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1. Die Ukraine-Krise bringt Israel in ein Dilemma

Israels Ministerpräsident Naftali Bennett unterhält als einer der letzten westlichen Regierungschefs noch immer eine direkte Verbindung zu Russlands Präsident Wladimir Putin. In einem Telefonat bot er sich als Vermittler an, um die Kriegshandlungen in der Ukraine zu stoppen. Israelische Medien berichteten über eine entsprechende Anfrage an Bennett von Seiten des ukrainischen Präsidenten Wolodymyr Selenskyj, der sich zudem Jerusalem als Ort der Treffen wünschte. Israel unterhält gute Beziehungen zu beiden Konfliktstaaten, allerdings verurteilte Außenminister Yair Lapid Russlands Angriff auf die Ukraine. Die Krise bringt Israel in ein Dilemma: Einerseits will Jerusalem es nicht mit dem wichtigsten Bündnispartner, den USA, verderben, zum anderen ist Israel aus strategischen Gründen auf Absprachen mit Moskau angewiesen. Die russische Armee hält sich bislang zurück, wenn israelische Kampfflieger iranische Ziele in Syrien bombardieren. Am 5. März flog Israels Premierminister Bennett nach Moskau zu einem dreistündigen Treffen mit Präsident Putin, um Wege zu einer Beilegung des Krieges gegen die Ukraine zu prüfen. Nach dem Treffen mit Putin telefonierte Bennett mit Präsident Selenskyj sowie Frankreichs Präsident Macron und berichtete ihnen über das Gespräch mit Putin. Anschließend flog Bennet weiter nach Berlin zu einem Treffen mit Kanzler Olaf Scholz. Ob Bennetts diplomatischer Einsatz die Lösung des Kon-

flikts näher gebracht hat, ist bis bislang nicht bekannt.

From Kyiv to Damascus, Russia is confronting the West

Israel now finds itself trying to have it both ways; on one hand, declaring its commitment to its US ally, while taking care not to offend Moscow or Russian President Vladimir Putin on the other. No wonder officials in Jerusalem fear the repercussions of the Ukraine crisis on the Middle East. Over the last decade, Syria has become the Russians' principal area of operations (...). Thus far, Israel has succeeded in containing the inherent stress in Russia's Syria presence and the need to act inside that country's territory to keep Iran out. It has done all this with Russia's at times tacit approval. The Ukraine crisis has focused the world's, and the Russians' first and foremost, attention on Eastern Europe. Yet Russia is large enough to act on additional fronts. Both a victorious and defeated Russia, or at the very least, a Russia that does not feel it has emerged from the crisis with the upper hand, could be tempted to try and maximize its achievements and expand its influence. (...) the Russian could furthermore increase cooperation with China, and more importantly, Iran. (...) This will be of significant importance on the eve of the expected signing of the new nuclear deal with Tehran and given Iranian aggression aimed at establishing itself throughout the entire Middle East. (...) Israel (...) stick to a

cautious and balanced policy while making sure to protect its security interests. (...)
Eyal Zisser, IHY, 20.02.22

By threat or raw power, Russia is determined to get its way in a post-Soviet world

(...) Russia is not the Soviet Union and its economy is medium-sized and riddled with systemic flaws. Nonetheless, it is still a nuclear power covering immense areas with a strong military that is skilled and experienced in combat in Syria and Ukraine over the past eight years. It wants to take what it perceives as its due, whether through diplomacy, threats or force. (...) it views itself as a global force that must be reckoned with, and (...) there will be no expansion of NATO at the expense of the post-Soviet states, which Putin treats as his natural playground. (...) Putin knows that President Biden is focused on China, that his domestic standing is shaky, and that he is still recovering from the fiasco of the chaotic Afghanistan pullout. Putin has no real desire to rule Kyiv by force, first of all because such a scenario would incur unbearable costs, externally – stifling international sanctions; domestically – high casualties. He would rather advance his goals through sophisticated tactics that combine the threat of force, psychological warfare and a war of information. (...) The West will not send its armies to save Ukraine, will not deploy ground forces on its territory, and will not accept it into NATO nor into the EU. Since Western states ordered the evacuation of their Kyiv embassies and a halt of flights, the Ukrainian economy has taken a deadly hit. In this sense, Putin has already won, because any post-Soviet state that dares to eye the West will know that when chased by the Russian bear, no club-wielding ally will rush to its side. (...) The dramatic events in Ukraine are bound to affect the Middle East, too. Russia, China and even Iran are about to challenge the US, which has lost interest in the region and is on its way out. The implications for Israel's security could be harsh and dangerous.
Ksenia Svetlova, JPO, 21.02.22

