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1. Waffenruhe beendet erneuten Schlagabtausch zwischen Israel und dem Gazastreifen

Nach elf Tagen schwerer Kämpfe einigten sich Israel und die militanten Palästinenser im Gazastreifen mit Hilfe ägyptischer Vermittlung auf eine Waffenruhe. Mehr als 4000 Raketen waren aus dem Gazastreifen auf Israel abgeschossen worden, dabei kamen zwölf Menschen ums Leben. Die israelische Luftwaffe flog umgekehrt hunderte Luftangriffe und tötete nach Angaben des palästinensischen Gesundheitsministeriums in Gaza mindestens 243 Menschen, darunter 65 Kinder. „Wir versuchen, die Zeit der Ruhe für Israel zu maximieren“, erläuterte Regierungschef Benjamin Netanyahu das Ziel der Bombardierungen. Gegenüber Hamas habe man nur zwei Optionen: "Man kann sie entweder erobern – das ist immer eine Möglichkeit – oder man kann sie abschrecken." Israel und Ägypten setzen die Gespräche über eine dauerhafte Waffenruhe mit der Hamas und den Wiederaufbau des Gazastreifens fort. Außenminister Gabi Ashkenazi reiste zu diesem Anlass nach Kairo. Es war der erste offizielle Besuch eines israelischen Außenministers in Ägypten seit mehr 13 Jahren. Auch in Tel Aviv wurde verhandelt. Dort traf der ägyptische Geheimdienstchef Abbas Kamel mit dem israelischen Ministerpräsidenten Benjamin Netanyahu zusammen.

Enough

(...) As the bodies pile up and with them the ruins of military installations, high-rise buildings, houses, apartments, offices and civilian infrastructures in Gaza, the operation is continuing undisturbed, even though (...) it isn't leading anywhere, but merely spreading more death and destruction in Gaza and Israel. (...) the operation should be stopped immediately (...). It must be stopped not just because of the terrible pain and suffering it is causing to millions of people, and not just because the United States is demanding this of Israel, but because it doesn't do Israel any good. This is another faulty war of choice, one of many. It was preceded by all possible mistakes, including violent and unnecessary provocations in East Jerusalem – in Sheikh Jarrah, at Damascus Gate, and at Al-Aqsa Mosque. Although none of this justifies Hamas' indiscriminate rocket fire on a civilian population, it would have been better had Israel maintained quiet during such a tense time instead of creating provocations. Despite the rhetoric of the military and political echelons, Israel's attacks are senseless. The Hamas and Islamic Jihad commanders that Israel has killed will be replaced by others and the military capabilities of both groups will be rehabilitated quickly and will end up being more sophisticated and lethal than previously, as has happened after all the other Gaza operations.
Gaza has no military solution (...).
Editorial, HAA, 19.05.21

Israel's 3-step program for Gaza stability

(...) Operation Guardian of the Walls has essentially achieved its goals: restoring Israel's deterrence and weakening Hamas (...). Even so, the operation's three key strategic objectives have yet to be achieved: stable long-term deterrence against Palestinian terror groups, preventing Palestinian Islamic Jihad and Hamas from further rearming and removing Hamas from its newly gained political, national and religious leadership position not only for the Palestinians, but for Israel's Arabs as well. Israel can still accomplish these goals, but only if it conducts the diplomatic battle to come wisely. (...) When Israel is assured beyond all shadow of a doubt that a ceasefire really is in effect, it will need to implement a carefully thought out plan to minimize the humanitarian damage in the Gaza Strip, in cooperation with international elements. It must simultaneously state that the renewal of socioeconomic activity in the enclave is conditioned on preventing Hamas and PIJ from further rearmament and the return of the Israelis held captive by them, under reasonable terms. If Hamas refuses to this agreement and if it is unable to get the other terror groups to agree, the Strip will remain under blockade, receiving only basic aid from international bodies. This means no Qatari money and no infrastructure projects. At the same time, the IDF must continue to thwart any attempts to rebuild the terror groups' tunnel network (...). Israel must tell Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas that from now on it will only talk with him on all future infrastructure and civilian plans for the Gaza Strip, thereby ensuring that any money allocated to them will not be used by the terror groups. Also, when the time is right, Israel will need to enter talks with the Palestinian Authority in order to reach some intermediary settlement. This agreement would be designed to prevent Hamas from capitalizing on what it has achieved since the start of the events that led to the fighting and block it from gaining a leadership role for the Palestinian people. (...)
Ron Ben-Yishai, YED, 19.05.21

