



# Rabbinic Recap

The week of November 10, 2017

## HEZBOLLAH

### **Saad Hariri Quits as Lebanon Prime Minister, Blaming Iran**

The [New York Times reported](#) that Prime Minister Saad Hariri of Lebanon said on Saturday that he had quit his post, blaming Iran for interference in Arab affairs and throwing his country, already awash with tensions and regional rivalries, into deeper uncertainty. Mr. Hariri, speaking in a televised address from the Saudi capital, Riyadh, issued a blistering condemnation of Iran and its growing power and influence in the region. He also assailed Iran's Lebanese ally, Hezbollah, the Shiite militia and political party that is part of the national unity cabinet he led. "Wherever Iran settles, it sows discord, devastation and destruction, proven by its interference in the internal affairs of Arab countries," Mr. Hariri said, adding that Iran's "hands" in the region "will be cut off." The surprise announcement — which shocked even his own staff — was an ominous sign of the escalating regional rivalry between Saudi Arabia and Iran, analysts said, indicating the growing dominance of Iran and Hezbollah as well as the Saudis' increasingly assertive response. Lebanese and regional analysts, whether supporters or opponents of Hezbollah, said it appeared that Mr. Hariri had been pressured to resign by his patrons, the Saudis, as they and the United States ratchet up efforts to counter Iranian influence. The resignation came after weeks of sharp American and Saudi condemnations of Iran, including from President Trump, and new American sanctions against Hezbollah. By pushing out Mr. Hariri, analysts said, Saudi Arabia could deny Hezbollah a credible Sunni governing partner — an attempt to isolate it and deny it the fig leaf of a national unity government. "They concluded that Hariri was serving as more of a cover for Iranian and Hezbollah influence than as a counterweight to them," said Rob Malley, a former special Middle East adviser to President Barack Obama and the vice president of the International Crisis Group. Yet the resignation also shows how few options Iran's opponents have. Without Mr. Hariri in power, the United States and Saudi Arabia lose their main partner in the Lebanese government. Across the political spectrum, analysts and officials said the resignation ushered in new dangers. If the next government is more pro-Hezbollah, they said, that could lead to devastating sanctions. It could even increase the chances of a new war with Israel, which would see added justification for its argument that there is little distinction between Hezbollah and the Lebanese state.

## PALESTINIANS

### **New Dispute Erupts Over Gaza Border Crossings as PA Pushes for Security Control of Strip**

[Haaretz noted](#) that a week after the Palestinian Authority assumed control of the border crossings in the Gaza Strip, Hamas and Fatah on Tuesday found themselves fighting over control of the Strip. Hamas expressed anger at Palestinian Prime Minister Rami Hamdallah's comments that the PA couldn't guarantee the crossings' orderly operation without assuming full security control over Gaza. [...] Another issue under dispute is the model for operating the

Rafah crossing, which the PA supports and would see European observers placed at the crossing, which was the practice until 2007, when Hamas assumed control of the Strip. The observers kept track of the handling of the crossing and prevented the entry of hostile elements, including foreigners, and Israel had a veto over foreigners who wanted to enter the Strip via the crossing. Hamas requested that the decade-old arrangement not be reimplemented, adding that the decision regarding who enters the Gaza Strip cannot be at Israel's whim. Hamas explained that, previously, over 750 clerks, managers and security personnel worked at the border crossings, and that the organization expects that the border authority will integrate its employees into the new staff rather than dismiss them.

## INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

### **IDF's largest-ever aerial exercise takes off, with India on board**

Air forces from eight countries on Sunday kicked off the Blue Flag exercise in southern Israel — the largest aerial exercise ever held by the Israel Defense Forces, according to a [Times of Israel report](#). Teams from India, the United States, Greece, Poland, France, Italy and Germany are taking part in the exercise, along with Israel, the army said. It is the first time that India is taking part in the biennial exercise, a sign of the improving military ties between Jerusalem and New Delhi. The Indian Air Force sent a C-130J transport plane. Other countries sent fighter jets, transport planes and refueling aircraft. According to the IDF, more than a thousand people — including pilots, commanders and technical personnel — are taking part in the 11-day exercise, which is being held out of the Israeli Air Force's Ovda base, north of Eilat. “The participating nations arrived in Israel in their own aircraft and will practice different situations and scenarios,” the IDF said. The countries will square off against the IDF's so-called Red Squadron, which acts as an enemy force in the exercises. According to the army, the goal of the exercise is to both improve technical ability and to strengthen the “diplomatic cooperation between the countries.” It is Israel's third time hosting the international biennial Blue Flag exercise, beginning in 2013, with it growing larger each time.

## ISRAEL IN THE NEWS

### **Israel sends emergency aid package to plague-stricken Madagascar**

The Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the South African branch of Israel's national emergency service, Magen David Adom, have put together an aid package for Madagascar following a deadly outbreak of the plague there, as [reported by Israel21c](#). The Black Death broke out on the island nation in August, and has infected over 1,800 people, and killed at least 127. The World Health Organization described the outbreak as the worst in 50 years. “We expect all packages to be delivered to the International Red Cross in Madagascar in the next few days,” Ayellet Black, deputy Israeli ambassador to South Africa, told the African News Agency (ANA). “The delivery of different medical equipment such as gloves to carry out medical procedures is being coordinated between Israel's Honorary Consul in Madagascar, Benjamin Memmi, and Madagascar's bureau for natural disasters,” she added. “Israel has a long standing tradition of offering humanitarian assistance and coordinating relief to alleviate disease, hunger and poverty. We have experience in helping countries going through natural and man-made disasters and will always provide assistance to help those in need,” she told the ANA.