



# Rabbinic Recap

The week ending April 15, 2016

## U.S. – ISRAEL RELATIONSHIP

### **AIPAC Press Release: Representatives Urge President to Veto One-Sided UN Resolutions**

AIPAC commends the 388 members of the House of Representatives who signed a letter to President Barack Obama which reiterates support for a two-state solution and expresses opposition to United Nations (UN) initiatives that circumvent direct Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations and seek to impose a solution. The letter was initiated by Reps. Kay Granger (R-TX), Nita Lowey (D-NY), Chris Smith (R-NJ), Karen Bass (D-CA), Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL) and Ted Deutch (D-FL).

The letter calls on America to continue its role as a trusted mediator adhering to a set of key principles. Among these key principles are: maintaining close coordination with our ally, Israel; encouraging Arab states to support peace efforts; opposing Palestinian efforts to seek statehood recognition in international bodies; and unequivocally condemning Hamas until it renounces terror, accepts Israel's right to exist, and accepts previously negotiated Israeli-Palestinian agreements.

In recent days, Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas has signaled his intention to seek a new UN Security Council resolution that would dictate the time-frame and terms of an Israeli-Palestinian accord. With this letter, an overwhelming bipartisan House majority has now urged the President to oppose and, if necessary, veto any such one-sided UN Security Council resolution.

[The letter can be found here.](#)

## IRAN

### **EU extends sanctions against Iran over human rights**

The European Union said Monday it had extended sanctions against 82 Iranian officials until 2017 because of the human rights situation in the nation. In 2015, executions in the country were at "the highest rate in over two decades," the UN's top expert on the human rights in Iran, Ahmed Shaheed, told the Human Rights Council last month. According to an [annual review by the State Department](#) released Wednesday they cited the use of torture by Iranian authorities, including "judicially sanctioned amputation and flogging," and noted the ongoing presence of "harsh and life-threatening conditions in detention and prison facilities, with instances of deaths in custody." Shaheed added that "at least 73 juvenile offenders were reportedly executed between 2005 and 2015," 16 of them in the past two years alone. Tehran dismissed the UN report as "biased, discriminatory, and prepared with political motives." "Through exploiting international human rights mechanisms," the report "reduces human rights to a political dispute,"

foreign ministry spokesman Hossein Jaber Ansari said in a statement. In a report published in January, global rights watchdog Amnesty International slammed Iran as the world's most prolific executioner of offenders convicted of committing crimes as juveniles. According to [AFP](#), in a report published in January, global rights watchdog Amnesty International slammed Iran as the world's most prolific executioner of offenders convicted of committing crimes as juveniles.

### **Editorial—Iran's Aggression Merits Sanctions, Not Concessions**

Both the sanctions relief package of the [Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action \(JCPOA\)](#)—valued [at more than \\$100 billion](#)—and the lure of further international trade and investment have not softened Iran's opposition to the West nor its attempts to dominate the Middle East. Since the deal's conclusion, Iran has carried out numerous illegal ballistic missile tests, further destabilized Syria and Yemen, and directly confronted the U.S. military. Nonetheless, Iran is now demanding further sanctions relief to overcome the reluctance of foreign nations and banks to do business with it. Reports that the administration is considering additional concessions beyond what the JCPOA requires—including potential access to the U.S. dollar in trade transactions—are deeply concerning. Members of Congress from both sides of the aisle are rightly [speaking out](#) against this potential move. U.S. policy must encourage good behavior and penalize bad behavior. If Iran wants additional sanctions relief, it must rein in its [regional aggression](#) and adhere to its international commitments. A policy that offers new concessions to Iran in the hope that it will engender better conduct will fail. Granting Iran access to the U.S. dollar and facilitating reintegration of its corrupt financial institutions into the global financial system would reward continued bad behavior while jeopardizing efforts to counter money laundering and terrorism finance. Effective sanctions, [not unilateral concessions](#), are needed now. Iran has a clear path forward to make the most of its sanctions relief: it must curtail its efforts to destabilize the region, adhere to its international commitments and carry out structural reforms. In the meantime, Washington should take tougher steps to press Iran until it makes meaningful change.

## **ISRAEL IN THE NEWS**

### **Google gives \$700K to Israeli disabilities technology initiative**

Google will grant \$700,000 to an Israel-based initiative aimed at producing technology to help people with disabilities. According to [The Times of Israel](#), the search engine giant's grant to Tikkun Olam Makers, or TOM, was announced Tuesday as part of the Google Impact Challenge: Disabilities campaign. Google's funding will "underwrite TOM's plans to support a global movement of innovators creating extremely affordable solutions to neglected needs of people with disabilities, with the goal of improving the lives of 250,000,000 within a decade," according to a statement from The Reut Group, the Tel Aviv-based nonprofit think tank that started the initiative. Tikkun Olam Makers holds three-day innovation makethons in which engineers and technologists come together to invent products for people with disabilities—like a bionic hand and a walker that helps disabled people climb stairs. It claims to have created 120 product prototypes since 2014. TOM, which sponsors maker events in Israel and the U.S., is dedicated to developing technology to help others in need.