



# Rabbinic Recap

The week of October 6, 2017

## THE PALESTINIANS

### **Landmark Talks Between Palestinian Authority, Hamas Stall**

As covered by [The Wall Street Journal](#), the Palestinian Authority convened its first cabinet meeting in the Gaza Strip in three years This Tuesday, but talks between the internationally recognized Palestinian governing body and Hamas hit a stumbling block over the latter's refusal to disarm. Landmark talks to end a decade long rift between the two Palestinian factions and return control of the Hamas-ruled enclave to the authority hinge partly on the political and militant group agreeing to completely disarm. The authority's president, Mahmoud Abbas, has warned he won't allow Hamas to maintain its armed wing as part of a unity government. "For sure Hamas will never accept this...dismantling al-Qassam," said Hazem Qassem, spokesman for Hamas, referencing the armed wing known as the Izz al-Din al-Qassam brigades. The cabinet meeting was convened by the authority's prime minister, Rami Hamdallah, before authority ministers then visited the Gaza outposts of their respective departments. The question of al-Qassam's fate overshadowed the two-day visit to Gaza, which began Monday, by a delegation of high-ranking authority officials, including Mr. Hamdallah. Negotiations over the issue are likely to continue next week in Cairo. Egyptian intelligence officials also helped broker the talks in Gaza. Mr. Abbas said late Monday he wouldn't allow a situation in the Palestinian territories such as that in Lebanon, where the militant and political group Hezbollah maintains a de facto army alongside Lebanese national forces. The U.S. and United Nations support the talks between the two parties, while Israel is watching them warily for a gauge on the future policy of the Palestinian national movement. "End the militant activities in Gaza and ensure that peace with Israel is achieved based on negotiations," said the U.N.'s special coordinator for the Middle East peace process, Nickolay Mladenov, on Tuesday after meeting with Mr. Hamdallah in Gaza.

## U.S.-ISRAEL RELATIONSHIP

### **Israel Stands with U.S. Following Las Vegas Shooting Attack**

On Oct. 1, a gunman killed at least 58 people and wounded 515 others at an outdoor concert in Las Vegas, Nevada. The gunman opened fire from a hotel room in the Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino before turning the gun on himself. Since then, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said, "On this terrible day, the people of Israel stand shoulder to shoulder with the American people in mourning and sorrow. Our hearts go out to the victims' families and we wish a speedy recovery to the wounded. We grieve with you." Israeli President Reuven Rivlin wrote in a letter to President Donald Trump, "The people of Israel join me in sending our deepest sympathy to you, to the participants in the festival, the people of Las Vegas and to all the people of the United States following this shocking attack which took the lives of so many innocent people and injured so very many more." Rivlin continued, "We stand with you as you mourn the terrible loss of life and injury following this senseless attack on people who had

merely gathered together to listen to music.” Other senior Israeli officials also expressed their condolences.

## **HEZBOLLAH**

### **Lebanese Hezbollah commander killed fighting IS in Syria**

Lebanon's militant Hezbollah group says one of its top commanders has been killed while fighting Islamic State militants in Syria. [ABC News reports](#) that, the 44-year-old Ali Al-Hadi Al-Ashiq is the latest fatality for the Shiite group that has fought alongside Syrian government forces in the civil war next door since 2012. Hezbollah said on Wednesday that he was killed fighting IS in the central desert of Palmyra on Monday. Hezbollah sent thousands of fighters to Syria, helping government forces in major battlefields victories against armed opposition and Islamic militants. More than 1,000 Hezbollah fighters have been killed there. I-Ashiq, also known by his nickname Alhaj Abbas, was among first Hezbollah commanders sent to Syria and he took part in the key battle in al-Qusair, near the Lebanese border. He also fought against Israel.

## **ISRAEL IN THE NEWS**

### **IsraAID Sends Emergency Response Team to Puerto Rico**

Hurricane Maria devastated Puerto Rico and other islands in the Caribbean, and destroyed much of the island's key infrastructure. An emergency response team from Israeli NGO IsraAID, arrived in Puerto Rico earlier this week. [According to Israel21c](#), the team's priority was distributing and setting up water filters in the affected areas and training local people how to use them. In addition, the Israeli team is distributing food and hygiene kits to the lowest-income neighborhoods. Natalie Revesz, head of IsraAID's mission in Puerto Rico, describes the scene: "The island is in complete ruin. There are wrecked cars all over the streets, boats washed onto land, many trees destroyed and felled, and electricity pylons upended, with cables scattered everywhere. The lack of electricity has also hugely impacted Puerto Rico's clean water supply, and many areas now have no or very limited access. People in the streets are worried and shocked; there is a tremendous feeling of confusion and uncertainty." Yotam Polizer and Navoniel Glick, IsraAID co-CEOs, also released a statement: "Our emergency response team is working very closely with local organizations and communities, including leaders from the Jewish community, to assess the most acute, immediate needs. IsraAID remains committed to supporting individuals, families and communities worst-affected by Hurricane Maria." The team will continue to monitor immediate needs and assess mid- to longer-term needs.