



KFIR

MIDDLE EAST UPDATE

Week of July 14, 2017



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Holy Ground Explorations



holygroundexplorations.com

THIS WEEK'S HEADLINES

AMMAN, Jordan (AP) – A separate truce for southern Syria, brokered by the US and Russia, is meant to help allay growing concerns by neighboring Israel and Jordan about Iranian military ambitions in the area, including fears that Tehran plans to set up a disruptive long-term presence there.

Representatives of the Quartet of Middle East peace negotiators -- the United Nations, the European Union, the United States and Russia -- convened in Jerusalem on Thursday, for the first time since U.S. President Donald Trump took office in January.

Speakers at a New York City "Quds Day Rally" declared, "US number one terrorist!" and "Israel, go to Hell!" At a rally in Times Square, New York, Muslims marked International Quds Day with vicious attacks on both the US and Israel.



UNESCO - HEBRON

The latest UNESCO resolution, declaring the Cave of the Patriarchs in Hebron a Palestinian heritage site, is "delusional," Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said at the start of Sunday's cabinet meeting. "In the wake of this resolution I decided to cut an additional \$1 million from Israel's U.N. membership dues and transfer the funds to the establishment of the Museum of the Heritage of the Jewish People in Kiryat Arba and Hebron."

The prime minister said that in the face of UNESCO's "denial," Israel would present the world with the "historical truth and the Jewish people's deep connection -- of thousands of years -- to Hebron, just as we did with UNESCO's other delusional decision regarding the absence of a connection to Jerusalem."

He told the cabinet, "Today I have instructed that procedures be completed for the construction of the Kedem Center for displaying the historical and archaeological findings for the City of David."

Defense Minister Avigdor Lieberman suggested that Israel leave UNESCO. "The UNESCO resolutions are really horrifying," Lieberman said.



NARENDRA MODI

Well Done Modi - Breaking Ugly Tradition!

Narendra Modi's three-day visit Israel on 4 July is imbued with symbolism, breathtaking benefits to the two countries and an era of promise for both...

Modi stands out for Israel - not just as the first Indian prime minister to visit, but also as a prominent world leader willing to skip the Palestinian Authority in Ramallah, thereby removing the automatic bracket attached to most foreign visits. This gesture is appreciated in Israel no less than booming defense deals totaling more than \$1 billion a year and the joint projects in water management, cyberspace, data protection, agricultural innovation, medicine, digitalization and numberless other fields with the world's fastest growing major economy. Fighting terrorism and sustainable development are watchwords shared by one of the largest and one of the smallest Asian nations.



MENNONITES

The Mennonite Church USA voted Thursday to sell off its holdings in companies that profit from what the church described as the "Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories," becoming the latest American Christian group to do so.

The decision was made at a national Mennonite convention in Orlando, Florida. Although the economic impact is expected to be minimal, such votes are closely watched as a measure of attitudes toward Israel and the Palestinians from within the U.S., the Jewish state's closest and most important ally.

The Mennonite Church has just over 75,000 members.

Such votes by the Mennonite Church and other religious groups are cropping up as the boycott, divestment and sanctions movement steadily gains support on U.S. college campuses and elsewhere as a means of protesting Israeli policies and bringing moral pressure to end the so-called occupation of Palestinian territories.



WEAPONS FACTORY

Iranian Weapons Factory in Lebanon.

The head of IDF intelligence confirms details of an Iranian weapons facility being constructed in Lebanon amid Israeli efforts to foil the transfer of weapons from the Islamic republic to Hezbollah.

The Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) realized the method of shipping weapons to Hezbollah was ineffective in the face of Israeli countermeasures targeting shipments.



GAZA TERROR TUNNELS

Senior IDF officials warned that while Hamas is investing notable efforts in rebuilding its military capabilities and its network of terror tunnels, the IDF's countermeasures will turn the underground passageways into a "deathtrap" for Hamas terrorists in the event of another war.

Speaking on Thursday, three years after Operation Protective Edge in the Gaza Strip, unnamed officials were quoted in Israel Hayom as saying that while the Israeli military significantly crippled Hamas' grid of terror tunnels during the 2014 military campaign, the IDF is confident that it is now far better equipped and prepared to deal with the threat, having invested millions to develop and procure useful technologies and equipment, as well as build a counter-tunnel obstacle around the Gaza Strip.

The IDF destroyed 32 terror tunnels during Operation Protective Edge, and has since exposed several others. However, the threat still remains, and the IDF devoted extensive resources to devise a solution to the tunnel threat.

A February report in Israeli media said that Hamas has built at least 15 tunnels extending into Israel. The terror organization employs over 1,000 residents of Gaza to dig its illegal cross-border tunnels and is spending hundreds of thousands of dollars monthly on wages. Each digger receives \$300-400 a month.

