



Rabbinic Recap

The week ending October 21, 2016

IRAN

U.S. general suspects Iran role in Huthi attacks on U.S. ships

Iran may have played a role in recent Huthi missile attacks against US warships in the Red Sea, a top U.S. general said Wednesday. Iranian-backed Huthi rebels are believed to be behind a series of incidents this month that saw surface-to-surface missiles fired at the USS Mason on at least two occasions. In response, U.S. cruise missiles on October 13 struck Huthi radar sites believed to have been used to target the weapons. "I do think Iran is playing a role in some of this. They have a relationship with the Houtis, so I do suspect there is a role in there," General Joseph Votel told a Washington think tank, reports [AFP](#). Votel heads the US military's Central Command, which oversees operations across the Middle East. We "are trying to ... understand this as much as we can, so we can properly attribute what is happening, and understand how these attacks are taking place," Votel told the Center for American Progress. "And more importantly, how the decisions are being made to launch these attacks, so we can take action against that." The Pentagon has not disclosed the type of missiles the Huthis used, but Votel noted that "some of the technology that we've seen there are things that are associated with" Iran.

United States Condemns Iran for 'Unjustly' Sentencing Two Americans

The United States is "deeply concerned" regarding recent news reports that Iran sentenced two dual Iranian-American citizens—businessman Siamak Namazi and his father, Baquer Namazi, a former UNICEF representative and governor of Iran's Khuzestan province—to ten years in prison for allegedly spying for and cooperating with the United States. "We are deeply concerned about reports that U.S. citizens Siamak Namazi and Baquer Namazi have each been sentenced to 10 years in prison," said the U.S. State Department in a press statement. "We join recent calls by international organizations and UN human rights experts for the immediate release of all U.S. citizens unjustly detained in Iran, including Siamak and Baquer Namazi, so that they can return to their families." Siamak Namazi is believed to have been arrested in October 2015. His father was detained in February 2016. Siamak's arrest was the first such action against an American citizen in Iran following the January prisoner exchange between the two countries. Key foreign policy leaders in Congress also spoke out against the sentencing. House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Ed Royce (R-CA) called the sentencing "unjust," stating that, "Once again Iran has made a mockery of its own legal system in convicting wrongfully detained Iranian-Americans. It appears the trials violated every basic international standard – carried out in secret with no transparency, no evidence, and no representation. They were a complete and total sham." Ranking Member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee Sen. Ben Cardin (D-MD) said he is "alarmed by news that Siamak and Baquer Namazi have been unjustly sentenced to 10 years prison in Iran," and called for their "immediate release."

UNITED NATIONS

UNESCO's executive board adopts Jerusalem resolution

In spite of an Israeli effort to delay a final vote, the UN cultural agency on Tuesday adopted a controversial Arab-sponsored resolution on East Jerusalem that ignores Jewish and Christian historical ties to Jerusalem holy sites. "It was adopted," a UNESCO spokesman said of the resolution, which led Israel last week to suspend its cooperation with the Paris-based agency. The resolution, passed Thursday in the committee stage of the United Nations cultural body, referred to the Temple Mount and Western Wall only by their Muslim names and condemned Israel as "the occupying power" for various actions taken in both sites. According to [The Times of Israel](#), in a surprise announcement Monday night, Mexico, which originally supported the resolution, announced that it had changed its position and wanted to abstain. The Israeli Foreign Ministry said Tuesday that based on its new opposition, Mexico was working utilize a rare provision to allow for a re-vote. The ministry also said that Brazil had expressed opposition despite initially supporting the motion. Israelis and many Jews around the world view the move as the latest example of an ingrained anti-Israel bias at the United Nations, where Israel and its allies are far outnumbered by Arab countries and their supporters.

ISRAEL AND THE PALESTINIANS

Stabbing attack thwarted at Tapuah Junction, terrorist killed

In the West Bank, Israeli security forces thwarted a Palestinian stabbing attack against Israel Defense Forces (IDF) soldiers at the Tapuah Junction. The assailant, a 19-year-old Palestinian woman, was shot and killed by security forces. According to police, a woman approached Border Police officers at Tapuah Junction, failing to Shomron Regional Council chief Yossi Dagan said following the attack that "this additional attempt to hurt the routine of our lives, not to mention that it comes during one of our holidays, will not succeed." According to [The Jerusalem Post](#), Dagan thanked security forces for their response to the attack. He said that activities for tourists in the Shomron region would continue as planned. heed their warnings to stop. She then pulled out a knife attempting to stab the officers.

ISRAEL AND AFRICA

African nations open for diplomatic ties, business with Israel

African nations are willing and ready to develop and expand their diplomatic and business relations with Israel, a spokesman for the ruling political party in the Ivory Coast said on Wednesday. Joel N'guessan, an official in the Rally of the Republicans party, headed by Ivorian President Alassane Ouattara, said in Jerusalem on Wednesday that the historical cause of the rupture in relations between Israel and African states was a result of political pressure imposed on them by Arab countries who dominated the Islamic world in the 20th century, reports [The Jerusalem Post](#). Today, as that influence has waned, Israel is in a position to expand its diplomatic relations with African countries, but Jerusalem must show its intent by investing in the continent, he said. "In order for Israel to be supported by African countries in the UN, it is important for Israel not only to restore diplomatic relations with Africa, but there must be within Israel an evolution of a diplomatic effort to create investment in Africa," said N'guessan. The embassy, which is a strongly pro-Israel evangelical organization, says it has sent delegations to numerous African states in recent years and discovered that certain countries were keen to deepen relations with Israel.