



Rabbinic Recap

The week ending August 5, 2016

U.S.-ISRAEL RELATIONSHIP

Israel, U.S. say progress made in military aid talks, agreement expected soon

Following three days of intensive discussions in Washington, D.C. progress has been made in talks between Israel and the U.S. on the military agreement aid, but the two sides have yet to reach a deal. Senior American and Israeli officials expressed their optimism, telling [Haaretz](#) that most of the remaining gaps are technical, and that they believe that an agreement could soon be reached. Talks between the Israeli delegation and the senior American team took off on Monday at the White House. Jacob Nagel, acting head of the National Security Council, led the Israeli team, which also consists of Maj. Gen. Amikam Norkin, the commander of the IDF's Planning Directorate, senior treasury officials and Ambassador to the U.S. Ron Dermer. The American team is headed by National Security Adviser Susan Rice, and includes Yael Lampert, an Israel adviser at the White House, U.S. Ambassador to Israel Dan Shapiro and senior officials from the Defense, State and Treasury departments. The talks ended overnight on Wednesday, with both sides conveying optimism: "We've made progress and closed many of the remaining gaps. We hope soon to be able to reach final agreement," said one American official. A senior Israeli official made a similar statement. "Progress has been made and gaps were closed," he said. "Israel and the U.S. hope to reach an agreement soon."

ISRAEL AND THE PALESTINIANS

Hamas infiltrated Gazan aid group, stole tens of millions of dollars

Hamas infiltrated a large international aid organization operating in Gaza and redirected tens of millions of dollars—60 percent—of the organization's budget to its military wing, the Shin Bet (Israel Security Agency) announced on Thursday, following an investigation that lasted almost two months. The World Vision organization, which operates in 100 countries and employs 46,000 people, fell victim to a complex, pre-planned Hamas takeover scheme, a senior Shin Bet source said, adding that Hamas's military wing stole 7.2 million dollars a year from the budget, aimed at food, humanitarian assistance, and aid programs for disabled children, and channeling the funds to weapons acquisitions, tunnel building and other preparations for war with Israel. "The scope of the infiltration by Hamas to this international organization is an unusual event," the Shin Bet source said. "It reveals a certain pattern," he added. World Vision was unaware of the fact that it was being exploited to channel funds towards war, the source stressed. According to [The Jerusalem Post](#), Hamas used the millions to purchase construction and maintenance means for its military facilities and tunnels, such as metals, fences, covering up greenhouses, and pipes, according to the investigation. This came at the expense of food

meant for the needy in Gaza, often literally. Packages of goods for poor Gazans were redirected to Hamas battalions in northern Gaza, the Shin Bet source said, adding that 2500 food packages, worth 100 dollars each, were taken in this manner from the people of Gaza.

IRAN

Iran executes gay teenager in violation of international law

Iran's regime executed a gay adolescent in July—the first confirmed execution of someone convicted juvenile in the Islamic Republic in 2016—according to Amnesty International on Tuesday. Hassan Afshar, 19, was hanged in Arak Prison in Iran's Markazi Province on July 18, after he was convicted of “forced male-to-male anal intercourse” (“lavat-e be onf”) in early 2015, the NGO said in a statement Tuesday. “Iran has proved that its sickening enthusiasm for putting juveniles to death, in contravention of international law, knows no bounds,” said Magdalena Mughrabi, Deputy Middle East and North Africa Program Director at Amnesty International. According to [The Jerusalem Post](#), Mughrabi added that Hassan Afshar was a 17-year-old high school student when he was arrested. “He had no access to a lawyer and the judiciary rushed through the investigation and prosecution, convicting and sentencing him to death within two months of his arrest as though they could not execute him quickly enough,” Mughrabi stressed. According to a 2008 British Wikileaks dispatch, Iran executed between 4,000 to 6,000 gay and lesbian people between the start of the Islamic Revolution in 1979 to 2008.

ISRAEL IN THE NEWS

Amar’e Stoudemire signs with Hapoel Jerusalem

American basketball star Amar’e Stoudemire has announced a new deal to play with Israeli basketball club just days after announcing his retirement as a player in the National Basketball Association. Stoudemire, who bought an ownership stake in Hapoel Jerusalem in 2013, signed a two-year contract with the red team. That contract includes a call for Stoudemire to sell his shares. “I may be retiring from the NBA, but I’m not saying goodbye to basketball just yet. My next step is playing for Hapoel Jerusalem, one of the top teams in Europe. This isn’t about collecting a paycheck overseas, though; it’s a spiritual journey, too,” writes Stoudemire in a personal blog to The Players Tribune. The former Miami Heat and New York Knicks player has a Star of David tattoo and can speak a bit of Hebrew. “My interests in playing in Israel, at this moment that dream has come true,” Stoudemire, a 14-year NBA veteran, reports [Israel21c](#). “I’m now able to play for Hapoel Jerusalem, a team that I’m looking forward to playing with.” Stoudemire is expected to move his family—wife, Alexis, and four children—to Jerusalem at the end of the month, in time for training camp and the beginning of the new school year.