Tens of Palestinian workers have been killed by collapsed tunnels. The IDF has warned the residents of Gaza that this occupation is hazardous.



ORON SHAUL & HADAR GOLDIN

Report: Israel, Hamas on verge of prisoner exchange deal

Lebanon's Al Akhbar paper says Russia, Egypt and U.N. are acting as mediators to secure the release of several civilians, bodies of two soldiers • Families say they learned of talks from the media • Minister warns of Hamas' psychological warfare.

Israel and Hamas are holding secret negotiations meant to promote a prisoner exchange deal that would see the Gaza-based terrorist group release several Israeli civilians and return the remains of two soldiers in exchange for the release of Palestinian security prisoners, Lebanese newspaper Al Akhbar reported on Saturday.

Hamas is believed to hold the bodies of Staff Sgt. Oron Shaul and Lt. Hadar Goldin, who were killed in the Gaza Strip in separate battles during Operation Protective Edge in the summer of 2014.



THE PLAIN TRUTH

Interrogation of Palestinian terrorist
proves: PA payments motivate terror

Palestinian terrorist: "I've accumulated large debts... if my son wants a shekel, I have nothing to give him... I decided to do something serious, such as committing murder, something in which I will both kill and die, and then my family will get money (i.e., from the PA) and will live comfortably... If I'm not able to kill soldiers, I'll try settlers, guards - in other words any Israeli target - the important thing is that I will die and they will kill me, so that my children will receive a [PA] allowance and live happily"

[From transcript of Israeli Police
interrogation of Palestinian terrorist] Itamar
Marcus and Nan Jacques Zilberdik



SDEROT ETC.

The Defense Ministry announced Wednesday it has completed fortifying schools and kindergartens in rocket-weary communities adjacent to the Israel-Gaza Strip border, at a cost of tens of millions of shekels.

The Defense Ministry said that it now plans to invest another 20 million shekels (\$5.6 million) into fortifying dozens of classrooms and public institutions in Ashkelon and the communities comprising the Shaar Hanegev Regional Council.

The work will include the reinforcing buildings' facades, replacing existing windows with safety glass and additional modifications that will make the buildings more suitable for children.

Over the past few months, the Engineering and Construction Division at the Defense Ministry has fortified dozens of buildings in the southern district, including 40 institutional shelters and secure rooms in 14 buildings in Ashkelon and the Sdot Negev, Lachish, Merchavim, Hof Ashkelon and Shaar Hanegev regional councils.



ISIS

The good news is that, although hard fighting remains, the Islamic State's caliphate in Syria and Iraq has been devastated. Soon, it will be entirely destroyed. Islamist terror will continue to gnaw societies around the world, but the vision of a totalitarian blood-cult ruling in the name of a gory god has been discredited among the Middle East's Muslims and beyond.

The bad news is that, with ISIS crushed as a quasi-state and conventional fighting force, we'll face a new Persian Empire stretching to the Mediterranean – and bordering Israel. The trans-national Shia-Sunni religious war will return to prominence. Dysfunctional borders still will plague the region. Traditional US allies will find themselves newly vulnerable. And Americans will no longer be welcome in Syria or Iraq.

The Battle of Mosul will end with ISIS forces in retreat BUT they will resurface globally to continue their 'terrorist ways'



UNABASHED PROPAGANDA

A close examination of US textbooks may explain why young Americans' support for Israel is declining - they are taught lies! Anti-Israel bias in the textbooks used by many American high schools may be to blame for the decrease in sympathy for Israel among young adults.

According to the Brand Israel Group, only 54 percent of US college students lean more toward Israel than the Palestinians, down from 73 percent in 2010. The decrease was even sharper among Jewish college students, dropping from 84 percent to 57 percent.

"The problem starts in high school," Dr. Sandra Alfonsi, founder of Hadassah's "Curriculum Watch" division, told *JNS.org*.

'Unabashed Propagandizing' - New textbooks depict Israel as the aggressor in every Arab-Israeli war and praise Muslim conquerors throughout the ages for their "gentle treatment of civilian populations."

