

**KFIR**

# MIDDLE EAST UPDATE

Week of April 21, 2017  
REPORT FROM JERUSALEM



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Holy Ground Explorations



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# HEADLINES

US President Donald Trump's plans for Syria have come into clearer view since he ordered cruise missiles fired on a Syrian air base to punish Assad for a chemical weapons attack. The strategy breaks down into three basic phases: defeating the ISIS group, restoring stability in Syria region-by-region and securing a political transition in which Assad ultimately steps down.

"Abbas ready for visit to Washington": The London-based al-Hayat said April 14 that the delegation preparing for Abbas' visit will include senior Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat and intelligence chief Majed Faraj. The lack of a firm date has led some Palestinian media to report that the visit has been postponed, but a US White House source quickly shot down this rumor, insisting that the visit is still on." [Al-Monitor] "Al-Quds said Trump's team has prepared a draft plan demanding that the Palestinians return to negotiations with Israel without setting any conditions and halt transfer of funds to the besieged Gaza Strip." [Wafa]

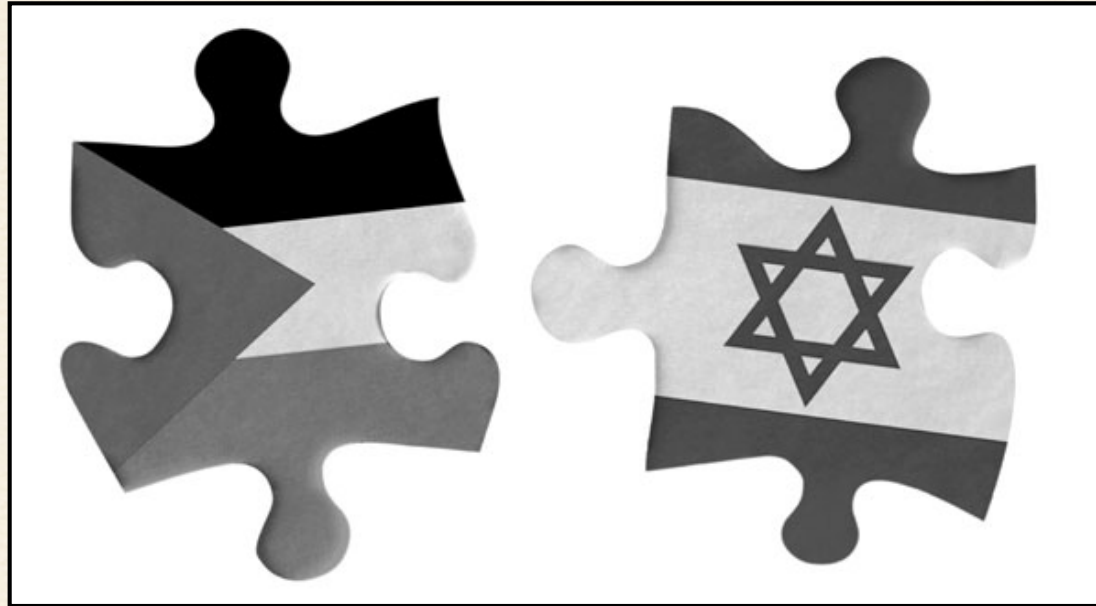
"Every year [at Iran's military parade] the missiles are bigger and enhanced—in accuracy, strength, and deadliness," Netanyahu said at a cabinet meeting at the time. "However, one thing does not change. What does not change is the inscription 'Death to Israel' on the missiles."

Israel Treating Wounded from Syria. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said that Israel remained committed to treating war wounded from Syria. Israel has treated more than 3,000 war wounded from Syria in what it describes as a humanitarian gesture.





# ISRAELI VIEW ON TWO STATES



While the international community clings to visions of a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Israeli public opinion is unified in asserting that the establishment of a Palestinian state is unrealistic and undesirable.

Only 12 percent of Jewish Israelis believe that withdrawing from the West Bank would end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, [according to a survey published by the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs](#) at the end of March.

Overall, Jewish support for withdrawal from the West Bank has decreased from 60 percent in 2005 to 36 percent in 2017. The survey also found that 79 percent of Jewish Israelis believe that it is important to retain a unified Jerusalem under Israeli sovereignty. Such a stance is at odds with the international community's oft-mentioned two-state plan of dividing Jerusalem and making it the capital of both Israel and a proposed Palestinian state.

"The Palestinian insistence on having their capital in Jerusalem is the true obstacle to peace," Professor Efraim Inbar of Bar-Ilan University's Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies told *JNS.org*.





