a site](https://www.jpost.com/breaking-news/explosions-heard-near-syrias-mediterranean-port-cities-667229) near Latakia and Tartus along Syria’s Mediterranean coast, according to the Syrian state news agency SANA.

A civilian was killed and six were injured, including a child, according to Syrian media.

The last alleged Israeli airstrikes in Syria were reported late last month after a surface-to-air missile was fired from Syria and exploded near the nuclear reactor in Dimona in southern Israel. The missile was reportedly fired in response to an alleged Israeli strike in Syria. <https://www.jpost.com/breaking-news/idf-carries-out-attacks-on-hezbollah-outposts-syrian-reports-667333>

**Netanyahu slams political adversaries after Lapid receives mandate**

***Premier attacks Yamina's Naftali Bennett and Ayelet Shaked, who he accuses of misleading his Likud party and voters by intending to form a 'dangerous left-wing government' with Labor, Meretz and Yesh Atid***

*Moran Azulay | Published: 05.05.21 , 20:47*

**Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu lambasted Yamina chair Naftali Bennett, who announced he would pursue a broad emergency government instead of siding with Netanyahu’s Likud**.

**Netanyahu’s attack came shortly after President Reuven Rivlin announced he had given the mandate to form a government to Yesh Atid leader Yair Lapid, after Netanyahu himself fai**led to do so.



***Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu during the presser (Photo: Contact)***

**"When [Bennett] met with us he had only one demand - to be prime minister. He raised this demand not only in private, but in all the meetings between the negotiating teams,” said Netany**ahu.

**"Now it has become clear to us that his goal was to waste time until the transfer of the mandate and to form a dangerous government with the le**ft, where he will receive two years as prime minister," added Netanyahu, who further accused Bennett of misleading his voters.

**“Bennett spoke today about a unity government. It is merely a laundering of words a**nd an attempt to deceive the public,” he said.



***Naftali Bennett (Photo: Yonatan Zindel)***

**"Everyone knows that he wants to form a dangerous left-wing govern**ment. Can you protect IDF soldiers from the International Criminal Court with [Meretz head Nitzan] Horowitz? Can you fight the nuclear agreement with Iran with Lapid? Can you educate our kids with [Labor chair Merav] Michaeli?" he added.

 **“Bennett and Ayelet Shaked have both sworn to the public not to form a government with Lapid, Meretz and Labo**r. Bennett even signed a written commitment the day before the elections. Now though, they are doing the exact opposite.”

***Yesh Atid leader Yair Lapid (Photo: EPA)***

**Netanyahu later called on Bennett, Shaked as well as other right-wing Knesset members who refused to side with him to "not deceive the public**.”

"If you stand with the right, you decide the fate of this campaign. With a solid right-wing bloc of 59 seats, we will have a government,” added Netanyahu.

<https://www.ynetnews.com/article/BJ11nIUlu00>  **[Sounds a bit like the little 3 year old that didn’t get his way and now it is everyone’s fault but their own. Bibi has really come down and shown his most negative character since all this began. – rdb]**

**Settlers to sue B'Tselem for alleging they set Palestinian fields ablaze**

***The Samaria Regional Council plans to sue the left-wing NGO B'Ttselem for slander after it alleged that settlers had set fire to fields near a Palestinian village.***

*By* [*TOVAH LAZAROFF*](https://www.jpost.com/author/tovah-lazaroff) *MAY 5, 2021 20:50*

**The Samaria Regional Council plans to sue the left-wing NGO B’Tselem for slander after it alleged that settlers from Yitzhar had set fire to fields near the Palestinian village of Buri**n.

**Overnight** [**B’Tselem**](https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/btselem-for-first-time-labels-israel-an-apartheid-state-655109) **tweeted a dramatic nighttime photo of the village with the flames burning in the background. In the tweet it stated, “settlers torched Palestinian fields in Bu**rin.”

**At 8:10 a.m. it also sent a release to the media about it, but within two hours, at 10:07, it retracted the charg**es.

“The fires in Burin tonight are being re-examined. I will update with any new information I have,” B’Tselem stated. No further information was provided.

**Samaria Regional Council head Yossi Dagan said the actual story was precisely the opposite. Palestinians “were the ones that ignited the fire that threatened residents**’ homes.”



***The fires near Burin (photo credit: B'TSELEM)***

**The IDF told The Jerusalem Post it had evidence that Palestinians had ignited the fields. It added that when settlers arrived to douse the flames altercations broke out between Palestinians and settl**ers.

**Dagan said the initial tweets had been shared 2,000 times including by the left-wing N**GO B’Tselem. The Council and Yitzhar have now asked an attorney to prepare a defamation case against B’Tselem.

**“At night, the Arab residents of the village lit a fire that endangered the lives of the Jews, and in the morning their extreme-Left friends lit a fire of hatred against the settlers**,” Dagan said. He warned that the settlers were not “suckers” and that “from today” they would not “remain silent” on the topic of defamation and slander, Dagan said.

“Freedom of expression is a sacred value, but not freedom of expression and defamation,” he added.

**Dagan’s charges against B’Tselem come amid an upsurge in allegations of settler and Jewish extremist viole**nce against Palestinians in the aftermath of Sunday’s drive-by shooting attack by a Palestinian, in which three teens were injured, including two seriously.

The international community has also increasingly focused on the issue of Jewish extremist and settler [violence](https://www.jpost.com/arab-israeli-conflict/night-of-west-bank-violence-followed-shooting-attack-on-three-israelis-667074) against Palestinians.

According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs there have been 97 attacks against Palestinian property and 30 acts of physical violence against Palestinians as of April 26th of this year.

Last year there were 270 attacks against Palestinian property and 63 physical attacks, according to OCHA. <https://www.jpost.com/arab-israeli-conflict/settlers-to-sue-btselem-for-alleging-they-set-palestinian-fields-ablaze-667300>

**Student, 19, dies of injuries after West Bank drive-by shooting**

***Victim of terror attack on Sunday identified as Yehuda Guetta of Jerusalem; IDF apprehends suspected gunman during raid on house in village where he was hiding out***

*By* [*TOI staff*](https://www.timesofisrael.com/writers/times-of-israel-staff/) *Today, 11:56 pm*

[](https://static.timesofisrael.com/www/uploads/2021/05/20210505_233815-1-e1620247493663.jpg)

***Yehuda Guetta, 19, was killed in a drive-by shooting in the West Bank (courtesy)***

**A 19-year-old student who was shot in the head in a drive-by shooting attack at Tapuah Junction in the West Bank earlier this week has died of his injuries, the hospital treating him announced Wednesday night**.

**Less than an hour later, the Shin Bet security** [**announced**](https://www.timesofisrael.com/shin-bet-says-its-apprehended-palestinian-shooter-in-deadly-west-bank-drive-by/) **that it had apprehended the suspect in the** attack.

Yehuda Guetta, a Jerusalem resident, was among three students shot at the bus stop on Sunday in the northern West Bank terror attack.

**All three were studying in a religious seminary in the nearby settlement of Itamar. Guetta is survived by his parents, four brothers and two sisters. His funeral was set to take place Thursday morning at 11 a.m. local time at the Givat Shaul cemetery**. **MORE -** <https://www.timesofisrael.com/student-shot-in-west-bank-drive-by-shooting-dies-of-injuries/>

**Palestinian suspect in West Bank shooting attack said to have US citizenship**

***Residents of Muntasir Shalabi’s hometown claim he spent years in US, recently returned from trip there and was reportedly in financial straits due to gambling debts***

*By* [*TOI staff*](https://www.timesofisrael.com/writers/times-of-israel-staff/) *Today, 4:51 pm*

***[](https://static.timesofisrael.com/www/uploads/2021/05/F210504STR02.jpg)IDF soldiers searching in the village of Aqraba, near the West Bank city of Nablus for a gunman who injured three Israeli teenagers, May 4, 2021. (Flash90)***

**Muntasir Shalabi, identified in Palestinian media as the main suspect in a drive-by shooting attack this week that wounded three Israelis, has United States citizenship, residents of his West Bank hometown told the Haaretz daily on Tuesda**y.

**Shalabi, 47, has been on the run since the Sunday shooting at the Tapuah Junction, which seriously wounded two Israeli teenagers and lightly injured a thir**d. Security forces launched a major manhunt to find him.

**According to residents of Turmus Ayya, Shalabi recently returned from a trip to the US and was in financial straits after losing money gambling. He had previously spent several years in the US, they** said.

**Several of Shalabi’s relatives were arrested overnight Tuesday, including his wife and a number of her family members in Turmas Ayya** and in the nearby village of Aqraba, where the car used in the terror attack was found.

Shalabi’s 17-year-old son was arrested earlier in the week.

Detained family members are not cooperating with investigators and are denying he was involved in the attack, according to Haaretz.

Shalabi’s wife was released Wednesday, according to Hebrew media reports.



***Israeli soldiers and police at the scene of shooting attack in Tapuah Junction, south of the West Bank city of Nablus, on May 2, 2021 (Sraya Diamant/Flash90)***

**Early Tuesday, security forces also arrested a number of other people in Aqraba. The detainees were suspected of aiding the gunman, according to the Kan public broad**caster.

The IDF said security forces had seized the car used in the attack, a gray Hundai that was found Monday in the village of Aqraba.  Photos of the car began circulating on Palestinian social media showing that it was hit by at least two bullets, one of which shattered the back windshield and the other hit the trunk door. That matched the claims by soldiers at the scene, who said they returned fire at the vehicle after the driver shot the three Israeli teenagers.

**Shortly after the vehicle was spotted outside Aqraba, clashes broke out between IDF soldiers who arrived at the scene and Palestinian locals, who managed to set the vehicle alight before it was seized by the** troops.

**According to Beilinson Hospital, where the three injured Israelis were taken, one of the victims, Yehuda Guetta, 19, from Jerusalem, remained in critical condition with a head wound as** of Tuesday morning, and doctors feared for his life.

Benaya Peretz, 19, from Beit She’an, who was shot in the back, remained in very serious condition. The third victim, Amichai Hala from Safed, also 19, was released from the hospital to recover from his wounds at home.

The attack came amid heightened tensions in the West Bank after the Palestinian Authority announced it was indefinitely delaying elections planned for later this month, blaming the decision on ostensible Israeli refusal to allow PA voting in East Jerusalem.

The IDF also bolstered its forces in the West Bank for the month of Ramadan, a period that regularly sees an uptick in violence.

Sunday’s shooting was followed by several apparent retaliatory attacks by Israeli settlers, including the storming of a Jaloud village in the predawn hours of Monday morning, where Israelis from the nearby Shloh settlement threw rocks and stun grenades and started fires. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/palestinian-suspect-in-west-bank-shooting-attack-said-to-have-us-citizenship/> **[So which of the wizards of Washington allowed or promoted the importation of this criminal from the “PA” territory? Is he the product of the Bush Islamic love affair or that of the Obamanation? – rdb]**

**Wounded IDF veterans block highway to Jerusalem, demand reform of rehab care**

***Protest comes as government approval of One Soul, the Defense Ministry plan to improve treatment for disabled ex-soldiers, is held up by fighting over funding***

*By* [*TOI staff*](https://www.timesofisrael.com/writers/times-of-israel-staff/) *Today, 4:18 pm*

[](https://static.timesofisrael.com/www/uploads/2021/05/F210505YS32.jpg)

***Israeli veterans and disabled IDF soldiers block Route 1 at the entrance to Jerusalem protesting for better financial and medical support, on May 5, 2021. (Yonatan Sindel/FLASH90)***

**Dozens of wounded IDF veterans blocked traffic at the entrance to Jerusalem Wednesday as part of a protest calling on the government to approve plans to provide better care for injured ex-serviceme**n.

**Before blocking Route 1, the protesters rallied outside the Knesset, with some scuffling with parliamentary security when they tried to move barricades** at the Knesset entrance, according to the Kan public broadcaster.

Government approval of the Defense Ministry plan for improving the treatment for wounded veterans, called One Soul, is being [held up by infighting](https://www.timesofisrael.com/plan-to-reform-care-for-veterans-stalls-as-netanyahu-gantz-quarrel-over-funding/) over funding.

**“We cannot be lied to, we will not stop protesting until the reform is fully implemented**,” said Idan Kliman, head of the IDF Disabled Veterans Organization, according to Channel 12.



***Israeli veterans and disabled IDF soldiers protest outside the Knesset, demanding better financial and medical aid and support, May 5, 2021. (Yonatan Sindel/FLASH90)***

**During the protest, demonstrators laid memorial candles on top of the bronze menorah outside Knesset.** Labor MK Omer Bar-Lev, a former IDF colonel, came out to greet the crowd, but they interrupted him, chanting: “Only by force — not by words — only by deeds will our struggle succeed,” said the network.

**“All the fighters who are here have a common denominator: they lie awake at night,”** shouted protester Raphael Francia in front of the Knesset.

**“I want to explain to the Knesset members who sleep well at night: You are causing an unforgivable i**njustice.”

“Finance minister, we are disabled IDF soldiers — it is thanks to us that you are sitting here and today you are neglect us. You should be ashamed – we protected Israel and today you kick us,” he added.

The Defense Ministry’s much-maligned Rehabilitation Department came under heightened scrutiny after a veteran with PTSD, Itzik Saidyan, who had struggled to receive help from the ministry, [set himself on fire](https://www.timesofisrael.com/ptsd-afflicted-idf-veteran-sets-himself-alight-suffers-serious-burns/) outside the department’s offices in Petah Tikva last month. He remains in serious condition.

Another group of demonstrators gathered outside the Rehabilitation Department on Wednesday. Some of them poured water on themselves from jerrycans in solidarity with Saidyan, who poured flammable liquid on his body before setting himself alight. A Defense Ministry official confiscated the containers, according to Channel 12.

**Saidyan’s sister, Leah, also spoke in protest: “My heart is with you. I very much hope that they will finally listen to us and help rehabilitate the people who are the reason we have this s**tate.”

בעקבות חילוקי הדעות על סבסוד התקציב בין האוצר למשרד הביטחון: נכי צהל צועדים לעבר שדרות בגין וחוסמים את הצירים המרכזיים בירושלים [pic.twitter.com/skVelYbOQ5](https://t.co/skVelYbOQ5)

— מעריב אונליין (@MaarivOnline) [May 5, 2021](https://twitter.com/MaarivOnline/status/1389879478592094208?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Plans to reform the Defense Ministry’s Rehabilitation Department to provide better care for wounded veterans came to a halt this week as political rivals Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defense Minister Benny Gantz fought over the source of funding for the NIS 350 million ($108 million) proposal.

**The cabinet was due to discuss the proposal last week, but that was postponed due to a fight within the government over the appointment of a justice minister**. The discussion was rescheduled to Sunday, but was again delayed as the cabinet canceled its meeting out of respect for the 45 people who were killed in the Mount Meron disaster last week.

The **Prime Minister’s Office blamed the holdup on the Defense Ministry,** saying it should be responsible for providing at least NIS 75 million ($23 million) of the funding for the program in 2021, and NIS 150 million ($46 million) in 2022 from its existing budget.

The **Defense Ministry attacked the financial proposal**, arguing it had been promised an assigned budget to implement the reform. A Defense Ministry official told Channel 12: “This is not a plan, this is a work in progress.”

“The prime minister and finance minister lied to wounded IDF veterans and bear full responsibility for not passing the proposal. We had discussions and made decisions, but Netanyahu and Katz chose instead to withdraw and flee,” he said.

The Rehabilitation Department has long been criticized, both by veterans’ groups and in government probes, for having an excessively complicated and difficult system of establishing if an applicant can be recognized as having injuries caused by or during their military service. The process can in some cases take several years, during which the applicant may not be eligible to receive required assistance. This is considered especially true for veterans suffering from PTSD, who can be subjected to probes by Defense Ministry investigators looking for reasons why their conditions may not have been caused by their military service. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/wounded-idf-veterans-block-highway-to-jerusalem-demand-reform-of-rehab-care/> **[It seems that there is a major problem at taking responsibility for an issue. It will be interesting to see what happens with the Meron fiasco investigation and see if this problem persists**

**Israel to extend Green Pass for the vaccinated and recovered until end of 2021**

***Health Ministry says COVID vaccines appear to provide protection against coronavirus through at least December***

*By* [*TOI staff*](https://www.timesofisrael.com/writers/times-of-israel-staff/) *Today, 6:31 pm*

**The Health Ministry announced Wednesday that it will be extending the validity of the Green Pass for those vaccinated against COVID-19 or who have recovered from coronavirus, throu**gh 2021.

The pass grants holders access to certain events and venues.

**A ministry statement attributed Health Minister Yuli Edelstein’s decision to the continued decline in morbidity “and the fact it appears the vaccine will protect us until at least the end of t**he year.”

**Chezy Levy, the director-general of the ministry, said he was “happy that the vaccines protect us and allow to get back to routine,**” but urged Israelis to continue to take measures such as masking indoors and social distancing.

**He also said there was still not enough information on how much protection vaccines offer against corona**virus variants.

**The announcement comes a day after the coronavirus cabinet approved a plan to allow the removal of almost all remaining restrictions at sports events, gyms and public** pools.

**According to the plan, there will be no limit in attendance at sports events for Green Pass holders**. For children — who are not yet vaccinated — indoor cultural events will be allowed to hold 50 attendees and outdoor ones 500. Gyms and public pools will run according to a separate “purple pass” system, under which those who are not vaccinated will be able to enter but distancing rules will remain.

Ministers also voted to end capacity limits in taxis and scrap the requirement to purchase a ticket in advance before riding the train.   
 The new regulations, part of a plan reached by Culture and Sports Minister Chili Tropper along with Edelstein, will go into effect on Thursday.   
 The number of COVID-19 patients in serious condition [dropped below 100 this week](https://www.timesofisrael.com/serious-covid-19-cases-in-israel-drop-below-100-for-1st-time-since-july/), the lowest level since last July as Israel’s world-leading vaccination campaign continued to show its effect.   
 According to Health Ministry data, there were 90 people whose condition was defined as serious as of Wednesday afternoon, with 55 of them on ventilators.  
 There were 72 new coronavirus cases diagnosed in the country over Tuesday, taking the total number since the pandemic began to 838,739. There were 1,212 active cases. According to the ministry, 39,471 coronavirus tests were conducted Tuesday, with 0.2 percent returning positive. The death toll stood at 6,369.  
 **With its aggressive vaccination drive, Israel has seen a sharp drop in daily mortality and infection rates since the pandemic peaked in late January**.  
 Late last month, Israel [passed the milestone](https://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-crosses-milestone-of-5-million-fully-vaccinated-against-covid-19/) of 5 million people receiving both vaccine shots.  
 According to the Health Ministry, 5,065,020 people have now received two doses of the vaccine, accounting for over 60% of the total population and more than 80% of the eligible population over the age of 16. A total of 5,410,942 people have received at least one shot.  
 The country is preparing to start vaccinating children aged 12-15 as soon as the US Food and Drug Administration approves vaccine use for children in that age bracket, which a US federal official [said](https://www.timesofisrael.com/us-fda-expected-to-ok-pfizer-vaccine-for-kids-aged-12-15-within-week/) Monday was expected for the Pfizer vaccine by next week.

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-to-extend-green-pass-for-the-vaccinated-and-recovered-until-end-of-2021/>

**44 Israeli experiments to join Israel's next astronaut to space**

***Most of the experiments are not for space-related technologies, but will test conditions in space that may lead to technological, scientific, and medical breakthroughs.***

*By* [*ZEV STUB*](https://www.jpost.com/author/zev-stub) *MAY 5, 2021 19:21*



***Eytan Stibbe discusses his upcoming space mission at the Peres Center for Peace and Innovation in Tel Aviv.(photo credit: ELAD MALKA)***

**The sky isn’t the limit for 44 Israeli research projects that are going to be carried out in outer space by**[**Eytan Stibbe**](https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/from-fighter-pilot-to-astronaut-meet-eitan-stibbe-649589)**as part of the Rakia mission at the beginning of 2**022.

**Stibbe is set to be Israel’s second astronaut to be sent to outer space in a mission to the**[**International Space Station**](https://www.jpost.com/breaking-news/three-astronauts-return-from-the-international-space-station-665408)**, led by the Science and Technology Ministry and the Ramon Foundation. Stibbe is funding the $50 million cost of his participation on the Ax-1** mission himself on what will be the first fully private crew in history to live and work aboard the ISS, run by the American company Axiom Space.

**While in space for 10 days, Stibbe will run a series of experiments created by Israeli start-ups, universities, and hospitals. Most of the experiments are not for space-related technologies, but will test conditions in space that may lead to technological, scientific and medical breakthroughs** that will influence human life on earth – and perhaps beyond.

**The goal of the mission is to inspire people to challenge their natural boundarie**s, as well as help develop and promote Israeli technologies, Stibbe told The Jerusalem Post.

**“As the mission gets closer, I’m getting more and more excited as I see the attraction to the mission of not only scientists and adults, but also kids and young scientist**s,” he said. “I hope it will be as widespread as possible, not only for people interested in science and mathematics and engineering, but also to those in the humanities, psychology, the arts, philosophy, and anyone inspired by the notion of space and being able to step outside and look at ourselves from another perspective.”

**The projects that were chosen, which were revealed Wednesday at a ceremony at the Peres Center for Peace and Innovation in Tel Aviv, span a wide breadth of disciplines, with about 60% of the projects coming from university researcher**s.

**In one experiment, an innovative lithium-ion battery will be tested under microgravity conditions in the hope of perfecting a process that may lead to rapid charging of the batteries found in most electrical and electronic de**vices.

**Another experiment, initiated by the oncology department at Schneider Children’s Medical Center for Israel, will attempt to characterize leukemia cells under microgravity conditions in both the presence and the absence of chemotherapy, comparing the findings to similar** experiments on earth.

**A third experiment, designed by researchers from the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering at Technion-Israel Institute of Technology in collaboration with researchers at NASA, will investigate the possibility of producing high-quality optic lenses while in space.** This could help scientists position large telescopes in space, greatly increasing the range of space exploration.

“The large number of experiments positions Rakia as the most significant private-manned mission in history,” said Ran Livne, CEO of the Ramon Foundation and head of the Rakia mission. “Just last week, we met with senior SpaceX and NASA officials who were astonished by the large number and wide range of experiments Eytan is going to carry out in space. We believe in Israeli science and technology, and we anticipate scientific discoveries that will impact human life on earth and in space. We are now working with the Science and Technology Ministry to help the chosen experiments to raise money to prepare, test and pack them – and then send them into space.”

**In December, the Ramon Foundation issued a call for proposals for experiments to be carried out on the ISS**. The experiments were selected by a committee headed by Inbal Kreiss, a top expert in the Israeli space industry and head of Innovation Systems Missiles & Space Division at Israel Aerospace Industries.

The experiments will be sent to the ISS, conditional on raising funds to cover their cost, compliance with the mission’s timetable and obtaining NASA’s approval. Some 20%-30% may not be ultimately accepted. The Israel Space Agency in the Science and Technology Ministry will issue a call for assistance in fundraising once the state’s budget has been approved. The Ramon Foundation also will help find alternative sources of funding.

**Stibbe, 63, is a former Israeli fighter pilot and businessman. In the 1982 Lebanon War, he gained IDF recognition when he shot down four enemy aircraft during a single sortie.** As an entrepreneur, Stibbe has more than 30 years of experience developing infrastructure projects in Africa and making impact investments in developing markets.

**Stibbe’s commander in the IAF was Ilan Ramon, who in 2003 became the first-ever Israeli to fly in spac**e. Tragically, Ramon was killed when his Columbia mission was destroyed upon reentering earth after the historic NASA flight. The Ramon Foundation, founded in his honor, is leading Stibbe’s space trip, which Stibbe dedicated to the memory of his former commander.

**The mission title, “Rakia,” is a Hebrew word for heaven,** and was the title of the book published with the fragments of Ramon’s diary, which was excavated from the crash. <https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/44-israeli-experiments-to-join-israels-next-astronaut-to-space-667270>

**Iraq has hosted more than one round of Saudi-Iranian talks, president says**

***Diplomats hope direct channels between Tehran and Riyadh will signal a calming of tensions across the Mideast after years of hostilities that have brought the region close to a full-scale conflict***

*Reuters | Published: 05.05.21 , 19:00*

**Iraq has hosted more than one round of talks between regional foes Iran and Saudi Arabia, Iraqi President Barham Salih said on Wednesd**ay.

**Salih made his remarks during an interview broadcast live online with the Beirut Institute think ta**nk. He gave no more details.



***Iraqi President Barham Salih (Photo: Reuters)***

**Diplomats hope the opening of direct channels between Iran and Saudi Arabia will signal a calming of tensions across the Middle East after years of hostilities that have brought the region close to a full-scale conf**lict.

**Baghdad hosted talks between officials from its two neighbors and mutual adversaries on April 9 in the only round of talks to have been previously reporte**d.

Asked how many rounds of Saudi-Iranian talks Iraq had hosted, Salih **replied: "More than once**."

**Washington and Tehran have engaged in indirect talks in Vienna that seek to revive an international pact reached in 2015 that constrained Iran's nuclear ambiti**ons in return for sanctions relief.

Former U.S. President Donald Trump pulled out the deal in 2018 and imposed harsh sanctions on Iran and its regional allies, increasing tension as Iran-backed militias attacked U.S. forces in Iraq and a series of attacks hit oil installations and tankers in the Gulf, where Washington counts Arab states such as Saudi among its close allies.

The killing of Iranian general Qassem Soleimani in a U.S. airstrike in Baghdad in January 2020 brought the region close to war. Iran responded with limited missile strikes against a U.S. base in Iraq, the first such direct attack, but took no further action.

**Iraqis hope for a general regional detente that would allow their country to rebuild instead of being used as an arena for U.S., Gulf Arab and Iranian score-se**ttling.

Iraq is trying to rein in powerful Iran-backed militias and deal with a resurgent Islamic State - the Sunni hardline Islamist group that took over a third of Iraq in 2014 and was beaten militarily in 2017 by U.S. forces, the Iraqi military, Kurdish fighters and Iran-aligned paramilitaries.

"The war against ISIS (Islamic State) and terrorism cannot be won by (only) military means," Salih said. "We have succeeded in liberating our land with the help of our friends but terrorism remains."

He added that he wished to see a solution to the Iran-U.S. rivalry that has fuelled violence in Iraq. <https://www.ynetnews.com/article/ryobYVedO>

**Iran Guards chief threatens to disrupt Israeli maritime trade operations**

***Hossein Salami says recent attacks on ships show how vulnerable sea routes are, claims spate of industrial incidents at key facilities in Israel have burst ‘security bubble’***

*By* [*TOI staff*](https://www.timesofisrael.com/writers/times-of-israel-staff/) *Today, 2:29 pm*

**The commander-in-chief of Iran’s powerful Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, , Major General Hossein Salami, said Wednesday that Iran can easily disrupt Israel’s sea trade routes, which he said recent attacks on cargo ships have shown to be vulnerable**.

**Salami spoke about the shadow maritime war between Tehran and Jerusalem d**uring an interview he gave to Iranian television on the eve of Quds Day, Iran’s day of protest against Israel, held on the last Friday of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan.

**Referring to a recent spate of attacks on Israeli-owned cargo ships that were blamed on Iran, Salami said the incidents showed that “the Zionist regime’s shipping and commercial shipping are vulnerable anywhere in the w**orld,” according to the semi-official Fars News Agency.

“No one thought that the Zionist regime would have such great damage in the field of maritime trade. It is very easy to seriously disrupt the Zionist regime’s maritime trade,” Salami said.

**The general further claimed that Israel’s national security infrastructure was “fragile,” citing recent incident**s including a rocket motor test at an air defense systems factory that [created a large fireball](https://www.timesofisrael.com/big-blast-at-rocket-factory-jolts-central-israel-in-controlled-test/) as part of what officials said was a planned test, a recent fire at a Haifa oil refinery, another blaze near Ben Gurion Airport, a [cyberattack on Israeli companies](https://www.timesofisrael.com/hm-israel-said-targeted-by-iranian-cyberattack/), and a [claim of an attack on a Mossad post](https://www.timesofisrael.com/kurds-officially-deny-pro-iran-media-claim-of-attack-on-mossad-base-in-iraq/) in northern Iraq that was dismissed as false by local authorities.

Israel’s national “security bubble” has burst as a result of the incidents, Salami asserted.

**He added that Israel’s political turmoil, which has seen four inconclusive elections in two years, was bringing an end to the count**ry. **[Herein is the key to their brash claims. The world sees the tremendous discord going on in Israel and their inability to come to any cohesive government which makes them vulnerable. Just as has happened in the past it shall happen again that the world will take advantage of their self-serving attitudes and try to attack and destroy them but this time The Holy One Himself will intervene – rdb]**

**“The Israelis are in a state of decline and are living in a political sunse**t, and this time it seems that the collapse of the Zionist regime can be from within,” Salami said.

**“We are witnessing the loss of social cohesion in their political inefficiency and political turmoil,**” he said, also referring to the weekly protests outside Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s official residence in which demonstrators have called on him to resign.

“So far, they have held four elections to appoint a prime minister, but they have not been able to do so and will probably go to the fifth election,” he said.

Salami also asserted that US influence in the region was on the decline and that it could no longer help its allies — Israel and Saudi Arabia in particular.

“We see fragility and vulnerability in the Israeli national security system, but the United States cannot help the Zionist regime,” the Fars news agency quoted him saying. **MORE -** <https://www.timesofisrael.com/iran-guards-chief-threatens-to-disrupt-israeli-maritime-trade-operations/>

**Sidney Powell: America is now a 'Communist regime'**

***'They're feeding lies to the American people very single day'***

*By* [*Bob Unruh*](https://www.wnd.com/author/runruh/) *Published May 5, 2021 at 7:42pm*

**One of the lawyers who fought, without a lot of success, to have evidence of fraud in the 2020 presidential election reviewed by the courts in America has delivered a harsh verdict on the state of the nation under President Joe** Biden.

Sidney Powell, a former federal prosecutor, worked on cases that, had they succeeded, would have been to the benefit of President Trump.

**They argued various state election systems mishandled mailed ballots, absentee ballots and even suggested fraudulent ballots, with huge dumps of votes all for Biden sometimes appearing in the dark-of-the-nig**ht hours.

**She was interviewed on The Talk of Pittsburgh radio, the Rose Unplugge**d show.

**"The world is absolutely upside down because this country is upside down," she charged. "They're feeding lies to the American people very single day. Just the fact that they're saying Biden is president is a lie because we've still got to resolve the election is**sue."

**While the allegations of deception and mishandling of ballots never got reviewed – most judges dismissed the cases on technicalities – what is not in question is that in multiple states where Biden narrowly was the winner state officials changed state laws to accommodate som**e ballots.

**The difficulty with that is that the Constitution requires state lawmakers to control those v**ariables.

[The Gateway Pundit](https://www.thegatewaypundit.com/2021/05/sidney-powell-living-communist-totalitarian-regime-audio/) explained Powell said, "**We are living under a Communist totalitarian regime**. If the voting machine companies had nothing to hide, they wouldn’t be hiding anything."

She charged there were millions of fraudulent votes for Biden in 2020.

Even after her lawsuits over the election were closed down, Powell remained unshaken.

Earlier, she [told Erskine Radio in an interview](https://www.iheart.com/podcast/966-erskine-radio-54283773/episode/ltg-michael-flynn-sidney-powell-78148871/) that there **is "more than enough evidence in the public now to more than reverse the election in at least five states**."

"There’s all kind of precedent for fixing what happened in this election from Bush vs. Gore to other cases as well," she said, [the Gateway Pundit reported](https://www.thegatewaypundit.com/2021/02/sidney-powell-live-enough-evidence-public-now-reverse-election-least-5-states-video/).

**Powell said the existence of "fractionalized votes" weighted in favor of Joe Biden, created by a computer algorithm, can be proved in multiple countie**s. And it could be proved across the country, she said, "if anybody would issue an order allowing inspection of the machines."

She noted that federal law calls for election records to be kept for 22 months.

"In this case it requires forensic evaluations of the machines and looking at all of the paper ballots. We already know that’s not going to match up," she said. "There were counterfeit ballots. People were saying, 'Oh, well they did a full audit in Georgia.' Well, if you just keep running the same counterfeit bill through the same counting machine you’re going to get the same result."

*Here the interview:*

**She said there's no reasonable explanation for the courts not having reviewed the evide**nce.

**Going on right now in Arizona is a fully audit of all 2.1 million ballots from Maricopa County. Results are expected in a couple of weeks but Democrats repeatedly have gone to court to try to have the results supp**ressed.

She noted that more than 5,000 people have signed sworn affidavits as witnesses of election anomalies or fraud.

Powell served in the Department of Justice for 10 years and for the last 20 years has devoted her private practice to federal appeals. She was the youngest assistant U.S attorney and later became chief of the appellate section for the Western and Northern Districts of Texas.

**Justices Clarence Thomas, Samuel Alito and Neil Gorsuch took a minority position at the Supreme Court when it rejected several election disputes, arguing that the court should have taken up election challenges from Penn**sylvania.

Thomas warned of "catastrophic" consequences if the court doesn't address the issue of authorities "changing the rules in the middle of the game."

[University of California at Irvine Professor Rick Hasen on his Election Law Blog](https://electionlawblog.org/?p=120941) wrote it's "a ticking time bomb" that the Supreme Court "is going to have to resolve."

Hasen wrote: "So why didn’t the court go further in this case? My guess is that it is either the fact that the case is moot (and the court would rather address the **issue in the context of a live case, but with lower stakes) or because the Trump cases are somewhat radioactive at the court.** Given former President Trump’s continued false statements that the election was stolen, the case would become a further vehicle to argue that the election results were illegitimate. It would thrust the court back in the spotlight on an issue the justices showed repeatedly they wanted to avoid.

"So the bottom line is that the independent state legislature doctrine hangs out there, as a ticking time bomb, waiting to go off in a future case," he said.

**Thomas said the Pennsylvania cases "provide us with an ideal opportunity to address just what authority non-legislative officials have to set election ru**les, and to do so well before the next election cycle."

"The refusal to do so is inexplicable."

He said there's little dispute about the facts:

The Constitution gives to each state legislature authority to determine the 'Manner' of federal elections. … Yet both before and after the 2020 election, nonlegislative officials in various states took it upon themselves to set the rules instead. As a result, we received an unusually high number of petitions and emergency applications contesting those changes. The petitions here present a clear example. The Pennsylvania Legislature established an unambiguous deadline for receiving mail-in ballots: 8 p.m. on election day. Dissatisfied, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court extended that deadline by three days. The court also ordered officials to count ballots received by the new deadline even if there was no evidence—such as a postmark—that the ballots were mailed by election day. That decision to rewrite the rules seems to have affected too few ballots to change the outcome of any federal election. But that may not be the case in the future. <https://www.wnd.com/2021/05/sidney-powell-america-now-communist-regime/> **[Considering the disastrous consequences of allowing a corrupt group of socialists, would be communists, to run the country (right into the ground) nothing about this contested election is moot. There is little if anything that has gone on since the Nov election that has made any since except for the fact that there is a HUGE deep state that needs to be wiped off the face of the earth. – rdb]**

**Pelosi: Spend $1 million on museum honoring Kavanaugh's accuser**

***Blasey Ford's claims that Supreme Court nominee assaulted her doubted even by friends***

*By* [*Bob Unruh*](https://www.wnd.com/author/runruh/) *Published May 5, 2021 at 3:51pm*

**Christine Blasey Ford became a celebrity for many in the anti-conservative population of Washington, D.C., when President Trump nominated Brett Kavanaugh to the U.S. Supreme Court, a position to which he later was confi**rmed.

**It's because he was considered conservative, and she accused him of assaulting her decades ago wh**en both were teenagers.

**Her story, however,** [**didn't even convince**](https://nypost.com/2019/09/17/christine-blasey-fords-friend-now-says-shes-skeptical-of-kavanaugh-accusation/) **her pals from that time per**iod.

The New York Post reported Leland Keyser, a friend of Blasey Ford's from high school in the 1980s, told two authors writing a book in 2019, "I don't have any confidence in the story. Those facts together I don't recollect, and it just didn't make any sense."

Keyser reported being at the party over which Blasey Ford made the allegations.

Ford claimed to the Senate Judiciary Committee considering Kavanaugh's nomination that he and his friend, Mark Judge, pushed her into a room and that Kavanaugh forced her onto a bed, tried to remove her bathing suit and attempted to rape her.

**According to a book, Keyser was under "pressure" at that time of the confirmation hearings and said she wouldn't contest Ford's stateme**nts.

**The book quoted Keyser saying, "I was told behind the scenes that certain things could be spread about me if I didn't comp**ly."

**Now House Speaker Nancy Pelosi wants to have taxpayers spend $1 million on a facility where Ford could be honored for her "courage**."

[Commentatory Sara Carter](https://saraacarter.com/pelosi-allocates-1-million-for-courage-museum-that-lauds-blasey-ford/) reported Pelosi, the California Democrat, wants to spend the million dollars on a "Courage Museum."

**The group proposing the idea is called Futures Without Violence, an organization dedicated to social j**ustice.

Carter reported previously the group issued various statements supporting and appreciating Ford over her decision to "speak out" on the issue.

"We believe that it is both Dr. Ford’s right and a public service for her to tell her story in a public forum and have it heard and judged on its merits," the organization has posted online. **[So basically even though there were investigations and hearings which failed to prove anything other than the fact that Ford was a lying idiot, the pig Pelosi thinks they need to keep the accusation against an innocent person alive. Someone needs to throttle that biddy until she wakes up to the stupidity and idiocy of her actions which would probably be never. – rdb]**

Just months ago, the group gave Ford a "Courage Award" and she spoke at a fundraiser there.

**Since FWV proposed the museum to the city of San Francisco in February, the organization has promised to "honor" Ford, Carter said**.

[NBC](https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/kavanaugh-accuser-christine-blasey-ford-makes-rare-appearance-accept-award-n1084696) reported Ford also was given an award from the ACLU of Southern California.

That "Rodger Baldwin Courage Award" was given to the psychology professor at Palo Alto University for her testimony against Kavanaugh.

She also got a similar award from the YWCA of Silicon Valley.

A column by Margot Cleveland at [USA Today](https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2018/10/03/christine-blasey-ford-changing-memories-not-credible-kavanaugh-column/1497661002/) in 2018 pointed out that Ford's "changing" story left her "short on credibility."

The column explained Rachel Mitchell, a sex-crimes prosecutor, saw Ford as "a witness lacking in credibility."

"The problem for Ford is not that she doesn’t remember everything: It is that everything she remembers changes at her convenience," the column explained. **MORE -** <https://www.wnd.com/2021/05/pelosi-spend-1-million-museum-honoring-kavanaughs-accuser/>

**Governor skewers 'statistics' on COVID-19 for inaccuracies**

**'Super spreader' event in Black Hills blamed for 267,000 cases, actually triggered 649**

*By* [*Bob Unruh*](https://www.wnd.com/author/runruh/) *Published May 5, 2021 at 5:38pm*

**The governor of South Dakota is skewering the "statistics" that the government releases and the media uses regarding the COVID-19 pandemic for their inaccurac**y.

Gov. Kristi Noem said this week that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention must have been basing its recommendations for mitigating the spread of COVID on politics – not medical data.

"We've all recognized that recently with the CDC they changed their opinion and their guidance based on political pressure at different times," she said.

In fact, among the most recent accusations is that teachers' unions across America have had an inordinate influence over guidance that is being released by health officials.

The issue in Noem's state concerned the Sturgis Motorcycle Rally held last year – in spite of leftist criticism and opposition.

**After the event, which attracted more than 460,000 people from 61% of all U.S. counties, according to the Sioux Falls** [**Argus-Leader,**](https://www.argusleader.com/story/news/2021/05/03/gov-kristi-noem-federal-covid-19-recommendations-based-politics/4931213001/) **it originally was blamed for 260,000 COVID cas**es.

**That blame was set by the Center for Health Economics and Policy Studies at San Diego State Univ**ersity – and came last September.

**But now, a report from the CDC, compiled from data from 39 state health agencies including South Dakota's, found only 649 positive cases of COVID-19 across the country in the two weeks following the 10-day** event in August that were tied to the Black Hills.

Noem said the inaccurate guesses and the headlines they generate are no more than an attempt to "demonize" the Sturgis event. **MORE -** <https://www.wnd.com/2021/05/governor-skewers-statistics-covid-19-inaccuracies/> [**If you haven’t figured out yet that this entire issue with Covid is a total and complete planned scam by a dangerous group of globalists (who want the world “reset” to convert it to socialism) on the world’s population to force a dangerous vaccine on people you are totally blind and need to go into a re-education program. – rdb]**

**Biden denies permit for veterans' Memorial Day event**

***Outrage in Congress over canceling of Rolling to Remember after 30 years***

*By* [*Art Moore*](https://www.wnd.com/author/amoorewnd-com/) *Published May 5, 2021 at 7:58pm*

**Prompting outrage in Congress, the Biden administration has canceled a permit for a Memorial Day charity event held annually in the nation's capital for the past three decades honoring war veter**ans.

**The Rolling to Remember motorcycle ride, formerly known as Rolling Thunder, brings scores of veterans and others to Washington, D.C., to commemorate war veterans**, including prisoners of war, those missing in action and those lost every day to suicide, [the Washington Free Beacon reported](https://freebeacon.com/biden-administration/biden-nixes-annual-rolling-thunder-event/).

**The host, the nonprofit group American Veterans, received approval from the Department of Transportation, the Department of the Interior and several state-based** agencies.

**The Pentagon approved a permit in March for the group to gather in its parking lot but rescinded it this week without explanation,** according to California Republican Reps. Darrel Issa and Ken Calvert.

The Defense Department is now saying the denial is due to COVID-19 restrictions.

**Issa accused the Biden administration of playing politics, noting President Biden recently hosted a political rally in Georgi**a.

"The Rolling to Remember event is no less safe," Issa said. "The only difference is the politics that are denying veterans the opportunity to honor their fallen comrades. If patriotic veterans are not welcome at the Pentagon, are they truly welcome anywhere in the Biden Administration?"

**Issa said Biden administration officials "refused to talk with event organizer**s" and "refused to respond to Congress about this topic."

The Pentagon's decision to deny the group a permit "leaves patriotic veterans without a safe alternative" to gather, the congressman said.

In a [letter petitioning the Pentagon](https://issa.house.gov/sites/evo-subsites/issa.house.gov/files/evo-media-document/20210423_Issa%2BCalvert_Pentagon_Rolling%20to%20Remember.pdf), Issa and Calvert noted that for decades, the Pentagon "allowed these veterans to gather in the Pentagon parking lot,  offering the participatnts a pre-parade staging area to safely line up for the solemn processional ride from the Department of Defense to the war memorials at the National Mall."

The group has done everything asked of it, the congressman said, and all that is missing is their traditional rendezvous point.

"We urge the Department of Defense to immediately review their request for permission ... so the cyclists can safely and appropriately honor our fallen and missing heroes." <https://www.wnd.com/2021/05/biden-denies-permit-veterans-memorial-day-event/> **[Time to run all these jerks out on a rail and tar and feather them, just before we send them to Gitmo. – rdb]**

**Twitter BANS ‘Trump Desk’ account after Democrats demand censorship**

*5 May, 2021 22:48 / Updated 2 hours ago*

**An account sharing posts from former US President Donald Trump’s ‘desk’ page – and operated by his PAC – was banned by Twitter after angry Democrats flooded the platform with demands to “#RemoveTrumpJack”**.

The hashtag, aimed at Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey, had over 20,000 tweets on Wednesday, hours after the account @DJTDesk appeared on the platform. The account explicitly said it was *“Not Trump Tweeting”* but posting content generated by the 45th US president on his own website, called *“From the Desk of Donald J. Trump.”* **MORE -** [*https://www.rt.com/usa/523013-twitter-bans-donald-trump-desk/*](https://www.rt.com/usa/523013-twitter-bans-donald-trump-desk/) **[So who runs twitter and facebook and google? The DNC. They have been bought lock stock and barrel and are all in bed together to destroy the USA. – rdb]**

**Pfizer’s obscene $900m profit from its Covid vaccine in just three months proves capitalism and public health are bad bedfellows**

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*5 May, 2021 14:01*

**The US pharmaceutical giant cashing in on a pandemic that has killed 3.2m people while failing to help the world’s poor is morally indefensible, and illustrates the corrupt nature of monopoly med**icine.

**As the New York Times** [**reported**](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/05/04/business/pfizer-covid-vaccine-profits.html?action=click&module=Top%20Stories&pgtype=Homepage)**, Pfizer generated hundreds of millions in profits in the first quarter of 2021, thanks to its successful Covid-19 vaccine. What’s interesting about the company’s success, however, is that its vaccine is one of just two widely used that are produced on a for-profit basis – and the only one whose manufacturer is not reliant on it to stay afloat. Pfizer’s windfall this year is, in essence, a windfall for monopoly medicine**.

**Unlike its Western competitors Johnson & Johnson and AstraZeneca, Pfizer decided early to profit from its** vaccine. **That profit margin hasn’t been** disclosed, but it was predicted that this [would be in the high 20% range](https://s21.q4cdn.com/317678438/files/doc_financials/2020/q4/PFE-USQ_Transcript_2021-02-02.pdf#page=19). **That means that, of the $3.5 billion brought in by the vaccine this quarter, about $900m is pre-tax profit**.

Unlike Moderna, a competitor that uses similar vaccine technology to Pfizer’s, Pfizer is an extraordinarily profitable company already, making $**9.6 billion in profits in 2020 before the vaccine had even had a serious impact**. Moderna has no other products on the market, so turning a profit on its vaccine is crucial for its operation. Not so for Pfizer.

**Pfizer sells its vaccine sales at different rates. The United States, for example, pays $19.50 for each dose, while Israel has reportedly paid $30.The reason all this is morally justifiable, Pfizer has said repeatedly, is that it was never part of the US government’s Operation Warp Speed** and therefore should be allowed to set its own prices.

**However, this is deceptive. BioNTech, the company that actually developed the vaccine, after which Pfizer basically slapped its label on it, received a $455 million grant from the German government and got around $6 billion in purchase commitments** from the US and EU. Not only that, but the Pfizer vaccine is based on mRNA technology [patented by the National Institutes of Health](https://www.ott.nih.gov/technology/e-234-2016) that was funded by US taxpayers.

**In a nutshell, Pfizer capitalized on a partnership with a then-obscure German biotech company that received German government grants to develop its vaccine based on US taxpayer-funded technology, and then received purchasing guarantees from rich governments** that guaranteed billions of dollars in revenue. It managed to privatize all the profits while socializing all the risk in what was a textbook case of how corrupt Big Pharma is.

But the scope of this monumental corruption really shines through when you consider that this is a once-in-several-lifetimes public health emergency that has killed millions of people. Governments around the world promised a warlike response to the Covid-19 pandemic and yet it’s mostly been just business as usual.

**As I mentioned in** [**my previous piece for RT on Bill Gates**](https://www.rt.com/op-ed/522872-billionaires-bill-gates-covid-climate-crisis/)**, global capitalism has reinforced itself through the pandemic, with Big Pharma being no exception.** Intellectual property (IP) laws, which have only been defended in multilateral institutions such as the United Nations by rich countries, are demonstrably a barrier to getting vaccine doses out – and everyone knows it.  **MORE -** <https://www.rt.com/op-ed/522964-pfizer-profit-vaccine-covid/>

**Billionaires like Bill Gates won’t save us from Covid, or fix fake news or the climate crisis. Because it’s not in their interests**

*Bradley Blankenship - is a Prague-based American journalist, columnist and political commentator. He has a syndicated column at CGTN and is a freelance reporter for international news agencies including Xinhua News Agency. Follow him on Twitter*[*@BradBlank\_*](https://twitter.com/bradblank_)

*4 May, 2021 14:51*

**The Microsoft founder’s belief that Big Pharma must retain its monopoly over vaccines – thereby denying millions of people from getting them – demonstrates an essential truth about the super-rich: they’re selfish lee**ches.

Billionaires. Our society has a complicated relationship with these folks since their mere existence at a time of record inequality only underscores the absurdity of our daily lives under capitalism. This is because none of them actually *earned* a billion dollars, rather they exploited workers to hoard that obscene wealth. They’re leeches, shouldn't exist but some, I assume, are good people.

**One multi-billionaire, Microsoft co-founder and philanthropist Bill Gates, is definitely not a good person. In fact, I would say he’s a really s\*\*\*ty one. Not because of his recently announced split from his wife of 27 years. But because, to name just one thing, he and others like him are directly responsible for keeping Covid-19 vaccines away from p**eople, particularly poor people in the Global South, in order to uphold the very system that he benefits from.

[In a piece in April for *The New Republic*](https://newrepublic.com/article/162000/bill-gates-impeded-global-access-covid-vaccines), journalist Alexander Zaitchik beautifully lays out exactly how Gates, through his charity **network, had essentially hijacked the global response to Covid-19 and maneuvered it away from the idea of a “people’s vaccine,” instead opting for the deeply unambitious COVAX program through the WHO that leaves monopoly medicine intact**.

**This happened because, Zaitchik writes, Gates and his network had implicitly argued that “intellectual property rights won’t present problems for meeting global demand or ensuring equitable access, and that they must be protected, even during a pandemic***.”* Basically, the Gates camp thinks it’s possible to both eradicate Covid-19 and reinforce the very systemic structures that led to its uncontrolled spread in the first place.

This predictably failed as literally anyone could have guessed. [In a recent interview with Sky News](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0-Ic4EN0io4), Gates was asked if it would be helpful to change intellectual property law in order to share the *“recipe for these vaccines”* to poorer countries to which he replied, “No.”

He went on to explain that it would not make a difference since there are only so many factories able to produce the vaccines to begin with.  **MORE -** <https://www.rt.com/op-ed/522872-billionaires-bill-gates-covid-climate-crisis/>  **[Gates is in the same league as Soros for being some of the vile and evil critters on the face of the earth. He is a eugenicist and wants to limit the world’s population to ONLY those he and his cohorts feel are significant and have a stature that makes them worth living. This is the same thinking as the Hitlers of this world and fortunately when they stand before the Almighty they will get their just reward. Until them they continue their evil ways. – rdb]**

**Commentary:**

**Do You Remember The 60 Minutes Vaccine Fallout From 1976? Fraud Then, Fraud Now***By* [*Bradlee Dean*](https://newswithviews.com/author/bradlee/)*|May 5th, 2021  
 “I will not take another shot that my government tells me to take.”*  
 After viewing the video below, I have to believe that many of you will come up with the same conclusion as myself after watching.  
 What we are dealing with today in America concerning the likes of the federal government, the CDC, the medical field, and corruption within these organizations is the same from yesteryears. Had Americans dealt with this corruption long ago, we would not be in the position that we are in today (Isaiah 26:9). When will Americans learn to avail the lessons taught from the past (Hosea 4:6)?  
 [[Brighteon Video](https://www.brighteon.com/embed/effa5ffa-aba8-4c69-8f15-47327b0fd323)]  
 So, without further ado, learn from the past so we do not repeat this horrific history.

**Mike Wallace 60 Minutes Exposes Swine Flu Pandemic Vaccine Fallout of 1976** <https://newswithviews.com/do-you-remember-the-60-minutes-vaccine-fallout-from-1976-fraud-then-fraud-now/>

**And then…**

**How Biden is smashing America's moral compass and dragging the West behind it**

***By Melanie Phillips JNS*** *Published May 5, 2021* For eight years, the administration of former President Barack Obama behaved as if the security needs of the State of Israel were such an irritating impediment to American foreign-policy aims that it had no compunction in brutally swatting them aside.   
 As a result, the Obama years were very difficult for Israel. Appallingly, it looks as if the Biden years may be even worse.   
 Much concern has already been expressed about President Joe Biden's posture of appeasement towards Iran, along with other moves such as his withdrawal of support from Saudi Arabia and his decision to cut and run from Afghanistan.   
 This has thrown some of the world's most dangerous places into a state of even more dangerous flux.   
 Until now, it was possible to believe that his administration was merely hopelessly naive, appeasement-minded or delusional as a consequence of its utopian liberal ideology, and that Israel just happened to be particularly vulnerable to its correspondingly bone-headed blundering in the Middle East. Now, however, there is evidence that the administration is driven by actual malevolence towards both Israel and Zionism itself, which lowers it into a pit of infamy fouler even than Obama's hostility and disdain.   
 That evidence concerns the infamous 2001 U.N. World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance that was held in Durban, South Africa, a few days before the 9/11 attacks.  
 This was an eye-watering, anti-Israel, anti-Jew hate-fest, whose sole purpose was to demonize and delegitimize Israel under the Orwellian banner of "human rights," and which erupted into openly Nazi-referenced anti-Semitism.  
 The notorious, forged handbook of deranged Jew-hatred, *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion,* was distributed to attendees. Leaflets saying Hitler should have finished "his job" circulated, along with fliers depicting him asking "What if I had won?" and receiving the answer: "There would be NO Israel and NO Palestinian bloodshed."  
 Jewish participants feared for their safety as activists chanted "Zionism is racism, Israel is apartheid," and "You have Palestinian blood on your hands." The Jewish Centre in Durban was forced to close because of threats of violence.  
 The conference's NGO Forum attacked every Jewish organization in attendance and passed a resolution calling Israel "a racist apartheid state," guilty of the "systematic perpetration of racist crimes including war crimes, acts of genocide and ethnic cleansing … and state terror against the Palestinian people."  
 The conference's final [declaration](https://www.un.org/WCAR/durban.pdf) brought this verbal pogrom to its climax by naming only the Palestinians as "victims of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance."  
 It thus singled out Israel alone as an instigator of those evils. The sheer lunacy of such a claim, identifying the Jewish state as so monstrous that it was in a category all of its own, placed that declaration itself squarely in the frame of classical anti-Semitism.  
 In 2011, the United Nations organized a meeting to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Durban conference. The United States, along with thirteen other countries, boycotted it.  
 In a strong statement, the Obama White House explained that this was because the meeting would reaffirm in its entirety the 2001 Durban Declaration and Program of Action "which unfairly and unacceptably singled out Israel." The United States, it said, "did not want to see the hateful and anti-Semitic displays of the 2001 Durban Conference commemorated."  
 Durban 2001 indelibly marked the moral collapse of the United Nations. It was the point at which the "anti-racist" and "human rights" movement turned itself into a propulsive motor for anti-Semitism, serving as the launching pad for the campaign of demonization, delegitimization and destruction of Israel that has continued ever since.  
 The countries that in 2011 boycotted the Durban process held the line against this bigotry. That was then. Now, shockingly, the United States has obliterated that line. Last month, it reversed the Obama administration's Durban position.  
 Having just rejoined the U.N. Human Rights Council, America promoted a statement of commitment to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance linked to "recalling the 20th anniversary of the adoption of the Durban Declaration and Program of Action."  
 Obama had repudiated this declaration on the grounds of its unjust demonization of Israel and the "hateful and anti-Semitic displays" around its creation. The Biden administration has embraced it.  
 Now there is to be a yet further attempt to re-weaponize Durban. In September, the United Nations plans to hold a 20th-anniversary meeting where the original declaration will be reconfirmed.  
 As the blogger "Elder of Zion" has observed, given America's endorsement of Durban at the Human Rights Council, it's entirely possible that the Biden administration will attend the September meeting — and thus associate the United States with what the Obama White House condemned as a commemoration of the "hateful and anti-Semitic displays of the 2001 Durban Conference."  
 Shocking as all this is, it makes perfect sense in light of the Democrats' embrace of intersectionality and identity politics. Intersectionality holds that Jews and the State of Israel are "white privileged" oppressors (even though most Israeli Jews are brown-skinned, coming from regions of the Middle East).  
 According to this dogma, Israel can't be the victim of Iran or the Palestinian Arabs (although it indubitably is), and no people of color can be anti-Semites (which some indubitably are).  
 Proponents of intersectionality view only white people as a threat. This is now the view of the Biden administration. In his address on Wednesday night to Congress, Biden said, according to the prepared text on the White House website (when he actually delivered the speech, he managed to mangle his words): "The most lethal terrorist threat to the homeland today is from white supremacist terrorism."  
 He made similar remarks in February when he said white supremacists were "the most dangerous people in America," calling them "demented."  
 But he doesn't think those Palestinian preachers and officials who say things like the Jews are "thirsty for blood to please their god" or that the Jews were forced out of Europe in the past because of the threat posed by their "evil nature" are demented. He doesn't think the Iranian leaders who deny the Holocaust, allege a Jewish conspiracy to replace Islam by Western imperialism and claim Jews seek to dominate the entire world are demented.  
 Instead, he treats the Iranians as rational actors with whom he wants to negotiate and into whose terrorist activities he intends to help funnel billions of dollars. And instead of acknowledging the Palestinians' exterminatory anti-Semitism as demonstrating "racism, xenophobia and related intolerance," he declares them to be the principal victims of such attitudes.  
 When Britain's Labour Party was in the grip of its hard-left, anti-Israel and anti-Semitism-promoting leader Jeremy Corbyn, there were Americans who took comfort in the belief that such a development couldn't happen in their own country. In fact, the Biden administration is even more baleful.  
 Whether Biden is too mentally fragile to grasp what he's doing or whether he has made a cynical calculation of where his interests lie in today's increasingly radical Democratic Party, it would seem that there's a puppet of the hard left in the Oval Office.  
 And it's not just America and Israel which are likely to feel the impact of this.  
 When the United States boycotted the 2011 Durban meeting, so did many other nations besides Israel. Now the reverse has happened. Every other nation that boycotted Durban 2011 signed the U.S.-led Human Rights Council statement supporting the original Durban Declaration.  
 The demonization of Israel has helped smash the cultural moral compass of the West. Now America is smashing its moral compass in politics, too — and as a result, is dragging the rest of the so-called civilized world behind it, to the potential endangerment of all. <http://www.jewishworldreview.com/0521/phillips050521.php3>

**Biden's Era of Big Government**[*Star Parker*](https://townhall.com/columnists/starparker/) *Posted: May 05, 2021 12:01 AM* When I began my work 25 years ago, my vision for fixing our poor, broken communities was driven by my belief in America and what made it successful.  
 It's what I call the 3 C's: the principles of Christianity, the virtues of capitalism and the rule of law outlined in our Constitution.  
 After the civil rights movement, big government was deemed necessary to turn poor communities around.  
 When then-President Johnson affixed his signature to the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the given assumption was that, although there was new law protecting freedom -- civil rights -- for all, low-income Black Americans were not prepared to be free and capable of being free.  
 A new era of big government ushered welfare-state socialism into these communities.  
 Despite tens of trillions of federal expenditures targeted toward these communities since the 1960s, poverty rates are practically unchanged. But major new problems were created -- mainly the decimation of families. Single-parent homes and out-of-wedlock births have tripled.  
 Today's Democrats want to blame racism for the persistence of problems in low-income communities. In some respect, they are right. It is their own racism that refused and refuses to accept that low-income Americans can and must be free.  
 Now, today, President Biden and his party aspire to the opposite of what I have fought for.  
 Instead of wanting to bring the capitalism of the healthy parts of America to the broken parts of the country, they want to bring the failed welfare-state socialism of the broken parts of the country to the rest of the country.  
 The $6 trillion spending blowout of the first 100 days of the Biden administration, sold under the guise of COVID-19 recovery, has been about using the COVID-19 crisis to sell a new era of welfare-state big-government socialism that will fundamentally change our country forever.  
 The U.S. economy was already well underway to recovery in the latter half of last year, and in the first quarter of 2021, it surged 6.4%, taking our gross domestic product almost to where it was pre-COVID-19.  
 Contrary to the president's rhetoric, the case for the connection between prosperity and freedom is about facts, not ideology.  
 Each year, the Fraser Institute publishes its Economic Freedom of the World report, which consistently shows that nations with more economic freedom -- smaller government, lower taxes, less regulation -- have the highest incomes and lowest poverty rates.  
 In his address to Congress, the president assured the American people that he can finance all this big government by getting the wealthy and big corporations to pay their "fair share."  
 But facts about who foots the tax bill tell a different story than the president's ideology-colored stories.  
 According to the nonpartisan Tax Foundation, which used the latest data available from the IRS, in 2018, the top 1 percent of all taxpayers paid 40.1 percent of all taxes. The top 50 percent of taxpayers paid 97.1 percent of all federal taxes. And the bottom 50 percent paid the remaining 2.9 percent.  
 What about corporations? Again, facts tell a different story.  
 Corporate income taxes simply punish labor with lower wages and punish customers with higher prices. Boston University economist Laurence Kotlikoff estimates that a zero percent corporate tax rate, which would focus taxes only on individuals, would increase wages 12 percent.  
 Giving the nation a civics lesson worthy of one of our failing public schools, President Biden used in his address the opening words of the preamble to the Constitution -- "We the People ..." -- to justify big government.  
 But that preamble says that the Constitution was established to "secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity."  
 Sen. Tim Scott, in his response to the president, noted what he experiences, and what I have experienced all my working life: that Blacks who speak about freedom and biblical values are met with derision and ridicule from the left.  
 Scott spoke truth. America is about freedom under God. Achieving this is today's great challenge. <https://townhall.com/columnists/starparker/2021/05/05/bidens-era-of-big-government-n2588944>

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**ARUTZ SHEVA**

**Brazil's President Jair Bolsonaro suggests COVID-19 is 'biological warfare'**

***'Could we be fighting a new war?' Bolsonaro says, without naming China.***

*Arutz Sheva Staff , May 06 , 2021 10:56 AM*



***Jair Bolsonaro Reuters***

**In his latest controversial statement, President Jair Bolsonaro of Brazil suggested that the coronavirus pandemic still claiming victims around the globe could be “biological warfare” waged by China, AFP reported**.

