



# Rabbinic Recap

The week of December 1, 2017

## IRAN IN SYRIA

### **Iran-backed militia in Syria says it's 'fully prepared' to battle Israel**

The head of a large Iranian-backed Iraqi militia that has been fighting in Syria said his group was "fully prepared" to fight Israel if Damascus asked it to, the [Times of Israel reported](#). Sheikh Akram al-Ka'abi, the leader of Iraq's Hezbollah al-Nujaba, told the Lebanese news network Al Mayadeen Friday night his group would participate in a Damascus-led attack on Israel's Golan Heights. "We are fully prepared to participate in any war with the Syrian Arab Army to liberate the Golan if the Syrian state agrees or requests so," Ka'abi said. He said this would be done through the militia's newest branch, the Golan Liberation Brigade, which was formed in March of this year. Hezbollah al-Nujaba is reportedly controlled by Qassem Soleimani, the commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps' (IRGC) elite foreign operations unit, the Qods Force. Ka'abi, who controls a reported 10,000 men in Syria, also said his group was prepared to defend the Lebanese terror group and fellow Iranian proxy Hezbollah from any Israeli attack. According to the spokesperson, Hezbollah al-Nujaba, the Golan Liberation Brigade comprises of special forces fighters and has advanced weaponry. When the formation of the brigade was announced, the group released a dramatic video, showing its soldiers marching in formation behind the banner "Israel will be destroyed." Israel has raised alarm bells over Lebanon's Hezbollah and Iranian military activity in southern Syria and has vowed to protect the country from any provocation, including reportedly bombing advanced weapons transfers.

## IRAN

### **High-Level Contacts Between North Korea and Iran Hint at Deeper Military Cooperation**

High-level meetings between North Korean and Iranian officials in recent months are stoking concerns inside the U.S. government about the depth of military ties between the two American adversaries, as [reported by The Washington Institute for Near East Policy](#). In September, President Trump ordered U.S. intelligence agencies to conduct a fresh review of any potential bilateral nuclear collaboration. Yet officials in Washington, Asia, and the Middle East who track the relationship indicate that Pyongyang and Tehran have already signaled a commitment to jointly develop their ballistic missile systems and other military/scientific programs. North Korea has vastly expanded its nuclear and long-range missile capabilities over the past year, developing intercontinental ballistic missiles that could potentially target the western United States with nuclear warheads. Over the same period, U.S. intelligence agencies have spotted Iranian defense officials in Pyongyang, raising the specter that they might share dangerous

technological advances with each other. "All of these contacts need to be better understood," said one senior U.S. official working on the Middle East. "This will be one of our top priorities."

## INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

### **In bid to boost Africa ties, Israel to open embassy in Rwanda**

[The Times of Israel reported](#) that Israel is opening a new embassy in Kigali, Rwanda, and is weighing direct commercial flights to the East African country, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced Tuesday. "This is part of the expansion of Israel's presence in Africa and of the deepening cooperation between Israel and African countries," Netanyahu said after a meeting with Rwandan President Paul Kagame in Nairobi. Currently, the Israeli ambassador to Ethiopia deals with Rwanda-related affairs... Netanyahu arrived in Kenya for a whirlwind visit to celebrate the inauguration of President Uhuru Kenyatta and for a marathon session of bilateral meetings with African leaders.

## ISRAEL IN THE NEWS

### **IsraAID and partners open STEM Center in South Sudan**

Israeli humanitarian aid organization IsraAID helped open the first Center for Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) education in South Sudan on November 13, according to [Israel21c](#). Over the next three years, the center is expected to provide vocational training to 10,000 young South Sudanese students in areas such as building and construction; electronics; computing; chemistry and optics. The long-term goal is to provide engineers, technicians, mathematicians and physicians contributing to the economic and social development of the fledgling African country. The University of Juba is leading the initiative in partnership with IsraAID, STEM Synergy, the Gelfand Family Charitable Trust of Massachusetts and UNESCO. IsraAID's mandate in South Sudan is to accompany national government and civil society partners in their efforts to design, implement, deliver, monitor and evaluate sustainable projects, programs and services that meet the protection, health and education needs of communities affected by conflict and displacement. "IsraAID has been working tirelessly with the university and STEM Synergy for the past year and half to make this day happen, and it is truly inspiring to see that our joint efforts have created such a crucial project which, I am sure, will greatly contribute to the social and economic development of South Sudan," said Ophelie Namiech, IsraAID's former South Sudan country director. Current IsraAID Country Director in South Sudan Tim Berke added, "The result today is impressive. But there is more work to come. We need to focus our efforts on bringing STEM awareness and knowledge into the communities, so that all South Sudanese, women, men, girls and boys, have access to information and education." The center was officially opened by the Vice President of the Republic of South Sudan, James Wani Igga, on behalf of President Salva Kiir.