



ISRAEL NEWS

*A collection of the week's news from Israel
From the Bet El Twinning / Israel Action Committee of
Beth Avraham Yoseph of Toronto Congregation*

Cross. Yes, as PMW has documented, the international humanitarian movement is actively involved in facilitating the payment of P.A. salaries to terrorists.

Because the anti-terror law was implemented in Judea and

Samaria on Friday, Cabha and his cohorts may have to wait quite a while before being properly remunerated. After all, the money that Abbas pushed through on Thursday is earmarked for prisoners already behind bars, and future funds will have to wait until the "Independence Bank" is operational.

But leave it to the head of the P.A. to figure it out. Cabha's literally counting on it. (JNS Jan 5)

Commentary...

Esther Horgen's Killer can Count on Abbas By Ruthie Blum

To circumvent Israeli anti-terrorism legislation that went into effect on Dec. 31, the Palestinian Authority rushed to transfer a lump sum to its "prisoners' fund."

The 2016 Law Against Terrorism (Chok Hama'avak B'teror)—which stipulates that anyone engaged in a transaction that "supports, promotes, funds or rewards" the commission of acts of terrorism is punishable by up to 10 years in prison—was adopted in Judea and Samaria (the West Bank) in February. Though it was slated to be enacted on May 9, the coronavirus crisis spurred Israeli Defense Minister Benny Gantz to postpone its implementation—first until October, and finally until the last day of 2020.

In April, three weeks before the May deadline, the research organization Palestinian Media Watch (PMW) sent a letter to the heads of banks in the P.A., warning that if they continue to provide accounts through which the powers-that-be in Ramallah funnel salaries to terrorist prisoners in Israeli jails, they could face criminal charges on the one hand and civil suits from the families of victims on the other.

Not wishing to subject themselves to liability or jeopardize their relations with financial institutions abroad, those banks promptly refused to serve as conduits for the "pay-for-slay" scheme. But P.A. leader Mahmoud Abbas wasn't about to turn his back on loyal jihadists relying on the hefty monthly stipends that he uses as an incentive—and delivers as a reward—for terrorism against Israelis.

As he has learned from decades of experience, where there's a will, there's a way. In this case, the "way" involved hurriedly handing over three months' worth of salaries to the prisoners on Dec. 30, while in the meantime trying to set up an "Independence Bank" not bound by international contracts or laws applying to him and his henchmen.

This is good news for the likes of Muhammad Cabha, the Palestinian suspect behind the Dec. 20 slaughter of Israeli mother-of-six Esther Horgen. During his interrogation last week by the Shin Bet, Cabha—a 40-year-old resident of the village of Tura al-Gharbiya near Jenin—admitted to and even re-enacted the cold-blooded murder.

Cabha, who has served time in prison for terrorism-related activities—told Israeli security services that he had been planning such a killing for six weeks. The idea for the location, he explained, came to him one day when he climbed through a hole in the security barrier in the Reihan Forest, near the northern Samaria settlement of Tal Menashe, and saw Israelis strolling there.

One reason he gave for wanting to commit the heinous act was to avenge the death of a friend, a Palestinian prisoner who died of an illness in an Israeli jail.

In the warped world of Palestinian terrorists, this is sufficient cause to come upon an innocent 52-year-old woman jogging through a forest and bash her head in with a rock. It didn't occur to Cabha, of course, that the woman's husband and children would be frantic when she failed to return home after her daily run, or that their lives would be forever marred by her absence, not to mention by the horrific manner in which she died.

No, all that was on his mind was fleeing from justice. He was abetted in this attempt by four other Palestinian paragons of virtue, who themselves are now in custody for helping him hide. All are likely to be tried by the Samaria Military Court.

If and when convicted, Cabha can expect to receive a life sentence. Once in jail, he will be put on Abbas's payroll in accordance with "[P.A.] Government Decision Number 23 of 2010, Regarding the Regulation of Payment of the Monthly Salary to the Prisoner."