“**It’s a new virus. Nobody knows whether it was born in a laboratory or because a human ate some animal they shouldn’t have,” the** far-right leader said.

“But the **military knows all about chemical, biological and radiological warfare**. Could we be fighting a new war? I wonder. Which country’s GDP has grown the most?”

Bolsonaro did not explicitly name China, though it was the only G20 country whose economy grew last year (by 2.3 percent).

This was not the first time the Brazilian leader had made inflammatory comments regarding China, even though the Asian giant is Brazil’s largest trading partner.

Suggestions that COVID-19 did not accidentally emerge but [could have been manufactured](https://www.israelnationalnews.com/Articles/Article.aspx/25545) in a laboratory are not new. Those making such claims point to the fact that a huge government-funded virology laboratory in the Chinese city of Wuhan, where COVID-19 first emerged, was known to be experimenting with coronaviruses.

A [World Health Organization report concluded](https://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/296535) in March it was “extremely unlikely” the virus originated in a lab, and China strenuously denies the allegations. However, [WHO experts who visited China](https://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/295974) in order to try and identify the source of the pandemic reported that they encountered obstacles to data access when they visited Wuhan, lending more force to the suspicions that the virus was either accidentally or purposely leaked. <https://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/305671> **[The gentleman is correct but it is not China who is the primary culprit, they are simply complicit in the plot. It is the WEC group that wants the global reset who has worked to perpetrate this dastardly deed with a multitude of accomplices around the world. – rdb]**

**'I see their faces before my eyes, they never leave me'**

***Dozens of United Hatzalah volunteers return to Meron to attempt to process their traumatic experiences. 'I still wonder if I did enough.'***

Arutz Sheva Staff , May 06 , 2021 8:57 AM

**Six days after the traumatic events surrounding** [**the disaster that occurred**](https://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/305300) **on Lag Ba’omer in Meron, members of United Hatzalah returned to the scene in order to attempt to process the difficult sights and horrific experiences they endured that night**.

Ariella Sternbuch of *Channel 13* reported on the visit and spoke with several Hatzalah volunteers.

“Our volunteers have been in constant contact with psychologists ever since that night,” related Ushi Shlomovitz, a Hatzalah division head. “They told us that it’s important to revisit the scene, to take them all back there to where it happened – it’s part of the emotional process they need to go through, to let out all their feelings that they’re still holding inside.”

**Dozens of volunteers arrived that night, traveling together on specially arranged buses. First they gathered together and lit candles in the form of a “45” and a Star of David, and then they sang together, songs of connecting to G-d and reinforcing their f**aith.

Following **that, they stood clustered around a rabbi, who spoke words of encouragement** and then instructed them to “Repeat after me, three times: *Mechilah, selichah, kapparah*,” requesting forgiveness and atonement from the 45 people who died in that place.

**Later on, some of the volunteers recounted to Channel 13’s reporter some of what they went through last Thursday night through to Friday morning, many of them breaking down and sobbing as they sp**oke.

“I ran over to here, where we are now, and started trying to resuscitate someone,” one volunteer related. “He was lying on the ground, and as I was doing that, I saw another volunteer running past with a thirteen-year-old boy in his arms. I thought to myself that he must have fainted from the crush of people there, but then I noticed that his head was lolling back, just hanging, and I realized that the boy was dead.”

“Did you think, even at that point, that maybe he could still be saved?” asked Sternbuch.

“Yes, I did – but I couldn’t reach him in any case,” the volunteer replied.

At midnight, the Hatzalah volunteers sat down together at the place where that Friday morning, the bodies were laid out in long rows and once again they recounted their experiences.

“I was right here, trying to resuscitate someone, and they kept bringing more and more bodies out, and at one point I just lost count – I remember shouting that I was trying to save the sixth person.” The volunteer wept, and others in the group wept with him as he recalled: “I said over the radio, I think there are around 15 resuscitations here, and Mendy told me – Chaim, there are over 30 people dead.”

“It’s like it’s still happening – it’s like I’m still there, experiencing it over and over,” he said.

Another volunteer related: “We were just running from one person to the next, you don’t know where to turn first, and then someone grabbed me and cried, Bentzi, it’s my brother, I can’t, I can’t, I’m begging you – and you don’t know what to do.”

“I went down to where we’re sitting now, and we’d already brought out 15 people, 15 dead, and then I saw them taking out the Englard boy [Moshe Nosson Nuta Englard *z”l*] and he [another volunteer] was crying and screaming, he’s such a young boy, I need a paramedic, quickly, get me a paramedic! **MORE -**<https://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/305666> **[There is an extremely important process known as critical stress debriefing this is absolutely necessary after such a traumatic event. Those involved in trying to deal with and rescue the victim are often simply flooded with grief from their experience. Not infrequently they blame themselves for failure to save lives and rescue everyone. They oftentimes have very intrusive thoughts that can cripple their ability to function in the future. Things like certain smells or music can trigger these thoughts. It is really a variant form of PTSD. To counter this it is vital for people to talk through and ventilate these feelings and truly grieve for the event. This is best done with a supportive group and they have to come to a realization that there is a supreme power (aka The Holy One) who knows and superintends everything that occurs in this world. – rdb]**

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**יונינה- הלב Yonina- The Heart**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KFfQ-BrFPQ4>

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| **"The unity of a nation's spirit and will are worth far more than the freedom of the spirit and will of an individual; and that the higher interests involved in the life of the whole must here set the limits and lay down the duties of the interests of the individual." -- Adolf Hitler (1889-1945) German Nazi Dictator  Where the Hillary got her ideology???? "We must stop thinking of the individual and start thinking about what is best for society." -- Hillary Clinton (1947- ) Wife of President Bill Clinton, US Senator (NY-D)** |

**Read the Prophets & PRAY WITHOUT CEASING!**

**That is the only hope for this nation!**

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| **Please**  **Remember**  **These**  **Folks**  **In**  **Prayer-**  **Check often**  **They**  **Change!** | **Pray that the world would WAKE UP! Time for a worldwide repentance!**  **ALL US soldiers fighting for our freedom around the world**  **Pray for those in our government to repent of their wicked corrupt ways.**  **Pray for AB family – Wife just diagnosed with brain tumor**  **Pray for AS – post knee replacement – some problems and another one scheduled.**  **Pray for TR – abnormal Mammogram having double biopsy – Mastectomy Scheduled**  **Pray for ZH - having trouble with PTSD**  **Pray for LAC – recurrent cancer getting treatment**  **Pray for KL – troubling spiritual situation.**  **Pray for Ella – emotionally disturbed abused child and brother with ? heart problem**  **Pray for JN – Neuro disease**  **Pray for MS – Job issues and change**  **Pray for BB – Severe West Nile Fever –still not mobile- improving!**  **Pray for RBH – cancer recurrence**  **Pray for Felicia – post op problems – continuing**  **Pray for SH and family – lady’s husband passed away and she is in Nursing home. Not doing well.**  **Pray for MP – Very complex problems**  **Pray that The Holy One will lead you in Your preparations for handling the world problems. – Have YOU made any preparations**? |

**Genesis 27:14And he went and took and came to his mother. And his mother made delicious things, such as his father loved. 15And Rebekah took the clothing of her elder son Esau, the costly ones which were with her in the house. And she dressed her younger son Jacob; 16and she put the skins of the kids of the goats on his hands, and on the smoothness of his neck. 17And she put the delicious things and the bread which she had made in the hand of her son Jacob.**

**Netanyahu tells president he cannot form a government; Rivlin may now task Lapid**

***Likud incumbent formally returns the mandate minutes before midnight deadline; President on Wednesday to discuss next steps with party reps; Netanyahu remains transitional PM***

*By* [*TOI staff*](https://www.timesofisrael.com/writers/times-of-israel-staff/) *5 May 2021, 12:00 am*

**Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu failed to form a government ahead of a midnight Tuesday-Wednesday deadline, telling the president he could not muster a majority and leaving him close to losing power after 12 straight years in office.**

**However, the rival bloc of parties could also fail to build a Knesset majority, and Netanyahu continues as transitional prime minister for the time being.**

**Netanyahu formally returned the government-forming mandate to President Reuven Rivlin a few minutes before the deadline expired**, and the president now has three days to decide how best to proceed.

**Rivlin’s office said it would contact party representatives “regarding the process of forming a government” on Wednesday morning**. He is now seen likely to give Yair Lapid of Yesh Atid the chance to form a coalition, in the knowledge that Lapid and Yamina’s Naftali Bennett have been holding negotiations under which Bennett would serve first as prime minister in a rotation agreement with Lapid.

**In a statement, Likud blamed Bennett for blocking Netanyahu’s route to a majority. “**Because of Bennett’s refusal to commit to a right-wing government, a move that would definitely have led to the establishment of a government with additional MKs joining, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu returned the mandate to the president,” Likud said as the midnight deadline passed. **[Even if Bennett would have joined, Bibi still wouldn’t have had his 61 coalition. – rdb]**

**The president can now give the mandate to another MK, most likely Lapid o**r, possibly, Bennett. He could also send the mandate to the Knesset, which would have 21 days to find a candidate backed by 61 or more of the 120 MKs; if that failed, Israel would automatically head to its fifth election since April 2019.

Shortly before midnight, Netanyahu informed Beit HaNasi that he was unable to form a government and returned the mandate to the president.

Tomorrow morning, Wednesday 5 May/23 Iyyar, Beit HaNasi will contact the parties in the Knesset regarding the process of forming a government

— Reuven Rivlin (@PresidentRuvi) [May 4, 2021](https://twitter.com/PresidentRuvi/status/1389688890898931712?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

**Hebrew media reports citing senior political sources have speculated that Lapid will be given the next opportu**nity to form a government, as he had the second most recommendations after Netanyahu when Rivlin consulted with party representatives last month. The Likud leader was given the first opportunity to cobble together a coalition on April 6, after receiving 52 recommendations versus Lapid’s 45.

**Lapid and Bennett have been negotiating coalition terms in recent weeks, reportedly closing in on agreements in many areas, with the Yesh Atid leader ready to let Bennett serve first as prime minister** in a “unity government.” The capacity of the so-called “change bloc” of anti-Netanyahu parties to win a Knesset majority is not straightforward, since parties of radically diverse ideologies would need to back it. However, the fact that Likud tried to woo the conservative Islamic party Ra’am into supporting a Netanyahu-led coalition would appear to have broken a historic taboo on Arab parties holding a determining role in the establishment of an Israeli government.

Netanyahu, who has served as prime minister for a record-breaking 12 consecutive years, after a three-year term from 1996-9, was given first chance at building a government after the deadlocked March 23 elections — Israel’s fourth elections in two years. Netanyahu came close to losing power after the third such election, in March 2020, when his rival Benny Gantz of the Blue and White party, was charged by Rivlin with building a government. But Netanyahu managed to woo Gantz into a coalition with him and retain the prime ministership. That coalition collapsed in December, when Netanyahu failed to pass a state budget, triggering the March 23 vote. **MORE -**<https://www.timesofisrael.com/netanyahu-fails-to-muster-majority-coalition-as-midnight-deadline-passes/>

**To block rivals, Netanyahu said considering claiming he can form government**

***PM denies planning move, which would give him an extra week to present coalition; Likud pushes direct election bill, reportedly works for Bennett to receive mandate from Rivlin***

*By* [*Raoul Wootliff*](https://www.timesofisrael.com/writers/raoul-wootliff/) *Today, 7:32 pm*

**In a bid to buy more time and prevent one of his rivals from being tasked with forming a government, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is considering telling President Reuven Rivlin that he is able to assemble a coalition when his mandate to do so expires midnight, the Walla news site reported Tuesday aftern**oon.

**Under Israel’s Basic Law: The Government, once a candidate is able to form a government and informs the president and the Knesset of it, they have a week to finalize their coalition** before bringing it before the parliament for a vote of confidence.

**Quoting unnamed sources, the report said Netanyahu has been holding talks on the matter despite lacking a coalition agreement with any of his prospective partners**, and despite the far-right Religious Zionism party ruling out joining a government backed by the Islamist Ra’am faction, appearing to sink his coalition hopes. **[If Bibi does this when the news reports have been voluminous on his inability to garner a coalition, it is no wonder that a huge number of people have no trust or confidence in anything he says. That is just disgusting. – rdb]**

Netanyahu’s office denied the report.

**While Netanyahu can tell Rivlin he has a government, the president may ask how Netanyahu and those who back him are able to form a government — something they currently have no clear route to do**ing. **MORE -**<https://www.timesofisrael.com/to-block-rivals-netanyahu-said-considering-claiming-he-can-form-government/>

**As Rivlin meets Lapid to kick off talks, New Hope backs Yesh Atid chief for PM**

***Hurting Lapid’s chances, Yamina lawmaker says he’ll object to emerging right-center-left government propped up by Ra’am; 51 ‘change bloc’ MKs recommend Lapid, Yamina backs Bennett***

*By* [*TOI staff*](https://www.timesofisrael.com/writers/times-of-israel-staff/) *Today, 12:06 pm*

[](https://static.timesofisrael.com/www/uploads/2021/05/WhatsApp-Image-2021-05-05-at-11.12.05.jpeg)

***President Reuven Rivlin (R) meets Yesh Atid party leader Yair Lapid at the President's Residence in Jerusalem, May 5, 2021. (Haim Zach/GPO)***

**Gideon Sa’ar’s New Hope party said Wednesday that it would tell President Reuven Rivlin that it recommends that Yesh Atid party leader Yair Lapid form the next governmen**t, greatly increasing the opposition chief’s chances of being handed the mandate after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu failed to muster a majority coalition in his allocated time.

**In the previous round of consultations with Rivlin last month, Sa’ar’s six-member party didn’t back anyone as premier. That boosted Lapid’s bloc of backers from 45 to 51, including** Yesh Atid, Blue and White, Labor, Meretz and Yisrael Beytenu.

All those parties backed Lapid as prime minister when they met Rivlin for consultations aimed at deciding whom to task with forming a new government, a day after Netanyahu announced that he had failed.

Rivlin met Lapid — who reiterated his request to be tasked with forming a government — and then Naftali Bennett, who heads the seven-seat Yamina and is reportedly set to go first as prime minister in an emerging rotation deal with Lapid for a unity government. Similar to the last time they met, Bennett recommended himself for the task, meaning he has 7 recommendations to Lapid’s 51.

**Reports said Rivlin may also meet Lapid and Bennett together**.

The bloc of parties that supported Netanyahu in the previous round of consultations, as well as the Joint List and Ra’am parties, were yet to announce who they recommend, if anyone.

As he emerged from his meeting with Rivlin, Lapid told reporters: “We will do everything to form an Israeli unity government.”

Entering his own meeting, Bennett said: “With God’s help, we will form a good government for the nation of Israel.” Like Lapid, during his meeting with Rivlin Bennett reiterated his previous request to receive the mandate.

**Even if Lapid is handed the mandate, the rival bloc of parties faces a tough task to bring together all its disparate groups and build a Knesset majority. Netanyahu continues as transitional prime minister for the time** being. **MORE -** <https://www.timesofisrael.com/as-rivlin-meets-lapid-to-kick-off-talks-new-hope-backs-yesh-atid-chief-for-pm/> **[The circus goes on and on. It will be interesting to see what Lapid can do. – rdb]**

**Poll: 43% back Bennett-Lapid coalition, but only 25% of Yamina voters approve**

***Unity government seen as preferred choice over one led by Bennett and Netanyahu; two-thirds of New Hope voters want Sa’ar to enter coalition with ‘change bloc’***

*By* [*TOI staff*](https://www.timesofisrael.com/writers/times-of-israel-staff/) *5 May 2021, 12:45 am*

**Almost half of Israelis back a unity government jointly led by Yamina party chairman Naftali Bennett and Yesh Atid leader Yair Lapid, according to a poll published Tuesday hours before Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s m**idnight mandate to form a new government expired. The survey also indicated that should Israel go to fifth election it would likely remain gridlocked.

**Forty-three percent of respondents to the Channel 13 poll said they back a government that would see Bennett and Lapid rotate as prime minister, while a third backed a Bennett-Netanyahu coalit**ion.

The poll only gave those two coalitions as options. About a quarter of the respondents didn’t back either option.

**Yamina voters, however, were not enthused about the prospect of teaming up with Lapid. Only 24% of the party’s voters supported joining a “change” governme**nt. Over half said they prefer Bennett join with Netanyahu, while a quarter opposed both options.

**Among supporters of Gideon Sa’ar’s New Hope party, which opposes joining a Netanyahu-led government, two-thirds backed a government of anti-Netanyahu parties, according to the** survey.

**In the case of direct elections for prime minister — a proposal Netanyahu has been pushing, but that was shelved earlier Tuesday due to lack of support — 41% of respondents said they would vote for Netanyahu, versus 36% for Lapid**.

**If new elections were held today, the poll said Likud would remain the largest party, but shrink from 30 to 28 seats. Yesh Atid would grow to 21 seats from its 17, while Yamina would become the third-largest party with 11 seats, up from its current** seven.

The survey said Shas would drop to seven seats from nine, and that United Torah Judaism and Labor would stay on the seven they currently have. Blue and White would remain at eight, while both New Hope and Joint List would retain their current strength of six seats apiece.

**The right-wing secularist Yisrael Beytenu party would slip to five seats from seve**n; Meretz would slip to five from its current six, as would the far-right Religious Zionism. The Islamist Ra’am party was forecast to again win four seats.

Overall, the “change bloc” of anti-Netanyahu parties would have 58 seats, while Netanyahu’s right-wing religious bloc would have 47 — down from its current 52 — both short of a majority in the 120-seat Knesset. Such an outcome would again position Yamina and Ra’am as potential kingmakers or in Bennett’s case, even king.

**Asked what they believe the chances are of a fifth round of elections since April 2019, 60% of respondents said that was the most likely outcom**e.

The internet poll, conducted by the “Midgam Project,” included 669 respondents and had a 3.8% margin of error, according to the network. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/poll-43-back-bennett-lapid-coalition-but-only-25-of-yamina-voters-approve/>

**Likud pushes through right-wing bills in bid to cause rift between PM rivals**

***Knesset panel fast-tracks bills to authorize illegal West Bank settlement outposts, allow parliamentary majority to override Supreme Court; committee chair blocks vote on direct premiership elections after failing to muster majority to back motion***

*Moran Azulay | Published: 05.04.21 , 20:18*

**The Knesset Arrangements Committee convenes to vote on several legislations pushed by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's Likud faction hours before his mandate to form a government expires at midnight** Tuesday. **With the loss of the Mandate, Netanyahu will also lose control over the Arrangements Committee** and his political opponents will then be able to promote laws that would block him from future bids to be the prime minister.

**Meanwhile, the panel voted to fast-track a bill to authorize illegal settlement outposts in the West Bank. The legislation will be presented before the Knesset plenum vote Wedn**esday.

 **The committee also approved fast-tracking a bill that would allow a majority of lawmakers to override Supreme Court rulin**gs.

***Knesset Arrangements Committee (Photo: Knesset PR)***

The bill passed 17 to 15 after Gideon Saar's New Hope party said they will support the proposal.

**Likud Whip MK Miki Zohar, who remains at the head of the Knesset committee until midnight, postponed a vote to fast-track an amendment to the elections law so that a vote could be held separately on the identity of the next prime minister in case a new election is called after failing to must a majority to back the moti**on. Such a law could have significantly increased Netanyahu's chances of re-election.

**Zohar also said he would also be advancing the death penalty for terrorists, a law which former Likud ally and Yisrael Beytenu leader Avigdor Liberman tabled four years ago** but had not made it out of committee because of Likud's opposition.

The efforts by Likud to advance the bills are seen as an attempt to cause rifts between the parties attempting to present an alternative coalition to Netanyahu's right-wing and religious bloc.

**The so-called "coalition for change" was made up of Knesset factions that disagree on ideology but are united on the need to oust Netanyah**u.

Likud chose to advance the legislation through the Arrangements Committee and not by tabling them in the plenum in order to expedite the legislative procedure.

**Netanyahu was concentrating his efforts to prevent Bennett from joining his opponent's coalition** should one be possible. The Yamina leader has consistently negotiated with Likud and the opposing camp and refused to commit himself to either side, despite publicly stating he prefers to see a right-wing government established.

**Opposition leader Yair Lapid, from the Yesh Atid Party, said he hoped that he will be tapped by President Reuven Rivlin to attempt to form a coalition** if Netanyahu fails to do so by the midnight deadline.

Bennett is also vying for the mandate claiming more members of Knesset including the Likud and the ultra-Orthodox parties would support his efforts, but political observers say Rivlin is unlikely to grant the Yamina leader's wish because his party controls only seven seats in the parliament. <https://www.ynetnews.com/article/3W1RW4HVI>

**Ex-Walla CEO: We removed news about bereaved families because PM didn’t like it**

***Ilan Yeshua says editors were told to take down stories about families of soldiers killed in 2014 Gaza war; says was made to fawn over Sara Netanyahu as if in ‘Byzantine court’***

*By* [*TOI staff*](https://www.timesofisrael.com/writers/times-of-israel-staff/) *Today, 3:19 pm*

[](https://static.timesofisrael.com/www/uploads/2021/05/F210504YS16-e1620127516273.jpg)

***Former CEO of Walla news website Ilan Yeshua arrives for his testimony in the case against Prime Minister Netanyahu who is on trial for bribery, fraud and breach of trust, at the District Court in Jerusalem, May 4, 2021. (Yonatan Sindel/Flash90)***

**On the first day of the cross-examination of Ilan Yeshua in Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s graft trial on Tuesday, the former Walla news CEO told the court that editors were ordered to remove stories from the site about families bereaved in the 2014 Gaza war because the premier didn’t like t**hem.

**Yeshua, who previously told the court how close associates of Netanyahu were directly involved in shaping the content of the news site to the premier’s liking, made the statement by way of explanation for his publicly stated feelings about the prime m**inister.

**During questioning about his own political views, Yeshua admitted he told staff members that “Bibi is destroying the Zionist enterprise” and had said that the prime minister was “a disaster for** the country.”

**The defense lawyer for Bezeq controlling shareholder Shaul Elovitch, Jack Chen, in an apparent attempt to demonstrate Yeshua’s bias against the prime minister, said to Yeshua: “You expressed yourself** freely.”

***Lawyer Jack Chen arrives at the Jerusalem District Court, May 4, 2021 (Yonatan Sindel/Flash90)***

**Yeshua responded that he made the comments about Netanyahu after a prolonged period of pressure in which editors at Walla were told to take down stories about families of soldiers who fell in the 2014 Gaza war with Hamas because the prime minister did not like suc**h coverage.

**“Things were said after a long period of pressure. I had to give explanations for what we did, sometimes there were very difficult cases**. We had to take down news about bereaved families because Netanyahu did not like it. It was not the cause, but the result,” Yeshua said.

It was not clarified in the cross-examination who had told the editors to take down the stories.

**The family of Hadar Goldin, an IDF soldier whose remains have been held by the Hamas terror group in Gaza since the 2016 war, issued an angry response after the testimony, saying it explained what they described as “institutional silence” in the face of their fight to return t**heir son.

“For years we have been yelling about the institutional silence directed from above when it comes to returning Hadar Goldin. To what depths of the abyss can our leadership sink? Shame and disgrace,” the family said.

**Yeshua is a key witness in Case 4000, in which Netanyahu is alleged to have abused his powers when he served as both premier and communications minister from 2014 to 2017 to illicitly and lucratively affect the business interests** of Bezeq’s controlling shareholder, Elovitch. In exchange, Elovitch allegedly provided Netanyahu with positive coverage of the prime minister and his family by the Elovitch-owned Walla news site.

**Netanyahu faces charges of bribery, fraud, and breach of trust in the case, while Elovitch and his wife, Iris, were also charged with bribery**. All three defendants deny wrongdoing.

**During the cross-examination, Yeshua also said that he received “crazy” requests from the prime minister’s wife, in a situation he likened to a “Byzantine cour**t.”

**When questioned about the relationship with Netanyahu associate Zeev Rubinstein, Yeshua said Rubinstein was “their senior officer in the Byzantine court,” and would pass on the “crazy requests and angles of Sara Neta**nyahu.”

“Why don’t you ask me if I meant what I said about whether Sara was beautiful in the photo?” Yeshua asked Chen. “Because you too understand that I am participating in a fawning discourse at a Byzantine court.”

Chen also presented Yeshua with a 2013 article from Ha’Ayin Hashevi’it, a periodical that covers the media, in which journalists at Walla said Yeshua had improperly intervened in the editorial process at Walla and accusing their boss of fostering a culture of humiliation.

**The article stated that “there has been an erosion in the independence of journalists by the Walla management because these may harm the commercial interests of the company,**” including relating to articles about Netanyahu’s Likud party.

Yeshua responded to Chen that he freely admitted that he took commercial considerations into account when making decisions.

“The company has commercial interests, and I am not ashamed to admit it. From what I remember, I did not want to deny it. There are such considerations and I have made such decisions,” Yeshua told the court.

The trial at the Jerusalem District Court resumed Monday after a pause since April 20 to discuss several requests by Netanyahu’s attorneys to release pieces of evidence. Netanyahu himself has only been in the courthouse for two of the hearings. **MORE -**<https://www.timesofisrael.com/ex-walla-ceo-we-removed-news-about-bereaved-families-because-pm-didnt-like-it/> **This is almost comical. Watching all the rhubarb going on with he election as well as the insanity and accusations of the trial rather reminds one of trying to watch three rings of a three ring circus at the same time. It is difficult to keep all of it straight and who is slinging much at whom. – rdb]**

**Amid fear of further unrest, Temple Mount said closed to Jews indefinitely**

***Holy Jerusalem site reportedly to open on Jerusalem Day; move comes after tense weeks in the capital and around its Old City as Muslims celebrate holy month of Ramadan***

*By* [*TOI staff*](https://www.timesofisrael.com/writers/times-of-israel-staff/) *Today, 5:36 pm*

**Fearing fresh outbreaks of violence in Jerusalem, police have closed the Temple Mount to Jews until further notice, Hebrew media reported Tuesday**.

**The move comes as Muslims celebrate the month-long Ramadan holiday,** which often sees increased tensions around the Old City and the Temple Mount site, including this year.

**Police were said to have informed Jewish groups organizing Temple Mount visits of the c**losure.

**However, according to the reports, Jews will be allowed into the site on Jerusalem Day next Mond**ay.

The Temple Mount is the holiest place in Judaism, as the site of the biblical Temples. It is the site of the third holiest shrine in Islam, the Al-Aqsa Mosque. Israel captured the Temple Mount and Jerusalem’s Old City in the 1967 Six Day War, and extended sovereignty throughout Jerusalem. However, it allowed the Jordanian Waqf to continue to maintain religious authority atop the mount, where Jews are allowed to visit under numerous restrictions, but not to pray.

**The Palestinian leadership has a long history of attempting to rally its public in response to alleged Israeli infringements on Muslim sovereignty in the flashpoint compound.** Official Palestinian Authority media often shows visits by religious Jews to the site, which it deems “settler invasions.”

**Tensions in Jerusalem, specifically around the Old City, reached the boiling point last month** after police prevented people from congregating outside Damascus Gate at the start of Ramadan, which Arabs said was an inflammatory move that obstructed a long-held tradition of gathering at the site during the Muslim holy month. Authorities later canceled the policy.

**Additionally, hundreds of Palestinians have marched toward Israeli checkpoints in the West Bank on a nightly basis over the past week, leading** to clashes.

The IDF is said to have also bolstered its forces in the West Bank during Ramadan.

Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas announced last week that the first Palestinian national elections in 15 years would be indefinitely delayed, amid escalating tensions in the region.

The delay was pinned on Israel refusing to allow East Jerusalemites to vote in the election. While Palestinians view East Jerusalem as the capital of a future state, Israel views the entire city as its undivided capital and views any PA activity in East Jerusalem as a violation of its sovereignty. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/amid-fear-of-further-unrest-temple-mount-said-closed-to-jews-indefinitely/> **[Trying to work with and control a bunch of islamics is like dealing with a herd of wild critters – rdb]**

**Israel to lift all crowd limits at ‘Green Pass’ sports, cultural events**

***Coronavirus cabinet approves plan to lift all remaining restrictions on the vaccinated and recovered at stadiums and in public transportation***

*By* [*TOI staff*](https://www.timesofisrael.com/writers/times-of-israel-staff/) *Today, 8:28 pm*

**A key ministerial panel overseeing Israel’s COVID-19 response approved a plan Tuesday that will allow the removal of almost all remaining restrictions at sporting events, gyms and public po**ols.

**The new regulations approved by the coronavirus cabinet, part of a plan reached by Culture and Sports Minister Chili Tropper along with Health Minister Yuli Edelstein, will go into effect on Thursday**.

**According to the plan, there will be no limit in attendance at sporting events for any holder of the “Green Pass,” a document held by those who are vaccinated or have recovered from the coronavirus**.

For children — who are not yet vaccinated — indoor cultural events will be allowed to hold 50 attendees and 500 for outdoor events.

**Gyms and public pools will run according to a separate “purple pass” system instead of the Green Pass, meaning those who are not vaccinated will also be able to enter but distancing rules will re**main.

**Ministers also voted to end capacity limits in taxis and scrap the requirement to purchase a ticket in advance before riding the tra**in.

Welcoming the plan’s approval, Tropper said in a statement: “We are on our way to a full reopening. I welcome the path we have taken and am glad we have reached coronavirus case numbers that until a few months ago would have seemed fantastical. I look forward to seeing you all at culture and sports events next week.”

“However, the work has not yet been completed, and we will continue to work to open up other places, including cinemas and the world of culture for children,” he added.

**The number of COVID-19 patients in serious condition** [**dropped below 100 on Monday**](https://www.timesofisrael.com/serious-covid-19-cases-in-israel-drop-below-100-for-1st-time-since-july/)**, the lowest level since last July** as Israel’s world-leading vaccination campaign continued to show its effect.

According to Health Ministry data, there were 93 people whose condition was defined as serious as of Tuesday afternoon, with 55 of them on ventilators.

There were 62 new coronavirus cases diagnosed in the country on Monday, with a further 45 since midnight, taking the total number since the pandemic began to 838,688. There were 1,235 active cases.

According to the ministry, 37,926 coronavirus tests were conducted Monday, with 0.2 percent returning positive.

The death toll stood at 6,369.

With its aggressive vaccination drive, Israel has seen a sharp drop in daily mortality and infection rates since the pandemic peaked in late January.

**Late last month, the Jewish state** [**passed the milestone**](https://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-crosses-milestone-of-5-million-fully-vaccinated-against-covid-19/) **of over 5 million people receiving both vaccine s**hots.

According to the Health Ministry, 5,061,053 people have now received two doses of the vaccine, accounting for over 60% of the total population and more than 80% of the eligible population over the age of 16. A total of 5,407,769 people have received at least one shot.

**The country is preparing to start vaccinating children aged 12-15 as so**on as the US Food and Drug Administration approves vaccine use for children in that age bracket, which a US federal official [said](https://www.timesofisrael.com/us-fda-expected-to-ok-pfizer-vaccine-for-kids-aged-12-15-within-week/) Monday was expected for the Pfizer vaccine by next week.

On Monday, regulations banning travel to seven countries over fears of importing COVID-19 variants into Israel went into effect. **MORE -** <https://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-to-lift-crowd-limits-at-green-pass-sports-cultural-events/>

**Palestinian suspects arrested for allegedly aiding Tapuah attacker**

***Israeli forces enter West Bank village of Aqraba and take individuals in for questioning, confiscate car used in drive-by attack; terrorist who carried out shooting not among them***

*By* [*TOI staff*](https://www.timesofisrael.com/writers/times-of-israel-staff/) *and* [*Judah Ari Gross*](https://www.timesofisrael.com/writers/judah-ari-gross/) *Today, 10:21 amUpdated at 5:18 pm*

[](https://static.timesofisrael.com/www/uploads/2021/05/WhatsApp_Image_2021-05-04_at_08.31.27_1-e1620116437861.jpeg)

***In a photo released by the Israel Defense Forces on May 4, 2021, soldiers are seen in the West Bank as part of the manhunt for suspects in a drive-by shooting attack that left three Israelis wounded, (Israel Defense Forces)***

**Israeli security forces entered a West Bank village early Tuesday and made a number of arrests in connection with a Sunday drive-by shooting attack at a northern West B**ank junction that left three Israelis wounded.

**The detained Palestinians, who were arrested overnight for their suspected involvement in the terror attack, were taken for questio**ning.

**Neither the Israel Defense Forces nor the Shin Bet security services specified how many suspects were de**tained.

**The gunman was not among those arrested,** but the detainees were suspected of aiding him, according to the Kan public broadcaster.

The IDF said security forces took the car used in the attack, a gray Hundai van that was found Monday in the village of Aqraba. Channel 12 reported that the security establishment believes the vehicle belonged to a Hamas member who lives in Aqraba. **MORE -** <https://www.timesofisrael.com/palestinian-suspects-arrested-for-allegedly-aiding-tapuah-attacker/>

**Hamas terror chief threatens Israel over East Jerusalem evictions**

***Rare statement from military wing leader Mohammad Deif warns Israel will pay a ‘heavy price,’ a day after 2 Palestinians arrested, 10 hurt in clashes at eviction protest***

*By* [*TOI staff*](https://www.timesofisrael.com/writers/times-of-israel-staff/) *and* [*AFP*](https://www.timesofisrael.com/writers/afp/) *Today, 1:58 am*

**The Hamas terror group in Gaza threatened Israel on Tuesday over tensions in East Jerusalem as a number of Palestinian families face eviction as part of an ongoing effort by right-wing Israelis to take control of homes in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhoo**d.



***Hamas military wing commander Muhammad Deif (courtesy)***

**In a rare public statement from Mohammed Deif, the elusive head of Hamas’s armed wing, the Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades, Hamas warned Israel would pay a “heavy price” if the evictions** went ahead.

“I salute our steadfast Palestinians at Sheikh Jarrah in occupied Jerusalem; The resistance leadership and al-Qassam are watching closely what is happening in the neighborhood,” Deif said.

**“This is our final warning; If the aggression against our people in the Sheikh Jarrah** neighborhood does not stop immediately, we will not stand idly by and the occupation will pay a heavy price,” he warned.

Deif, one of the founders of Hamas’s military wing, has been wounded in several Israeli assassination attempts. One of his wives and two of his children were killed in an Israeli attempt on his life during 2014’s Operation Protective Edge.

Israel’s border with Gaza has been largely quiet in recent months following a truce between Israel and the terror group, however, last week saw [dozens of rockets fired](https://www.timesofisrael.com/gaza-terrorists-fire-rocket-into-israel-for-second-night-in-a-row/) at Israel following clashes in Jerusalem. **MORE -**<https://www.timesofisrael.com/hamas-terror-chief-threatens-israel-over-east-jerusalem-evictions/>

[](https://static.timesofisrael.com/www/uploads/2021/05/Latakia.jpg)

**Israeli airstrikes said to hit targets in northern Syria**

***Large explosions heard and a fire caused in port city of Latakia, targets also hit in Hama; State media says air defenses engaged enemy missiles***

*By* [*TOI staff*](https://www.timesofisrael.com/writers/times-of-israel-staff/) *Today, 3:34 am*

***A fire burns in the Syrian port city of Latakia, allegedly caused by and Israeli airstrike on May 5, 2021 (Screencapture/Twitter)***

**Israeli aircraft reportedly carried out airstrikes in northern Syria early Wednesday, Syrian state media said, in the first alleged attacks since the raids last month that saw an errant Syrian anti-aircraft missile explode in the Negev dese**rt.

**Syrian state media SANA reported that Syrian air defenses had engaged Israeli missiles near the port city of Latakia in northern Syria**.

**Videos posted to social media showed a large fire and several loud explosions at the scen**e of the blast.

SANA said the site was a plastics factory. Israel has reportedly bombed sites connected to Iran’s alleged missile production and arms depots in the areas of Latakia and Hama before.

A large fire with secondary explosions near Latakia, [#Syria](https://twitter.com/hashtag/Syria?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) reported. [pic.twitter.com/FHZSIgL9Td](https://t.co/FHZSIgL9Td)

— Joe Truzman (@Jtruzmah) [May 5, 2021](https://twitter.com/Jtruzmah/status/1389733130521640962?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

The Israel Defense Forces refused to comment on the late-night strikes, in accordance with its policy to neither confirm nor deny its operations in Syria, save for those in retaliation for an attack from the country.

The IDF has launched hundreds of strikes in Syria since the start of the civil war in 2011 against moves by Iran to establish a permanent military presence in the country and efforts to transport advanced, game-changing weapons to terrorist groups in the region, principally Hezbollah. **MORE -**<https://www.timesofisrael.com/israeli-airstrikes-said-to-hit-targets-in-northern-syria/>

**Report: Saudi Arabia to reopen Damascus embassy, seeking thaw with Syria**

***Saudi officials said to meet with Syrian leadership during Monday trip to Damascus in first contact since nations severed ties in 2012 during peak of Syrian civil war***

*i24NEWS | Published: 05.04.21 , 17:25*

**Saudi Arabia has decided to reopen its embassy in Damascus as it seeks a rapprochement with Syria, Jordanian newspaper Rai el Youm reported on Tuesday.**

 **According to the report, a Saudi delegation arrived in Damascus on Monday in a diplomatic visit**.

***Members of opposition to Syrian President Bahar al-Assad in the city of Idlib to which Saudi Arabia has provided support***

***(Photo: AFP)***

**Riyadh's messengers reportedly liaised with several senior Syria officials, including President Bashar al-Assad and his senior advisor and close confidante** Ali Mamlouk.

**Riyadh is said to be looking to restore its ties with Syria, an ally and client state for Iran — Saudi Arabia's regional arch-nemesis**.

**The two countries severed ties in 2012 as Syria's civil war escalated and Assad turned to help for Iran**, while Riyadh supported the anti-regime forces.

**Saudi and Iranian officials held direct Iraqi-mediated talks this month i**n a bid to ease tensions between the two foes, a senior Iranian official and two regional sources said, as Washington works to revive a 2015 nuclear pact with Tehran and end the Yemen war.

The regional source said the meeting focused on Yemen, where a military coalition led by Saudi Arabia has been battling the Iran-aligned Houthi group since March 2015.

The talks were the first significant contact between the two countries, which cut their ties in 2016 after Riyadh executed 47 people, including a prominent Shi'ite cleric Nimr al-Nimr.

Later on, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman said in an interview that Saudi Arabia would want better ties with Iran, but had issues with its nuclear ambitions, missile program and support of regional armed groups. <https://www.ynetnews.com/article/B16C4RCv00>

**Iranian-backed rocket attacks on US increase in Iraq**

***The attacks are growing and coincide with Iranian-backed attacks by the Houthis against Saudi Arabia. They also go hand in hand with Iran trying to wring concessions from the US in Vienna.***

*By* [*SETH J. FRANTZMAN*](https://www.jpost.com/author/seth-j-frantzman) *MAY 4, 2021 20:47*

**On Tuesday two rockets landed at** [**Ain Al-Asad**](https://www.jpost.com/breaking-news/multiple-rockets-land-at-iraqs-ain-al-asad-air-base-that-hosts-us-coalition-forces-660776) **air base in western** [**Iraq**](https://www.jpost.com/opinion/iraq-a-country-notorious-for-its-democracy-opinion-667011)**. On Monday three to six rockets fell near Balad Air Base in Iraq according to various reports. The base houses US contractors and has been targeted numerous times in the past by pro-Iranian militias** targeting Americans.

**This appears to be the third attack in three days, a**n increase in these pro-Iranian attacks on US forces in Iraq. The attackers frequently use 107mm rockets supplied by Iran, although they have also used drones in a new escalation. The attacks are designed to provide Iran leverage, to harass the US and to create plausible deniability for Iran.

**The US line regarding these attacks is to claim that the base is an “Iraqi base” and note that it does not house US or coalition troops. This negates any need to hold anyone responsible**. The US Pentagon press secretary John Kirby did acknowledge that “there is a private US company that does have contractors working there.” The US is “concerned about any use of violence by any group in Iraq.” This statement makes it clear the US does not currently want to emphasize that this attack fits a long pattern of pro-Iranian militias, many tied to leading parties in Iraq,  targeting the US.  **[Is that called a copout? – rdb]**

**On Sunday two rockets were fired at Iraq’s Baghdad International Airport, targeting a housing complex used by US-led Coalition troops, according to local reports. At the time that was considered** the second attack in ten days. An air defense system known as C-RAM was used to defend against the attack.

According to the AP “almost 30 rocket or bomb attacks have targeted American interests in Iraq, including troops, since President US Joe Biden took office in January.” There was another attack on Baghdad Airport on Thursday, May 29. That included three rockets. An Iraqi soldier was wounded.

On April 18 five rockets targeted Balad air base, wounding two foreign contractors. They hit a canteen and dormitory used by the US company Sallyport, reports said.

The attacks are growing and they coincide with Iranian-backed attacks by the Houthis using drones against Saudi Arabia. They also go hand in hand with Iran trying to wring concessions from the US in Vienna. <https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/iranian-backed-rocket-attacks-on-us-increase-in-iraq-667205>

**Germany says antisemitic crimes up 15% in 2020, far-right attacks on the rise**

***Head of European Jewish Congress says new figures announced by German interior ministry ‘should ring alarm bells’; police arrest alleged neo-Nazi ‘motivated by right-wing ideology’***

*By* [*Matthew Barakat*](https://www.timesofisrael.com/writers/matthew-barakat/) *Today, 8:52 pm*

BERLIN, Germany (AP) — **Berlin police arrested a 53-year-old German man on suspicion of sending dozens of threatening letters to politicians, lawyers and journalists that were signed with the acronym of a neo-Nazi group, as officials warned Tuesday that statistics show a disturbing rise in far-right extremism across Germany**.

**Antisemitic crimes rose by more than 15 percent in 2020, the data sho**wed.

Interior Minister Horst Seehofer said far-right crime rose 5.65% in 2020, accounting for more than half of all criminality categorized as “politically motivated.”

**“This shows again that right-wing extremism is the biggest threat for our country,” Seehofer told reporters** Tuesday while announcing the annual statistics.

In carrying out Monday’s arrest in Berlin, police seized an unencrypted hard drive with data that might help with an ongoing probe, said Holger Muench, the head of Germany’s Federal Criminal Police Office.

**“There was a lot of data, but it needs to be evaluated**,” he said.

The suspect, whose name wasn’t released for privacy reasons, has previous convictions for “numerous crimes, including ones that were motivated by right-wing ideology,” said prosecutors in Frankfurt, who are handling the case.

**The letters were signed “NSU 2.0.” A German group called the National Socialist Underground was responsible for a string of violent crimes between 1998 and 2011, in**cluding the racially motivated killings of nine men with immigrant backgrounds and a police officer. The group’s name was derived from the full name of the Nazi, or National Socialist, party.

**Police think the suspect sent almost 100 letters to dozens of people and organizations across Germany and Austria since 2018. German news agency dpa reported that investigators think the suspect may have obtained personal data on the people he targeted from official records or Darknet fo**rums.

German security agencies warned of the growing threat of violent far-right extremism. In July 2019, a regional politician from Chancellor Angela Merkel’s party was killed by a neo-Nazi; three months later, a gunman tried to force his way into a synagogue on Yom Kippur, killing two people.

**Seehofer said the new statistics reveal an ongoing increase in antisemitic crimes in Germany, which was up 15.7% in 2020 over 2019 with 2,351 total incidents — 94.6% of which were committed by a far-right** suspect.

**Of the total, 62 were acts of violence while the majority were antisemitic hate spee**ch and other related crimes, frequently on the internet or over social media, Seehofer said.

“This development in Germany is not only troubling, but in view of our history, deeply shameful,” he said.

[](https://static.timesofisrael.com/www/uploads/2021/05/AP21124354389039.jpg)

***Horst Seehofer (CSU), Federal Minister of the Interior, for Construction and Home Affairs, presents the case figures of politically motivated crime for the year 2020 at the Federal Press Conference in Berlin, Germany, May 4, 2021. (Kay Nietfeld/dpa via AP)***

**Moshe Kantor, president of the European Jewish Congress, said the German numbers highlight a broader issue. “This is a wake-up call, not just for Germany, but for the whole world,” he said. “These figures should ring alarm bells, because we are seeing similar trends across the Western world.**”

In 2020, Germany recorded a 72.4% increase in anti-immigrant crimes, up to 5,298 total cases over 3,073 in 2019, Seehofer said.

**In the most deadly incident, nine people with immigrant backgrounds were shot dead in Hanau, near Frankfurt, in February by a gunman who had called for ge**nocide.

Authorities have raised concerns about the role the Alternative for Germany party allegedly played in stoking a climate of resentment toward immigrants and the government. The party, which placed third in Germany’s 2017 election, has moved steadily to the right in recent years, drawing increasing scrutiny from the country’s domestic intelligence agency.

On Tuesday, Alternative for Germany’s section in Berlin condemned a member who appeared to lament the absence of attacks on Merkel. **MORE -** <https://www.timesofisrael.com/germany-says-far-right-attacks-on-the-rise-antisemitic-crimes-up-15-in-2020/> **[This is a report on Germany BUT you can see a similar trend around the world. I believe it was last week when some people in Poland said that the Jews deserved the disaster they had a Meron on Lag B’Omer. Europe for sure has in actuality changed little from the anti-Semitic attitudes in the 30’s. – rdb]**

**Xi claims ultimate authority, adopts Mao's title 'helmsman'**

*By* [*Bill Gertz*](https://www.washingtontimes.com/staff/bill-gertz/) *- The Washington Times - Monday, May 3, 2021*

**Chinese President and Communist Party General-Secretary** [**Xi Jinping**](https://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/xi-jinping/) **continues to consolidate power and has reached new status, adopting the title “helmsman,” a descriptor not used since Mao Zedong and denoting ultimate authority, according to U.S. intelligence official**s.

**Army Lt. Gen. Scott D. Berrier, director of the Defense Intelligence Agency, said Mr.** [**Xi**](https://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/xi-jinping/)**’s increased power will fuel the Chinese military’s drive to create forces more powerful than those of the United States** in the coming years.

“I think Xi is firmly in control of the party, of the military and every aspect of Chinese society,” Gen. Berrier told the Senate Armed Services Committee in testimony late last week.

**In his prepared remarks, Gen. Berrier said a Chinese Communist Party Central Committee meeting in October marked a significant shift in Mr. Xi’s po**wer.  
 “The ensuing communique likely signaled Xi’s singular political position within the party, declaring him the ‘core navigator and helmsman,’ an invocation not used since Mao Zedong,” the three-star general said.  
 **The most famous sobriquet of Mao, founder of the Chinese Communist Party and hero of the Chinese Revolution, was “Great Helmsman.” Mr. Xi’s use of the term highlights what analysts say is his plan to consolidate his rule under an extreme Chinese version of communism**.  
 Gen. **Berrier said the CCP session outlined the party’s economic and military goals, including renewed efforts to shift the economy to developing high-technology industries**. “[Beijing](https://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/beijing/) believes that [China](https://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/china/) remains in ‘a period of important strategic opportunities,’” he said.  
 [Larry Ong](https://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/larry-ong/), a senior analyst with the U.S.-based Chinese political risk consultancy SinoInsider, said the addition of the titles used by Mao are part of Mr. Xi’s drive to consolidate his power indefinitely.  
 “By ‘**borrowing’ from Mao, Xi is looking to boost his ‘power-prestige,’ or ‘quan wei’ — the sum total of an official’s formal and informal power, authority** and prestige,” Mr. [Ong](https://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/larry-ong/) said, adding that use of the title does not mean Mr. Xi wants to become a new Mao.  
 Under Mr. Xi, [China](https://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/china/) has pursued military expansion abroad and increased political control domestically. The State Department this year declared [Beijing](https://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/beijing/) engaged in genocide against minority Uyghurs in the western province of Xinjiang.  
 Militarily, [China](https://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/china/) has stepped up naval and aircraft pressure in neighboring seas against rival claimants to disputed waters. New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern and Philippine Foreign Affairs Secretary Teodoro Locsin in recent days have issued sharp criticism of [Beijing](https://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/beijing/)’s assertiveness in the region.  
 “It will not have escaped the attention of anyone here that as [China](https://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/china/)’s role in the world grows and changes, the differences between our systems — and the interests and values that shape those systems — are becoming harder to reconcile,” Ms. Ardern told a [China](https://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/china/) business summit Monday in Auckland.  
***Alarm bells*** [Beijing](https://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/beijing/) has **also set off alarm bells within the Pentagon over stepped-up military provocations against Taiwan, the island democracy with close U.S. ties. Mr. Xi has declared reuniting Taiwan** with the mainland a core interest and has dispatched military aircraft and warships around Taiwan in large numbers in recent weeks.  
 Mr. Xi became Communist Party general secretary and chairman of the Central Military Commission, the ultimate power position, in 2012. He initially was slated to serve two five-year terms.  
 But **in 2018, Mr. Xi changed party rules to eliminate term limits, paving the way for him take on a third term next year or even a fourth term after** that.  
 The term limits were set up when Deng Xiaoping was CCC leader and were meant to prevent another dictator like Mao from creating a personality cult and imposing totalitarian control.  
 Mao ruled [China](https://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/china/) from 1949 until his death in 1976 with devastating results, including actions that historians say caused the deaths of tens of millions of Chinese through policies of political extermination, forced collectivization and other policies.  
 [China](https://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/china/) experts say Mr. Xi’s hold on power is less certain because of the party’s history of factionalism.  
 No known power factions are following Mr. Xi’s purge of thousands of officials and military leaders who could have challenged his authority.  
 That was carried out by eliminating rivals from two political power centers known as the “Shanghai faction,” led by those associated with Chinese President Jiang Zemin, and the “Central Party School faction” under President Hu Jintao, Mr. Xi’s immediate predecessor. Mr. Xi thoroughly purged a third faction within the People’s Liberation Army of perceived rivals, along with officials from the other factions.  
 As a “princeling,” the offspring of a high-ranking party official, Mr. [Xi](https://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/xi-jinping/) cobbled together his own support base by eliminating rivals from the other power centers.  
 “Nine years after [Xi Jinping](https://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/xi-jinping/) took office, we can now say that a ‘Xi faction’ is emerging,” said Mr. [Ong](https://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/larry-ong/). “If Xi does take a third and even fourth term, he will lay a foundation that would allow the ‘Xi faction’ to dominate the regime in a similar fashion to what the Jiang faction did in the previous two decades.”  
 [China](https://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/china/) watchers say the remnants of the Jiang faction remain the greatest threat to the Xi regime and will try to stop Mr. Xi in the lead-up to the 20th Party Congress next year, when the question of a third term will still give them influence, Mr. [Ong](https://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/larry-ong/) said.  
 Analysts also noted recent remarks published in Macao by former Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao suggesting renewed infighting between Mr. [Xi](https://www.washingtontimes.com/topics/xi-jinping/) and the Hu Jintao faction. The New York Times exposed Mr. Wen in 2012 for allegedly using his power to amass a fortune worth $2.7 billion. **MORE -** <https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2021/may/3/xi-jinping-adopts-mao-zedong-title-helmsman-claims/> **[Anyone not understanding that the Chinese Communist group are truly an existential threat are obviously not operating on all their burners. There is enough documentation of their designs for global dominance and control that it should be readily apparent even thought their Washington DC surrogates like to play it down. – rdb]**

**I will not be intimidated into hiding my faith': Christian official faces jail for believing God**

***'These are all based on the Bible's teachings'***

*By* [*Bob Unruh*](https://www.wnd.com/author/runruh/) *Published May 4, 2021 at 11:08am*

***Päivi Räsänen (Facebook)***

 **A far-left government prosecutor has announced plans to prosecute – and possibly jail – a Christian who served for years as a member of Finland's Parliament, including as the nation's interior minister between 2011 and 2014, over her Christian faith**.

[The Evangelical Focus](https://evangelicalfocus.com/europe/11305/christian-politician-paivi-rasanen-formally-charged-for-hate-crime-against-homosexuals?fbclid=IwAR3UXaCQbE74BiW8P1hTBcMDFUKsRsFdixlUXyqfp9hr2mnMrHlH4x7qwds) publication confirmed Finnish Christian politician Päivi Räsänen has been charged for her social-media posts, a booklet, and her statements during an interview, over a span of 10 years.

**She's a medical doctor who is a leader of the Christian Democrats in Finlan**d, and is charged with three hate crimes against homosexuals, the report said.

The "**investigation" that resulted in the charges took nearly two years, including three different "interrogations" of Räsänen, the report** said.

**The claims against her include that she posted on social media Romans 1:24-27 to criticize a decision by the Finnish Lutheran Church, in which she holds membership, to take part in an LGBT Pride festival for homosexuals, for the contents of a booklet about the Bible titled "Male and Female He Created Them," which dates to 2004, and her Finnish Public Broadcasting interview where she spoke about "What would Jesus think about homosexuals**?"

"I do not consider myself guilty of threatening, slandering or insulting any group of people," Räsänen said in a statement after what she considers "shocking" charges.

"These are all based on the Bible’s teachings on marriage and sexuality." **MORE -**<https://www.wnd.com/2021/05/will-not-intimidated-hiding-faith-christian-official-faces-jail-believing-god/> **[the truly pathetic issue here, besides Christian persecution for Biblical Belief is that the Lutheran Church which is the official STATE Church of Finland obviously has totally lost its way and any sense of Biblical doctrinal soundness. – rdb]**

**Trump Vindicated as Judge Rules Michigan Secretary of State Violated Election Laws**

By [Matt Margolis](https://pjmedia.com/columnist/matt-margolis) Mar 17, 2021 12:38 PM ET

**A judge in Michigan has vindicated President Trump by ruling that Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson, a Democrat,** [**broke state law**](https://www.breitbart.com/2020-election/2021/03/16/mi-court-michigan-secretary-of-states-absentee-ballot-order-broke-law-vindicating-trump-claim/) **when she unilaterally changed election rules concerning absentee balloting in the 2020 election. This ruling legitimizes a key claim made by the Trump legal team in its challenges to the 2020 election**.

**A major change imposed by Benson was loosening the signature verification requirement for absentee ballo**ts. Michigan Court of Claims Chief Judge Christopher Murray ruled that this change violated Michigan Administrative Procedures Act.

The [court made the following conclusion](https://www.scribd.com/document/498855479/Genetski-v-Benson-No-20-216-MM-in-the-Court-of-Claims-for-the-State-of-Michigan):

…nowhere in this state’s election law has the Legislature indicated that signatures are to be presumed valid, nor did the Legislature require that signatures are to be accepted so long as there are any redeeming qualities in the application or return envelope as compared with the signature on file. Policy determinations like the one at issue — which places the thumb on the scale in favor of a signature’s validity — should be made pursuant to properly promulgated rules under the APA or by the Legislature.

