

The week ending September 26, 2014

## IRAN

### **West tells Iran it must address nuclear bomb fears**

According to [Reuters](#), Western powers told Iran on Thursday it must step up cooperation with a U.N. watchdog's investigation into suspected atomic bomb research by the country if it wants to get a broader nuclear deal that would ease sanctions. The warning was issued at a board meeting of the U.N.'s International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in Vienna, as chief negotiators from Iran and six world powers prepared to resume talks in New York after a two-month hiatus. Iran's envoy, Reza Najafi, dismissed accusations about his country's atomic activities as "mere allegations ... without any substantiation" but also said a new meeting with the IAEA to discuss the matter was expected to be held soon. The United States and the European Union said they were concerned about the slow headway so far in the IAEA's long-running probe into suspicions that Iran has worked on designing a nuclear weapon. Iran denies the charge and says it is Israel's assumed atomic arsenal that threatens Middle East peace. In a statement to the IAEA meeting, the EU said it was disappointed with the "very limited progress" in that inquiry. Iran has been promising to cooperate with the IAEA since Hassan Rouhani, seen as a pragmatist, was elected president last year on a platform of ending Tehran's international isolation. It says its nuclear work is for non-military purposes only. But Iran did not address two key issues by late August as agreed with the IAEA: alleged experiments on explosives that could be used for an atomic device and studies related to calculating nuclear explosive yields. U.S. envoy Laura Kennedy urged Iran to "intensify its engagement" with the IAEA. "Concerns about the possible military dimensions of Iran's nuclear program must be addressed as part of any comprehensive solution," she said. While the powers seek to limit the size of Iran's future nuclear program—and thereby extend the time it would need for any bid to amass fissile material for a weapon—the IAEA is investigating alleged research and experiments in the past that could be used to make the bomb itself.

## U.S. – ISRAEL RELATIONSHIP

### **Obama talks Mideast crises on annual Rosh Hashanah call with rabbis**

In his annual Rosh Hashanah call with American rabbis, President Obama focused on crises in the Middle East. "He spoke about the complexities and dangers of the Middle East and the challenges facing the world," said Rabbi William Gershon, one of two rabbis who posed questions to the president during the call. Gershon told [Haaretz](#) that there were 900 rabbis who called in. "In general, he spoke about seeking our help in domestic issues, and more importantly foreign policy issues," said Gershon, the president of the Conservative movement's Rabbinical Assembly and also senior rabbi at Congregation Shearith Israel in Dallas. Gershon said he could not go into further detail, as the call was off the record. In its statement describing the call, the White House said

that Obama, as he has done in the past, began by “noting the important role of the American Jewish community in advancing key domestic priorities.” Obama, the statement said, continued with a focus on the Middle East. “He reaffirmed our efforts, working with allies, to degrade and destroy ISIL,” the jihadist group also known as Islamic State or ISIS, “his commitment to preventing Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon, and our collective responsibility to respond to the sharp increase in global anti-Semitism,” the statement said. “He also reaffirmed his unshakeable commitment to Israel’s security, his support for Iron Dome,” the anti-missile system Israel used to deflect rocket attacks during Israel’s war this summer with Hamas, “as well as his support of a sustainable peace through a two-state agreement.” Also asking a question during the call was Rabbi Leonard Matanky, an Orthodox rabbi at Congregation K.I.N.S. of West Rogers Park in Chicago.

## ISRAEL IN THE NEWS

### **Israel’s population rises slightly to 8.9 million**

[JTA](#) reports that the official population of Israel on the eve of the Jewish New Year is 8.9 million, a slight increase from last Rosh Hashanah. The population grew by 2 percent since the previous Rosh Hashanah, rising 173,811 to 8,904,373, according to the Population and Immigration Authority, which released the figures on Sunday. About 75 percent of the population is Jewish. The number of babies born in Israel during the past year was 176,230, including 90,646 boys and 85,584 girls. Some 75,848 people married since Rosh Hashanah, and the country registered 32,457 divorces. The number of new immigrants was 24,801, rising nearly 10 percent. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said at the start of the weekly Cabinet meeting that the population figures are meaningful to the Jewish community some 70 years after the start of the Holocaust. “More than 6 million Jews live here. This number has great significance in light of our people’s history in the previous century as well as in the current one,” he said.

## EUROPE

### **Europe's anti-semitism comes out of the shadows**

From the immigrant enclaves of the Parisian suburbs to the drizzly bureaucratic city of Brussels to the industrial heartland of Germany, Europe’s old demon returned this summer. “Death to the Jews!” shouted protesters at pro-Palestinian rallies in Belgium and France. “Gas the Jews!” yelled marchers at a similar protest in Germany. The ugly threats were surpassed by uglier violence reports [The New York Times](#). Four people were fatally shot in May at the Jewish Museum in Brussels. A Jewish-owned pharmacy in this Paris suburb was destroyed in July by youths protesting Israel’s military campaign in Gaza. A synagogue in Wuppertal, Germany, was attacked with firebombs. A Swedish Jew was beaten with iron pipes. The list goes on. The scattered attacks have raised alarm about how Europe is changing and whether it remains a safe place for Jews. An increasing number of Jews, if still relatively modest in total, are now migrating to Israel. Others describe “no go” zones in Muslim districts of many European cities where Jews dare not travel. Now the question is whether a subtle societal shift is occurring that has made anti-Jewish remarks or behavior more acceptable. Europe has seen protests and outbursts of anti-Semitism whenever the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has erupted, and some analysts say this summer’s anger is a cyclical episode that like others will fade away. Some note that the number of reported anti-Semitic incidents this year in France, for instance, is well below some years in the 2000s. European officials are deeply concerned that radical Islam, nurtured in the Middle East, could take root in Europe.