The amount that he will get—as the murderer of an Israeli—will reach 12,000 shekels (\$3,800) per month or four times the average earned by residents of the P.A. Even more extraordinary and disturbing is the process that he will undergo in order to receive the money, as it requires his signing over power of attorney to the Red

The COVID Vaccine Blood Libel against Israel

By Jonathan S. Tobin

The headline in The Guardian showed why so many people think Israel is the sum of all evil and deserving of international opprobrium. Nothing screams "apartheid state" like the accusation that, "Palestinians excluded from Israeli Covid Vaccine rollout as jabs go to settlers." Indeed, this follows a traditional pattern of coverage of the Jewish state in the mainstream media in which its achievements—in this case, a rapid and efficient program of mass coronavirus vaccinations that has outstripped the efforts of the rest of the developed world—are highlighted only to be employed as proof of its perfidy. Why cheer a record-setting vaccine distribution if the only beneficiaries are Jews while millions of poor, suffering Palestinians go without?

But there was one problem with the claim. It's a lie even if the same story has been spread in a number of outlets, including the taxpayer-funded PBS, whose respected "News Hour" program claimed last month that, "Palestinians left waiting as Israel is set to deploy COVID-19 vaccine."

The truth is that Israel hasn't excluded Palestinians from its program. Arab citizens of Israel are being vaccinated just like Jewish citizens. Those Arabs who live within the boundaries of Israel, including Palestinians who live in united Jerusalem but who have chosen not to become Israeli citizens, are also getting the vaccine. But contrary to those who harp on Israel's supposedly tyrannical role as "occupier" of the West Bank and Gaza, the Jewish state doesn't administer the daily lives of Palestinians who live there. The health-care system in the villages, towns and cities of the West Bank where Arabs live is run by the Palestinian Authority, not Israel. Those who live in Gaza are ruled by the Hamas terrorist organization, which operates the coastal enclave as an independent Palestinian state in all but name.

You had to scroll down to the 13th paragraph of the Guardian article to get a hint of that fact when it noted that the P.A. has not asked for help from Israel. Indeed, it cut off coordination on issues relating to health care and security since early last year to express its pique at the Trump administration's peace proposal, which it rejected just as it has all such efforts for decades.

But before learning that the P.A. was pursuing its own vaccine solutions with international pharmaceutical companies, Guardian readers had to read heartrending pleas from Palestinians about being ignored by Israel, such as this from a sports coach in Nablus who complained, "Who cares about us? I don't think anybody is stuck on that question."

The correct answer to his question was that his own government, led by Mahmoud Abbas—who this month began the 17th year of the four-year term to which he was elected as president of the P.A. in 2005—certainly doesn't care. The P.A. is a chronically corrupt institution that has squandered the billions it has received in foreign aid, much of which has wound up in the private foreign bank accounts of the leaders of Abbas's Fatah Party.

Both the Guardian and PBS described the P.A. as "cash-strapped" and forced to depend on help from groups tied to the World Health Organization to get vaccines for its people. But in addition to

its corruption problem, the P.A. spends hundreds of millions of dollars a year on salaries and pensions for terrorists who have committed violent crimes, including the murder of Israelis, Americans and those of other nationalities. So dedicated is it to the continuation of its “pay for slay” program that Abbas preferred to give up aid from the United States rather than end the practice after Congress passed the Taylor Force Act, which prohibits further U.S. funds from being given to the P.A. as long as it subsidizes terrorism.

Far from wanting Israel to take over their local government and health care, Palestinians say they want full independence, which would mean excluding Israeli security forces from the West Bank as well as control of their borders. Since the price of that has always been recognition of the legitimacy of a Jewish state next door—and thereby effectively ending the century-long conflict—the P.A. has never been willing to do that. But that doesn’t stop it from ruling Arab areas of the West Bank, including running education, health care and having the power to suppress and imprison those who oppose or criticize Fatah, thereby proving that the autonomy it won in the 1993 Oslo Accords is no sham.

Gaza is a “no go” zone for Israelis and an armed camp that acts as a terrorist base from which rockets are still occasionally fired over the border, even during periods when a ceasefire between the two sides is observed.

As for the settlements, the people who live in them are not governed by the P.A., and obviously, are the responsibility of Israel. Indeed, the Palestinians have made it clear that if they get the power, they will force hundreds of thousands of Jews in the West Bank and Jerusalem out of their homes.