Putin invades Ukraine, and he will never stop

(...) The only reason why Putin withdrew from the Minsk II agreement is because Russia's political pressure on Ukraine failed, and thus the Kremlin decided to resolve the "Ukraine problem" by military force. (...) For Russia's rulers, Ukraine is an oddity, a mistake of history, and, ultimately, a problem. (...) If Ukraine succeeds in its drive towards democratization and modernization, Russian citizens will be

less receptive to the Kremlin's domestic propaganda (...). There no longer any doubt that Russia will continue its invasion beyond the two "republics." Two scenarios are feasible in this regard. (...) Moscow will not stop even with the Donetsk and Lugansk Oblasts, and will go even further. (...) Moscow will only stop where it will be stopped.
Anton Shekhovtsov, HAA, 24.02.22

Putin's winter war

(...) Putin regards himself as a latter-day czar whose mission is to restore and expand the shriveled empire that was bequeathed to him. He has more money than he can ever spend (...), a much younger girlfriend (...) and powers unconstrained by any laws. De facto, he has a license to kill, one he doesn't hesitate to exercise. What he lacks and wants is a legacy – confidence that he will be remembered as Vladimir the Great or maybe Vladimir the Terrible but, in either case, as a man of action, a shaper of history, a lion. He's pushing 70. He has no time to waste. (...) I disagree with those who contend that Putin is motivated primarily by fear of NATO, a strictly defensive alliance that Ukrainians want to join because they feel threatened by Putin. Ukraine is not a NATO member, and American and other allied troops will not deploy there. But the United States and the European Union do have a vital interest in preventing fledgling democracies from falling under despotic jackboots. (...)
Clifford D. May, IHY, 24.02.22

Russia invaded Ukraine - what will Israel do?

(...) Israel has to play what several commentators have called "a balancing act" when it comes to Ukraine. On the one hand, it should support Ukraine's right to independence as well as the position of the United States and its European allies who have slapped sanctions on Moscow. But at the same time, it cannot alienate Putin's Russia with which it maintains strong diplomatic and economic ties, and which also has a sizable Jewish community. (...) Israel is certainly not a part of the Russia-Ukraine War, and its main concern should be for the 8,000 Israelis who remain in Ukraine – despite repeated calls from the Foreign Ministry urging them to leave – and the estimated 200,000 Ukrainians eligible to make aliyah under the Law of Return. (...) Putin, who has been a supporter of Israel and the Jewish people, is a master strategist. But he has played a double game, also acting as a key ally to Syria and Iran. In addition to supplying Tehran with arms, Russia also built its first nuclear reactor at Bushehr.

Israel needs to pay heed to its strongest ally, whose president, Joe Biden, strongly condemned Russia's "unprovoked and unjustified attack. (...) While focusing on the safety of Israelis and the Jewish community in Ukraine, Israel should take a moral stand against the war. That is what is needed right now. Editorial, JPO, 24.02.22

Ukraine's lesson for Israel: Rely only on yourself

The Russian invasion of Ukraine poses dangers that could extend beyond the immediate battlefield, potentially changing the world security order for the worse. (...) Although Putin is currently only focused on Ukraine, it's fair to wonder whether the West's exhibited weakness won't embolden him further. And Russia is not alone, of course; China, too (...) is watching closely, which could directly impact the future of Taiwan. These are disconcerting developments, for Israel as well. (...) Israel – which rose from the ashes of the Holocaust – must always position itself on the right side of history; (...) it needs to stand alongside the United States and the West (...) Putin has proven time and again that he is motivated solely by the Russian interest. His cooperation with Israel in Syria is predicated on his local interests there, which could quickly change. One only needs to see how Russia cooperates simultaneously with Iran on a number of issues, including the nuclear one, to understand that Russia is not a stable pillar, and certainly isn't an alternative to the United States. (...) The lack of Western resolve is very troubling. (...) The immediate lesson for Israel is obvious: It can only rely on itself. (...) Yoav Limor, IHY, 25.02.22