Over 3.1 million Michiganders voted by absentee ballot in November. Biden “won” the state by just over 154,000 votes, according to the state-certified results.

**“I’m glad the court sees Secretary of State Benson’s attempts at lawmaking for what they are – clear violations of her authority,” said State Rep. Matt Hall, a Republican**. “If she wants to make changes like these, she needs to work with the Legislature or properly promulgate them through the laws we have on the books.”

“The Legislature is an equal branch of government charged with crafting laws,” Hall [continued](https://gophouse.org/posts/rep-hall-benson-overstepped-authority-crafting-signature-verification-standards). “This is not the role of the Secretary of State, and there is a clear process that must be respected. Unfortunately, Secretary of State Benson has a pattern of not respecting that process. She issued a mandatory directive requiring local election officials to apply a presumption of validity to all signatures on absent voter ballots, but there is nothing within state law allowing for that type of power from her position. As a result, this directive was found to be not in accordance with our laws and not valid.”

Michigan was not the only state where Democrat state officials unilaterally changed election laws, so this ruling certainly raises legitimate doubts whether Biden truly won the election without invalid votes. <https://pjmedia.com/news-and-politics/matt-margolis/2021/03/17/trump-vindicated-as-federal-judge-rules-michigan-secretary-of-state-violated-election-laws-n1433162>

**Secretary of state fighting Arizona audit once vowed to use her office to help Dems take over**

*By* [*Randy DeSoto, The Western Journal*](https://www.wnd.com/author/wj/) *Published May 4, 2021 at 12:18pm*

**Democratic Arizona Secretary of State Katie Hobbs promised while running for her current position in 2018 that if she were to win she would help Democrats prevail in races statewid**e.

**Hobbs made the pledge at a Democratic candidates forum in the spring of that year,** [**saying**](https://www.westernjournal.com/ivote-drops-millions-az-states-flip-top-election-officials/)**, “We going to do very well electing statewide Democrats, and the secretary of state’s office is how we’re going to hold on to those wins, how we’re going to continue to make gains in the legislature and really create a state that reflects all of our va**lues." **[Her values may not be those of the electorate and that is why she needs to serve hard time and be locked up for good. – rdb]**

**That does not sound like the type of partisan mindset you want in the official overseeing the state's election, but she narrowly w**on.

**As secretary of state, Hobbs was able to preside over some pretty big Democratic wins in November, including Joe Biden's shocker at the top of the ticket and less surprising victory of former astronaut Mark Kelly for U.S. senator.**

**Biden's win was the first time a Democratic presidential candidate had won the state since 1996 and only the second time** [**since 1952.**](https://www.270towin.com/states/Arizona) **The election also marked the first time Arizona has had two Democratic senators since early in the** [**last century**](https://www.senate.gov/states/AZ/senators.htm)**.**

**With these notches in her belt, Hobbs is reportedly eyeing a gubernatorial run next y**ear.

All this might help explain why she doth protest so much about the Republican Senate's 2020 [election audit](https://www.westernjournal.com/judge-rejects-democrats-desperate-attempt-shut-arizona-election-audit/).

The secretary's Twitter feed is filled with disparagements about the [#fraudit](https://twitter.com/katiehobbs/status/1387101590784561161)and the like.

She has also made multiple media appearances seeking to discredit the undertaking.

In an interview Sunday with [KPNX-TV](https://www.12news.com/video/news/politics/sunday-square-off/arizonas-tops-elections-officer-gets-eyes-on-audit/75-c4e4aca0-f69e-46ca-8233-0dd8b8eb5b49) host Braham Resnik, Hobbs called the effort "a partisan fishing expedition by people who are refusing to accept the valid results of the November election and they want to continue to sow doubt in the minds of voters to serve their political agenda."

"They’re writing the playbook here for this kind of continued disruption and relitigation and rehashing of the 2020 election," she said.

"If they’re successful here in terms of continuing to undermine voters’ confidence, they’re going to take this on the road to other states."

Thanks [@brahmresnik](https://twitter.com/brahmresnik) for the conversation on [@12News](https://twitter.com/12News) yesterday.

As long as this sham continues, I will do everything in my power to hold the [#fraudit](https://twitter.com/hashtag/fraudit?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) accountable.<https://t.co/WekexFdRUU>

— Katie Hobbs (@katiehobbs) [May 3, 2021](https://twitter.com/katiehobbs/status/1389296283605684228)

**In an MSNBC interview last week, Hobbs utilized "the big lie" lingo that Democrats and GOP Rep.** [**Liz Cheney**](https://www.westernjournal.com/ap-rep-liz-cheney-dealt-blow-wyoming-gop-impeachment-vote/) **of Wyoming** [**like to use**](https://twitter.com/Liz_Cheney/status/1389225154639695881) **when critics raise issues regarding the integrity of the** election.

"It is simply designed to continue promoting the big lie that the election in 2020 was stolen," Hobbs told MSNBC's [Nicolle Wallace](https://www.westernjournal.com/msnbcs-nicole-wallace-says-biden-accusations-part-republican-smear-campaign/).

"We know that that is not the case," the secretary of state continued. "We know that this was the most secure and historically participated-in election that we’ve had."

**If the election was as secure as she claims, Hobbs should have no issue with the audit, w**hich has observers from both parties and is open to the media's scrutiny.

**The secretary of state** [**confirmed to KNXV-TV**](https://www.abc15.com/news/state/secretary-of-state-gets-observers-inside-maricopa-county-election-audit-cyber-ninjas-has-to-reveal-methods) **last week that she now has three representatives on site, following some legal wrangling in court.** One is from the liberal Brennan Center for Justice and another from the Democracy Project.

A: If you mean observers placed by [@SecretaryHobbs](https://twitter.com/SecretaryHobbs), under agreement with Senate GOP they started Thursday afternoon and were at audit site Friday & Saturday. One pair of observers inside. That's state Elections Director Bo Dul on left on Saturday, not sure who's on right. <https://t.co/nRBaliUg2w> [pic.twitter.com/deX6O4YEff](https://t.co/deX6O4YEff)

— Brahm Resnik (@brahmresnik) [May 3, 2021](https://twitter.com/brahmresnik/status/1389066810339717120)

The Brennan Center is trying to get the Department of Justice to [intervene](https://www.westernjournal.com/liberal-groups-call-doj-step-az-election-audit-following-dem-court-losses/) in the audit by sending federal monitors.

**According to a**[**news release**](https://twitter.com/AZSenateGOP/status/1377321595518083074) **from the Arizona Senate Republicans in late March, the audit will include scanning all 2.1 million paper ballots cast to look for irregularities, conducting a full manual recount, investigating the registration rolls to ensure only eligible voters voted** and performing a forensic audit of the electronic voting machines and systems used.

Biden flipped Maricopa County, which encompasses the Phoenix metropolitan area, from red to blue in November, which of course in and of itself is no indicator that fraud occurred.

In 2016, Republican [Donald Trump](https://www.westernjournal.com/trump-slams-dems-seeking-block-az-election-audit-desperate-fraud-remain-concealed/) won the county over Democrat Hillary Clinton by approximately [44,500 votes](https://recorder.maricopa.gov/electionarchives/2016/11-08-2016%201%20Canvass%20COMPLETE%20NOV%202016.pdf), or 2.8 percent.

Biden won Maricopa by [45,100 votes](https://recorder.maricopa.gov/electionarchives/2020/11-03-2020-1%20Final%20Official%20Summary%20Report%20NOV2020.pdf), or 2.2 percent of the vote November.

That the candidates won the county by almost the exact same margin is a little odd, but again not necessarily a red flag for fraud.

**Despite Biden’s victory, Republicans carried** [**every countywide office**](https://www.azcentral.com/elections/results/local/2020-11-03/04013/) **in Maricopa, save for sherif**f (which an incumbent Democrat held), including flipping the county recorder and winning the open treasurer seat.

That is odder, because it means a lot split tickets or under-voting among the 2.1 million ballots cast.

**Add to this fact that very vocal Trump-supporting members of Congress, like GOP Reps.** [**Andy Biggs**](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/11/03/us/elections/results-arizona-house-district-5.html) **and** [**Debbie Lesko**](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/11/03/us/elections/results-arizona-house-district-8.html)**, won their re-election contests in Maricopa County districts by massive margins**, and now the red flag is starting to go up.

Living in Maricopa County, I witnessed massive car rallies and other pro-Trump events and signage last fall while out and about town, with no visible countervailing support for Biden.

Finally, the county did use the notorious Dominion Voting Systems, which proved to be problematic (whether human error or otherwise) in terms of accuracy, by thousands of votes, when hand recounts were conducted in [Michigan](https://www.westernjournal.com/michigan-county-flips-trump-major-vote-tabulation-error-discovered/) and [Georgia](https://www.westernjournal.com/thousands-votes-discovered-another-georgia-county/).

Biden won Arizona overall by [10,457 votes](https://results.arizona.vote/#/featured/18/0) (0.3 percent), the closest margin of any of the swing states that went for him.

Obviously, Hobbs has a vested interest in the election results being shown accurate. She was the official in charge last November, after all, and apparently has aspirations for higher office.

Further, her stated goal back in 2018 was to get Democrats elected statewide and use her office to "hold those wins."

For the rest of us, we just want accurate and fair elections, and there were enough oddities that Maricopa County deserves a closer look. <https://www.wnd.com/2021/05/dem-sec-state-fighting-az-audit-vowed-use-office-help-dems-take/> **[The corruption in the AZ governance by the demon-rats is amazing. – rdb]**

**Democrat lawmaker arrested in sex-trafficking sting**

***Former state house speaker now facing charges***

*By* [*WND News Services*](https://www.wnd.com/author/wndnewsservices/) *Published May 4, 2021 at 12:03pm* ***By Thomas Catenacci*** *Daily Caller News Foundation*

**Former Democratic Oregon House Speaker Dave Hunt is facing charges after being arrested in an April sex trafficking sting, the Portland Tribune repor**ted.

Dave Hunt and seven other men were arrested after clicking on decoy advertisements, which Portland police posted on popular [human trafficking](https://dailycaller.com/2021/04/22/philadelphia-captain-save-a-hoe-sex-trafficking-minors-charged/) websites, the Portland Tribune [reported](https://pamplinmedia.com/pt/9-news/507253-405959-former-oregon-house-speaker-dave-hunt-cited-in-sex-trafficking-sting?wallit_nosession=1). The men were charged with [commercial sexual solicitation](https://dailycaller.com/2021/04/17/lara-logan-joe-biden-taxpayer-dollars-subsidizing-human-trafficking-border-crisis/) after contacting undercover police officers to pay for sexual acts.

Hunt voted in favor of legislation that made commercial sexual solicitation illegal in 2011, according to the Portland Tribune. He sponsored a separate bill that was designed to combat sex trafficking in 2007.

The Portland Police Bureau didn’t publish the names of the men who were caught in the sting in its original [announcement](https://www.portlandoregon.gov/police/news/read.cfm?id=301680) Saturday, but said a list could be obtained upon request. On Monday, police granted the Portland Tribune’s request for the list.

**The portion of the** [**police report**](https://dailycaller.com/2021/04/16/florida-pastor-coach-arrested-sex-trafficking-sting/) **obtained by the Portland Tribune listed the same full name, address and date-of-birth as Hunt. The former House speaker declined to comment when the Portland outlet asked him about the allegations**.

“I don’t think I should talk about that,” Hunt told the Portland Tribune.

Columbia Public Affairs, the public relations firm that Hunt founded last year, didn’t immediately respond to a request for comment.

Hunt had represented Clackamas County, Oregon, for 10 years in the state’s House of Representatives, according to his [CPA biography](https://www.columbiapublicaffairs.com/dave-s-bio). During his time in government he served as majority leader in addition to speaker of the state house.

Hunt and his wife Tonia Hunt have been married since 1992. <https://www.wnd.com/2021/05/democrat-lawmaker-arrested-sex-trafficking-sting/>

**Commentary:**

**CAIR and US Islamists Have a #MeToo Problem**

[*Daniel Greenfield*](https://www.blogger.com/profile/13575285186581875356) [*May 04, 2021*](http://www.danielgreenfield.org/2021/05/cair-and-us-islamists-have-metoo-problem.html)

First, Ahmad Saleem, a community organizer for CAIR in Florida, was busted after showing up to molest what he thought was a 12-year-old girl he had met over the internet. When Ahmad showed up in a car with a plate, "Invest in Children", the cops were waiting for him instead.  
 The son of Pakistani immigrants had [headed up](https://www.frontpagemag.com/fpm/272241/cair-sex-predator-changes-name-heads-pakistan-joe-kaufman) the local Muslim Students Association at the University of Central Florida before moving up the ranks at CAIR. Then it was [off to prison](https://archives.frontpagemag.com/fpm/cair-sex-predator-changes-name-heads-pakistan-joe-kaufman/).

[](https://1.bp.blogspot.com/-vpnEdVkG3lE/YI4rW9Igl9I/AAAAAAAATDA/FnKDC0bHKhoLcambEiDYnhJAvGRsVdlXwCNcBGAsYHQ/s694/image_2021-05-01_213226.png)

Now it’s Hassan Shibly’s turn. The Syrian immigrant w[ho headed up](https://www.frontpagemag.com/fpm/2021/01/cairs-hassan-shibly-resigns-amidst-domestic-joe-kaufman/) CAIR Florida was accused of assaulting his wife, threatening [to kill her](https://www.investigativeproject.org/8814/accused-of-abuse-ex-cair-florida-leader-admits-to), and sexually harassing CAIR employees. Shibly was also accused of threatening some of his accusers, and trying to pay them off.  
 An NPR article [noted that](https://www.npr.org/2021/04/15/984572867/muslim-civil-rights-leader-accused-of-harassment-misconduct?utm_campaign=storyshare&utm_source=twitter.com&utm_medium=social) CAIR leaders had been aware of the accusations as far back as 2016 and that no action was taken. "CAIR National has a history of turning a blind eye to many incidents over the years, and the information is coming out. No NDA will save them from what's to come," a former CAIR employee tweeted.  
 A [forum](https://www.instagram.com/cairvictimsforum/) for CAIR victims on Instagram quickly filled up with stories of a CAIR chapter head who "was found to be sexually harassing a member of staff and other women also complained about his behavior" only to be protected by the local CAIR governing board, a CAIR leader grooming an employee into a sexual relationship, a CAIR leader using "his religious belief that men can have 4 wives to manipulate women into having affairs with him behind his legal wife's back", and a "lawsuit with an imam and a little girl."  
 This kind of thing happens a lot.  
 When the various Islamist groups set up by the Muslim Brotherhood and similar networks operate in this country, they use the laws of Sharia that they intend to impose on Americans.  
 Two years ago, Zia ul-Haque Sheikh, a former ISNA board member, and the Imam at the Islamic Center of Irving, was accused of sexually exploiting a 13-year-old girl. He allegedly tried to [marry the girl](https://religionnews.com/2019/08/15/texas-imam-ordered-to-pay-2-55-million-in-sexual-misconduct-case/), when she came of age, even though he already had two wives at the time.  
 Also at the Islamic Center of Irving, a security guard [was accused](https://religionnews.com/2019/08/15/texas-imam-ordered-to-pay-2-55-million-in-sexual-misconduct-case/) of molesting a third-grader, and there was an incident of a foreign man kissing minors at the mosque.  
 Sheikh's accuser claimed that she had reported this to the president of the Islamic Center of Irving board, Nouman Ali Khan, who “discouraged her from sharing what she experienced because it would harm Sheikh’s reputation.”  
 Khan, an Islamic preacher and a Pakistani immigrant, had headed up the Bayyinah Academy before being accused of latching on to troubled women at Islamic events and then exploiting them. The Islamist cleric had frequently appeared at ISNA and other Islamist events, and had previously [defended](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4t0yvFDCjGw) the Sharia practice of lashing those accused of immoral behavior.  
 Sheikh Usama Canon, the Islamic cleric who founded the Ta'leef Collective, had been a frequent speaker at CAIR and ISNA events, an instructor at the Islamist Zaytuna Institute, and an advisor to the Inner-City Muslim Action Network (IMAN).  
 Canon, a black convert to Islam turned preacher, was ousted after allegations of sexually inappropriate behavior that included grooming women. He still remains involved in various Islamic institutions and organizations including the Downtown Islamic Center of Chicago.  
 Muslim feminist activists insist that the answer is more female leadership, but Linda Sarsour, probably the most prominent female Muslim activist in America, was herself [accused of enabling](https://www.jpost.com/american-politics/linda-sarsour-accused-of-body-shaming-sexual-harassment-victim-519655) sexual harassment back when she was working at the Arab American Association.  
 “She oversaw an environment unsafe and abusive to women,” a former employee, who claimed to have been repeatedly groped, alleged.  
 The Islamist apples rarely fall far from the tree.  
 Tariq Ramadan, the grandson of the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood, and probably the leading Islamist figure in the West, has been accused of raping a series of women.  
 Ramadan's alleged assaults took place in Washington D.C., in Paris, London, and major cities around the world. The victims who have come forward included a disabled convert to Islam and former teenage students: including one [as young as](https://www.thenationalnews.com/world/europe/tariq-ramadan-accused-of-seducing-his-teenage-students-1.673066) 14 years old.  
 The disabled woman [described meeting](https://www.vanityfair.fr/pouvoir/politique/story/-il-avait-lair-habite-jetais-glacee-deffroi-temoignages-glacants-sur-le-systeme-tariq-ramadan/1027) Ramadan after a conference on Islamophobia and Palestine before he beat her, raped her, and then urinated on her.  
 Abuses happen in all religions and among secular intellectuals, but Islam is unique in that its theology provides a license for sexual abuse. A number of the Muslim leaders caught in the #MeToo moment employed the toolbox of Sharia law to perpetrate their abuses. They used the legal fiction of “temporary marriages” to force women into illicit affairs and the codes of a religion whose founder married a 7-year-old girl and where children are married off well before they hit puberty to justify abusing underage girls. And the Islamist infrastructure around them, tapping into the Sharia demand for multiple witnesses to a rape charge, ignored their accusers.  
 Rape and sexual abuses can happen in a variety of settings, but Islam is uniquely built to justify and protect behaviors that are crimes in the United States, but normative in the Muslim world.  
 The #MeToo scandals of Islamism are just symptoms of the fundamental divide between two civilizations and their accompanying value systems. The Islamists had always intended to build a state within a state. And within their organizations and communities, the state within a state operates under Sharia law, with legal, but no moral accountability, to the United States.  
 After 9/11, America’s Islamists increasingly came to align with the Left. The unspoken conflict between Sharia and feminism has yet to explode out into the open because there is too much at stake for both sides. But the #MeToo scandals at CAIR and other Islamist groups are a fracture point between two ideologies that are hostile to America, but also to each other’s values.  
 The miniature clash of civilizations within the political infrastructure of multiculturalism is coming.  
 Islamists have injected their policy priorities, support for the Muslim Brotherhood, hostility to Israel, hijabization, and opposition to fighting terrorism, into the Left. But the Left has also injected its own values, including feminism, into the Islamist political infrastructure.  
 Leftists and Islamists allied in Egypt, Algeria and Iran, among many other places, to overthrow establishment governments, only to have those alliances come apart in blood and tyranny.  
 The American alliance between Islam and the Left may meet the same end.

[*Daniel Greenfield*](http://sultanknish.blogspot.com/)*is a Shillman Journalism Fellow at the David Horowitz Freedom Center. This article previously appeared at the Center's*[*Front Page Magazine*](https://www.frontpagemag.com/)*.* <http://www.danielgreenfield.org/2021/05/cair-and-us-islamists-have-metoo-problem.html>

**[Always remember folks these are the wonderful friends of the Bush/Clinton and Obamanation family – rdb]**

**And then…**

**An Unaware and Compliant Citizenry, Part 2***By* [*Dr. Dennis Cuddy*](https://newswithviews.com/author/dennis/)*|May 1st, 2021* In Fabian Socialist Bertrand Russell’s THE IMPACT OF SCIENCE ON SOCIETY (1953), he wrote that “it is to be expected that advances in physiology and psychology will give governments much more control over individual mentality than they now have even in totalitarian countries. Ficte laid it down that education should aim at destroying free will, so that, after pupils have left school, they shall be incapable, throughout the rest of their lives, of thinking or acting otherwise than their school masters would have wished….Diet, injections, and injunctions will combine, from a very early age, to produce the sort of character and the sort of beliefs that the authorities consider desirable, and any serious criticism of the powers that be will become psychologically impossible.” “Injections?” Like vaccines? “Injunctions?” Like self-isolate and wear masks?  
 To understand how what is happening today is not coincidental, and effects “the sort of beliefs the authorities consider desirable,” note that protesters marching close to each other were not required to wear masks, but people in general were not allowed to go to their churches. There is an undermining of traditional values component to what is occurring, and we can see that this overall effort began many years ago. For example, during the current pandemic, the world has been looking to the World Health Organization (WHO) for leadership. However, after the Communist spy Alger Hiss placed his friend, Canadian psychiatrist Brock Chisholm, in the position of first head of the WHO, Chisholm wrote in the February 1946 edition of the journal PSYCHIATRY: “We have swallowed all manner of poisonous certainties fed us by our parents, our Sunday and day school teachers, our politicians, our priests….The reinterpretation and eventual eradication of the concept of right and wrong which has been the basis of child training, the substitution of intelligent and rational thinking for faith in the certainties of old people, these are the belated objectives…for charting the changes in human behavior.”  
 In 1957, former president of the California Medical Association Dr. Lewis A. Alesen wrote MENTAL ROBOTS, in which he revealed what was happening “under the disarmingly innocent title of ‘The Mental Health Program,’ saying its aim was “the ultimate destruction of the human individual as a person; the eradication of all the traditions, ideals and moral concepts which he has learned from home, church, and school…and taught to deny and reject responsibility for himself, and to transfer that responsibility to the group, that is the state.” Ultimately, this will result in THE NEW WORLD ORDER, which is the title of Samuel Zane Batten’s 1919 book published by the American Baptist Publication Society. In this book, Batten pronounced: “We have vindicated the right of social control….The state must socialize every group….Men must learn to have world patriotism. World patriotism must be a faith.” Batten then called for a World Federation of Nations, and said that men “must see and affirm that above the nation is humanity. Internationalism must first be a religion before it can become a reality and a system.”  
 Also in 1957, Vance Packard authored THE HIDDEN PERSUADERS, and on its first page, one reads: “This book is about “the large scale efforts being made, often with impressive success, to channel our unthinking habits, our purchasing decisions, and our thought processes by the use of insights gleaned from psychiatry and the social sciences. Typically these efforts take place beneath our level of awareness, so that the appeals which move us are often, in a sense, ‘hidden.’ The result is that many of us are being influenced and manipulated far more than we realize in the patterns of our everyday lives.”  
 Before becoming president of the University of Cincinnati (1971-1977), leading educator Warren Bennis in 1968 authored THE TEMPORARY SOCIETY, in which he explained: “One cannot permit submission to parental authority if one wishes to bring about profound social change….In order to effect rapid changes, any such centralized regime must mount a vigorous attack on the family lest the traditions of the present generations be preserved. It is necessary, in other words, artificially to create an experiential chasm between parents and children to insulate the latter in order that they can more easily be indoctrinated with new ideas. The desire may be to cause an even more total submission to the state, but if one wishes to mold children in order to achieve some future goal, one must begin to view them as superior, inasmuch as they are closer to this future goal….One must teach them not to respect their tradition-bound elders, who are tied to the past and know only what is irrelevant.”  
 One way to teach children “not to respect the values of their tradition-bound elders” is to say they have “mental illness.” Relevant to this, in B. K. Eakman’s “What? Are You Crazy? The Screening of America” (CHRONICLES, October 2004), she reveals that “in August 2003, the National Institute of Mental Health and the National Science Foundation announced the results of their $1.2 million taxpayer-funded study. It stated, essentially, that traditionalists are mentally disturbed. Scholars from the University of Maryland, California at Berkeley, and Stanford had determined that social conservatives, in particular, suffer from ‘mental rigidity,’ ‘dogmatism,’ and ‘uncertainty avoidance,’ together with associated indicators of mental illness.”  
 The theoretical basis for social control goes back over 100 years, as “The Father of American Sociology,” Edward Alsworth Ross in his 1901 book, SOCIAL CONTROL, revealed that social checks and stimuli “are managed by a rather small know of persons…the Elite….Judgment may be moulded as well as the will and the feelings.”  
 After the Power Elite has accomplished bringing about “an unaware and compliant citizenry” as a means of achieving their goals, the people can be subjected to “temporarily impaired judgment and heightened suggestibility,” as in psychiatrist William Sargant’s BATTLE FOR THE MIND (1957). In this book, Sargant claims that “belief can be implanted in people after brain function has been a sufficiently disturbed by…induced fear, anger or excitement. Of the results caused by such disturbances, the most common one is temporarily impaired judgment and heightened suggestibility.” “Induced fear, anger or excitement”? Like police shootings? Riots?  
 Relevant to elections, in 1981 Hollywood star Robert Mitchum played Mr. Quinn in a movie titled “Agency” and heads an ad agency that is able to influence elections. Quinn says: “Let us enter the living room and we can enter the mind. It’s power, our power. Public opinion is crucial. Someone must use a guiding hand. I’ve been hired, financed,…the names don’t matter, though you might recognize some of them. Let’s just call them an elite of power, or maybe an influential elite who understand the value of manipulating public opinion….The public wants to be led. It needs to be led. We have long term plans….The concentration of power is healthy.” This reminds one of what “The Father of Public Opinion,” Edward Bernays said in his book PROPAGANDA (1928): “Those who manipulate the organized habits and opinions of the masses constitute an invisible government which is the true ruling power of the country….The technical means have been invented and developed by which opinion may be regimented.”  
 Concerning the most recent American elections, while Trump supporters have been searching for evidence of voter fraud, something far more insidious had actually determined the election’s outcome in advance of November 3, 2020! I will explain what that was, but for those who want to hear an expert describe what happened, go to https://steelonsteel.com/SOSPreview/Guests/so2021-0414-Epstein.mp3 . It is an interview by the Steel-on-Steel radio host John Loeffler with Dr. Robert Epstein, former editor of PSYCHOLOGY TODAY who is now senior research psychologist at the American Institute for Behavioral Research and Technology. Or you can read Epstein’s article, “BIG TECH’S GREATEST THREAT: They have no paper trail for authorities to trace. They are the perfect weapon for changing…the outcome of elections” found at https//www.gatestoneinstitute.org/17218/big-tech-threat . Most of the focus of Epstein’s interview focuses on Google, and for his information on that, go to www.mygooglereseach.com.  
 In Dr. Epstein’s interview, he explains the manipulation of ephemeral experiences from his studies of major search engines (Search Engine Manipulation Effect -SEME) and their leftward bias. In every election, Democrat liberals and Republican conservatives can be counted upon to vote the way one would expect. However, Epstein points out that 6 months before the election, there are still about 20% of voters (roughly 30 million voters) who are still undecided, and who can be pushed politically left or right. Because of the millions of pages of information search engines like Google have gathered on us, they know who they can get out to vote, which way the voters lean, etc. Epstein said that because he is a liberal and that Joe Biden won the November 3 election, he should be pleased. However, he said he not pleased, but actually “horrified” at how it came about! When he learned how many votes could be shifted, he concluded that we are no longer a democracy!  
 Dr. Epstein explained that Google hires people who lean to the political left, and about 96% of Google employees’ political contributions go to the Democrats. He then said Google’s hires write and can adjust algorithms and shift 15 million votes with no paper trail to find out what they have done! Epstein has considerable experience in analyzing what has occurred over the years using controlled randomized ephemeral experiences since early 2013. For example, he has determined that Google has biased search results. Using neutral search terms to measure results (e.g., Trump’s travel ban), Epstein found that Google’s search results were highly biased toward Hillary Clinton in the 2016 presidential race, shifting between 2.6 million and 10.4 million votes with no way to trace what they did!  
 Getting leaks from whistleblowers and others, THE WALL STREET JOURNAL in 2018 found an email from a Google employee stating, “How can we use ephemeral search results to push against Trump’s travel ban?” What happened is that if someone searched “Trump’s travel ban,” Google would put the negative search results first, and of course, most people tend to look at just the first results. In terms of the November 3, 2020 election, months before the election, Google sent out “Go vote” reminders only to liberal voters. Epstein’s group found out what Google was doing and on October 30, just 4 days before the election, forced Google to stop doing that and send “Go vote” reminders to everyone. Thus, before the first vote was even cast, the election results may have already been determined!  
 But Epstein is concerned about far more than just election results being manipulated. For example, he indicated that Google had purchased a thermostat company which produces thermostats that include watching and listening devices that can even interpret what they hear in homes or offices (e.g., Do the children brush their teeth enough. or are the inhabitants having a satisfactory sex life)! Thus it would seem that Big Brother is already here, but “and unaware and compliant citizenry” unfortunately seems clueless about it! <https://newswithviews.com/an-unaware-and-compliant-citizenry-part-2/>

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**ARUTZ SHEVA**

**Senior Israeli official makes secret visit to Jordan**

***Israeli official attends Iftar meal in Jordan in midst of tensions, violence in Jerusalem.***

*Arutz Sheva Staff , May 04 , 2021 10:43 PM*

**A senior member of the defense establishment visited Jordan this week and attended the Iftar meal. The official flew from Israel on an light Air Force aircraft, stayed in the kingdom for a few hours then met with officials and attended the traditional end-of-fast dinner, then returned to Israel, Kan 11 rep**orted.

The **visit is one of the first to Jordan by an Israeli official since the Jordanian Prince's visit to Jerusalem was cancelled in Marc**h.

Israeli officials have visited Jordan to attend the traditional Iftar meal in recent years. This year's visit took on added significant as it occurred amidst a wave of violence in Jerusalem and increased tensions over the Temple Mount.

Israel has held talks with Jordan, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, and Morocco over the tensions in the Holy City. These talks led to the removal of gates which had been set up near the Damascus Gate of the Old City of Jerusalem.

<https://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/305569>

**Principal Secretary of Swiss Embassy in Tehran dies after falling from high rise**

***The senior secretary at the Swiss Embassy in Tehran was found dead after an apparent fall from her high rise apartment on Tuesday.***

*Dan Verbin , May 04 , 2021 9:34 PM*

**The principal secretary of the Swiss Embassy in Tehran was found dead after falling from the high rise tower where she lived on Tuesday, reported Reuter**s.

The **Swiss Foreign Ministry (FDFA) issued a statement saying that an employee of its Tehran embassy had died of an accident, without naming the deceased**. "The FDFA and its head Federal Councillor Ignazio Cassis are shocked by the tragic death and express their deepest condolences to the family.”

A spokesperson for Iran’s emergency services said that the woman’s body was discovered by a gardener after an embassy employee arrived at her apartment to discover she was missing, reported Fars news agency.

"The **cause of her fall has yet to be determined,"** spokesperson Mojtaba Khaledi said.

The secretary’s age is being reported as either 51 or 52.

Switzerland has officially represented American interests in Iran since 1980 when diplomatic relations between Washington and Tehran were cut off after Iranian university students took over the US Embassy in Tehran and held American diplomats hostage for 444 days. <https://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/305562>

**Trump launches new platform after social media ban**

***New platform enables former President to communicate directly with his followers after ban from sites like Twitter and Facebook.***

*Ben Ariel , May 05 , 2021 4:05 AM*

**Former US President Trump on Tuesday launched a new platform aimed at giving him the ability to communicate directly with his followers, after months of being banned from sites like Twitter and Faceboo**k.

**The platform, "From the Desk of Donald J. Trump" appears on his website, reported Fox News. The space will allow Trump to post comments, images, and videos**.

The **technology appears to be powered by Campaign Nucleus, the "digital ecosystem made for efficiently managing political campaigns and organizations," created by** his former campaign manager, Brad Parscale.

The **space allows Trump to post, and allows followers to share the former President’s posts to Twitter and Facebook. However, the new platform does not have a feature to allow users to "reply**" or engage with Trump’s posts.

"This is just a one-way communication," one source familiar with the space told *Fox News*. "This system allows Trump to communicate with his followers."

The new platform launches after Trump was banned from several social media platforms in the wake of the riots on the US Capitol on January 6.

[Facebook banned Trump](https://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/294475) from the platform in the wake of the riots and then [referred its decision](https://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/295358) to the independent Oversight Board, a panel of experts and civic leaders from around the world that was established last year. **MORE -**<https://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/305576>

**Second Temple-era 'luck' lamp found in Jerusalem's City of David**

***A “Lucky” bronze oil lamp meant for good fortune discovered during excavations of the City of David’s Pilgrimage Road.***

*Arutz Sheva Staff , May 05 , 2021 10:32 AM*

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| The building in the City of David where the lamp was uncovered.  ***The building in the City of David where the lamp was uncovered. Koby Harati, City of David*** | ***The oil lamp Koby Harati, City of David*** |

**A rare bronze oil lamp, shaped like a grotesque face that is cut in half, was recently discovered in excavations conducted by the Israel Antiquities Authority, in the City of David Nationa**l Park.

**Israel Antiquities Authority archaeologists, Ari Levy and Dr. Yuval Baruch, believe that the lamp, which was discovered in the foundations of a building built upon the pilgrimage road, was intentionally deposited in order to bring good fortune to the building's residents**. "The offering of this lamp may attest to the importance of the building, which may have been linked to the protection of the Siloam Pool, the city's primary water source."

**The excavation was conducted by the Israel Antiquities Authority, in the Jerusalem Walls-City of David National Park and funded by the City of David Foundation**, the Ministry of Tourism, the Ministry of Jerusalem and Heritage, and the Jerusalem Development Authority.

**This special bronze lamp was deliberately buried in the foundations of the building, dating to the Roman Period, subsequent to the destruction of Jerusalem and the Second Temple in 70 CE** (late 1st-early 2nd century CE). In the opinion of the site’s archeologists, the lamp was a foundation deposit (a ritual burial of an offering in the foundations of a building). “Foundation deposits (offerings) were prevalent in the ancient world, and were intended for luck, and to ensure the continued existence of the building and its occupants, and they were usually buried under the floors of buildings or foundations,” explainedDr. Yuval Baruch and Ari Levy, archeologists on behalf of the Israel Antiquities Authority.

**In actuality, the artifact is half of a lamp. It was poured into a sculpted mold that was shaped like half of a face of a bearded man with a grotesque appearance.** The tip of the lamp is shaped like a crescent moon, and the handle is shaped like the Acanthus plant. The d**ecoration that appears on the lamp is reminiscent of a common Roman artistic motif, similar to a theatrical mask**.

**According to the archaeologists, "This lamp is a very unique find, and as far as we know, the first of its kind discovered in Israel.** The uniqueness of the current object is that it is only half a face." Researchers are debating what this means. It may have been simply a practical matter. The lamp may have been attached to a flat object or wall, serving as a wall lamp, but the possibility that it was an object used in some sort of ceremonial ritual should not be ruled out.

**According to archaeologist Ari Levy, director of the excavations on behalf of the Israel Antiquities Authority, "The building where the lamp was discovered was built directly on top of the Pilgrimage Road at the end of the Second Temple period. The construction of such a massive structure in the period after the destruction of Jewish Jerusalem demonstrates the importance of the area even after the destruction of the Second Temple**. It is possible that the importance of the building, and the need to bless its activity with luck by burying a foundation deposit, was due to its proximity to the Siloam Pool, which was also used in the Roman period as the central source of water within the city."

After the bronze lamp was found, it was handed over for treatment and preservation in the metal laboratory of the Israel Antiquities Authority and put in the care of Ilia Reznitsky. During the treatment, another exciting discovery was made - **inside the lamp was its wick, which was unusually preserved. The wick, which is a very rare find, was submitted for examination by Dr. Naama Sukenik, curator of organic materials at the** Israel Antiquities Authority. Upon microscopic examination, Dr. Sukenik identified that it was a wick made of flax. Future stages of research will try and identify any oil residue left on the wick, which will help determine whether the lamp was used, and if so, what oil they used to light it.

According to Dr. Yuval Baruch of the Israel Antiquities Authority, “Decorated bronze oil lamps were discovered throughout the Roman Empire. For the most part, such oil lamps stood on stylish candelabras or were hung on a chain. Collections around the world contain thousands of these bronze lamps, many of which were made in intricate shapes, indicating the artistic freedom that Roman metal artists possessed. Meanwhile, this half of a lamp, and in fact half a face, which was discovered in the City of David, is a very rare object, with only a few discovered in the whole world, and is the first of its kind to be discovered in Jerusalem." <https://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/305594>

**Jerusalem's Jewish majority hits new low**

***More Orthodox, more Arab: Two-thirds of Jews in Jerusalem are religious, new report reveals. But Jewish majority shrinking rapidly.***

*David Rosenberg , May 05 , 2021 2:01 PM*

**The Jewish majority in Israel’s capital city continues to shrink, a new report finds, with just slightly over 60% of Jerusalemites being Jewi**sh.

According to a report published in Hebrew Wednesday by the Jerusalem Institute for Policy Studies **ahead of Jerusalem Day, at the end of 2020, just 60.4% of residents of Jerusalem were** Jewish.

**There were a total of 952,000 residents of the capital at the end of 2020, the report said, of which 38% were Arabs and 62% were in the category of ‘Jews** and others’.

The **vast majority (96%) of Jerusalem’s Arab population in 2019 was Muslim, with just 12,900 Christian Arabs**.

Some 97.5% of the city’s non-Arab population, listed as “Jews and others”, were Jewish in 2019, with just 2.5% of the “Jews and others” category listed as either non-Arab Christians (3,300) or without a listed religion (11,100).

Within the non-Arab population, two-thirds of Jerusalemites are religious – either haredi or Religious Zionist – with just one-third of the Jewish population identifying as non-religious – a far smaller proportion than in Israel generally.

**Over one-third (36%) of Jerusalem’s Jews identify as haredim**, with just under one-third (31%) identifying as non-haredi religious. **MORE -**<https://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/305609>

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**05/04/2021 NEWS AM**

**ישתבח שמו ⚡ Yaakov Shwekey**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E_hzOuAK5gY>

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| Lord of the Worlds  I found two words  That Jews say everywhere  For what already was  Which has not yet happened  It does not matter because it will always be true  We thank him every day  And glorify to heaven | Thank God  For everything he created for me  For everything that happened to me  Thank God  On moments of happiness  About light in the dark  Thank God  Together forever  Thank God |

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| **"Individuality is the aim of political liberty. By leaving to the citizen as much freedom of action and of being as comports with order and the rights of others, the institutions render him truly a free man. He is left to pursue his means of happiness in his own manner." -- James Fenimore Cooper (1789-1851) American Novelist** |

**Read the Prophets & PRAY WITHOUT CEASING!**

**That is the only hope for this nation!**

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| **Please**  **Remember**  **These**  **Folks**  **In**  **Prayer-**  **Check often**  **They**  **Change!** | **Pray that the world would WAKE UP! Time for a worldwide repentance!**  **ALL US soldiers fighting for our freedom around the world**  **Pray for those in our government to repent of their wicked corrupt ways.**  **Pray for AB family – Wife just diagnosed with brain tumor**  **Pray for AS – post knee replacement – some problems and another one scheduled.**  **Pray for TR – abnormal Mammogram having double biopsy – Mastectomy Scheduled**  **Pray for ZH - having trouble with PTSD**  **Pray for LAC – recurrent cancer getting treatment**  **Pray for KL – troubling spiritual situation.**  **Pray for Ella – emotionally disturbed abused child and brother with ? heart problem**  **Pray for JN – Neuro disease**  **Pray for MS – Job issues and change**  **Pray for BB – Severe West Nile Fever –still not mobile- improving!**  **Pray for RBH – cancer recurrence**  **Pray for Felicia – post op problems – continuing**  **Pray for SH and family – lady’s husband passed away and she is in Nursing home. Not doing well.**  **Pray for MP – Very complex problems**  **Pray that The Holy One will lead you in Your preparations for handling the world problems. – Have YOU made any preparations**? |

**Genesis 27:11And Jacob said to his mother Rebekah, Behold, my brother Esau *is* a hairy man, and I a smooth man. 12Perhaps my father will feel me, and I shall be like a deceiver in his eyes, and I shall bring a curse on me, and not blessing. 13And his mother said to him, Your curse *be* on me, my son; only listen to my voice and go, take for me.**

**Top cop says won't allow scapegoating police for Meron crush**

***Shabtai backs Northern District chief and his cops, blasts 'many different bodies' whose misconduct led to the tragedy; police minister slams media for 'trying to drive wedge' between police, public***

*Ahiya Raved | Published: 05.03.21 , 18:41*

**Police Commissioner Kobi Shabtai on Monday fended off criticism for the Lag BaOmer festival on Mount Meron that ended in a disaster that took 45 lives and pointed an accusing finger at "many different bodies" for years-long neglect of the site**.

**"I won't let Israel Police become anybody's scapegoat for the continued misconduct of many different bod**ies that eventually blew up in the face of Israel Police which had to contain the event for years," Shabtai said at a police senior command meeting at the Northern District Headquarters in Nazareth.



***Public Security Minister Amir Ohana, Northern District Commander Shimon Lavi and Police Commissioner Kobi Shabtai***

***(Photo: Alex Kolomoisky, Tal Shahar, Meshi Ben Ami)***

**"This is an unimaginably tragic event, the like of which the State of Israel never seen before… the police under my command is a strong and professional organization with high work ethic**… I have no doubt that we will emerge from this crisis stronger. But we will not give up until we have learned and internalized what happened there and draw conclusions from it to ensure such an event will not happen again."

**Shabtai said he fully backed Northern District Commander Shimon Lavi — who oversaw the festivities** — and all other cops who took part in the preparations and the event itself.

Public Security Minister Amir Ohana also joined the meeting to show his support for law enforcement.

"I dedicated my past several days mainly to visit the wounded and pay my respects to the families of those who perished. I hear from them, among other things, about the heroic stories of the policemen and first responders," Ohana said.

**"And on the other hand, I hear about the media's attempts to drive a wedge between us. A wedge between the commissioner and the district commander, a wedge between the commissioner and the district commander and the minister, and a wedge** between police and the public.

"I came here to tell you, in my own voice, that this won't happen. I fully back the district commander and the commissioner, who did everything they could to prepare for the festival. Together, we will empower the public and the police. Together, we will continue to work for the safety and security of the citizens of Israel. And together, we will work to empower the entire Israeli society."

**Earlier Monday, State Comptroller Matanyahu Englman said his office — which audits the government — would look into the circumstances surrounding the event at the religious site in north**ern Israel.

"I wish to announce today that I intend to open a special audit that will investigate the circumstances that led to this tragedy," he said in a televised announcement.



***State Comptroller Matanyahu Englman (Photo: Alex Kolomoisky)***

**Englman said that if the government decides to establish a commission of inquiry he may review whether his probe would have any relevan**ce.

"The events of Thursday night were the worst civilian disaster in the history of the country, which could have been avoided. We are obligated to find out how such a tragedy could have been prevented," Engleman said.

**The controller said that his office had issued a scathing report in 2008, in which he labeled the Mount Meron site as hazardous** and recommended steps that must be taken to improve conditions on the ground.

Another report was published in 2011 after the comptroller's office followed up on its earlier finding and found that his recommendations were ignored. "Had the proper action been taken then, last week's disaster would not have taken place."

**Engleman went on to say that both reports found that there was no government authority that had ultimate responsibility for the site or the organization of the religious festiviti**es, the infrastructure on the ground was lacking and maintenance of the compound, insufficient.

"There were structures built without a permit and not according to codes, and access roads and emergency routes bellow standard."

Moreover, the organizers of the Mount Meron festival appeared to have ignored a major safety report on the religious site, issued just eight days before the disaster.

The National Fire and Rescue Services report, which was seen by Ynet, demanded that two separate paths be prepared to regulate the passage of people in and out of the Toldos Aharon compound, where the stampede occurred. <https://www.ynetnews.com/article/H15Gxq6wd>

**At Knesset memorial, leaders urge comprehensive probe of Meron tragedy**

***Netanyahu says deadly crush will be thoroughly investigated, but doesn’t mention a state inquiry commission; Deri, breaking silence, also calls for full examination***

*[](https://static.timesofisrael.com/www/uploads/2021/05/F210502DC15.jpg)By* [*TOI staff*](https://www.timesofisrael.com/writers/times-of-israel-staff/) *Today, 7:19 pm*

***Visitors at the site where 45 people were killed in a crush at Mt. Meron, May 2, 2021. (David Cohen/Flash90)***

**The Knesset held a special memorial session Monday for the dozens of people who died in a crush at a religious festival last week, with the country’s leaders calling for a comprehensive probe of the incident**.

Forty-five people were crushed to death and more than 150 people were hurt, including many in critical condition, in the tragedy at a mass gathering to celebrate the Lag B’Omer holiday at the Mount Meron site in the early hours of Friday morning. Among the victims were over a dozen children and teenagers.

**Monday’s session began with a moment of silence for the casualties of Israel’s deadliest peacetime di**saster.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called the incident a “night of terror.”

“We all mourn the terrible blow,” Netanyahu said.

He said the tragedy will be investigated from every angle, without specifying whether he means a state commission of inquiry. Netanyahu, according to Hebrew media reports, fears the political repercussions of such an inquiry.

**“It is our duty to check every aspect of the disaster thoroughly and in-depth,” he said. “We will learn all the lessons for the future so t**hat a disaster such as this will not be repeated.”



***Screen capture from video of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu speaking in the Knesset, May 3, 2021. (Twitter)***

**The prime minister also praised the groundswell of public response to the disaster that came from across the breadth of Israeli society, with Jews and Arabs providing help in any way they could, offering food and shelter, donating blood** for those who were injured, and attending funerals for those who were killed.

**Israelis have shown “mutual responsibility and a huge hea**rt” in their response to the tragedy,” Netanyahu said.

“The families are not alone and this is the most important thing,” he said, vowing government assistance.

**Benny Gantz, the defense and justice minister, said the incident was “a national disaster that touches each and every one of us as a people and** society.”

**Gantz suggested the tragedy underlines the dangers of ultra-Orthodox “autonomy**” within Israeli society as reflected in the haphazard way the Lag B’Omer festival is administered at Meron, with different ultra-Orthodox sects making arrangements and with no clear oversight.

**“It is our obligation to transform this national tragedy into change,” Gantz sai**d “The State of Israel cannot allow itself to break into autonomies in which people do whatever they please.”

But he urged unity, adding that in Israel, “there is one law for all and everyone has the right to practice their faith and traditions under the auspices of the state.”

“Therefore, at this time, we don’t need criticism, but rather to draw conclusions. Not self-flagellation, but a national and personal embrace while looking ahead,” Gantz said. “It is our duty to correct. This is the order left to us unknowingly by the dead in the disaster.”

**Earlier Monday, having received the go-ahead from the attorney general, Gantz** [**instructed the Justice Ministry**](https://www.timesofisrael.com/ag-transitional-government-can-form-state-inquiry-into-meron-disaster/) **to prepare a proposal for a state commission of inquiry into the** disaster.

**Interior Minister Aryeh Deri, in his first public comments since the tragedy, urged the government to assert full control over Moun**t Meron.

**“I was silent for several days until the funerals ended,” Deri said. “This terrible tragedy is a decree from heaven, but this does not absolve us from a thorough examination and investigation to ensure that no additional tragedie**s like this occur.”

“It’s time to deal with the root [of the problem], to take responsibility, to offer sizable funding and build infrastructure at the site, as is fitting for a holy site,” he said.

**Deri, who heads the ultra-Orthodox Shas party, also rebuffed criticism after it emerged that he pushed for the Lag B’Omer pilgrimage to go ahead without COVID-19 restrictions limiting attendanc**e. He said the discussions preceding the event were about the health risks of the gathering, which he dismissed, rather than general overcrowding.



***Interior Minister Aryeh Deri attends the funeral of Abraham Ambon, one of the victims of the Meron tragedy, in Jerusalem, May 3, 2021. (Yonatan Sindel/Flash90)***

**Earlier, Yisrael Beytenu party chairman Avigdor Liberman called on the leadership of the two ultra-Orthodox parties to resign over what he claimed were their roles in the tragedy at Mount M**eron.

Liberman insisted that had the cabinet backed the recommendations of the Health Ministry to limit the number of attendees at the Lag B’Omer celebration, the tragedy could have been averted. Ultra-Orthodox lawmakers from Shas and the United Torah Judaism party had placed immense pressure on Netanyahu and Public Security Minister Amir Ohana to allow the annual Meron event to take place without any restrictions. **[Liberman is less than kind in many if not most of his comments and has demonstrated his utter loathing for anything that smacks of religion. – rdb]**

 “I call on Aryeh Deri, [UTJ MK Yaakov] Litzman, and [UTJ chairman Moshe] Gafni to take responsibility and resign, rather than passing on responsibility [for the tragedy] onto the [police] district commander,” he said Monday, in a statement to the press at the opening of his right-wing, secular party’s faction meeting. **[This is most interesting. Why have there been 4 elections? In part if you look back because Liberman was totally unwilling to think of the best interest of the state after the first election and compromise in any way in order to help establish a government. Perhaps the resignation should be his. – rdb]**

***Yisrael Beytenu party chairman Avigdor Liberman speaks during a faction meeting at the Knesset, on May 3, 2021. (Yonatan Sindel/Flash90)***

Liberman also joined the growing number of Netanyahu’s opponents calling for the opening of a government-appointed state inquiry into the disaster.

“We must appoint a state commission of inquiry because otherwise, we will not get real answers. Any attempt to appoint another commission is an attempt to evade responsibility and we do not intend to let that happen,” Liberman said.

**Attorney General Avichai Mandelblit said Monday that there is** [**no legal obstacle preventing the transitional government**](https://www.timesofisrael.com/ag-transitional-government-can-form-state-inquiry-into-meron-disaster/) **from forming a state commission of inquiry into the Meron d**isaster.

Following last month’s inconclusive election, the fourth in two years, the country is being run by a transitional government, as negotiations continue to form a majority coalition.

The Israel Police, fire department, Justice Ministry’s Police Internal Investigations Department, and state comptroller have opened their own probes into Israel’s deadliest civilian disaster. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/at-knesset-memorial-leaders-urge-comprehensive-probe-of-meron-tragedy/>

**Netanyahu: I’ll let Bennett be PM first; Bennett: But you don’t have a majority**

***Likud leader again urges Yamina chief to commit to forming right-wing coalition, but Smotrich continues to rule out reliance on Ra’am and Sa’ar still won’t serve with Netanyahu***

*By* [*Raoul Wootliff*](https://www.timesofisrael.com/writers/raoul-wootliff/) *Today, 4:30 pm*

**With just one day remaining for him to form a coalition, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Monday that he was ready to step aside as premier and let Yamina party leader Naftali Bennett serve as prime minister first in a rotation agreement — a proposal immediately dismissed by Bennett, who said in response that Netanyahu simply doesn’t have the** votes.

**Meanwhile, opposition leader Yair Lapid said he expected President Reuven Rivlin to task him with forming a government after Netanyahu’s 28-day period to do so ends Tuesday night**, “if nothing surprising happens” before then, but that he would willing to let Bennett serve first as prime minister in any rotation agreement between them.

**Speaking in a video message released on his social media accounts, Netanyahu said that in his negotiations with Bennett, “I told him I am willing to accept his demand for a rotation deal in which he will serve first as prime minister for one year**. Yamina party members will enter the government and Knesset with important roles.” **[Were I bennett I would be more than leery of Bibi’s offer. Unless he has a very short memory, he will take a lesson from Ganz experience. – rdb]**

**“In a post 10 days ago, Bennett wrote that a right-wing government could be formed if I move aside for the first year. So I moved aside. Now it’s your turn,” Netanyahu said in a direct plea to the Yamina cha**ir. “Personal boycotts and personal rivalries within the right must not prevent the formation of a right-wing government.” (Last month, Netanyahu had [derided](https://www.timesofisrael.com/lashing-bennetts-absurd-ambition-netanyahu-urges-direct-vote-for-pm/) Bennett’s “absurd ambition” and said the idea of the head of a party with just seven seats becoming prime minister was “anti-democratic.”)

**Bennett, however, said he had never asked to be prime minister and reiterated his previous pledge to join Netanyahu only if the incumbent can come up with enough Knesset support for a coalition;** if not, Bennett said, he would back an alternative government.

“If Netanyahu doesn’t manage to form a government, we will form a unity government,” Bennett insisted, referring to a coalition with centrist, left-wing and right-wing parties. “The most destructive thing for Israel is more elections.”

**Netanyahu swiftly responded with an argument he has previously made, saying that if Bennett came aboard, others would follow — making possible a right-wing m**ajority.

**However, Religious Zionism party leader Bezalel Smotrich and New Hope’s Gideon Sa’ar both made clear again Monday that they were not about to boost Netanyahu’s chances.** Smotrich said he would not compromise on his refusal to serve in a government supported by the Islamist Ra’am party, while Sa’ar said he stood by his pledge not to join a government with Netanyahu — thus effectively leaving the prime minister still with no path to a majority. **[It actually appears that Bibi has burned all his bridges and may have to face the consequences and relinquish all power. – rdb]**

**In his video message, Netanyahu goaded Bennett to commit to joining a right-wing government, saying that the Yamina leader must allow the formation of a coalition with the Likud party “to prevent a dangerous leftist government” coming** to power.

“Sixty-five seats voted for a right-wing government. A huge majority of them voted for me as prime minister — directly on the ballot paper, or indirectly for parties that pledged in advance to sit in a coalition led by me,” Netanyahu said of the March 23 elections.

“For such a government to be formed, Naftali Bennett must stand with us in the right-wing bloc, and not join the left-wing bloc,” the prime minister insisted, referring respectively to the bloc of parties that have said they support Netanyahu and those who have vowed to replace him.

**Though Yamina won just seven seats in the March election, Bennett has become a potential kingmaker and even king**, having not yet declared who he will back as prime minister. He has repeatedly said that he will support a right-wing government headed by Netanyahu if the prime minister has the votes, but will work toward a unity government without Netanyahu if not.

**Responding to Netanyahu’s message in a Yamina party faction meeting at the Knesset, Bennett denied he had demanded to be prime minister,** and reiterated his pledge to back the premier if he had the votes.

“I heard Netanyahu’s offer now, but it’s not clear: I didn’t ask for the premiership, but for a government — and this, unfortunately, he doesn’t have, because Smotrich burned the bridges leading to a right-wing government,” Bennett told reporters, referring to the Religious Zionism leader’s abiding refusal to enter a government propped up by Ra’am.

**Bennett said he still preferred to form a right-wing government over a coalition with centrist and left-wing parties and is willing “to make compromises”** to reach that goal. But he said Netanyahu is seeking to pin his own failure to form a government on Yamina and he refused to commit, per Netanyahu’s ultimatum, to not forming a coalition with the Likud leader’s rivals.

**In an apparent boost to Netanyahu, the spiritual head of the far-right Noam faction within Religious Zionism published an open call on Sunday for Netanyahu to form a right-wing coalition with the backing of Ra’am. But a second leading rabbi, Chaim Druckman, on Monday said the opposite, with Smotrich at his side: “Don’t use Ra’am to set up a government**.”

And Smotrich reiterated that despite the opinion of some in his party, he would prevent a right-wing government that relies on Ra’am. “I hate to be a killjoy, but I have no intention of quitting,” he also said.

**Smotrich said he would “prevent the collapse of Zionism with the establishment of a government that relies on terror supporters who deny our existence as a Jewish state.” If necessary, he** said, he would “go into opposition with head held high.”

**At the same time, Sa’ar indicated Monday his party would not join a government with Likud and Yamina even if Netanyahu gave Bennett first turn as prime minister**, for a year, as part of a rotation agreement.

Netanyahu’s proposal to Bennett “is not what New Hope voters voted for. New Hope voters voted for change,” said Sa’ar at his Knesset faction meeting.

Reports late Sunday and early Monday said Netanyahu had agreed to a plan that would allow Bennett to try and put together a right-wing government, in return for the Yamina chief committing to a series of measures that could help the premier put an end to his ongoing criminal trial.

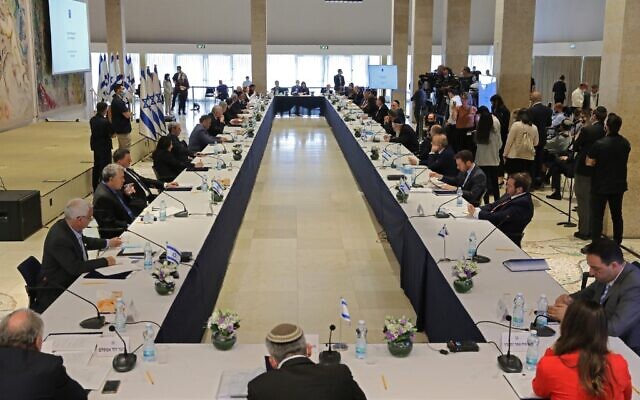
**According to a Walla news report Monday, Netanyahu wants the Yamina leader to commit to giving Likud control over the Justice Ministry and passing a law that would allow the lawmakers to override Supreme Court decisions** striking down Knesset legislation.

Both measures could theoretically help Netanyahu in his reported efforts to [cancel the charges](https://www.timesofisrael.com/netanyahu-lawyers-again-seek-to-cancel-charges-claim-ag-never-authorized-probe/) of bribery, fraud and breach of trust against him and prematurely end his criminal trial. In controlling the Justice Ministry, Netanyahu would be able to appoint a new attorney general when Avichai Mandelblit’s tenure ends in the coming months; and a Supreme Court-override law could allow him to pass legislation against putting a prime minister on trial. **MORE -**<https://www.timesofisrael.com/netanyahu-ill-let-bennett-be-pm-first-bennett-but-you-dont-have-a-majority/> **[This article goes on and on and is a litany of excuses for Israel not to establish a government because they simple refuse to see eye to eye on issues and compromise for the sake of the nation itself. Most sad to watch, BUT this was actually predicted by sages many years ago. – rdb]**

**After High Court warning, cabinet approves appointment of 5 ministers**

***Vote held after Netanyahu repeatedly resisted calls to fill the positions when trying to prevent appointment of Blue and White’s Gantz as justice minister***

*By* [*Raoul Wootliff*](https://www.timesofisrael.com/writers/raoul-wootliff/) *Today, 12:31*

[](https://static.timesofisrael.com/www/uploads/2020/05/000_1S68CP.jpg)

***A cabinet meeting of the new government at Chagall State Hall in the Knesset in Jerusalem, May 24, 2020. (Abir Sultan/Pool/AFP)***

**[This is a most interesting photo from last year. A great picture of the enormity of the cabinet that had to be formed to come to any agreement with he last government. More of same. – rdb]**

**The cabinet on Monday approved the appointment of several cabinet ministers after a fracas with the High Court last week that saw judges freeze the installation of a Likud loyalist of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu as justice minister in a move that violated coalition agreements with the Blue and White p**arty.

