

ISRAEL REPORT

To provide greater exposure to primary Israeli news sources and opinions in order to become better informed on the issues, and to gain a better understanding of the wide range of perspectives that exist in Israeli society and politics.

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MIDGAM POLL (Walla, 9/3/19)

	Current	6/3 Poll	8/5 Poll	9/3 Poll
Likud	39	36	31	32
Blue & White	35	34	29	31
Hadash-Taal	10	11	11	10
United Torah Judaism	8	7	8	8
Shas	8	7	7	7
Labor	6	4	6	7
Yisrael Beitenu	5	8	10	9
United Right List (Shaked, Peretz)	5	4	11	9
Democratic Union (Barak)	4	4	7	7

YAIR LAPID: I WILL BE PRIME MINISTER (Arutz-7 9/4/19)

MK Yair Lapid (Blue and White), a candidate for Prime Minister as part of a rotation with Benny Gantz, rejects the allegations of disagreements at the top of the party and hopes to form a government with the Likud after the election - but without Binyamin Netanyahu.

Lapid commented on the leaks from the Blue and White election campaign headquarters and said that "there was no mole. It's all a spin. There was an information security check, which is important."

Responding to Gantz's hiring of an investigative company at a cost of half a million shekels without his knowledge, Lapid said, "We sat together and told him, 'Benny, take care of the leaks.' That's his job, that's what needs to be done. That's fine with me."

Lapid also explained why he attacked Netanyahu this week, even after Gantz suspended the election campaign in the wake of the tensions on the northern border. "It came out at the same minute. If they had said something a minute earlier, I wouldn't have published my statement."

Lapid said he does not see a possibility that the day after the election, Gantz will part with him and join a coalition headed by Netanyahu. "It won't happen. Benny is an honest man. I made a deal with an honest man. He said he would not sit with Netanyahu because of the indictments."

To the question, "Do you think you will ultimately be Prime Minister?" Lapid replied, "Yes. I made an agreement with honest people. When you have an agreement with honest people you feel safe."

The day after the elections, he continued, "there will be a series of phone calls that everyone will know about, and a series of phone calls that no one will know about. We will talk to Liberman, talk to Amir Peretz, I see no reason not to talk to Naftali [Bennett] and Ayelet [Shaked]. [Rafi] Peretz and [Bezalel] Smotrich cannot serve as ministers, you can already see that in the short time that they have been serving."

"We will not sit with Netanyahu. A unity government is being prevented because of one person called Netanyahu. If he steps aside, there will be a good unity government," MK Lapid added.

BATTLE AT THE TOP HURTING LITTLE PARTIES (Israel Hayom 9/3/19)

Two facts will make the final two weeks of the Knesset election campaign critical, and possibly even drama-laden. The first is that the Sept. 17 election is a do-over, only a few months after the April election, and the public is already sick of it all and not paying too much attention. The second is that the heavy campaigning took place in July and August, when interest in newspapers and TV news reports plummets to the single digits.

The various parties know this, so they have been pacing themselves in the past couple of months - meaning that they are going into the final two-week stretch with well-lined pockets and well-stocked arsenals.

In the Likud, panic is growing, and this time, it's justified. None of the polls to date have shown the right-wing bloc beating the Left, and if that is how the election actually plays out, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government could be in real danger.

The center-left Blue and White is busy with internecine fighting, but they are maintaining their position as a party the same size as the Likud and the only option for a change of government. Yair Lapid and Benny Gantz are attracting the anti-Netanyahuites, leaving the left-wing parties only crumbs.

The fact that the Labor party hasn't gotten a second wind since the final results of the April election points to a problematic campaign that isn't delivering the goods. While the candidates in the party to the Left of Labor, the Democratic Union (Ehud Barak and Meretz), seem to be aggressive and hungry, both Labor and Blue and White are falling asleep at the wheel and sending out messages that don't hit home. Blue and White exists mostly thanks to inertia, while Labor is failing to take votes from Blue and White and is running the clumsiest campaign of the election.

In the last two weeks, everything could change. It looks like Netanyahu will be the one to dictate the agenda, and the battle between the big parties will be a tough one and close. This is bad news for the "satellite" parties: Labor and the Democratic Union on the Left, and Yamina (formerly the New Right) on the Right. They will all lose votes to the large parties, and it doesn't look like they can do anything about it unless a miracle happens. The Hebrew month of Elul, which has just begun, isn't a bad time to start praying for one.