Israel's support for Ukraine could be costly

Neutrality was never really an option. You can't make noise like a global military, nuclear and economic power; drive the world crazy with your problems, whether it's the Israeli-Palestinian conflict or the Iranian threat; sell arms and export spyware like there's no tomorrow, or borders; meddle in the domestic politics of other countries, including the American superpower (...) and then, where there is an international conflict, act like a nice little country, a savannah of unicorns and Pegasuses. (...) Israel is now at the front. And this could be more dangerous than having less freedom to conduct airstrikes in Syria. We got a hint of this a month ago, when Russian and Syrian planes jointly patrolled the Golan Heights near the Israel border, and Russia even announced that both states plan to make such patrol

flights routine. (...) in the context of renewing the fundamental partnership with the West, Israel must keep in mind that it may be required to pay a high price. That's how it is in a partnership: You have to pay, not only to demand. This will be yet another bill that Netanyahu left for others to pay. Carolina Landsmann, HAA, 27.02.22

2. Sorge vor einem Atomabkommen mit Iran

Israels Ministerpräsident Naftali Bennett äußerte sich besorgt über den möglicherweise baldigen Abschluss der Atomverhandlungen. Das sich abzeichnende Abkommen werde die Unsicherheit und Gewalt in der Region nur verstärken. Dabei geht es dem israelischen Regierungschef nicht nur um die vorgesehenen Fristen, nach deren Ablauf Teheran das Atomforschungsprogramm und die Urananreicherung wieder aufnehmen könne, sondern auch um die durch die Lockerung der Sanktionen freierwerdenden Gelder. Außenminister Yair Lapid nannte vor allem die libanesische Hisbollah, den palästinensischen Jihad und die jemenitischen Houthi – Terrororganisationen, die vom Iran finanziert werden.

Bennett's nuclear deal speech shows Israel has learned nothing

(...) any nuclear agreement, even a carbon copy of the 2015 agreement, is better than the position Trump's unilateral withdrawal has put us with the egging on of Israel. Since then, Iran has enriched large quantities of uranium, developed tactics that would help it withstand financial sanctions and enjoyed international support from countries who did not jump on the Trump-Netanyahu bandwagon while completely ignoring Israeli use of force and assassinations of senior Iranian figures. The road to nuclear capabilities for Iran is shorter than ever. The emerging nuclear deal will reverse things back to where they were in 2015, and more importantly, it will allow the Iranians to keep putting off the nuclear question like it has been doing for years. Bennett's speech and his government's policies, show us that Israel has learned nothing from its past mistakes. (...) Time after time, Israel reveals itself as one of the last countries that believe in using force for the sake of using force. (...) The quality of Israeli intelligence and Air Force is indeed impressive, but it's more important to ask what are the purpose and worldview for which we carry out such strikes. (...) Israel will never subdue Iran, it must find a shared equipoise that will take into account the complex Iranian worldview. This is the only way to sway Iran

against manufacturing a nuclear bomb for history shows us that whoever wishes to become a nuclear power would do so eventually. (...) Ofer Shelah, YED, 21.02.22

The Iran nuclear deal isn't a threat, and Israel must find a new approach

The latest reports on the issue of Iran's nuclear program have sown fear in the hearts of Israeli decision makers. (...) Prime Minister Naftali Bennett was quick to warn that "(...) If the world signs the agreement again (...) then we are talking about an agreement that buys a total of two and a half years, after which Iran can and may develop and install advanced centrifuges, without restrictions." Bennett forgot to mention that Iran began to violate the agreement only about a year after the United States withdrew from it unilaterally in 2018. (...) Iran is negotiating aggressively – and while the negotiations haven't been free of ups and downs, Tehran has demonstrated seriousness and appears determined to sign a deal. If the deal is signed, it won't allay all of Israel's fears. Iran will still be able to continue developing ballistic missiles, and it's not expected to stop supporting Hezbollah, Islamic Jihad, the Houthis in Yemen or militias in Iraq. At the same time, Tehran is seeking to repair its relationships with Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and the other Gulf states that are considered Israeli allies. Israel's government must view the agreement with suspicion, participate in the international supervisory effort to ensure that all its provisions are indeed upheld and work to thwart any Iranian threat against Israelis. But when the government views the agreement itself as a threat, it is undermining its aspiration to neutralize the existential threat Iran poses to Israel's citizens.

