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1. US-Wahl

Es ist kein Geheimnis, dass sich Israels Ministerpräsident Benjamin Netanyahu einen erneuten Sieg Donald Trumps bei der US-Wahl gewünscht hätte. Dennoch gratulierte er Joe Biden und seiner Stellvertreterin Kamala Harris zum Ausgang der Wahl. Er kenne Biden als "großen Freund Israels", twitterte Netanyahu, und freue sich darauf, mit ihm und Harris zusammenzuarbeiten "um das besondere Bündnis zwischen den USA und Israel zu vertiefen". Seinem engen Verbündeten, Amtsinhaber Donald Trump, dankte Netanyahu für die Freundschaft zu Israel, für "die Anerkennung Jerusalems und der Golanhöhen" sowie Trumps „entschlossener Haltung gegenüber dem Iran“. Unter Trumps Führung hätten die Beziehungen zwischen Israel und den USA „einen Höchststand“ erreicht. Trump hatte mit seiner Politik in Israel viele Sympathien gewonnen. Der scheidende US-Präsident vermied jede Kritik gegen Israels Siedlungspolitik im besetzten Westjordanland. Für die palästinensische Führung hatte er sich mit seiner offen pro-israelischen Haltung als Vermittler im Friedensprozess disqualifiziert. Mit dem Wahlausgang in den USA und der Aussicht darauf, dass Biden erneut in Verhandlungen mit der Führung in Teheran treten wird, wächst die Sorge vor einem möglichen Angriff Israels auf die iranischen Nuklearanlagen. Medienberichten zufolge soll sich auch Trump über einen möglichen Militärschlag beraten haben lassen.

Remain Strong

Whatever happens (...) one thing is certain: The US and Israel will surely maintain their close relationship based on shared values and interests. (...) Trump checked off many items on Israel supporters' wish lists (...). As long as Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu remains in office, Trump is perceived by many Israelis as an easier president for the Israeli government to face. Netanyahu and Trump appear to be in sync on many policy issues (...). The Biden campaign has said the former vice president's style is also to keep disagreements between allies, such as Israel, behind the scenes and to maintain a publicly united front. Still, he and Netanyahu have a drastically different view on settlements and Biden has said that he would want to try and find a way to get the Iran deal back on track, an accord that Netanyahu fought with every diplomatic and political weapon in his arsenal in 2015. But anyone who is concerned about confrontations between Netanyahu or any other potential Israel prime minister with Biden should be reassured by the former vice president's record, going back nearly 50 years. He has decades of voting in support of Israel in the US Senate, including for the bill to move the US Embassy to Jerusalem. (...) Biden often pushed back on then-president Barack Obama's pressure on Israel. (...) Netanyahu expressed hope that regardless of who wins, he will be able to work together to continue the policies that brought three Arab states to make peace with Israel. This is the correct atti-

tude for Netanyahu and Israelis to have. Trump may be popular in Israel, but Biden is no less a friend. (...)
Editorial, JPO, 02.11.20

No matter who wins, Trumpism is here to stay

(...) Trumpism – the powerful process characterized by deep identification with the current president, his values and all his whims – is here to stay and has permanently altered the basis of support for the Republican Party, which had remained stable for many years. The Republican candidates vying for hundreds of seats in the House and 34 Senate seats dare not distance themselves from Trump in any way because he holds the huge right-wing American base under his sway. (...) All the serious media outlets in America have exposed Trump's numerous lies. (...) Anyone running for election must show total loyalty to the president. This is the essence of Trumpism. Even though Benjamin Netanyahu outshines Trump by any measure, the clear similarity between American Trumpism and Israeli Bibi-ism worries many and delights others. In Israel, too, Likud, as a party, has been done in. (...) the party's surrender to the rule of a single emperor (...) is clear. As in America, here, too, Netanyahu's lies have been exposed, along with his poor handling of the pandemic in terms of both public health and the economic repercussions. But even the serious criminal charges he faces for various acts of corruption don't budge his base of support. Generals and knowledgeable sources can reveal as many details about the submarines affair as they like. Where the Bibi-ist camp is concerned, it will all fall on deaf ears. (...) we ought to recognize that in Israel and America the battle is not being waged against the past incarnations of political parties that had known ups and downs. The battle being fought by champions of democracy and human rights is now being waged against parties that are loyal to one man and that are completely defined by this loyalty. This is the real menace to democracy.