Israel must differentiate between Hamas, Arab riots

(...) The violent struggle currently being waged against Israel by the Islamist organizations in Gaza cannot be allowed to gain a victory (...) in shattering the dream of a shared society and coexistence between Jewish and Arab citizens of Israel. Israel's national strategy with regard to Gaza is that there is no strategy. (...) The modest goal defined by the government for the IDF is to extend the periods of

quiet between fighting (...). There are realistic alternatives to this status quo strategy (...). One alternative is based on the premise that de facto, we already recognize Hamas's sovereignty, and thus the purpose of our strategy should be to reach a long-term ceasefire agreement, or hudna. (...) The second alternative demands even more difficult decisions and perseverance in their implementation. This would include an extended and systematic effort to destroy Hamas's institutions and leadership, in both Gaza and the West Bank, in order to allow the Palestinian Authority to rule in its place. (...) But as long as the situation vis-à-vis the Gaza Strip remains fragile and volatile, we must make a clear distinction between internal and external events. It is in the utmost interest of Hamas to drag the "Arabs of 1948," as they refer to them (meaning, Israel's Arab citizens), into opening another front against Israel, with Hamas leading the way and setting the tone. On the other hand, it is in the utmost interest of Israel to create the sharpest possible distinction between the two events and handle them with entirely different tools. (...) Normalizing the political participation of the Arab public in the centers of decision-making in Israel is a realistic and achievable goal. (...) National leadership must create an iron-clad distinction between the two issues; to develop a national strategy vis-à-vis Gaza that does not accept repeated rounds of fighting as simply our fate; and to act to solve the fundamental challenges facing the country's Arab citizens, so as to alienate and drive a wedge between them and the Islamist leaders of Gaza.

Yohanan Plesner, JPO, 20.05.21

Israel's Gaza war is like no other military operation in history

In the 16 years since Israel withdrew unilaterally from the Gaza Strip, we've had six large-scale operations, an average of one every two and a half years. Each one had its trigger, each its objective. But fundamentally, none were different from the one that preceded it or came after it. (...) In the 16 years since Israel withdrew from the entire Strip, the region has changed dramatically. Wars have been fought, superpowers have come and gone, and borders have shifted like the proverbial sand of the Middle East.

But Gaza remains stuck in place. (...) Instead of looking at the strip of land as enemy territory, maybe Israel needs a shift in the paradigm: does Israel simply accept the reality that there is another round of violence every few years, or is there a possible

alternative? (...) maybe it is worth trying something else. In most likelihood, the answer will be: nothing else will work, because as long as Hamas rules Gaza, it will seek Israel's destruction. It is possible that this reality is something we Israelis simply have to accept. But maybe there is something else. One of the explanations why Hezbollah is currently deterred from a conflict with Israel is because it understands that if there is war, it will be blamed for the inevitable destruction of Lebanon, and specifically and more importantly, the Lebanese national infrastructure. Hezbollah runs Lebanon, and Israel has already stated that in any future war, it would attack Beirut's national infrastructure as part of its target bank. In Gaza, however, there is no infrastructure, beside what Hamas has built for itself. (...) Gazans have the simplest, cheapest and most effective Iron Dome in the world – it is called Stop Shooting. If Hamas stopped attacking, Israel would not have to fire a single missile into Gaza. (...)
Yaakov Katz, JPO, 21.05.21