Since vaccinations of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza are not Israel’s responsibility, and both the P.A. and Hamas have rejected Israeli offers of coordination and help on the issue, why then have supposedly reputable news organizations spread this lie?

The answer is that the claim fits into the ongoing narrative about Israel and the Palestinians that much of the mainstream media has adopted for the last half-century. In doing so, those who spew such falsehoods not only serve to help demonize Israel, but also to deprive the Palestinians of any agency for their fate or the conduct of their leaders.

It’s important to understand that this is not just another example of inaccurate Mideast reporting by journalists who don’t know any better. By claiming that Israel is deliberately depriving Palestinians of a life-saving vaccine, outlets who give credence to this charge are pumping new life into old anti-Semitic canards that amount to blood libels against Jews.

Much like past allegations that Jews harvest the organs of Palestinians, poison their children or have engaged in mass slaughters in the course of attempting to suppress rocket fire and other accounts of terrorism, the vaccine is just the latest entry in a long list of untruths about Israel intended to make it seem uniquely evil. Such fabrications are a necessary corollary of arguments that call for the elimination of the only Jewish state on the planet and the only nation being targeted for such treatment.

Part of this campaign necessarily involves not just ascribing evil motives to Israelis, but in reinforcing general ignorance about the facts of the conflict. It also shows that the line between legitimate criticism of Israeli policies—and anti-Zionist and anti-Semitic smears—is one that some in the news media who ought to know better simply don’t recognize. Shifting the discussion about what is already a complex conflict from one about territory and national rights to one in which Jews are cast in the role of murderer of non-Jews that stands at the heart of classic anti-Semitic tropes remains deeply troubling. Journalists who do this are not only making peace even harder to achieve; they are also ensuring that the debate about the Middle East is transformed into one in which real crimes against Jews can be rationalized and even justified.

Those responsible for this particular libel—and all those who have shared it on social media—not only ought to apologize, but recognize that what they have done is not advocacy for Palestinians or human rights. It is a hate crime for which they ought to be held accountable. (JNS Jan 5)

Forming a United Front against Destabilizing Forces in the Middle East By Yoav Limor

The Middle East continues to produce headlines at a hectic pace, and Sunday was no exception. On the one hand, Iran announced it had resumed enriching uranium to 20 percent purity at its Fordow nuclear facility, and on the other, the Americans helped achieve a breakthrough between Saudi Arabia and Qatar that is likely to end the three-year Gulf crisis.

That crisis was sparked in 2017 when Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Egypt severed diplomatic relations with Qatar over its ties with Iran, the world’s top state sponsor of terrorism. They were later joined by Jordan and supported by the Maldives, Mauritania, Senegal, Djibouti, Comoros, Yemen and the Tobruk-based government in Libya.

In all likelihood, the deal between Riyadh and Doha will be the last one brokered by the Trump administration, and while it will end the animosity between the two it will also—and more importantly—allow the moderate Gulf states to present a united front against destabilizing forces in the Middle East.

The price of the deal—in aid funds or arms sales—will surely surface in the coming days and weeks, but its advantages are already clear: Qatar is a key player in the Muslim Brotherhood axis, something that has been at the heart of its dispute with its neighbors, and as such now stands to be a major moderating factor vis-à-vis Turkey and Hamas.

Qatar is not short on reasons to pursue rapprochement with Saudi Arabia, as on top of the obvious diplomatic and economic benefits doing so would also grant it the peace of mind to focus on something it holds dear—hosting the 2022 FIFA World Cup. Doha wants to arrive at the games a winner—not a sheikdom mired in a myriad of regional conflicts.

The end of the Gulf crisis also holds opportunity for Israel. Having inked peace deals with the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Sudan and Morocco, there is no reason why Jerusalem and Doha cannot do the same.

Israel operated a bureau in Doha in the past, which was manned by Foreign Ministry officials. The Mossad intelligence agency also has extensive ties in Qatar—and in fact, had it not been for its conflict with Saudi Arabia, Doah would have probably already boarded the peace train.

Rapprochement with Qatar will also advance peace deals with other Gulf states, chief among them Saudi Arabia. Israel still believes that the Saudis would prefer to wait for the incoming Biden administration; with only 15 days remaining to it, it is hard to believe the Trump administration could announce an Israeli-Saudi accord.