Uzi Baram, HAA, 03.11.20

If you care about Israel, you have to vote for Donald Trump

(...) Donald Trump has been the most pro-Israel president during my lifetime and arguably the most pro-Israel president in history. President Trump can continue to do great things for the State of Israel if reelected. (...) Trump has demonstrated that he is willing to stand up for Israel at the United Nations. (...) President Trump has showed that he will do

everything in his power to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons and to quell Iran's regional ambitions. (...) The sanctions that have been reimposed make it harder for Iran to sponsor terrorism throughout the world and to develop nuclear weapons. The Iranian economy as of now is on the verge of collapse. (...) Recently, President Trump was responsible for the Abraham Accords, a peace agreement in which several Arab states agreed to recognize and normalize relations with the state of Israel. (...) Trump has completely upended the traditional norms and has been able to forge peace agreements between Israel and the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, and Sudan. In summation, given Trump's track record on Israel and the Middle East, if you truly care about the State of Israel, you need to vote for Donald Trump.

Andre Lövy, JPO, 03.11.20

The Middle East braces for Biden shift

The transition to a President Biden will bring a dramatic shift to America's relationship with allies and adversaries all over the world, but perhaps nowhere will the impact be felt as strongly as in the Middle East. That's because while President Trump's sneering at allies such as the European Union and coddling of dictators from Vladimir Putin to Kim Jong Un could be seen as mostly (if shockingly) rhetorical, he actually upended decades of US policy in the world's most combustible region. Trump was transformative on issues from the Israel-Palestine conflict to Arab democracy, ignored human rights concerns like none before him, binned global conventions and US obligations, and projected the idea that under his watch and in his America, all that mattered was transaction. (...) Biden can be expected to lower the flames of the overheated global conversation and start acting like a friend to allies and as a rival to adversaries, but it is in the Middle East where real change might be immediate. (...) Human rights will matter again (...). Trump's obsession for walking away from the world powers' 2015 nuclear deal with Iran (...) was probably motivated by an irrepressible desire to be the anti-Obama (...). Biden is likely to try to revive the deal, aiming for a longer time-frame and tighter inspection. (...)

Dan Perry, JPO, 10.11.20

Iran nuclear deal will be back in Biden's White House

(...) U.S. President-elect Joe Biden's (...) administration is working on a reworked outline for negotiations with Tehran, a top priority for his upcoming

presidency. (...) The strategy (...) involves a two-phase negotiation with the Iranians through two separate channels. The first is due to take place after Biden takes office in January and before the election of a new Iranian president in June. (...) The main objective during this phase is to reach an understanding with Tehran to freeze its ballistic missile development, end interventionist actions in the Middle East and halt its nuclear military activity. In return and once a new agreement signed, Washington will lift the latest sanctions (...). As far as Netanyahu is concerned, there is no better alternative to heavy sanctions until such a time as Iran decides to throw out its entire nuclear program and its existing atomic capabilities. Gantz, on the other hand, does not rule out an attempt by the Americans to reconfigure the existing agreement, but stresses that any updated outline must not only include an end to Iranian nuclear development, but also an effective ban on its distribution of ballistic missiles to the region – including the rocket workshops in Lebanon - as well as an end to Iranian intervention against Israel in Lebanon and Syria and its activities in war-torn Yemen. (...) The current pace of the development of precision rockets in various covert workshops in Lebanon could force Israel's hand into an all-out military conflict. Gantz has already ordered the IDF to prepare for such a scenario, with a wide-scale military exercise last week seen as a dress rehearsal should the situation escalate. Israeli security officials believe that a good deal with Iran, which could halt its nuclear development and precision weapon manufacturing in Lebanon, is far more preferable to an armed engagement that would only postpone Iran's nuclear race for a number of years. Alex Fishman, YED, 11.11.20

Why hasn't Benjamin Netanyahu called Joe Biden?

