

The week ending October 17, 2014

## ISRAEL & THE PALESTINIANS

### **Quietly, Israel is easing Gaza restrictions**

In a dramatic but undeclared change of direction in its policy toward the Gaza Strip, Israel is significantly easing restrictions on the movement of commodities and people in and out of the Hamas-controlled territory following Operation Protective Edge. For the first time since the Islamist movement took control of the coastal enclave in the summer of 2007, the Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT), the IDF branch responsible for civil Palestinian affairs, is allowing Gazan agriculturists and fishermen to market their produce in the West Bank. [The Times of Israel](#) reports in another first, Israel is allowing thousands of tons of building materials to enter Gaza for reconstruction projects to be managed by private contractors. Previously, only the UN was allowed to import such materials. As UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon visited Gaza on Tuesday, Israel allowed 600 tons of cement, 400 tons of steel, and 2,000 tons of aggregates to enter the Strip through the Kerem Shalom crossing, Israeli and Palestinian sources confirmed. A complex three-way supervision mechanism comprising Israel, the PA and the UN has been put in place to ascertain they will not be used to support terrorism.

## IRAN

### **U.S. says no talk now about extending Iran nuclear negotiations**

According to [Reuters](#), A senior U.S. official said on Wednesday a deal on Iran's nuclear program was still possible by late next month and there were no talks now about extending the deadline, after Tehran and Moscow indicated more time may be needed. "We don't know if we'll be able to get to an agreement, we very well may not," the official said, declining to be named. But with less than six weeks to go before the Nov. 24 target date, Western officials say there are still important differences between the sides, especially over the future scope of Iran's production of enriched uranium, which can have both civilian and military applications. One of Iran's chief negotiators, Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi, last week raised the possibility that the talks could be extended, and Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov on Tuesday said the deadline date was not "sacred". But the State Department official said: "There is still time to get this done. There's enough time to get the technical work done, to get the political agreement ... if everybody can make the decisions they need to." Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, speaking in Paris on Tuesday where he met Kerry, said he was "sure that a compromise is possible" in the negotiations with Iran. "I can't guarantee you that it would be reached by November 24. This date is not sacred," he told Russian television. "I'm sure that the main thing is not artificial schedules but the essence of the agreements."

## ISRAEL AND THE WORLD

### **Thousands of celebrants parade through colorful capital in annual Jerusalem March**

Tens of thousands of people thronged the streets of Jerusalem Tuesday afternoon in the annual Jerusalem March, which takes place every year during the festival of Succot reports [The Jerusalem Post](#). Among those in the procession were soldiers from the IDF Paratroopers Brigade who fought in Gaza during the recent conflict, as well as firefighters, police, Border Police personnel, and numerous other groups and associations. Prominent among the marchers were the approximately 5,000 Christian visitors from 80 countries around the world who were in Israel for a five-day conference organized by the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem, a pro-Israel Evangelical Christian group. The Christian visitors marched in their national groupings, many in distinctive national costumes. Ricardo Alencar Malheiros, from the city of Manaus in northern Brazil, was one of the participants in the march and said this was his second visit to Israel. "You have to protect this country, because it is the beginning of everything – it is the birthplace of Christianity, and it is the best place to be in the whole world," he added. Marie Umidi headed a delegation from Virginia that had taken part in the ICEJ conference as well. "We support that strongly as Christians, and as Americans we urge our leaders to support Israel at every chance and to help Israel establish a permanent homeland where they will never have to leave again."

## ISRAEL IN THE NEWS

### **New Israel app aims to counter BDS counterparts**

The latest Israel technology wasn't developed at the Technion, nor was it hatched by a startup in Tel Aviv. In fact, it didn't come from Israel at all. Am Yisrael Buy, a new app (available on Apple, Android and Windows Phone) designed to help users locate and buy Israeli products, is the brainchild of Rabbi Daniel Cohen, 49, the spiritual leader at Temple Sharey Tefilo-Israel in South Orange, New Jersey. After learning this summer about apps being developed to advance the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement, the rabbi said he "went looking for a pro-Israel app and couldn't find one that was standing up to BDS." So Cohen, who sees BDS as a movement geared toward "isolating and destroying the Jewish state," took it upon himself to create Am Yisrael Buy, which launched just before Rosh Hashanah, reports [The Times of Israel](#). Some 2,500 users have downloaded it so far; it includes a list of Israeli products for purchase, as well as links to Israeli media outlets and Israeli organizations. Cohen said he hopes to clean the app's interface and attract people with greater technical know-how to work on the app. But he's not looking to monetize it or start a company. "For me it's about the mission, the love for Israel, and the commitment that brought me into the rabbinate and made me an avid Zionist," he said. "I'm just very fortunate to be in a position where I can make a difference."