# PA TEXTBOOKS

The Palestinian Authority (PA) announced Thursday it is suspending ties with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) over changes that make the [agency's school curriculum](#) more sympathetic to Israel and more historically accurate and truthful.

The PA's Education Ministry called the changes an "affront to the Palestinian people, its history and struggles," and vowed the suspension will not change until UNRWA reverses the changes.

UNRWA schools serve more than 312,000 Palestinian children, including 262,000 students in Gaza as well as 50,000 in the Judea and Samaria and Jerusalem.

**JUST IN ...** The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) has folded under Palestinian pressure and will not make changes to the [agency's school curriculum](#). The curriculum will not be more sympathetic to Israel and more historically accurate and truthful. Instead, it will continue to teach the Palestinian Authority (PA) curriculum, which is fraught with incitement against Israel and teaches that the Jewish State lacks the right to exist.





# ISIS vs CHRISTIANS



ISIS attacked a monastery in the heart of the Sinai Peninsula on Tuesday, continuing its wake of terror targeting Christians in Egypt. ISIS forces opened fire from a hilltop overlooking the police checkpoint situated about 800 yards from Saint Catherine's Monastery, a popular tourist site in the heart of the Sinai Peninsula. One Egyptian police officer was killed and four others were injured. It is believed that some of the ISIS attackers were wounded before fleeing the scene. The Islamic State (ISIS) claimed responsibility for the attack via the ISIS-affiliated *Amaq* news agency.





# HOLOCAUST

Recently released documents show that the Allied forces were aware of the scale of the Holocaust some two years earlier than previously assumed. They did little to stop the deaths or rescue the victims.

The unsealed United Nations files show that the US, UK and Russia knew as early as December 1942 that two million Jews had been massacred and millions more were at risk of being killed, Britain's [Independent newspaper](#) reported on Tuesday. Despite that knowledge, the Allies did not accept refugees or take action to prevent the slaughter.

I will be attending a seven day conference at Yad Vashem (Jerusalem) on the topics: The Holocaust, Anti-Semitism and Israel.

Sharon and I just saw The Zoo Keepers Wife and we highly recommend it.





# NIKKI HALEY - UN

**DRIVING THE DAY: "Haley Wants Iran, Not Israel, at Core of UN's Middle East Agenda" by Kambiz Foroohar:** "[Nikki] Haley, who holds the rotating presidency of the United Nations' top decision-making body for April, wants to use a monthly meeting on "the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question" to tackle Tehran's role in Yemen and Syria and its support for Hezbollah... Thursday's report will be presented by Nickolay Mladenov of Bulgaria, the UN's special coordinator for the Middle East peace process. While Mladenov... is expected to focus again on Israel and the Palestinians, Haley can prod the discussion toward other issues. " [\[Bloomberg\]](#)





# 80,000



Last week 80,000 people squeezed into the Western Wall Plaza for the giving of the Aaronic Blessing by the Cohen.





# COUNTING THE OMER



As soon as Passover ended, entire families, men women and children, gathered in a field in the Negev to harvest barley that would be used the next day by priests to recreate the omer offering of barley. The barley was prepared according to Torah law and presented as a wave offering in Jerusalem by priests in a ceremony that closely resembled what was once seen every year in Solomon's Temple.





# COUNTING THE OMER





# QUOTE OF THE WEEK

**HEARD YESTERDAY -- WH Press Secretary Sean Spicer** at the daily briefing said Trump and Abbas will use the May 3 meeting "to reaffirm the commitment of both the United States and Palestinian leadership to pursuing and ultimately concluding a conflict-ending settlement between the Palestinians and Israel."

**Abbas in an interview with the Asahi Shimbun, a Japanese publication:** "I am ready to meet the Prime Minister of Israel any time in Washington under the patronage of President Trump." [[Asahi](#)]



# HGE - UPCOMING FALL TOURS

Israel - Off The Beaten Path  
with Petra Extension (optional)



Israel - NOV 12-20 / Petra - Nov 20-24, 2017



*Thus says the LORD: "Stand by the roads, and look, and ask for the ancient paths, where the good and walk in it, and find rest for your souls..." Jer. 6:16*

There are many paths in Israel. OFF THE BEATEN PATH will take in paths not found on "traditc tours - yet they are important paths, ones that should be seen to take in the full breadth of Israe Dan & Sharon Stolebarger and guide, Jane Ben-Ari as we give you a totally different type of expe Included will be a geo-political Jeep Tour on the Golan Heights - see for yourselves what is truly happening along this strategic border of Israel.