(...) Netanyahu genuinely wanted to see Trump win the election, and Biden's victory came as a blow to Netanyahu's plans. It takes time to readjust. In addition, there are more than two months left to Trump's term, and there are issues that still need to be managed, like Iran (...). At some point however, Netanyahu will have to hold that conversation with Biden, and will need to begin to acknowledge that the administration is changing. It will be complicated. Not because Biden is not pro-Israel – his track record over five decades in government proves he is – but rather because Israelis have forgotten what a non-Trump president looks like. Whether it was Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan, George H.W. Bush, Bill

Clinton, George W. Bush or Barack Obama, every president opposed settlement activity and actively pushed for a two-state solution. (...) The point is that opposition to settlements has always been US policy. The change came with Trump, the most unconventional of presidents, who took an alternative position on a complicated conflict. He was the anomaly, not the new normal. (...) Yaakov Katz, JPO, 12.11.20

Biden and Israel – Frenemies?

We can be certain about the uncertainty of our relationship with the United States under Biden. (...) without Trump, Israel wouldn't have been able to make the UAE, Bahrain or Sudan deals (...). Biden will have our backs with regards to our most important issue — security. (...) the US will let us purchase bunker busting missiles along with more advanced aircraft. The real threat though, is what happens after Biden. Biden (...) will be the oldest president ever sworn in, by almost a decade. (...) American Jews are prioritizing Israel less and less and this is reflected in their support for the Democratic party. (...) I hope that Biden has the strength, courage and capabilities to do what almost no political leaders on the international scene seem to be able to do today. And that is to help his constituents rise up over their small and often petty differences. To be the leader of the entire nation. To bring to light shared values rather than accentuating differing ones, for the benefit of the United States, and if I may add, peace and prosperity for the entire world. (...)

Jay Hait, TOI, 13.11.20

Will Netanyahu strike Iran? Unlikely, but Trump might

(...) An evil spirit is hovering over the American capital these days. Along with purges at the top, Trump and his advisers are busy managing a battle of legal self-defense with the aim of overturning the election result, or at least of disrupting Biden's entry into the White House. (...) The question is whether Trump, who never intended to concede the election, is only immersed in processing his mourning and his advisers are flowing with him, or whether there is a plot afoot, desperate and hopeless, to thwart the transition of power. (...) The New York Times, quoting senior sources in the Pentagon, reported this week that the concern there is that Trump is planning one last dramatic act before he leaves – a military attack in Iran or Venezuela. (...) In the Trump era, against the background of the U.S. with-

drawal from the nuclear agreement with Iran, the question of bombing the country did not arise directly until now. (...) Trump is the least predictable U.S. president ever. There's a certain edginess in Israel over the attempt to grasp his intentions concerning Iran during the transition period. If Trump is sharing his thoughts with Netanyahu, the prime minister so far is not updating the defense establishment. It appears unreasonable, in these circumstances, that Netanyahu will seek to impose on his coalition allies from Kahol Lavan (...) a unilateral Israeli move in Iran. But it's hard to completely rule out an American operation, with Israel getting some of the ricochets of the Iranian response to it.

