



Rabbinic Recap

The week ending July 1, 2016

IRAN

Members of Congress Condemn FATF Decision to Suspend Countermeasures against Iran

Members of Congress from both political parties denounced the Financial Action Task Force's (FATF) June 24 [decision](#) to defer its call for countermeasures against Iran for 12 months. FATF is an international watchdog organization dedicated to combatting international money laundering and terrorist financing through the establishment of legal and regulatory guidelines. "The FATF welcomes Iran's adoption of, and high-level political commitment to, an Action Plan to address its strategic (anti-money laundering and anti-terror financing) deficiencies," FATF said in a [statement](#). "The FATF therefore has suspended counter-measures for 12 months in order to monitor Iran's progress in implementing the Action Plan." According to the statement, if Iran neglects to improve its record on money laundering and terrorist financing, FATF will renew its call for vigorous countermeasures to be taken against Iran. On the other hand, if Iran makes serious steps in implementing its Action Plan, the task force will consider "further next steps" at the end of the 12 month period. House Democratic Whip Steny Hoyer (D-MD) [emphasized](#) that the FATF decision sends "mixed messages" to Iran and can "be seen as a victory for Iran's mullahs." House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Ed Royce (R-CA) [called](#) the FATF decision "a sobering reminder that Iran remains a state sponsor of terrorism, and a threat to the U.S. and global financial systems."

U.S.-ISRAEL RELATIONSHIP

U.S. State Department condemns 'outrageous' Kiryat Arba terrorist attack

The U.S. State Department spokesperson John Kirby issued a condemnation Thursday "in the strongest possible terms" for the Kiryat Arba terrorist attack in which 13 year old Hallel Ariel was stabbed to death in her bed Thursday morning. According to [The Jerusalem Post](#), The State Department stated that, "we condemn in the strongest possible terms the outrageous terrorist attack this morning in the West Bank where a 13-year-old girl, Hallel Ariel, was stabbed to death in her home. This brutal act of terrorism is simply unconscionable. We extend our deepest condolences to her family. We also understand another individual who was responding to the attack was wounded by the attacker. We extend our hopes for a quick and full recovery." Hallel Yaffa Ariel died of her wounds after she was stabbed in her room on Thursday morning by a Palestinian teen—identified as Muhammad Nasser Tarayrah, 17, from the nearby village of Bani Na'im—who jumped the fence into the Kiryat Arba settlement, broke into her house and knifed her, before also stabbing a civilian security guard who arrived at the scene. Tarayrah was shot and killed by other guards.

United States, Israel Sign Anti-Tunneling Cooperation Agreement

This week, the U.S. Department of Defense and the Israeli Ministry of Defense announced an agreement to enhance collaboration on counter-tunneling research and development. The two allies will work together on a portfolio of about a dozen Pentagon projects, including an effort to identify a tunnel test site with terrains and geologies of mutual interest. The bilateral agreement represents the implementation of a multi-year congressional initiative to fund cooperative anti-tunneling programs with Israel. Last year, Congress included \$40 million to develop a new, joint U.S.-Israel anti-tunneling defense program to locate, map and destroy terrorist tunnel networks. The agreement updated a 2005 Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the United States and Israel on combating terrorism. “An amendment was done just to include the Financial Reporting requirement called for (in the FY-16 NDAA),” Pentagon Spokesman Chris Sherwood told [reporters](#). “The existing MOA had already called for a 50-50 cost sharing, tasks that benefit both nations, and sharing of data and prototypes. The amendment was negotiated and signed on May 11, 2016.” Project development will focus on capabilities such as tunnel mapping as well as communication and imagery technology. Reps. Doug Lamborn (R-CO) and Gwen Graham (D-FL), who spearheaded an anti-tunneling amendment in last year’s National Defense Authorization Act, both stressed the importance of anti-tunneling cooperation between the United States and Israel. Both the House of Representatives and the Senate defense appropriations bills for fiscal year 2017 contain \$42 million in continued funding for U.S.-Israel anti-tunneling cooperation. On June 16, the House overwhelmingly passed its annual defense spending bill; the Senate version awaits floor consideration.

ISRAEL IN THE NEWS

The Israeli who brings urban gardening to Harlem kids

Plenty of rain falls in Harlem, the northern Manhattan neighborhood synonymous with New York City’s African-American culture. Yet agriculturally, Harlem is a desert. A young woman with roots in Israel—a real desert with thriving agriculture—started an urban hydroponic farm in Harlem supplying organic locally grown produce served up alongside a helping of youth empowerment. What’s more, Leigh Ofer’s Seed Street has Harlem kids planting hydroponic vegetable gardens inside repurposed shipping containers. This material has symbolic resonance given that Ofer’s forebears established the Ofer Brothers shipping company in 1950s Israel, and her family retains strong ties to the international shipping industry. An environmental justice class she took at Brown University opened Ofer’s eyes. “I saw how in the US there so much abundance but people are starved of a connection to the land and to their souls,” she tells [Israel21c](#). “The whole way of life is so artificial and manufactured. I think it all starts with what you put in your mouth.”