ISRAEL IN TALKS WITH US FOR AID IN CASE OF EXISTENTIAL THREAT - REPORT (JPost 9/2/19)

Advisers to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and US President Donald Trump are in contact about a possible US commitment to come to Israel's aid in case of an existential threat, Haaretz reported on Monday.

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According to the report, Netanyahu is looking for a dramatic gesture from the US president to help boost him at the polls on September 17.

In March, just two weeks before the last election, Trump announced US recognition of Israel's sovereignty over the Golan Heights, a move widely seen at the time as a pre-election gift to Netanyahu.

Over the last few months, there has been some talk about a US-Israel defense treaty. Republican Sen. Lindsey Graham first broached the idea in June, saying at a gala dinner hosted by the Endowment for Middle East Truth (EMET) that he wanted Israel to be added to a long list of countries with whom the US has treaty obligations.

"I think it is important to send a signal in the 21st century: If you are intending to destroy Israel, you have to go through us, and it will not turn out well for you," he said.

Though there is not time before the elections to finalize and get such an agreement passed, the idea under discussion – according to Haaretz – is to issue a joint announcement about the start of negotiations over such a treaty. Graham discussed the idea of a treaty when he was in Israel in July. Politically, this is something that could benefit both Netanyahu and Trump in their upcoming electoral battles: Netanyahu in securing yet another diplomatic gift from a friendly administration, and Trump in giving something to Israel that will go down well with his Evangelical base.

The idea of a treaty is one that has been discussed on and off for several decades, and while on the surface it would appear to be a significant diplomat achievement, there have consistently been voices raised saying that it would not necessarily be good for Israel, since it would limit the country's operational freedom.

NETANYAHU: 'WE WILL REMAIN IN HEBRON FOREVER' (YNet 9/4/19)

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Wednesday during a memorial service to the 1929 Arab riots in Hebron that "we are not strangers in Hebron and will remain in the city forever."

"We are not here to disinherit anyone, but no one will disinherit us (from here)," he said.

"We have come here to unite in memory, to express victory over bloodthirsty rioters who committed this horrific massacre 90 years ago," the prime minister said.

"They were sure that they uprooted us for good, but they made a huge mistake," he added.

Earlier in the ceremony, Knesset speaker Yuli Edelstein said that "it is time to impose sovereignty" on the city.

"We did not return in all out might to this place, a place where our legacy lies and where Jews have dreamed about for generations," he said. "It is time that the Jewish settlement in Hebron grows by the thousands."

Culture Minister Miri Regev also called on Netanyahu to annex the city of Hebron, saying that "it's time that we uphold the pledge we have with our patriarchs and be sovereigns over the West Bank and Hebron, Tel Aviv and Hebron are no different"

"We have no right to settle in Tel Aviv, Dimona or Kiryat Shmona if we don't understand the meaning of Hebron," she added.

President Reuven Rivlin attended a different memorial service in the city earlier Wednesday and said that "Hebron is not a barrier for peace."

"It is all up to us and our will. Hope is where we stand, Jews have returned to the home of their fathers," he said.

"Israel must work to improve the quality of life in the area for all its inhabitants," the president added, referring to both the Arab and Jewish population of the city.

ISRAEL SAYS HEZBOLLAH PLANS ADVANCED MISSILE PLANT IN LEBANON (YNet News 9/3/19)

Israel accused Hezbollah on Tuesday of setting up a factory for precision-guided missiles in Lebanon's Bekaa Valley, in a veiled warning of further possible Israeli counter-strikes after a drone attack near Beirut attributed to Israel set off brief cross-border fighting.

Sunday's shelling exchange was the fiercest between Israel and Hezbollah since the end of the 2006 Second Lebanon War. While neither side is keen to see an escalation, Israel has said it could act against any upgrades of Hezbollah's missile arsenal, while Hezbollah has said it would retaliate for any attacks on Lebanese soil.