Amos Harel, HAA, 15.11.20

2. Lockerungen im Lockdown

Die Regierung in Jerusalem entschied eineinhalb Monate nach Beginn des zweiten Corona-Lockdowns über weitere Lockerungen. Die Grundschulen öffneten Anfang November für rund eine halbe Million Schüler_innen der ersten bis vierten Klasse, allerdings gilt strenge Maskenpflicht während des Unterrichts und in den Pausen. Die höheren Stufen lernen vorerst weiter von zu Hause via Zoom. Einkaufszentren, Kultureinrichtungen und Fitnesscenter sind noch immer geschlossen. Masken sind im öffentlichen Bereich nach wie vor überall Pflicht. Grünes Licht gilt für Ferienwohnungen sowie Friseur- und Kosmetiksalons, die wieder öffnen dürfen. Fahrunterricht ist ebenfalls wieder erlaubt. In Synagogen, Kirchen und Moscheen dürfen sich bis zu zehn Menschen versammeln, außerhalb von Gebäuden bis zu 20. Nach einem glimpflichen Verlauf zu Beginn der Pandemie waren die Corona-Infektionszahlen nach ersten Lockerungen im Mai drastisch gestiegen. Der seit dem 18. September geltende zweite landesweite Lockdown ließ die Zahlen erneut deutlich sinken. Diesmal sollen die Lockerungen vorsichtiger umgesetzt werden, damit die Infektionszahlen nicht wieder in die Höhe schnellen.

There is no 'normal life' with coronavirus

The second wave of coronavirus hitting Europe and the closures of varying scopes now being imposed teach us that even in countries with leaderships unburdened by corruption and with populations that tend to be more disciplined than Israelis, the pathogen is a tough adversary to beat. This of course does not diminish Israel's responsibility for the mess (...), caused by the government's hasty and reckless

exit from the first lockdown; nor does it ease the blame that Israelis share in brushing off the danger. But the rise in cases in countries like Germany, the Czech Republic, Italy and even Sweden (...) is proof that COVID-19 remains rampant and may not be controllable at all. The recent resurgence around the world and the rise in cases despite careful mitigation demands that we rethink the assumption that we can maintain a degree of normalcy while living alongside coronavirus. In a reality in which any mundane activity - such as going to work or meeting family and friends - can cause contagion, it is hard to see how regular economic activity can be restored and how we ourselves can resume our normal lives. As long as most of the population is not immune to the virus, we cannot allow hundreds of thousands of students back in school without mass contagion occurring. Hotels cannot open their doors to guests, industry cannot return and commerce cannot expect to continue uninterrupted for any length of time when the spread is surging and hospitals are once again facing the threat of being overrun, the latter ultimately leading to an inevitable third lockdown. In this global emergency, talk of reopening economies is unrealistic. It is time to stop fooling the public into believing we will all soon be back to normal. (...) those in power should at least try to mitigate the danger to the very lives of their citizens. Sarit Rosenblum, YED, 01.11.20

Israel's schools in the coronavirus age: Back to abnormal

There's nothing normal about "back to normal" for the children in grades one to four except the chaos provided by the Education Ministry since day one of the coronavirus crisis. (...) The absurdity is that even if holding classes in smaller groups is an efficient way to avoid a spike in infections, that advantage will be scuttled when children from the different capsules mix in afternoon programs. What's the logic in that? School has lurched into session three times like this now. It's inconceivable for the approach to such a large system - 3 million children - to be so amateurish and confused. (...) By cutting back on the material studied, many local authorities throughout the country have drawn up better plans that will allow elementary school children to study five days a week in capsules while following Health Ministry guidelines and without the need to hire extra staff. But the Education Ministry, the Prime Minister's Office and the Health Ministry prefer to ignore the local authorities, apparently according to the crooked logic that if it's broke, don't

fix it. The wavering over dates for the winter matriculation exams is also putting undue pressure on teachers and students, and it looks like we're set for another failure by the Education Ministry. The impression is that decision-making at the Education Ministry is unprofessional, a shoot-from-the-hip approach without learning from previous mistakes. When decisions are made by a small forum of the minister and his people, keeping professionals out of the process, such a complex and sensitive system can't be properly run.