**According to a statement from the Prime Minister’s Office, ministers, in a video meeting, approved the appointments of Blue and White’s Eitan Ginzburg as communications minister, Culture and Sports Minister Chili Tropper to also serve as science and technology minister; and Strategic Affairs Minister Michael Biton to additionally head up the Social Equality Min**istry.

In addition, Likud’s Education Minister Yoav Gallant was appointed minister of higher education and Energy Minister Yuval Steinitz was appointed minister of water resources.

The ministries were vacated by resigning ministers in recent months as the government collapsed before the March 23 election.

Knesset member Eitan Ginzburg at the Knesset, on April 29, 2019. (Noam Revkin Fenton/Flash90)

**After they became empty, Netanyahu repeatedly resisted calls to fill the ministries with permanent replacements, as part of a wider effort to prevent the appointment of Blue and White leader Benny Gantz as justice min**ister.

**As part of Gantz’s coalition agreement with Netanyahu last year, the position of justice minister was reserved for members of Gantz’s Blue and White-led blo**c. Avi Nissenkorn held the post until elections were called late last year, at which point he resigned to run on a separate party’s slate. Gantz, also defense minister, subsequently took on the post in an interim capacity until his temporary tenure ran out last month. [**This may seem strange, but Bibi has repeatedly welched on his deals in the past and continues with this. That is why he can’t form a government any more because no one will trust him. It is interesting but there is a Talmudic principle that if a person lies before a court once they may never testify again because their testimony will hold no weight. – rdb]**

**After repeated warnings from the High Court that the government must appoint a permanent justice minister and fill the other vacant ministries, Netanyahu last week briefly forced through the appointment of Likud’s Ofir Akunis as justice minister over the objections of the attorney general, who said the move was illegal**.

The prime minister quickly [reversed his position](https://www.timesofisrael.com/netanyahu-backs-down-agrees-to-make-gantz-justice-minister/) after the High Court intervened.

Telling the court that he had agreed for Gantz to become justice minister — a move that took place in a vote last Wednesday night — Netanyahu also said he would fill the several other unstaffed ministerial roles at this week’s cabinet meeting. However, the premier canceled Sunday’s planned meeting as the country observed a day of mourning for the 45 people killed in the Mount Meron tragedy, and therefore the appointments were only approved on Monday.

**Critics accused Netanyahu of trying to blocking Gantz’s appointment in order to exert pressure over the Justice Ministry in an attempt to influence his ongoing criminal trial**.

Netanyahu, who is on trial on charges of bribery, fraud and breach of trust, has railed against the justice system, police, left-wing opposition and media, accusing them of conspiring to remove him from power. He denies any wrongdoing. **MORE -** <https://www.timesofisrael.com/after-high-court-warning-cabinet-approves-appointment-of-5-ministers/>

**Israel’s ban on travel to 7 countries over COVID variants takes effect**

***Israelis cannot travel to India, Mexico, South Africa, Brazil, Ukraine, Ethiopia, Turkey; returnees, even those vaccinated or recovered, must isolate***

*By* [*TOI staff*](https://www.timesofisrael.com/writers/times-of-israel-staff/) *Today, 4:26 pm*

**New regulations banning travel to seven countries over fears of importing COVID-19 variants into Israel went into effect on Monday, the Health Ministry announce**d.

**Effective Monday, Israelis cannot travel to India, Mexico, South Africa, Brazil, Ukraine, Ethiopia, or Turkey unless they receive special permission. Israelis may take connecting flights through those countries, provided the layover is shorter than 12 hou**rs.

Special permission may be provided for those with humanitarian reasons, athletes or emissaries for national institutions.

**Israelis returning from those seven countries — even those vaccinated or recovered from the virus — must enter 10 days of isolation with two negative PCR tests, or 14 days with one test taken u**pon arrival in the country. The vaccinated or recovered do not need to self-isolate if they merely took a connecting flight through those countries, provided the layover was shorter than 12 hours.

**In the face of the**[**new coronavirus variant**](https://www.timesofisrael.com/india-sets-new-global-daily-record-in-virus-cases-as-millions-vote-in-state-poll/)**devastating India, the Health Ministry**[**proposed new travel restrictions**](https://www.timesofisrael.com/health-ministry-backs-ban-on-travel-to-7-high-risk-countries-including-india/) **for Israelis last week;** however, the urgent restrictions were not immediately implemented.

The original recommendation included [requiring](https://www.timesofisrael.com/health-ministry-to-require-quarantine-for-all-travelers-from-7-virus-hit-nations/) noncitizens entering Israel from the specified highly infected countries to self-isolate in quarantine hotels, but that measure was not ratified.

**Last week, Israel identified 41 cases of the Indian coronavirus variant, including five in childre**n, and five among people who were fully vaccinated.

A top health official said Wednesday that it was [not clear that COVID-19 vaccines offer protection against the Indian variant](https://www.timesofisrael.com/top-health-official-vaccines-effectiveness-against-india-strain-is-uncertain/), and cited the concern as a key reason Israel must ban travel to countries with high coronavirus infection rates.

**According to a ministry statement, 24 cases of the mutated strain were found among people who returned recently from abroad, including 21 foreign resident**s. But 17 of those infected hadn’t been abroad, and some of them had no obvious links to anyone who did, indicating that the variant is spreading undetected.

**Moreover, five kids from five schools were diagnosed with the Indian variant. Since the vast majority of children under 16 are not being vaccinated, this has raised fears of a new outbreak after infecti**ons have been steadily dropping for several months following the country’s rapid inoculation campaign.

Still, Israel [recorded](https://www.timesofisrael.com/only-13-new-covid-cases-diagnosed-in-24-hours-lowest-in-14-months/) the lowest positive infection rate in 14 months, with only 13 new coronavirus cases diagnosed in the country on Saturday, according to Health Ministry data released Sunday.

Late last month, the Jewish state [passed the milestone](https://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-crosses-milestone-of-5-million-fully-vaccinated-against-covid-19/) of over 5 million people having received both vaccine shots.

And on Sunday, the Israel Defense Forces [declared itself coronavirus-free](https://www.timesofisrael.com/idf-says-no-active-covid-cases-among-soldiers-in-first-since-start-of-outbreak/), as it recorded zero active cases of the disease among its ranks for the first time since the outbreak of the virus. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/israels-ban-on-travel-to-7-countries-over-covid-variants-takes-effect/>

**Israel confirms first cases of Brazilian, Chilean COVID-19 variants**

***South American strains identified in three Israeli returning from abroad, two vaccinated adults and an infant; Israel bans travel to 7 destinations suffering from severe coronavirus outbreaks***

*Ynet | Published: 05.03.21 , 20:03*

**The Health Ministry reported Monday it had identified in Israel the first cases of two new COVID-19 strains that were originally found in Brazil and Chille**. [sic]

**Health authorities said that two cases of the Brazilian coronavirus variant were identified in an infant and in a vaccinated adult who returned from a**broad.

**The ministry said it had also detected the first case in Israel of the Chilean variant in a vaccinated adult who came back from abroad. Some 60 cases of the Indian variant have been identified in Israel as of Sunda**y, most of them in foreign laborers hailing from the Indian sub-continent.

An official statement said that health officials do not yet know the effects of the strains on those who are vaccinated or have fully recovered from the disease and will keep the public updated on any new information or findings on the matter. **MORE -** <https://www.ynetnews.com/health_science/article/SJCMGo6v00>

**Palestinians torch car said to be used in West Bank drive-by attack**

***Torching in West Bank village of Aqraba occurs moments after Palestinian security forces identify the vehicle; condition of Yehuda Guetta, 19, remains critical, while the condition of Bnaya Peretz, 19, is described as serious***

*Ynet | Published: 05.03.21 , 19:24*

**Palestinians Monday torched a car believed to have been used in Sunday's drive-by shooting at Tapuah Junction in the northern West Bank in which three Israelis were w**ounded. The troching (sic) **occurred after Palestinian security forces found the vehicle in the West Bank village of Aqraba**, southeast of Nablus.



***The suspected vehicle***

**According to images, the car was hit by at least two bullets, one of which shattered the back windshield and the other hit the trunk door, probably from IDF soldiers who returned fire at the scene of the att**ack.

**Earlier Monday, the IDF decided to beef up forces' presence in the West Ban**k as searches after the suspected gunmen persisted.

**A military spokesperson said the forces are being bolstered to assist with the manhunt but also for fear of further attacks, which might be carried out in the wake of the cancellatio**n of the Palestinian elections, for which Palestinian officials blame Israel.

**Meanwhile, Petah Tikva's Rabin Medical Center — where the wounded were taken to after the attack — said the condition of Yehuda Guetta, 19, remained critical, while the condition Bnaya Peretz, 19, was described as serious**.

**The third person who was wounded in the drive-by shooting, 19-year-old Amichai Hala, has been released from the hospital, having sustain**ed mild injuries.

Speaking to Ynet, Hala recounted the first moments of the attack.

 **"We were talking to some guys at the bus station and suddenly, I heard a loud noise and gunshots. We laid down quickly on the ground. My back was turned to the terrorists, and only after I laid down did I realize they were shooting at us before fleeing towards Na**blus."

Hala said it was a "miracle" he was only lightly hurt.

**"Very quickly, they started evacuating the wounded and then I realized a bullet hit me in the back.** It was only when I was on the ground that I realized it was a terror attack. If I was standing a bit to the right or to the left, my situation would have been different."

***An IDF soldier at the scene of the shooting Sunday (Photo: Yoav Dudkevitch)***

**No organization has taken responsibility for the attack but Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vowed there would be a harsh response**.

“We will not allow terrorism to raise its head and we will strike our enemies with force,” he said. <https://www.ynetnews.com/article/BkkG29TD00#autoplay>

**UN committee to examine Palestinian apartheid charges against Israel**

***A United Nations arbitrations committee is poised to examine a Palestinian Authority complaint that Israel has committed acts of apartheid.***

*By* [*TOVAH LAZAROFF*](https://www.jpost.com/author/tovah-lazaroff) *MAY 3, 2021 21:19*

**A United Nations arbitrations committee is poised to examine a Palestinian Authority complaint that Israel has committed acts of aparth**eid.

**The move comes as civil society allegations against the Jewish state by Israeli left-wing NGOs such as Yesh Din and B’Tselem and by the US-based** [**Human Rights Watch**](https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/investor-cashing-in-on-israeli-startups-while-calling-israel-apartheid-666972)**, on the issue of** [**apartheid**](https://www.jpost.com/opinion/israel-is-not-an-apartheid-state-editorial-666516) **have made hea**dlines.

**Israel’s mission to the UN in Geneva issued a sharp retort on the matter Monday, after the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) said Friday it planned to advance the matter.**

**CERD “has applied discriminatory standards against Israel to justify its outrageous decision on the admissibility of the politically motivated Palestinian complaint**.”

The Palestinian Authority in contrast welcomed the decision issued on Friday as CERD wrapped up its April session.

CERD’s action, it said proved that “Israel’s racism and discrimination against the Palestinian people violate the basic tenets of international law and humanity as a whole.” **[There is no proof of anything because there has yet to be an investigation or inquiry. This is typical “PA” rhetoric and garbage. – rdb]**

The PA had initially filed its complaint with CERD on April 23, 2018. The matter would have been dealt with in 2020, but was delayed due to COVID-19.

CERD is the monitoring body of the Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination that went into effect in 1969. Its 18-member body examines all states for compliance on a routine rotating basis. It also evaluates complaints of non-compliance.

**Both Israel and the PA are signatories to the convention, which prohibits apartheid** under Article 3.

“States Parties particularly condemn racial segregation and apartheid and undertake to prevent, prohibit and eradicate all practices of this nature in territories under their jurisdiction,” the convention states.

**The PA has complained to CERD that Israel is not in compliance with Articles 2, 3 and 5 of the convention. At issue is Israeli actions in Gaza, t**he West Bank and east Jerusalem.

CERD routinely examines Israeli compliance with the convention, as it does with all signatories. Israel participates in all such reviews, the last of which was held in 2019. CERD also reviewed Palestinian compliance in that same year.

**Israel has taken CERD reviews seriously as the committee is composed of a professional body and is largely presumed to not exhibit the same level of anti-Israel bias as the UN organs t**hat are composed of representatives of member states.

The arbitration procedure is not part of the normative review and an ad hoc five member panel, known as the conciliatory committee, would be appointed to deal with the matter.

On Friday CERD said it had rejected Israel’s argument that the PA claim should be dismissed and planned to appoint such a committee.

**Already in 2019 CERD had dismissed an opinion in support of Israel by a UN legal advisory body that the Palestinian claim was inadmissible.** The former Trump administration had also spoken out against the PA’s claim.

“After careful considerations, on 30 April 2021, the Committee had decided with consensus, by the non-participation of four members, to reject the exceptions raised by the respondent concerning the admissibility of the inter-State communication [by the PA],” CERD stated. **MORE -** <https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/un-committee-to-examine-palestinian-apartheid-charges-against-israel-667110>

**State Dept: US will not take part in Durban IV conference**

***The US will keep up its policy of not participating in events commemorating the 2001 Durban Declaration, which singled out Israel as racist.***

By [LAHAV HARKOV](https://www.jpost.com/author/lahav-harkov)   MAY 3, 2021 20:26

**The US will keep up its policy of not participating in events commemorating the 2001 Durban Declaration, which singled out Israel as racist, a State Department spokesperson told The Jerusalem Post on** Monday.

**“The United States will not attend or participate in any events commemorating the 20th anniversary of the Durban Declaration and Program of Action or the World Conference on Racis**m, which preceded it,” the spokesperson stated. **[The moist racist group in the Middle east is the “PA” authority. Israel has little problems having islamics and Christians living the state of Israel but the “PA” refuses to have even one Jew live in the area that they claim to be their territory. If that isn’t racism and apartheid nothing is. – rdb]**

The UN plans to hold events marking the 20th anniversary of the World Conference on Racism, also called Durban IV, on September 22, coinciding with the Jewish holiday of Sukkot.

The State Department spokesperson said that the US “remains deeply committed to combatting antisemitism at home and abroad. Furthermore, the United States stands with Israel and has always shared its concerns over the [Durban](https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/israel-us-vote-against-un-funds-for-antisemitic-durban-conference-653947) process’s anti-Israel sentiment, use as a forum for antisemitism and freedom of expression issues.”

The spokesperson responded to a query from *The Jerusalem Post* about a March 2021 UN Human Rights Council Joint Statement on Countering Racism and Racial Discrimination, initiated by the US.

The statement mentions the Durban Declaration in a positive light: "Recalling the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Durban Declaration and Program of Action, we are committed to working within our nations and with the international community to address and combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance, while upholding freedom of expression."

The State Department spokesperson said that the joint statement "includes a brief reference to the fact that the Durban conference happened 20 years ago and in no way reflects a change in our position regarding the problematic portions of the document or the process that led to its creation."

The spokesperson also said "the Biden Administration has put racial justice at the top of its priorities, both in multilateral fora and at home." **MORE -** <https://www.jpost.com/bds-threat/state-dept-us-will-not-take-part-in-durban-iv-conference-667103>

**Fire, explosion at petrochemical plant in Iran**

***Two firefighters were seriously injured and two of the fire trucks battling the flames caught fire and were destroyed.***

*By* [*TZVI JOFFRE*](https://www.jpost.com/author/tzvi-joffre) *MAY 2, 2021 14:14*

***Fire at a petrochemical plant in the Shokuhieh Industrial Town in the Qom Province of Iran (photo credit: TASNIM NEWS AGENCY)***

**An** [**explosion**](https://www.jpost.com/breaking-news/natanz-nuclear-site-blast-iranian-state-tv-identifies-man-behind-attack-665416) **and fire were reported at a petrochemical plant in the Shokuhieh Industrial Town in the Qom Province of Iran on Sunday, according to Iranian medi**a.

**Some 150 firefighters and 20 firefighting vehicles worked to extinguish the large fire**. Two firefighters were seriously injured and two of the fire trucks caught fire while battling the flames and were destroyed, according to the Iranian Fars News Agency.

A number of explosions were reported amid the fire. A spokesman for the local fire department told Fars that the fire had been prevented from reaching nearby tanks which would have caused a "very large accident" if they had caught fire.

Last year, a [series of explosions](https://www.jpost.com/breaking-news/explosion-at-gas-plant-in-iran-report-634916) and fires hit industrial sites across Iran, including a number of petrochemical plants. Iranian officials referred to most of the cases as incidents or accidents, although some reports have claimed that at least some of the incidents involved foul play. <https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/fire-explosion-at-petrochemical-plant-in-iran-666957>

**Vicious' sanctions are hurting Russia, but Moscow has plan to ditch US dollar & axe dependency on West, Foreign Ministry tells RT**

*3 May, 2021 10:54* By **Gabriel Gavin,** in Moscow

**Facing harsh economic measures imposed by Washington and its allies in Europe, Russia is working to cut Western influence out of its economy, Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said in an exclusive interview with** RT.

**In April, US President Joe Biden unveiled a new package of sanctions against Russian businesses and officials, while, at the same time, effectively banning American financial institutions from buying shares in Russian soverei**gn debt. **Officials in Washington described the restrictions as a "proportional" response to alleged meddling by Moscow in the 2020 US presidential election**, and assertions Russia was behind the colossal SolarWinds cyber-espionage breach detected last year. The Kremlin has strongly denied both sets of claims.

**The UK and the EU have both since rolled out their own sanctions, and there is talk in European capitals of more measures to com**e. Few moves have been as extreme, though, as the decision to target national debt bonds, which the White House says was designed to hit the country's economy while minimizing the impact on world markets. However, some economists claimed the package of measures was mostly *"symbolic,"* and the new rules could simply be *"circumvented"* if buyers still wanted to pick up shares in Russian debt.

***'A gesture of desperation'***

**The characteristically blunt Zakharova told RT over the weekend that new economic barriers were "having a complex negative impact on both Russian and Western economies." According to her, the price of playing out hostilities through the financial markets is high, a**nd *"estimates of the damage vary, but are well within the hundreds of billions of dollars."*

*"Unfortunately,"* the diplomatic spokeswoman said, *"***the reality of our time has been the increased use of politically motivated unilateral measures by some Western states, mainly the US***. We see the sanctions against Russia more and more as a 'gesture of desperation' due to the inability of elites to accept the new realities, abandon their collective groupthink, and recognize Russia's right to determine its own development path and build relations with its partners."*

One reason behind this, she claimed, is that Washington and its allies *"seem to find it difficult to accept the obvious successes of the Russian economy, the increase in its international competitiveness and the expansion of the presence of quality Russian goods and services on world markets."*

**While the ruble has been hit hard by falling oil prices, geopolitical uncertainty, and the global recession that has accompanied the Covid-19 pandemic, the country appears more resilient than most of its contempora**ries. While a number of other European nations are still languishing in lockdowns, most Russian businesses have been trading consistently with few restrictions since an initial strict quarantine period in the first half of last year.

**The governor of Russia's Central Bank, Elvira Nabiullina, has previously said that "the economy is bouncing back rather steadily"** and, *"given the current positive trends,"* its analysts have maintained their outlook on GDP growth for 2021 at 3 to 4%. Her bullishness comes at a time when the path back to growth appears uncertain for many countries.

**The US insists its approach is simply to send a message that it will not tolerate what it deems as aggressive and malign influence on the part of Mosc**ow. *“I was clear with President Putin that we could have gone further, but I chose not to do so,”* Biden told journalists at the time. *“The United States is not looking to kick off a cycle of escalation and conflict with Russia.”* However, since then, relations have gone from bad to worse, accompanied by diplomatic expulsions and increasingly combative rhetoric coming from both sides.

***A SWIFT response***

**At the end of April, the EU Parliament passed a non-binding resolution in which representatives called for the harshest possible steps to be taken against Russia in the event of an all-out conflict with neighboring Ukrain**e. Tensions have risen rapidly in recent weeks over fierce fighting in the Donbass between Kiev's forces and those loyal to two self-declared breakaway republics, which have sought support from Moscow.

**In such a scenario, the Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) behind the motion said, "Imports of oil and gas from Russia to the EU [should] be immediately stopped.***"* At the same time, the country *"should be excluded from the SWIFT payment system, and all assets in the EU of oligarchs [sic] close to the Russian authorities and their families in the EU need to be frozen and their visas cancelled."* **[Convenient that they are doing this in summer rather than winter when they might have a major problem without Russian gas. – rdb]**

**SWIFT, a Belgium-based international transaction mechanism, is the cornerstone underpinning the vast majority of cross-border transactions, with more than 30 million financial messages** moving through its network each day.

**Ukraine has previously issued a request for Moscow to lose the right to make use of the service, even without the kind of conflict described by the MEP**s. But Russia has warned that, if implemented, disconnecting its businesses from SWIFT would be seen as an *"act of war,"* and it has expanded domestic alternatives to reduce its vulnerability to Western sanctions.

**Speaking at a meeting with his Chinese counterpart last month, Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said, "The United States has declared its mission is to limit the technological development opportunities of both the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China." He added that the dollar should be de-prioritized** as the default currency of international markets, and the two nations should move away from the use of *"Western-controlled international payment systems."* **[The loss of the dollar as the benchmark currency around the world would deal a huge and devastating blow to the USA. It would severely limit the ability of this country to just keep printing money and expecting it to be accepted. In other words the dollar would have little value. – rdb]**

Zakharova cautioned that *"the question of Russia being disconnected from SWIFT is still only hypothetical,"* but said that *"nevertheless, cross-governmental studies are underway to minimize the risks and potential economic damage that would be caused by our country's access to international financial instruments and payment mechanisms being limited."* She pointed to the Bank of Russia's own financial messaging system as a possible alternative, with *"options for interfacing"* it with European, Iranian, and Chinese mechanisms *"currently under discussion."*

**New developments in online finance could also be a route out of dependency on the most common Western-run institutions.** The Foreign Ministry spokeswoman added that *"Russia is actively studying the opportunities offered by digital technology and their potential for enhancing the sustainability, stability, and independence of the national financial system and means of making payments, with an understanding that digital money could, in the future, become the foundation for an updated international financial system and cross-border transactions."* The move, if realized, would have the potential to undermine the centrality of SWIFT altogether and enable the moving of money despite political intervention.

***Ditching the greenback?***

**Washington's record of introducing sanctions on rival states at short notice has undermined confidence in the dollar, Moscow claims**. Lavrov's deputy Foreign Minister, Alexander Pankin, recently warned journalists that the unpredictability of US foreign policy has *"called into question the reliability and convenience of using the American currency as the priority currency of deals."*

**Instead, the minister said, countries are now being "forced to take measures against the risk of economic losses and disrupted transactions. Therefore, there is increasing interest in developing alternative mechanis***ms. Using other currencies in trade is becoming more and more important on the international agenda."*  
 Zakharova told RT that *"a gradual departure from the US-centric configuration of the global monetary system"* has already begun. She called for *"coordinated steps in this direction"* to be taken with the country's trading partners, *"not only to help strengthen our national currencies, but to make it possible to minimize the potential economic damage from the introduction of any new restrictive measures by Western countries."* **Recent deals with China and Turkey, she added, have helped facilitate exactly that.**

These **disclosures put weight behind Moscow's previously bombastic rhetoric about the importance of reducing American supremacy in financial systems. In one such set of remarks**, Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Ryabkov told Bloomberg in February that it was essential to pre-empt hostile confrontation with the new president, Joe Biden. *"We need to barricade ourselves against the US financial and economic system to eliminate dependence on this toxic source of permanent hostile actions,"* he said. *"We need to cut back the role of the dollar in any operations."*

***Banking on the future***

**Despite the escalations of recent weeks, Zakharova insisted that Russia was not isolated in the commerc**ial arena. *"Only a small number of individual nations are pursuing a hostile foreign policy,"* she said. *"This is to their detriment."*

*"We do not intend to close ourselves off from the outside world, as those pushing sanctions are trying to get us to do. On the contrary, we are always open for a dialogue on all problematic issues, and ready for equal and mutually beneficial cooperation with all countries – but only on the basis of the principles of equality and mutual respect of each other's interests,"* the official stated. *"Only in this way, we believe, can international relations be sustainable."*

**Paradoxically, then, Russia's efforts to slash the use of international systems and the US dollar are not intended as a road to anti-free market isolationism. Instead, they are intended as a response to efforts by the Biden White House to cut off the country from international trade** and foreign investment, keeping cash and goods flowing with trading partners. To overcome Washington's approach, Moscow's foreign policy officials clearly believe that taking a step back from financial ties to the West could mean taking two steps forward for the economy. <https://www.rt.com/russia/522685-vicious-sanctions-dollar-dependency/> **[This needs to be read carefully and thought about. It could result in ‘the great reset’ – rdb]**

**‘Most severe sexual abuse’: German police bust darknet child-porn platform boasting 400,000 users worldwide**

*3 May, 2021 14:39*

**German police have raided one of the world’s largest child-porn platforms, a darknet site called ‘Boystown’, arresting several suspects believed to be its administrators. The site had some 400,000 users at the time of its closur**e.

The shutdown of the platform was announced in a statement by Frankfurt prosecutors together with the Federal Criminal Police Office on Monday.

**Law enforcement officials said they had caught three suspects believed to be the administrators of the now-defunct platform, which reportedly had over 400,000 users** at the time the police operation took it offline.

**Police described it as “one of the world’s biggest child pornography darknet platforms” and said it has been active since at least June 2019.** Several other chat platforms dedicated to sharing child pornography were also taken offline during the raids.

Two suspects, a 40-year-old man from Paderborn and a 49-year-old man from Munich, were arrested during police raids in mid-April. Another suspect, a 58-year-old man from northern Germany, was arrested in Paraguay where he has resided for years. Germany has requested his extradition.

The police have also detained a fourth suspect, a 64-year-old man from Hamburg, believed to be one of the platform’s most active users. They said the man has allegedly uploaded over 3,500 posts containing highly illegal content to the platform.

A large cache of pornographic materials, including imagery of *“most severe sexual abuse of toddlers”*, has been seized during the raids.

**The takedown of the child pornography network was hailed by top German officials who said the successful police action shows the authorities able to effectively protect the most vulnerable and punish the sexual predators** who prey on them.

*“This investigative success has a clear message: Those who assault the weakest aren’t safe anywhere,”* German Interior Minister Horst Seehofer stated. *”That’s what investigators work for day and night, online and offline, globally.”*

***We’ll do everything within our power to protect the kids from these disgusting crimes.***

The bust followed a months-long probe that was coordinated by Europol. Law enforcement officials in the Netherlands, Sweden, the US and Canada have also contributed to the investigation, German police said. <https://www.rt.com/news/522779-germany-child-porn-bust/>

**Green light given to extend 2020 presidential recount in Arizona**

***Audit checking all 2.1 million ballots from Maricopa County***

*By* [*Bob Unruh*](https://www.wnd.com/author/runruh/) *Published May 3, 2021 at 11:22am*

**An audit of the 2020 presidential election results from Maricopa County, Arizona, which was one of multiple states where Joe Biden won by a narrow margin, resulting in objections from lawmakers based on evidence of fraud, is likely to be extend**ed.

**Originally the audit, being organized by Republicans in the state Senate, was to have concluded about May 14, as the process is being done at Veterans Memorial Coliseum and that facility has multiple graduation ceremonies booked starting on that date and for a few days foll**owing.

**But now it has been revealed the process could continue after those eve**nts.

**Ken Bennett, the former Arizona secretary of state who is liaison for the audit, said in a report in the Arizona Republic that the facility now has given permission to resume after those events, and for "as long as we need** it" for the audit.

**Democrats, who have sued to suppress the results, also say they may sue if the auditors go ahead with planned interviews with a selected number of voter**s, to complete the audit and gain evidence that voters are who they said they are.

The [Washington Examiner](https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/news/maricopa-county-2020-election-audit-expanding-liaison-no-deadline) reported that the process, which is to hand recount and verify all 2.1 million ballots, had reached the one-week mark but Bennett did not estimate the number of ballots already reviewed – or whether fraud has been discovered already.

Initially, Bennett had estimated that the audit report would be released within 60 days of the launch of the review.

The Senate, with a GOP majority, hired Cyber Ninjas of Florida to head the audit effort.

**The number of counters being used also is being expanded, so this week there are expected to be 46 counting tables, up from 20, with a total of 138 counters per shift.**

**Also, the county election department said it was picking up some of the election machines that had been delivered to the audit under subpoena from the state Sena**te, as Bennett explained an IT company had finished capturing forensic information for those units.

Bennett explained, "All of the forensic data has been captured off of those machines, and now they'll move into phase two, which is analyzing that data."

**The Arizona Democratic Party and Maricopa County Supervisor Steve Gallardo, a Democrat, already have gone to court to try to suppress the wor**k – after the Senate obtained court permission for the audit.

Arizona Secretary of State Katie Hobbs, a Democrat, has labeled the audit "a farce" because the county election department twice checked its own work earlier and said there were no irregularities.

Hobbs charged that a recount "observer" from her office claimed there were questions about the reliability of the audit.

**However, Arizona GOP Chairwoman Kelli Ward noted that the "observers" from Hobbs' office included an election consultant for a Democrat operations organization and a lawyer with the far-left Brennan C**enter.

The operations organization, called Protect Democracy, also threatened it would take the recount to court again if auditors follow through on announced plans to knock on doors to confirm valid voters actually live at the stated addresses.

And the Brennan Center claimed, in a complaint to the Joe Biden Department of Justice, "We are very concerned that the auditors are engaged in ongoing and imminent violations of federal voting and election laws." **[It would seem that the demon-rats are a bit agitated and most concerned over the potential results of the audit. Egg on the face and criminal fraud prosecutions can be most unsightly. – rdb]**

Hobbs earlier made television appearances claiming that GOP officials are just doing the audit because party members "refuse to accept that … Trump lost Arizona and that he's not the president anymore."

**Observers have noted that the results of the audit could trigger more audits in other states where the vote totals suddenly surged – almost exclusively for Joe Bide**n – in dark-of-the-night vote total updates. President Trump, on election night, had held significant leads in those states before the sudden vote total surges for Biden.

<https://www.wnd.com/2021/05/green-light-given-extend-2020-presidential-recount-arizona/>

**Lubbock, Texas, Votes to Ban All Abortions; Proclaims Itself a “Sanctuary City for the Unborn”**

*by* [*James Murphy*](https://thenewamerican.com/contributor/james-murphy-2/) *May 3, 2021*

**On Friday, the city of Lubbock, Texas, voted to ban all abortions in its city limits and also declared itself a “Sanctuary City for the Unborn.” The vote was not close, with the new ordinance passing with 62.5 percent voting for the ban to only 37.5 percent voting ag**ainst it.

**With the vote, Lubbock, a city of approximately 260,000 in northwest Texas, became the largest city in the United States to codify such a ban.** Some 22 Texas locations have also enacted “Sanctuary City for the Unborn” policies as well as two locations in Nebraska.

**But none of those small cities even had an abortion provider in town. Lubbock has a Planned Parenthood in town, which only began offering abortion services on April 15 of this ye**ar. Those services will certainly be affected by the legislation, likely setting up lawsuits challenging the city’s new ordinance.

“The Church of Jesus Christ banded together, stepped up to their role, their God-given role, and said we’re not going to let babies be killed in our city,” said Jim Baxa of West Texas for Life on Saturday after the results were announced. “All these churches banded together. There were 200 churches in the City of Lubbock, working together to stand up for life. It’s excellent.”

**Violating the new abortion ban in Lubbock will cost perpetrators a $2,000 fine per violation. In addition, the law allows for individuals affected by abortions — which could include the mother, father, grandparents, and siblings of the unborn child — to sue individuals and entities that provide abortions for damages**, including emotional distress. **MORE -**

<https://thenewamerican.com/lubbock-texas-votes-to-ban-all-abortions-proclaims-itself-a-sanctuary-city-for-the-unborn/>

**Biden eyeing private firms to help spy on Americans**

***'What do you do about ideology that's leading to violence?'***

*By* [*Art Moore*](https://www.wnd.com/author/amoorewnd-com/) *Published May 3, 2021 at 5:23pm*

**Seeking to expand its ability to monitor American citizens, the Biden administration is considering using private firms to track chatter online by "extremi**sts."

**Currently, federal authorities are limited to browsing unprotected information on social-media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook. Assuming false identities to gain access to private messaging apps, for example, is forbid**den.

**But the Department of Homeland Security is discussing plans to get around those limitations,** [**CNN reported**](https://www.cnn.com/2021/05/03/politics/dhs-partner-private-firms-surveil-suspected-domestic-terrorists/index.html)**, citing multiple sour**ces.

**DHS wants to partner with private entities that can legally access private groups and provide authorities with information that could help DHS identify emerging** threats.

**The FBI can monitor U.S. citizens this way only by obtaining a warrant or having the pretext of an ongoing investigation**. CNN said the Biden administration is looking for ways to respond to the failures by intelligence agencies to act on warnings ahead of the Jan. 6 riot the U.S. Capitol.

**DHS officials insist any information provided by outside groups would be limited to broad summaries or analysis of narratives and would not be used to target specific ind**ividuals. **[sounds like another case of liar, liar your pants on fire just like the FBI, KGB and SS groups. If you believe their claims you are definitely uninformed and not nearly skeptical enough. – rdb]**

**However, CNN said some of the private research firms and non-profit groups under consideration by the DHS sometimes use covert identities to access private social-media groups such as Telegr**am.

That's a "potential legal gray area," the network said

**But civil-liberties advocates have contended that even collecting publicly available information on Americans in bulk as a violation of First and Fourth Amendment ri**ghts.

In testimony to Congress, FBI director Christopher Wray has insisted the bureau does not investigate ideologies, limiting its social media monitoring to cases in which it believe a crime or potential crime was committed.

However, one former senior intelligence official asked: "What do you do about ideology that's leading to violence? Do you have to wait until it leads to violence?"

**A DHS official told CNN the department is "exploring with our lawyers, civil rights, civil liberties and privacy colleagues, ho**w we can make use of outside expertise" regarding encrypted apps. **[If they are looking at it there is a reason and it isn’t usually for the public good. – rdb]**

A source familiar with the effort acknowledged to CNN, however, that DHS would be operating in a space that likely would alarm civil liberties advocates.

***DOJ considers seeking domestic terror law***

Last Wednesday, in his first address to Congress, [President Biden declared white supremacists posed the "most lethal" terrorist threat](https://www.wnd.com/2021/04/biden-white-supremacists-americas-lethal-terrorist-threat/) to the United States. **[Address to Congress????? I don’t think so. There were a pitiful few people present for that sham which the demon-rats are trying to portray as a state of the union address. Since when is it by invitation only? – rdb]**

**A day later,** [**a senior official said the Justice Deparment is "actively considering" whether to seek a new law**](https://www.wnd.com/2021/04/right-wing-attacks-biden-doj-considering-domestic-terrorism-law/) **allowing prosecutors to bring specific charges for plotting and carrying out acts of domestic te**rrorism.

"One of the things we’re looking at is would we need new authorities," Brad Wiegmann, deputy assistant attorney general for the DOJ's national security division, said during a House hearing Thursday. **[New authorities?? Is that a synonym for bigger more intrusive government like 1984 – rdb]**

Reacting to the announcement, noted civil-liberties journalist [Glenn Greenwald pointed out opposition to such a law has been raised from across the political spectrum](https://twitter.com/ggreenwald/status/1387846295667232780). Rep. Ilhan Omar, D-Minn., is among the opponents.

Arguing for the law, Rep. Matt Cartwright, D-Pa., chairman of the powerful Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee, emphasized the need to counter "right-wing" groups.

" This is a cancer on our country," he said. "Right-wing extremist attacks and plots have greatly outnumbered those from all other groups combined and caused more deaths as well."

However, both Islamic and white supremacist terror have become rare, never accounting for more than 1% of all homicides in any given year, with the notable exception of 2001. <https://www.wnd.com/2021/05/biden-eyeing-private-firms-help-spy-americans/>

**Ron DeSantis suspends local COVID orders, bans vaccine passports**

***Florida governor says it's time to 'believe in the science'***

*By* [*Art Moore*](https://www.wnd.com/author/amoorewnd-com/) *Published May 3, 2021 at 3:01pm*

**Florida Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis signed a bill Monday suspending local COVID-19 emergency orders in the state and banning "vaccine passports**."

**He also signed an executive order immediately lifting the local emergency orders to bridge the gap between now and when the bill takes effect on J**uly 1.

**DeSantis, a rising Republican star regarded as a possible 2024 presidential candidate, said the move is "the evidence-based thing to** do."

**"I think folks that are saying that they need to be policing people at this point, if you're saying that, you really are saying you don't believe in the vaccines, you don't believe in the data, you don't believe in the scienc**e," DeSantis said. "We've embraced the vaccines. We've embraced the science on it."

The governor pointed out that the suspension affects only government-mandated orders. It won't affect how businesses such as supermarkets or Disney theme parks enforce coronavirus restrictions.

"It’s simply emergency orders and emergency penalties on individual businesses," he said.

**He explained that the bill "ensures that neither the state or local governments can close businesses or keep kids out of in-personal instruction unless they satisfy a demanding and continuous justifi**cation."

**DeSantis previously issued an executive order banning "vaccine passpo**rts."

“You have a right to participate in society, go to a restaurant, movie, a ballgame, all these things without having to divulge this type of information,” DeSantis said.

**The bill, SB 2006, restricts any emergency orders to no longer than six weeks and grants the governor the authority to overrule cities that adopt restrictions determined to be too harsh or unnecessary.** The legislation also gives city and county commissions the authority to overrule mayors.

The governor's powers, in turn, are checked by the state legislature.

DeSantis said that measure would serve a a check on a future Democratic governor who might enforce rules opposed by a Republican legislature.

*See the news conference:*

***‘Most epidemiologists don’t know the literature as well as he does’***

**Last week, amid criticism from Democrats and media for opening his state, DeSantis received praise from one of the prominent epidemiologists who have advise**d him.

**Stanford medical professor Jayanta Bhattacharya said he was surprised by the governor's knowledge, calling him "extraordinary" and unlike any other politi**cian.

**“I mean, most epidemiologists don’t know the literature as well as he does. I mean, I don’t have the word**s. ... I’m still stunned by it. I didn’t know anything about him, actually, before September, really. I’ve just been very impressed," Bhattacharya said.

He said DeSantis had read all of the papers he referenced and many more.

"He knew all of the details; it was a remarkable conversation," Bhattacharya said. "And then, we had this, like, roundtable on Sept. 25 ... with DeSantis leading it, and the next day, he lifted most of the restrictions all across Florida."

In September, [Bhattacharya was joined by epidemiologists Sunetrea Gupta of Oxford and Martin Kulldorff of Harvard](https://www.wnd.com/2020/09/florida-governor-hosts-expert-panel-that-condemns-lockdowns/) in a roundtable that helped inform the governor's COVID-19 policy.

[The three published a petition](https://www.wnd.com/2020/10/4859862/) in October called [The Great Barrington Declaration](https://gbdeclaration.org/), which has been signed by more than 14,000 medical and public health scientists, and more than 42,000 medical practitioners.

**It states that as "infectious disease epidemiologists and public health scientists we have grave concerns about the damaging physical and mental health impacts of the prevailing COVID-19 p**olicies, and recommend an approach we call Focused Protection."

Focused protection means allowing the healthy to go about their business while focusing on protecting the vulnerable. In the panel discussion with DeSantis last September, they argued for the "age-targeted strategy," contending lockdowns only make the pandemic worse. **MUCH MORE -** <https://www.wnd.com/2021/05/4912776/>

**Commentary:**

**Joe’s Joint Session of Socialists***By* [*Lex Greene*](https://newswithviews.com/author/lex/)*|May 3rd, 2021* Pseudo-President Biden gave his first teleprompter reading to a joint session of socialists on April 28th – which drew about as much audience and support as the average Biden or Harris campaign rally last year. Nearly none…just a handful of socialists, most of whom are his handlers…  
 CNN’s “most popular political figure in the 21st century” can’t draw enough real supporters to keep a summer lemonade stand in business. Even most of his democratic socialists decided to skip the event and catch a rerun of Law and Order at home.  
 I’d like to report what Joe had to say, but in the end, he didn’t really say anything. Whoever is writing his teleprompter text seems to be intent on making Joe look like a bumbling babbling old fool.  
On the upside, Joe’s dementia cocktail seems to be working a little better. At least he seemed to know he was in the congressional chamber and “Dr. Jill” the schoolteacher didn’t have to hold his hand and whisper into his ear what’s on the teleprompter this time.  
 [CNN reports](https://www.cnn.com/2021/04/28/politics/cnn-poll-biden-speech-to-congress/index.html) that *“7 of 10 who watched were left feeling optimistic.”* Of course, only 9 were watching…  
 Essentially, Joe’s teleprompter reading was full of self-serving platitudes only suited for the most dumbed-down ignoramuses on earth. Nothing he said was true…nothing. But personally, I’m thrilled he refuses to give Trump any credit for his “warp speed” COVID19 response in place long before Biden and Harris stole the 2020 election.  
 Scientifically speaking there are no COVID19 vaccines and there can’t be for at least another year or two. Acceptable trials can’t be completed for real FDA safety approval for public use until then, in stark contrast to the fake FDA approval that we have today. They have even tried to grant themselves immunity for all deadly results from their so-called “vaccines.”  
 Personally, I wish Trump would totally distance himself from the mad dash to “vaccinate every American” with shots that aren’t even vaccines. I’m thrilled democrats continue to take full credit for everything Trump did before they arrived. This means they can take the fall for everything they are taking credit for doing to Americans.  
 Joe’s speechwriters did get one thing right, although they demonstrated a mental malfunction in the process and struck an almost comical contradiction in alternate realities when Joe read the words – *“We the people are the government!”*   
 Joe the puppet has been performing like a world class 3rd world dictator via his plethora of unilateral unlawful and unconstitutional Executive Orders since the moment he stole the Oval Office from Trump. Makes one wonder which “we the people” he’s talking about, when suggesting *“we the people are the government.”* I suspect he meant to say, *“I, the pseudo-dictator, is the government.”*  
 None the less, Joe was vertical. That alone was an achievement for the mindless old fool. Thank God Joe and Kamala aren’t actually running anything. Obama & Co. (the puppet masters) are clearly in charge and equally clear…is their intent to put Joe in a position of having to step down soon, moving cackling Kamala into Obama’s pseudo-presidency.  
 There are over 331M people in the USA today, according to the 2020 Census. Almost none of them tuned in to watch the latest comic relief from Uncle Joe the lifelong perv.  
 Did you watch it? I didn’t…and neither did anyone else!  
 The State of the Union is…SCREWED! <https://newswithviews.com/joes-joint-session-of-socialists/>

**And then…**

**The Great Woke Revolt is Coming**[*Gabriella Hoffman*](https://townhall.com/columnists/gabriellahoffman/) *Posted: May 03, 2021 12:01 AM  
 Get woke, go broke.*   
 Senator Ted Cruz (R-TX) recently announced he’ll [forgo](https://www.newsweek.com/ted-cruz-wont-take-woke-corporate-pac-donations-anymore-1587801)future corporate donations.   
 NRSC Chair Senator Rick Scott (R-FL) similarly [warned](https://www.foxbusiness.com/politics/sen-rick-scott-work-corporate-america-backlash) “it will be a day of reckoning” against woke corporations if Republicans retake both chambers of Congress next year.   
 Is a Great Woke Revolt on the horizon? A movement is definitely taking shape. Here are three examples.    
**Basecamp CEO Puts Foot Down on Politics**  
 Last week, Basecamp CEO Jason Reid took a bold stand banning political discourse at his company. His letter [“Changes at Basecamp”](https://world.hey.com/jason/changes-at-basecamp-7f32afc5) reads like this:   
 **1. No more societal and political discussions on our company Basecamp account.**Today's social and political waters are especially choppy. Sensitivities are at 11, and every discussion remotely related to politics, advocacy, or society at large quickly spins away from pleasant. You shouldn't have to wonder if staying out of it means you're complicit, or wading into it means you're a target. These are difficult enough waters to navigate in life, but significantly more so at work. It's become too much. It's a major distraction. It saps our energy, and redirects our dialog towards dark places. It's not healthy, it hasn't served us well. And we're done with it on our company Basecamp account where the work happens. People can take the conversations with willing co-workers to Signal, Whatsapp, or even a personal Basecamp account, but it can't happen where the work happens anymore.   
 This move immediately prompted backlash: a [third of the company’s workforce](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/30/technology/basecamp-politics-ban-resignations.html) immediately quit. (Good!)   
 Reid isn’t the first tech CEO to employ such a practice. Last September, Coinbase CEO Brian Armstrong published [this letter](https://blog.coinbase.com/coinbase-is-a-mission-focused-company-af882df8804) encouraging a “championship” company mission devoid of distractions, namely in the form of politics. Armstrong [wrote](https://blog.coinbase.com/coinbase-is-a-mission-focused-company-af882df8804):   
 We focus minimally on causes not directly related to the mission:  
 **Policy decisions:** If there is a bill introduced around crypto, we may engage here, but we normally wouldn’t engage in policy decisions around healthcare or education for example.  
 **Non-profit work:** We will do some work here with our Pledge 1% program and GiveCrypto.org, but this is about 1% of our efforts. We are a for-profit business. When we make profit, we can use that to hire more great people, and build even more. We shouldn’t ever shy away from making profit, because with more resources we can have a greater impact on the world.  
 **Broader societal issues:** We don’t engage here when issues are unrelated to our core mission, because we believe impact only comes with focus.  
 **Political causes:** We don’t advocate for any particular causes or candidates internally that are unrelated to our mission, because it is a distraction from our mission. Even if we all agree something is a problem, we may not all agree on the solution.  
 Could more tech CEOs follow suit? Absolutely. The dam has finally broken.   
**Coca-Cola Regrets Going Woke?**   
 Despite going full throttle on woke policies and piling on Georgia’s new voter integrity law, Coca-Cola has now [adopted](https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/news/coca-cola-says-time-find-common-ground-voting-measures-pressure-from-right) a conciliatory tone.   
 What!?  
 “We believe the best way to make progress now is for everyone to come together to listen, respectfully share concerns and collaborate on a path forward. We remain open to productive conversations with advocacy groups and lawmakers who may have differing views," the company [told Washington Examiner](https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/news/coca-cola-says-time-find-common-ground-voting-measures-pressure-from-right). "It’s time to find common ground. In the end, we all want the same thing – free and fair elections, the cornerstone of our democracy.”  
 This comes after Bradley Gayton, general counsel and chief driver of company diversity initiatives, resigned after eight months on the job. NRO [noted](https://www.nationalreview.com/2021/04/is-coke-rethinking-woke/):   
 On April 27, Law.com’s Corporate Counsel [reported](https://www.law.com/corpcounsel/2021/04/27/coca-colas-diversity-initiative-taking-a-pause-for-now-says-new-gc-addressing-the-legal-team-for-the-first-time/) that Monica Howard Douglas, Gayton’s replacement and a 17-year veteran of Coca-Cola’s legal department, refused to discuss Gayton’s resignation, but told the company’s legal department that Gayton’s departure meant a “pause” on the company’s controversial diversity initiatives.  
 Ouch.   
**Texas Hits Back at Anti-Gun Banks**  
 The banking industry was the first sector to “go woke” after it started employing discriminatory practices against firearms and ammunition companies.   
 Bank of America and CitiGroup, for instance, have made company decisions based on anti-gun politics—not on the grounds of  [“credit worthiness and financial risk assessment.”](https://www.nssf.org/articles/nssf-applauds-occ-finalization-of-fair-access-banking-rule/)  
 Texas, however, isn’t buying what they’re selling.   
 A new bill in the state legislature, [Senate Bill 19](https://capitol.texas.gov/tlodocs/87R/billtext/pdf/SB00019E.pdf#navpanes=0), would [prohibit](https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-04-28/bofa-citi-risk-hit-to-business-in-texas-over-gun-policies) government contracts with companies “that discriminate against the firearm or ammunition industries.”  
 This effort largely mirrors Senator John Kennedy (R-LA)’s [No Red and Blue Banks Act of 2018](https://www.kennedy.senate.gov/public/2018/10/sen-kennedy-r-la-introduces-no-red-and-blue-banks-act-to-prevent-trampling-of-second-amendment-rights) to prohibit “the federal government from giving contracts to banks that discriminate against lawful businesses based solely on social policy considerations.”  
 As of this waiting, SB19 awaits a vote in the Texas House. If it passes, other states could replicate these efforts.   
 You can bank on that.   
**Conclusion**  
 The old adage goes, *The customer is always right.*   
 And if customers, and by extension consumers, aren’t happy they’ll make their frustrations known and voluntarily take their business elsewhere.   
 How a handful of loud Twitter voices could make corporate flaks squirm in terror is beyond me. Cowardice reigns supreme until their bottom line is affected.   
 It’s time to put woke corporations on notice. When we do, we can—and will— win. <https://townhall.com/columnists/gabriellahoffman/2021/05/03/the-great-woke-revolt-is-coming-n2588848>   
   
**and then….**

**Anti-White Racism**[*Jeff Davidson*](https://townhall.com/columnists/jeffdavidson/) *Posted: May 03, 2021 12:01 AM* For eight years, I attended a once-a-month program led by an excellent host who was well-versed in various aspects of human potential. We would meet for 90 minutes with the first 10 minutes devoted to introductions of those in attendance, followed by a 20 to 25 minute online video presented by some luminary in the field of self-help.   
 The subsequent class discussion in the remaining time often focused on some aspect of standing up for yourself, increasing your awareness, being good to yourself, getting along better with other people, overcoming a bad habit, being more supportive of others, and so on.  
**From Propitious to Accused**  
 I received many benefits from attending the sessions and took notes rather prodigiously. By the next day, I often would send my notes to the instructor, and she felt that they would benefit the whole class so she posted them online.  
 As the summer of 2020 unfolded, and the 'social justice' movement heightened, something started to change within the class itself. I mentioned that I was from Bloomfield, CT and that we had been designated an All-American City. While the city and the school system wasn't perfect, relations between races and ethnic groups were as good as I've ever seen.   
 As a follow-up to that monthly session, I sent high school photos to the group leader, who happened to be African-American, to show that not every town was like what some social justice warriors would like to portray. We had reasonably harmonious relations in Bloomfield.  
 She disliked the contention. She said that it was all a facade and that I was unaware. She maintained that the minority students were doing their best to get along and go along. She declared that, as a white man, I didn't understand the nuances, and didn't understand how I was contributing to the problem. She then said that, “Silence is violence.”  
**I’m Not Buying It**  
 I did not and do not accept that by virtue of being a Caucasian male, that I was inherently racist, or had missed the boat in terms of what other races or ethnicities were experiencing. In fact, I would have none of it. I have not knowingly discriminated against anybody:   
 I first check for cues and clues like anyone does in terms of how people carry themselves, how they act, and how they communicate. I feel that each person is an individual, and that behavior is what speaks loudest.  
 Reflecting on the larger issue, the charge that ‘progressives’ in contemporary America are trying to foist upon all Caucasians, I now understand that they're practicing  anti-white racism.   
 The Left contends that Caucasians, as a result of being born, and by virtue of their skin color, are inherent racists. You are contributing to a social structure in which systemic racism occurs, and there is no way for you to heal yourself. You need to be part of their movement. You need to atone, en masse.  
 I have friends who feel the same as I do about what has transpired during the last 10 months. Each of us will have none of this. I do not accept that I am inherently racist, or that my race inherently practices systemic racism.  
**Mass Stereotyping**  
 I suppose It’s no surprise that with the mainstream media machine pumping out non-stop blather about “critical race theory” and “microaggressions” that some people discern racism everywhere. In any case, when you lump multi-millions of people into the same category, and claim that each of them acts in a certain way towards others, you are stereotyping on a grand scale.   
 Blaming an entire race, or when any group is blaming any other group en masse, is grossly unfair. It requires not paying attention to individuals or to their behaviors, attitudes, aspirations, and activities.   
 If you find yourself doing this, stop, because you're dead wrong. You're not helping yourself, you're not helping your fellow men and women, and you're not helping society.  
 Bigotry exists on both sides of the aisle, left and right, and among all races and ethnicities, and among people everywhere. If you feel that your group is special because you've suffered ‘the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,’ get over it.   
 There's more opportunity before you than there has ever been on Earth. You can make a living right from your computer, without leaving your house. You can start a business more easily than ever before. Scholarships and educational opportunities abound.  
**Move On**  
 Stop yapping, and start planning. Stop complaining, and start achieving. Sure, you might run into pockets of bigotry, and feel down for a while. If so, shift your view and start doing. In the end, for most people, most of the time, the only thing holding them back is themselves. They can pretend otherwise, which leads to nowhere.   
 Shift your outlook, perhaps shift your geography, and in a nanosecond, you'll realize that there are legions of others who will treat you fairly, based on your behavior, aptitude, attitude, and aspirations. <https://townhall.com/columnists/jeffdavidson/2021/05/03/antiwhite-racism-n2588852>

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**ARUTZ SHEVA**

**Report: FDA to approve Pfizer vaccines for adolescents next week**

***Federal officials say FDA could authorize Pfizer vaccine in adolescents 12 to 15 years old by early next week.***

*Ben Ariel , May 04 , 2021 1:01 AM*

**The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is preparing to authorize use of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine in adolescents 12 to 15 years old by early next week, federal officials familiar with the agency’s plans told The New York Times on Mon**day.

The authorization could come as early as late this week, according to the federal officials, who did not give their names because they weren’t authorized to speak publicly.

**If it is granted, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s vaccine advisory panel will likely meet the following day to review the clinical trial data and make recommendations for the vaccine’s use in adoles**cents.

The clearance would be a major development in the nation’s vaccination campaign and welcome news to parents anxious to protect their children during summer activities and before the start of the next school year.

**Pfizer and its German partner BioNTech SE** [**said last month**](https://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/299962) **they have requested the FDA to expand the emergency use of their COVID-19 vaccine in ad**olescents aged 12 to 15. **MORE -**<https://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/305499> **[NOTE BENE: This is still approval FOR EMERGENCY USE. This is not a full approval and it is still an experimental treatment which means the Nuremburg code still applies. – rdb]**

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**05/03/2021 NEWS AM**

**איציק אורלב ה' אחד | Itzik Orlev HaShem Echad**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jsPonxryRY0>

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| "Lonely islands there between the mountains - standing alone in front of Gd  Shouts without words - everything inside - my heart in front of you everything is visible  Calling you - shouting at you - and in your name ...... cloud ...  The Lord is one and His name is one forever - God is one and His name is one forever  Or or Sala - or or Sala  Or or Sala - or or Sala Let's all announce the same name together | Time to think about life - Generations go Generations come  And what is left in the end - and when it's all over - from the hallway to the lounge  Please bring me closer - strengthen me - the privilege of being close - see a description again that we will not fall. " |

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| **"At the heart of western freedom and democracy is the belief that the individual man ... is the touchstone of value, and all society, groups, the state, exist for his benefit. Therefore the enlargement of liberty for individual human beings must be the supreme goal and abiding practice of any western society." -- Robert F. Kennedy (1925-1968), US Senator, Attorney General** |

**Read the Prophets & PRAY WITHOUT CEASING!**

**That is the only hope for this nation!**

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| **Please**  **Remember**  **These**  **Folks**  **In**  **Prayer-**  **Check often**  **They**  **Change!** | **Pray that the world would WAKE UP! Time for a worldwide repentance!**  **ALL US soldiers fighting for our freedom around the world**  **Pray for those in our government to repent of their wicked corrupt ways.**  **Pray for AB family – Wife just diagnosed with brain tumor**  **Pray for AS – post knee replacement – some problems and another one scheduled.**  **Pray for TR – abnormal Mammogram having double biopsy – Mastectomy Scheduled**  **Pray for ZH - having trouble with PTSD**  **Pray for LAC – recurrent cancer getting treatment**  **Pray for KL – troubling spiritual situation.**  **Pray for Ella – emotionally disturbed abused child and brother with ? heart problem**  **Pray for JN – Neuro disease**  **Pray for MS – Job issues and change**  **Pray for BB – Severe West Nile Fever –still not mobile- improving!**  **Pray for RBH – cancer recurrence**  **Pray for Felicia – post op problems – continuing**  **Pray for SH and family – lady’s husband passed away and she is in Nursing home. Not doing well.**  **Pray for MP – Very complex problems**  **Pray that The Holy One will lead you in Your preparations for handling the world problems. – Have YOU made any preparations**? |

**Genesis 27:6And Rebekah spoke to her son Jacob, saying, Behold, I heard your father speaking to your brother Esau saying, 7Bring game to me and make delicious things that I may eat, that I may bless you before Jehovah before my death. 8And now my son hear my voice, that which I command you. 9Go now to the flock and bring me from there two good kids of the goats. And I will make them into delicious things for your father which he loves; 10and you shall bring it to your father and let him eat, so that he may bless you before his death.**

**3 hurt, 2 seriously in West Bank drive-by shooting; IDF searching for terrorists**

***Assailants opened fire from passing car, hitting 3 yeshiva students at Tapuah Junction; apparent terror attack comes amid heightened tensions after PA cancels elections***

*By* [*Judah Ari Gross*](https://www.timesofisrael.com/writers/judah-ari-gross/) *Today, 6:43 pm*

**Three 19-year-old yeshiva students were injured, two of them seriously, in a drive-by shooting at a bus stop in the northern West Bank on Sunday evening, Israeli authorities sai**d.

**The shots were fired from a passing car at the Tapuah Junction south of Nablus. The victims were all civilians, according to the Israel Defense Forces**.