No Ceasefire Will Put Out the Flames of Hatred Between Us

(...) the public has no confidence that the heavy barrages will come to a halt for long. (...) The hatred towards us never stops. Israel is constantly under siege, with pressure and repeated attacks, not only from Hamas and Hezbollah, but from Iran and other hostile elements all over the world. (...) We live in an integral system and are organized in a network that binds together the entire human race and operates according to strict laws of nature. The main hub in all this interconnected global traffic is the people of Israel. (...) the Israeli nation has a significant role to play in the lives of everyone in the world. We were given a task from the day we stood at the foot of Mount Sinai, united as one man with one heart, when we signed a mutual guarantee and agreed to be a light unto the nations. From that moment on, we received the Torah, the light, the method for uniting the world—the wisdom of Kabbalah. (...) as long as the people of Israel are united above their opposite views, then the power of internal connection between them ignites sparks of light, a positive force that is projected to all the nations of the world in the global network. On the other hand, if the Jewish people succumb to egoism—self benefit at the expense of others—and mutual hatred, it is as if they block the pipeline of oxygen for all of humanity, cutting off the sparks of light. The blockage is not visible, but it is felt keenly in the hearts of people and nations. Animosity against Jews conquers and

suffocates the people of the world until it breaks out as antisemitic hate speech and actions. The more the lack of light and frustration intensifies in the nations of the world, the more it obliges them to take action, to seek to annihilate the Jews wherever they are. (...) We need to listen to the world's internal and underlying demand from us: Jewish unity. (...)
Michael Laitman, TOI, 21.05.21

Assessing Operation Guardian of the Walls: Did it change any opinions?

(...) several Israeli wide-held conceptions have been shattered. The first relates to Israel's intelligence assessment that Hamas is not interested in escalating its struggle against Israel and is focused on its domestic concerns. The way Hamas has engaged with Israel (...) indicates that its plans and capabilities were primed, awaiting the right moment. (...) The timing was especially fortuitous for Hamas given the cancellation of the Palestinian elections widely expected to hand it a significant victory in PA territory. (...) The second failure relates to Israel's policy vis-à-vis the PA, which has rendered Mahmoud Abbas (...) all but irrelevant, essentially depicting him as a traitor to his people for continuing to cooperate with Israel without any significant quid pro quo. (...) Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu have sought to marginalize the PA, positioning Hamas as the only faction capable of delivering achievements to the Palestinians. Rather than proving that moderation pays, Israeli policy has continuously weakened the PA and rewarded the militants of Hamas. The third conception was the assumption that events in Gaza, the West Bank and Israel are unconnected. The Netanyahu government's classic divide-and-rule strategy provided it with an excuse to avoid a peace process. Hamas has tried, with a marked degree of success, to link the three focal points. Events have proven that the Palestinian identity, of which Jerusalem is a major component, is the glue that binds all three arenas. (...)
Elie Podeh, JPO, 29.05.21

Israel's debasement of words

Judging by the level of public interest, Israelis weren't bothered by the fact that the Israel Defense Forces used the foreign media as undercover agents in a military operation. (...) the IDF Spokesperson's Unit "informed" foreign reporters that Israeli ground forces had entered the Gaza Strip. I put "informed" in quotes because the unit didn't actually inform foreign correspondents of anything; it simply put one over on them. Prima facie, of course. Fol-

lowing this “briefing,” media outlets around the world published headlines about a ground operation in Gaza, and millions of people believed them. Meanwhile, in Israel, the IDF Spokesperson’s Unit briefed the local media that no ground operation was underway in Gaza. (...) the fact that the Israeli media applauded the IDF’s brilliant trick, designed to get Hamas fighters scurrying to the movement’s tunnels to be buried alive by Israeli bombs, merely bolsters the hypothesis that this was a camouflage operation conducted through deception. (...) The question that must be asked: After we blur the meaning of all our words, destroy the foundations of all our institutions, deceive the media, violate agreements, change the Basic Laws and the rules of the game and stretch the interpretation of every aspect of our lives, what will be left? If the word “media” no longer has its classic meaning, if the red cross no longer means anything to us, if there’s nothing basic about the Basic Laws, if promises can be broken and agreements are binding only on the other side and it’s impossible to believe a word anyone says, what will our lives look like once words have completely lost their value?