This tight window of opportunity is one Iran is also watching, especially given Monday’s announcement about Fordow, which constitutes the Islamic Republic’s most significant violation to date of the 2015 nuclear deal.

Iran’s move may shorten its path to a bomb, but it is still a long way from having a nuclear weapon. It is likely that Iran is not seeking to make a mad nuclear dash at this point, but rather to accumulate assets ahead of the new nuclear negotiations with the Biden administration.

This is, in fact, a classic “somebody stop me” warning to Washington, signaling that progress better be made if the international community hopes to slow Iran’s nuclear pursuits.

Iran will gladly relinquish enriching uranium to 20 percent in favor of a nuclear pact that would lift the crippling economic sanctions off the Islamic Republic.

Tehran has likely been waiting with this move to make sure Trump was in his last days in office and will not be able to mount a military response.

This is exactly the Iranian weakness that Israel needs to exploit: We need to make it clear to the Biden administration that Iran is violating every understanding and every agreement, and playing not just with fire but with weapons of mass destruction.

Israel must also have an available and reliable military option, and make it clear to the Americans that it is ready to use it. Unlike the 2015 agreement, this time Israel will not really stand alone—its new friends in the Gulf will stand by it. In this respect, the agreement with Qatar is excellent news for the “good guys,” but a little less good for Tehran. (Israel Hayom Jan 5)

The Makings of America's Recognition of the Moroccan Sahara

By Dore Gold

For much of the modern era, the Arab world has sought ways to provide legitimacy to its political leadership. That led it down the road of highly ideological politics based on promoting Arab unity schemes even with the use of force, experimenting with Arab socialist doctrines and maintaining at all costs the Arab-Israel conflict.

A few brave leaders were prepared to break with this paradigm and reached peace with Israel, such as President Anwar Sadat of Egypt and King Hussein of Jordan. Most recently, King Hamad of Bahrain and Sheikh Zayed of the United Arab Emirates have joined this circle. Peace with Israel is not a risk-free strategy, and some of these leaders' enemies were prepared to threaten them with assassination and political turmoil. But they persisted nonetheless in the path of peace.

Now King Muhammad VI has bravely moved the Kingdom of Morocco into the circle of states making formal peace with Israel. It is a move not without risks for the Moroccans. The security challenges that they face primarily emanate from the area of the former Spanish colony of the Western Sahara, where an insurgency campaign is being waged by guerrillas from the Polisario Front against the Moroccan security forces, with the support of Algeria. Morocco had valid claims to this disputed territory; many tribes in the area had been historically linked to the Moroccan monarchy.

The stakes in this conflict are considerable. The Polisario, also backed by the Iranian regime, seeks to undermine the territorial integrity of Morocco itself. In 2018, Morocco presented documents to the Iranian government proving that Tehran was now arming and training the Polisario with the help of Hezbollah. This activity included shoulder-fired anti-aircraft missiles like the SAM-9 and SAM-11. As a result, Morocco cut its diplomatic ties with Iran. It turned out that the Iranians were using their embassy in Algiers as a conduit to the Polisario.

This was part of a pattern that the Iranians were following in Africa—seeking to infiltrate the continent by backing the military moves of allies they sought to cultivate. In late 2019, the United Nations obtained photographs of weapons used by Khalifa Haftar's Libyan National Army, including guided anti-tank missiles which were believed to be Iranian-made. The Iranians also sought to promote the conversion of African Sunnis to Shi'ism, which exacerbated the tensions between Tehran and a number of Sunni states. Sheikh Yousuf al-Qaradhawi, a spiritual head of the Muslim Brotherhood, charged in the local press in a number of countries that Iran was seeking to infiltrate Egypt, Sudan, Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco.

There were several lessons for the West from these episodes. First, it was clear that the Polisario, far from being a national liberation movement deserving global backing, was emerging as an organization that had no problem linking itself to the terrorist network Iran had established across the Middle East and Africa. What would the Western powers do? They did not have to send their air forces to North Africa. But they could deny the Polisario their diplomatic goals.