Editorial, HAA, 08.11.20

Netanyahu, crack down on Arab, haredi coronavirus violations

The signs are beginning to look worrisome once again. (...) amid all the discussions and meetings about what to do to prevent a third lockdown, the country's decision-makers are walking on eggshells. The whole country does not need to be under a nighttime curfew, as most Israelis adhere to the restrictions and regulations about holding large gatherings, wearing masks and personal responsibility to stem the virus's spread. Two sectors of the population who don't fall into that category – the country's ultra-Orthodox and Arab citizens – are the ones who need to be targeted. All statistics point to those sectors as being responsible for the bulk of infractions and new infections. (...) the declining trend in the number of cases in the ultra-Orthodox sector had stopped in some localities and in some instances, it had increased. Meanwhile, the infection rate in the Arab sector remains high. (...) Of course, not everyone in the haredi and Arab communities are flouting the coronavirus restrictions, but both sectors have become notorious for continuing to hold large weddings and public events with participants far beyond the allowed number, despite the increase in fines and beefed up police monitoring. (...) Efforts should be made to focus on those areas of the country where a major infection issue remains. At the same time, the rest of the country should be allowed to slowly continue to open up amid stringent supervision and oversight. (...)

Editorial, JPO, 12.11.20

Putting out the coronavirus fires

(...) There may already be reason enough to roll back some of the measures taken to reopen the country but the fight against the virus is an exercise in risk management during a time of extreme uncertainty, and as such is difficult to explain to the population. It is difficult to justify to Israelis why more

restrictions are imposed by the government after a seemingly minor shift in positive tests. The most important guiding principle in risk management is a quick response. Another guiding principle is that there is no such thing as zero risk in determining the proper policy in the battle against COVID-19. (...) It is up to leadership to manage the risk and determine which is worth taking considering health, economy and education concerns. (...) As greater the chance of contagion in a certain economic or social activity, the longer it should remain out of bounds - and when it does resume, the quicker it should be shut down if infection rates rise as a result. These measures (...) must be recognized solely as the result of a careful policy and concern for public safety. (...) In light of recent spikes in COVID-19 cases across Europe, the government should indeed consider a nighttime curfew. (...) A nighttime curfew would also bring home the message that the virus is still with us and is no less dangerous that we believed it to be at the start of the pandemic.

When the ultimate solution is still out of our grasp, we must choose the next best answer and waste no time in implementing it.

Sever Plocker, YED, 14.11.20

3. Nachruf auf Saeb Erekat

Saeb Erekat, Generalsekretär der Palästinensischen Befreiungsorganisation (PLO) und Chefunterhändler bei fast allen Friedensverhandlungen mit Israel, erlag den Folgen seiner Covid-19-Erkrankung. Bis zum Schluss kämpften israelische Spezialist_innen im Jerusalemer Hadassah-Krankenhaus um das Leben des 65-Jährigen. Das künstliche Koma, in das die Ärzt_innen Erekat versetzt hatten, ersparte es ihm, sich der Häme aus Israels rechtem politischen Lager stellen zu müssen, wo die Behandlung des Palästinensers in der israelischen Klinik nicht unkommentiert blieb. Erekat war einer der schlagfertigsten und entschiedensten Kritiker der israelischen Regierung. In akzentfreiem Englisch zürnte er zuletzt Bahrain und den Vereinigten Arabischen Emiraten, die einer Normalisierung der Beziehungen mit Israel zugestimmt hatten. Er stellte Bedingungen für die Wiederaufnahme von Verhandlungen mit Israel, zuallererst den Stopp des Siedlungsbaus. Er drohte, die getroffenen Vereinbarungen mit Israel aufzulösen: „den Schlüssel zurückzugeben“, wie er es nannte. Und doch blieb er unermüdlich seiner Mission treu: Frieden mit Israel, wohl wissend, dass die Erfolgsaussichten miserabel sind. „Ich bin der armeligste Unterhändler in der Geschichte der

Menschheit“, räumte er schon 2007 ein. „Ich habe keine Armee, keine Flotte, keine Wirtschaft und meine Gesellschaft ist zersplittert.“ Schon lange vor Beginn des Friedensprozesses, als in Israel Kontakte zur PLO noch gesetzlich verboten waren, lud der in den USA studierte Politologe und später in England promovierte Friedens- und Konfliktforscher israelische Student_innen zum Dialog an der Al-Najah-Universität von Nablus ein, an der er Internationale Beziehungen unterrichtete. In der palästinensischen Bevölkerung war er, nicht zuletzt weil er auf seinem Weg zur Zweistaatenlösung und der palästinensischen Selbstbestimmung so wenig vorankam, umstritten.