Editorial, HAA, 21.02.22

Israel: Iran got more in nuclear deal than expected, thinks it can get more

The new nuclear deal between Iran and world powers seems closer than ever, and the ball is in the Iranians' court. Tehran managed to achieve a lot more than it expected and still expects to achieve a lot more. (...) The events unfolding in Ukraine may accelerate the nuclear talks in Vienna between Iran and the powers, but other than that, there is no direct link between them. (...) Despite the tensions, the Russians and Americans are able to work together on the Iranian issue and there is no bad blood between them. (...) Tehran is still hesitant, owing to its Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khome-

ini's innate distrust in the West in general, and the U.S. in particular. (...) According to Israel, the Iranians already got much more than they initially thought they would, and are now just stalling for time to get even more waivers. (...) If and when Iran and world powers do end up reaching an agreement, Israel would have to reevaluate its course of action and find another way to get rid of the Iranian nuclear threat once and for all. Jerusalem believes that a return to the agreement makes its job much more complicated, but it has not yet given up. (...)

Itamar Eichner, YED, 21.02.22

Stop lying about the Iran deal

(...) There is no benefit to Israel in exaggerating the problematic aspects of the world powers' apparently emerging rejiggered nuclear deal with Iran. (...) it was disappointing to behold Bennett parroting the ancient regime's trope about the past and possibly future nuclear agreement: that it allows Iran to supposedly "gallop" to the bomb upon its expiration. (...) the truth is simple and quite unhidden. There is absolutely nothing in the agreement – neither the past one nor surely the one to come – that says Iran will be allowed to advance to a bomb upon its expiration. (...) The world by and large does not want and will not want a nuclear Iran. Moreover, the West is still committed to Israel's survival (...). This is not the only reason to seek a non-nuclear Iran, but it compels great lengths to arrest the nuclear program. So the negotiators are indeed giving Iran rope on issues deemed less critical – such as the terrible damage Iran is causing in Syria. If Israel does not want a nuclear Iran and understands the principle of priorities in life, it should welcome the efforts of President Biden and his allies. (...) there is the nuclear program to contend with, as has been the case for a quarter-century or so, and on this matter, Israel would do well to take yes for an answer. It is precisely in the absence of an agreement that Iran has been able to ramp up its uranium enrichment and edge ever closer to weaponization. It is the lack of an agreement that is perilous for Israel, as well as the region and the world. Stopping Iran's nuclear program even temporarily is good, and paying a price for doing it by agreement is inevitable.

Dan Perry, TOI, 23.02.22

Israel can't keep yelling about Iran and stay silent on Ukraine

The Bennett-Lapid-Gantz government's strategy regarding an Iranian nuclear agreement has failed. It had been guided by the following concept: We'll try

to prevent the signing of the agreement and if there's no alternative, we'll have an impact on a new agreement. (...) At the moment, it appears that a new Iranian nuclear agreement with the major powers is about to be signed and Israel's influence on it has been negligible. (...) It's now clear that foiling the agreement through confrontation with the administration won't work. Foiling the agreement through dialogue with the administration won't work. (...) What's absurd is that no one sees the link between this development and the situation in Ukraine. (...) As usual, Israel is preoccupied only with itself. What do we care about Ukraine? We're only preoccupied with our freedom of action in the skies over Syria. (...) Israel is again finding itself on the wrong side of history. (...)