After Syria hosted Iranian proxy forces in large numbers, the United States issued a proclamation in March 2019 recognizing Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights. After the Polisario decided to work with Iran, an equivalent move of recognizing Moroccan sovereignty over the Western Sahara made perfect sense. It was extremely important to send a message to other players as well.

It was a strategy that was working. Already Bahrain, Jordan and the UAE had spoken about opening up a Moroccan consulate on the territory of the Western Sahara. South Africa's president, Cyril Ramaphosa, distanced his country from Polisario claims. It was significant given the fact that South Africa, besides being the most powerful country in Africa, also held the presidency of the African Union. If the United States wished to reinforce political moderation across the region and weaken the axis of extremism then reinforcing Morocco's position on the Sahara issue was a wise approach to follow. That logic helped lead to the birth of the Moroccan Sahara.

The connection between peacemaking efforts now being pursued by Israel and Morocco and the situation in the Western Sahara is not complicated. When the voices of Arab moderation are secured, peace can become a reality. But if Iran enters undisturbed, then any peace can be undermined. The resolve of the United States and its allies can make all the difference in setting the stage for a new era in the Middle East. (Israel Hayom Jan 4)

Seven Reasons for the Arab World's 'Post-Jihad' Movement

By Yishai Fleisher

With America in a moment of deep polarization, elections looming in Israel and the coronavirus still wreaking havoc around the world, the local and global situation seems murky. And yet, ironically, within this mud-swamp grows a beautiful flower of Middle East hope: The Abraham Accords—the beginnings of the Arab world's normalization with Israel. The Abraham Accords are, in turn, an outward manifestation of an even broader movement happening within the Arab world: post-jihadism.

Jihad means struggle, and it represents the Islamic value of holy war against infidels. Post-jihadism, on the other hand, is the tendency away from pan-Arabism and pan-Islamism—the ideologies of Arab-Islamic conquest—and its replacement with the ideal of regional cooperation and the goals of societal and individual self-actualization and prosperity.

Post-jihadism has a long way to go, to be sure. But the old thinking is being challenged—and there are at least seven contributing factors that are helping ignite the imagination for a post-jihadist Middle East:

1. States running jihadism are a disaster

Regional Arabs are rethinking jihadism, because it doesn't make sense in the modern industrial world. A posture of conquest simply does not equal power and wealth the way that it used to. Instead, the Arab street sees that the jihadist-leaning states and organizations, such as Iran and ISIS, eschew minimum freedoms, and bring misery, poverty and death to their people.

In other Arab states, rulers used jihadism as a national goal to draw popular ire away from inept leadership, endemic corruption, slothful bureaucracy and a stagnant pre-industrial economy. Egypt's Gamal Abdel Nasser had a goal of defeating Israel, while Iraq's Saddam Hussein dreamed of defeating Iran. But the jihad distraction is no longer working. People in Arab countries are no longer content to forfeit their own lives and upward mobility for their corrupt leaders' dreams of victory.

Discontent with jihadism is also rocking the foundations of a related concept: anti-Israelism. Destroying Israel was once a reliable rallying cry in the Arab world.

However, as journalist and author Jake Wallis Simons recently wrote: "The most stunning development has been the change of feeling on the Arab street. Traditionally, levels of anti-Semitism have soared across the Middle East, with a seminal 2014 study finding that 74 percent of adults across the region harbored anti-Semitic beliefs. But as country after country has made peace with Israel, these attitudes have softened significantly. Recent polls report that about 80 percent of Saudis are now in favor of normalization, and 40 percent of citizens across a range of Arab countries want their leaders to take an active role in encouraging peace."

Evidently, the old political belief that peace with Israel was not possible without satisfying Palestinian demands is now dead. Sunni-Arab leaders are tired of having their foreign policy shackled to the fickle whims of the PLO and Hamas, and therefore the accords between Israel and Sunni-Arab states simply circumvented the Palestinian issue, except for lip service. This, together with the Arab League's refusal to condemn the Abraham Accords, spoke volumes about the acceptance of Israel, and of the Arab disgust with the corrupt and jihadist Palestinian leadership.