A Palestinian patriot and man of peace

(...) Erakat was a walking archive of the peace process between Israel and the Palestinians. He was wont to speak of every single clause, regardless of whether it had or hadn't been agreed upon in the end. He was the right-hand man of both Palestinian Presidents Yasser Arafat and Mahmoud Abbas, two leaders whose stark differences will one day come to light. (...) He had very clear principles, and he adhered to the idea of a Palestinian state, but he always knew to leave room for a diplomatic compromise. (...) In Jericho, where Erakat lived for almost all of his life, there was quite a bit of flooding in the winter, and in one such instance, just a few years back, things were particularly bad. When I called him to ask how his home was holding up, he told me that his two daughters, who had spent that summer with Israeli youths at a camp run by the peacebuilding and leadership development organization Seeds of Peace, had received 23 emails from Israelis asking how they were. He was noticeably emotional, and although I could not see him, I knew there were tears in his eyes.

Yossi Beilin, IHY, 11.11.20

A loss for all those who desire peace

The death of Saeb Erekat, secretary general of the PLO and veteran of all the negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians (...) was a loss for his people and his family, as well as for all those who want peace and reconciliation between the two peoples. Politician, Jerusalem native, Erekat was a leader in using the diplomatic option as a means to achieving the two-state solution (...). During that entire period (...) Erekat adhered to the solution of the conflict through peaceful means. (...) he took a courageous stand against the terrorist organizations and condemned the terror attacks against Israeli

civilians. He always preserved his contact with Israeli society and served as an ambassador of good will. (...) His death has thinned out the already weakened Palestinian "Oslo camp" (...). Abbas (...) has not cultivated an experienced heir with a pragmatic approach, as in Erekat's example, who will be tasked with rehabilitating the trust of the Palestinian public in a diplomatic solution. Erekat, like the rest of his colleagues in the Palestinian and Israeli peace camp, watched the peace process being trampled in the last years of his life under the boots of U.S. President Donald Trump, (...). In the parting words he sent to his partner in the negotiations, former Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni, Erekat expressed his regret that he was unable to complete the task he was born for. The thwarting of this joint mission – advancing the two-state solution and a sustainable regional peace – was a missed opportunity that Israeli society cannot afford. (...)

Editorial, HAA 11.11.20

An Arab for Peace

(...) Erekat was not a terrorist, not active in terrorist activities and always preferred peace to war. Stricken with the deadly coronavirus (...) he was treated with the very best of medical care. Israeli hospitals do not distinguish between Arabs and Jews, males or females, friends or enemies. (...) In Arab Palestine, Erekat will be hailed as a national hero, a monumental figure in Palestinian history and a devoted personality in efforts well-intended but too often in failure to reach a satisfactory peace accord with Israel. (...) In his obituary in the Palestinian press he was hailed as a Palestinian politician, a moderate and a realist. Two true and endearing words. Israeli leaders who had met with him over many years recognized him as a decent human being who demanded the rights which had been too long denied his people. (...) There is no Palestinian braver and more determined than Erekat. He will be immensely missed by the leaders and citizens of Palestine. (...)

Esor Ben-Sorek, TOI, 14.11.20

Erekat was neither 'enemy in disguise' nor one of us

More so than any other Palestinian leader (...) Saeb Erekat represented the era of the Oslo Accords - the utopian approach to the Middle East conflict. (...) He was a kind of human archive, remembering every document, position and idea raised during the negotiations. His death from coronavirus (...) in many ways represents the end of the Oslo era, although many feel it died several years ago. Indeed, people

