

UN chief lends credibility to PA move for independence

WASHINGTON (YnetNews) – While many in Israel are becoming increasingly nervous about Palestinian Authority leader Mahmoud Abbas's plan to appeal for recognition of a Palestinian state at the United Nations General Assembly session in September, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon seemed to give credence to such a move by slamming Israel's policy and called for the division of Jerusalem last week.

In a message delivered by his assistant at a UN regional meeting in Uruguay, Ban said: "The target date for completing the Palestinian Authority's two-year state-building program is fast-approaching. "The 'occupation' that started in 1967 is morally and politically unsustainable, and must end," he told the UN Latin American and Caribbean meeting in support of Israeli-Palestinian peace.

Israeli-Arab actor fatally shot in Jenin

JERUSALEM (JTA) – Juliano Mer-Khamis, a well-known Israeli-Arab actor, was shot dead by masked Palestinian gunmen in the West Bank city of Jenin.

Mer-Khamis was killed Monday after being shot five times while driving in his car, according to reports. Mer-Khamis, 53, reportedly had received death threats after establishing the Freedom Theater in a Jenin refugee camp.

"The Palestinians have a legitimate right to the establishment of an independent and viable state of their own. Israel has the right to live in peace and security within internationally recognized and secure borders."

The UN chief said that "a way must be found for Jerusalem to emerge as the capital of two states, Israel and Palestine, with arrangements for holy sites acceptable for all." He added that "there must be a just and agreed solution to the... plight of the Palestinian refugees."

Ban harshly criticized Israel's actions including settlement construction in the West Bank and east Jerusalem, demolition of Palestinian homes and forced transfer of Palestinian residents. He added that all expressions of violence and the incitement or glorification of violent acts must stop.

He lauded the PA's efforts to

establish viable state institutions and commended security forces' efforts to maintain security in areas under their control.

He called on Israel to take further steps to improve economic and security conditions by reducing obstacles to movement, halting military operations and giving the PA access to more West Bank areas.

Speaking at Toronto's Beth Tzedec synagogue last week under the sponsorship of Canadian Friends of Haifa University, former Shin Bet director Ami Ayalon warned that Israel must find a way to make peace with the Palestinians before September.

"With the Palestinians, time is running against us," he said. "I think we have a timeline of September of this year.... They will present their case to the UN...and demand a vote on a Palestinian state. If they do it, they will get a huge majority vote for a Palestinian state in the pre-1967 bor-

ders with east Jerusalem as the capital. If Israel doesn't accept it – and Israel cannot accept it – there will be violence and the terror will achieve legitimacy in the world.... Terrorists will be perceived as freedom fighters by the international community."

Predicting, in that event, "sanctions by many countries," Ayalon declared:

"Based on this scenario, I think we have to accept reality and what we should do immediately is create a new initiative."

Ayalon headed the People's Voice peace initiative of 2002 together with Sari Nusseibeh, president of Al-Quds University and a leader of the First Intifada.

Ayalon's assessment of a Palestinian state in the West Bank is optimistic; others are wary that a Palestinian state would pose a serious military threat to Israel

– with files from Atara Beck



UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon wants Israel to end 'occupation.'

Peres to unveil Bibi peace plan on DC visit?

WASHINGTON (JTA) – Israeli President Shimon Peres on a visit to Washington reportedly will present the outlines of a peace plan that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu expects to unveil in May.

Peres will be in Washington this week, the Israeli Embassy said in a release last Thursday, and arrangements for meetings with "government leaders" are under way.

The White House said this will include a "working lunch" Tuesday with US President Barack Obama. Topics to be addressed include "US-Israeli security cooperation, recent developments across the Middle East," a White House statement said, a reference to the turmoil afflicting the region, "and the pursuit of peace between Israel and its neighbours."

Israeli media have reported that Peres will present Obama with the outlines of the peace plan that Netanyahu expects to introduce in an address at the annual American Israel Public Affairs Committee policy forum.

Peres also will attend a dinner April 5 hosted by the Center for Middle East Peace, a think tank with close Obama administration ties.



Shimon Peres reportedly will be bringing a peace plan to Washington.

Canadian charged with plotting to join Somali terrorist group

TORONTO (IPT News) – Canadian authorities said they arrested a man last Tuesday as he allegedly tried to leave for Somalia to join the al-Shabaab terrorist organization.

Mohamed Hersi, 25, was arrested at Pearson International Airport as he was about to board a plane to Cairo through London. After arriving in Egypt, the former University of Toronto health sciences student planned to go to Somalia "to join Al-Shabaab and participate in their terrorist activities," the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) said.

Hersi is charged with planning to participate in terrorist activities and counselling an unidentified person to do

the same.

More than two years ago, the RCMP and the Canadian Security Intelligence Service stepped up investigations of Somali jihadist recruitment in the wake of reports that Toronto men were travelling overseas to join al-Shabaab.

Previous terrorism cases in Canada were brought to the attention of the RCMP

through foreign allies and intelligence agencies, Canadian officials said. In contrast, the Hersi investigation resulted from the efforts of the Toronto Police, who received a lead months ago and followed up. Once city police detectives concluded there was a genuine security threat, the RCMP was brought in to investigate.

Al-Shabaab has been increasingly active in its recruiting efforts in the Toronto area, home to tens of thousands of Somali-Canadians. Omar Hammami, a Muslim convert and US native, lived in Toronto before travelling to Somalia and becoming one of the jihadist group's senior military leaders.

Rabbi attacked by African killer bees in Zimbabwe

JOHANNESBURG (JTA) – A rabbi handing out matzah and wine for Passover to Jews in Zimbabwe was attacked by a swarm of African killer bees.

Moshe Silberhaft, the spiritual leader and executive director of the African Jewish

Congress known as the Travelling Rabbi, was making a pre-Passover visit to the 190 Jews left in the beleaguered capital of Harare when he was attacked by the bees while walking from the Ashkenazi synagogue to the Sephardi synagogue on the

Shabbat of April 2.

The rabbi was being accompanied by the Ashkenazi synagogue's Torah reader, Yosi Kably.

Silberhaft and Kably called for help and were taken to a private doctor's clinic. Silberhaft was visibly upset at missing the service and was saddened that the incident occurred on Shabbat.

"Africa is not for sissies," he said.

Israel Day Festival set for June 5

TORONTO – Na'amat Canada Toronto and Canadian Zionist Federation will hold their 16th annual Israel Day Festival on June 5 at Mel Lastman Square.

Admission is free. Enjoy a day of continuous entertainment on the stage for children and adults, live auction, vendor's area, Middle Eastern and Canadian cuisine, and a children's village, including arts, crafts and rides.

"Teens are directed to register at Jserve.ca, where they will be asked to choose a project from among several service opportunities," explained Kevin Goodman, program director at BBYO.

For more information, visit the site or contact Kerry Bernknopf, project coordinator, at (416) 398-2004 ext 223 or kberknopf@bbyo.ca.

J-Serve program unites diverse group of Jewish teens

TORONTO – More than 500 Toronto-area teens, along with 10,000 others from across North America, Europe and Israel, will participate in J-Serve, the Global Day of Jewish Youth Service, on Sunday, April 10, at Adath Israel Congregation.

This is the second year that GTA teens will partake in this initiative, thanks to funding by UJA Federation of Greater Toronto and the PANIM Institute of BBYO.

The event coincides with the kickoff of Volunteer Canada's National Volunteer Week.

J-Serve is great because it brings together such a diverse group of Jewish teens uniting for a common purpose," said Toronto-area teen Shia Cooperman-Green.

Additional support for J-Serve Toronto 2011 is pro-

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