**“IDF troops returned fire at the vehicle, which fled the scene. IDF troops are searching for the vehic**le and are setting up roadblocks in the area,” the military said.

**Medics said one of the victims, Yehuda Guetta from Jerusalem, was in critical condition and received CPR en route to the hospital, while the second seriously injured man, Benaya Peretz from Beit Shean, was in and out of consciousness. The third, Amichai Hala from Safed, sustained light injuries, medics said**.

**The nearby settlement of Itamar said the victims were students at its yeshi**va, or seminary.

**Security camera footage of the attack (above) showed the silver SUV pull up to the bus stop and hit the brakes — seen at the 16-second mark — before someone inside opens fire. The students and a soldier who was at the scene are seen scrambling to take cover behind a concrete barrier**, as the car then speeds off in the direction of Ramallah.

**“IDF and security forces will not rest until they get their hands on the terrorists** who carried out the attack,” Defense Minister Benny Gantz said in a statement after the shooting.

Prime Minsiter Benjamin Netanyahu said he was sure that security services would track down the assailants quickly.

“We will not allow terror to raise its head, and we will strike our enemies forcefully,” Netanyahu said in a statement.

Medics said the three people injured in the attack were men in their late teens or early 20s. They were taken to Petah Tikva’s Beilinson Hospital for treatment.

“Many medical teams from different specialities are providing treatment and do what they can to stabilize the conditions [of the two seriously injured victims,” a hospital spokesperson said.

“The families of the victims are on their way to the hospital,” she added.

**The apparent terror attack came amid heightened tensions in the West Bank after the Palestinian Authority announced it was indefinitely delaying elections planned for later this month, blaming the decision on Israeli refusal to allow PA voting in East Jerusalem**. The explanation was widely seen as largely being an excuse to avoid elections that would have likely resulted in a victory for PA President Mahmoud Abbas’s rivals, the Hamas terror group.

**The IDF bolstered its forces in the West Bank for the month of Ramadan,** in case of violence stemming from the effective cancellation of the Palestinian elections.

Following large terror attacks, such as the shooting on Sunday evening, the Israeli military works to quickly restore calm to the West Bank out of a belief that such events tend to inspire copycats.

**Palestinian terror groups praised the shooting attack on Sunday evening, but none took responsibility** for it.

“This comes as a the natural response to the crimes of the Zionist occupation and an act of support for our people in the city of Jerusalem. This is a legitimate branch of the our Palestinian people’s resistance in the West Bank, and we salute the rebellious heroes of the West Bank,” Hamas spokesperson Abd al-Latif Qanou said in a statement.

**“We praise the courageous operation at [Tapauch Junction]. We consider it a message in the name of the entire Palestinian people that Jerusalem is a red line and harming the holy places** will cause an explosion of anger in the face of the occupation,” the Palestinian Islamic Jihad terror group said. **[The only harming of holy places is done by the “PA” as they persist in desecrating the site with garbage and treating it like a big playground. These critters are simply vile. – rdb]**

**Earlier in the day, Israeli security forces shot dead a Palestinian woman brandishing a knife who the military said tried to carry out a stabbing attack at** the Gush Etzion Junction in the West Bank, south of Jerusalem.

כך נראה הבוקר ניסיון פיגוע הדקירה בצומת הגוש. הכוח ביצע נוהל מעצר חשוד, ומשהמחבלת לא הקשיבה, ירו באוויר ואז לעבר רגליה. אף אחד מהחיילים לא נפגע ב"ה. [pic.twitter.com/tj0QyzT1Ec](https://t.co/tj0QyzT1Ec)

— אלעד הוּמינר ???????? العاد هومينر (@EladHumi) [May 2, 2021](https://twitter.com/EladHumi/status/1388745206950989825?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

The woman, a 60-year-old resident of the nearby village of Husan, approached a group of soldiers with a knife in her hand and tried to stab the troops, the military said. Palestinian media later identified her as Fahima al-Hroub.

One of the soldiers shot her in the upper body, and she was taken to Jerusalem’s Shaare Zedek Medical Center in critical condition, where she was later pronounced dead, the hospital said. There were no casualties among the soldiers, according to the IDF.

Footage of the incident published by Hebrew media showed al-Hroub walking toward the soldiers even as they shouted at her repeatedly to stop and fired warning shots in the air. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/3-hurt-2-seriously-in-west-bank-drive-by-shooting-idf-searching-for-gunmen/>

**Netanyahu defense attorney to represent Meron victims’ families**

***Amit Hadad is one of the main lawyers for the PM in his corruption trial; his office reportedly set up emergency hotline for families to call, in later-deleted item***

*By* [*TOI staff*](https://www.timesofisrael.com/writers/times-of-israel-staff/) *Today, 7:00 pm*

[](https://static.timesofisrael.com/www/uploads/2021/05/F200219MA52.jpg)

***Israeli attorney Amit Hadad attends the annual international Municipal Innovation Conference in Tel Aviv, on February 19, 2020. (Miriam Alster/Flash90)***

**Amit Hadad, an attorney for Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in his corruption trial, will reportedly represent the families of the victims killed in the Lag B’Omer disaster on Mount Mero**n.

**A article posted on the Kikar HaShabbat Haredi news site, which was later deleted, said that Hadad was “coordinating the many lawsuits” after “being approached by rabbis and representatives of the familie**s.” According to reports, the now-deleted post appeared to be sponsored content on the site. The post included a phone number for an emergency hotline for families to call in order to seek legal representation.

**A spokesperson for Hadad said the attorney was approached by figures in the Haredi community about taking a role in any future civilian lawsuits pertaining to th**e disaster.

**In a** [**statement**](https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/S1xx9Tovd) **to the Ynet news site, Hadad’s office said that the attorney “has a deep understanding and connection to the Haredi community. After the disaster, senior Haredi figures reached out to see if attorney Hadad would agree to give his time and his office in order to assist the families** of those injured and killed at Meron. It is unfortunate that there are those who are sadly cynically trying to connect the tragedy to his representation of the prime minister. There is no basis.”

**Reports of Hadad’s potential involvement have already raised concerns about a conflict of interest, with Netanyahu named as a potential target for families seeking to hold the government responsible**. The Israel Bar Association says it will look into the matter if a complaint is made.

At least 45 people were killed on Friday during the crush on Mount Meron at a religious festival marking Lag B’Omer. Israel was observing a national day of mourning on Sunday for the victims, who ranged in age from 9 to 65. The final funerals for the victims were scheduled for Sunday, and 16 people remain hospitalized following the event.

**Elected representatives and public officials have begun to point fingers over the tragedy,** considered the deadliest civilian disaster in Israel’s history. Many have called for a state commission of inquiry into the incident. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/netanyahu-defense-attorney-to-represent-meron-victims-families/>

**'You can't move a stone at Meron without facing Hassidic opposition'**

***Former head of the regional council where Mount Meron is located tells Ynet he for years tried to eliminate the dangers at the location, but religious groups use government connections and corruption to have the place 'in a chokehold'***

*Ahiye Raved | Published: 05.02.21 , 09:40*

**As Israel is still grappling with its** [**biggest civilian disaster**](https://www.ynetnews.com/article/r1vJYRuwO) **in the country's history, one of the officials at the local authority where Mount Meron is located said on Sunday it's impossible to even "move a stone" at the location without facing opposition from Hassidic grou**ps.

***Merom HaGalil Regional Council where Mount Meron and the tomb complex of Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai are located***

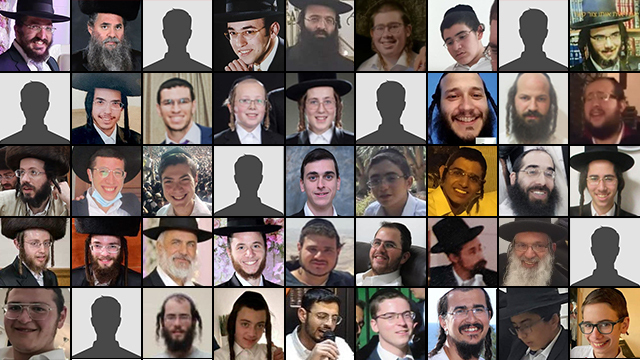
***(Photo: Reuters)***

**A stampede that broke out at the Lag BaOmer festivities on Mount Meron overnight Thursday claimed the lives of 45 worshippers, including 10 children. The investigation into the circumstances of the tragedy in underway, with high-ranking Israeli officials being blamed for not appointing a body to oversee the annual ev**ent.

**Shlomo Levy, former head of Merom HaGalil Regional Council where Mount Meron and the tomb complex of Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai are located, told Ynet that he for years tried to improve the conditions at the mountain, but t**o no avail.

**"From my knowledge of the place, it is impossible to move a stone there without running into this or that Hassidic group, and if you do move something there, half an hour later you get a phone call from Jerusale**m," Levy said.

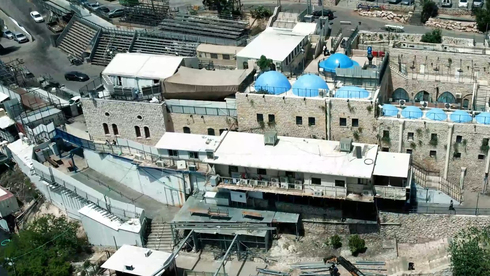
Attorney General Avichai Mandelblit on Friday [launched an investigation into the conduct of police](https://www.ynetnews.com/article/B1E11RVKvu) at a deadly crush during Lag BaOmer celebrations and is apparently set to launch a similar probe into the government's conduct.



***Images of some of the victim killed in a stampede at Mount Meron***

**Levy, however, said that deciding the future of the mountain is more important in the long term than determining who is responsible for last week's even**ts.

"**What will be the fate of the place? What should be done in my opinion, as someone who was dealing with this matter for 10 years, is to expropriate the place from the hands that have it in a chokehold. There is corruption, there is money, there is ego, there is everything - except for the fear of god," he said**.

 "This place must be expropriated from the hands of all the Hasidim, of all the rabbis, of all the bavot."

***Tomb complex of Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai***

***(Photo: Yehuda Rozen)***

**Levy said he tried to appeal to government officials in order to draft an outline similar to the one implemented at the Western Wall, that gives authority over the place to one body, but his pleas fell on deaf ears**.

"I am not such an innocent person and I understand that everything is about political pressure, everything is political interests. And most of all it is a balance of terror in efforts to form government coalitions."

<https://www.ynetnews.com/article/SJuXYhovu>  **[This is a great example of the frustration exemplified in the old adage – have two Jewish people and get three opinions. There is oftentimes a controversy about most everything. It is a bit like having all chiefs and no Indians as is the American saying. – rdb]**

**Chief rabbi, top Haredi MK urge government to assert control over Mount Meron**

***United Torah Judaism leader Gafni says pilgrimage site, where 45 were crushed to death, has been neglected by politicians since ‘the establishment of the state’***

*By* [*TOI staff*](https://www.timesofisrael.com/writers/times-of-israel-staff/) *Today, 6:35 pm*

[](https://static.timesofisrael.com/www/uploads/2021/05/000_98Z7YP.jpg)

***Ultra-Orthodox Jews gather at the grave site of Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai at Mount Meron in northern Israel on April 29, 2021, as they celebrate the Jewish holiday of Lag B'Omer (JALAA MAREY / AFP)***

**[That is truly a sea of people. – rdb]**

**A chief rabbi and the head of the ultra-Orthodox United Torah Judaism party on Sunday called for the government to assert control over the Mount Meron pilgrimage si**te, following the deadly crush last week that left 45 people dead.

**Following the disaster during Lag B’Omer celebrations, and under intensifying public, political and media scrutiny of the chain of events that led to the tragedy at the gravesite of 2nd century sage Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, a picture has emerged of a facility caught in a years-long tug of war between various authorities**, religious sects and interest groups that left it bereft of proper, unified state oversight even as constant warning bells were being sounded regarding its potential for catastrophe.

**Since the disaster, several former police chiefs have characterized Meron — Israel’s second-most visited Jewish holy site after the Western Wall — as a kind of extraterritorial facility.** It was administered by several ultra-Orthodox groups, while the National Center for the Protection of Holy Places, part of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, apparently had some responsibility over it as well, as did the local authority and the police. But ultimately, no single state body has full responsibility.

Chief Ashkenazi Rabbi David Lau told Army Radio on Sunday that in the wake of the Meron tragedy, management of the site must be formally determined.

“**The site needs to be handled differently**. What is happening at the moment does not respect the place or human life. The state is obligated to take responsibility for it,” he said.

**The chief rabbi also suggested spreading out the Lag B’Omer festivities to avoid overcrowding in the fut**ure.

“It could be that the events need to be divided over a whole week,” Lau told the Kan public broadcaster. He suggested that some bonfires and prayers could be held before Lag B’Omer, which falls on a particular date of the Hebrew calendar, with the more boisterous revelry taking place during and after the festival.

**The head of the United Torah Judaism party, Moshe Gafni, told Kan that the Mount Meron site “looks like Eastern Asia. The place hasn’t been touched since the establishment of the s**tate.”

**He added: “You can’t have so many people come to such a small space and not have a disas**ter.”

Gafni said he personally knows several people who lost family members on Thursday night.

“It’s horrible,” he said. “The State of Israel has never known such a thing. Each of them was an entire world.”

Since the disaster, calls have mounted for a state commission of inquiry to investigate.

Gafni said Sunday that he neither opposes nor supports a state commission of inquiry, but raised questions as to why nothing had been done in the past to make the festival safer. **MORE -** <https://www.timesofisrael.com/chief-rabbi-top-haredi-mk-urge-government-to-assert-control-over-mount-meron/>

**Netanyahu said to back Bennett forming coalition in return for legal protections**

***PM reportedly held secret meeting with Yamina leader in bid to prevent him supporting ‘change bloc’; Netanyahu said seeking commitment to measures that could help cancel his trial***

*By* [*Raoul Wootliff*](https://www.timesofisrael.com/writers/raoul-wootliff/) *Today, 10:57 am*

**With just one day remaining for him to form a coalition, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has reportedly agreed to a plan that would allow Yamina party head Naftali Bennett to try and put together a right-wing government, in return for him committing to a series of measures that could help the premier put an end to his ongoing cr**iminal trial.

**While Yamina’s negotiating team was meeting with representatives of the Yesh Atid party last week, Channel 12 news reported Sunday, Bennett and Netanyahu held a secret meeting, not disclosed to the media**, where they discussed the details of a potential rotation government between the two.

**According to a Walla news report Monday, Netanyahu offered to back Bennett to put together a coalition and be prime minister first in a rotation if the Yamina leader committed to giving Likud control over the Justice Ministry and passing a law that would allow the lawmakers to override Supreme Court decisions striking down Knesset le**gislation.

**Both measures could theoretically help Netanyahu in his reported efforts to** [**cancel the charges**](https://www.timesofisrael.com/netanyahu-lawyers-again-seek-to-cancel-charges-claim-ag-never-authorized-probe/) **of bribery, fraud and breach of trust against him** and prematurely end his criminal trial. In controlling the Justice Ministry, Netanyahu would be able to appoint a new attorney general when Avichai Mandelblit’s tenure ends in the coming months; and a Supreme Court-override law could allow him to pass legislation against putting a prime minister on trial.

**Netanyahu has in the past** [**refused to rule out**](https://www.timesofisrael.com/netanyahu-dodges-question-on-law-that-could-stop-his-prosecution/) **the possibility of legislation to provide him immunity f**rom conviction, even after his criminal trial has begun. Bennett has repeatedly said he supports reform of the Supreme Court but opposes personally tailored, retroactive legislation.

**Both Likud and Yamina denied the Walla report, wit**h Bennett’s party saying “no such things” were discussed between the two leaders.

“There is no such proposal and there is no importance to such proposals for Yamina as long as Netanyahu has no way to form a right-wing government,” the party said in a statement.

**Though Yamina won just seven seats in the March election, Bennett has become a potential kingmaker and even king, having not yet declared who he will back as prime minist**er. He has said that he will support a right-wing government headed by Netanyahu if the prime minister has the votes, but will work toward a unity government without Netanyahu if not.

**Even if Likud and parties supporting Netanyahu were to back Bennett to form a coalition, Netanyahu would still need to convince the far-right Religious Zionism and Islamist Ra’am to cooperate — which they are currently unwilling** to do.

On Sunday night the spiritual head of the far-right Noam faction within Religious Zionism published an open call for Netanyahu to form a right-wing coalition with the backing of Ra’am.

**Religious Zionism, however, released a statement in response saying that “there is not and will not be a change in the position of Religious Zionism regarding reliance on terror supporters w**ho deny the existence of Israel as a Jewish state.”

**Responding to** [**Sunday’s terror attack**](https://www.timesofisrael.com/3-hurt-2-seriously-in-west-bank-drive-by-shooting-idf-searching-for-gunmen/) **in which three 19-year-old yeshiva students were injured, two of them seriously, in a drive-by shooting at a bus stop in the northern West Bank, Ra’am leader Mansour Abbas on Monday said that he “unequivocally opposes any harm to inno**cents.”

**Netanyahu, Israel’s longest-serving prime minister, is fighting for his political and legal survival afte**r the March 23 elections, as he struggles to form a government while on trial for corruption charges. His official mandate to assemble a coalition expires on Tuesday night, though he can request a 14-day extension from President Reuven Rivlin.

The elections, the fourth since April 2019, ended in gridlock, with Netanyahu’s right-wing religious bloc again coming short of a ruling majority, in part because three right-wing parties ran with the declared goal of replacing him. Barring an unexpected breakthrough, Netanyahu has no clear way of putting together a ruling coalition.

Rivlin, who as Israel’s president is tasked with mandating a lawmaker to form a government, can either give Netanyahu an extension, hand the mandate to another lawmaker or kick it to the Knesset for a 21-day period, after which fifth elections would automatically be called if no one forms a government.

If Rivlin does task another Knesset member with forming a government, it is widely expected to be either Bennett or Yesh Atid leader Yair Lapid, who have been holding talks together on forming a unity government without Netanyahu.

However, Bennett is said to be facing reluctance from within his own right-wing nationalist party to cooperate with Lapid, and some of his Yamina’s seven lawmakers may not agree to join such a coalition, which would also require the backing of Arab lawmakers. Yamina No. 2 Ayelet Shaked has reportedly been working hard against the prospect of a unity government with the center-left. **MORE -**<https://www.timesofisrael.com/netanyahu-said-to-back-bennett-forming-coalition-in-return-for-legal-protections/> **[Could Bennett possible trust Bibi after the Ganz affair? I don’t think so. – rdb]**

**Only 13 new COVID cases diagnosed in 24-hours, lowest in 14 months**

***Just 100 serious cases now in Israel as infection rates continue steady decline since pandemic’s peak in January, due to aggressive vaccination drive***

*By* [*TOI staff*](https://www.timesofisrael.com/writers/times-of-israel-staff/) *3 May 2021, 12:47 am*

**As Israel continues its world-leading vaccination campaign, just 13 new coronavirus cases were diagnosed in the country on Saturday, the lowest rate in 14 months, according to Health Ministry data released Sunday. According to the ministry, a total of 9,238 coronavirus tests were conducted Saturday, with 0.1 percent returning positive. While weekend numbers are generally significantly lower due to reduced testing**, the new figures still represent a relative drop, with last weekend’s positivity rate at 0.5%.

**Of the 1,310 active cases in the country, there were 100 serious cases, including 60 people on ventilato**rs, the Health Ministry data showed. The death toll stands at 6,366.

As infections have dwindled, Israel has rolled back restrictions on public life, including lifting the requirement to wear face masks outdoors, which ended last month.

With its aggressive vaccination drive, Israel has seen a sharp drop in daily mortality and infection rates since the pandemic peaked in late January.

Late last month, the Jewish state [passed the milestone](https://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-crosses-milestone-of-5-million-fully-vaccinated-against-covid-19/) of over 5 million people having received both vaccine shots.

According to the Health Ministry on Sunday, 5,049,828 second doses were now in Israeli arms, accounting for over 60% of the total population and more than 80% of the eligible population over the age of 16. A total of 5,401,155 people have received at least one shot.

Israel’s vaccination program, which is based on the Pfizer-BioNtech two-shot vaccine, has seen it maintain the highest per capita inoculation rate in the world since it began in late December.

**The country is preparing to start vaccinating children aged 12-15 as soon as the US Food a**nd Drug Administration approves vaccine use for children in that age bracket.

**Earlier Sunday, the Israel Defense Forces** [**declared itself coronavirus-free**](https://www.timesofisrael.com/idf-says-no-active-covid-cases-among-soldiers-in-first-since-start-of-outbreak/)**, as it recorded zero active case**s of the disease among its ranks for the first time since the outbreak of the virus.

The military reported its first coronavirus case on March 2, 2020, when a soldier who worked part-time at a toy store tested positive for the disease. The number of conscripts, career officers, and civilian employees of the IDF diagnosed with the disease has risen and fallen in the interim 14 months, reaching a peak in February, with over 3,000 cases.

In March, the military declared that it had reached “herd immunity” from the disease as more than 80% of all servicemembers had been vaccinated or had recovered from the coronavirus. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/only-13-new-covid-cases-diagnosed-in-24-hours-lowest-in-14-months/>

**Gunmen attack home of candidate who called on EU to halt funding to PA**

***“They opened fire at my home, tossed stun grenades and broke the doors,” the candidate said.***

*By* [*KHALED ABU TOAMEH*](https://www.jpost.com/author/khaled-abu-toameh) *MAY 2, 2021 20:26*

**In the first incident of its kind since Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas’s decision to postpone the elections, unidentified gunmen attacked the house of a Palestinian candidate who urged the** [**European Union to halt financial aid**](https://www.jpost.com/arab-israeli-conflict/eu-moves-to-stop-funding-palestinian-terrorists-inciting-textbooks-666595) **to the P**A.

**Palestinian political activists expressed fear that the attack could be part of an attempt by the PA leadership to silence critics in the aftermath of the postpo**nement.

**The PA has instructed its supporters to stage rallies in parts of the West Bank in support of Abbas and his deci**sion to [delay the elections](https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/abbass-decision-to-delay-elections-sparks-public-outcry-666907), they said.

**The attack on the home of Nizar Banat, a prominent political activist and candidate on the Freedom and Dignity electoral list for the Palestinian parliamentary elections, which were set for May 22, took place on Saturday nigh**t in the town of Dura, near Hebron.

**Banat, an outspoken critic of Abbas, said he was not at home when the gunmen attacked w**ith live ammunition and stun grenades. **His wife and three children, who were in the house, were not hurt**, he said.

**Banat hinted that “thugs” belonging to Abbas’s ruling Fatah faction wer**e behind the attack and that they were escorted by PA security officers.

“They opened fire at my home, tossed stun grenades and broke the doors,” he said. “I want to know who carried out this cowardly attack.”

**Banat said he would not be intimidated or stopped from voicing his criticism of** Abbas and highlighting corruption in the PA.

**The attack came after the Freedom and Dignity list published a statement on Friday night in which it said it had decided to ask EU courts, especially the EU Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg, France, to order an immediate cessation of financial aid to the PA and launch an investigation into “the squandering of European taxpayer money**.”

The statement was signed by Banat and another candidate from his list, Dr. Amjad Shehab.

**The unprecedented appeal to the EU drew strong condemnations from senior PA and Fatah offici**als. They accused Banat of “crossing a redline” by appealing to foreign parties to suspend financial aid to the PA.

An investigation had been launched into the incident, a senior PA security official said. He denied that members of the Palestinian security forces were involved in the shooting.

In recent months, Banat has been posting videos on Facebook in which he launched scathing attacks on Abbas and senior PA and Fatah officials. **[Here is another example of why Abbas and his cadre of criminals should never have been supported by the EU/UN or US for any reason. Neither Fatah or Hamas care a whit about any of the so called Palestinians. They only care about the funding they can get from playing the victim and keeping the $$$s flowing so they can skim off the funds to their private bank accounts. Most of the leadership are blatant criminals from childhood. – rdb]**

He also participated in a demonstration in Ramallah last week to protest Abbas’s decision to delay the parliamentary and presidential elections.

**Banat and his list had decided to call for halting financial aid to the PA “because the European Union funds despicable gangs headed by Mahmoud Abbas**,” he said Sunday in a Facebook post.

**The PA security forces were responsible for “the frightening state of security anarchy in the West Bank**,” he added.

**The attack on his home came shortly after he received a phone call from his lawyer informing him that he had been summoned for interrogation by the PA Prosecutor-General’s Office** over his appeal to the EU, Banat said.

On Sunday, the European Union Delegation to the Palestinians said it “followed with concern last night’s attack on activist Nizar Banat’s house.”

“Violence against politicians and human rights defenders is unacceptable,” the EU mission said on Twitter. “The PA has to ensure respect for the freedom of expression and protection of human rights activists.”

Several Palestinian factions and human-rights groups expressed concern over the incident, dubbing it a dangerous assault on public freedoms.

Hamas and exiled Fatah operative Mohammad Dahlan’s supporters denounced the attack as a “crime” and blamed the PA security forces. <https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/gunmen-attack-home-of-candidate-who-called-on-eu-to-halt-funding-to-pa-666985>

**Iran’s regime threatens to execute brother of wrestler Navid Afkari**

***Navid’s brothers Vahid and Habib also participated in the demonstrations against the regime in 2018***

*By* [*BENJAMIN WEINTHAL*](https://www.jpost.com/author/benjamin-weinthal) *MAY 2, 2021 21:12*

**The Islamic Republic of Iran has announced that it may execute Vahid Afkari, the brother of the champion wrestler Navid Akari, who was the victim of an extrajudicial killing by Iran’s judiciary for his protest against Iranian regime corruption**.

**The founder of the campaign United for Navid, Masih Alinejad, on Saturday tweeted:  “After executing the innocent athlete Navid Afkari for protesting, authorities of the Islamic Republic of Iran have now threatened to execute his jailed brother, Vahid Afkari, if he doesn’t agree to make forced confessions. His life is in danger.#United4Navi**d.”

BREAKING NEWS:

After executing the innocent athlete [#NavidAfkari](https://twitter.com/hashtag/NavidAfkari?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) for protesting, authorities of the Islamic Republic of Iran have now threatened to execute his jailed brother, [#VahidAfkari](https://twitter.com/hashtag/VahidAfkari?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw), if he doesn’t agree to make forced confessions. His life is in danger.[#United4Navid](https://twitter.com/hashtag/United4Navid?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [pic.twitter.com/Og2K8pDUEP](https://t.co/Og2K8pDUEP)

— Masih Alinejad ️ (@AlinejadMasih) [May 1, 2021](https://twitter.com/AlinejadMasih/status/1388530688438194177?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

**Alinejad is a** [**women's rights**](https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/remembering-womens-rights-on-intl-womens-day-and-everyday-661345) **campaigner who has cultivated sources across Iran for her reports and journalism on human rights violations in the Islamic Republic**.

Voice of America, an American government news organization, wrote on its Persian-language website that Islamic Republic of Iran officials threatened Vahid with death.

**Navid’s brothers, Vahid and Habib, also participated in the demonstrations against the regime in 2018. For their peaceful protests, Iran’s regime sentenced Vahid to 54 years and six months imprisonment, and Habib sentenced to 27 years and three months in jail, as well as 74 lashes each**. Both brothers have faced severe torture and isolation in prison. **[Keep in mind that Iran has held a seat on the UN Human Rights commission for some time. Simply one more example of the total and complete idiocy and hypocrisy of the organization. There is no way they should ever have had a seat there/ - rdb]**

**Saeed Afkari, the brother of Navid, Vahid and Habib, tweeted in Persian about his "brothers' complaint against solitary confinement, beatings, and also the threat of murder by two high-ranking officials of the Islamic Republic."**

**He continued that "After 228 days, an informal interrogation session was held only in Vahid's presence The interrogator did not give permission to access the file, to the video of the beatings, to the medical jurisprudence report of the injuries, and the solitary confinement still continues."**

Sheina Vojoudi, an Iranian dissident, provided *The Jerusalem Post* with the translation of Saeed Afkari's tweet.

“There is not one shred of evidence in this damned case that shows I’m guilty,” Navid Afkari, 27, said shortly before his execution in September, 2020, adding that the regime’s hanging judges “are looking for a neck for their rope.”

Meanwhile, the United For Navid campaign and the sports human rights organization, Global Athlete, welcomed last week the International Judo Federation’s decision to suspend the Iran Judo Federation (IJF) for a four year period due to discrimination against Israeli athletes. **MORE -** <https://www.jpost.com/international/irans-regime-threatens-to-execute-brother-of-wrestler-navid-afkari-667012>

**Iran’s Khamenei says remarks by Zarif in audio leak a ‘big mistake’**

***Supreme leader lashes FM for bemoaning military’s influence on foreign policy***

*By* [*AFP*](https://www.timesofisrael.com/writers/afp/) *and* [*TOI staff*](https://www.timesofisrael.com/writers/times-of-israel-staff/) *Today, 8:52 pm*

**Iran’s Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei on Sunday slammed as a “big mistake” remarks by his foreign minister, a week after audio emerged of the latter bemoaning the military’s influence on diplo**macy.

**Top diplomat Mohammad Javad Zarif, a relative moderate, made the remarks in a three-hour “private” conversation first published by media outlets outside the country a week ago, provoking anger from conservatives**.

“The country’s policies are made of different economic, military, social, scientific, and cultural plans, including foreign relations and diplomacy,” Khamenei said in televised remarks.

**Saying “that one part denies the other or contradicts… is a big mistake that must not be perpetrated by officials of the Islamic Republic,” the suprem**e leader added.

The recording — described as “stolen” by Iran’s government — has triggered a heated debate ahead of presidential elections and amid talks in Vienna aimed at reviving a 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and world powers.

**Khamenei did not explicitly cite the leaked audio or Zarif’s name, but the comments, in the last few minutes of an hour-long speech, were clearly targeted at the foreign mi**nister.

**The supreme leader also emphasized that “nowhere in the world is foreign policy devised by the foreign mini**stry.” **[So does anyone want to place bets on the life expectancy of Zarif. It is obvious that the “great and awesome Aya-Puba of Iran” is not a happy camper and he is a total dictator. – rdb]**

**The diplomatic apparatus is only “the executor” of decisions made at higher levels, h**e said.

**In the audiotape, Zarif also mentioned the significant role played by Major General Qassem Soleim**ani, the commander of the Revolutionary Guards’ foreign operations arm, who was killed in a US airstrike in Iraq last year.

“In the Islamic Republic, the military field rules, Zarif said in the recording, quoted by The New York Times. “I have sacrificed diplomacy for the military field, rather than the field servicing diplomacy.”

**Khamenei said Sunday, “Some of these remarks are a repeat of hostile remarks of our enemies, repeating America’s rhetor**ic.”

“There is the Supreme National Security Council. All the officials are present (there). Decisions are made and the foreign ministry must execute and advance them through its own means.”

**In response to the supreme leader’s speech, Zarif affirmed that he believes Iran’s foreign policy should be directed by its leadership and represent the nationa**l consensus.

**Zarif had earlier on Sunday asked for forgiveness from Soleimani’s fam**ily.

“My remarks… do not diminish the status and irreplaceable role of martyr Soleimani,” Zarif wrote on Instagram.

“If I knew a word of… (my remarks) would be published publicly I would not have said them,” the foreign minister said.

“I have forgiven all those I believe accused me… I hope the great people of Iran, all those who love (Soleimani), and especially the gracious Soleimani family, forgive me as well,” he added.

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/irans-khamenei-says-remarks-by-zarif-in-audio-leak-a-big-mistake/>

**North Korea warns of 'VERY GRAVE SITUATION' for US, says Biden blundered by calling its self-defense efforts ‘serious threats’**

*2 May, 2021 17:49*

**President Joe Biden's speech to Congress apparently went over like a lead balloon – or perhaps an ICBM – in North Korea, as Pyongyang has said the US will face “a very grave situation” because its leader “made a big blun**der.”

*“His statement clearly reflects his intent to keep enforcing the* [*hostile policy*](http://www.mfa.gov.kp/en/statement-of-dprk-foreign-ministry-director-general-of-department-of-u-s-affairs/) *toward the DPRK (Democratic People’s Republic of Korea) as it had been done by the US for over half a century,”* Kwon Jong-gun, North Korean Foreign Ministry director general for US affairs, said on Sunday.

**The statement came in response to Biden’s first address to Congress, last Wednesd**ay, when the US commander in chief referred to the nuclear programs of North Korea and Iran as “serious threats” to American and global security. He said he will work closely with allies to address those threats through diplomacy and [*“stern deterrence.”*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2021/04/29/remarks-by-president-biden-in-address-to-a-joint-session-of-congress/)

**Kwon called Biden's position – referring to Pyongyang’s deterrence against “constant nuclear blackmail” as a “threat” – an “illogical” encroachment on North Korea’s sovereign right to self-defense.** US nuclear war exercises held shortly after Biden's inauguration in January *“proved in action who really threatens whom on the Korean peninsula and clearly showed that one must build a powerful deterrence to counter the US.”*

**A worsening crisis will spin out of control for the US if Washington retain**s *“outdated policy from a Cold War-minded perspective and viewpoint,”* Kwon said. Biden *“made a big blunder in the light of the present-day viewpoint,”* he added, and by disparaging Pyongyang in his first speech to Congress, the president made clear his hostile North Korean policies.

*“We will be compelled to press for corresponding measures and, with time, the US will find itself in a very grave situation,”* Kwon said.

The Washington-Pyongyang relationship appears to be veering off the track preferred by South Korean President Moon Jae-in, who has repeatedly urged Biden to [build on the progress](https://www.reuters.com/article/southkorea-politics/refile-skoreas-moon-urges-biden-admin-to-follow-up-on-kim-trump-summit-idUSL4N2JT197) made by former President Donald Trump and reopen peace talks with North Korean leader Kim Jong-un. White House press secretary Jen Psaki said in late March that Biden doesn’t intend to meet with Kim. <https://www.rt.com/usa/522753-nkorea-blasts-biden-speech/>

**U.S. radar tracking massive Chinese rocket plummeting down in uncontrolled re-entry**

*By* [*Jack Davis, The Western Journal*](https://www.wnd.com/author/wj/) *Published May 2, 2021 at 6:18pm*

**A massive Chinese rocket will be falling to Earth, with large sections of the United States among the possible sites, but no one knows where or when the rocket will h**it. The Long March 5B rocket pushed China's first module for its space station into orbit on Wednesday. However, the booster rocket remained in orbit as well as the payload.

**That means that the core of the rocket, which weighs about 21 metric tons, the equivalent of about 23 tons, will eventually** [**tumble back to Earth**](https://www.westernjournal.com/spacex-test-rocket-sticks-landing-explodes-massive-fireball-minutes-later/)**, according to** [SpaceNews](https://spacenews.com/huge-rocket-looks-set-for-uncontrolled-reentry-following-chinese-space-station-launch/).

100-Foot-Tall Booster From Chinese Rocket Will Likely Make an Uncontrolled Reentry <https://t.co/Qyr3XWhIsH> [pic.twitter.com/4DuLSzkQIV](https://t.co/4DuLSzkQIV)

— Gizmodo (@Gizmodo) [April 30, 2021](https://twitter.com/Gizmodo/status/1388155702930132996)

**In its reporting, SpaceNews explained that most launch rockets are not designed to go into** [**orbit**](https://www.westernjournal.com/china-threatens-take-lead-21st-century-space-race-launching-independent-orbital-station-report/)**, but to crash back to land in a safe area**.

"Most expendable rocket first stages do not reach orbital velocity and re-enter the atmosphere and land in a pre-defined re-entry zone. Some other larger, second stages perform deorbit burns to lower altitude to reduce time in orbit and lower chances of collisions with other spacecraft or to immediately re-enter the atmosphere," it said.

**In March, the second stage of a Falcon 9 rocket used by SpaceX returned to Earth in a fiery spectacle that saw most of the rocket burn up upon re-entry, although some pieces of debris reached the gr**ound.

Last May, China's first Long March 5B made a [similar uncontrolled re-entry](https://spacenews.com/bridenstine-criticizes-china-for-uncontrolled-rocket-reentry/), scattering debris across the Atlantic Ocean and part of western Africa, [SpaceNews](https://spacenews.com/bridenstine-criticizes-china-for-uncontrolled-rocket-reentry/) reported.

At the time, estimates of the rocket's path indicated that had it returned to Earth 30 minutes sooner, debris would have landed on the U.S.

**The** [**U.S. military**](https://www.westernjournal.com/ap-white-house-quick-damage-control-bidens-press-secretary-mocks-space-force/) **is tracking the rocket, the report sa**id.

The SpaceNews report said that the timing of the rocket's blazing return is unclear.

"The decay of its orbit will increase as atmospheric drag brings it down," the report explained. "The speed of this process depends on the size and density of the object and variables include atmospheric variations and fluctuations, which are themselves influenced by solar activity and other factors."

As it orbits the Earth every 90 minutes, "the rocket body passes a little farther north than New York, Madrid and Beijing and as far south as southern Chile and Wellington, New Zealand, and could make its re-entry at any point within this area," the report stated.

The most likely event will see any debris that actually survives the intense heat of re-entry falling into the oceans or uninhabited areas, but the risk remains of damage to people or property.

**One observer said the danger -- and the potential show -- would be almost without prece**dent.

"The Long March 5B core stage is seven times more massive than the Falcon 9 second stage that caused a lot of press attention a few weeks ago when it re-entered above Seattle and dumped a couple of pressure tanks on Washington state,” spaceflight observer Jonathan McDowell told SpaceNews, noting that last year's return of the Long March 5B launch was the fourth-biggest uncontrolled re-eetry in spaceflight history.

**“I think by current standards it’s unacceptable to let it re-enter uncontrolle**d,” McDowell said. “Since 1990, nothing over 10 tons has been deliberately left in orbit to re-enter uncontrolled.”

This article appeared originally on [The Western Journal](https://www.westernjournal.com/). <https://www.wnd.com/2021/05/us-radar-tracking-massive-chinese-rocket-plummeting-uncontrolled-re-entry/>

**China's new space effort called 'greatest tech transfer in history'**

***'International' station will let regime 'pilfer what they need'***

*By* [*WND News Services*](https://www.wnd.com/author/wndnewsservices/) *Published May 2, 2021 at 3:48pm*

[*Editor's note: This story originally was published by* [*Real Clear Science*](https://www.realclearscience.com/)*.*]

**By Brandon Weichert**Real Clear Science

**Space is the ultimate strategic high ground. Whichever nation controls this domain will have unprecedented access to the terrestrial strategic sectors (land, sea, air, and even cyberspace). The United States has been the dominant space power thus far, but the days of America’s unquestioned hegemony in orbit are coming to a clos**e.

**Very soon, Beijing will launch the first of three components for its modular space station. Meant to rival the American-led International** Space Station (ISS), the Chinese Space Station (CSS) will grant China unprecedented access to low-Earth orbit (LEO).

**Unlike the ISS which is truly an international effort based on peace, China’s modular space station is—like so many things that China does today—a nationalistic endeavor** with a militaristic flair.

It’s true that China’s space agency has said they welcome international missions to their new space station. But simple science has never been China’s end goal. In fact, by allowing for international scientific missions to their soon-to-be-launched space station, China will be getting access to the intellectual property and trade secrets of other nations and corporations. And like they have always done with foreign entities, China will pilfer what they need.

Essentially, international cooperation with China on their space station will amount to nothing less than the greatest technology transfer to China in history.

We know that China’s leaders have viewed their new station in strategic terms. In 2010, Beijing reorganized its military to fight—and win—a space war against the United States. So, while China’s new modular space station is nothing new (both the Americans and Russians have been operating space stations for decades), China’s space station program is one piece of a larger strategy for Beijing’s comprehensive dominance over the Earth.

Beyond that, a few years ago Chinese scientists advocated for installing a laser at the base of the Chinese Space Station once it was in orbit. China claimed that a laser could be used to clear dangerous space debris from around the Earth.

**Of course, most systems in space are dual-use in nature. In peacetime, a laser could be used to clear dangerous space debris. In wartime, however, it could be used to disable critical American satellite constellations in orbit. When the Obama Administration proposed placing a laser on the ISS to clear space debris, it shied away, out of fears that either Russia or China would accuse Washington of weaponizing s**pace.

The Chinese have little compunction about weaponizing space under the guise of making space safer for all. And China has already demonstrated a consistent disregard for international law, whether it be their illegal island building program in the South China Sea or their sloppy 2007 anti-satellite (ASAT) weapon test that created the world’s largest—and most dangerous—debris field around the Earth in history. **MORE -**<https://www.wnd.com/2021/05/chinas-new-space-effort-called-greatest-tech-transfer-history/>

**Government agents are telling Facebook to censor content, lawsuit says**

***'We should all be alarmed when prominent social-media voices are censored, silenced and made to disappear'***

*By* [*Bob Unruh*](https://www.wnd.com/author/runruh/) *Published May 2, 2021 at 11:55am* **U.S. Rep. Adam Schiff, D-Calif., played a huge role in the false narrative carried for years by Democrats that President Trump's 2016 campaign colluded with Russia**. That has, of course, been debunked.  
 **But the claims were cited in a long series of legal figh**ts.  
 **Now Schiff is playing a role in another legal fight: a dispute over the actions by Big Tech companies that violate the First Amendment because they are done at the behest of government officials, such as Schiff**.  
 **The Rutherford Institute, which often finds itself finding for individual and religious rights, has asked to file a friend-of-the-court brief on behalf of Children's Health Defense, a group that sued Facebook over its censorship actions**.  
 **Constitutional amendments apply to governments, not private corporations, but the First is in play here because, Institute lawyers are arguing, "Facebook acted in concert with U.S. government officials and agencies to suppress and punish Children's Health Defense for sharing information critical of the dangers** of the COVID-19 vaccine."  
 "Without being able to proceed in this lawsuit, Plaintiff CDF and others similarly situated would be left without any remedy for violation of their constitutional rights inflicted by government officials using big tech as their deputized proxy," the filing explains.  
 "**We should all be alarmed when prominent social-media voices are censored, silenced and made to disappear from Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Instagram for voicing ideas that are deemed politically incorrect**, hateful, dangerous, extremist or conspiratorial," said constitutional attorney John W. Whitehead, president of The Rutherford Institute. "At some point, depending on how the government and its corporate allies define what constitutes 'extremism,' we might all be considered guilty of some thought crime or other and subjected to technocensorship."

The original case arose last year when Facebook, allegedly in retaliation for CHD's "speech critical of vaccines and wireless technologies, violated the First Amendment's guarantee to freedom of speech."  
 "**The lawsuit alleges that Facebook acted at the behest of and in concert with the U.S government, asserting that Congressman Adam Schiff had pressured Facebook to suppress 'vaccine misinformation'** and that officials threatened to repeal a statute providing Facebook with immunity from liability," the Institute said.  
 **Facebook wants the claim dismissed because "it is a private entity and not subject to the First Amendment**," but the Institute argues "that CHD’s lawsuit must be allowed to proceed in order to protect the free speech rights of *all* citizens, which are threatened by the increasing collaboration of the government and social media giants to censor speech that challenges the status quo."  
 The [Institute](https://www.rutherford.org/publications_resources/on_the_front_lines/challenging_technocensorship_rutherford_institute_asks_court_to_prohibit_facebook_from_censoring_de_platforming_covid_19_vaccine_critics) **is warning, in its filing, "against the rising threat to free speech posed by the government’s collusion with large technology companies in order to regulate and control what ideas can be shared on the internet** and through social media."  
 CHD was founded by Robert F. Kennedy Jr. and is a nonprofit organization working to end childhood health epidemics by exposing causes, eliminating harmful exposures, seeking justice for those injured, and establishing safeguards to prevent future harms.  
 It is a critic of the proliferation of childhood vaccines and shares information about their dangers with the public.  
 Facebook has been waging "a campaign to discredit CHD: repeatedly posting labels and overlays on CHD’s Facebook page labeling information provided as 'false,' preventing persons visiting CHD’s Facebook page from making donations to CHD; and otherwise asserting that CHD violated Facebook’s terms of service by posting false information," the Institute said.  
 The brief explains Schiff "sent to defendants" a letter "threatening their immunity from suit under CDA section 230 if defendants failed to censor content on the sites which Schiff and other congress members found objectionable."  
 Facebook ultimately "acted in partnership with government actors including the CDC, a federal agency, and the CDC's proxy, the WHO," the filing states.  
 It charges, "Censorship of the kind CHD has been subjected to is increasing at a rate that poses a serious threat to the freedoms of all people, regardless of their views. Moreover, it is wholly contrary to university principles of freedom of speech that are the foundation for representative democracy." <https://www.wnd.com/2021/05/government-agents-telling-facebook-censor-content-lawsuit-says/> **[Someone needs to hang that dude out to dry until he simply blows away. Kennedy may not be a doctor but he has spent more time studying this topic than about 99+% of the physicians in the US and world. – rdb]**

**At Least 9,245 Americans Tested Positive for COVID-19 After Vaccination; 132 Dead**

*By* [*Zachary Stieber*](https://www.theepochtimes.com/author-zachary-stieber) *May 1, 2021 Updated: May 1, 2021* **The number of documented so-called breakthrough COVID-19 cases has climbed above 9,000, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Preventio**n.  
 **As of April 16, 9,245 people tested positive for COVID-19 at least two weeks after getting their final COVID-19** **vaccine, the health agency reported**.  
 About **9 percent, or 835, required hospitalization, and 132 died**.  
 **Of the hospitalized patients, 241 were said to be asymptomatic or having an illness not related to COVID-19**, and 20 of the deaths were reported as asymptomatic or not related to the disease, which is caused by the [CCP (Chinese Communist Party) virus](https://www.theepochtimes.com/giving-the-right-name-to-the-virus-causing-a-worldwide-pandemic-2_3277200.html).  
 [**The numbers**](https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/health-departments/breakthrough-cases.html) **are from 46 U.S. states and territories**. It’s not clear which four states are not submitting the breakthrough case figures to the agency, which is known as the CDC.  
 **The numbers are an undercount because the CDC’s surveillance system is passive and relies on voluntary reporting from state health departments. A**dditionally, not all breakthrough cases will be identified because of a lack of testing.  
 “These **surveillance data are a snapshot and help identify patterns** and look for signals among vaccine breakthrough cases. As CDC and state health departments shift to focus only on investigating vaccine breakthrough cases that result in hospitalization or death, those data will be regularly updated and posted every Friday,” the agency said in a statement.  
 A **breakthrough case means a person gets COVID-19 despite being vaccinated** and having two or more weeks elapse since their final dose. Two of the three vaccines authorized for use in the United States require two doses.  
 The CDC says vaccines are still effective, noting that the breakthrough cases represent a small number of those who have been vaccinated.  
 Clinical trials reviewed by drug regulators showed Pfizer’s vaccine to be 95 percent effective in preventing infection by the CCP virus, Moderna’s to be 94 percent effective, and Johnson & Johnson’s to be 66.9 percent effective.  
 The Johnson & Johnson shot was tested after variants began circulating, unlike the others.  
 As of April 30, over 100 million Americans have been fully vaccinated against the CCP virus. Fully vaccinated means getting two doses of the Pfizer or Moderna jab or the single-shot Johnson & Johnson vaccine.  
 Also on Friday, the number of adverse events reported to the passive [Vaccine](https://www.theepochtimes.com/t-vaccine) Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS) was updated, reaching over 133,000.  
 The system, which federal authorities encourage people to submit reports to, now has reports of 3,607 post-vaccination deaths.  
 There **were also 2,527 recorded life-threatening cases, over 1,600 cases of permanent disability, and nearly 8,500 cases where patients required hospitalization**.  
 The CDC says on its website that “VAERS has not detected patterns in cause of death that would indicate a safety problem with COVID-19 vaccines.”  
 Agency physicians, along with regulators from the Food and Drug Administration, review each case report of death.  
 “A review of available clinical information including death certificates, autopsy, and medical records revealed no evidence that vaccination contributed to patient deaths,” the CDC said in an April 27 statement.

<https://www.theepochtimes.com/mkt_breakingnews/at-least-9245-americans-tested-positive-for-covid-19-after-vaccination-132-dead_3798410.html>

**'Eradicate' white people, urges student-government candidate**

***On college campuses 'it's acceptable to be racist to white Americans'***

*By* [*WND Staff*](https://www.wnd.com/author/wndstaff/) *Published May 2, 2021 at 12:11pm*

**A candidate for student government at Stanford University posted racist threats, including "white people need to be eradicated," then apparently deleted the account when cau**ght.

[**The Federalist reported**](https://thefederalist.com/2021/04/29/stanford-student-government-candidate-says-white-people-need-to-be-eradicated/) **the tweets by Gabby Crooks, a sophomore running for reel**ection.

**But a few hours after the report, Twitter said the account for that person does not exis**t.

The Federalist said tweets by Crooks from as recently as last year were found by the Stanford College Republicans.

Stephen Sills, head of the group, told The Federalist, "Racism in any form is obscene, and there's a moral obligation that students need to know this stuff before they vote.

Among the statements credited to Crooks:

* "Yes I think white people need to be eradicated yes I will go feral over mediocre white men we exist."
* "why do white people think everything is about them??"
* "why did I see vinnie hacker tryna fly outside my window y'’ll n-ggas let spicy white get to these crackers' heads."
* "not my mom walking in on me watching a video about unlearning christian homophobia and getting mad….girl do i potentially have news for you."
* "not a passionate amerikkka lover in my IR class….. I thought ya’ll were joking."

The Federalist reported the Stanford College Republicans have continued to find other racist tweets by the student-government candidate.

**"Crooks has received an endorsement from the Stanford Student Daily Editorial Board, but the newspaper did not respond to a request for comment asking if it stands behind this decisio**n. The Stanford Student Daily, a publication with a far-left slant, published an op-ed in February that said the Stanford College Republicans should be removed from campus," the report said.

Sills said: "I think it is reflective of the sort of cultural context that we live in — where anti-white racism is growing increasingly prevalent and mainstream. Especially on college campuses, where it is ideologically taught that it's acceptable to be racist to white Americans because of this false narrative that you can only be racist if you have power."

<https://www.wnd.com/2021/05/eradicate-white-people-urges-student-government-candidate/> **[In today’s society the greatest perpetrators of racism are those on the liberal left (aka socialist/communist block – like the DNC). They have been using this as an instrument of agitating and inciting hatred for years and the Maxine Waters/Sharpton group have simply played this card (as did the entire Obamanation administration in an attempt to create a huge divide in the people of the USA. It is a tactic from the Cloward and Piven playbook which has been the bible for the DNC for years. The ultimate goal is to create a race war which will help accomplish two things. It will ‘thin out the population (ala the globalist agenda) and will give the ‘leadership’ an excuse to confiscate arms. – rdb]**

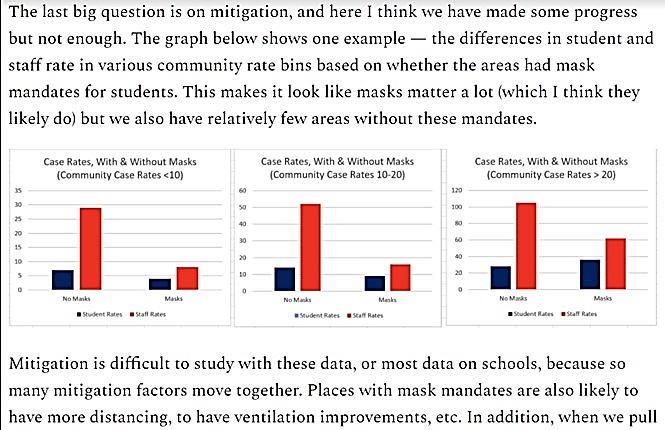
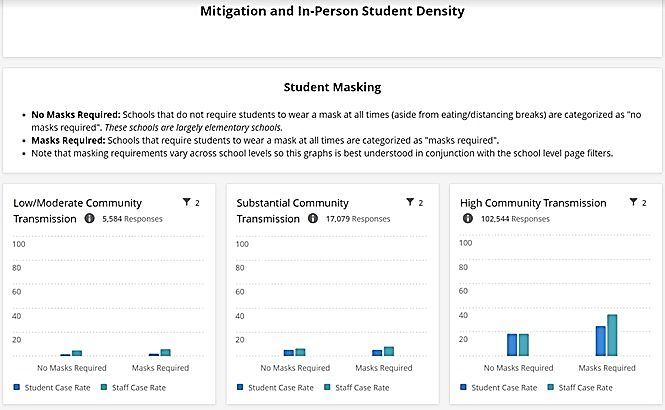
**America’s richest boosted their fortunes by $195 billion in Biden’s first 100 days – media**

*2 May, 2021 08:36*

US President Joe **Biden wants the wealthiest Americans to pay their fair share of taxes, but it turns out they have become one of the main beneficiaries of his preside**ncy.   
 The **combined net worth of the top 100 ultra-rich people in the US has skyrocketed by $195 billion since Biden took office, according to Bloomberg’s calculations. From his election to his inauguration, they added $267 billion to their fortunes, bringing their total gain to $461 billion since November** 4.   
 The **rise in billionaires’ wealth in the first 100 days of Biden’s presidency is around 20**% of the cash stockpile those billionaires raked in between Trump’s inauguration and the 2020 election. According to Bloomberg data, they became $860 billion richer over that period.  
 The gains are largely based on enormous stimulus measures to help the economy mitigate the coronavirus crisis, which resulted in a stock market rally. In addition to the trillions-worth of measures agreed by Trump, Biden approved another $1.9 trillion stimulus package. That gave another boost to stocks, with the S&P 500 and Dow Jones indices jumping around 10% since Biden’s inauguration.  
 Heads of tech and e-commerce giants such as Amazon and Facebook were the biggest winners, both at the height of the pandemic and during the latest rally in the stock market. American billionaires’ collective net worth has surged by 55% over the past 13 months, hitting $4.56 trillion, according to a report by the Institute for Policy Studies and Americans for Tax Fairness.   
 However, Biden now wants the wealthiest 1% of Americans and corporations *“to pay their fair share,”* he said earlier this week. He wants to bring *“billions of dollars”* to the economy and proposes taking the top tax bracket for those making $400,000 or more to 39.6% and raising capital gains taxes for those making more than $1 million a year.

<https://www.rt.com/business/522724-us-richest-biden-100-days/> **[The world has been “had” by this group of criminals and will continue to be deluded and manipulated unless someone/something stops them. Lying is the primary ingredient in any and all dialogues that they promulgate. – rdb]**

**Commentary:**

**This Data On Masked Vs Unmasked Schools Will Be Ignored By The Mask Cult**[*Scott Morefield*](https://townhall.com/tipsheet/scottmorefield/) *Posted: May 01, 2021 10:00 AM* One of the most frustrating aspects of the 'war' on COVID waged by our overlords in the name of health and safety has been the forcible muzzling of children in schools, particularly when playing outside or participating in sports. This virus has never been significantly driven by spread between or from children, yet they are the ones seemingly being punished with overbearing restrictions that last from the time they step on the school bus early in the mornings until they step off in the afternoon.  
 When complaints arise on social media, invariably some virtue-signaling, do-gooder parents will chime in that their children are "used to it" and "never complain" about having to wear a piece of cloth over the holes through which they breathe for most of their days. Well, I suppose prisoners eventually get "used" to having to wear chains too, but that doesn't make it natural. However, while chaining prisoners is necessary from time to time for security and safety reasons, it was never necessary to [mask children](https://www.city-journal.org/masking-children-unnecessary-and-harmful), especially younger ones, and the data seems to increasingly be bearing this out.  
 Consider [this dataset](https://statsiq.co1.qualtrics.com/public-dashboard/v0/dashboard/5f78e5d4de521a001036f78e#/dashboard/5f78e5d4de521a001036f78e?pageId=Page_ffb4dc52-5543-46b2-8126-2b7229fd1b17) on COVID spread in schools from Brown University Professor Emily Oster, hardly a member of Team Reality. Launched last fall, Oster's "COVID dashboard project" has attempted to make up for the lack of a "coordinated federal effort to track COVID cases in context."  
 "By 'in context' I mean with information on how many people were in in-person school and what mitigation factors allowed school to operate safely," Oster [writes](https://emilyoster.substack.com/p/school-dashboard-update) in a March 1 dashboard update.   
 The amount of data collected here, although not exhaustive, seems surprisingly voluminous and impressive:  
 When we launched the dashboard in early September, our first announcement included about 100,000 in-person students. All of the data in that wave came from schools and districts that opted-in to the study to provide their information. These data provided a first, early look at case rates in schools. The sample was selected, yes, but it provided a first look at case rates in schools.  
 The most recent wave of data, covering early February, includes about 12 million students, of whom 6 million were in-person (this is about 20% of all school enrollment in the US). At this stage of the process, we still collect data from districts and schools who opt-in. But we’re also pulling in comprehensive data at either the school or district level from a number of states (New York, Texas, Massachusetts, Florida). The result is data with less geographic balance but significantly more representativeness (and many more observations).  
 Interestingly, in March, Oster felt that the data showed that masks probably matter "a lot" because of the increase in staff (not student) rates of infection in non-masked schools.  
  
