



Rabbinic Recap

The week ending September 18, 2015

U.S.-ISRAEL RELATIONSHIP

United States Sanctions Hamas and Hezbollah

On September 10, the U.S. Treasury Department imposed sanctions on four key Hamas leaders and a company used to channel funds to the terrorist organization. Sanctioned were Hamas political bureau member Salih al-Aruri, senior Hamas financial officer Mahir Jawad Yunis Salah, Abu Ubaydah Khayri Hafiz al-Agha, Mohammed Reda Mohammed Anwar Awad, and the Asyaf International Holding Group for Trading and Investment (Asyaf). All assets of the four activists and the company located on U.S. soil or under the control of American citizens will be frozen. U.S. citizens and companies will be prohibited from maintaining economic or commercial ties with them.

"Treasury is committed to exposing and weakening Hamas, its supporters, and its terrorist agenda," said Adam Szubin, acting Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence. "Today's action targets key players in Hamas's international fundraising and operational network," he added.

In addition to the sanctions by Treasury, the U.S. State Department designated Hamas operatives Yahya Sinwar and Rawhi Mushtaha, Hamas military commander Muhammed Deif, and Hezbollah member Samir Kuntar as Specially Designated Global Terrorists (SDGTs). The U.S. government designated Hamas and Hezbollah as Foreign Terrorist Organizations in 1997.

White House: Obama, Netanyahu to meet November 9

According to [Ha'aretz](#), the White House announced on Wednesday that U.S. President Barack Obama will host Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Washington on November 9. This will be the first time the two leaders will meet in over a year, and a chance to ease the tensions between the two brought on by substantial differences over the Iran nuclear deal.

In a statement, the White House said Obama seeks to discuss with Netanyahu the implementation of the nuclear agreement with Iran that is meant to "prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon," as well as ways to counter "Tehran's destabilizing activities" in the Middle East. According to the White House, another issue Obama wishes to bring up at the meeting is the relations between Israel and the Palestinians, the situation in the Gaza Strip and "the need for the genuine advancement of a two state solution." The White House spokesman added that "Netanyahu's visit is a demonstration of the deep and enduring bonds between the United States and Israel as well as the unprecedented security cooperation, including our close consultations to further enhance Israel's security."

Netanyahu will most likely arrive in Washington on November 8. During his visit, he is scheduled to speak at the Jewish Federations of North America's annual conference. Before meeting

Obama, Netanyahu will meet in two weeks' time with U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly in New York.

In mid October, Defense Minister Moshe Ya'alon will visit Washington and meet with his American counterpart Ashton Carter.

IRAN

Iran: Russia to Help Us Improve Our Centrifuges

[The Times of Israel](#) reports that Russia has agreed to help Iran upgrade its uranium-enriching centrifuges, Iran's nuclear chief said. Moscow has confirmed its "preparedness to cooperate and improve Iran's centrifuges to produce stable isotopes," Ali Akbar Salehi, head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran, said Tuesday, according to the Iranian semi-state [Fars news agency](#).

Salehi was speaking after talks in Vienna with Sergey Kirienko, who heads Russia's State Atomic Energy Corporation. Salehi said Russia had undertaken to help "enhance" Iran's centrifuges as part of July's nuclear deal between the P5+1 world powers and Iran. "Assistance to enhance the designing of our existing centrifuge machines in a way that they can produce stable isotopes is among the Russians' undertakings (based on the July 14 nuclear agreement between Tehran and the world powers)," Fars quoted Salehi saying. "They are among the most powerful and pioneering countries in the world in this field, and they have announced their preparedness to cooperate and improve Iran's centrifuges to produce stable isotopes."

Critics of the nuclear accord have highlighted, among other flaws, that it grants Iran the right to conduct ongoing R&D to improve its centrifuges, potentially enabling it enrich uranium more quickly toward a potential breakout to the bomb. The deal provides, for instance, that Iran will commence testing of the fast "IR-8 on single centrifuge machines and its intermediate cascades" as soon as the deal goes into effect, and will "commence testing of up to 30 IR-6 and IR-8 centrifuges after eight and a half years."

Iran has said that its IR-8 centrifuges are intended to enrich uranium 20 times faster than the IR-1 centrifuges it currently uses.

ISRAEL IN THE NEWS

8.412 Million People Living in Israel

The population of Israel now stands at 8,412,000 people, according to the annual report by the Central Bureau of Statistics released ahead of the Jewish New Year. The report suggests that within the next decade, the population will top 10 million people.

According to the annual statistics survey, 168,000 babies were born in Israel and 42,000 people died during the past 12 months. Israel's population is made up of 6.3 million Jews (74.9%); 1.746 million Arabs (20.7%) and 366,000 thousand residents of other denominations (4.4%).