Carolina Landsmann, HAA, 30.05.21

2. Schwierige Koalitionsverhandlungen

Für Yair Lapid, Chef der Zukunftspartei, blieb es bis kurz vor Ablauf der Frist für die Regierungsbildung aufregend. Besonders schwierig gestalteten sich die Verhandlungen mit Naftali Bennett von der ultrarechten Yemina (Nach rechts). Bennett zögerte vor dem Zusammengehen mit einer arabischen Partei, nachdem es jüngst zu schweren Auseinandersetzungen zwischen jüdischen und arabischen Fanatiker_innen innerhalb Israels gekommen war. Die Regierung muss, bevor sie vereidigt werden kann, von einer einfachen Mehrheit der 120 Parlamentarier_innen befürwortet werden. Lapid zog alle Fäden, um das heterogene Bündnis, darunter die Arbeitspartei und die links-liberale Meretz, unter einen Hut zu bringen. Den national-religiösen Bennett lockte er schließlich mit dem rotierenden Amt des Ministerpräsidenten. Ein Scheitern hätte Israel zum fünften Mal an die Wahlurnen gezwungen, ohne dass an der grundsätzlichen Patt-Situation der beiden Lager pro und contra Benjamin Netanyahu klare Verschiebungen zu erwarten gewesen wären. Allerdings bleibt es bis zur Vereidigung der Regierung, die sich bis zum 14. Juni noch hinauszögern könnte, spannend, da von Seiten des

Likud weiterhin heftiger Druck auf Yemina-Abgeordnete ausgeübt wird, abzuspringen und gegen die heterogene Koalition von Yair Lapid zu stimmen.

Lapid, Bennett, Sa’ar and Liberman: Turn Gaza tragedy into triumph

As heartbreaking, as costly in lives as the rocket war with Hamas has been, the outbreak of Israeli Arab-Jewish violence in mixed cities such as Lod, Ramle, Acre and Jerusalem is even more devastating to the soul of our people. The riots struck at the mutual trust between Arab and Jewish communities and the willingness to build a joint society. (...) You can take charge and decide to not let the violent extremists win. You can transform this moment of collapse into a positive turning point for the State of Israel. (...) The communal breakdown only makes clearer that the unprecedented unity government you started to build is not simply some anti-Bibi coalition. It represents the possibility of initiating a year’s long major effort focused on improving internal Israeli society – including all the financial investments, political commitment, devotion, and hard work needed. It opens the possibility of a decade of healing between Right and Left that will not necessarily solve the policy differences, but will take the toxicity out of trying to solve them by democratic means. (...) there is an unexpected ray of light. A movement and its leader – hitherto deemed to be extremist and even anti-Zionist, opposed to integration in the total society – has stepped forward. Mansour Abbas has courageously made a healing gesture when every rational and political pressure urged him to play to further polarization. Critically, Abbas’s condemnation of violent extremism included his own side, not just the other side. (...) you should offer him inclusion inside the coalition (...) approach the Joint List and offer it a similar participation based on similar requirements to disown extremism and bring together moderates in and between Arab and Jewish Israeli communities to begin the work of healing. (...)

Yitz Greenberg, JPO, 23.05.21

As clock winds down on Lapid’s mandate, Bennett set to be PM

(...) Netanyahu never had a government. He has 52 of the Knesset’s 120 members. The seven lawmakers of the Religious Racism party – pardon me, Religious Zionism – never even considered that any of their number would sit in a cabinet that depended on the active or passive support of the

United Arab List. Religious Zionism Chairman Bezalel Smotrich, a master of racism (...) called the Arab lawmakers "supporters of terror," adding that "Israel's Arabs are a dual creature. (...) Some people attribute great sophistication to Bennett; not for a single moment has he abandoned his desire to be the prime minister of change, say the believers. He enabled the president to grant the mandate to Netanyahu first, so that he would fail and the way would be paved for Bennett and Lapid. The flare-up in the Gaza Strip, regardless of whether it was force majeure or something more orchestrated, scrambled the plan to have a government sworn in with him at its head two weeks ago. Bennett realized that continued talks with Lapid and United Arab List Chairman Mansour Abbas would open the gates of hell for Bennett and his fellow Yamina MKs. (...) Any other politician, from the moment he was offered the opportunity to serve as prime minister first in a rotation, would have taken his life into his hands and plunged headlong toward the goal. He wouldn't have looked left or right, wouldn't have hesitated and pondered, he would have rushed forward. Bennett got pelted from both directions. The rightists opposed his participation in a government with Lapid and the parties on the left are angry. The moderates who supported the idea are disappointed. With skill that cannot be discounted, he emptied the bucket. (...)

