

HOLY GROUND EXPLORATIONS

MIDDLE EAST UPDATE - WEEK OF DEC 22, 2017



KAFIR

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IS ANTI-SEMITISM ALIVE?

128 IN FAVOR / 9 OPPOSED / 35 ABSTAINING



HEADLINES

The Palestinians have decided NOT to meet with Kushner, Greenblatt or any other US officials regarding any future peace plans.

Nazareth's Muslim Mayor who cancelled Christmas last week has backtracked and is now allowing Christmas celebrations.

Austrian government's platform refers to Israel as Jewish state for first time

Bahrain distanced itself from the Palestinian campaign against Trump, calling it a "side issue" and insisting that the world keep its focus on the "theo-fascists" of Iran. And the Saudis appear to be pushing the Palestinians to curb their battle with the White House for similar reasons.

The prestigious *Travel and Leisure Magazine* has included Tel Aviv as one of the 50 best places in the world to travel in 2018.



JERUSALEM UN VOTE

DRIVING THE CONVO -- The U.S. used its first veto power in the Security Council since Trump became President as Ambassador Nikki Haley was the only one to vote to against an Egyptian-sponsored UNSC resolution calling on Trump to rescind his declaration of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. "The United States will not be told by any country where we can put our embassy," Haley said in remarks following her vote. "A 'peace process' that is damaged by the simple recognition that Jerusalem is the capital of Israel is not a peace process; it is a justification for an endless stalemate."



HANUKKAH

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu immediately released a video message comparing Haley to the Maccabees.

"On Hanukkah you spoke like a Maccabee, you lit the light of truth and expelled the darkness. One triumphs over many; truth triumphed over falsehood.

Thank you, President Trump.

Thank you, Nikki Haley," Netanyahu said.



US TAKING NAMES

U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Nikki Haley has warned that President Donald Trump will be carefully watching a special U.N. General Assembly vote Thursday on a nonbinding resolution criticizing his decision to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital.

Haley, who has adopted an aggressive stance at the world body on U.S. priorities, said "the U.S. will be taking names" in the pending U.N. vote "criticizing our choice."

Haley tweeted: "At the UN we're always asked to do more & give more. So, when we make a decision, at the will of the American people about where to locate OUR embassy, we don't expect those we've helped to target us."



FATAH FACEBOOK



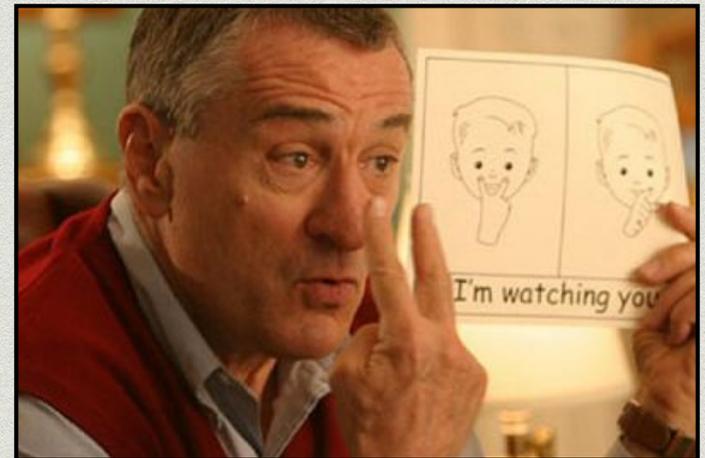
The official PA daily depicted US Ambassador to the UN Nikki Haley as a vulture in the cartoon above, in response to Haley's warning to countries voting against the US recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel in the UN General Assembly today. [Official PA daily *Al-Hayat Al-Jadida*. Dec. 21, 2017]



TRUMP TO UN

US President Donald Trump on Wednesday cautioned he could slash funding to countries that support a UN General Assembly resolution on Thursday that seeks to annul the United States' recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital.

"They take hundreds of millions of dollars and even billions of dollars, and then they vote against us. Well, we're watching those votes. Let them vote against us. We'll save a lot. We don't care," Trump said at the White House, according to Reuters.



DEMS SPEAK OUT

Trump's threat to cut foreign aid to countries that criticize his position on Jerusalem at the UN is drawing fierce condemnation from key DEMS, raising doubts that Congress would allow him to carry it out.

"The effort of Trump and Haley to threaten nations who might dare to express disagreement in the UN is not a wise or sustainable tactic, and it will make cooperation more difficult in the future," said Rep. David Price, D-N.C., a member of the House panel overseeing foreign aid spending.



GAZA ROCKETS

A rocket launched at Israel from the Gaza Strip on Wednesday evening fell inside Gaza, causing damage to UNRWA school in Beit Hanoun... Two rockets were intercepted by Israel's Iron Dome air defense system, and a third landed in an open field in the Eshkol region. Sweet Justice: A rocket fired from Gaza on Friday evening towards southern Israel missed its mark and fell on the Beit Hanoun home of a Gaza terrorist, brother of Hamas spokesman Mushir al-Masri. *(Almost 20 rockets were fired from Gaza into Israel in one week. Predictably, there is no international 'outcry' - press is silent!)*



RUSSIA IS READY

Palestinians say that Washington's recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital and its "pro-Israel bias" preclude it from acting as a mediator in regional peace talks

Russia's deputy envoy: Moscow is willing to host direct talks between Israel and Palestinian Authority

Russia is ready to act as an impartial mediator in the Israeli-Palestinian peace talks, Russian Deputy Ambassador to the United Nations Vladimir Safronkov said Monday at a U.N. Security Council meeting.