2. Deal with it—Israel is undefeatable

Another old premise, on which the 100-year Arab war on Israel was based, was that at some point Israel would be defeated; if only the Arab and Islamic world could get together, surely they could "throw the Jews into the sea."

The conflict with Israel, however, diverted a lot of resources into the war effort and away from progress. Many Arabs were willing to swallow it, as long as the goal of defeating Israel appeared to be achievable.

But after 100 years, and countless attempts to destroy Israel, the realization has finally hit parts of the Arab world that Israel isn't going anywhere. Many Arabs ask themselves a simple question: Why fight a pointless war that only hurts us? Why give up on the attainable goal of prosperity for the unattainable goal of destroying Israel? As the old adage goes: If you can't beat 'em, join 'em.

3. Oil hegemony is over

In the late 1970s, the Muslim Middle East had all the oil. With this

gift from Allah, jihad could be subsidized.

But lo and behold, the energy monopoly has been broken. The United States has now become the world's biggest oil producer, and the Arab states can no longer control the world by turning off the oil spigot. The economic engine of jihadism has run out of gas.

Moreover, oil is a finite commodity, and in order to assure their economic standing, forward-thinking Arab leaders are imagining a future not of jihadist conquest, but of regional and global cooperation. The "Saudi 2030 Vision" is "a strategic framework to reduce Saudi Arabia's dependence on oil and diversify its economy."

4. Big, bad Iran

A major motivator for the normalization with Israel—and therefore a catalyst for post-jihadism—is the realization that there are far greater and more concrete dangers to Sunni-Arab countries than the presence of a small, local Jewish state. Iran's mullahs covet Mecca and Medina in Saudi Arabia and hope one day to rule the Muslim holy cities. With a 500,000-strong army, long-distance ballistic rocket capabilities and impressive victories in Yemen, the Iranian threats are not empty.

Sunni Arabs understand that the axis of defense against Iranian aggression runs right through the Jewish state, which has a capable defense apparatus, a self-interest in subduing Iranian power and close relations with the U.S.—an important strategic partner for Sunni states. The ability of Israel to operate unfettered off the shores of the United Arab Emirates—right across from Iran—is therefore a major defense asset. (Recently it was reported that an Israel Navy submarine went through the Suez Canal heading for the shores of the UAE.) And so, this rationale for Sunni-Arab détente with Israel can be reduced to another truism: My enemy's enemy is my friend.

5. A new generation of Arab leaders

A new generation of energetic Arab leaders is coming into its own and for some of them, jihadism is a retarding force that keeps their realms locked into the pre-industrial mindset.

Saudi Arabia's Mohammed bin Salman (MBS) has begun building a new ultra-modern city—Neom on the Red Sea—with the vision of moving Saudi Arabia into the future. He has removed the ban on women driving, cracked down on jihadist imams, cleaned up radical textbooks and established a center to counter extremism. An excellent video on "Why Arab-Israeli ties are normalizing" discusses two "geo-economic mega-projects" between Israel and Saudi Arabia, both spearheaded by MBS. This is post-jihadism embodied.

6. U.S. President Donald Trump—a blessing for the region

Undoubtedly, the Trump administration was a catalyst of the Middle East's post-jihadist mindset. One vector was the obvious pro-Israel bent that rejected the Arab denial of the Jewish state. The Trump administration frontally attacked the classic mechanisms of the anti-Israel narrative—such as the United Nations (UNESCO, UNRWA, etc.)—and then very publicly recognized Jerusalem as Israel's capital. This served to strengthen the Arab realization that Israel was not at all on the path to being defeated.

But another side of Trump's policy was the more pro-Arab vector: the art of the deal. The Trump-Jared Kushner team was able to bypass the tough religious-ethnic-national issues by appealing to the merchant nature of the Middle Eastern bazaar: "We are businessmen, not politicians," they said.

"The leadership in the region recognize that the approach that's been taken in the past hasn't worked, and they realize that their people want to see a more vibrant and exciting future," Kushner told reporters.

7. The Islamic rationale for post-jihadism

Post-jihadism and acceptance of Israel need a theological rationale for it to become a legitimate movement.

