



# Rabbinic Recap

The week ending August 28, 2015

## IRAN

### **Retired Generals and Admirals Urge Congress to Reject Iran Nuclear Deal**

A group of nearly 200 retired generals and admirals sent a letter to Congress on Wednesday urging lawmakers to reject the Iran nuclear agreement, which they say threatens national security. According to [The Washington Post](#), the letter is the latest in a blizzard of missives petitioning Congress either to support or oppose the agreement with Iran, which would lift sanctions if Iran pared back its nuclear program. Letters have come from ad hoc groupings of rabbis, nuclear scientists, arms-control and nonproliferation experts—and now, retired senior military officers, many of whom have worked in the White House during various administrations dating to the 1980s. “The agreement will enable Iran to become far more dangerous, render the Mideast still more unstable and introduce new threats to American interests as well as our allies,” the letter states. Many of the signatories served in the White House, under Democratic administrations as well as Republican. The only thing they appear to have in common is that they consider the Iran nuclear deal a threat to U.S. interests in the region and its own national security.

### **Hundreds of U.S. Rabbis Sign Letter Against Iran Deal**

Hundreds of American rabbis have signed an open letter calling on Congress to reject the Obama administration's deal intended to curb Iran's nuclear program, adding their voices to an increasingly strident debate splitting the American-Jewish community. “We, the undersigned rabbis, write as a unified voice across religious denominations to express our concerns with the proposed nuclear agreement with Iran,” they wrote in an online petition signed by 871 people. “We have weighed the various implications of supporting—or opposing—this agreement. Together, we are deeply troubled by the proposed deal, and believe this agreement will harm the short-term and long-term interests of both the United States and our allies, particularly Israel.” According to Rabbis Kalman Topp and Yonah Bookstein, who organized the letter, 750 of the signatories have been confirmed as rabbis and include senior members of the Rabbinical Council of America as well as the Reform and Conservative movements. “In my view, this agreement kicks the can down the road, and this is not a harmless can but a ticking bomb. In a little more than a decade, we will be confronting an Iran that is stronger, wealthier, emboldened and has nuclear capability with virtually zero breakout time,” Topp, the rabbi of the Beth Jacob Congregation of Beverly Hills, told [The Jerusalem Post](#).

### **Newest Quinnipiac Poll: Wide Majorities of Voters in Key Swing States Oppose the Deal**

Weeks before Congress is set to take up debate on the agreement reached between Iran and the P5+1, wide majorities of voters in three key swing states oppose the deal, according to the latest Quinnipiac University poll. In Florida, Ohio and Pennsylvania, voters oppose the nuclear

deal with Iran by margins of more than 2-1 and overwhelmingly believe that the deal will make the world less safe. In Florida, 61 percent of voters oppose the deal with Iran, while 25 percent support it. By a margin of 61 to 27 percent, Florida voters also say the agreement will make the world less safe, not safer. In Ohio, 58 percent of voters oppose the deal, compared with 24 percent who support it. Ohio voters also say the agreement will make the world less safe, not safer by a margin of 58 to 26 percent. In Pennsylvania, 61 percent of voters oppose the deal, while 26 percent support it. Pennsylvania voters also believe the deal will make the world less safe, not safer by a margin of 60 to 27 percent. The poll surveyed 1,093 voters in Florida, 1,096 voters in Ohio and 1,085 voters in Pennsylvania between August 7-18, 2015. The margin of error is plus or minus three percentage points.

Click [here](#) to view the poll online.

## **ISRAEL AND THE PALESTINIANS**

### **Israel strikes Hamas site after Gaza rocket attack**

According to [AP](#), the Israeli military says it struck a Hamas target in the Gaza Strip after a rocket was fired at Israel. The military says it hit a Hamas weapon manufacturing facility early Thursday. It says the rocket launched earlier caused no damage or injury. No injuries were reported following the airstrike. Israel says it holds the Islamic militant group Hamas, which rules Gaza, responsible for rockets launched from the territory. Israel and Hamas fought a brutal 50-day war last year. Since then rocket fire and airstrikes have largely subsided although there is still occasional violence. The military says eight rockets have been fired from Gaza since January.

## **ISRAEL IN THE NEWS**

### **Jewish NFL star Julian Edelman visits Israel**

A video released Monday showed Super Bowl champion Julian Edelman traveling through Israel, where he spent nine days exploring his Jewish heritage. In the video, released by trip organizer Combined Jewish Philanthropies, Edelman can be seen calling out “Yalla,” a Hebrew expression meaning “Let’s go,” as he travels through Israel, including the Old City of Jerusalem, the Negev and the Dead Sea. “Exploring my heritage is something I started in the past few years and seeing Israel for the first time and really getting a sense of its history and culture—I now truly understand why it’s so special,” he added. Edelman, a wide receiver for the New England Patriots, rose to stardom last season with all-star level stats and heroics in the team’s Super Bowl victory. He has been known to proudly display his Jewish heritage, including attending Shabbat dinners, wishing supporters a Happy Passover and wearing a U.S.-Israel flag pin during a 2014 game. According to [The Times of Israel](#), the Patriots star was one of the first passengers traveling to Israel on a new direct El Al flight from Boston to Tel Aviv.