Yossi Verter, HAA, 28.05.21

The true motives of the ultra-Orthodox parties

(...) The ultra-Orthodox parties have historically supported moderate Israeli positions on land and security. The Shas party, on the orders of its late founder and spiritual leader Rabbi Ovadia Yosef, abstained during the 1993 Knesset vote to accept the Oslo Accords, thereby ensuring their ratification. In 1979, when Israel was on the cusp of signing its peace deal with Egypt, Yosef went so far as to state that Jewish law did not prohibit a withdrawal from parts of the Land of Israel in the interests of peace.

(...) It seems clear that if they are not motivated by strong right-wing ideology or a personal affinity to Netanyahu, the alliance between the ultra-Orthodox parties and Netanyahu's Likud is based on money and favorable legislation such as IDF exemptions for a growing number of Haredi men. If these are indeed the motivations of Netanyahu's firm bloc of supporters, their defection to an alternative coalition cannot be discounted. And should they decide to join the "coalition for change," it would be rightfully seen as the unity government it claims to want.

Asher Maoz, YED, 28.05.21

The dirty deal, 2021's version

Naftali Bennett has already decided it. (...) he will sit down with his party members to make sure that none of them gets cold feed at the moment of trust. His biggest concern, and nearly the only hope that remains for the Right, would be repeat of what happened in 1990. The dirty deal. Shimon Peres, while still a member of Yitzhak Shamir's government, secured the signatures of 61 MKs to set up a government with himself as leader. At a celebratory Knesset session convened during Passover of that year to swear in the new government, it turned out that two of his signatories had failed to show up. (...) Apart from a handful of Yamina supporters, the vast majority of those who are backing Bennett and his latest moves are supporters of the left-wing parties. Bennett will be joyfully welcomed to the Prime Minister's Office with trumpet blasts from Labor, Meretz, and Yesh Atid voters, and wept over by people on the Right, the religious, settlers in Judea and Samaria, and the ideologists, who in the past few years Bennett has done everything he can to go after. (...)

Mati Tuchfeld, IHY, 30.05.21

3. Brandstiftung und Verfolgungsjagden in gemischten Ortschaften

Unter dem Einfluss der Unruhen in Ostjerusalem entlud sich der Zorn über Diskriminierungen arabischer Staatsbürger_innen innerhalb Israels. Drohende Räumungen mehrerer palästinensischer Familien aus von ihnen im Stadtteil Sheikh Jarrah bewohnten Häusern wie auch ein Handgemenge zwischen Palästinenser_innen, Juden und Jüdinnen waren der erneuten Eskalation in Jerusalem vorausgegangen. In der israelischen Kleinstadt Lod wurden wenig später Autos und Synagogen in Brand gesteckt. Umgekehrt griffen jüdische Fanatiker_innen willkürlich arabische Mitbürger_innen an. In der Küstenstadt Bat-Yam misshandelte ein aufgebracht Mob einen bereits bewusstlos am Boden liegenden arabischen Mann vor laufenden Kameras. Auch in Jaffa und anderen gemischten Ortschaften kam es zu schweren Auseinandersetzungen. In Akko ging ein landesweit bekanntes Lokal in Flammen auf. Amir Ohana vom Likud, derzeit Minister für innere Sicherheit solidarisierte sich mit rechtsgerichteten jüdischen Gruppen. „Gesetzestreue Bürger, die Waffen tragen, verdoppeln die Kraft der Behörden, Bedrohung und Gefahr sofort zu neutralisie-

ren“, so Ohana. Die Juden hätten in einem „Akt der Selbstverteidigung“ gehandelt.

There is only one war: the extremists vs. the moderates

(...) More than ever (...) it became clear that we must make an alliance of the sane, and quickly, because an alliance of extremists has long been springing up behind our backs. The extremists, Jews and Arabs, need each other. They are working together to prevent peace agreements and sabotage our chances at a normal life. They hate each other, but they desperately need each other, because without an enemy they will dissipate. (...) We've heard many complaints from right-wing mouthpieces about how the media reports riots against Jews. They are lies. What the media doesn't report is how Hamas' growing strength is not a problem for Netanyahu, but a goal. Look at the West Bank, where relative quiet has prevailed thanks to security arrangements with the Palestinian Authority. This fact has disappeared from public discourse: You can't serve the goal if you tell people that these agreements contribute to security. Thus, two terrorist movements are threatening us simultaneously, one from within and one from without. We can deal with both of them: Block the groups that preach violence – and the hundreds of millions of shekels that will be saved can be invested in education for equality and partnership, in strengthening the Palestinian Authority, in signing agreements about borders and the economy and in promoting the future Palestinian state across the border. It has never been more important to establish a joint government of Jews and Arabs. Netanyahu's incitement must not be allowed to determine our path. The extremists on both sides will continue sabotaging efforts toward peace and will persist in sowing terror and violence – but they will lose, because most people, as always, will choose life. (...) there is no other way. Stav Shaffir, HAA, 20.05.21