Raviv Drucker, HAA, 24.02.22

3. Neue Unruhen in Ostjerusalem

Der rechtsnationale Politiker Itamar Ben Gvir von der Partei „Jüdische Stärke“ provoziert erneut im Ostjerusalem Stadtteil Sheikh Jarrah mit einem provisorischen Büro. Neue Ausschreitungen in dem nördlich der Altstadt gelegenen Wohnviertel ließen nicht lange auf sich warten. Palästinensische und jüdische Männer gingen zum Teil mit Stühlen aufeinander los. Das Haus einer Siedlerfamilie wurde offenbar vorsätzlich in Brand gesteckt. Die Polizei war mit Sondereinheiten im Einsatz und nahm mehrere Personen fest. Die provokante Anwesenheit des extremistischen Politikers in Sheikh Jarrah stieß auf schwere Kritik von Seiten linker Politiker_innen. Bei Protesten von Palästinenser_innen gegen drohende Zwangsräumungen in Ostjerusalem kam es in der Vergangenheit immer wieder zu Zusammenstößen mit israelischen Sicherheitskräften. Im vergangenen Mai hatte eine Räumungsklage gegen Palästinenser_innen in Sheikh Jarrah massive Spannungen ausgelöst, die schließlich zu mehrtägigen militärischen Auseinandersetzungen zwischen bewaffneten Gruppen im Gazastreifen und der israelischen Armee führten. Dabei kamen mehr als 250 Menschen zu Tode, die meisten von ihnen Palästinenser_innen.

Sheikh Jarrah is the first test for Israel's new attorney general

On May 7, 2021, the day on which Knesset member Itamar Ben-Gvir settled for the first time in East Jerusalem's Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood, the Israeli prime minister at the time, Benjamin Netanyahu warned him (...) it ended with a war in which 12

people were killed on the Israeli side and 280 dead, including 68 children, on the Palestinian side. (...) Sheikh Jarrah is again on fire and Hamas is again threatening to add fuel to the fire. (...) Re-moving the pyromaniacs from Sheikh Jarrah is a necessary step, but it's far from enough. (...) Two authorized legal opinions offer the government a solution to the right-wing messianic takeover of East Jerusalem Palestinian neighborhoods in general and the effort to make Sheikh Jarrah Jewish in particular. (...) When individuals' property rights might conflict with other basic rights of society, such as the right to maintain the public peace and prevent unruliness and disaster, the two values must be weighed and balanced against one another. (...) In 2019, then-Deputy Attorney General Menachem Mazuz issued a legal opinion in which he said that the government was authorized to expropriate property in Silwan (...) to head off the creation of new points of friction as well as to maintain the government's freedom of political action during a highly sensitive political period. (...) Attorney General Avichai Mendelblit (...) preferred to evade the issue of Sheikh Jarrah, relying on formal legal reasoning. (...) Mendelblit has left the scene, but Sheikh Jarrah isn't going anywhere. Will the new attorney general, Gali Baharav-Miara, follow her predecessor's cowardly path and watch from her office, on nearby Saladin Street, as police throw hundreds of women, children and elderly residents of Sheikh Jarrah out of their homes? Sheikh Jarrah is her first trial by fire. She has the power to put an end to the residents' suffering, to prevent bloodshed and to show the world a less ugly side of the face of the occupation. Extinguishing Ben-Gvir's match requires permanently getting rid of the powder keg that he loves to sit on. (...) It's difficult to think of a better test of her intelligence, of her sense of justice and of her courage. Akiva Eldar, HAA, 22.02.22

Hamas doesn't need Sheikh Jarrah or Jerusalem to start a war

(...) In Sheikh Jarrah we saw what happens when there is a lack of police enforcement, and when the government allows pockets of lawlessness to fester. Instigators like Ben-Gvir decide to move in and violence erupts. (...) If all of Jerusalem belongs to Israel, then police enforcement and government control need to extend throughout all of the city, whether the violence is against Jews or against Arabs. It makes no difference. (...) let us be clear about something now: if Hamas decides to attack Israel, it will have nothing to do with Sheikh Jarrah,

just like it had nothing to do with Sheikh Jarrah in May. It is just an excuse. When you are a terrorist organization bent on Israel's destruction, excuses are just that: convenient excuses. If Sheikh Jarrah did not exist, Hamas would invent it. (...)

Yaakov Katz, JPO, 17.02.22

Israel's battle for Sheikh Jarrah only serves Palestinian interests

(...) Even Israel's allies (...) can understand that prolonging the battle over the contentious East Jerusalem neighborhood only harms the Jewish state. (...) The Palestinians must be complete idiots to receive millions of dollars as compensation, while continuing the propaganda can bring them hundreds of millions more. (...) And every visit by far-right legislator Itamar Ben-Gvir to the neighborhood is yet another precious gift that adds more. (...) In the legal context, there are justifications to return the Jewish property in Sheikh Jarrah to its rightful owners (...). But under the current circumstances, no legal argument will convince a serious person that there is a justification in returning Jewish property while preventing the return of Arab one at the same time. The stubborn claim is one that ruins every argument made by Israel against the return of property to Palestinians in the West Bank, Jerusalem and even Jaffa. In the long run, the fight over Sheikh Jarrah will fulfill the vision of a "one-state solution"- which will be neither Jewish nor democratic. Right now we are in the middle of an horror show - where a small group, the tip of the extreme right-wing iceberg is dictating the agenda. Over the past few days this team's most valuable player, Ben-Gvir, has become a superstar. (...) Hamas is guilty of the violence, not Ben-Gvir, but he already spilled oil once and ignited the conflict, there is no need to do it a second time.