**HOLY  
GROUND  
TOURS**

## OFF THE BEATEN PATH ITINERARY

**DAY 1:** Overnight in Tel Aviv right on the Mediterranean Sea.

**DAY 2 - 4:** Travel to Jerusalem where we will be staying inside the walls of the Old City for three nights. While in Jerusalem, visit **OLD SYNAGOGUE TOUR, RABBINICAL TUNNELS, TEMPLE INSTITUTE, BURNT HOUSE, JERICO** with **ST. GEORGE'S MONASTERY** and **FRIENDS OF ZION MUSEUM**. Also planned is an incredible landscape of the Judean desert on a fully guided **JEEP TOUR**.

**DAY 5 - 7:** Travel to the Galilee where we will stay for three nights at a kibbutz hotel right on the shores of the Sea, away from the hustle and bustle of Tiberias. Our time in the north includes: **TSIPORI, NAZARETH VILLAGE, CHURCH OF THE ANNUNCIATION, MT. ARBEL** (with an option to hike up), **MAGDALA, GAMLA** (with hike to the synagogue) and **MT. BENTAL**. On Shabbat, we will have a Shabbat Service at our hotel. In addition, while in the Golan Heights, we will take a geo-political **JEEP TOUR** to hear and see for ourselves exactly what is happening on this strategic border.

**DAY 8:** We travel to **JAFFA** for one night. En route, visit the grottoes at **ROSH HANIKRA** and the **VALLEY OF ELAH**.

**DAY 9:** Before bidding farewell to Israel, we will enjoy a leisurely morning, a tour of **JAFFA**, as well as a **FAREWELL DINNER**. Those departing will be taken to the airport.

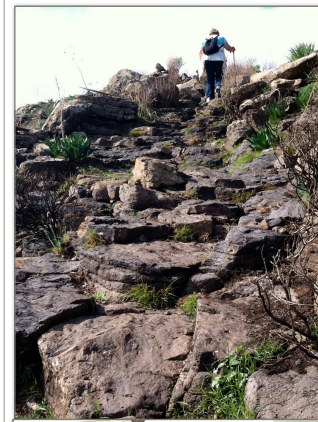
## BEATEN PATH INCLUSIONS:

**Pricing:** \$2995 LAND ONLY per person double occupancy

## PACKAGE INCLUDES:

- ⊗ Hotels: 1 night Tel Aviv, 3 nights Jerusalem, 3 nights Tiberias, 1 night Jaffa
- ⊗ Meals: Breakfast daily, 4 Lunches, 5 Dinners
- ⊗ All Sightseeing and Entrance Fees including two JEEP TOURS
- ⊗ Gratuities for Guide and Driver
- ⊗ Baggage handling for one piece of checked luggage per person
- ⊗ All ground transportation

See Registration Form for complete pricing and the Terms & Conditions for the "fine print."







## PETRA EXTENSION - Nov 20-24, 2017

[NOV. 20: We will spend the night in Israel following the Farewell Dinner for the Off the Beaten Path Tour.]

**DAY 1:** Today we depart for the southernmost tip of Israel, **EILAT**, where we will spend the next 3 nights.

**DAY 2:** An early morning departure from the hotel where we drive the short distance to the border at Aqaba. After crossing over, we drive to **PETRA** – We begin the day with a guided tour but then you are set free to be adventurous on your own. You can ride camels, donkeys, hike or travel via animal up to the Monastery – your choice. We will set a meeting time to meet at the entrance and then travel to **EILAT** for the remaining two nights, arriving in time for a later dinner.

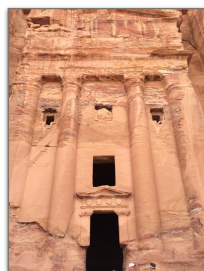
**DAY 3:** Free day in **EILAT**

**DAY 4:** Late check out. We will visit **TIMNA** where we will take in the magnificent **SOLOMON'S PILLARS**. The highlight, however, will be the tour at the Tabernacle. We continue to travel north and will arrive at the airport around 7pm, following dinner.

### INCLUDED IN THE TOUR:

- \* **Four nights hotel stay:** 1 night Jerusalem, 3 nights Eilat.
- \* **Meals:** 4 Breakfasts, 1 Lunch, 4 Dinners
- \* **Visa for entry into Jordan**
- \* **Guided tour and entrance fees to all sites**
- \* **Baggage handling:** 1 bag per person

*[Due to Passover in Israel, complete details will soon be available.]*







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