In a statement to media accompanied by satellite images, the Israeli military said that Hezbollah, with Iranian assistance, had been bringing specialised equipment to a weapons factory near the Bekaa village of al-Nabi Sheet with a view to setting up a production line for precision-guidance missiles.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said in response that Israel's enemies will not possess precision-guided missiles on his watch. "These precision missiles are aimed directly at (the northern city of) Kiryat Ata," said the prime minister.

Hezbollah recently moved some of the equipment to "civilian locations" in Beirut as a precaution against strikes, the Israel Defense Forces statement said, alluding to tensions that surged after the August 25 drone incident in a Hezbollah stronghold in a Beirut suburb.

There was no immediate comment from Hezbollah, which has denied having precision-guided missile production sites in Lebanon. But it says it possess such weapons, which could be used to home in on and knock out key Israeli infrastructure.

In an August 31 speech, Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah accused Israel of using the movement's capability with precision-guided missiles as a pretext for attacks.

Israel has not formally claimed responsibility for the Beirut drone strike, which a regional security source said hit a component of the precision-guided missile project.

Hoping to move Beirut to rein in Hezbollah, Israel has signalled that in any further flare-up it could carry out widespread attacks on Lebanon.

PLANNERS GREEN-LIGHT ISRAEL'S FIRST MASTER PLAN FOR ENERGY INFRASTRUCTURE (Times of Israel 9/4/19)

Government planners on Tuesday gave the green light to Israel's first-ever master plan for energy infrastructure, which earmarks up to 40,000 dunams (almost 10,000 acres) of land for the construction of renewable energy plants by 2050.

Seeking to put an end to the practice to date, which saw infrastructure plans for electricity, oil, gas, water and other such industries planned separately and on a project-by-project basis without any broader vision, the master plan consolidates all previously approved plans for facilities providing conventional as well as renewable energy, and lays out guidelines for future infrastructure development through 2050.

According to the Energy Ministry, the master plan has been put together following consultations with government ministries, the major utilities, environmental organizations, local authorities and interested parties.

Master plan 41 (known in Hebrew by its acronym, Tama 41) maps a dozen large sites, mainly in and around industrial areas in the country's south, for the creation of solar farms, with one, near the Negev city of Dimona, set aside for wind turbines.

To minimize harm to the landscape and preserve the environment, it also delineates locations for the laying of infrastructure, both above and below ground, with an emphasis on running cables and pipes for gas, oil, electricity, water, sewage and communications together wherever possible. The plan includes instructions to investigate the feasibility of digging new tunnels for infrastructure in 11 locations, mainly under existing roads.

No new facilities for natural gas are envisaged beyond 2040.

The master plan will now be sent to district planning committees, which are responsible for issuing building permits, for consultation and comment.

"For the first time, we are presenting one plan to advance the energy infrastructure in Israel for the medium and long term. The plan envisages a mixture of infrastructure for natural gas and renewable sources of energy within a framework of reducing air pollution for the sake of public health," said Energy Minister Yuval Steinitz.

Israel is currently transitioning from coal-fired power to natural gas, following the discovery of huge reserves off the Mediterranean coast.

The Tamar platform, located roughly 80 kilometers (50 miles) west of the northern city of Haifa, began production in 2013. The much larger Leviathan field, 125 kilometers (77 miles) west of Haifa, is expected to start operating by the end of this year, with its production platform due to arrive in Israel within days.

The Energy Ministry is trying to reach government targets set in 2016 to have renewables producing 10 percent of the country's electricity by 2020 and 17% by 2030. By the end of last year, just 3.5% of energy was being renewably produced, and by December this year, that figure is expected to rise to only 5%.

In July, the Energy Ministry and the Electricity Authority rolled out an incentive campaign to encourage more Israelis to install electricity-producing solar panels on their roofs. (Solar-powered water heaters have been a common site on roofs for decades).

To date, solar panels have been installed on around 13,000 roofs, the vast majority of them agricultural, commercial or industrial, such as shopping centers. The aim of the campaign has been to double that number of roof-laid panels by the end of next year, largely by encouraging residential property owners to invest in solar systems that become profitable after eight to 10 years within the framework of a deal that pays them for the surplus electricity that enters the national grid.

Plans are also afoot to place solar panels in quarries and at landfill sites, as well as to put floating panels on bodies of water that can also reduce evaporation.