 However, as data has poured in, there has been a clear shift. Here's [a screengrab](http://dashboard) of the as it stands now:  
  
 In areas of high community transmission, masked school students saw a case rate (defined here as daily cases per 100,000) 37 percent higher than non-masked school students, or 19 cases per 100,000 in 'no masks required' schools vs 26 in 'masks required' schools. Even worse, staff experienced a case rate 84 percent worse in masked schools, at 19 cases per 100,000 in "no masks required" schools vs 35 in 'masks required' schools. In areas of low or substantial community transmission, students experienced no difference in case rates while staff numbers in "masks required" schools were slightly worse.  
 Sure, this sample isn't exhaustive, and although it does contain data from all states, it relies heavily on just a few. Still, it stands to reason that any data collected on such an issue would show at least somewhat less transmission in masked vs unmasked schools, IF masks worked to slow the spread of COVID-19. They [don't](https://townhall.com/columnists/scottmorefield/2020/09/14/if-masks-work-why-dont-they-work-n2576139), obviously. Meanwhile, some blue state school districts are still forcing tennis players and track runners to wear face muzzles over their breathing holes outside, in the name of "science," or something. <https://townhall.com/tipsheet/scottmorefield/2021/05/01/this-data-on-masked-vs-unmasked-schools-will-have-the-mask-cult-seething-n2588826>

**Biden's Withdrawal from Afghanistan Undermines His Own Global Strategy  
*by*** [***Richard Kemp***](https://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/author/Richard+Kemp) ***May 2, 2021 at 5:00 am*** US President Joe Biden's unconditional withdrawal of US forces from Afghanistan by September this year has potentially grave and dangerous consequences far wider than that embattled country and is set to undermine the [national security strategy](https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/NSC-1v2.pdf) he proudly unveiled only days before announcing his pull-out.  
 In 1982, Admiral Sir Henry Leach, head of the Royal Navy, told Margaret Thatcher that if Britain didn't retake the Falkland Islands when Argentina invaded, "in another few months we shall be living in another country whose word counts for little". He knew that failure to resist a dictator who seized sovereign territory by force would be a green light to such aggression everywhere. The same calculation underpinned President George H. W. Bush's decision to unleash one of the most powerful armies in history following Saddam Hussein's 1990 invasion of Kuwait.  
 Far worse than failing to intervene is intervening to fail. The withdrawal from Afghanistan is just that. Biden did not order US forces there in 2001, but as Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee at the time, he strongly supported it. Later [he said](https://newrepublic.com/article/69645/hawk-down): "History will judge us harshly if we allow the hope of a liberated Afghanistan to evaporate because we failed to stay the course".  
 It will not be history alone that judges Biden's failure to stay the course now, but America's allies, enemies and competitors around the world. His March 2021 National Security Strategic Guidance says:  
 "Authoritarianism is on the global march, and we must join with likeminded allies and partners to revitalize democracy the world over. We will work alongside fellow democracies across the globe to deter and defend against aggression from hostile adversaries. We will stand with our allies and partners to combat new threats aimed at our democracies."  
 Biden emphasises the need to work with NATO and other allies, which he describes as "America's greatest strategic asset".  
 Fine words butter no parsnips, as Harry Truman was fond of saying. Biden's unconditional withdrawal from Afghanistan provoked the first public [statement](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/afghanistan-military-troops-withdrawal-defence-b1832722.html) of dissent against US security policy that I can recall in my lifetime from Britain, America's closest military ally and NATO's next most powerful member. Prior to Biden's decision, both [France](https://www.reuters.com/article/france-usa-idINKBN27T0RV) and [Germany](https://www.reuters.com/article/nato-afghanistan-germany-int-idUSKBN2AH21S), which is the second largest troop contributor behind the US, also opposed withdrawal in the current circumstances, and NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg [echoed](https://www.dw.com/en/afghanistan-nato-chief-warns-against-hasty-troop-withdrawal/a-55632389) their views.  
 US allies who have themselves invested huge military and economic resources in Afghanistan fear a Taliban return to power and the blood-bath that would likely accompany it. Their concerns are shared by General Kenneth McKenzie, commander of US CENTCOM, responsible for Afghanistan, who [told](https://www.cnbc.com/2021/04/22/top-us-general-worried-about-afghan-military-collapse-after-troop-withdrawal.html) the Senate Armed Services Committee last week that Afghanistan's forces might well collapse following US withdrawal.  
 America's partners are fearful also of an intensified threat from global jihadists. Al Qaida — along with Islamic State-Khorasan, with which it sometimes collaborates — would regain their preferred base for attack against the West. As before, Western citizens would flock to Afghanistan for terrorist training. Jihadists everywhere would be encouraged and empowered by a perceived US defeat at the hands of the Taliban, which was being [trumpeted](https://www.memri.org/jttm/pro-al-qaeda-outlet-deems-bidens-withdrawal-decision-acknowledgement-bitter-defeat-afghanistan) by Al Qaida within days of Biden's announcement.  
 Biden [justified](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2021/04/14/remarks-by-president-biden-on-the-way-forward-in-afghanistan/) his withdrawal with the need to counter challenges from China and Russia and strengthen democratic allies and partners against autocracy. His actions are likely to have the reverse effect.  
 The abandonment of Afghanistan will long be remembered by countries around the world as they weigh their choices between the US and authoritarian regimes. Already Saudi Arabia has [recognised](https://apnews.com/article/jamal-khashoggi-iran-baghdad-middle-east-a046c89b0da8c708978452df9fb72abb) that Biden will not protect them from Iran, with his administration rushing headlong to rejoin the catastrophic nuclear deal and withdrawing support to the Kingdom in its fight against Iranian proxies in Yemen. Fearful for their future, the Saudis know they cannot stand alone against Iran and have opened talks with Tehran, a move that could only harm US interests in the region.  
 Across the Pacific, Taiwan is increasingly plagued by Chinese bomber [incursions](https://news.sky.com/story/china-deploys-jets-and-bombers-into-taiwanese-airspace-in-biggest-incursion-to-date-12273627) into its airspace, at greater [intensity](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/mar/26/taiwan-reports-incursion-by-20-chinese-military-aircraft) since Biden took office. Chinese President Xi Jinping [says](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-china-46733174) Taiwan must and will be "unified" with China, by force if necessary. How confident can Taiwan now be that the US will actively help them resist should China invade? More importantly, Xi will be asking the same question while he counts the potential cost of moving against the country that he considers his own.  
 As Russian forces massed along the border with Ukraine last month, Xi will also have noticed that Biden [cancelled](https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/us-cancels-warships-deployment-black-sea-turkish-diplomatic-sources-2021-04-14/) a transit of the Black Sea by two US warships after Russia told Washington to stay away, [calling](https://www.politico.com/news/2021/04/15/us-navy-ukraine-russia-tensions-481897) its planned naval deployment an unfriendly provocation.  
 Like a kettle of vultures, Pakistan, Iran, China and Russia will all be circling the Afghan carcass following US withdrawal. Iran, which has long provided weapons, funding and safe haven to the Taliban, has been building its influence with them in recent months. [Russia](https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/07/01/russia-afghansitan-united-states-bountygate/) has also helped fund and arm the Taliban — sometimes in collaboration with Iran — to kill Afghan, US and NATO forces in order to challenge the US and increase its own influence in the country. [China](https://in.news.yahoo.com/detention-10-chinese-spies-afghanistan-040901520.html) too has been cooperating with the Taliban, both to hunt down and kill Uighur Muslim leaders and in its hunger for natural resources. It also sees influence in Afghanistan as a means to confront New Delhi. Beijing knows that India, as a US ally and democracy, is the only regional power that could play a genuinely constructive role in a future Afghanistan. Xi is not willing to see that happen.  
 Pakistan, in cahoots with China, is also determined to keep India out of Afghanistan. Its Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate created the Taliban and today remains by far the greatest external backer of its campaign against Afghan and international forces. Islamabad sees the country as vital strategic depth in a future conflict with India and intends to hold sway over a future Taliban regime in Kabul. But it might have to pay a severe price it did not anticipate as it recklessly fuelled the conflict: a flood of Afghan refugees fleeing the Taliban onslaught. They would join the vast number already there, which Islamabad struggles to support. By the end of 2001, 4 million Afghan refugees were in Pakistan, with 1.4 million still there today. This will not be a problem for Pakistan alone; Iran, Turkey and Europe may also face a huge additional influx. Even before Biden's withdrawal, Afghans are already the second largest [migrant population](https://euobserver.com/opinion/151606) in the world.  
 There is also the prospect of instability in Afghanistan flowing across the border and further destabilising Pakistan with potentially devastating strategic consequences. Intent on overthrowing the government — with its nuclear armory — Jihadists there have been butchering mercilessly for years. Taliban success next door would embolden them and potentially provide support. The soon-to-be-ended US presence in Afghanistan has helped suppress the insurgency in Pakistan. There are suggestions that US assets deployed in Pakistan might have the same effect in Afghanistan, but that is at best questionable, even if Islamabad allows it.  
 All of this is a high price to pay for ending what Biden [calls](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2021/04/14/remarks-by-president-biden-on-the-way-forward-in-afghanistan/) the "forever war" in Afghanistan. The truth is this is a forever war for the US only in the rhetoric of those who support surrender to the Taliban. Afghan troops continue to suffer horrific levels of attrition, but the last US combat death there was over a year ago. If a conflict needs to be fought in the first place, it may require an enduring presence, sometimes for decades — look for example at US forces still deployed today in South Korea, Germany and Japan. Look also at the consequences of Barack Obama's precipitate withdrawal from Iraq in 2011 — the rise of the Islamic State and the costly return of US forces for almost another decade and counting.  
 There are just 3,500 US forces (including off-the-books units) among the 10,000 NATO and other international troops in Afghanistan, all of whom are dependent on US presence. Their function is not combat but training and assistance to Afghan security forces. The US also conducts counter-terrorist operations using intelligence agencies, special operations forces and air assets, the very approach Biden unsuccessfully argued for when vice president, as he opposed the more extensive counter-insurgency campaign that Obama prosecuted while in office.  
 The net strategic effect of Biden's unconditional withdrawal is shaping up to be the opposite of what his national security strategy seeks to achieve: diminished confidence among allies, increased boldness among adversaries, the vital strategic territory of Afghanistan ceded to anti-democratic autocracies, a destabilised region containing two nuclear powers with associated proliferation risks, a spiralling of the global jihadist threat and massive population displacement.  
 *Colonel Richard Kemp is a former British Army Commander*. *He was also head of the international terrorism team in the U.K. Cabinet Office and is now a writer and speaker on international and military affairs. He is a Shillman Journalism Fellow at Gatestone Institute.* <https://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/17322/biden-withdrawal-afghanistan>

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**ARUTZ SHEVA**

**Bennett meets secretly with Netanyahu**

***Prime Minister held secret meeting with Yamina chief, with negotiating teams from both parties also meeting in secret.***

*Arutz Sheva Staff , May 02 , 2021 10:36 PM*

**Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Yamina party chief Naftali Bennett met in secret last week, according to a report released by Kan Sunday eveni**ng.

**Negotiating teams from the Likud and Yamina parties also met secretly last week**, the report said.

**According to the report, after the meetings, the clandestine talks between the two sides continued via telephone over the weekend, with the goal of preventing Yesh Atid chief Yair Lapid from receiving a mandate** to form a coalition government should Netanyahu fail to build a coalition by the deadline.

Netanyahu has until Tuesday night to present a new government or lose the President’s mandate, which will then go either to the Knesset or to a rival candidate for the premiership. However, if Netanyahu makes progress towards forming a new government, he could request an extension from President Reuven Rivlin.

**The Kan report also claimed that members of the anti-Netanyahu bloc are outraged at Bennett over his talks with Netanyahu, saying: “He is about to be tricked by Netanyahu**.”

Talks among opposition parties aimed at forming an alternative government have made no progress in the past few days.

**A senior Likud official told Kan that the party is debating if to request an extension on the deadline for forming a government, citing the catastrophe in Meron last wee**k which claimed the lives of 45 people during the Lag Ba’Omer festival. <https://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/305433v>

**Poles react to Meron disaster: 'The less Jews there are, the better for the world'**

***Comments section to article on Meron disaster in Polish media swamped with anti-Semitic hate.***

*Nissan Tzur , May 02 , 2021 10:59 PM*

**As the Jewish People mourns for the 45 victims of the catastrophe that occurred in Meron on Lag b’Omer, many Poles have expressed their delight at “a world with less Jews in** it.”

**The Polish news site Interia.pl, one of the largest and most popular news sites in Poland, published an article on the Meron disaster and the national day of mourning declared in its aftermath. Although the site’s editors included a message at the end of the article asking that readers refrain from posting comments that included expressions of hate, the comments section of the article was soon swamped with precisely such reactions**, with readers writing of their “joy” at hearing of the disaster, and of their hatred of Jews.

Along with such sentiments were “traditional” anti-Semitic allegations, such as those accusing Jews of controlling the Polish government and of being behind all the “wars” and “persecution” in the world.

**“Finally something bad is happening in Israel!” rejoiced one poster. “At last G-d is punishing this evil nation of thieves, criminals, and swindler**s!”

**“The less Jews there are, the better for the world,” wrote another Pole**. “If only we could get such news every day,” wrote another.

Other comments sarcastically remarked that, “Israel is now trying to figure out which country to blame for the disaster,” and “funny how Iran isn’t being held responsible.” <https://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/305432> **[Way down low for the Poles. While they try to deny it and say the Poles weren’t like the Nazis I think this demonstrates quite well that there was AND STILL IS a huge anti-Semitic contingent in Poland and the EU nations to boot. – rdb]**

**Arabs set fire near Jewish neighborhood in Yitzhar**

***Arabs light fire near Jewish neighborhood of Kumi Ori, shout at IDF soldiers securing firefighters.***

*Arutz Sheva Staff , May 03 , 2021 2:51 PM*

**Arabs from the Arab village of Urif on Monday morning lit a fire near the Kumi Ori neighborhood of Yitzhar in Samaria**.

Residents and volunteer firefighters, as well as Yitzhar's security chief and IDF soldiers, worked to put out the fire.

**As the Jews worked to extinguish the fire, Arab youths began to gather at the edges of the village and shout at the** IDF soldiers who were securing the firefighting forces.

Residents reported that Border Police forces at the entry to Kumi Ori for several minutes prevented the entry of residents who had arrived to extinguish the flames.

[Kumi Ori](https://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/296698) is currently a closed military zone, and only residents are allowed to enter. <https://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/305466>

**Report: Rivlin won't hold further consultations**

***Israeli Pres. Rivlin will not hold consultations regarding who to ask to form a government, source says.***

*Arutz Sheva Staff , May 03 , 2021 2:14 PM*

**Israeli President Reuven Rivlin will not hold another round of consultations with the various parties' representatives if Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu does not succeed in forming a government, Israel Hayom reported**.

**Netanyahu's opportunity to form a government ends Tuesday at mid**night.

**Instead, Rivlin will only hold meetings with those party representatives who request to meet with him prior to his decision regarding w**ho [the next candidate](https://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/305167) to form a government should be.

A senior President's Residence source told *Israel Hayom*: "There will not be [another] round. Whoever wants to can tell us his stance. The President's understanding of the situation will be based on what he sees with his own eyes."

"Discussions with the parties, meetings with the representatives, political estimates - all of his understanding of the situation." <https://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/305463>

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**05/02/2021 NEWS AM**

**מאיר חג'בי - סיבת הסיבות ווקאלי | meir hajby - Sibat Hasibot**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uuuF7k1xkJs>

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| --- | --- |
| Put the wind back in me, take the rain off me  I had a sea time to rest, I got used to it a bit actually  And in the open space, you can see the sun on the horizon  No doubt I'm sure, at the end the road will be clearer  -  Just open for us  Gates of Faith, Gates of Understanding  That we have no king ...  *Refrain*  But you  The cause of the causes, the cause of the causes  Terrible fame  And only you are handsome to thank, for all the days and all the nights | We left the box, to a different reality  Redeem the prisoners of power and trapped in the net  Also get the black and white, with all the colors of the rainbow  Mishnah Avot, Chapter 3, a favorite of a man created in B'Tselem  -  Just open for us  Gates of the bride, gates of the beginning  Because we do not have a king ...  *Refrain*  But you  The cause of the causes, the cause of the causes  Terrible fame  And only you are handsome to thank, for all the days and all the nights  But you  The cause of the causes, the cause of the causes  Hear prayers  And only for you  Nice to thank you, for all the days and all the nights |

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| **"If we had no winter, the spring would not be so pleasant: if we did not sometimes taste of adversity, prosperity would not be so welcome." -- Anne Bradstreet (1612-1672) poet, American colonist** |

**Read the Prophets & PRAY WITHOUT CEASING!**

**That is the only hope for this nation!**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Please**  **Remember**  **These**  **Folks**  **In**  **Prayer-**  **Check often**  **They**  **Change!** | **Pray that the world would WAKE UP! Time for a worldwide repentance!**  **ALL US soldiers fighting for our freedom around the world**  **Pray for those in our government to repent of their wicked corrupt ways.**  **Pray for AB family – Wife just diagnosed with brain tumor**  **Pray for AS – post knee replacement – some problems and another one scheduled.**  **Pray for TR – abnormal Mammogram having double biopsy – Mastectomy Scheduled**  **Pray for ZH - having trouble with PTSD**  **Pray for LAC – recurrent cancer getting treatment**  **Pray for KL – troubling spiritual situation.**  **Pray for Ella – emotionally disturbed abused child and brother with ? heart problem**  **Pray for JN – Neuro disease**  **Pray for MS – Job issues and change**  **Pray for BB – Severe West Nile Fever –still not mobile- improving!**  **Pray for RBH – cancer recurrence**  **Pray for Felicia – post op problems – continuing**  **Pray for SH and family – lady’s husband passed away and she is in Nursing home. Not doing well.**  **Pray for MP – Very complex problems**  **Pray that The Holy One will lead you in Your preparations for handling the world problems. – Have YOU made any preparations**? |

**Genesis 27:1And it happened when Isaac *was* old and his eyes were dim for seeing, he called his elder son Esau and said to him, My son! And he said to him, Behold me. 2And he said, Behold! Now, I am old; I do not know the day of my death. 3And now please lift up your weapons, your quiver and your bow, and go to the field and hunt game for me. 4And make for me delicious things, such as I love, and bring to me, and I will eat; so that my soul may bless you before I die. 5And Rebekah heard when Isaac spoke to his son Esau. And Esau went to the field to hunt game, to bring *it* in.**

**Palestinian woman tries to stab soldiers in West Bank, is shot — IDF**

***Fahima al-Hroub, 60, taken to Jerusalem hospital in critical condition after approaching security forces at Gush Etzion Junction with a knife, failing to heed warnings***

*By* [*TOI staff*](https://www.timesofisrael.com/writers/times-of-israel-staff/) *Today, 9:38 am*

[](https://static.timesofisrael.com/www/uploads/2021/05/Untitled-e1619938471437.jpg)

***A Palestinian woman (R) approaching IDF soldiers at the Gush Etzion Junction in the West Bank, in an alleged attempt at a stabbing attack, May 2 2021. (screenshot: Twitter)***

**Israeli security forces shot a Palestinian woman brandishing a knife who tried to carry out a stabbing attack at the Gush Etzion Junction in the West Bank, south of Jerusalem, the Israel Defense Forces said Sund**ay.

**The incident came amid rising tensions over the postponement of Palestinian elections, as well as unrest surrounding the holy mon**th of Ramadan.

**The woman, a 60-year-old resident of the nearby village of Husan, approached a group of soldiers with a knife in her hand and tried to stab the troop**s, the military said.

Palestinian media later identified the 60-year-old woman as Fahima al-Hroub.

**A soldier shot her in the leg, and she was taken to Jerusalem’s Shaare Zedek Medical Cen**ter in critical condition, according to the United Hatzalah medical organization.

There were no casualties among the soldiers, the IDF said.

Footage of the incident published by Hebrew media showed al-Hroub continuing to walk toward the soldiers even as they shouted at her repeatedly to stop and fired warning shots in the air.

כך נראה הבוקר ניסיון פיגוע הדקירה בצומת הגוש. הכוח ביצע נוהל מעצר חשוד, ומשהמחבלת לא הקשיבה, ירו באוויר ואז לעבר רגליה. אף אחד מהחיילים לא נפגע ב"ה. [pic.twitter.com/tj0QyzT1Ec](https://t.co/tj0QyzT1Ec)

— אלעד הוּמינר ???????? العاد هومينر (@EladHumi) [May 2, 2021](https://twitter.com/EladHumi/status/1388745206950989825?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

An IDF statement said: “A terrorist armed with a knife arrived at the Gush Etzion Junction and tried to stab IDF fighters who were at the spot. A fighter initiated rules of engagement protocol that included gunshots toward the terrorist, who was neutralized.”



***The knife used by a Palestinian woman in an alleged stabbing attempt in the Gush Etzion Junction in the West Bank on May 2 2021. (Israel Defense Forces)***

**The Gush Etzion Junction has been the scene of many Palestinian attacks in recent years, most recently on January 3**1, when [Israeli soldiers shot dead a Palestinian man who attempted to stab](https://www.timesofisrael.com/attempted-stabbing-reported-in-west-bank-attacker-shot/) a soldier with a makeshift spear.

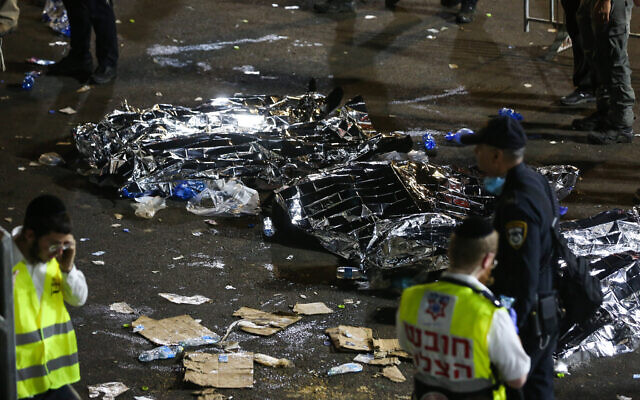
**On Friday, police said a Palestinian man** [**tried to carry out a stabbing attack**](https://www.timesofisrael.com/palestinian-tries-to-stab-cop-soldier-in-w-bank-is-shot-and-hurt-police-say/) **near the Efrat junction, south of Bethlehe**m — several kilometers from the Gush Etzion Junction — and was shot by an officer on the scene and seriously injured.

Tensions in Jerusalem, specifically around its Old City, were high in recent days after police prevented people from congregating outside Damascus Gate during Ramadan, which critics said was an inflammatory move that obstructed a long-held tradition of gathering at the site during the holy month. Authorities later canceled the policy. **MORE -**<https://www.timesofisrael.com/palestinian-woman-attempts-stabbing-in-west-bank-is-shot-idf/>

**With Shabbat over, Mt. Meron victim identification and funerals resume**

***Some seriously injured people see improvement; police said to fear tens of thousands could flock to site to pay tribute to victims, leading to further danger***

*By* [*TOI staff*](https://www.timesofisrael.com/writers/times-of-israel-staff/) *Today, 9:06 pm* **The identification of bodies from the deadly stampede during Lag B’Omer celebrations at Mount Meron resumed Saturday night, with numerous funerals taking place after Shabbat ended**.   
 **Before Shabbat began Friday night, 32 of the 45 bodies were formally identified at the Abu Kabir Forensic Institute in Tel Aviv, and 22 released to relatives for burial**. [Funerals](https://www.timesofisrael.com/families-rush-to-identify-bury-meron-disaster-victims-before-shabbat/) were held for 13 of the victims. The institute halted the identification process in the evening following a ruling from the chief rabbi that it could not continue on the Sabbath.   
 Jewish tradition calls for the dead to be buried as soon as possible. Families whose loved ones were positively identified rushed to do so Friday before the Jewish day of rest began, with hundreds in attendance at many of the services.   
 **As the forensic institute continued its identification process Saturday night, more funerals were getting underway in Jerusalem, Beit Shemesh and Bnei Brak, cities that were home to many of the dead**. Three people were also set to be buried at Mt. Meron, according to Channel 12.   
 **Avigdor Hayut, a Bnei Brak resident who was hurt in the stampede, was to be released from the hospital to attend the funeral of his 13-year-old son Yedidia. Hayut said Yedidia’s funeral had initially been set to take place on Friday** but authorities had accidentally released a different boy’s body for the burial.   
 **Sixteen people remained hospitalized on Saturday after the deadly stampede at Meron, with a number of them in critical or serious condition**. The condition of several people hurt in the crush improved over the weekend. A 52-year-old man who was seriously injured returned to full consciousness at Rambam Medical Center in Haifa. At the same hospital, the condition of an 11-year-old boy who was seriously injured also improved.   
 According to Channel 12, over the weekend some 10,000 ultra-Orthodox worshippers were present at the mountainside holy site where the disaster unfolded, the gravesite of the second-century sage Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai, despite the tragedy. Some 30,000 had been planning to spend the weekend at the holy site — a place of pilgrimage throughout the year — but most went home after the disaster.   
***  
Yedidia Hayut, 13 of Bnei Brak, killed during the stampede in Mt. Meron on April 30, 2021. (Courtesy)***

**The network said police fear that tens of thousands of people could flock to Mount Meron in the coming week to pay tribute to those killed and hurt.** The concern is that this could lead to even more people being hurt, Channel 12 news reported, and police were therefore bolstering their deployment at the site.   
 **Some 300 buses were dispatched to the mountain on Saturday night to take home the thousands of worshipers who remained there**.   
 **With** [**45 dead**](https://www.timesofisrael.com/victims-of-the-mount-meron-tragedy-named/) **and dozens injured, the disaster in the early hours of Friday is believed to be the worst peacetime tragedy in Israel’s history**, surpassing the death toll of 44 from the 2010 Mount Carmel forest fire.   
 The victims [included many children and teens](https://www.timesofisrael.com/victims-of-the-mount-meron-tragedy-named/), including two sets of brothers, as well as young fathers and rabbis. They **included at least nine foreign citizens, among them six Americans, two Canadians** and an Argentinian.  
 More than 100,000 people were attending the annual gathering in the northern Galilee, which includes visits to the gravesite Bar Yochai and massive bonfires on the mountainside. A bonfire lighting ceremony for the Toldot Aharon **Hasidic sect was being held at the pilgrimage area, close to Bar Yochai’s tomb.**  
***Top row (L-R): Menahem Zakbah, Simcha Diskind, Shraga Gestetner, Shimon Matalon; 2nd row (L-R): Yosef David Elhadad, Moshe Mordechai Elhadad, Moshe Natan Neta Englander, Yehoshua Englander; 3rd row (L-R): Haim Seler, Yedidia Hayut, Daniel (Donny) Morris, Nahman Kirshbaum; 4th row (L-R): Abraham Daniel Ambon; Yedidya Fogel, Yisrael Anakvah, Moshe Ben Shalom***  
 **As the dense crowds began to exit, a narrow, sloping walkway on the exit route became immensely congested, people slipped on the metal floor and others fell on them, precipitating a stampede and fatal crushing, exacerbated by a reported police barrier at the bottom of the incline**.  
 As the initial shock and horror over the deadly crush began to subside, focus [started to turn](https://www.timesofisrael.com/after-tragedy-multiple-reports-of-political-pressures-not-to-limit-meron-event/) on Friday toward the **matter of who was to blame** for the packed conditions at the site and the security dangers. Two state comptroller reports highlighting that the Mount Merom site was radically unprepared for the huge numbers attending the annual festivities, in 2008 and 2011, were ignored, as was a 2016 police report that sounded similar warnings. **The site, the second most visited religious site in Israel after the Western Wall, appears to have become a kind of extraterritorial zone**, multiple reports indicated Friday, with separate ultra-Orthodox sects organizing their own events, and their own access arrangements, no overall supervision, and police routinely pressured by government ministers and ultra-Orthodox politicians not to object.  
 A framework drawn up by Health Ministry officials, police and other government officials to restrict this year’s event to 9,000 participants was agreed by all parties, Dr. Sharon Alroy-Preis, the Health Ministry’s head of public medicine, said a day before the event. But it was not put into place, she said, “because no one would take responsibility for enforcement.” The agreement was not brought to the government for approval because of infighting among ministers on other matters, including a major dispute over the appointment of a justice minister. She called this failure “shameful.” Questions will likely be directed at political, civil and law enforcement officials involved in planning, approving and securing the event, amid talk of a potential state commission of inquiry to thoroughly investigate the disaster. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/with-shabbat-over-mt-meron-victim-identification-and-funerals-resume/>  **[A really horrid situation but one that has been just waiting to happen. – rdb]**

**110 years ago, 100 people fell from a balcony at Mt. Meron; 11 were killed**

***Disaster in 1911 underlines the perennial safety concerns, and failures, at the holy site where 45 ultra-Orthodox pilgrims were fatally crushed on Thursday night***

*By* [*TOI staff*](https://www.timesofisrael.com/writers/times-of-israel-staff/) *Today, 8:59 pm*

[](https://static.timesofisrael.com/www/uploads/2021/05/F200525DC20.jpg)

***Illustrative: Leader of the ultra-Orthodox Jewish chassidic dynasty of Toldot Avraham visits Meron, Northern Israel, on May 25, 2020. (David Cohen/FLASH90)***

**The deadly stampede in which 45 ultra-Orthodox pilgrims were crushed to death at Mount Meron on Thursday night was not the first safety-related disaster to occur there during Lag B’Omer celebrations. Exactly 110 years ago, 11 people were killed, and more than 40 were wounded, when a balcony railing collapsed** at the holy site.

On May 15, 1911, Lag B’Omer night, at the gravesite of the second-century sage Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai, at least 100 people fell some seven meters from a balcony after the railing surrounding it collapsed.

**Bar Yochai is reputed to have died on Lag B’Omer. The date, poignant in the era of COVID-19, also commemorates the end of another plague some 2,000 years ago, which saw the deaths of 24,000 followers of Rabbi A**kiva.

**Back in 1911, almost four decades before the establishment of the State of Israel, there were no emergency medical forces present. T**he event was being secured by the Ottoman Safed police unit, the Walla news site noted in a report Saturday on past disasters and alerts at the northern Galilee site, which has become the second most-visited holy place in Israel after the Western Wall.

**The railing on the balcony, along with part of the roof in an area where a large number of worshippers were present, broke apart, sending dozens plunging downwar**d. Nine died in the immediate aftermath, and two more died the next day in the Rothschild Hospital in Safed, now known as the Bnai Zion Medical Center.

Fears of further disaster at the annual celebrations were frequently raised over subsequent decades, along with numerous reports that underlined the sense of relief when tragedy *didn’t* strike.

A 1959 article on that year’s festivities in the “Al HaMishmar” paper opened with the words: “Lag B’Omer passed without disasters. Meron was crowded with tens of thousands in a small area — and no disaster happened.” **MORE -**<https://www.timesofisrael.com/110-years-ago-100-people-fell-from-a-balcony-at-mt-meron-11-were-killed/>

**IDF: Female soldiers were attacked by Haredim when assisting at Meron disaster**

***Military says Home Front Command Search and Rescue forces ‘continued on their mission’ after being accosted while searching for bodies and injured victims after stampede***

*By* [*TOI staff*](https://www.timesofisrael.com/writers/times-of-israel-staff/) *Today, 11:48 pm*

**Soldiers of the Israel Defense Force’s Home Front Command were physically and verbally attacked by ultra-Orthodox Jews while they were assisting in searching for dead and wounded in the stampede during Lag B’Omer celebrations at Mount Meron, the IDF said late Saturda**y.

**“We entered the gravesite to search for injured people and suddenly a commotion began that there are female soldiers in uniforms who are touching the wounded,” a soldier told Army Radio e**arlier.

**“They started to kick and spit on us. The female soldiers were kicked, spit on, and punched from every direction**,” the radio station quoted the soldier saying. Hebrew media reports said five female soldiers were targeted.

**The military confirmed the incident, saying in a statement that “the force continued on its mission and ignored the harmful behavi**or.”

“The IDF views this incident very gravely and condemns any violence — physical or verbal — toward female and male soldiers. The IDF in general and the Home Front Command in particular will continue to extend a hand, to assist and to save any citizen or resident in a time of need,” a spokesperson for the military added.

Defense Minister Benny Gantz said in a statement: “Saving live is a supreme value and I’m proud of all IDF soldiers in treating the wounding in the disaster at Miron and firmly condemn whoever attacked the soldiers there.

“Many citizens owe their lives to those who were called to the event. Just like at Moron, just like during the coronavirus, IDF soldiers will continue to save lives wherever they are needed.”

**On Friday, a spokesperson for the IDF said “Search and Rescue Brigade troops, Northern Command medical teams and a number of IAF helicopters with medical teams and Unit 669 forces are assisting in the mass casualty incid**ent in Mount Meron.”

The disaster began at around 1 a.m. on Friday morning, when huge crowds of ultra-Orthodox pilgrims were making their way along a narrow walkway with a slippery metal flooring that ended in flights of stairs. People began to slip and fall, others fell upon them, and a calamitous stampede ensued.

Forty-five people were crushed to death and more than 150 people hurt, including several in critical condition. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/idf-female-soldiers-were-attacked-by-haredim-when-assisting-at-meron-disaster/> **[There are very stringent rules about the intermingling and touching of opposite sex, HOWEVER, when someone has come to help you perhaps it would be more appropriate to put these rabbinic rules aside and assist in the rescue effort. The treatment of the rescuers is inexcusable. – rdb]**

**After Mt. Meron disaster, police limit ‘Holy Fire’ Easter ceremony in Jerusalem**

***Temporary barriers and increased security noted at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre***

*By* [*Emanuel Fabian*](https://www.timesofisrael.com/writers/emanuel-fabian/) *Today, 5:14 pm*

[](https://static.timesofisrael.com/www/uploads/2021/05/AP21121450082530.jpg)

***Christian pilgrims hold candles as they gather during the ceremony of the Holy Fire at Church of the Holy Sepulchre, where many Christians believe Jesus was crucified, buried and rose from the dead, in the Old City of Jerusalem, Saturday, May 1, 2021. (AP Photo/Ariel Schalit)***

**Police on Saturday were working to limit the number of pilgrims marking the Holy Fire ceremony at Christianity’s holiest site, a day after a deadly crush killed 45 people during Lag B’Omer festivities in northern Israe**l.   
 **Heavy police presence and temporary barriers were seen by the entrance to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem’s Old City on the eve of Orthodox Easter**.   
 Overnight Thursday-Friday at least 45 ultra-Orthodox pilgrims were crushed to death and more than 150 people hurt, including many critically, in a stampede at a mass gathering to celebrate the Lag B’Omer holiday at Mount Meron.   
 **In Jerusalem Saturday, police scuffled with pilgrims making their way to the church as they attempted to control the massive cro**wds.

אחרי התמונות הנינוחות מהבוקר, הלחץ הגיע גם לכנסיית הקבר: צפיפות רבה ודחיפות בעיר העתיקה בירושלים, בדרך לטקס שבת האור[@SuleimanMas1](https://twitter.com/SuleimanMas1?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [pic.twitter.com/frBAIXKjqB](https://t.co/frBAIXKjqB)   
 — כאן חדשות (@kann\_news) [May 1, 2021](https://twitter.com/kann_news/status/1388450250021613568?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

 **There was no immediate statement from the police.** **It was unclear how many participants were present at the Holy Fire ceremony this year. Previous years have seen over 10,000 pilgrims partake in receiving the flame, representing** the resurrection of Jesus, which is passed from candle to candle and will be taken back to Orthodox churches worldwide.   
 Last year, during the onset of the coronavirus pandemic, special arrangements were made to allow the ceremony to take place in a highly limited fashion. Now, as the pandemic ebbs and Israel has largely reopened, the ritual was held with minimal restrictions.   
 The ceremony at the church — built on the site where according to Christian tradition Jesus was crucified, buried, and resurrected — is the holiest event for Orthodox Christianity.   
  
 ***Orthodox Christians take part in the Holy Fire ceremony at Jerusalem’s Holy Sepulchre Church on May 1, 2021. (Photo by Emmanuel DUNAND / AFP)***

**During the annual ceremony dating back at least 1,200 years, top Eastern Orthodox clerics enter the Edicule, the small chamber marking the traditional site o**f Jesus’s tomb.  
 They then emerge to reveal candles said to be miraculously lit with “holy fire” as a message to the faithful from heaven. The details of the flame’s source are a closely guarded secret.  
 Orthodox Christians will celebrate Easter on Sunday.  
 The Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the rest of the Old City lies in East Jerusalem, captured by Israel from its Jordanian occupiers in the Six Day War of 1967 and later annexed by Israel. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/after-mt-meron-disaster-police-limit-holy-fire-easter-ceremony-in-jerusalem/>   
   
**Biden said to meet Mossad chief as Israel lobbies against Iran deal  
*US president reportedly hosted Yossi Cohen and other top security officials in the White House on Friday****By* [*TOI staff*](https://www.timesofisrael.com/writers/times-of-israel-staff/) *2 May 2021, 12:24 am*   
 **US President Joe Biden met with Mossad intelligence agency chief Yossi Cohen at the White House on Friday for talks likely centered on Washington’s intention to reenter the Iran nuclear deal, according to Hebrew-language media reports on Saturda**y.   
 **Reports said Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu briefed Cohen in advance on the main issues to discuss with the American president. The issues weren’t specified, but the reports came after Cohen and other top Israeli security officials held talks with senior American officials this week over the Biden administration’s plans to rejoin the 2015 deal limiting Iran’s nuclear program, which Israel opposes in its current** form.   
 **Israel seeks to convince Washington to negotiate an improved deal to prevent Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons rather than reenter the limping 2015 accord**. Cohen’s visit to Washington also comes weeks after an attack on Iran’s Natanz nuclear site, which Tehran has blamed on Israel.   
 Also taking part in the meeting with Biden on Friday were senior National Security Council officials, the reports said, adding that the sit-down was likely not planned ahead of time. **MORE -** <https://www.timesofisrael.com/biden-said-to-meet-mossad-chief-as-israel-lobbies-against-iran-deal/>

**NOT SO FAST>>>>**

**Biden ‘drops by’ national security adviser’s White House meet with Mossad chief**

***President makes appearance at US-Israeli meeting on Iran to express condolences over Meron tragedy, US says, downplaying earlier report suggesting more formal gathering***

*By* [*Jacob Magid*](https://www.timesofisrael.com/writers/jacob-magid/) *and* [*TOI staff*](https://www.timesofisrael.com/writers/times-of-israel-staff/) *Today, 12:24 am*

**US President Joe Biden “dropped by” a meeting  at the White House between his National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan and Mossad chief Yossi Cohen on Friday, as a delegation of senior Israeli officials continued meetings in Washington on the Iran nuclear** issue.

The apparently unplanned run-in was confirmed by a spokesperson for the US National Security Council who said that Cohen and Sullivan were meeting to “discuss regional security issues.”

**“President Biden dropped by to express condolences for the tragedy at Mount Meron**,” the spokesperson said Saturday, referring to the stampede that killed 45 people.

**The comments came hours after Channel 12 reported that Biden and Cohen held a meeting at the White House to discuss Iran**. The Mossad chief and confidant of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has in the past [been accused by opponents](https://www.timesofisrael.com/liberman-appears-to-accuse-mossad-head-of-leaking-israeli-role-in-iran-attacks/) of the premier of leaking to the press stories regarding his personal involvement in matters of national security.

**Channel 12 had reported that Netanyahu briefed Cohen in** advance on the main issues to discuss with the American president. The issues weren’t specified, but the report came after Cohen and other top Israeli security officials held talks with senior American officials this week over the Biden administration’s plans to rejoin the 2015 deal limiting Iran’s nuclear program, which Israel opposes in its current form. **MORE -**<https://www.timesofisrael.com/biden-said-to-meet-mossad-chief-as-israel-lobbies-against-iran-deal/>

**Fighter jets said to escort El Al plane over Greece after false bomb warning**

***Passengers kept unaware of threat; caller claimed to US authorities there were explosives on aircraft en route from New York to Tel Aviv***

*By* [*TOI staff*](https://www.timesofisrael.com/writers/times-of-israel-staff/) *Today, 4:50 am*

Fighter jets were summoned to accompany an El Al plane over Greece on Friday after a bomb threat was reported mid-flight, according to a television report.

Flight LY02 departed from New York for Tel Aviv on Thursday afternoon. After takeoff, US authorities received a phone call warning there was a bomb on the plane, Channel 12 reported on Saturday.

“I’m telling you there’s a bomb on the plane,” the caller said.

Though the warning was considered dubious, the pilot, Israeli security agencies, and the countries whose airspace was on the flight path were alerted, the report said.

The plane was then accompanied by fighter jets after entering Greek airspace. The jets remained at a distance and passengers remained unaware of the incident, the report said. It did not specify whether the jets were from the Greek military or Israel’s air force.

After landing at Ben-Gurion Airport, “searches were conducted of the plane and security forces were updated on the issue. It emerged that it was a false warning,” an official told Channel 12. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/fighter-jets-said-to-escort-el-al-plane-over-greece-after-false-bomb-warning/>

**Huge blaze reported at Iranian chemical factory near Qom; cause unclear**

***Fire injures at least 2; incident comes amid escalating tensions with Israel, which Tehran has blamed for an earlier blast at Natanz nuclear plant***

*By* [*TOI staff*](https://www.timesofisrael.com/writers/times-of-israel-staff/) *and* [*Agencies*](https://www.timesofisrael.com/writers/agencies/) *Today, 1:50 pm*

[](https://static.timesofisrael.com/www/uploads/2021/05/Screenshot-2021-05-02-at-12.10.59.png)

***Heavy black smoke rises from Movaledan chemical factory in the vicinity of Qom, one of Iran’s prominent religious cities on May 2, 2021. (Screen capture: Twitter)***

**A chemical factory near the central city of Qom caught fire Sunday, Iranian media reported, in a blaze that injured at least two firefighters**.

**Videos showed heavy black smoke rising from Movaledan chemical factory in the vicinity of Qom, one of Iran’s prominent religious cit**ies.

**The cause of the blaze was not immediately known.**

Twenty fire engines and 150 firefighters were dispatched to the site, the semiofficial ISNA news agency quoted Qom fire department spokesman Hamid Karimi as saying.

[#BREAKING](https://twitter.com/hashtag/BREAKING?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)  
May 2—Qom, central [#Iran](https://twitter.com/hashtag/Iran?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)  
Massive blaze erupted at a local industrial complex & reports show a chemical factory was the center of the fire.  
-Several factories were burning  
-A number of firefighters suffered injures; one fire truck engulfed in fire  
-Blaze under control [pic.twitter.com/3YSpEm7DNm](https://t.co/3YSpEm7DNm)

— Heshmat Alavi (@HeshmatAlavi) [May 2, 2021](https://twitter.com/HeshmatAlavi/status/1388723905033121792?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

**Karimi said the firefighters managed to stop the fire from reaching alcohol tanks, although there were several explosions and two fire engines caught** fire.

Two firefighters were injured, with one in critical condition, ISNA reported. Israel’s Channel 12 news said at least six people were injured in total.

May 2—Qom, central [#Iran](https://twitter.com/hashtag/Iran?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)  
 The fire led to explosions at the site that resulted in highly flammable chemical substances spreading to

various areas and even under a fire truck that was then engulfed in the fire.

Authorities are asking for help from other entities. [pic.twitter.com/S2TPfJkLKd](https://t.co/S2TPfJkLKd)

— Heshmat Alavi (@HeshmatAlavi) [May 2, 2021](https://twitter.com/HeshmatAlavi/status/1388727535513571331?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

**While the cause of the incident wasn’t immediately known, it comes against the backdrop of several explosions at Iranian nuclear sites that have been blamed on Israel**.

On April 11, Iran’s Natanz nuclear plant suffered a blast that blew up the main and backup power supply to the underground enrichment facility — an attack that Tehran pinned on Israel.

Israel has neither confirmed nor denied involvement but media reports have since said it was a sabotage operation by the Mossad spy agency. The blast caused damage to various kinds of the 6,000 centrifuges there and set back enrichment for six to nine months, according to Israeli and American reports. **MORE -**<https://www.timesofisrael.com/huge-blaze-reported-at-iranian-chemical-factory-near-qom-cause-unclear/>

**Iran expects sanctions on banks, oil to be lifted based on nuclear talks**

***US National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan said on Friday the talks were in "an unclear place," meaning it was uncertain whether they would lead to an agreement.***

*By REUTERS,* [*TOVAH LAZAROFF*](https://www.jpost.com/author/tovah-lazaroff) *MAY 1, 2021 22:33*

**Iran’s chief nuclear negotiator said that Tehran expects US sanctions on oil, banks and other sectors and on most individuals and institutions to be lifted based on** [**agreements reached so far at talks in Vienna**](https://www.jpost.com/opinion/will-biden-sacrifice-israel-over-iran-analysis-666914)**, Iranian state media reported on Saturda**y.

**Russia and Western European powers, meanwhile, gave contrasting accounts of the task ahead in the talks to bring Iran and the United States fully back into compliance with the 2015 nuclear deal,** as the talks adjourned for six days.

**“Sanctions... on Iran’s energy sector, which include oil and gas, or those on the automotive industry, financial, banking and port sanctions, all should be lifted based on agreements reached so far,” Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi was quoted as saying by Iranian state media**.

**Araqchi did not say under what mechanism sanctions would be lifted, or refer to how Tehran would meet Washington’s demands and return t**o its commitments under the deal.

“We will negotiate until the two sides’ positions come closer and our demands are met,” he said. “If they are met there will be an agreement, if not there will naturally be no agreement.”

**The US State Department had no immediate comment on Araqchi’s rema**rks.

**MORE -** <https://www.jpost.com/breaking-news/iran-nuclear-talks-with-us-will-resume-on-friday-russian-envoy-says-666913>

**India expands faltering vaccine drive as over 400,000 infections recorded in day**

***Hard-hit New Delhi extends lockdown by a week; vaccination opened to all adults, but Indians struggle to schedule appointments amid shortage of shots***

*By* [*Bhuvan Bagga*](https://www.timesofisrael.com/writers/bhuvan-bagga/) *and* [*Glenda Kwek*](https://www.timesofisrael.com/writers/glenda-kwek/) *To*day, 6:44 pm

**NEW DELHI (AFP) — India’s devastating COVID-19 surge further accelerated on Saturday with more than 400,000 new cases in 24 hours, as vaccinations opened to all adults despite shortages of shots**.

The hard-hit capital New Delhi meanwhile extended its shutdown for another week while top US pandemic advisor Anthony Fauci said that India should go into a national lockdown for “a few weeks.” **[Fauci the lockdown guy who kills countries and people with his ignorance. India will be wise if they totally ignore everything he says. – rdb]**

**Two months ago the health minister said India was in the “end game” of the pandemic as it sent millions of vaccines abroad, but now exports have stopped and people are desperate to be inoculat**ed.

A crowd of people formed outside one Delhi hospital on Saturday — one of very few offering shots to those under 45 years old.

“There are so many people that are getting sick… so we just wanted to be here as soon as possible,” one of those waiting, Aadya Mehta, 25, told AFP. **[Order Tons of HCQ and Zpacks and they will do fine. – rdb]**

Until now, only “frontline” workers like medical staff, people over 45 and those with pre-existing illnesses have been given the AstraZeneca or Covaxin shots.

But even this more modest program has stumbled, with some areas running out of shots and others throwing them away because of lack of demand, in part because some people are scared to leave home during this recent surge.

**So far, around 150 million shots have been administered, equating to 11.5 percent of the population** of 1.3 billion people. Just 25 million have had two doses.

***‘Confusion reigns’***

With the expansion of the rollout to all adults, around 600 million more people are now eligible to get vaccinated, but many states said they have insufficient stocks.

Millions of younger people terrified by the current situation and desperate to get inoculated registered on the government’s digital platform.

**But very few of them have been given appointments and only around half a dozen of India’s 28 states began vaccinating people under 45,** and in many cases only a token scale.

“Half my family is positive, so everybody wanted us to get vaccinated,” data scientist Megha Srivastava, 35, told AFP outside the Max clinic, one of three private hospitals in the capital vaccinating younger people. **[If those that are positive aren’t sick and have recovered you are probably safe. – rdb]**

“It won’t completely protect us, but it will ensure that even if we get infected, we’ll recover,” she said.

Further confusion has been created by the government’s decision to ask states and private hospitals to order vaccine supplies on their own. **MORE -**<https://www.timesofisrael.com/india-expands-faltering-vaccine-drive-as-over-400000-infections-recorded-in-day/>

**Russia Fires Supersonic Anti-Ship Cruise Missile in 'Signal to NATO'***By* [*Brendan Cole*](https://www.newsweek.com/authors/brendan-cole) *On 4/30/21 at 12:37 PM EDT* **Russia's Navy has test-fired a supersonic anti-ship cruise missile in the Black Sea in a show of force ahead of** [**NATO**](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/nato) **mili**tary exercises in the region.  
 [**With tensions still simmering**](https://www.newsweek.com/russia-troops-withdraw-ukraine-border-nato-f-16s-baltic-1585646) **following Russia's build-up of troops on its border with Ukraine, the Russian Defense Ministry tweeted on Friday footage of the Moskva guided missile cruiser from its Black Sea Fleet launching the Vulkan missil**e.  
 The **P-1000 Vulkan missile, an improved version of the Soviet-era P-500 Bazalt missile with greater range, was fired via the Moskva warship's Bazalt main missile system**, the Defense Ministry said. It landed around 19 miles away, Naval Post reported.  
 The footage the Defense Ministry tweeted shows the launch from a number of angles and cuts to the crew of the vessel on the bridge.

Ракетный крейсер «Москва» Черноморского флота впервые в новейшей истории выполнил ракетную стрельбу в акватории Чёрного моря главным ракетным комплексом корабля «Базальт» ракетой «Вулкан» [#Минобороны](https://twitter.com/hashtag/%D0%9C%D0%B8%D0%BD%D0%BE%D0%B1%D0%BE%D1%80%D0%BE%D0%BD%D1%8B?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [#ЮВО](https://twitter.com/hashtag/%D0%AE%D0%92%D0%9E?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [#ЧФ](https://twitter.com/hashtag/%D0%A7%D0%A4?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [#Корабли](https://twitter.com/hashtag/%D0%9A%D0%BE%D1%80%D0%B0%D0%B1%D0%BB%D0%B8?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [pic.twitter.com/IDfEh39Cmd](https://t.co/IDfEh39Cmd)  
 — Минобороны России (@mod\_russia) [April 30, 2021](https://twitter.com/mod_russia/status/1388085378175881216?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

**In coverage on the military channel Zvezda, wreckage of a simulated enemy ship is shown and its correspondent said: "These missiles are the reason why our cruiser is called 'aircraft carrier-killer,'" accordin**g to *The Moscow Times*[.](https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2021/04/30/russian-navy-conducts-first-black-sea-supersonic-cruise-missile-test-a73798)  
 This week, the *Moskva*, other warships and military helicopters were involved in live-fire naval combat exercises. It comes as the U.S. Coast Guard vessel, *Hamilton*, a cutter, was moving into the Black Sea to work with NATO allies in the region. The vessel is being tracked by the Russian fleet, Reuters reported.  
 Mathieu Boulègue, research fellow at the Russia, Eurasia program at London's Chatham House think tank, said the launch from the *Moskva* was Russia demonstrating its increase naval presence in the region, which follows recent displays of force in occupied Crimea. **MORE -** <https://www.newsweek.com/russia-black-sea-supersonic-missile-nato-signal-1587859>

**Streets set on fire as police and May Day protesters battle in Berlin (VIDEOS)**

*1 May, 2021 20:29 Axel Schmidt*

***Police officers walk past a fire during a left-wing May Day demonstrations in Berlin, Germany, May 1, 2021 © Reuters /***

**Dozens of separate protests took place in Berlin, drawing demonstrators from across the political spectrum. Police had their hands full, as some of these groups started fires and smashed** cars.

**May Day is an international day of leftist protest, but demonstrations in Berlin on Saturday drew participants of all stripes. Pro- and anti-vaxxers, trade unionists, anti-capitalist radicals, Palestinian activists and techno music fans all took to the streets in around 20 separate protests across the** city. Notably absent were the extreme right, although small right-wing [protests](https://www.bild.de/regional/thueringen/thueringen-aktuell/erfurt-polizei-kesselt-70-hooligans-ein-und-schickt-sie-nach-hause-76254370.bild.html) were held in [other](https://www.bild.de/regional/chemnitz/chemnitz-news/entscheid-des-oberverwaltungsgerichts-demo-von-rechtsextremer-partei-iii-weg-gen-76252134.bild.html) German cities.

A heavy contingent of police kept order throughout the day, periodically arresting protesters for violating face masking rules. By late afternoon, police said that 60 demonstrators were arrested at a protest against the virus restrictions in the Lichtenberg neighborhood. **MORE -** <https://www.rt.com/news/522710-berlin-protests-fire-may-day/>

**Democrats proposing huge financial penalties on American industry**

***Drug price controls and how much they cost consumers***

*By* [*WND News Services*](https://www.wnd.com/author/wndnewsservices/) *Published May 1, 2021 at 1:05pm* ***By Grace-Marie Turner*** *Real Clear Health*

**The debate over expanding government control of our health sector should have ended during the Covid-19 pan**demic:

* Where there have been failures in responding to the crisis, it has been a failure of big government – such as the Center for Disease Control’s arrogant and clumsy insistence on controlling early development of testing that delayed the U.S. response and surely cost lives. Or the failure to protect those most at risk, especially seniors in nursing homes. Or CDC’s decades-long refusal to develop a modern data tracking system.
* Where there have been successes – such as producing and delivering medical supplies and conducting research to develop vaccines at warp speed – it is the private sector that has shown it can deliver.

**But House Democrats on Thursday introduced a bill that would impose huge financial penalties on the pharmaceutical industry, drying up resources needed for the very research that is saving lives tod**ay.

**H.R. 3 would impose price controls on U.S. drug sales based upon prices in certain European countrie**s – countries that have decimated their pharmaceutical research capacity and that deny their citizens access to the newest, life-saving drugs. U.S. patients have access to 90% of the newest drugs; in France, patients can access fewer than half and only 14% in Spain and Greece, for example.

**The proposed Biden plan would set an "upper price limit" for cutting-edge medicines based on prices set by foreign governments. Washington would "negotiate" prices with U.S. drug** companies and determine the "fair price" based upon these international reference prices.

If companies refuse, they would face a 95% excise tax on revenues from sales of the drug in the previous year.  This is confiscatory and punitive.

The result for Americans would be devastating. More than 100 fewer new drugs would be produced over the next decade.

In fairness, international reference pricing is based upon a plan offered by the Trump administration, which conservatives like us also vociferously opposed, with Galen Senior Fellow [Doug Badger's paper](https://galen.org/assets/Badger-Report-March-2019.pdf) explaining the consequences in powerful detail.

**Drug prices continue to be a huge political issue,** and Democrats are pushing this bad idea because the Congressional Budget Office has said it also [would reduce drug spending](https://www.cbo.gov/system/files/2019-12/hr3_complete.pdf) for Medicare by $345 billion.  They want to spend those savings on other new programs. But seniors need to understand the consequences.  Now.

Badger wrote, in ["Pharmaceutical Innovation is Winning the War on COVID-19.  Biden Shouldn't Disarm,"](https://www.chicagotribune.com/opinion/commentary/ct-opinion-covid-vaccine-pharmaceuticals-biden-20210417-zhhz7nnlajdffedilgk7fzk7fu-story.html) that, December 2019, "the Council of Economic Advisors estimated this would reduce the pharmaceutical industry's revenue by anywhere from $500 billion to $1 trillion over the next decade, resulting in a massive reduction in research budgets and as many as 100 fewer products over that period," Badger writes.

"According to the CEA, Americans would be less healthy and less economically productive as a result…imposing a cost to society 10 to 30 times the federal savings."

Imagine the cost of years of delay in producing vaccines and countless lives that would be lost without a vibrant, research-based pharmaceutical industry ready to respond.  "Oh, government researchers would fill the gap," some say.  Absolutely not so.  The vaccines going into hundreds of millions of arms over the last several months are based upon decades of thankless research in pharmaceutical company labs. "The proposed price controls would choke off tens of billions of dollars of capital investments in new treatments, vaccines, and cures," Badger writes.

**Republicans are offering** an alternative, the "[Lower Costs, More Cures Act](https://republicans-energycommerce.house.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Section-by-Section-HR-19.pdf)."

Highlights:

* It would cap out-of-pocket spending for seniors in Medicare Part D at no more than $3,100 a year
* Allow Part D cost sharing to be paid over time
* Allow HSAs to cover drugs before the deductible
* Increase price transparency that now allows insider companies to draw down more than $48 billion throughout the supply chain while producing no treatments or cures
* Require 340B discounts to be paid directly to consumers

[Innovation and a healthy biopharmaceutical sector](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/58bf2243d482e99321a69178/t/5fd3e5e1f874625c619b974e/1607722468667/FIN+Prescriptions+for+Savings.pdf) allowed the U.S. to lead in producing vaccines in an astonishingly short time.  In the next pandemic, will we wonder why it takes years rather than months for a treatment, vaccine, or cure?  Whether H.R. 3 passes will give us the answer.

Seniors with chronic conditions, those with rare diseases, and others seeking better treatments will be hit the hardest. A new study by the [Council of State Bioscience Associations and Vital Transformations](https://vitaltransformation.com/2021/03/5984/) says the Biden plan would reduce by more than 90% the number of medicines developed by small and emerging biotech companies, resulting in 61 fewer medicines over 10 years. These small companies—think Moderna—are the cradle of innovation.

H.R. 3 likely will pass the House again, as it did in the last Congress.  All eyes will then be on the 50-50 Senate to see if reason or politics will prevail.

*Grace-Marie Turner is president of the Galen Institute that develops health policy solutions that support innovation and doctor-patient control over health care decisions.* <https://www.wnd.com/2021/05/democrats-proposing-huge-financial-penalties-american-industry/> **[When you look at the millions upon millions that Big Pharm spends just on TV network advertising and then add the millions upon millions the spend on personnel and perks for direct advertising to healthcare professionals and then throw in the dinners and the lunches and the sponsored conferences to promote their ‘products’, I am sorry but they could be doing a lot of pharm research with those funds. People receiving the TV ads can’t prescribe the medicines anyway and most doctors should be getting their information from NON BIASED medical information sources. Then you can also look at the overhead expenses for the millions upon millions for those in the administration of the companies and you have covered your research costs. I cry no tears for Big pharm and hope that they get some major cuts. Perhaps they need to boost their prices to the countries that get the drugs for pennies on the dollar ? – rdb]**

**Kerry owned 'emitter of greenhouse gases' before taking White House job**

***Reportedly sold off stock in multiple oil companies to be climate czar***

*By* [*WND News Services*](https://www.wnd.com/author/wndnewsservices/) *Published April 30, 2021 at 7:59pm* ***By Thomas Catenacci*** *Daily Caller News Foundation*

**Special Presidential Envoy for Climate John Kerry owned shares of multiple oil and gas corporations prior to joining the White House, ethics filings show.** [**John Kerry**](https://dailycaller.com/2021/04/28/group-republicans-call-investigation-john-kerry-iran-congress/) **previously invested in Cabot Oil & Gas Corporation, Duke Energy, Cimarex, Dominion Energy, Xcel Energy, Exelon Corporation, Valero Energy Corporation and WEC Energy Group, according to Office of Government Ethics** [**filings**](https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/20694598-john-kerry-financial-disclosure) **obtained by** [**Axios**](https://www.axios.com/john-kerry-financial-disclosure-d26d25e7-5201-477c-a166-ff1eb97aa4e4.html)**. Kerry reportedly** [**sold**](https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/20694599-kerry-stock-sales) **off his entire stock portfolio, which was worth between $4.2 and $15 million, prior to joining President Joe Biden’s administrati**on.