Ben-Dror Yemini, YED, 19.02.22

Israeli-Palestinian violence could rekindle in April

(...) The recent clashes between right-wing Jews and Palestinians in Sheikh Jarrah is just the tip of the iceberg. With pyromaniacs like MK Itamar Ben-Gvir being blindly followed by a choir of Likud members of Knesset spilling fuel on the fire, and the police using violence against Palestinians and left-wing activists, the ground is already shaking before the earthquake. (...) Sheikh Jarrah is a case of more than one family that has been living in a home granted to them by the Jordanian government prior to the Israeli conquest and annexation of east Jerusalem in 1967. The homes or the land on which the

homes in question in Sheikh Jarrah were built most likely belonged to Jews prior to 1948. The Jews were forced to leave those homes or ran away from their homes when Jordan succeeded in keeping east Jerusalem under their control. The Jewish claims of ownership are not without base; however, the Palestinians who were given those homes were themselves refugees from territories which became Israel after 1948, many of them from west Jerusalem. (...) The Salem family which was expected to be forced from their home in the coming weeks is but one of tens of other families in Sheikh Jarrah that could make hundreds of Palestinians homeless. (...) For Palestinians, the issues of Sheikh Jarrah and Silwan are reminiscent of the 1948 Nakba and keep alive the harsh memories of dispersion and the destruction of their lives into forced refugee status. This is why many Palestinians view Zionism and the settlement movement in the occupied territories, including east Jerusalem, as the continuation of the Nakba. When a Palestinian is evicted from their home or homes are demolished by Israel, the entire Palestinian people feels the pain and identifies with the new refugees and homeless compatriots. Unfortunately, evictions and house demolitions are on the rise since the Government of Change has taken over power in Israel. (...) Gershon Baskin, JPO, 23.02.22

Despite relative calm, Israel faces plenty of threats on Palestinian front in 2022

While Israel is distracting itself with domestic finance and crime troubles, the Palestinian Authority is dealing with events which could have great significance on the future of the security situation. (...) The first dispute emerging on the horizon is Hamas' strategic efforts to gain legitimization as a political body and become dominant amongst West Bank's Palestinians. (...) The second issue is weakening of the national legitimacy and support of the PA and especially its long-term leader Mahmoud Abbas, who throughout his reign has harmed the PA's governing ability, thus sabotaging the financial state and law enforcement in the West Bank. The dysfunctionality of the PA and its security mechanisms helped strengthen the status of Hamas amongst West Bank's Palestinians, and fester more terrorist and nationalistic attacks against Israel and its settlements. The third matter regards the worrying forecast of what will go down once Abbas finally resigns as PA's president and is no longer on the political arena. The worst case scenario would be that the fight for leadership leads to anarchy that

would translate into violence against Israel and its civilians. (...) The Shin Bet and other domestic security forces are preparing for the worst case scenario when it comes to "the day after Abbas". (...) The Israeli government cannot openly back and express support towards Palestinian leaders. This would potentially lead them to be pictured as Israel's puppets, and thus lose national legitimacy. Therefore, most interactions regarding this matter are done behind closed doors and masked with other political motives. (...) Hamas still poses a threat of a terrorist organization, hence Israel's top priority is to control its expansion into the West Bank as much as possible.