A truck cleaning the dust off the thermo-solar mirrors of the Negev Energy Ashlim plant, August 29, 2019. (Avshalom Sasoni)

At the end of last month, Israel officially marked the start of operations at the nation's largest renewable energy project — a 121MW thermal solar power plant in the Negev desert. The plant, which started production in April, will supply 0.75% of the nation's electricity to some 70,000 households, helping to reduce some 245,000 tons of CO2 emissions per year — the equivalent of taking 50,000 vehicles off the road — according to the project's website.

In contrast to Israel, the European Union aims have at least 32% of its energy coming from renewables by 2030. According to a World Economic Forum report published in February, renewable sources accounted for an average of 17.5% of EU electricity across the board by 2017, with Sweden deriving 54.5% of its energy from renewables, Finland 41%, Latvia 39% and Denmark 35.8%. At the bottom of the pile is the Netherlands, which is 7.4 % behind its goal.

Tama 41 joins Tama 42, a national master plan for land-based transportation which brings all transportation plans together and contains targets to be implemented up to 2040. That was presented to the national planning committee for the first time last month.

Israel faces the dual challenge of having to cut carbon emissions, which contribute to global warming, while providing power for a population that is set to almost double by 2050 from the current nine million to 17.6 million.

WORLD LEADING CARMAKERS BACK NEW ISRAELI AI VISION START-UP (JPost 9/4/19)

The artificial intelligence start-up Cortica has partnered with world-leading carmakers and investors to launch Cartica AI, an automotive visual intelligence platform based on self-learning technology.

Continental, Toyota AI Ventures, BMW i Ventures and OurCrowd will invest undisclosed sums in the company's autonomous AI platform, which aims to increase road safety and lower casualties on global highways.

Founded in 2007, the Tel Aviv-headquartered Cortica has operated for two-and-a-half years in the field of autonomous mobility. The launch of Cartica AI as a separate company seeks to expand the firm's activities in the automotive sector. Cortica has previously secured more than \$69 million in funding, and employs over 100 workers in Tel Aviv, Haifa, New York and Geneva.

"We're excited to have these leading funds and strategic players on board," said Cartica AI co-founder and CEO Igal Raichelgauz. "Our goal is to introduce a novel, yet proven, AI approach to the automotive industry, which will pave the way for a safer and more autonomous transportation. Our strategy is to build strong partnerships with leading automotive players in order to bring our solution to the high-volume automotive marketplace by the end of next year. Joining forces with these leading players is another substantial validation of our unique technology and business strategy."

Cartica AI's autonomous technology is based on more than a decade of research and development at the Technion-Israel Institute of Technology in Haifa, and is protected by over 200 patents. Unlike the conventional AI approach of supervised deep learning, which is heavily based on massive amounts of human-labeled data, the company says its technology enables unsupervised learning from real-world data, resulting in greater accuracy in edge cases and challenging road scenarios. The platform promises high-accuracy visual perception in all weather and lighting conditions, with the ability to recognize and predict the actions of thousands of objects.

"We're thrilled to invest in Cartica AI," said Toyota AI Ventures founding managing director Jim Adler. "It's rare to see a company leverage over a decade of computer vision research and development applied to the toughest problems in autonomous driving. We've been impressed with the quality of Cartica's team, and their unsupervised learning approach to new perception solutions for the automotive market. We look forward to working with them as they power the next generation of mobility AI solutions."

The technology developed by Cartica AI is installed on a chip designed by Japanese chipmaker Renesas Electronics, with the company stating that operating the platform requires less than a half-watt of power compared with five to 10 watts among existing solutions including Mobileye. The technology, Cartica AI said, is currently in serial production.

The new company's operations will be transferred in November from Cortica's Tel Aviv headquarters to its own new offices, where it is expected to employ 100 developers. The company also plans to open an office in Munich, which will boost its activity in proximity to Europe's leading automotive manufacturers.

"OurCrowd is very excited to be investing in Cartica," said OurCrowd senior investment partner Eli Nir. "Cartica AI has a unique mix of a world class technology, team, extremely strong IP portfolio, and a product that offers functional and cost benefits that are currently unheard of in the ADAS ecosystem, not to mention robust market traction that can convert into very sizable deals. We are pleased to be able to help CEO Igal Raichelgauz, his team and other stakeholders in the company to maximize the potential of Cartica."