The **Texas-based Valero Energy Corporation was recently ranked the fifth-worst emitter of greenhouse gasses despite having just 14 facilities, the San Antonio Current** [reported](https://www.sacurrent.com/the-daily/archives/2020/12/21/san-antonios-valero-energy-is-the-oil-industrys-fifth-largest-emitter-of-greenhouse-gases) in December. The company was ordered to pay $2.85 million in a civil penalty in October for Clean Air Act violations, according to the [Environmental Protection Agency](https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/us-settles-valero-over-alleged-gasoline-and-diesel-fuel-violations).  
 **Cabot Oil & Gas Corporation, a billion-dollar fracking and natural gas company, has been** [**cited**](https://www.thetimes-tribune.com/news/cited-for-chemical-spills-cabot-oil-reports-another/article_40d299e2-6bd0-56f3-8b7f-cbde2289368c.html) **for** [**environmental damages**](https://www.upstreamonline.com/online/cabot-slapped-with-violation/1-1-1116493)**. In 2014, a Pennsylvania court granted the co**mpany’s request to place a restraining order against an anti-fracking activist, The Guardian [reported](https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2014/jan/29/vera-scroggins-fracking-activist-pennsylvania).  
 Kerry has [railed against fossil fuel companies](https://dailycaller.com/2021/04/22/john-kerry-remove-carbon-atmosphere-leaders-summit-climate-change/) since Biden appointed him to spearhead the federal government’s climate change response. He has even warned oil and gas companies not to be on “the wrong side of this battle,” urging them to divest from current projects and invest in clean energy, CNN [reported](https://www.cnn.com/2021/03/02/investing/john-kerry-oil-climate/index.html). **[I guess those companies are ok when he can rake in a bundle from them but when he can’t have a part of them they are bad????? Hypocrite. – rdb]**  
 “They ought to be figuring out how do we become not an oil-and-gas company, but how do we become an energy company,” Kerry said during his remarks at an energy conference in March, according to CNN.

The filings also showed Kerry, who served as secretary of state under former President Barack Obama, was paid $5 million by Bank of America to lead its global advisory council and $382,400 by Deutsche Bank, Waste Management and Cornell University in speaking fees. The Rise Fund, a firm that invests in renewable energy stocks, paid Kerry $125,000 in consulting fees.  
 “The State Department’s Ethics Office reviewed Special Presidential Envoy Kerry’s assets and investments upon his appointment to identify holdings that could pose a significant risk of a conflict of interest,” a State Department spokesperson said in a statement, according to Axios. “Special Presidential Envoy Kerry agreed to divest the assets identified by the Ethics Office and has done so.” <https://www.wnd.com/2021/04/kerry-owned-emitter-greenhouse-gases-taking-white-house-job/> **[The man should be in the slammer. – rdb]**

**Alan Dershowitz to Newsmax TV: Giuliani Raid 'Unconstitutional'**

*(Newsmax TV's "Saturday Report") By Eric Mack    |   Saturday, 01 May 2021 11:28 AM*

**The FBI raid this week of former President Donald Trump's lawyer Rudy Giuliani violated the "spirit and the letter of the Constitution," because it permitted prosecutors to read privileged information without permission, according to legal expert Alan Dershowitz** on [Newsmax TV.](https://newsmaxtv.com)

**"This was just a misuse of the search and seizure power," Dershowitz tol**d "[Saturday Report.](https://newsmaxtv.com/Shows/Saturday-Report)" "Initially it was turned down; now it was approved, both by a judge and by the attorney general of the United States, so it wasn't lawless action, **but I believe that they acted inconsistently with both the spirit and the letter of the Constitution and that there should be remedies for** it.

"It just shouldn't be done this way," Dershowitz added to host Carl Higbie. "It should be done through subpoena, and that is the constitutional route to getting evidence."

**The only reason to raid Giuliani's privileged electronics is out of fear he would destroy evidence, but Dershowitz added that burden of proof falls short in this ca**se.

"To conduct a search warrant is to imply that Rudy Giuliani and the other lawyers who are subject to the search warrant would destroy evidence," Dershowitz said. "Now, Giuliani knew they were after the cell phones and the computers for months and months and months, and he didn't destroy anything, so what's the basis for the search warrant rather than the subpoena?

**"The 4th Amendment demands a subpoena in these situations, not a search warrant**. What they did in this case was unconstitutional."

Reading the privileged information is damaging enough to Giuliani or any of his clients, because of "tainting" prosecutors who tend to privately share information with each other.

"What the government does is they seize it all, and then they give it to some prosecutors: They call them the taint team," Dershowitz said. "Those prosecutors read all the privileged information and they decide what to turn over to the prosecution team. **MORE -** <https://www.newsmax.com/newsmax-tv/alan-dershowitz-attorney-client-privilege/2021/05/01/id/1019749/> **[This again is the rogue FBI going after political enemies. They need to be broken into bits. – rdb]**

**He hurt our Constitution, our country and our party’: Mitt Romney booed at Utah GOP convention**

*1 May, 2021 20:58*

**Mitt Romney made headlines in recent years as one of former President Donald Trump’s most vocal Republican critics. Now though, he’s being censured by his own party and booed off stage in his home st**ate.   
 An opponent of Trump’s **since 2016, Sen. Romney (R-Utah) rarely missed a chance to publicly disagree with the president, whether by marching with Black Lives Matter protesters** last year or by crossing party lines twice to vote for Trump’s impeachment.  
 Though Trump is out of office, he remains Republican voters’ [first choice](https://www.rt.com/usa/515757-trump-tops-primary-chart-2024/) for the presidential nomination in 2024, and Romney is paying a price for his refusal to commit to Team Trump.  
 **Republican delegates gathered in West Valley City in Utah on Saturday, to strategize, choose party leaders, and to vote on censuring Romney for his impeachment votes. Before the vote, Romney took to the stage to try and win over the crowd. However, he was treated to a chorus of boos from the second he walked o**ut.

.[@SenatorRomney](https://twitter.com/SenatorRomney?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) is getting boo’d loudly at the [@UtahGOP](https://twitter.com/UtahGOP?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) convention. [@fox13](https://twitter.com/fox13?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)[#utpol](https://twitter.com/hashtag/utpol?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)[#utgop](https://twitter.com/hashtag/utgop?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)[pic.twitter.com/4vMwVnh6YI](https://t.co/4vMwVnh6YI)  
 — Ben Winslow (@BenWinslow) [May 1, 2021](https://twitter.com/BenWinslow/status/1388556507558473734?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Romney thanked the crowd regardless, and Utah GOP Chairman Derek Brown intervened to calm the angry delegates down. As the heckling continued, Romney earned some cheers for bashing the Biden administration, finishing his speech with a plea for *“strength and unity”* before leaving the building.  
 **Voting is still ongoing at the time of writing, but the sponsor of the censure resolution, Don Guymon, told** [**KUTV**](https://kutv.com/news/local/sponsor-of-romney-censure-predicts-it-passes-at-utah-gop-convention) **on Friday that he predicts it will** pass.

*“From my perspective there’s a lot of anger,"* Guymon, a delegate and GOP activist, said. *“Mitt Romney hurt our US Constitution, our country and our party.”* <https://www.rt.com/usa/522711-mitt-romney-booed-utah/> **[There should be a host of other similar episodes in many state GOP meeting, like Wyoming, Alaska, Maine and a number of others. It is time for the GOP to return to the Constitutional perspective that it should have. RINOs need to go and go fast. There needs to be a contingent of true conservatives coming up to replace them, Assuming there is ever a fair election again. – rdb]**

**5 white Midwest farmers sue over loan forgiveness only for minorities**

***Going to court over program that discriminates based on race***

*By* [*WND News Services*](https://www.wnd.com/author/wndnewsservices/) *Published May 1, 2021 at 7:44pm* ***By M.D. Kittle****The Daily Signal*

**MADISON, Wis.—Christopher Baird owns a dairy farm near Ferryville in southwest Wisconsin, not far from the Mississippi River. He milks about 50 cows and farms approximately 80 acres of pas**ture.

**Like a lot of farmers, Baird has direct loans through the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Farm Service A**gency.

**But the dairy farmer isn’t entitled to a new FSA loan-forgiveness program provided as part of COVID-19 relief in the $2 trillion American Rescue Plan Act, legislation touted Wednesday night by President Joe Biden** in his [address to Congress](https://www.dailysignal.com/2021/04/28/heritage-scholars-sound-off-on-bidens-address-to-congress/).

**Baird is white. He joined four other white farmers Thursday in suing federal officials over being le**ft out.

**Only "socially disadvantaged" farmers may apply for some of the $4 billion in loan-forgiveness funds, which include direct payments to farmers of up to 20% of the value of the loan. Specifically, the law says those eligible must be "Black/African American, American Indian or Alaskan native, Hispanic or Latino, or Asian American or Paci**fic Islander."

**"There is a case for loan forgiveness for individuals," Baird said, "but we shouldn’t be looking at the color of someone’s skin and saying, 'This person needs more help or less help based on the color of their skin**.' That’s just wrong."

Baird is among five white farmers from Wisconsin, Minnesota, Ohio, and South Dakota who are suing Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack and FSA Administrator Zach Ducheneaux, alleging racial discrimination and violation of their right to equal protection under the Constitution.

The other Wisconsin farmer who sued, Adam Faust, said the federal government shouldn't provide taxpayer money "just based on race."

**Baird, Faust, and the three other farmers filed the** [**lawsuit**](https://protect-us.mimecast.com/s/wG-pC5y1GkH6Mn9QSzprkH?domain=will-law.org) **Thursday in the U.S. District Court in Wisconsin's Eastern Distric**t.

**The farmers' lawyer, the Wisconsin Institute for Law & Liberty, seeks a temporary injunction preventing the Biden administration from applying racial classifications in determining eligibility for loan modificatio**ns and payments.

The Milwaukee-based law firm ultimately seeks a declaratory judgment holding what other courts have held: that such racial classifications in determining federal benefits are unconstitutional.

**The Wisconsin Institute for Law & Liberty "is committed to ensuring that the current threats to the bedrock principle of equality under the law**, something that many generations have worked tirelessly to achieve, are challenged and fought," said Rick Esenberg, president and general counsel for the law firm.

**The Agriculture Department is reviewing the complaint and working with the Justice Department, a spokesman told Empower Wisconsin, but USDA has no intention of halting the targeted loan-forgiveness progra**m.

"During this review, we will continue to implement the debt relief to qualified socially disadvantaged borrowers under the American Rescue Plan Act," the spokesman said.

FSA officials did not reply to a request for comment.

**The controversial provision in the American Rescue Plan Act has raised similar concerns of discrimination nationwide. Proponents**, however, defend the relief package for minority groups as long overdue.

**Vilsack and Ducheneaux have stated publicly that the goal of the program is ending "systemic racism"** that has "plague[d] the programs at USDA, especially the Farm Loan Program." **[Systemic Racism is lie from the left and a bunch of socialist oriented garbage. – rdb]**

Vilsack has said that the legislation "provides funding to address longstanding racial equity issues with the department and across agriculture."

Such broad goals do not override the constitutional ban on discrimination by race, the farmers' complaint states. It says the U.S. Supreme Court has "rejected the interest in remedying societal discrimination because it had no logical stopping point."

**In short, the complaint says, the way "to stop discrimination on the basis of race is to stop discriminating on the basis of rac**e."

The farmers suing the USDA argue that a program that excludes them is just more discrimination. <https://www.wnd.com/2021/05/5-white-midwest-farmers-sue-loan-forgiveness-minorities/> **[Good for these guys. The socialist leftist have been playing the race card for way too long. The likes of Jackson and Sharpton and Waters and their ilk keep screaming but the problem is with them not the American people. They are the antithesis of the ideology of MLK. The leftists have been pushing and agitating for racial separation for years and they have only made things worse. They want a disempowered, victim oriented black and Hispanic community so they will be dependent on government and it will supposedly give them more power. If you aren’t a fan of Candace Owens you need to read her reports because she came from poverty but didn’t let it hinder her ability to succeed. Likewise for Star Parker and Larry Elder. The major problem in today’s society is the destruction of the nuclear family which is occurring in all races, BUT has a longer history of problems in the black community when they were enticed to ‘go on the dole’ with Johnson’s form of enslavement. The leftists have a very long history of racism and if there is substantial racism in the USA it is mostly in the leftist socialist group. – rdb]**

**Already, 61% of green 'planetary collapse' forecasts have failed**

***'Apocalypse is always a shade over 20 years away'***

*By* [*WND News Services*](https://www.wnd.com/author/wndnewsservices/) *Published May 1, 2021 at 7:16pm* ***By Rupert Darwall****Real Clear Energy*

**A puzzle of contemporary society is the broad acceptance by young people – Millennials and Generation Z – of their lot. True, they haven’t been conscripted to fight an inglorious war as the early Baby Boomers were in Vietnam. But in many other respects, they have strong grounds for feeling shortchanged. Economies in the developed world haven’t boomed, as they did in the decades immediately after the Second World War. The expansion that started in the 1980s sputtered after the dotcom bust at the turn of the century**. The economy glowed only thanks to a central bank-stoked housing boom that led to the economic equivalent of a cardiac arrest in the 2007-08 financial crisis.

**“The one experience Millennial Americans all share is that our early adult years have been dominated by an economy that has failed us over and over again,” writes Joseph Sternbe**rg in *The Theft of a Decade: How the Baby Boomers Stole the Millennials’ Economic Future*. The jobs market has been hollowed out as routine jobs are automated. Research shows that it pays to be old – the earnings gap between older and younger male workers widened from 11% in 1970 to an astonishing 41% in 2011. Declining rates of homeownership put the primary vehicle of wealth accumulation increasingly beyond reach of Generation Rent, burdened with $1.4 trillion of student debt. **Earlier generations experienced recessions, but none since the Great Depression matches the Great Recession, notes Sternberg.** “The economic recoveries weren’t as slow. The underlying transformation in the labor market wasn’t as dramatic. And the previous generations weren’t so indebted, so house-poor, so haunted by the prospect of substantial tax bills to come.”

**Add the pandemic to that list. For Gen Z, it is even more of a disaster. Most Millennials – the youngest now in their mid-twenties – had some chance to get onto what remains of the jobs ladder**. Students are finding their college years turned into a virtual experience of remote learning and social isolation, their introduction to adulthood suspended indefinitely. Has any generation been treated so shabbily by its elders? Covid-19’s steep age gradient means that young people are least at risk from serious illness but are punished most by lockdowns and social distancing. There is low-level, covert non-compliance, but signs of a youth rebellion are few. Mask mandates are broadly obeyed. The justification for lockdowns is unchallenged except by a handful of crotchety old Boomers. Street protests in the wake of the police killing of George Floyd had the imprimatur of public-health officials and the approval of cultural and political elites, which perhaps offers a clue. **MUCH MORE -**<https://www.wnd.com/2021/05/already-61-green-planetary-collapse-forecasts-failed/>

**Commentary:  
Biden Administration Needs to Halt Talks with Iran's Mullahs  
*by*** [***Majid Rafizadeh***](https://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/author/Majid+Rafizadeh) ***May 1, 2021 at 5:00 am***Amid talks -- between the Iranian regime and France, the United Kingdom, China, Russia, plus Germany as well as indirect talks between the US and Iran -- the ruling mullahs of Iran [continue](https://apnews.com/article/iran-uranium-enrichment-60-percent-ed89e322595004fddc65fd4e31c1131b) to ratchet up their threats and nuclear defiance.  
 Last week, the head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran, Ali Akbar Salehi, [announced](https://apnews.com/article/iran-uranium-enrichment-60-percent-ed89e322595004fddc65fd4e31c1131b) that Iran would be enriching uranium to 60 percent -- a level of enrichment that has no civilian purpose. Now the Iranian regime has [begun](https://apnews.com/article/iran-uranium-enrichment-60-percent-ed89e322595004fddc65fd4e31c1131b) enriching uranium to its highest level ever, 60 percent, close to weapons-grade level.  
 Iranian leaders also began boasting about this development. Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf, the speaker of the Iranian parliament [wrote](https://apnews.com/article/iran-uranium-enrichment-60-percent-ed89e322595004fddc65fd4e31c1131b):  
 "The young and God-believing Iranian scientists managed to achieve a 60% enriched uranium product... I congratulate the brave nation of Islamic Iran on this success. The Iranian nation's willpower is miraculous and can defuse any conspiracy."  
 The Iranian regime also announced that it will be activating more centrifuges at the Natanz nuclear site. Abbas Araqchi, Iran's chief negotiator at the talks, said that Iran would [activate](https://www.timesofisrael.com/iran-says-it-will-install-1000-centrifuges-at-nuclear-plant-in-next-3-months/) 1,000 advanced centrifuge machines.  
 Now, instead of halting talks amid Iran's defiance, the Biden administration appears [happy](https://www.israelhayom.com/2021/04/18/iran-names-suspect-in-natanz-attack-says-he-fled-country/) that Iran is engaged in discussions. President Joe Biden [told](https://www.israelhayom.com/2021/04/18/iran-names-suspect-in-natanz-attack-says-he-fled-country/) reporters in Washington during a joint news conference with Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga:  
 "We are, though, nonetheless pleased that Iran has continued to agree to engage in discussions -- indirect discussions -- with us and with our partners on how we move forward and what is needed to allow us to move back into the [nuclear deal]...".  
 The Biden administration seems more determined than ever, however, to "reward" Iran's dangerous and predatory regime by returning to a deal that has [sunset clauses](https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2017/09/22/iran-nuclear-deal-bomb-215636), as well as an expiration date after which the mullahs can enrich uranium, spin centrifuges at any level they desire, and make as many nuclear weapons as they like.  
 A return to the 2025 deal would [help](https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/JCPOA-at-a-glance) to lift all major sanctions against Iran -- sanctions it took years to put in place. The deal would enable Iran's military sites to be [exempt](https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/JCPOA-at-a-glance) from inspection by the International Atomic Energy Agency. The deal would allow Iran to rejoin the global financial system with full legitimacy, so that billions of dollars could begin flowing into the treasury of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and its expanding militias across the Middle East.  
 The deal also disregards that the Financial Action Task Force's (FATF) has [placed](http://www.fatf-gafi.org/publications/high-risk-and-other-monitored-jurisdictions/documents/call-for-action-february-2020.html) the Iranian regime on the terrorism financing blacklist. The FATF pointed out in its [report](http://www.fatf-gafi.org/publications/high-risk-and-other-monitored-jurisdictions/documents/call-for-action-february-2020.html):  
 "[G]iven Iran's failure to enact the Palermo and Terrorist Financing Conventions in line with the FATF Standards, the FATF fully lifts the suspension of counter-measures and calls on its members and urges all jurisdictions to apply effective counter-measures..."  
 Ever since President Biden declared that he wanted to [resurrect the nuclear deal](https://www.thegatewaypundit.com/2021/04/iran-ignores-us-sanctions-send-tankers-3-million-barrels-crude-oil-syria/) -- which, incidentally, Iran [never signed](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3334249/State-Department-says-Iran-NEVER-SIGNED-nuclear-deal-s-not-legally-binding-tells-Congress-butt-Obama-s-political-commitments.html) -- the Iranian regime has been ratcheting up its threats and nuclear defiance in order to get more "rewards" -- evidently for non-compliance -- from the Biden administration.  
 First, Iran began increasing uranium enrichment to 20% in January 2021. Then on January 4, in a move that apparently alarmed the US State Department, Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) [seized](https://www.npr.org/2021/01/04/953314512/iran-seizes-south-korean-flagged-ship-as-tensions-mount-with-u-s) a South Korean-flagged ship carrying thousands of tons of ethanol in the Persian Gulf, according to Fars News. A US State Department spokesperson [noted](https://www.reuters.com/article/us-iran-tanker-usa/u-s-calls-for-iran-to-release-south-korean-flagged-tanker-idUSKBN2992AJ) at the time:  
 "The (Iranian) regime continues to threaten navigational rights and freedoms in the Persian Gulf as part of a clear attempt to extort the international community into relieving the pressure of sanctions. We join the Republic of Korea's call for Iran to immediately release the tanker."  
 Later, on January 9, the Iranian parliament [passed](https://news.yahoo.com/iran-expel-u-n-nuclear-120836818.html) a law requiring the government to expel the International Atomic Energy Agency's nuclear inspectors.  
 This week, according to the US Navy, "Revolutionary Guard fast-boats [swarmed](https://www.wsj.com/articles/iranian-ships-swarmed-u-s-coast-guard-vessels-in-persian-gulf-navy-says-11619461317) U.S. Coast Guard vessels in [the] Persian Gulf."  
 Last September, Iran's Foreign Minister Javad Zarif [told](https://www.thenationalnews.com/world/iran-s-zarif-demands-us-compensation-before-any-new-talks-1.1081226) a forum organized by New York's Council on Foreign Relations that Iran wants more money. "A sign of good faith is not to try to renegotiate what has already been negotiated," he said, [adding](https://www.thenationalnews.com/world/iran-s-zarif-demands-us-compensation-before-any-new-talks-1.1081226) in the same speech that the US must "compensate us for our losses." Iran's top judicial body had already [demanded](https://www.foxbusiness.com/money/iran-us-130-billion-trump-administration) that the US pay $130 billion in "damages." And now the regime is enriching uranium at its highest level ever.  
 The Biden administration has reportedly [agreed](https://www.israelhayom.com/2021/04/18/israeli-officials-decry-complete-american-capitulation-in-nuclear-talks-with-iran/) in principle to the Iranian regime's demand for compensation over the "economic damage".  
 Unnamed Israeli diplomats unofficially [expressed](https://www.israelhayom.com/2021/04/18/israeli-officials-decry-complete-american-capitulation-in-nuclear-talks-with-iran/) disappointment over the nuclear negotiations and characterized the talks as "[complete American capitulation](https://www.israelhayom.com/2021/04/18/israeli-officials-decry-complete-american-capitulation-in-nuclear-talks-with-iran/)" to Iran's leaders. Israeli leaders are apparently seriously [concerned](https://www.ynetnews.com/article/HkufdgcLd) that the Biden administration wants to revive the Iran nuclear deal "at all costs".  
 Finally, amid the talks to revive the "nuclear deal," Iran's leaders [signed](https://www.jihadwatch.org/2021/04/iran-and-russia-engage-in-high-level-talks-discuss-combating-us-interventions-in-syria-afghanistan-and-yemen) a 25-year strategic deal with China. In addition, the Iranian authorities are also [engaged](https://www.jihadwatch.org/2021/04/iran-and-russia-engage-in-high-level-talks-discuss-combating-us-interventions-in-syria-afghanistan-and-yemen) in high-level talks with Russia, "in order to help establish stability and combat American interventions."  
 The Biden administration's silence in the wake of Iran's increasing threats and nuclear defiance will only embolden and empower this predatory regime. The Iranian regime clearly believes it can get away with its violations. Instead of "rewarding" this dangerous Islamist regime, the Biden administration needs to take a firm stance and hold the ruling mullahs accountable.

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**And then…**

**No Tears, Only Cheers by The People for Demise of Communists**

*By* [*Andrew Wallace*](https://newswithviews.com/author/andrew/)*|May 1st, 2021* The purpose of this article is to report the real feelings of The People toward the Communist rulers who usurped our Constitutional Republic and are rapidly destroying our country. The ruling class minions consist of Communist media, academia, large corporations, banks, elected officials, government bureaucrats, actors, judges, military flag officers, stock market manipulators,  et a l. All of these traitors are controlled by the super rich. Most of their supporters live in the very undesirable inner city plantations subject to fake schools and fake media with little upward mobility. Lenin referred to these supporters of Communism as USEFUL IDIOTS and I agree with him. Useful idiots are not Communists and will never share in the wealth stolen by the Communists. Useful idiots are not stupid, but they are as ignorant of the truth as a box of rocks. Many useful idiots lacking morals and ethics are the thugs used to burn and loot Democrat cities to promote unrest.  
 I am not advocating anything in this article.  I am only trying to report the very strong feelings of “The People” who are not in the Communist cabal or are useful idiots. Based upon the last election we know that a majority of the people oppose this usurped faux government. Power by insurrection has no Constitutional authority to govern. Most importantly, patriots know this fact which undermines any claim of legitimacy by the Communists.  
 I can honestly say that every American I know hates Communism and the people who have usurped our Republic. Hate may be too mild a word to use; our people really detest and hold them in contempt. Our people will shed no tears over their demise, nor will they do anything to defend them.  
 Most people know that firearms are the only thing that stands between us and slavery. The rest of the world is a stark example of this assertion.  
 Wearing a mask is a sign of submission, cowardice and ignorance.  Ordinary masks are no protection from the virus, they only prevent you from sneezing or coughing on others. Mask wearing also has a negative effect on your health.  
 Many people feel that the Communists are doing everything possible to force people to revolt so they can crush the people. If this is their objective they are in for real trouble. The people are now on the verge of revolt and it will not take much to start it. Traitors must realize that the people know from experience and history that guerilla warfare is the proper course of action if required. President George Washington fought a superior force this way. History is replete with examples demonstrating how it is almost impossible to defeat a determined guerilla force.  
 I would estimate that at a minimum, more than 50% of the people would support a conflict with the illegitimate Communist rulers. I don’t know anyone personally who supports the Communist cabal. Based on history you could expect only 3-5% to take an active part in any conflict. This translates into millions more patriots than needed, which is also many times larger than the military. It is impossible for the Communists to prevail against the will and power of the people ,except for this short period.  
 The cabal of the super rich has 100% of the power, control everything and own 85% of the money. When they took away the Constitutional vote, they left the people with no recourse. In any conflict the people can only lose their chains, but the cabal can lose real money.  
 As I have said these are only my observations, but I feel they are correct because I can see people get more enraged by the day. I can only hope that the Communists abandon their plan to destroy our Constitutional Republic before it is too late. Any conflict would result in starvation, destruction and poverty. In fact you should be wary because almost overnight any limited guerilla activity could tank the economy, currency and markets instantly.  
 The Covid Virus was a deliberate  Chinese attack on the world in coordination with our super rich cabal of would be Communist dictators. Communist Democrats used the virus to destroy a presidency, our economy, deny Constitutional rights, burn our cities and usurp our Republic. Our Communist Democrats and their superiors among the super rich, et al. earned their label as dirty rotten traitors.  
 This paper is nothing if not an exercise of my Constitutional right to freedom of speech. I have not advocated the violent overthrow of the Constitutional government, nor could I because it no longer exists. <https://newswithviews.com/no-tears-only-cheers-by-the-people-for-demise-of-communists/>

**And then…**  
**An Unaware and Compliant Citizenry, Part 2***By* [*Dr. Dennis Cuddy*](https://newswithviews.com/author/dennis/)*|May 1st, 2021* In Fabian Socialist Bertrand Russell’s THE IMPACT OF SCIENCE ON SOCIETY (1953), he wrote that “it is to be expected that advances in physiology and psychology will give governments much more control over individual mentality than they now have even in totalitarian countries. Ficte laid it down that education should aim at destroying free will, so that, after pupils have left school, they shall be incapable, throughout the rest of their lives, of thinking or acting otherwise than their school masters would have wished….Diet, injections, and injunctions will combine, from a very early age, to produce the sort of character and the sort of beliefs that the authorities consider desirable, and any serious criticism of the powers that be will become psychologically impossible.” “Injections?” Like vaccines? “Injunctions?” Like self-isolate and wear masks?  
 To understand how what is happening today is not coincidental, and effects “the sort of beliefs the authorities consider desirable,” note that protesters marching close to each other were not required to wear masks, but people in general were not allowed to go to their churches. There is an undermining of traditional values component to what is occurring, and we can see that this overall effort began many years ago. For example, during the current pandemic, the world has been looking to the World Health Organization (WHO) for leadership. However, after the Communist spy Alger Hiss placed his friend, Canadian psychiatrist Brock Chisholm, in the position of first head of the WHO, Chisholm wrote in the February 1946 edition of the journal PSYCHIATRY: “We have swallowed all manner of poisonous certainties fed us by our parents, our Sunday and day school teachers, our politicians, our priests….The reinterpretation and eventual eradication of the concept of right and wrong which has been the basis of child training, the substitution of intelligent and rational thinking for faith in the certainties of old people, these are the belated objectives…for charting the changes in human behavior.”  
 In 1957, former president of the California Medical Association Dr. Lewis A. Alesen wrote MENTAL ROBOTS, in which he revealed what was happening “under the disarmingly innocent title of ‘The Mental Health Program,’ saying its aim was “the ultimate destruction of the human individual as a person; the eradication of all the traditions, ideals and moral concepts which he has learned from home, church, and school…and taught to deny and reject responsibility for himself, and to transfer that responsibility to the group, that is the state.” Ultimately, this will result in THE NEW WORLD ORDER, which is the title of Samuel Zane Batten’s 1919 book published by the American Baptist Publication Society. In this book, Batten pronounced: “We have vindicated the right of social control….The state must socialize every group….Men must learn to have world patriotism. World patriotism must be a faith.” Batten then called for a World Federation of Nations, and said that men “must see and affirm that above the nation is humanity. Internationalism must first be a religion before it can become a reality and a system.”  
 Also in 1957, Vance Packard authored THE HIDDEN PERSUADERS, and on its first page, one reads: “This book is about “the large scale efforts being made, often with impressive success, to channel our unthinking habits, our purchasing decisions, and our thought processes by the use of insights gleaned from psychiatry and the social sciences. Typically these efforts take place beneath our level of awareness, so that the appeals which move us are often, in a sense, ‘hidden.’ The result is that many of us are being influenced and manipulated far more than we realize in the patterns of our everyday lives.”  
 Before becoming president of the University of Cincinnati (1971-1977), leading educator Warren Bennis in 1968 authored THE TEMPORARY SOCIETY, in which he explained: “One cannot permit submission to parental authority if one wishes to bring about profound social change….In order to effect rapid changes, any such centralized regime must mount a vigorous attack on the family lest the traditions of the present generations be preserved. It is necessary, in other words, artificially to create an experiential chasm between parents and children to insulate the latter in order that they can more easily be indoctrinated with new ideas. The desire may be to cause an even more total submission to the state, but if one wishes to mold children in order to achieve some future goal, one must begin to view them as superior, inasmuch as they are closer to this future goal….One must teach them not to respect their tradition-bound elders, who are tied to the past and know only what is irrelevant.”  
 One way to teach children “not to respect the values of their tradition-bound elders” is to say they have “mental illness.” Relevant to this, in B. K. Eakman’s “What? Are You Crazy? The Screening of America” (CHRONICLES, October 2004), she reveals that “in August 2003, the National Institute of Mental Health and the National Science Foundation announced the results of their $1.2 million taxpayer-funded study. It stated, essentially, that traditionalists are mentally disturbed. Scholars from the University of Maryland, California at Berkeley, and Stanford had determined that social conservatives, in particular, suffer from ‘mental rigidity,’ ‘dogmatism,’ and ‘uncertainty avoidance,’ together with associated indicators of mental illness.”  
 The theoretical basis for social control goes back over 100 years, as “The Father of American Sociology,” Edward Alsworth Ross in his 1901 book, SOCIAL CONTROL, revealed that social checks and stimuli “are managed by a rather small know of persons…the Elite….Judgment may be moulded as well as the will and the feelings.”  
 After the Power Elite has accomplished bringing about “an unaware and compliant citizenry” as a means of achieving their goals, the people can be subjected to “temporarily impaired judgment and heightened suggestibility,” as in psychiatrist William Sargant’s BATTLE FOR THE MIND (1957). In this book, Sargant claims that “belief can be implanted in people after brain function has been a sufficiently disturbed by…induced fear, anger or excitement. Of the results caused by such disturbances, the most common one is temporarily impaired judgment and heightened suggestibility.” “Induced fear, anger or excitement”? Like police shootings? Riots?  
 Relevant to elections, in 1981 Hollywood star Robert Mitchum played Mr. Quinn in a movie titled “Agency” and heads an ad agency that is able to influence elections. Quinn says: “Let us enter the living room and we can enter the mind. It’s power, our power. Public opinion is crucial. Someone must use a guiding hand. I’ve been hired, financed,…the names don’t matter, though you might recognize some of them. Let’s just call them an elite of power, or maybe an influential elite who understand the value of manipulating public opinion….The public wants to be led. It needs to be led. We have long term plans….The concentration of power is healthy.” This reminds one of what “The Father of Public Opinion,” Edward Bernays said in his book PROPAGANDA (1928): “Those who manipulate the organized habits and opinions of the masses constitute an invisible government which is the true ruling power of the country….The technical means have been invented and developed by which opinion may be regimented.”  
 Concerning the most recent American elections, while Trump supporters have been searching for evidence of voter fraud, something far more insidious had actually determined the election’s outcome in advance of November 3, 2020! I will explain what that was, but for those who want to hear an expert describe what happened, go to https://steelonsteel.com/SOSPreview/Guests/so2021-0414-Epstein.mp3 . It is an interview by the Steel-on-Steel radio host John Loeffler with Dr. Robert Epstein, former editor of PSYCHOLOGY TODAY who is now senior research psychologist at the American Institute for Behavioral Research and Technology. Or you can read Epstein’s article, “BIG TECH’S GREATEST THREAT: They have no paper trail for authorities to trace. They are the perfect weapon for changing…the outcome of elections” found at https//www.gatestoneinstitute.org/17218/big-tech-threat . Most of the focus of Epstein’s interview focuses on Google, and for his information on that, go to www.mygooglereseach.com.  
 In Dr. Epstein’s interview, he explains the manipulation of ephemeral experiences from his studies of major search engines (Search Engine Manipulation Effect -SEME) and their leftward bias. In every election, Democrat liberals and Republican conservatives can be counted upon to vote the way one would expect. However, Epstein points out that 6 months before the election, there are still about 20% of voters (roughly 30 million voters) who are still undecided, and who can be pushed politically left or right. Because of the millions of pages of information search engines like Google have gathered on us, they know who they can get out to vote, which way the voters lean, etc. Epstein said that because he is a liberal and that Joe Biden won the November 3 election, he should be pleased. However, he said he not pleased, but actually “horrified” at how it came about! When he learned how many votes could be shifted, he concluded that we are no longer a democracy!  
 Dr. Epstein explained that Google hires people who lean to the political left, and about 96% of Google employees’ political contributions go to the Democrats. He then said Google’s hires write and can adjust algorithms and shift 15 million votes with no paper trail to find out what they have done! Epstein has considerable experience in analyzing what has occurred over the years using controlled randomized ephemeral experiences since early 2013. For example, he has determined that Google has biased search results. Using neutral search terms to measure results (e.g., Trump’s travel ban), Epstein found that Google’s search results were highly biased toward Hillary Clinton in the 2016 presidential race, shifting between 2.6 million and 10.4 million votes with no way to trace what they did!  
 Getting leaks from whistleblowers and others, THE WALL STREET JOURNAL in 2018 found an email from a Google employee stating, “How can we use ephemeral search results to push against Trump’s travel ban?” What happened is that if someone searched “Trump’s travel ban,” Google would put the negative search results first, and of course, most people tend to look at just the first results. In terms of the November 3, 2020 election, months before the election, Google sent out “Go vote” reminders only to liberal voters. Epstein’s group found out what Google was doing and on October 30, just 4 days before the election, forced Google to stop doing that and send “Go vote” reminders to everyone. Thus, before the first vote was even cast, the election results may have already been determined!  
 But Epstein is concerned about far more than just election results being manipulated. For example, he indicated that Google had purchased a thermostat company which produces thermostats that include watching and listening devices that can even interpret what they hear in homes or offices (e.g., Do the children brush their teeth enough. or are the inhabitants having a satisfactory sex life)! Thus it would seem that Big Brother is already here, but “and unaware and compliant citizenry” unfortunately seems clueless about it! <https://newswithviews.com/an-unaware-and-compliant-citizenry-part-2/>

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**ARUTZ SHEVA  
We must become stronger in "baseless love" for one another**

***Rabbi Shmuel Eliyahu: We must become stronger in "baseless love" for one another.***

*Sponsored Content , May 02 , 2021 2:50 PM*

**Less than a day since the terrible disaster on Mount Meron on Friday, Rabbi of the city of Tzfat Rabbi Shmuel Eliyahu answered the question of whether it was a sign from heaven or an**ger.

"**Rabbi Eliyahu of righteous and blessed memory," the rabbi said of his father, "would often mention the Holy Zohar which says that with Rabbi Shimon everything depends on kindness** and ["Ahavat Chinam,"](https://go.thechesedfund.com/ijcf/lag-bomer?aff=Arutz7) baseless love.

"Unfortunately, for the last two years, Rabbi Shimon has not accepted us."

"Last year in Corona, and this year he really dumped us. We must pay attention that these are the two years in which there is controversy and hatred among the people of Israel," Rabbi Shmuel Eliyahu added.

[**We unite together with "Ahavas Chinam" in memory of the victims>>**](https://go.thechesedfund.com/ijcf/lag-bomer?aff=Arutz7)

He continued to tell about his father: "The rabbi would bring the story from the Zohar about Rabbi Yossey who came to Rabbi Shimon to ask for mercy on the People of Israel because there was a stoppage of rains.

Rabbi Shimon said to them, "when the people of Israel are in brotherhood, and each one looks at his brother like the cherubim, then Hashem dwells in us and that he listens to our prayers and our teachings and rejoices in us."

We must unite and grow stronger in baseless love between people. We must not remain complacent and move past what happened as if it had nothing to do with us! <https://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/305403>

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**05/01/2021 NEWS AM**

**Abba | אבא - Padre | 🎙 Avraham Fried - אברהם פריד**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bYfGoO92sQ4>

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| **"It doesn't matter what rights you have under the Constitution of the United States, if the government can punish you for exercising those rights. And it doesn't matter what limits the Constitution puts on government officials' power, if they can exceed those limits without any adverse consequences. In other words, the Constitution cannot protect you, if you don't protect the Constitution with your votes against anyone who violates it. Those government officials who want more power are not going to stop unless they get stopped. As long as millions of Americans vote on the basis of who gives them free stuff, look for their freedom -- and all our freedom -- to be eroded away, bit by bit. Our children and grandchildren may yet come to see the Constitution as just some quaint words from the past that people once took seriously." -- Thomas Sowell (1930- ) Writer and economist** |

**Read the Prophets & PRAY WITHOUT CEASING!**

**That is the only hope for this nation!**

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| **Please**  **Remember**  **These**  **Folks**  **In**  **Prayer-**  **Check often**  **They**  **Change!** | **Pray that the world would WAKE UP! Time for a worldwide repentance!**  **ALL US soldiers fighting for our freedom around the world**  **Pray for those in our government to repent of their wicked corrupt ways.**  **Pray for AB family – Wife just diagnosed with brain tumor**  **Pray for AS – post knee replacement – some problems and another one scheduled.**  **Pray for TR – abnormal Mammogram having double biopsy – Mastectomy Scheduled**  **Pray for ZH - having trouble with PTSD**  **Pray for LAC – recurrent cancer getting treatment**  **Pray for KL – troubling spiritual situation.**  **Pray for Ella – emotionally disturbed abused child and brother with ? heart problem**  **Pray for JN – Neuro disease**  **Pray for MS – Job issues and change**  **Pray for BB – Severe West Nile Fever –still not mobile- improving!**  **Pray for RBH – cancer recurrence**  **Pray for Felicia – post op problems – continuing**  **Pray for SH and family – lady’s husband passed away and she is in Nursing home. Not doing well.**  **Pray for MP – Very complex problems**  **Pray that The Holy One will lead you in Your preparations for handling the world problems. – Have YOU made any preparations**? |

**Genesis 26:30And he made a feast for them, and they ate and drank. 31And they started up early at dawn, and each swore to his brother. And Isaac sent them away, and they left him in peace. 32And it happened on that day Isaac's slaves came and told him about the well which they had dug, and said to him, We found water. 33And he called it Shebah; so the name of the city *is* The Well of Sheba until this day. 34And Esau was a son of forty years. And he took a wife, Judith, the daughter of Beeri the Hittite; also Basemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite. 35And they were a grief of spirit to Isaac and to Rebekah.**

**Families rush to identify, bury Meron disaster victims before Shabbat**

***In Jerusalem, funerals still going on as sirens announcing sabbath wail across city; forensic institute suspends ID process for Jewish day of rest with 32 of 45 bodies identified***

*By* [*TOI staff*](https://www.timesofisrael.com/writers/times-of-israel-staff/) *Today, 8:09 pm*

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| Mourners carry the body of Shraga Gestetner, a Canadian singer who died during Lag BaOmer celebrations at Mt. Meron in northern Israel, at his funeral in Jerusalem on Friday, April 30, 2021.  (AP Photo/Ariel Schalit)  Mourners carry the body of Shraga Gestetner, a Canadian singer who died during Lag BaOmer celebrations at Mt. Meron in northern Israel, at his funeral in Jerusalem on Friday, April 30, 2021. (AP Photo/Ariel Schalit) | Ultra-Orthodox men carry the bodies of Moshe Englander, 14, and his brother, Yehoshua, 9, who died during Lag B'Omer celebrations at Mt. Meron in northern Israel, in Jerusalem on Friday, April 30, 2021. (AP Photo/Ariel Schalit)  Ultra-Orthodox men carry the bodies of Moshe Englander, 14, and his brother, Yehoshua, 9, who died during Lag B'Omer celebrations at Mt. Meron in northern Israel, in Jerusalem on Friday, April 30, 2021. (AP Photo/Ariel Schalit) |
| In a sign of mourning for one who lost a relative, a man cuts the shirt of a child whose father died in Meron tragedy, April 30, 2021 (Olivier Fitoussi/Flash90)  In a sign of mourning for one who lost a relative, a man cuts the shirt of a child whose father died in Meron tragedy, April 30, 2021 (Olivier Fitoussi/Flash90) | Hundreds attend the Jerusalem funeral of David Krauss in Jerusalem, one of the victims of the Meron tragedy, April 30, 2021 (Olivier Fitoussi/Flash90)  Hundreds attend the Jerusalem funeral of David Krauss in Jerusalem, one of the victims of the Meron tragedy, April 30, 2021 (Olivier Fitoussi/Flash90) |
| Mourners carry the body of Shraga Gestetner, a Canadian singer who died during Lag B'Omer celebrations at Mt. Meron in northern Israel, at his funeral in Jerusalem on Friday, April 30, 2021.  (AP Photo/Ariel Schalit)  Mourners carry the body of Shraga Gestetner, a Canadian singer who died during Lag B'Omer celebrations at Mt. Meron in northern Israel, at his funeral in Jerusalem on Friday, April 30, 2021. (AP Photo/Ariel Schalit) | Ultra-Orthodox Jewish mourners attend the funeral of a victim of Jewish pilgrim stampede, at Segula cemetery in Petah Tikva on April 30, 2021.( GIL COHEN-MAGEN / AFP)  Ultra-Orthodox Jewish mourners attend the funeral of a victim of Jewish pilgrim stampede, at Segula cemetery in Petah Tikva on April 30, 2021.( GIL COHEN-MAGEN / AFP) |

Thousands of people gathered at cemeteries across Israel on Friday afternoon as the first funerals were held for victims of the Meron disaster. In Jerusalem, families faced a “race against time” to bury their loved ones before the onset of Shabbat.

Meanwhile, anger was mounting at the Abu Kabir Forensic Institute in Tel Aviv, over the perceived slow process of formalizing the identification. By Friday evening 32 of the 45 bodies were formally identified and 22 released to relatives for burial.

The institute halted the identification process on Friday evening, following a ruling from the chief rabbi that it could not continue on the Sabbath.

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| Mourners attend the funeral of one of the victims of Meron stampede at Segula cemetery in Petah Tikva on April 30, 2021.(GIL COHEN-MAGEN / AFP)  Mourners attend the funeral of one of the victims of Meron stampede at Segula cemetery in Petah Tikva on April 30, 2021.(GIL COHEN-MAGEN / AFP) | Ultra-Orthodox men watch the funeral of Shraga Gestetner, a Canadian singer who died during Lag B'Omer celebrations at Mt. Meron in northern Israel, in Jerusalem on Friday, April 30, 2021. (AP Photo/Ariel Schalit)  Ultra-Orthodox men watch the funeral of Shraga Gestetner, a Canadian singer who died during Lag B'Omer celebrations at Mt. Meron in northern Israel, in Jerusalem on Friday, April 30, 2021. (AP Photo/Ariel Schalit) |



A man weeps at the funeral of Rabbi Eliezer Goldberg, who died during Lag BaOmer celebrations at Mt. Meron in northern Israel, in Jerusalem on Friday, April 30, 2021.(AP Photo/Ariel Schalit)

All the victims were ultra-Orthodox Jews taking part in Lag B’Omer ceremonies in Mount Meron.

Jewish tradition calls for the dead to be buried as soon as possible and not to delay funerals until after Shabbat, when burials cannot be held. Families whose loved ones have been positively identified rushed to do so. The Jewish day of rest began around 6:40-7:00 p.m. Friday evening, depending on sunset times in the different cities.

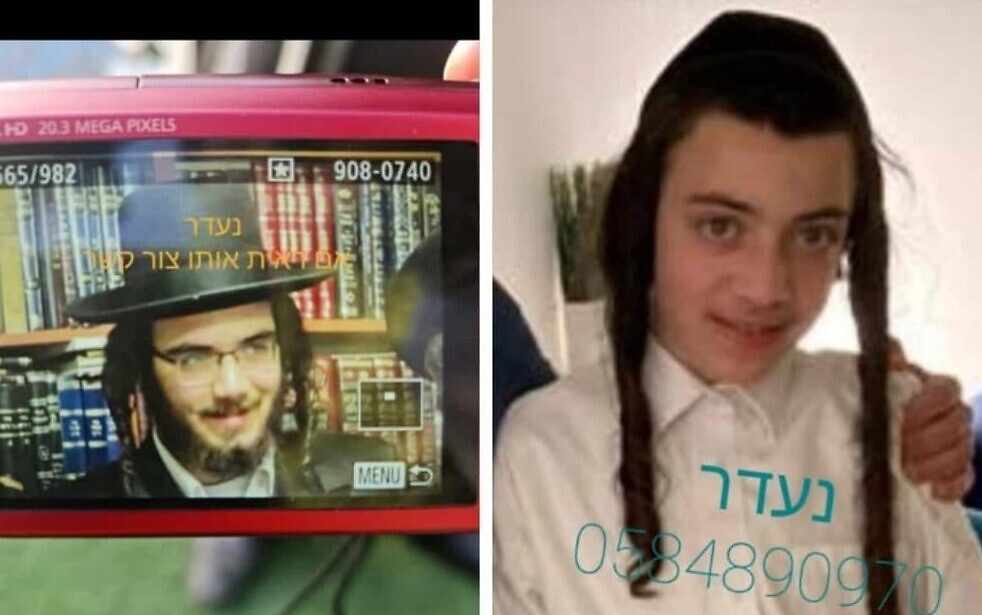
In Jerusalem, funerals were still going on as the sirens announcing the start of Shabbat wailed across the city.

“Mourners stream in and out of the funeral hall, one group after another as they race to complete the burials,” a Channel 12 reporter said, calling it a “race against time” to complete funerals.

In Jerusalem, Elazar Goldberg, 38, was laid to rest. “We were blessed to have you for 38 years, and now you’ve left us. You were like gold, you helped everybody, you welcomed everybody,” his father eulogized him.

Goldberg was a student at the Aderet Eliyahu Yeshiva.

In Jerusalem, hundreds of people answered a call to attend the funeral of Shraga Gestetner, a Hasidic singer without any immediate relatives in Israel.

 Gestetner, a 35-year-old from Montreal, Canada came to Israel specifically for the Lag B’Omer celebrations, which ended in tragedy. He is survived by his wife and five children.

After Gestetner was named as one of the victims, calls went out on social media for the public to attend his funeral in Jerusalem, with the messages noting he has no immediate family in the country who would be present.

“Let’s pay his final respects,” Israel Nabul, an event producer who knew Gestetner, wrote on Facebook in one such message.

Brothers Moshe Natan Neta Englander, left, and Yehoshua Englander, of Jerusalem, were killed during the stampede in Mt. Meron on April 30, 2021. (courtesy)

Diaspora Affairs Minister Omer Yankelevich also called on anyone who could do so to attend, saying “we won’t leave him alone in his final moments.”

Jerusalem funerals were held for Moshe Englander, 14, and Yehoshua Englander, 9, one of two pairs of brothers killed in the crush at Meron.

The boys were identified at the Abu Kabir forensic center by their father.

Also buried in Jerusalem was Yehuda Leib Rubin, 27, a father of three from Beit Shemesh.

In Petah Tikvah Menachem Zakbach, 24, was also buried. He is survived by his pregnant wife and a one-year-old baby.

In Ashdod, Rabbi Hanoch Slod, 52, was laid to rest.

Simcha Diskind, 23, of Beit Shemesh was buried in Haifa. He is survived by his wife and two young children.

Families of victims of the deadly stampede at the Mount Meron pilgrimage site had gathered Friday at Israel’s central forensic center to identify the bodies of the deceased.



People outside the Institute of Forensic Medicine in Tel Aviv, where victims of the Mount Meron crush were brought to be identified, April 30, 2021. (Tomer Neuberg/Flash90)

This delay in identification was being fiercely opposed by the families of victims, who want to bury the bodies as quickly as possible in accordance with Jewish tradition.

MK Moshe Gafni, head of the ultra-Orthodox United Torah Judaism, called senior police officials to urge them to speed up the identification process so that burials could be held before the sabbath.

The head of Abu Kabir, which is tasked with identifying the bodies, said the delay comes from the fact that it is “a complicated and sensitive process.”

 “The institute’s workers and teams are working determinedly and sensitively to complete the identification process,” said Dr. Chen Kugel.

Flowers on a bench outside the Institute of Forensic Medicine in Tel Aviv, where victims of the Mount Meron crush were brought to be identified, April 30, 2021. (Tomer Neuberg/Flash90)

The Health Ministry said the process involved finding the fingerprints, dental records and DNA tests of suspected victims and checking those against the body.  
 “We must work responsibly in order to prevent — heaven forbid –dire mistakes. Our hearts are with the families on this difficult day,” Kugel said.

The US Embassy said it was working with local authorities to “verify reports that US citizens are among the injured and deceased.”

“Our consular section stands ready to provide all possible support to any affected US, citizens and their family members,” the embassy said, adding that it offered “our sincerest condolences to the families and loved ones of those injured and who perished in the tragedy.”

The disaster appeared to be one of the worst peacetime tragedies in Israel’s history, surpassing the death toll of 44 from the 2010 Mount Carmel forest fire.

More than 100,000 people were attending the annual gathering in the northern Galilee, which includes visits to the gravesite of the second-century sage Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai and massive bonfires on the mountainside.

A bonfire lighting ceremony for the Toldot Aharon Hassidic sect was being held at the pilgrimage area, close to Bar Yochai’s tomb. As the dense crowds began to exit, some apparently slipped on the walkway, falling on those below and precipitating a stampede and fatal crushing, exacerbated by a reported police barrier at the bottom of the incline.

Pictures from the scene showed bodies covered in blankets and bags as well as the personal effects and shoes of those trapped in the crush. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/families-rush-to-identify-bury-meron-disaster-victims-before-shabbat/>

**Hundreds of strangers at funeral of Canadian Hasidic singer without family here**

***Calls go out for public to pay final respects to Shraga Gestetner, a father of 5 from Montreal, who came to Israel specifically for the Lag B’Omer celebrations***

*By* [*TOI staff*](https://www.timesofisrael.com/writers/times-of-israel-staff/) *Today, 6:42 pm*

[](https://static.timesofisrael.com/www/uploads/2021/04/shrag.jpg)

Shraga Gestetner, of Montreal was killed during the stampede in Mt. Meron on April 30, 2021. (courtesy)

Hundreds of people answered a call to attend the funeral on Friday of Shraga Gestetner, a Hasidic singer without any immediate relatives in Israel, who was crushed to death in a stampede at Mount Meron the night before.

Rabbi Gestetner, a 35-year-old from Montreal, came to Israel specifically for the Lag B’Omer celebrations, which ended in tragedy when he was among the 45 people killed in what is believed to be Israel’s worst peacetime disaster.

He is survived by his wife and five children. In recent years he had been living in Monsey, New York.

After Gestetner was named as one of victims, calls went out on social media for the public to attend his funeral in Jerusalem, with the messages noting he has no immediate family in the country who would be present.

“Let’s pay his final respects,” Israel Nabul, an event producer who knew Gestetner, wrote on Facebook in one such message.

Diaspora Affairs Minister Omer Yankelevich also called on anyone who could do so to attend, saying: “We won’t leave him alone in his final moments.”

Following these entreaties, hundreds arrived at the Shamgar funeral home to escort his body to Jerusalem’s Har Hamenuchot cemetery.

At the funeral home, Gestetner’s cousin Haim told the Kan public broadcaster that he was at Meron but left minutes before the deadly stampede.

“I suddenly felt a need to leave the mountain,” he said, describing his cousin as a “special man” who God chose “to be the victim of the public.”

He also called the pain he felt over the death of his cousin and the 44 others as “incomprehensible.”

Speaking earlier with Channel 12 news, Nabul said Gestetner mostly performed overseas and called him a “wonderful man who died in tragic circumstances.”

The event at Meron appeared to the worst peacetime tragedy in Israel’s history, with a death toll higher than the 44 who lost their lives in the 2010 Mount Carmel forest fire.

The huge gathering, the largest in Israel since the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic, had already sparked health fears.

Due to the large crowds, police had said they were unable to enforce coronavirus restrictions at the site.

At around midnight Thursday, organizers had estimated that some 100,000 people were at the site.

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/hundreds-of-strangers-attend-funeral-of-hasidic-singer-without-family-in-israel/>

**Palestinian leader Abbas, Jordan’s king, Gulf allies send condolences over Meron**

***Day after he blamed Israel for forcing him to suspend elections, PA chief tells Rivlin he’s praying for disaster victims; Arab states without ties to Israel also said reaching out***

*By* [*TOI staff*](https://www.timesofisrael.com/writers/times-of-israel-staff/) *Today, 7:08 pm*

Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas and several other Arab leaders have sent messages of condolence to Israel in the hours since dozens of ultra-Orthodox Israelis were crushed to death at the mass Lag B’Omer gathering at Mount Meron in the northern Galilee.

Among these, the Foreign Ministry said Friday afternoon, have been empathetic messages from countries with which Israel does not have diplomatic ties. It did not specify which countries.

Abbas wrote to President Rivlin Rivlin a day after he announced the indefinite suspension of Palestinian parliamentary elections that had been scheduled for May, and blamed Israel for not clarifying whether it would allow Palestinians to vote in East Jerusalem.

In his [letter](https://twitter.com/PalMissionUK/status/1388144489953472518) to Rivlin, Abbas expressed his sorrow “for the tragedy that claimed the lives of dozens of victims,” adding, “we are praying for the victims and hope for the recovery of those injured,” according to the President’s Office.

Jordan’s King Abdullah II called Rivlin and offered condolences, Rivlin’s office said.

The president thanked the Jordanian king, who generally maintains very little public contact with Israeli leaders, saying the “embrace” by Israel’s friends around the world “warms the heart and gives strength.”

The crown prince of Bahrain, with which Israel said a substantive normalization agreement as part of the Abraham Accords last year, offered his condolences: “His royal highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the crown prince and prime minister, today sent a cable of condolences to the prime minister of the State of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu, following the Lag Ba’omer Mount Meron stampede,” according to a statement.

He “expressed his condolences to the government of Israel and the families of the victims, while wishing the injured a speedy recovery.”

The first of Israel’s Abraham Accords partners, the United Arab Emirates, meanwhile, posted tweets in Hebrew, Arabic and English from its new embassy in Tel Aviv, saying “our hearts go out to the people of Israel who lost their loved ones in the tragedy.” The ambassador, embassy staff “and all the people of the UAE offer condolences to the families, and wish a full and swift recovery to those injured,” it said.

The Foreign Ministry said minister Gabi Ashkenazi also received a condolence call from Emirati Foreign Minister Abdullah bin Zayed.

Israeli Arab political leaders also issued empathetic statements.

Joint List leader Ayman Odeh spoke of “heartache” for the dozens of families “left torn and bereaved.” He said he was heartened to see Jews and Arabs work together to respond to the disaster, calling it “a small ray of light in the great tragedy.”

He also called for a thorough probe of failures that led to the event.

Joint List MK Ahmad Tibi tweeted of “a terrible disaster” and expressed “deep sorrow for those who died on the day they came to celebrate.”

Ra’am leader Mansour Abbas, who has spoken in recent weeks of a desire to build better relations between Israel’s Jews and Arabs, and is being wooed by both the pro- and anti-Benjamin Netanyahu camps after last month’s deadlocked elections, sent condolences to the bereaved and wrote of  the”difficult feelings over the terrible disaster.”

Several local Arab towns and villages [reached out in the immediate aftermath of the disaster](https://www.timesofisrael.com/arab-towns-offer-food-drink-to-meron-survivors-hundreds-give-blood-in-tel-aviv/) to help the victims and the rescue efforts. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/palestinian-leader-abbas-jordans-king-gulf-allies-send-condolences-over-meron/>

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**Pressure expected for full state inquiry into responsibility for Meron disaster**

***Amid growing reports of systemic failures, calls mount to extend probes beyond police and local officials, to investigate ministers responsible for catastrophic event***

*By* [*TOI staff*](https://www.timesofisrael.com/writers/times-of-israel-staff/) *Today, 10:24 pm*

[](https://static.timesofisrael.com/www/uploads/2021/04/000_9927JH-e1619778177566.jpg)

***Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Internal Security Minister Amir Ohana (R) visit the site of an overnight fatal stampede during an ultra-Orthodox religious gathering at Mt Meron in northern Israel, on April 30, 2021. (Ronen ZVULUN / POOL / AFP)***

Two investigations into the failings that led to the deaths of 45 people at Mount Meron Lag B’Omer festivities are set to move into high gear after Sunday’s day of national mourning for the victims, but pressure is also expected to grow for a full-fledged state commission of inquiry into the disaster, in which ministers would also be required to testify and could be held responsible.