ISRAEL IS READY

"Israel is willing to pay the price for the U.S.'s recognition of Jerusalem," Defense Minister Avigdor Lieberman said Tuesday during a visit the communities adjacent to the Israel-Gaza Strip border.

"The president's decision is historic and we must cement the issue inside and out. It was clear to us that the U.S. president's announcement would come with a price and we are willing to pay that price. This statement is very important," he said.

"We know how and what to do, and most importantly when to do it. Over the past year and a half, the IDF has been operating with determination and resolve, both in southern and northern Israel. We will not tolerate sporadic rocket fire," he said.



DAYS OF RAGE

The Fatah point man is leading the “day of rage” activities in the West Bank is Mahmoud Al-Aloul, names at the start of 2017 as Abbas’ deputy. The PA president, who for years refused to name a deeply, made the appointment in light of growing political unrest within Fatah and in a bid to block other contenders for the leadership he viewed as more of a threat. It turns out the Al-Aloul has a keen understanding of public sentiment, which no longer believes in Trump. Following the Jerusalem declaration he said, “Oslo has ended. We are in a state of constant conflict with the occupation. The conflict cannot be stopped. We have adopted a path of civil disobedience.”



TURKEY'S EMBASSY

Turkey intends to open an embassy in east Jerusalem, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said on Sunday, days after leading calls at a summit of Muslim leaders for the world to recognize it as the capital of Palestine.

The call comes in response to U.S. President Donald Trump's Dec. 6 announcement recognizing Jerusalem as Israel's capital. His move broke with decades of U.S. policy and international consensus that the city's status can only be decided in Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations.

It was not clear how Erdogan plans to carry out the move, as Israel controls all of Jerusalem and views the city as its indivisible capital. "God willing, the day is close when officially, with God's permission, we will open our embassy there," Erdogan said.



KIDNAP ATTEMPT FOILED



It was announced on Wednesday that a group of Hamas terrorists from Shechem (Nablus) who were arrested before they could perpetrate their attack was also planning to kidnap Rabbi Yehudah Glick, a Likud Member of Knesset and advocate for universal prayer on the Temple Mount. The three terrorists were arrested in late October while they were in the planning stages of an attack they intended to carry out during the Hanukkah holiday that ended on Wednesday.



IT IS SAFE TO GO!

The Israeli Tourism Ministry announced on Wed that a record number of Christian pilgrims are expected to give a welcome boost to the economy by visiting the Holy Land for Christmas, finishing up a record-breaking year of tourism for Israel.

Tourism Minister Yariv Levin released a statement saying that in the next few weeks, 20 percent more Christian tourists are expected than visited last year.

"Israel invites the faithful from all religions to pray, worship and visit all the holy sites in Israel in freedom and security," Levin said. "I am proud to take this opportunity to announce that this year we have broken all previous records for incoming tourism, and are set to end 2017 with a record 3.5 million tourists - half a million more than the previous record."



QUOTES OF THE WEEK

"Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased." LUKE 2:14

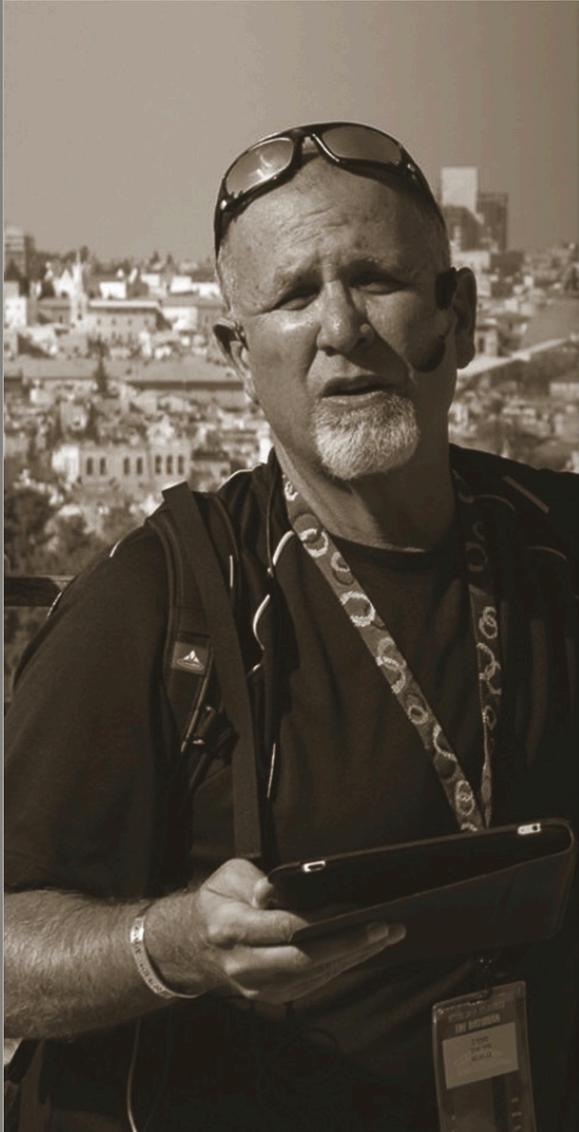
DAN - In a world that is starving for peace it is noteworthy that this evasive gift is only given to those in whom He is pleased!
SELAH



Since man is both body and soul, both "his heart and his flesh should sing to the Living God." - Abraham Joshua Heschel

MERRY CHRISTMAS KFIR - Love the HGE Board & Staff
(Dan, Sharon, Andrew, Troy, Glen and Brandy)

HGE UPCOMING TOURS



ANTHEM CHURCH TOUR

FEBURARY 8-16, 2018



EXPERIENCE ISRAEL

APRIL 22 - MAY 1, 2018

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