like Erekat had little to offer Palestinian society today, especially considering the collective slump in which the Palestinians found themselves in recent years. The negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians have been put on indefinite hold; the Palestinians' vision of an independent state is dimming rapidly; Arab and international backing is diminishing while internal divisions are deepening. (...) many Palestinians are beginning to support a one-state solution that would see them live under Israeli sovereignty. Erekat was a difficult figure to fathom. On one hand he was a person who represented the path of dialogue and the longing for separation between the two peoples living on the same land and on the other he was a leader who did not shy away from attacking Israel mercilessly (...). Erekat was the personification of Palestinian leadership in the 20th century - the kind that supported negotiations but ultimately failed to make decisions, demonstrate flexibility and adapt to changing circumstances. (...) Erekat was first and foremost a Palestinian leader who held onto goals and a collective memory that are not only different from ours but often stand in complete contradiction to them. (...) Erekat's death should at least serve as a reminder in Israel of the need for an in-depth discussion about our future relationship with the Palestinians.
Michael Milstein, YED, 13.11.20

4. Medienquerschnitt

Armee zerstört Beduinendorf

74 Palestinians just lost their home. Does anybody care?

The scope of the destruction wreaked by the Civil Administration November 3 in Khirbet Humsa, a Palestinian shepherding community in the Jordan Valley, was so great that a large delegation of European diplomats went there to see the devastation with their own eyes. The village is in an area that Israel has declared a firing zone. In terms of the number of people made homeless, it was the Civil Administration's largest single demolition operation in 10 years: 11 families – 74 people, including 41 children. In terms of the number of structures razed, it was the biggest since 2016. Dozens of shacks, animal pens, water tanks, watering troughs and solar panels – all destroyed by Civil Administration employees. The destruction took place before the very eyes of dozens of frightened children, who since birth have become accustomed to being de-

prived of the rights enjoyed by children their age just a few kilometers away. (...) The families of Humsa (...) are barred from using the wide-open spaces of the Jordan Valley – most of which is privately owned land – in keeping with their lifestyle and need to support themselves. They are prohibited from connecting to the water and electricity supplies or to use the local access roads. They cannot even dream of permanent housing where they could live without the daily threat of demolition or eviction. (...) this blatant discrimination is perfectly lawful. (...) But law is manmade, and with the aid of military orders the goal is to implement a policy that has not changed since 1967: pushing the Palestinians into separate enclaves, without reserves of land, and shaping the spaces in the West Bank in such a way that most of them are available for Jewish settlement. Firing zones, only a small portion of which are used for training exercises, are one of the proven means of displacing Palestinians from areas that were used seasonally for agriculture and residence before gradually became permanent places of residence. This egregious humanitarian violation is made possible by the apathy of Israelis and the inefficacy of international oversight. (...)
Editorial, HAA, 11.11.20

Straflos als Präsident

Is becoming Israel's president Netanyahu's 'get out of jail free' card?

Sources in the political world believe that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is examining the possibility of becoming Israel's next president when Reuven Rivlin ends his term in office in July, as a possible way to gain immunity from his corruption charges. A draft bill by the Yesh Atid-Telem faction banning anyone charged with a crime from running for Israel's president was defeated in the Knesset several weeks ago. This incident has only strengthened speculation that Netanyahu might be heading down this route. (...) the president has full immunity from criminal prosecution throughout his seven-year tenure (...). If Netanyahu does wish to move from the prime minister's residence in Jerusalem to the presidential residence down the road - and enjoy a seven-year delay in his criminal trial - he will have to overcome with two legal hurdles.
(...) although Yesh Atid-Telem's proposal did not pass, the High Court of Justice can still decide that it is unreasonable for the Knesset to elect a person facing criminal charges to the role of the president,

whom the court says "represents the moral values of the State of Israel." (...) Second, even if Netanyahu does get the job, there are still questions (...). Is the immunity from trial relevant to a criminal procedure that is already ongoing? (...) The legal precedents and the various interpretations of the law should also demonstrate to Netanyahu that he must very carefully examine the possibility of becoming president and whether his criminal trials are not an impossible hurdle in that effort.

Matan Gutman, YED, 06.11.20

HAA = Haaretz

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IHY = Israel HaYom

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