Former police commissioner Moshe Karadi on Friday night issued a call for such an inquiry, saying responsibility for the tragedy plainly extends beyond the police. Defense and Justice Minister Benny Gantz has also reportedly told aides that some kind of public commission of inquiry is required.

An initial police investigation has already shown failings “by all of the parties” that are supposed to have responsibility for the annual event, a Channel 12 news report said. Sources quoted by Channel 13 said an initial investigation has established that politicians pressured the police to allow a large number of worshipers at the site.

MK Ayman Odeh, of the Joint List, on Friday called for the resignation of the Minister of Public Security, Amir Ohana, who is responsible for the police, for failing to heed “the numerous danger signs” ahead of the event. Ohana earlier Friday himself called for an independent investigation into “all aspects related to the planning of the event, preparations, responsibilities, infrastructure.”



***Public Security Minister Amir Ohana at the lighting of a bonfire during the celebrations of the Jewish holiday of Lag B’Oomer on Mt. Meron in northern Israel on April 29, 2021. (David Cohen/Flash90)***

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vowed during a visit to the scene of Israel’s worst-ever peacetime disaster that the investigations would be “comprehensive, serious and detailed.”

Thus far, two investigations have been ordered — by the Police Internal Investigations Department, into police failings, and by the police into the failures of other authorities regarding the event.

[](https://static.timesofisrael.com/www/uploads/2021/04/Screen-Shot-2021-04-30-at-16.18.36-e1619788858815.jpg)Bodybags at the scene of the Mount Meron disaster, April 30, 2021 (Screenshot)

However, neither of these two probes has the authority to investigate relevant ministers, including the ministers of public security, interior and religious affairs, and the prime minister himself, all of whom were involved in various meetings relating to preparations for the event.

Both national Police Commissioner Kobi Shabtai and Northern Command chief Shimon Lavi are set to be called to give testimony to the PIID probe.



Israael police Northern Command chief Shimon Lavi, at Mt Meron, on April 30, 2021. (YouTube screenshot)

Lavi said soon after the disaster that he bore “overall responsibility” for the event and thus for its consequences. A Channel 13 report said, however, that he does not intend to resign.

A Channel 11 news report said the police were pointing a finger of blame at the Ministry of Religious Affairs’ safety engineer, who approved security arrangements and who, the report said, earlier in the week checked the walkway where the fatal stampede occurred.

Sigal Bar Tzvi, head of Community Policing for Israel Police, told Channel 13 that the Merom site can hold the estimated 100,000 worshipers who gathered Thursday night, but that the disaster stemmed from too many people being crowded into the specific area, in the particular circumstances, where the stampede unfolded. She added, however, that there were numerous other potential trouble spots on the mountain. [](https://static.timesofisrael.com/www/uploads/2021/04/Screen-Shot-2021-05-01-at-1.45.06-e1619823431394.jpg)

She said repeatedly that the police do not have the authority to limit the number of participants in the gathering on the mountain. “We do what we are told to do, within the framework of our abilities; there is freedom of religious assembly.”

Senior Israel Police officer Sigal Bar Tzvi (Channel 13 screenshot)

Even though it was “a religious event,” that did not require a license or certain other checks, she said, district commander Lavi had ensured that two safety engineers — the one from the Ministry of Religious Affairs and a second, independent, expert — signed off on the arrangements and that other approvals were obtained. The second engineer, she said, “found all kinds of other failings,” including an underground tunnel. Had they not been fixed, she said, “there could have been the most serious disaster.”

Still, she said police had warned in the past two weeks “that the event is dangerous,” citing the district commander — an apparent reference to Lavi — who “spoke with who he needed to speak with.” She then said the plans for the event, “including all the dangers… were presented to the minister.” Asked how minister Ohana reacted, she said, “I don’t know. I wasn’t there.”

In the hours since the tragedy, increasing evidence has emerged that warnings about the dangers involved in the annual gathering have been ignored for years, including in two reports by the State Comptroller.

A 2008 State Comptroller report warned of “systemic failure at the Rashbi [Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai] compound” at Meron, due to “many different authorities all involved in its management,” noting that the chaotic situation would lead to harm to the holy site as well as endanger worshipers. MORE - <https://www.timesofisrael.com/pressure-expected-for-full-state-inquiry-into-responsibility-for-meron-disaster/>

**After Meron, Gantz said to explicitly tell Netanyahu no on forming government**

***Israeli TV says Blue and White chief told PM he is committed to ‘change bloc’; also reports that premier won’t seek extension of mandate unless coalition realistically in reach***

*By* [*TOI staff*](https://www.timesofisrael.com/writers/times-of-israel-staff/) *Today, 11:17 pm*

Blue and White leader Benny Gantz has explicitly told Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that he won’t form a government with the premier’s Likud party, Israeli television reported Friday.

The Channel 12 report, which came as Israel reeled after 45 people were crushed to death in a stampede during a religious festival in northern Israel, said Gantz had relayed this message to the premier following the tragedy, believed to be the worst peacetime disaster in the country’s history.

Gantz stressed to Netanyahu that he is committed to the “change bloc” of parties seeking to replace the prime minister, the network said, without citing a source.

Netanyahu, Israel’s longest-serving prime minister, is fighting for his political and legal survival after the March 23 elections, as he struggles to form a government and is on trial for corruption charges, which he denies. His official mandate to assemble a coalition expires on Tuesday night, though he can request a 14-day extension from President Reuven Rivlin.

Last month’s elections, the fourth since April 2019, ended in gridlock, with Netanyahu’s right-wing religious bloc again coming short of a ruling majority, in part because three right-wing parties ran with the declared goal of replacing him. After the previous elections in March 2020, Netanyahu agreed to a power-sharing deal with Gantz in which two agreed to swap off as prime minister, but it dissolved in December after the prime minister refused to pass a two-year state budget, the only way elections could be called without the Blue and White leader becoming premier.

On Wednesday, [a report](https://www.timesofisrael.com/gantz-said-to-hold-coalition-talks-with-netanyahu-despite-vowing-to-replace-him/) said Gantz has engaged in recent negotiations with Netanyahu to form a government, going against his pledge not to again form a coalition with the Likud leader. Gantz equivocated when asked directly about this in three TV interviews, though he said he had concluded there was no mileage in working again with Netanyahu. MORE -<https://www.timesofisrael.com/after-meron-gantz-said-to-explicitly-tell-netanyahu-no-on-forming-government/>

**After tragedy, multiple reports of political pressures not to limit Meron event**

***Following initial horror over crush that killed 45, blame game begins between various authorities and officials who planned, approved and oversaw mass festivities at holy site***

By [TOI staff](https://www.timesofisrael.com/writers/times-of-israel-staff/) Today, 5:57 am

As the initial shock and horror over Thursday night’s deadly crush at Lag B’Omer festivities on Mount Meron began to subside, focus started to turn on Friday toward the matter of who was to blame for the packed conditions at the site that led to the deaths of 45 people and the injuring of dozens of others in the fatal stampede.

Stark questions will likely be directed at political, civil and law enforcement officials involved in planning, approving and securing the event, amid talk of a potential state commission of inquiry to thoroughly investigate the disaster.

On Friday night, multiple reports in Hebrew media outlets indicated that there had been immense pressure by religious lawmakers ahead of the festivities to ensure that there would be no limits placed on the number of attendees.

Officials with knowledge of the investigation told Channel 13 that cabinet ministers had pressed police to allow large numbers of people to enter the gravesite of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, saying this was to compensate for last year’s event being canceled due to coronavirus.

 The disaster, which began at 1 a.m. on Friday morning, took place when huge crowds of ultra-Orthodox pilgrims were making their way along a narrow walkway with a slippery metal flooring that ended in flights of stairs. People began to slip and fall, others fell upon them, and a calamitous stampede ensued. The fitness of the walkway, whether it was approved for use and by whom, are matters that seem certain to be a focus of the various investigations.

Israeli rescue forces and police at the scene after a stampede during celebrations on Mt. Meron, in northern Israel on April 30, 2021 (David Cohen/Flash90)

According to Channel 12, the head of the ultra-Orthodox Shas party Aryeh Deri sent an official request to Public Security Minister Amir Ohana ahead of the event, saying that “anyone who wants to come [to Meron] should be allowed to do so.”

Ohana, who is responsible for police, went on to approve the request and no limits on attendees were put in place at Meron, despite pleas from health officials concerned about coronavirus transmission. MORE -<https://www.timesofisrael.com/after-tragedy-multiple-reports-of-political-pressures-not-to-limit-meron-event/>

**16 still hospitalized after Meron tragedy; condition of 11-year-old boy improves**

**Rambam Medical Center in Haifa says child has been taken off ventilator and is no longer sedated; identification of fatalities set to resume Saturday evening**

By [TOI staff](https://www.timesofisrael.com/writers/times-of-israel-staff/) Today, 12:01 pmUpdated at 12:35 pm

Sixteen people remained hospitalized on Saturday morning after the deadly stampede at Meron, with a number of them in critical or serious condition.

However, there has been an improvement in the condition of an 11-year-old boy who was seriously injured, the Rambam Medical Center in Haifa announced.

A spokesperson for the hospital said the child was sedated and put on a ventilator when he arrived at the medical center on Friday, but has now regained consciousness. His condition has been upgraded to moderate, they said.

The boy, who wasn’t named, is from the central city of Bnei Brak.



Israeli military helicopter evacuating injured people from Ziv hospital in the city of Safed to central Israel hospitals on April 30,2021 (JALAA MAREY / AFP)

The hospital said three other people injured in the crush remained in their intensive care unit and were still sedated and on ventilators. Those injured in the stampede were taken to a number of hospitals around the country.

With [45 dead](https://www.timesofisrael.com/victims-of-the-mount-meron-tragedy-named/) and dozens injured, the disaster in the early hours of Friday appeared to be one of the worst peacetime tragedies in Israel’s history, surpassing the death toll of 44 from the 2010 Mount Carmel forest fire.

There have now been 32 victims identified at the Abu Kabir Forensic Center in Tel Aviv.

The institute halted the identification process on Friday evening, following a ruling from the chief rabbi that it could not continue on the Sabbath. It was set to resume on Saturday evening. MORE -<https://www.timesofisrael.com/hospital-announces-improvement-in-condition-of-boy-11-seriously-hurt-at-meron/>

**At Sarah Halimi rally in Paris, signs French Jewry is nearing a breaking point**

***Unlike the informal, stoic and often patriotic demonstrations protesting antisemitic violence until now, this week’s protest had a palpable air of disillusionment and even despair***

*By* [*Cnaan Liphshiz*](https://www.timesofisrael.com/writers/cnaan-liphshiz/) *Today, 4:46 pm*

PARIS (JTA) — Joining the stream of people converging on Trocadero Square, I soon realized that this event would be significantly different from the dozens of Jewish community gatherings I had attended in France.

The atmosphere, rhetoric, symbolism and attendance at the “Justice for Sarah Halimi” [protest rally](https://www.timesofisrael.com/protesters-mass-in-france-israel-uk-to-demand-justice-for-sarah-halimi/) on April 25 suggested to me that France’s Jewish community is entering a new phase in the decades-long slip of its members’ confidence in their future here.

The rally — an event with 20,000 participants, one of the largest communal gatherings in decades — was sparked by an April 14 decision by France’s highest court. It affirmed that 31-year-old Kobili Traore was unfit to stand trial because Traore, a Muslim, had smoked so much marijuana before the 2017 slaying that it rendered him temporarily psychotic.

The killing of Halimi, a 65-year-old physician and kindergarten teacher, infuriated French Jews also because they widely see it as the latest in a series of ideologically motivated murders by Islamists, which have claimed the lives of at least 10 Jews over the past decade.

But unlike many previous protests by French Jews over this issue, the April 25 one was not primarily about antisemites at all. Instead, it was a cry against the actions of authorities that French Jews almost unanimously regard as [cherished allies](https://www.timesofisrael.com/for-anti-semites-in-france-police-are-seen-as-dirty-jews/) in the fight against jihadists and other haters of Jews.

This significant thematic twist is the least of what makes me think of April 25 as a milestone.

This community, which I thought I knew very well, was suddenly unrecognizable to me.

Gone was the familiar informality that usually accompanies such gatherings. Like funerals, they are solemn but social events for members of a tight-knit community where reunions are uplifting — especially after a year of lockdown.

The people I saw at Trocadero Square were neither merely sad nor angry. They were seething, exasperated. Perhaps desperate. And there was a new sentiment in the mix: resignation, which I had not experienced quite so palpably before during my 15 years of covering French Jewry.

It was evident not only in conversations I had with protestors — “Take a look at all the people here: We’ll all be in Israel by 2031,” one protester, an actor named Anthony Sonigo, told me — but also in the signs and speeches of the organizers.

It was the first time I had witnessed black humor on display at a setting that I’m used to seeing dominated by expressions of unity and uncompromising resolve to endure.

Some of the signs at the rally read: “Two joints will get you high, 10 joints will get you free.”

The videos shown on a giant screen at the rally were also unusual.

One was by Jacques Essebag, a French-Jewish comedian who is known by the stage name Arthur, announcing that he has “decided to start using drugs because in France you can do whatever you want, even kill your neighbor if you don’t like her, if you use drugs.” He then added: “What has become of this country?”

Another featured four people engaged in maniacal laughter and mumbling “impossible, could never happen” to underline how many French Jews believe the rulings on Traore to be unreasonable. They point to Traore’s own statements as he killed Halimi, as well as his flight afterward, as evidence that he was not insane.

Another telltale sign was the dozens of yellow flags at the rally of the Jewish Defense League, a far-right organization that is considered a terrorist organization by the FBI. Its symbols are usually verboten at mainstream Jewish community events such as Sunday’s rally.

I also observed a real change in the way that allegiance to France — and the possibility of leaving it — was discussed. At least 50,000 French Jews have decided to [leave France for Israel](https://www.timesofisrael.com/french-jews-leaving-in-record-numbers-but-not-for-the-reason-you-think/) over the past decade. This immigration, called aliyah in Hebrew, peaked after 2012, when a [jihadist murdered four Jew](https://www.timesofisrael.com/four-reported-killed-at-jewish-school-in-france/)s at a Jewish school in Toulouse. It surged after a jihadist [in 2015 killed another four](https://www.timesofisrael.com/paris-worker-recounts-wrestling-gunman-targeting-jewish-school-in-2015-attack/) Jews at a Paris kosher supermarket.

In the wake of these tragedies and the uncertainty they spelled for French Jews, Chief Rabbi Haim Korsia has consistently sought to reassure them of their future here. In 2016, following the stabbing of a Jew in Marseille, he said in a speech that even questioning whether to wear a kippah on the street in France “is problematic. We must not cede an inch, and neither France nor its Jews will ever cede an inch,” he [said](https://www.europe-israel.org/2016/01/interview-du-grand-rabbin-de-france-haim-korsia-pourquoi-il-ne-faut-pas-ceder-sur-la-kippa/). MORE - <https://www.timesofisrael.com/at-sarah-halimi-rally-in-paris-signs-french-jewry-is-nearing-a-breaking-point/> [In 2005 Ariel Sharon made the comment that at that time France was not a fit place for Jews to live because of the anti-Semitism. It is now a hundred times worse. More Islam, more anti-Semitism. – rdb]

**Iran's Zarif refutes Kerry: No knowledge of Israeli strikes**

***Foreign minister's claim also conflicts with State Department's claim***

*By* [*Art Moore*](https://www.wnd.com/author/amoorewnd-com/) *Published April 30, 2021 at 7:44pm*

The State Department has dismissed the charge reported by the New York Times that John Kerry disclosed covert Israeli actions to Iran's foreign minister, insisting the military strikes were public information.

But the Iranian foreign minister, Javad Zarif, is on record saying he first learned of Israel's actions from Kerry, [according to an independent translation commissioned by the Washington Free Beacon of a leaked audio recording](https://freebeacon.com/national-security/zarif-had-no-knowledge-of-israeli-strikes-until-kerry-told-him-translation-reveals/).

[The New York Times reported Sunday](https://www.wnd.com/2021/04/iran-foreign-minister-john-kerry-gave-intel-israeli-covert-ops/) that Zarif said Kerry told him Israel launched 200 airstrikes against Iranian interests in Syria. The Times report of the recording obtained by Iran International, a Persian news channel, said Zarif was "astonished" by the information. But the Times provided no further details.

[](https://www.wnd.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/kerry_iranians.jpg)

Kerry with Hossein Fereydoun and Mohammad Javad Zarif during the announcement of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, July 14, 2015 (State Department photo)

"Kerry told me that Israel had launched 200 airstrikes against [Iran]," said Zarif, according to the translation commissioned by the Free Beacon.

"You didn't know?" asked his interviewer. "No, no," he replied.

On Monday, State Department spokesman Ned Price was asked  during a press briefing about Zarif's claim.

"If you go back and look at press reporting from the time, this certainly was not secret, and governments that were involved were speaking to this publicly on the record," he said.

On Tuesday, Secretary of State Antony Blinken accused Republicans of trying to "play politics with this." He said the strikes "were all reported in the press at the time, so it is utter nonsense."

Kerry denied the allegations in a Twitter post Monday.

"I can tell you that this story and these allegations are unequivocally false," he wrote. "This never happened - either when I was Secretary of State or since."

***Michael Oren: Kerry's Iran relationship 'very disturbing'***

Former Israeli ambassador to the United States and former Knesset member Michael Oren said he didn’t know whether Zarif was telling the truth. But it was well known during the negotiations for the Iran nuclear deal that Kerry and Zarif had a close relationship, he said, which was troubling to Israel.

"He made no attempts to disguise that," said Oren in [a report by the Jewish News Syndicate](https://www.jns.org/former-israeli-ambassadors-say-kerrys-history-of-conflict-with-israel-lends-weight-to-iranian-accusation/).

MORE - <https://www.wnd.com/2021/04/irans-zarif-refutes-kerry-no-knowledge-israeli-strikes/> [Mr scumbag just got outed for his criminal treachery and is trying to lie his way out of it. Certainly glad that Zarif has given this report because there is a chance (though not good) that he could get his hands slapped. He should be sent to Gitmo. – rdb]

**Biden accused of manipulating Census for 'political gain'**

***House GOP members say president 'has done just that'***

*By* [*Bob Unruh*](https://www.wnd.com/author/runruh/) *Published April 30, 2021 at 3:06pm*

Joe Biden has been accused of manipulating the results of the 2020 U.S. Census, which missed its deadline by months because of the COVID-19 pandemic, for political gain.

A letter dispatched by 17 members of Congress noted that they were referred by the Census Bureau to the White House for their questions about dramatic variances between estimates of population released just months ago, and the final results released this week.

The Census is supposed to be bipartisan, and the White House would not normally have a role in it.

But the letter demands from Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo answers to questions about whether there was "any political interference" in the final numbers, which are used to determine which states get how many members in the U.S. House.

The letter, dated on Friday, said the representatives need to have answers "about the methodology and the role the Biden White House may have played in releasing these numbers, especially as the results differ from evaluation estimates released mere months ago in ways that benefit blue states over red states."

They letter notes Texas is poised to gain two seats, Colorado, Florida, Montana, North Carolina and Oregon each one, with California, Illinois, Michigan, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania and West Virginia each losing one.

First, they expressed alarm at the process.

"When our staff contacted the Census Bureau on the morning of the release with questions about the apportionment count, they were referred by Census officials to the White House for questions. Yet the statute is clear: it is the Secretary of Commerce who reports the apportionment count to the president, not the other way around. Referring our staff's questions to the White House … is entirely inappropriate, and raises questions about the level of White House involvement in the process."

They cited Democrat complaints earlier that the administration of President Trump was "using" the Census process.

"President Biden has done just that. Even as President Trump sought to ensure the accuracy of the 2020 Census apportionment results by excluding illegal aliens from the apportionment count, President Biden reversed course, deciding to dilute American citi9zens' representational interests by rescinding this commonsense measure," they said.

They noted "liberal states" may have lost even more seats if illegal aliens had not been counted.

Then they noted that the numbers for some states "are strikingly differen"t from the population evaluation estimates released just months ago.

For example, New York's population, between Dec. 22, 2020, and the count released this week, gained nearly 1 million residents.

"Likewise, states such as New Jersey and Illinois experienced large population increases of hundreds of thousands of individuals," they noted.

Meanwhile, conservatives states like Arizona, Florida and Texas saw "large decreases."

The members of Congress ask for, by May 14, "all documents and communications" over the last six or eight months on the independence of the audit, documents about any analysis of an error rate, exactly who approved or denied final apportionment numbers, documents indicating who in the president's office was involved in the numbers, and more.

The letter was signed by Rep. James Comer, ranking member of the Committee on Oversight and Reform, and more than a dozen more.

[Fox News](https://www.foxnews.com/politics/house-republicans-biden-census-numbers-estimates-departures) noted the GOP representatives wrote, "New York was estimated to have a population of 19,336,776, but was attributed an apportionment population much greater than that of 20,215,751, a difference of nearly 900,000 individuals."

The letter is also signed by Reps. Jim Jordan, R-Ohio; Jody Hice, R-Ga.; Glenn Grothman, R-Wis.; Michael Cloud, R-Texas; Ralph Norman, R-S.C.; Paul Gosar, R-Ariz.; Virginia Foxx, R-N.C.; Bob Gibbs, R-Ohio; Clay Higgins, R-La.; Fred Keller, R-Pa.; Andy Biggs, R-Ariz.; Andrew Clyde, R-Ga.; Scott Franklin, R-Fla.; Jake LaTurner, R-Kan.; Yvette Herrell, R-N.M.; and Byron Donalds, R-Fla.

Estimates earlier had suggested Texas was going to gain three seats, not two, and the importance of a single congressional seat can be seen in the current Democrat "majority" in the 50-50 Senate, which is run by Democrats only by virtue of the vice president's tie-breaking ability. <https://www.wnd.com/2021/04/biden-accused-manipulating-census-political-gain/> [If someone doesn’t act very soon the USA will cease to exist and will simply become the SCNA (socialist confederation of North America). The demon-rats and their puppeteers like Soros, Gates , Obamanation and other globalist players will have succeeded in destroying the constitution and the nation. – rdb]

**Google, Soros, & Gates-Funded Media Outlet ‘Project Syndicate’ Publishes Op-Eds For China’s State Media.**

[*April 27, 2021*](https://thenationalpulse.com/exclusive/google-soros-gates-fund-project-syndicate-linked-to-ccp/)[*Natalie Winters*](https://thenationalpulse.com/author/natalie-winters/)

***Project Syndicate – a media outlet that counts funding and written contribution from George Soros, Bill Gates, the United Nations, and Google – is engaged in “media partnership” deals with several Chinese state-run media outlets, The National Pulse can today reveal.***

The globalist propaganda outlet – founded in 1995 – has also been lauded by the Chinese Communist Party’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with its Twitter account praising the outlet’s content defending genocide in Xinjiang as “objective and informative.”

We find "The [#Xinjiang](https://twitter.com/hashtag/Xinjiang?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Genocide Allegations Are Unjustified" carried by the [#US](https://twitter.com/hashtag/US?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)-based media organization Project Syndicate objective and informative. We applaud its just voice on Xinjiang related issues.<https://t.co/c8n9TJWCSl>

— Spokesperson发言人办公室 (@MFA\_China) [April 24, 2021](https://twitter.com/MFA_China/status/1385803937651912704?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Project Syndicate published op-eds and analysis from “prominent political leaders, policymakers, scholars, business leaders, and civic activists” and partners with non-western media outlets to amplify their spread.

“News organizations in developed countries provide financial contributions for the rights to Project Syndicate commentaries, which enables us to offer these rights for free, or at subsidized rates, to newspapers and other media in the developing world,” the outlet [summarizes.](https://www.project-syndicate.org/about)

Among the state-controlled media outlets Project Syndicate partners with, however, are China Global Television Network (CGTN), China Daily, and Global Time*s.*

 Together, these sites have published nearly 2,000 articles from the outlet, including content [praising](https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202010/30/WS5f9b5e02a31024ad0ba8204e.html) the Chinese Communist Party and [attacking](https://news.cgtn.com/news/3d3d774e3341544f31457a6333566d54/index.html) the [U.S.](https://news.cgtn.com/news/3d3d514e7745544e78457a6333566d54/share_p.html) and [populism](https://news.cgtn.com/news/3d3d674d31597a4e31457a6333566d54/share_p.html). What’s more, the Chinese state-run media outlets appear to exploit Project Syndicate content for legitimacy, often burying the fact that the content was obtained through Project Syndicate at the bottom of articles:

Project Syndicate’s website reveals the operation is [funded](https://www.project-syndicate.org/about) by several foundations including George Soros’s Open Society Foundations, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Google Digital News Initiative, and the United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network.

Since 2012, the Gates Foundation has [funneled](https://www.gatesfoundation.org/about/committed-grants?q=project%20syndicate) $5,280,186 to the outlet for grants in the “Global Health and Development Public Awareness and Analysis” field. [Bill](https://www.project-syndicate.org/columnist/bill-gates) and [Melinda](https://www.project-syndicate.org/columnist/melinda-gates) Gates have also contributed articles to the site.

Google News Initiative has also funded Project Syndicate [through](https://newsinitiative.withgoogle.com/dnifund/dni-projects/ps-plus-round-5/) its Digital News Innovation Fund, [earning](https://newsinitiative.withgoogle.com/dnifund/insights/read-full-list-successful-round-5-recipients-here/?amp=1) a “medium” grant valued at roughly $260,000.

***GOOGLE NEWS INITIATIVE HYPING PROJECT SYNDICATE.***

And Open Society Foundations has donated $707,105 [since](https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/grants/past?filter_keyword=project+syndicate) 2018 to Project Syndicate, in addition to Soros [penning](https://www.project-syndicate.org/columnist/george-soros) over 110 op-eds for the outlet.

The Sustainable Development Solutions Network, led [by](https://www.unsdsn.org/governance) the Chinese Communist Party-[linked](https://thenationalpulse.com/exclusive/lancets-jeffrey-sachs-covid-commission-chair-ccp-ties/) and Uyghur genocide-defending Jeffrey Sachs, describes itself as a “[global](https://www.unsdsn.org/about-us) initiative for the United Nations. <https://thenationalpulse.com/exclusive/google-soros-gates-fund-project-syndicate-linked-to-ccp/> [The deep state of the globalist society pushing trash news to the masses to achieve their goals of making you a slave to the system.- rdb]

**Pentagon to cancel Trump border wall projects using military funds**

***President Joe Biden issued a proclamation on January 20, his first day in office, ordering a freeze on border wall projects***

*By REUTERS   APRIL 30, 2021 23:57*

The Pentagon on Friday said it was canceling the construction of parts of former President Donald Trump's border wall with Mexico that were being built using military funds, with all the unobligated money being returned to military.

Trump declared a national emergency in 2019 in an effort to redirect funding to build a wall along the US southern border.

President [Joe Biden](https://www.jpost.com/breaking-news/biden-expresses-condolences-with-israel-for-mt-meron-tragedy-666846) issued a proclamation on January 20, his first day in office, ordering a freeze on border wall projects and directing a review of the legality of its funding and contracting methods.

"The Department of Defense is proceeding with canceling all border barrier construction projects paid for with funds originally intended for other military missions and functions such as schools for military children, overseas military construction projects in partner nations, and the National Guard and Reserve equipment account," Pentagon spokesman Jamal Brown said in a statement.

Brown said the returned funds would be used for deferred military construction projects.

It was not immediately clear how much would be returned to the military, but it was likely to be several billion dollars.

Trump's diversion of funds from the [Pentagon](https://www.jpost.com/jpost-tech/pentagon-tests-prototype-for-space-energy-beam-report-660049) had been heavily criticized by lawmakers, who said it put national security at risk and circumvented congress.

In 2019 alone, the military said more than 120 US military construction projects would be adversely affected by Trump's move. <https://www.jpost.com/american-politics/pentagon-to-cancel-trump-border-wall-projects-using-military-funds-666858> More stupidity and ignorance from the demon-rats and the “Bi-dumb” folks. What a pathetic bunch of garbage. They have created a disaster and just let it run. – rdb]

**More than 90 people found in Houston home in suspected smuggling case**

***The 90 victims, all but roughly five of them men, were removed from the house and given food and water***

*By REUTERS   MAY 1, 2021 03:02*

Police responding to reports of a kidnapping said on Friday they had found more than 90 people crammed into a two-story suburban Houston home and suspected it was being used in a human s[muggling operation](https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/experts-hezbollah-exports-drugs-weapons-lebanon-government-knowledge-666654).

The 90 victims, all but about five of them men, were removed from the house and given food and water, said Daryn Edwards, assistant chief of the Houston Police Department.

"They basically (were) in there in their basic clothing and all, all huddled together. So that's what we saw when we got in," he said. No children were found among them.

At least several of the people showed symptoms of [COVID-19 infection](https://www.jpost.com/health-science/genetic-changes-could-be-behind-long-terms-covid-symptoms-666799), including fever and lack of taste or smell, Edward said. The victims told police they had not eaten recently.

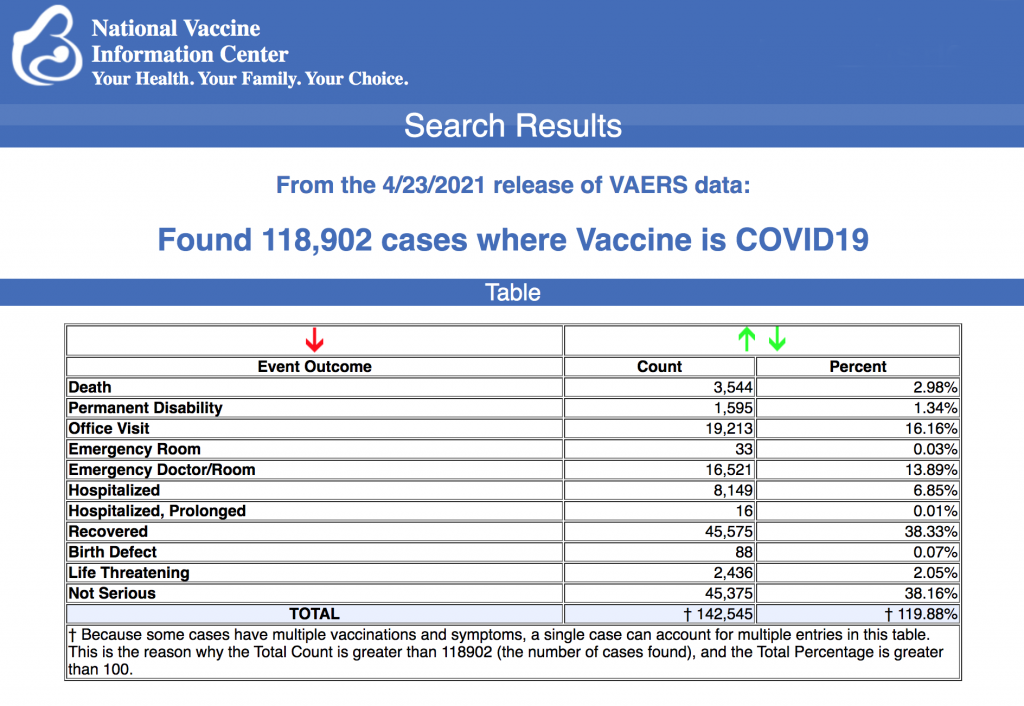
The victims were issued personal protective gear and put onto white busses. It was not immediately clear where they were being taken.

Homeland Security and Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents were seen at the house along with local police and firefighters.

Edwards said no arrests had been made in the case as of Friday afternoon and declined to offer further details, citing the ongoing investigation. <https://www.jpost.com/international/more-than-90-people-found-in-houston-home-in-suspected-smuggling-case-666863> [Another leftist run city that prides itself on being a sanctuary for illegals. – rdb]

**Significant Jump This Week in Reported Injuries, Deaths After COVID Vaccine**

***VAERS data released today showed 118,902 reports of adverse events following COVID vaccines, including 3,544 deaths and 12,619 serious injuries between Dec. 14, 2020 and April 23, 2021.***

By  [Megan Redshaw](https://childrenshealthdefense.org/authors/megan-redshaw/) 04/30/21

Data released today by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on the number of injuries and deaths reported to the [Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System](https://vaers.hhs.gov/) (VAERS) following COVID vaccines showed a significant jump in reports of injuries and deaths compared with [last week’s numbers](https://childrenshealthdefense.org/defender/cdc-investiging-johnson-johnson-vaers-data-reports-deaths-covid-vaccines/).

[VAERS](https://childrenshealthdefense.org/defender/rfk-jr-david-kessler-covid-vaccine-vaers/) is the primary government-funded system for reporting adverse vaccine reactions in the U.S. Reports submitted to VAERS require further investigation before a causal relationship can be confirmed.

Every Friday, [VAERS](https://childrenshealthdefense.org/defender/rfk-jr-david-kessler-covid-vaccine-vaers/) makes public all vaccine injury reports received as of a specified date, usually about a week prior to the release date. Today’s data show that between Dec. 14, 2020 and April 23, a total of [118,902 total adverse events](https://www.medalerts.org/vaersdb/findfield.php?TABLE=ON&GROUP1=CAT&EVENTS=ON&VAX=COVID19) were reported to VAERS, including [3,544 deaths](https://www.medalerts.org/vaersdb/findfield.php?TABLE=ON&GROUP1=AGE&EVENTS=ON&VAX=COVID19&DIED=Yes) — an increase of 358 over the previous week — and [12,619 serious injuries](https://www.medalerts.org/vaersdb/findfield.php?TABLE=ON&GROUP1=AGE&EVENTS=ON&VAX=COVID19&SERIOUS=ON), up 2,467 since last week.

In the U.S., [222.3 million](https://ourworldindata.org/grapher/cumulative-covid-vaccinations?tab=chart&stackMode=absolute&country=~USA&region=World) COVID vaccine doses had been administered as of April 23. This [includes](https://ourworldindata.org/grapher/covid-vaccine-doses-by-manufacturer?country=~USA) 97 million doses of [Moderna’s](https://childrenshealthdefense.org/defender/did-cdc-mislead-public-allergic-reactions-moderna-vaccine/) vaccine, 117 million doses of [Pfizer](https://childrenshealthdefense.org/defender/fda-pfizer-experimental-covid-vaccine-children/) and 8 million doses of the [Johnson &Johnson (J&J) COVID vaccine](https://childrenshealthdefense.org/defender/u-s-pauses-johnson-johnson-covid-vaccine/).

MORE -<https://childrenshealthdefense.org/defender/vaers-significant-jump-reported-injuries-deaths-after-covid-vaccine/>

**Commentary:**

**Team Biden Intends to Never Let Its Manufactured Crises Go to Waste**

[*David Limbaugh*](https://townhall.com/columnists/davidlimbaugh/) *Posted: Apr 30, 2021 12:01 AM* My major takeaway from President Biden's joint address to Congress is that he and his handlers are continuing to employ the Democrats' primary strategy from the Obama years: Never let a crisis go to waste.  
 To scare the American people into accepting his reckless spending proposals, Biden is leveraging the pandemic, which means he is framing it as still hot, raging and dangerous, while immodestly taking undeserved credit for the progress that we've made.  
 To begin, he staged an image of crisis for television viewers by having a group of entirely vaccinated people unnecessarily wear masks and socially distance, though Massachusetts Institute of Technology researchers recently suggested that the six-foot rule offers no protection in indoor settings, whether or not people are vaccinated. This charade is destructive to the American psyche, which desperately needs positive images and an end to the climate of fear the White House continues to perpetuate. Limiting the audience size also allowed Biden the luxury of hand-picking a more favorable audience for his speech. Everything in this bizarre administration must be carefully orchestrated because the powers behind the scenes can't afford the titular president to go off script even slightly.  
 To set the table, Biden said we are in "extraordinary times" and invoked the word "crisis" in his opening remarks. "Tonight, I come to talk about crisis and opportunity," he said. He immediately tied the "crisis" to his plan for Big Brother to start "rebuilding the nation."  
 It's not American enterprise and ingenuity that will rebuild it, mind you, but government spending pursuant to the Democrats' command-control economic model. Just like with former President Obama's "stimulus" package, they're effectively promising "shovel-ready" jobs galore, many of them catered toward another "crisis" -- the "climate crisis." Never mind how disastrous Obama's record was on that (Solyndra). We'll see similar failures should Biden shove this monster spending package, euphemized as an "investment," through Congress via the reconciliation process.  
 Biden continually expanded the scope of the crises. "One hundred days ago, America's house was on fire," he said, and he "inherited a nation ... that was in crisis. "The worst pandemic in a century. The worst economic crisis since the Great Depression." That last claim, by the way, is manifestly false. As National Review's Philip Klein tweeted, when Biden took over, the unemployment rate was 6.3% and the economy had just experienced two consecutive quarters of strong growth. In fact, Klein noted, during the Obama-Biden years, the unemployment rate was above 6.3 percent for the first five years.  
 Upping the ante, Biden breathlessly reported that 10 million homes and 400,000 schools and child care centers have lead in their pipes, "including in drinking water, a clear and present danger to our children's health." But these problems are nothing his proposed beneficent American Jobs Plan can't solve.  
 Ratcheting up the projected atmosphere of crisis and laying a further foundation for the public to accept his Big Brothership, he said that the Jan. 6 attack on the Capitol was "the worst attack on our democracy since the Civil War." Sane Twitter properly refuted this lie, noting that Biden conveniently forgot the Senate bombing of 1983. Mollie Hemingway cited the "deadly Summer of Rage with its attacks on the WH and federal court buildings, four presidential assassinations, another five assassination attempts, Pearl Harbor, and 9/11."  
 But, thanks to Biden's messianic magic, he boasted, "America is on the move again, turning peril into possibility, crisis to opportunity, setback into strength." Notice how those three word pairings are designed to accentuate the gravity of the alleged crises -- "peril," "crisis," "setback" -- and the indispensability of big Biden government to rescue us -- "possibility," "opportunity" and "strength." Further milking that theme, he said that the government was able to "rescue" American households through his American Rescue Plan -- the government's distribution of checks (printed money).  
 Grossly taking personal credit, Biden stressed that "We're also providing rental assistance," and patronizingly added, "you all" -- his fellow Big Brotherites in Congress -- "know this, but the American people -- I want to make sure they understand." Thank you, Generous Joe. He added that his friendly feds kept people from being evicted from their homes, provided loans to small businesses and enrolled 800,000 Americans in the Affordable Care Act because he "established the special sign-up period to do that."  
 Incidentally, the federal government's main accomplishment in turning the corner on COVID-19 -- Operation Warp Speed -- was initiated by former President Donald Trump and involved a robust partnership with private businesses and industry to produce vaccines. Yet Biden took credit for the vaccines and ungraciously offered no praise to Trump, all while pretending to project a bipartisan spirit.  
 Biden audaciously claimed that America on his watch is choosing "hope over fear, truth over lies and light over darkness." Precisely wrong. He is perpetuating fear -- keep those masks whether or not you're vaccinated, or even outside, or even in schools, where there's minimal risk -- and spreading lies so the darkness of these manufactured crises swallows the light and optimistic spirit of the American people. The actual crises we face are mostly created by the Democrats' war on cops, opening of the borders, pandemic fearmongering, fanning the flames of race, undermining confidence in America's founding (canceling Trump's 1776 commission and resurrecting the America-hating 1619 Project) and trying to spend us into irreversible bankruptcy.  
 Throughout the speech, Biden hammered the message that our crises are multifaceted and existential -- and the only remedy is his government and its limitless trillions of rescue dollars.  
 To paraphrase our ludicrously labeled "unity president," I realize conservatives "know this," but let's hope a significant portion of the other half of America understands the full implications of this madness. <https://townhall.com/columnists/davidlimbaugh/2021/04/30/team-biden-intends-to-never-let-its-manufactured-crises-go-to-waste-n2588748>

Once again Glick is right on target and the outlook is tenuous. - rdb

**Iran: Where Biden and Israel’s legal fraternity converge***04/30/2021 Caroline Glick* The US media is treating the leaked recordings of Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif’s conversations with a journalist allied with President Hassan Rouhani as a major scoop. The recordings were allegedly set for release after Rouhani leaves office following this summer’s presidential elections.  
 While there is good reason to doubt their authenticity, assuming the recordings are authentic, Zarif told his interlocutor two notable things. First, he said the Iranian government is merely a mouthpiece. All decisions related to Iran’s foreign and security affairs are made by the Revolutionary Guards in conjunction with Iran’s dictator Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. Zarif said that his own contribution to foreign policymaking was “nil.”  
 As a historical document, the recordings, (if authentic) were helpful. It was good to hear Zarif admit this truth in his own voice. But he didn’t say anything that wasn’t already widely known.  
 Since the first “moderate” Iranian president appeared on the scene with Mohamed Khatami’s election in 1997, thousands of articles and still more intelligence reports have been written asserting and proving that Iran’s president and his ministers have no actual decision-making power in regards to anything with strategic significance to the regime.  
 When Rouhani, the “moderate” presidential candidate was elected in 2013, Israel brought reams of proof to the Obama administration that Rouhani had no influence on regime policy and that anyway, there was nothing moderate about him. Then-President Barack Obama, his vice president Joe Biden and his secretary of state John Kerry along with all of their advisors were unmoved. They didn’t care. They wanted to say the Iranian government was “moderate” to sell the policy of realigning the US towards Iran. It was an ideological position and they had no interest in reconsidering it. So the facts were dismissed.  
 The second significant thing Zarif allegedly said was that Kerry essentially acted as his agent. Zarif said that Kerry told him about 200 Israeli military strikes on Iranian targets in Syria. It bears noting that Zarif cultivated ties with Kerry since his service as Iran’s UN ambassador. Zarif’s time at the UN overlapped with Kerry’s tenure as chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. In the recordings, he indicated that Kerry had developed an emotional attachment to Zarif over the years.  
 While Kerry denied transferring the information to Zarif during his tenure as Secretary of State or in their meetings after he left office, Kerry didn’t mention his actions in the Senate.  
 Whether or not Kerry actually told Zarif directly about Israeli operations, the fact is that senior Obama administration officials repeatedly leaked the media information about Israeli military strikes against Iranian targets in Syria to the media. And since they told CNN, why wouldn’t they tell Zarif and his associates?  
 Kerry is currently a member of Biden’s National Security Council and also serves as his envoy for climate change. Zarif’s alleged revelations provoked calls from Republican lawmakers that Biden fires him from his positions.  
 Even in the unlikely event that Biden dumps Kerry, it won’t have an impact on his administration’s policies towards Iran. Every senior official involved in the administration’s Iran policy shares Kerry’s pro-Iran and anti-Israel positions.  
 Take Colin Kahl. Biden’s appointment of Kahl to serve as Undersecretary of Defense for Policy was confirmed this week by the Senate. After word broke of the Mossad’s May 2018 seizure of Iran’s nuclear archive, Kahl posted a tweet insinuating that the archive was faked and the entire operation was an Israeli conspiracy to drag the US into war with Iran.  
 Speaking in opposition to Kahl’s confirmation, Senator Ted Cruz called Kahl, “the most virulently anti-Israel nominee that would serve in the Biden administration.”  
 Recalling Kahl’s conspiracy theory about the Iran’s nuclear archive, Cruz remonstrated that Kahl has “a lifelong obsession with and antipathy for the State of Israel, and he’s demonstrated a willingness to endanger Israeli lives and American lives to advance that hostility.”  
 Cruz placed Zarif’s claims about Kerry in the context of Kahl’s appointment saying that like Kerry, Kahl, “has been credibly accused of weaponizing and leaking classified information.”  
 Now, thanks to the Democrats who approved his nomination, Kahl is responsible for determining the US security posture towards Iran together with the Robert Malley, the State Department envoy to negotiations with Iran. Like Kahl, Malley has a long history of obsessive hostility towards Israel and support for Iran and its terrorist proxies.  
 Working with them is CIA Director Bill Burns, who ran secret negotiations with Iran for then secretary of state Condoleezza Rice towards the end of George W. Bush’s second term. This week Iran scholar Michael Rubin reported that Burns was in Baghdad over the past several days. There he reportedly met with Iranian officials in private homes.  
 Rubin reported that top administration officials have asked Iraq to release $4 billion “from an Iran escrow account that the Iraqi government had established during the Trump administration in order to ensure that Iraq could purchase Iranian fuel while ensuring that the proceeds would not subsidize Iranian terror.”  
 These moves align with the Biden administration’s previous successful effort to persuade South Korea to unfreeze $1 billion in Iranian funds after Iranian forces illegally seized a South Korean ship and held its sailors captive.  
 The goal of these efforts is clear. The Biden administration is seeking to give Iran money now, before it is in a position to cancel the economic sanctions the Trump administration applied to Iran because Iran refuses to curtail its illegal nuclear activities.  
 Burns moves, it should be noted are taking place as Malley is carrying out indirect negotiations with Iran in Vienna. The goal of those talks was previously to bring Iran into full compliance with the 2015 nuclear deal in exchange for the end of US economic sanctions. Malley has since adopted a position that Iran must merely return to the state of its nuclear activities before the Trump administration abandoned the deal. That is, Iran may continue to cheat, but at the level that it was cheating in 2018.  
 Under the 2015 agreement, all limitations on Iran’s nuclear activities are due to end in nine years. So at best, all Malley’s talks will do is postpone Iran from fielding a nuclear arsenal until 2030.  
 This brings us to Israel. This week, the heads of Israel’s security establishment traveled to Washington to brief top Biden administration officials on the latest developments in Iran’s nuclear project. On its face, the trip was an obvious move. The Americans are holding diplomatic talks with Iran. As the US’s chief Middle East ally, Israel sent its top officials to coordinate its efforts to block Iran from becoming a nuclear power with those of its ally. Unfortunately, the trip was an exercise in futility.  
 Even before Mossad Director Yossi Cohen, National Security Advisor Meir Ben Shabbat and head of Military Intelligence Dorector Maj. Gen. Tamir Heyman left their offices, White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki said that their briefings would have no impact on US policy towards Iran. Like the Obama administration before it, the Biden administration is ideologically committed to realigning US policy towards Iran and away from Israel and the Sunni Arab states. And no facts will sway it from that course.  
 So too, just as Kerry could not be trusted with classified information Israel shared with him and his Obama administration colleagues, so his colleagues in the Biden administration can be expected to misuse information Israel provides them about Iran.  
 Facing this reality, in which the US – the most important strategic actor in the region – is now openly in Iran’s corner, Israel needs to conceive and implement a strategy to bypass the US and achieve its goal of preventing Iran from becoming a nuclear power.  
 As a general rule, strategic policies are developed through political processes. Although it will be difficult, Israel has the ability to develop an international political strategy that achieves its goal while bypassing Biden. But this brings us to Israel’s domestic political morass. Here it is far from clear that Israel’s elected leaders have the political power to develop and implement a coherent and successful strategy for preventing Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons. Moreover, the domestic political obstacles harm Israel’s ability to implement a successful international strategy.  
 Consider past efforts. According to a 2012 exposé by Israel’s investigative journalism program *Uvda (*“Fact”*)*, in 2010, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and then-Defense Minister Ehud Barak ordered the IDF and Mossad to prepare plans to attack Iran’s nuclear installations. Then-Mossad director Meir Dagan and then IDF chief of general staff Gabi Ashkenazy refused to follow the order. They claimed that Netanyahu and Barak lacked the legal authority to give such an order. At the time, current attorney general Avichai Mandelblit served as the IDF’s Military Advocate General. In a posthumously broadcast interview, Dagan insisted that Netanyahu’s determination to destroy Iran’s nuclear program was driven by “political” considerations.  
 In 2016, Uvda broadcast an interview with Leon Panetta. In 2010, as Obama’s CIA director, Panetta was Dagan’s counterpart. In the interview, Panetta revealed that after refusing Netanyahu’s order, Dagan travelled to Washington and informed Panetta about the order – thus alerting the US to Israel’s plans.  
 Dagan’s move was arguably treacherous, but more to the point, the fact that in 2010 he had faith in the Obama administration’s commitment to Israel’s security than he had in Netanyahu shows that at a minimum, Dagan had no understanding of international politics. The year before, at his address at the American University in Cairo, Obama declared before the world his intention to realign US policy away from Israel and the US’s traditional Sunni Arab allies and towards Iran and the Muslim Brotherhood. Dagan clearly failed to grasp the implications of the speech. Netanyahu and Barak clearly understood them.  
 As Attorney General, the same Mandelblit who claimed in 2010 that Israel’s elected leaders lacked the authority to determine strategic policy has even more aggressively eroded the governing powers of Israel’s political leadership, while arrogating those powers and authorities to himself and his office. Just this week, Mandelblit took his legally ungirded efforts to new heights by declaring illegal a legal vote of the government which approved the appointment of a justice minister that Mandelblit didn’t want.  
 In this state of affairs, with elected leaders hamstrung by unelected lawyers devoid of international political awareness or accountability to the voting public, the likelihood that Israel’s elected leaders will be capable of conceiving and carrying out a policy to block Iran’s rise as a nuclear power is not high.  
 The Israeli public discourse about legal reform generally focuses on the domestic implications of the legal fraternity’s seizure of the political powers of elected officials. But as the episode from 2010 makes clear, the current power imbalance between unelected lawyers and elected politicians has acute strategic implications. Until Israel’s elected leaders seize back their powers from the government attorneys, they will be unable to contend with the strategic challenge posed by the Biden administration’s embrace of Iran and gutting of the US-Israel alliance.

<https://carolineglick.com/iran-where-biden-and-israels-legal-fraternity-converge/>

**The Fire Burns**

[](http://2.bp.blogspot.com/-CEz13L48kFE/T68kPo1638I/AAAAAAAAGS4/BJdtPHVps7E/s1600/miron1.jpg)[*Daniel Greenfield*](https://www.blogger.com/profile/13575285186581875356) [*April 30, 2021*](http://www.danielgreenfield.org/2021/04/the-fire-burns.html)

The circle of men whirls around the fire, hand in hand, hand catching hand, drawing in newcomers into the ring that races around and around in the growing darkness. A melody thumps through the speakers teetering unevenly with the bass, the sound is both old and new, a mix of the past and the present, like the participants in the dance, the traditional garments mixing with jeans and t-shirts until it is all a blur.

It is Lag BaOmer, an obscure holiday to most, even to those who come to the fires. The remnants of the Jewish Revolt against the might of the Roman Empire are remembered as days of deprivation in memory of the thousands of students dying in the war, until the thirty-third day of the Biblical Omer, part of the way between Passover and Shavuot, the day when Jerusalem was liberated.  
 Deprived of music for weeks, it rolls back in waves through speakers, from horns blown by children and a makeshift drum echoing an ancient celebration when men danced around fires and shot arrows into the air. The fires and bows have remained a part of Lag BaOmer, even when hardly anyone remembers the true reason for them.  
 The new Yom Yerushalayim, the day of the liberation of the city, is coming up soon,  but the old Yom Yerushalaim, came thousands of years ago and ten days before it on the calendar. Time is a wheel, and, like a circle, everything comes around again. Hands pulling on hands, years pulling on years, on and on like the orbits of planets and stars. The Divine Hand of G-d pulls us along, and we pull each other in the dance of life.  
 The circle speeds up, men racing faster and faster, the children left behind, as the flames sputter and night falls. The rebellion, although bravely fought, failed, and Jerusalem fell again, and then Betar. The joy of the celebration turned to ashes, but, even in the shadow of the empire, their spirit endured. The stories were changed a little, the rebellion encoded into a story of Rabbi Akiva, the pivotal scholarly figure in the war, and of his students who perished because they had not been able to get along with one another. The failure of unity had been the underlying reason for the Roman conquest and the Jewish defeats. It is the ancient lesson still unlearned that the circle of the dance teaches us.  
 Lag BaOmer is not the first Jewish story of physically and spiritual heroism to be encoded for fear of the enemy. There is much that we know, without knowing what it truly means, messages from the past, that exist only as echoes reminding us of our purpose. Few of those in the circle passing around the flame know what they are truly commemorating and yet the act is its own commemoration. Thousands of years later the echo of a fierce joy, the pride of a people emerging out of a momentary darkness in a burst of wild energy, is still here. Though the details are forgotten, the joy endures, the song is sung and the fire still burns.  
 In the darkness, there is nothing but the fire and the dark shapes racing around it, leaping with the guttering flames. A teenager pours oil on the flames and they rise higher and higher. A new song begins but they are all the same song. Even the new songs are old. The music changes, but the words remain the same. Arms rise and fall, feet kick and the participants run around the fire only to end up right back where they began.  
 Codemaking is a dangerous business, for the keys to the code can be forgotten. In Spain and in the American Southwest there are men and women who keep odd rituals, but who no longer remember that the reason they keep them is because they are descended from Jewish Conversos. They have lost the most important part of the code, the part that explains everything. The men dancing around the fire have not lost that. They may not remember the liberation of Jerusalem, but their feet remember it, their arms remember it, their hearts remember it and most of all they remember who they are. They retain the key to the entire code. They remember that they are Jews.  
 It all began with fire. Avraham was cast into the fire and emerged alive from the flames. Then Chananya, Mishael and Azariah. And then millions more turning to ash in the ovens only to rise again in a new generation. "Is not this man a brand plucked out of the fire," G-d asks Satan in the vision of the Prophet Zechariah. "But who may abide the day of his coming?" the Prophet Malachi says."And who shall stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire."

[](http://2.bp.blogspot.com/-7uKdzBurEbc/T68kTfNhGeI/AAAAAAAAGTA/igSxK86DdEY/s1600/Lag+B%27Omer7.JPG) A piece of heavy wood chars, bright sparks rising into the night air. It is cool outside the ring of fire, but here it is painfully hot, the air thick with heat. The children gaze wonderingly at the sparks, flying up like tiny stars, their eyes recording the memory with a purer fidelity than any of the cameras outside the circle. Their minds will record the memory of the light, the feel of it on their skin and the awe of seeing something new for the first time. They will remember the circle and the fire.  
 The story of Moloch is the tale of men who worshiped the fire with the bodies of their children. But the children who race around the margins of this fire are the survivors of the servants of Moloch who tried to thrust their grandfathers and great-grandfathers into the flames. They will grow running around the flames from those who wish to thrust them into the fire, to burn away all that they are. Some will die, killed by Muslim terrorists or by other modern day servants of Moloch, but others will survive, and one day their children will race around the flames, defying the worshipers of fire, the worshipers of death, to do their worst to them.  
 The fire blazes up, tongues of flame darting toward us like the tongues of lions. This is the race we run around the flames that always burn, whether we see them or not. Year after year, generation after generation, and century after century, the fire burns, but we go on and no matter how many of us burn, we continue running the race with the flames, outpacing it, outlasting it and outliving it. No matter how many of us die, we still live.  
  
 A Talmudic recollection bemoans the Zoroastrian persecutions of the Jews. The notion today is as quaint as Assyrian chariots and Roman legions. The day will come when the Islamic persecutions are as obscure and laughable. When all the desert sands have covered over Mecca and the might and power of Islam are one with Assyria and Rome, with ancient pagan religions that have come and gone, blazing brightly like the flames, only to go out into the darkness, the dance will continue.  
 The men slow their steps, an ancient movement that the first wave of settlers to the Holy Land instinctively recreated. Dancing is a key that unlocks secret knowledge, that opens up buried memories, that turns the wheel of time back until it all becomes a circle that comes alive when it is closed. Despite the tremendous variations in customs and appearances, they have all unlocked the code of the circle, the hand to hand connection, the knowledge that whatever else we must go on. That the Jewish people must live.  
 The Bar Kochba revolt was not the last time that Jews fought to liberate their land. It was not the last time that the gates of Jerusalem were thrown open to a Jewish army. The liberation of Jerusalem in 1967 was the fulfillment of a struggle that had been going on for nearly two thousand years, as empires and caliphates had claimed the land, planted their spears and rifles over its barren hills, and enforced their laws upon it. And if Jerusalem falls again, if Masada falls again, if we fall into the fire, then we will rise out of it again, less in number, less in memory, but still a circle.  
 Fresh from battle, the soldiers danced around the flames. They had defeated the legions of Rome, without any special training and with poor equipment, they had beaten the greatest army in the world. They had survived the flames and in an explosion of joy, they raced around the celebratory fires, tasting the momentary immortality of battle. Their names are forgotten, lost to memory. Lag BaOmer is associated now with two of Rome's scholarly opponents, Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai, who passed on the teachings and traditions that kept the circle intact even in the fire.

[](http://4.bp.blogspot.com/-tv6SrbQt6cY/T68kWLUTOzI/AAAAAAAAGTI/9sa-ICRHxk8/s1600/f100501ns01-635x357.jpg) Wars are won and lost all the time. No victory, however significant, endures forever. There is no immortality in the victories of the flesh, only in the triumphs of the spirit. For all our losses, this circle is a victory, an ancient celebration of a spiritual triumph kept secret in the face of the enemy. The circle of clasped hands reminds us that against the dead hand of history, we have a Living Hand that guides us even in our darkest hours, in the smoke and flame, in the ash and fire.  
 "Know that your descendants will be strangers in a land not their own," G-d tells Avraham, as the sun goes down, and amid a thick darkness, a smoking furnace and a flaming torches passes between the parted pieces of the covenant. There is smoke and fire, a thick darkness, but as each hand in the circle clasps another, the pieces are joined together into one. The unity will not last. But it is a reminder of who we can be and who we should be when we join together. A reminder of the covenant with G-d and with one another.  
 The dance is difficult, not because it is hard to learn or do, but because it is tiring. Some fall out of the circle, but others join in. It is a mistake to dwell too much on how many come and how many go. To count the losses, while overlooking the gains. We were never meant to be a numerous people, to swell to an empire, rotten with corruption, choking on its own grossness, until it dies. It is easier to win the race with the flames when you are small and light on your feet. Some tire of the race and leave, and fall into the flames or the darkness and are gone. But we go on. We always go on. <http://www.danielgreenfield.org/2021/04/the-fire-burns.html>

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