



# Rabbinic Recap

The week ending September 23, 2016

## U.S. – ISRAEL RELATIONSHIP

### Obama and Netanyahu Reaffirm Strength of U.S.-Israel Relationship

U.S. President Barack Obama and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu [met](#) on Sept. 21 at the United Nations General Assembly in New York to discuss U.S.-Israel relations. Both leaders expressed positivity about the current state of the relationship and its future. “The bond between the United States and Israel is unbreakable,” [said](#) President Obama before the meeting. “It is based on common values, family ties, a recognition that a Jewish state of Israel is one of our most important allies, and a guiding principle throughout my presidency—one that I’ve expressed often to the Prime Minister—is, is that it is important for America’s national security to ensure that we have a safe and secure Israel, one that can defend itself.” “Israel has no greater friend than the United States of America, and America has no greater friend than Israel,” [added](#) Prime Minister Netanyahu. “Our alliance has grown decade after decade, through successive presidents, a bipartisan Congress, and the overwhelming support of the American people.”

On Sept. 14, the United States and Israel reached a new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that pledged \$38 billion in U.S. security assistance to Israel over 10 years starting in Fiscal Year 2019. The agreement includes \$33 billion in Foreign Military Financing (FMF) funds and \$5 billion for missile defense assistance.

“I want to thank you for the Memorandum of Understanding that we signed last week,” [said](#) Prime Minister Netanyahu. “It greatly enhances Israel’s security. It fortifies the principle that you’ve enunciated many times that Israel should be able to defend itself, by itself, against any threat.” “What it [the MOU] does is provide an assurance and a foundation for the kinds of ongoing military and intelligence cooperation that has been the hallmark of our relationship. It allows I think Israeli planners the kind of certainty in a moment where there’s enormous uncertainty in the region. It is a very difficult and dangerous time in the Middle East, and we want to make sure that Israel has the full capabilities it needs in order to keep the Israeli people safe and secure,” [said](#) President Obama.

### AIPAC Statement: Senators Urge President to Veto One-Sided U.N. Resolutions

AIPAC commends the 88 senators who signed a bipartisan letter today urging President Obama to maintain long-standing U.S. policy and veto any one-sided United Nations Security Council resolutions on the Israeli-Palestinian issue. The letter cites President Obama's 2011 General Assembly address in which he said, "Peace will not come through statements and resolutions at the United Nations." Instead, the senators express, "The only way to resolve the conflicts between the two is through direct negotiations." The letter was initiated by Sens. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) and Mike Rounds (R-SD). The letter cautions that the international community

should "avoid taking action that would harm the prospects for meaningful progress." It adds: "Even well-intentioned initiatives at the United Nations risk locking the parties into positions that will make it more difficult to return to the negotiating table and make the compromises necessary for peace. The United States remains an indispensable trusted mediator between the parties, and we must continue to insist that neither we nor any other outsider substitute for the parties to the conflict." In April 2016, 394 members of the House of Representatives signed a [bipartisan letter](#) similarly urging President Obama to oppose U.N. initiatives that circumvent direct Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations and seek to impose a solution.

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

## IRAN

### **U.S. Resident Gets 10-Year Iran Prison Sentence**

A U.S. permanent resident detained for a year in Iran over spying allegations has been sentenced to 10 years in prison and a \$4.2 million fine, his supporters said Tuesday, the latest move in a crackdown on those with foreign ties following last year's nuclear deal. The sentence for Nizar Zakka, a Lebanese citizen who advocates for internet freedom and whose nonprofit group did work for the U.S. government, comes as Iranian officials attend the United Nations General Assembly this week in New York. Amnesty International has said Zakka had only two court hearings before the ruling and received only limited legal assistance. The closed-door tribunal handles cases involving alleged attempts to overthrow the government. According to [ABC News](#), in a statement, the State Department said it was "troubled" by Zakka's reported sentence and demanded his immediate release. "We reaffirm our calls on Iran to respect and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms, cease any arbitrary or politically motivated detentions and ensure fair and transparent judicial proceedings in all criminal prosecutions," the statement said.

## ISRAEL IN THE NEWS

### **Israeli juggler sets wacky new record at the Sea of Galilee**

A new smuggling (swimming while juggling) world record has been set at the 2016 Sea Of Galilee Swim, an annual open-water swimming event in northern Israel. Shahar Cohen, a 46-year-old juggling entrepreneur, upped the ante for this popular race when he opted to swim the 3.5 kilometers while doing backstroke and juggling three balls. "I saw someone smuggling while doing a triathlon and I decided that I wanted to do it," Cohen tells [Israel21c](#). It was American juggler Joe Salter whom Cohen had seen in a video. Salter is credited with inventing smuggling as a viable juggling exercise in 2010 and introducing it to the global juggling community. Cohen is also a fan of joggling (juggling while running) and has competed in marathons in Israel and around the world while performing this sport. He is adamant that smuggling is much more than a gimmick and says that he hopes to create videos of the pool exercises he devised to help stay afloat while juggling.