Netanyahu's responsibility for the Jewish-Arab meltdown in Israel

More than anything else, what distinguished this round of fighting with Hamas was the unprecedented violence perpetrated by Arab and Jewish thugs within Israel's pre-1967 borders. Taking advantage of a confluence of combustible circumstances at well-established flashpoints, the Kahanist Itamar Ben-Gvir and his racist thugs, as well as the Jerusalem 'Shabab' and Hamas served up a lethal cocktail of violence and destruction. (...) Netanyahu did not

seek outside assistance until it was too late. He did eventually get Ben-Gvir to leave the flash point at Sheikh Jarrah and he did re-route the Jerusalem Day march, but only at the last minute. Too busy trying to save his own skin, the watchman left the door ajar and by the time he tried to shut it, it was too late. (...) Ironically, it is Netanyahu's narcissism that provides an opportunity to set Israel on the track towards coexistence. After years of presenting Arab parties' participation in government as something akin to serving a pork chop at a bar-mitzvah, it was Bibi himself who gave a "Kashrut" certificate to Ra'am, the Islamic party led by Mansour Abbas. (...) Abbas is now free to join a government of national unity led by the right-wing Bennett and centrist Lapid; should Bennett prove willing and Lapid able, to complete this difficult task. (...) The consequences of political narcissism cannot be undone, but they can be turned against Netanyahu himself through the formation of an unprecedented coalition government that points the way to something the thugs find repulsive – peaceful, respectful, coexistence. Jonathan Rynhold, TOI, 27.05.21

There is a solution for Jaffa

The recent riots in Jaffa should be understood partly in connection with tension over housing. A good many Jaffa Arab residents live in apartments they don't own and the threat of eviction hangs constantly over their heads because of the state's discriminatory conduct. About half of Jaffa's 20,000 Arab residents live in premises that belonged to Jaffa's original Arab residents, and were abandoned during the War of Independence. The state expropriated this abandoned property and housed Arabs in the premises who were "internal refugees" – that is, Arabs from Jaffa whom the state evicted from their homes, then gave them the right to live in abandoned Arab homes as protected tenants. That was not the end of the damage done to Jaffa's Arabs. When their status as homeowners was stolen from them and they instead became protected tenants, the state did everything in its power to restrict them. It determined that the right to protected tenancy ended with the third generation, so most of Jaffa's young people found themselves at risk of eviction in the house where they grew up and in which their families have lived since the 1960s. (...) This outrageous injustice stands out particularly when we compare the harsh attitude toward squatters in the Jaffa neighborhood of Ajame to the compensation given to Jews who lived as squatters in Kfar Shalem and Givat Amal in Tel Aviv. And so, due to the ongoing discrimination

by the state, the discontent in Jaffa spills over time after time to the streets and people are paying for it with their lives. There is an easy, obvious solution to this: Allow the protected tenants of Jaffa to purchase their homes (...) and at the same time abolishing the definition of squatters for families who have been living in the same house for 60 years or more.