In a recent interview with the Tikvah Fund, Middle East expert Richard Goldberg described many conversations with Saudis who have taken to calling this post-jihadist Islamic outlook not "modern" or "reformed" Islam, but rather "true" Islam—the authentic Islam that harkens back to more tolerant periods of Muslim history. In that vein, new religious organizations are appearing on the Islamic map, such as the Baghdad-based Global Imams Council, which promote a tolerant agenda.

Indeed, the next years will probably see an increase in fatwas and clerical statements that extoll the beauty of the Abraham Accords and normalization with Israel—and that is exactly what is needed to give the Arab layman the "excuse" to drop the thinking of the past and enter the era of post-jihadism.

Hope for the Abrahamic region

The Arab Spring was a testament to the deep frustration that Arabs have with their societies and their leaders. But now, numerous factors have come together to help the Arab world transition out of the era of jihadism and into a mode of progress.

For leaders like the UAE's Mohammed bin Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan (MBZ) and Saudi Arabia's MBS, the totality of the above list—the disappointment with old-style jihadist regimes, the threat of Iran, the limits of the oil economy, the realization that Israel is not a foe but a partner and the deep yearning for Arab civilizational advancement—all coalesce into an outlook that prefers progress to jihadist regression.

Naturally, jihadist Islam, from the Iranian mullah-led regime to the Muslim Brotherhood, has identified this threat to its control, and will push back with plenty of religious fire-power and violent suppression to keep its school of thought dominant in the region. It will take a powerful vision, a willingness to take on reluctant forces and, of course, the blessings of Allah, for the ideals of post-jihadism to take root. (JNS Jan 4)

Time to Put an End to Legislated Racism By Naomi Kahn

If you were asked to name a country where there is still a law in force that prohibits Jews from buying property, you might be tempted to make an educated guess based on the dark history of Europe and the long tradition of expulsion and persecution that was facilitated by anti-Jewish legislation over centuries. Places like Germany, England and France might spring to mind; Spain and Portugal might be in the running as well.

You probably wouldn't guess that today, in the year 2021, a law is enforced by the State of Israel that prohibits Jews from purchasing privately owned property—but that is the sad and shocking truth. Law 40, enacted in 1953 by the Jordanians during their illegal annexation of Judea and Samaria, prohibits the purchase of privately owned land by non-Arabs, as well as the sale of privately owned land to non-Arabs (in other words, Jews). Not only is Law 40 still "on the books," but it is actively enforced to this very day by the State of Israel's legislative, judicial and security branches.

In a very real and undeniable sense, this legislation is, quite simply, racist. It is blatantly anti-Semitic. It is regressive, and an affront to the concepts of personal liberty, equality and property rights upon which democracy is based. Laws of this kind would not be allowed to stand anywhere in the civilized world, and it is nothing short of outrageous that the Jewish state has allowed this discriminatory and regressive legislation to remain in force in a judicial system that champions individual rights.

How, then, have Jews purchased property over the past 53 years? In 1971, the Military Commander for Judea and Samaria issued a "work-around" directive, by changing the Jordanian law that pertains to corporate ownership, while leaving Law 40 untouched. Thus, companies registered in Judea and Samaria—even if they are owned by Jews—are now permitted to purchase property in Judea and Samaria. Rather than strike down Law 40, the Israeli government has left it in place and designed a method of circumventing it.

Why, you may well ask? Why should this be necessary? Simply put, the State of Israel has spent decades avoiding any action that might be construed as an act of sovereignty in Judea and Samaria. It has bent itself into contorted legal positions in order to avoid fulfilling its most basic responsibilities to Israeli citizens and to the security of the State of Israel. It has procrastinated to the point of absurdity, creating a vacuum of governance and a black hole of law and order that continues to turn normal life—for Jewish and Palestinian residents of "Area C" alike—into a tangled bureaucratic nightmare.

The legal departments of both Israel's Ministry of Defense and Civil Administration have recommended additional methods of circumventing or even amending Law 40. The Regavim Movement, on the other hand, has petitioned the High Court of Justice to strike down this racist legislation altogether, and to expunge this anti-Semitic vestige from the Israeli legal code. Striking down Law 40 is a statement of Israel's commitment to equal and universal rights under the law—a statement that is long overdue. (JNS Jan 4)
