



# Rabbinic Recap

The week ending December 18, 2015

## HEZBOLLAH

### **U.S. Congress Votes to Sanction Banks Financing Hezbollah**

The U.S. House of Representatives voted unanimously Wednesday to impose tough new sanctions on banks that knowingly do business with the Lebanon-based Shiite movement Hezbollah. The bill targeting the Iran-backed Hezbollah, which is considered a terrorist organization by Washington and Israel, passed the Senate last month. It now goes to the White House for President Barack Obama's signature. The House adopted the measure 425 to 0, following a unanimous vote in the Senate on November 17. According to [The Times of Israel](#), the new rules direct the president to prescribe punishing regulations against financial institutions that conduct transactions with Hezbollah or otherwise launder funds for the organization. It also requires the administration to present to Congress a series of reports highlighting the group's narcotics trafficking, transnational crime, and operations of international groups linked to Hezbollah, especially in Latin America, sub-Saharan Africa and Asia.

### **AIPAC Statement: Congress Adopts Bill Targeting Hezbollah Finances**

AIPAC commends Congress for final passage of critical legislation to cut off the terrorist group Hezbollah from the international finance system. The House today unanimously passed the final version of the Hezbollah International Financing Prevention Act. The bill originated in the House and gained Senate approval last month. This legislation provides an important tool against Iranian aggression in the region. A key provision of the bill could force international financial institutions to choose between doing business with Hezbollah or the United States. The measure would allow sanctions on foreign financial institutions that knowingly facilitate the activities of the Iranian proxy, Hezbollah, by providing significant financial services. Hezbollah, an Iranian-backed terrorist group, poses a direct threat to American and Israeli security, dominates the Lebanese government, fights for the Assad regime in Syria, and possesses an arsenal of 150,000 rockets and missiles. Hezbollah has killed more Americans than any terrorist group other than al-Qaeda, and has recently attempted attacks, some successfully, in multiple countries including Bulgaria, Thailand, and Azerbaijan. AIPAC appreciates the leadership of Sens. Marco Rubio (R-FL) and Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH) along with Reps. Ed Royce (R-CA) and Eliot Engel (D-NY), who authored the original legislation.

## IRAN

### **AIPAC Statement on IAEA Vote to Close Iranian Nuclear File**

AIPAC deplores the vote by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) board to close the file on the possible military dimensions (PMD) of Iran's nuclear program. The IAEA is closing this file even after discovering further suspicious evidence and experiencing additional Iranian

obstinacy. The IAEA could have recommended delaying Implementation Day until Iran demonstrated substantial compliance with its obligation to explain its past illicit nuclear activities. This decision to whitewash the past represents an inauspicious beginning to the implementation process of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

For over a decade, Iran has repeatedly withheld critical information from the IAEA and has lied by consistently denying nuclear weaponization work in the face of solid evidence to the contrary. Tehran has continued this practice even after accepting the JCPOA last July. Iran has ignored some IAEA official inquiries, and has provided incomplete or deceptive responses to many others. Moreover, the IAEA has gained only limited access to suspect locations and personnel.

Without a complete understanding of Iran's past nuclear weaponization efforts, the IAEA will lack a sufficient baseline to create an effective inspections and verification regime capable of assuring Iranian compliance with the JCPOA. It is impossible to estimate how long it will take Iran to assemble a nuclear weapon—to break out—so long as the full state of its weaponization efforts remains unknown.

The Dec. 2 IAEA report confirmed that Iran has lied about its pursuit of a nuclear weapons program, and Iran continues its mendacity to this day. At the same time, Iran in recent weeks conducted a second illicit missile test to develop a capability to deliver a nuclear weapon, in clear violation of United Nations Security Council resolutions. The continued pattern of violations and obstruction does not bode well for its adherence to the nuclear agreement.

By closing the PMD file and thereby acquiescing to an incomplete accounting of Iran's past nuclear weapons activity, the board of the IAEA weakens the credibility of its institution and lessens the prospect that Iran will comply with the JCPOA in the future.

The United States should demand that the IAEA examines any new evidence of Iranian violations, and that the agency exercise maximum vigilance for Iranian compliance with the JCPOA. In addition, the United States should not hesitate to respond forcefully to any Iranian JCPOA violations.

## **U.S. – ISRAEL RELATIONSHIP**

### **BIRD Program to Bring Israeli Rescue Tech to America**

The BIRD Foundation, which helps bring Israeli tech to America via partnerships between Israeli and American firms, is turning its attention to next-generation first-responder technologies. BIRD, the Israel–U.S. Binational Industrial Research and Development (BIRD) Foundation, is partnering with the Israeli Ministry of Public Security and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to fund projects that will improve the preparedness and capabilities of national rescue forces—including fire, police and first-aid units. According to [The Times of Israel](#), the BIRD program matches Israeli hi-tech companies with U.S. partners that help produce and market a product or service, using the Israeli companies' technology. Once the suitable partner is found, BIRD will also lend the companies money to fund projects, thereby boosting not only specific projects and technologies, but helping to further cement the relationship between the United States and Israel, as well as making a significant contribution to the lives of people affected by the technology in both countries and beyond.