Editorial, HAA, 26.05.21

The Israel Police's Operation Intimidation and Silence

(...) In Haifa, at a protest over two weeks ago, 38 people were arrested, most of them students, artists and political activists. Most of them were released, with some ordered to stay out of Haifa for 50 days and a small number indicted. According to the police, Operation Law and Order was supposed to settle accounts with "criminal elements in the Arab sector." With their permission, I would suggest another name – Operation Intimidation and Silence – the punishment of young Arab men and women who dare to protest, under the guise of fighting crime. This is not to say that there is no place for dealing with criminal elements in Arab society. Over the last decade, the Arab community has begged the police to do just that. But right now it's just about settling accounts with other "elements:" the young, students and political activists, some of whom took part in protests in support of Palestinians in Sheikh Jarrah and Gaza, or against police provocations and violence and the restrictions on the number of Muslims praying at Al-Aqsa. Most of those detained were released without being indicted. The goal from the start was simply to intimidate. (...) they're trying to break the Palestinian national spirit of these young people. After all, it's quite clear that no arrests on such a scale are being made against Jews. It's an exclusive service available only to Arabs. What turns a turbulent but legal protest into a turbulent illegal one? If we go by the police's conduct, it depends on the protesters' origins. So, maybe rather than making it so complicated for the police, it would be better to simply pass new legislation to complement the nation-state law and deem all political activity by Arabs a threat to the State of Israel and therefore illegal.

Hanin Majadli, HAA, 28.05.21

Israelis and Palestinians need reconciliation

(...) The Israeli-Palestinian conflict (...) demands innovative ideas and practices that go beyond social, financial, and political interests. Reconciliation could heal the hatred in this protracted conflict. (...)

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict needs a path not taken, which leads toward justice, coexistence, forgiveness, empathy, truth, and inclusiveness. Two cultures have invested much in denying the existence of the other; attempted agreements have failed for a variety of reasons. The reconciliation process starts by recognizing the suffering and accepting the narrative of the other. (...) Reconciliation undermines the egos and political ambitions of our current leaders. (...) Hamas and Israel have been in protracted conflict, and the siege has been almost 14 years long. It did not weaken Hamas or other parties but made them stronger politically and on the ground. It did not contribute to the security of Israelis. Hamas and other factions are part of Palestinian society and must be part of the solution, not the problem. (...) The reconciliation process can guide a new generation away from the path of darkness, toward the light. The alternative is to allow the seeds of hatred to flourish within both Israelis and Palestinians for generations to come. (...)

Iyad Muhsen AlDajani, YED, 28.05.21

4. Medienquerschnitt

Kampf der Gewalten

The threat of war between Israel's branches of gov't

Law and politics have long been on the verge of a head-on collision in Israel. The judiciary acts as a restraint on the other two branches of government – the executive and legislative – out of its responsibility to uphold the rule of law. At the same time, the latter two seek to break free of the restraints, maintaining that as elected and representative bodies, they express the will of the people in a democratic manner. This week's High Court of Justice ruling is another, particularly dramatic milestone in the struggle between the branches. (...) The petitioners sought to repeal legislative amendments designed to delay the dissolution of the Knesset, which has since been replaced by a new one, and increase the state budget via temporary order – a budget that has already been implemented. Although it may appear to have been rendered moot, this is in fact one of the most important rulings ever handed down in the State of Israel. The legal question is whether the High Court has the authority to nullify a law enacted as a Basic Law. (...) the Knesset has developed a means of circumventing judicial review: It crowns laws as "Basic Laws" to ensure that the last word on

certain matters will be its own. The justices behind the majority ruling, led by the court's president, oppose this practice. They hold that, when the content of the law does not merit the "Basic Law" designation, that law is subject to judicial review. Thus, in this specific case, it is clear that the legislative amendments fall into the category of temporary provisions for particular political purposes, which lack constitutional standing; as such, they amount to an abuse of the Knesset's power as a constitutive authority. It is difficult not to accept the Court's majority opinion when one considers the essential issue at hand: The Israeli constitution has been co-opted for fleeting political purposes, something that should not be tolerated under any circumstances. (...) At the same time, it is similarly difficult to find fault with the minority opinion when one looks at the issue from a separation-of-powers perspective. The ruling could potentially lead to the creation, ex nihilo, of an unchecked judicial authority that changes the rules of the game. The Knesset, by abusing its authority, and the High Court, by opening the door to judicial review of Basic Laws, are both poised over the red button that could launch a war between the branches of Israel's government. Something that was once inconceivable – elected officials explicitly calling for the High Court's instructions to be disregarded – has become reality. The already substantial rifts in the fabric of our democracy are widening. (...) our divided society operates on shifting sands. It urgently needs a constitutional anchor that, while not resolving our national disputes, will provide guidance on how to manage them.

Yedidia Stern, JPO, 28.05.21

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