ISRAEL SENDS GROUP TO HELP BRAZIL BATTLE AMAZON FIRES (Times of Israel 9/4/19)

Israel announced Tuesday it was sending a delegation of experts on natural disasters to help Brazil combat the fires ravaging its Amazon basin.

"An Israeli delegation of firefighters and rescue experts is leaving for Brazil on Tuesday evening to help the local authorities," the foreign ministry said.

The ministry said the 11-member team would depart Tuesday evening to assist Brazilian authorities with search-and-rescue and wildfire operations.

August saw the highest number of fires in the Brazilian Amazon since 2010, and a sharp increase compared to the year before.

The fires have consumed large swaths of the country's Amazon rainforest, and have put Brazil under pressure on the diplomatic front.

Turning down other offers of international help over the worst fires in the Amazon in years, Brazil has accused foreign countries — particularly in Europe — of trying to meddle in its affairs.

But Brazil, whose President Jair Bolsonaro has good relations with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, has accepted aid from the Jewish state, which last week said it would provide 100 tons of fire-fighting material.

Netanyahu's office said Israel would send a shipment of flame-retarding

chemicals to Brazil, while Bolsonaro tweeted that Israel was sending a specialized plane to help in the firefighting operation.

It was not clear when or what equipment was sent.

Israel and Brazil have strengthened bilateral ties since Bolsonaro took office earlier this year. Netanyahu made the first state visit by an Israeli leader in December 2018, days before Bolsonaro's inauguration, then rolled out the red carpet for the far-right Brazilian in April.

Netanyahu's pledges to help join a chorus of international concern over the devastating fires burning across the Amazon region.

But Bolsonaro has accused France and Germany of "buying" Brazil's sovereignty after the G7 group of rich democracies offered \$20 million in Amazon fire aid. He initially rejected the money unless his French counterpart Emmanuel Macron withdrew "insults" made against him.

Bolsonaro later said Brazil would accept bilateral aid to fight the fires, but has insisted the Latin American country must control the money.

Chilean President Sebastian Pinera announced that his country will send four water bombers to help fight the Brazilian blazes.

That is being done "thanks to financing from the G7 countries," Pinera said.

Last week, US President Donald Trump said the United States was ready to help Brazil fight the fires and criticized the G7 for failing to consult Bolsonaro over its initiative.

The Brazilian president told reporters he would talk to German Chancellor Angela Merkel, and repeated a demand that "our dear Macron" retract remarks relating to Brazil's sovereignty over the Amazon before he would speak to him.

"Europe has nothing to teach us about preserving the environment," Bolsonaro said, reiterating his plan for "sustainable exploitation" of the Amazon.

Bolsonaro later tweeted that he had a "productive" conversation with Merkel, who he said "reaffirmed Brazilian sovereignty over our Amazon region."

Under growing pressure to do more, Bolsonaro issued a nationwide 60-day ban on burning that took effect Thursday.

Activists quickly doused hopes that the prohibition would work in the remote Amazon region where deforestation has surged this year as agencies tasked with monitoring illegal activities were weakened.

On the same day as the ban took effect, 2,300 new fires were detected — most of them in the Amazon basin — taking the total number for this year to 87,257, the latest figures from the National Institute for Space Research show.

Nearly 1,500 of the new fires were in the vast Amazon basin.

This year's total is the highest since 2010 when 132,106 fires were detected across the country.

Para was the hardest hit state on Thursday, with 587 new blazes — up 67 percent from the previous day.

Police on Thursday arrested three people for burning several thousands hectares (acres) in a conservation area in Para.

Thousands of troops and firefighters, along with aircraft, have been deployed since the weekend, and the defense ministry says the fires are under control. Bolsonaro claimed in a live broadcast on Facebook on Thursday that "this year's fires are below the average of recent years."

IS A CONFLICT WITH LEBANON STILL ON THE HORIZON (Rachel Avraham, Israel Hayom 9/4/19)

Recent days have been extremely tense in northern Israel after Hezbollah fired a missile at an IDF vehicle. Although no one was wounded in that missile attack, pundits are wondering whether a Third Lebanon War is on the horizon.