Ron Ben-Yishai, YED, 18.02.22

4. Medienquerschnitt

Spionage-Software bedroht Freiheit und Demokratie

With Pegasus, we're approaching democracy's point of no return

Imagine this: from the moment you wake up to the moment you go to sleep, someone is following your every move. They know what time you wake up—and even how many times you snooze the alarm on your phone. They know where you live, where you work, and everywhere that you've been. They know every conversation you've had, every event on your calendar, your banking details, and even every keystroke you've made on your phone. You may think you are alone or with friends and family, but you are recorded or filmed in your most private moments. This is Pegasus, and the threat we are facing: the end of privacy. The right to privacy embodies the rights of every individual to their personal information, thoughts, ideas, and choices free from the scrutiny of the public or the government. Privacy is one of the most fundamental human rights, inextricably linked to all other rights. (...) This central right is undermined in Israel again and again, in a predictable pattern: first, advanced technologies are developed by the private sector; next, these technologies are tested on Palestinians in the Occupied Territories; and finally, they are used around the world – including in Israel against citizens of Israel. (...) The Israel Police is acting in defiance of Israeli law in using the "Hawk Eye" mass surveillance system, which tracks all civilians on the roads through license-plate recognition, and now seeks to adopt more technologies, including facial recognition. (...) The development and spread of these technologies

aren't just a slippery slope – we are quickly sliding towards a point of no return for democracy and human rights. (...) Pegasus not only critically threatens democratic institutions and human rights in Israel and the Occupied Territories, but all over the world. (...) This is a crucial time in a struggle with potential for wide-ranging impact. Anyone who cares about democracy in Israel should follow closely. Noa Sattath, TOI, 20.02.22

Gewalt extremistischer Siedler gegen Palästinenser_innen

There is no ideology whatsoever behind settler violence

The big problem with the discourse about the increasingly extreme violence being committed by a small proportion of the settlers is the insistence on framing it as ideological violence and inserting into the discussion about these shocking – there is no other word for it – acts of violence highly loaded terms that have nothing to do with it, terms such as messianism, Judaism and nationalism. The violence of these Jewish rioters contains no trace of messianism or nationalism, let alone Judaism. This is (...) lust for control and land and money and power, which is being acted upon largely out of an instinctive understanding that at this time, in these areas, pretty much anything goes and the strongest reign. This (...) violence (...) exploits the distorted link between religion and state for the sake of the personal desires of the people employing this violence. (...) As tempting as it may be to use these events for political ends, to make them the representation of an idea or outlook, it should be taken into account that this use prevents many Israelis from seeing and denouncing these incidents as they truly are, in all their criminality and cruelty. (...) Without relevant and exact language that fits and derives from the reality, we will continue to wallow in the same mire, with the same manipulations. And the violent disturbances in an area where everyone is free to do as he sees fit will only intensify.

Yair Assulin, HAA, 27.02.22

Leichter Rückgang der Corona-Neuinfektionen

10,000 COVID deaths must trigger soul-searching for Israelis

Over 10,000 Israelis have succumbed to COVID-19 since its onset almost two years ago in what looks to be one of the biggest national disasters Israel has ever known. (...)

Two years have passed since we first heard about the COVID-19 virus. And thanks to the experience we have gained, the battle against the pandemic appears a lot different now than how it looked in the beginning. The means at our disposal nowadays are much better. We have many treatment options that have been modified and improved throughout the pandemic. (...) The vaccines, despite their well-known limitations and diminished protection against the Omicron variant, also managed to change the way we approach the pandemic since those who chose to get vaccinated are usually protected against a severe COVID illness. (...) Our way of dealing with COVID has evolved as well. From the policy of lockdowns and quarantines to "life alongside the pandemic". We insist on going back to our "routine," many times burying our heads deep in the sand and completely ignoring what is going on around us. (...) But those who paid the ultimate price for these policies were the sick, poor, and weak, those who weren't vaccinated, those who couldn't avoid the infection, and those who live in areas where hospitals couldn't provide the adequate care to save their lives. (...) Since the next wave is just a matter of time, we must decide how we move forward. After three infection waves with harsh restrictions, and two with almost no curbs at all, it is time for us to find the balance that will allow us to continue our daily life as much as possible without compromising the lives of others.

Sarit Rosenblum, YED, 22.02.22

HAA = Haaretz

YED = Yedioth Ahronoth / Ynetnews

JPO = Jerusalem Post

IHY = Israel HaYom

TOI = Times of Israel

GLO = Globes

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Verantwortlich:

*Dr. Paul Pasch, Leiter der Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung
Israel*

Redaktion:

Susanne Knaul

Judith Stelmach

Homepage: www.fes.org.il

Email: fes@fes.org.il