



# Rabbinic Recap

The week of July 13, 2018

## IRANIAN AGGRESSION

### **There Are Fears of New Conflicts at One of Israel's Quietest Borders**

A reinforced deployment of tanks and heavy guns is parked along Israel's frontier with Syria as the civil war that transformed the balance of power in the Middle East appears headed into its final stretch, [Bloomberg](#) reported. The fighting in Syria has come full circle as its army sets its sights on retaking Daraa province, where the regime's brutal reaction to anti-government graffiti on a school wall sparked the uprising against President Bashar al-Assad in 2011. The offensive against one of the last two major opposition strongholds has brought Syrian forces close to the Israeli-held section of the Golan Heights, captured from Syria in the 1967 Middle East war. As the thud of shells echoes across what has for decades dependably been Israel's quietest frontier, fears of new conflicts have risen. Iran, whose forces helped to propel Assad to the brink of total victory, has a presence on the doorstep of Israel.

### **Top Iranian general: Forces in Syria 'Awaiting Orders' to Destroy Israel**

In a recent speech, the deputy commander of Iran's Revolutionary Guards (IRGC) boasted that the "Islamic army in Syria" in the Golan Heights was awaiting orders to eradicate the "evil regime" of Israel, as reported by the [Times of Israel](#). He also said the Tehran-backed Hezbollah terror group had 100,000 missiles aimed at Israel.

### **U.S. Slaps Terror Designation on Iran-Linked Group in Bahrain**

The United States designated a Shiite militant group in Bahrain as a foreign terrorist organization Tuesday to ramp up pressure on Iran, the [New York Times](#) noted. The al-Ashtar Brigades are "yet another in a long line of Iranian-sponsored terrorists who kill on behalf of a corrupt regime," Nathan Sales, the coordinator for counterterrorism at the State Department, said in a statement detailing the designation.

### **Pompeo Accuses Iran Of Using Embassies for Terror Plots**

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo on Tuesday accused Iran of using its embassies to plot terrorist attacks in Europe and warned Tehran that its actions have "a real high cost" after it threatened to disrupt Mideast oil supplies, the [Washington Post](#) reported. Pompeo's comments came during a short trip to the United Arab Emirates, a staunch U.S. ally, and as senior U.S. officials were wrapping up three days of talks in neighboring Saudi Arabia on countering threats from Iran and starving it of oil revenue. "Just this past week there were Iranians arrested in Europe who were preparing to conduct a terror plot in Paris, France. We have seen this malign behavior in Europe," Pompeo said in an interview with Sky News Arabia.

## U.S.-ISRAEL ALLIANCE

### Senate Moves to Codify Obama-Era Aid Package to Israel

A Senate panel approved a bill on Tuesday endorsing a decade-long aid package to Israel brokered by the Obama administration, as reported by the [Jerusalem Post](#). The U.S.-Israel Security Assistance Authorization Act of 2018 authorizes a memorandum of understanding negotiated in 2016 between the two governments which will provide Israel with \$38 billion in military aid between 2019 and 2028. A bipartisan majority of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee passed the legislation, allowing it to proceed to the full Senate floor. [...] The American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), which pioneered the legislation, applauded its progress in a [statement](#).

## PALESTINIANS

### Defiant Abbas Says He Won't Halt Stipends to Terrorists

Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas said Sunday that he will continue paying stipends to Palestinian attackers and their families despite the Israeli parliament's decision last week to withhold hundreds of millions in funds from taxes collected on the Palestinian Authority's behalf, the [Times of Israel](#) reported. Abbas defiantly told a meeting of Fatah party leaders that the Palestinian government would pay "our martyrs and prisoners and wounded people" as it had since 1965.

### Palestinians Lose Patience with Abbas as Frustrations Pile Up

Palestinians angry over their dysfunctional government and decrepit infrastructure are souring on Mahmoud Abbas, as the U.S. questions the 83-year-old leader's interest in peace talks with Israel, the [Wall Street Journal](#) reported. Protests, once rare, have broken out in Ramallah, the seat of the Palestinian Authority, which Mr. Abbas heads as president. [...] The president is now in the 13th year of what initially was meant to be a four-year term and has been in and out of the hospital in recent months. He shows no signs of relinquishing power.

## ISRAEL IN THE NEWS

### Israel to Launch Rocket to The Moon in December

Determined to continue its race to the moon despite the expiration of the \$20 million Google Lunar XPRIZE competition last March, Israel's nonprofit SpaceIL announced plans to launch its unmanned module on a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket from Cape Canaveral in Florida in mid-December, [Israel21c](#) noted. If the module reaches the moon as expected on February 13, 2019, it will make history as the smallest and first privately funded unmanned spacecraft to land on the moon. [...] Until now, only three world superpowers—the United States, Russia, and China—have achieved controlled lunar landings.

### Israel Ranked Eighth Most Powerful Country in the World

Israel has been ranked as the eighth most powerful country in the world, in an annual poll compiled by U.S. News and World Reports, as reported by [Haaretz](#). Israel ranks particularly high in terms of life expectancy, education and per capita income. But while its economy is highly developed thanks to the high-tech, pharmaceutical and diamond-cutting industries, Israel also ranks as one of the most unequal societies.