Hezbollah has since asked Israel to bring the conflict to a halt and the firing has ceased. But IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Aviv Kochavi reiterated that the UN Interim Force in Lebanon needs to stop Hezbollah's missile program or Israel will. According to a recent report in The Jerusalem Post, Hezbollah is currently setting up a precision missile site in Lebanon's Beqaa Valley.

According to Mendi Safadi, head of the Safadi Center for International

Diplomacy, Research, Public Relations and Human Rights: "Israel is prepared and ready for any scenario, both from Lebanon and the Syrian border; every small shell will be answered by heavy artillery that will paralyze the source of the shooting." Nevertheless, he notes, "Hezbollah does not have the physical ability to launch a continuous war with Israel."

According to Safadi, due to the Iran sanctions implemented by US President Donald Trump, Hezbollah's budget has been decreased significantly. This, along with Israeli operations in Syria, has compromised its preparedness for battle. The Syrian Civil War has exhausted Hezbollah's resources and ability to fight against Israel. Moreover, "Hezbollah has lost the support of the Lebanese street and finds itself facing a frontal collision with most of the Lebanese public, even within Shia homes." For this reason, when Israel began to respond to Hezbollah in southern Lebanon, many locals decided to flee north and abandon the area, which forced Hezbollah head Hassan Nasrallah to "abandon the ongoing attack on Israel. It would have been a suicidal act with devastating consequences."

Though Hezbollah is not now in the best position to take Israel on, it still seeks to threaten the Jewish state. Interestingly, just a few months ago, former Education Minister Naftali Bennett, speaking at Shurat HaDin's annual Law and War Conference, said that Hezbollah now has 140,000 missiles aimed at Israel: "Now, they have piled up tens of thousands of missiles, embedded them within homes, and they can shoot at population centers in Israel in order to kill Israelis. You come into a home in a Lebanese village in southern Lebanon and there is a parents' room, the children's room, the kitchen, the living room and there is the rocket room. There is a rocket room, literally. There is a rocket targeted toward Israel. There is a movable ceiling so, like a convertible car, you can move the ceiling, shoot, and then you close it. So, they might have a dog, a cat, and a missile in their home."

The placing of missiles in civilian homes in southern Lebanon is a callous strategy utilized by Hezbollah. "Deliberately, in the beginning, they build the homes around the missiles," Bennett explained. "It's a long-range missile. It is a pretty big thing. You cannot bring it in after you build the homes, so there are some homes that they actually built around the missiles. Quite literally. This happens primarily in Shiite villages but not only. You got villages where 30 to 40% of the houses are hosting missiles right now. The rest of the villages are booby-trapped." Bennett noted that when you have 140,000 missiles aimed at Israel, this gives Hezbollah the ability to fire 1,000 missiles into Israeli civilian population centers per day over a period of five months.

For this reason, though another Lebanon war was temporarily averted, many believe that a Third Lebanon War is just a matter of time. Former Consul General Dr. Yitschak Ben Gad noted, "It is not if but when. In my opinion, Israel is changing the rules of the game. Israel is not going to tolerate Hezbollah getting accurate missiles. Israel has to take the take initiative and remove this danger of 140,000 missiles threatening our population. Now, if we listen to what [Prime Minister Benjamin] Netanyahu says, we have a problem with Lebanon, not with just Hezbollah alone. Hezbollah is part of the government of Lebanon. This means if a war starts, it is Israel against Lebanon and that will be a catastrophe for Lebanon. It is like a war between the US and Mexico. The US would destroy Mexico."

However, Ben Gad added that there are many Lebanese who do hate Hezbollah and these people could potentially try to rein in Hezbollah: "Most of the Lebanese think Hezbollah is a troublemaker and proxy of Iran. They are saying, what do we have to do with Iran? We are not Iran but Lebanon. Hezbollah is serving the interests of Iran, not Lebanon. They are putting Lebanon into trouble with Israel."

Though Hezbollah seeks to threaten Israel, it is not interested in self-destruction. Its leaders still remember what happened during the Second Lebanon War in 2006, when two Israeli soldiers were abducted and killed. Lebanon suffered massive destruction during that war. Its people are still traumatized. According to Nasrallah: "Had I known the results of this war, I would not have kidnapped those two soldiers." Ben Gad concludes, "It doesn't pay for Hezbollah to start troubles. If many Israeli soldiers and civilians get killed, that will start a war between Israel and Lebanon."