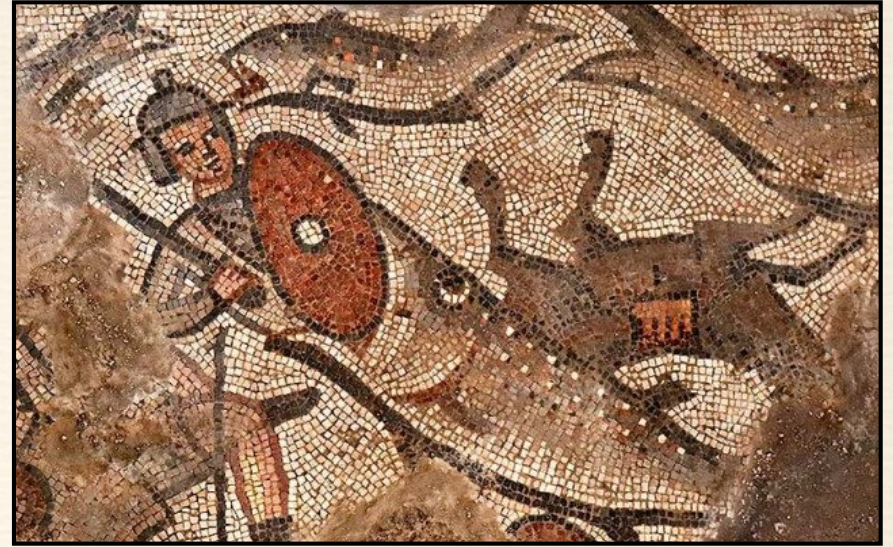
Parents in Tennessee's Williamson County complained to school authorities over a textbook called *The Cultural Landscape: An Introduction to Human Geography*. In a section on the reasons for the rise of terrorism, the book asks: "If a Palestinian suicide bomber kills several dozen Israeli teenagers in a Jerusalem restaurant, is that an act of terrorism or wartime retaliation against Israeli government policies and army actions?"



ARCHAEOLOGY

Recently discovered panels on an ancient synagogue floor in the Galilee show famous biblical sagas unfolding.

A mosaic depicting the biblical story of Jonah has recently been uncovered at the synagogue at Huqoq, an ancient Jewish village in Israel's Lower Galilee. This represents the first time the story of Jonah has been discovered decorating the floor of a synagogue in Israel.



Ancient mosaics depicting Noah's ark and the parting of the Red Sea have been discovered by university scholars and students excavating a synagogue in Israel that dates to the fifth century.

The mosaics decorate the floor of a synagogue that dates to the time when the area was ruled by the Roman Empire and when Christianity had become the empire's official religion. The mosaics show an ark and pairs of animals including elephants, leopards, donkeys, snakes, bears, lions, ostriches, camels, sheep and goats.

The images also portray Pharaoh's soldiers being swallowed by large fish, surrounded by overturned chariots with horses and chariot drivers.



QUOTE OF THE WEEK



The day after a monument depicting the Ten Commandments was installed at the Arkansas State Capitol in Little Rock, Michael T. Reed II drove his 2016 Dodge Dart into the 6-foot-tall (1.8-meter-tall), 6,000 pound (2,721-kilogram) granite slab, shattering it to pieces. Apparently, Reed live-streamed the escapade on Facebook using a video camera inside his car. A man's voice in the video is heard saying, "Oh my goodness. Freedom!" as the car crashes into the monument.



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 "tradititc 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
EXPEDITIONS**

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, GAMLAL** (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.

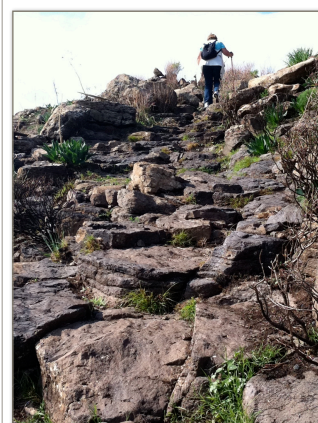
BEATEN PATH INCLUSIONS:

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 (optional): Nov. 21-24, 2017 (1 night Jaffa; 2 nights Eilat, 1 night Petra)*

Israel is the land where it all began and **PETRA** just may be the land where the "end" may be centered. It's one thing to see all the sites where prophecy has taken place and has been fulfilled, but then there are the places where the fulfillment is yet to come. During the Tribulation period, God will provide a refuge for His people...many believe that Petra is that place.

Also included is a visit to the replica **TABERNACLE at TIMNA** where you will learn more in 30 minutes about the Tabernacle than you probably have learned in a decade. All this plus the resort city at the southernmost tip of Israel, **EILAT**, where at night you can see the lights of Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Israel and Egypt, all at the same time. Add to this an overnight in Petra where our hotel is located right across the street from the entrance. This extension is not often offered so take advantage of this departure date.

*NOTE: Those staying on for Petra will spend Nov. 20th in Jaffa before beginning the Petra extension on Nov. 21st.

For complete brochure information:

<http://holygroundexplorations.com/israel-tours/israel-off-the-beaten-path-tour-petra-extension/>





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