Contents:

‘Setback for Peace’: Israeli Envoy: Ron Prosor, National Post, Nov. 29, 2012— In a speech to the General Assembly before the vote, Israel’s ambassador to the UN, ron Prosor, said granting non-member observer status to the Palestinians would be a setback for peace.

UQAM Professor Office Door Vandalized With Anti-Semitic Slogans: Montreal Gazette, Nov. 21, 2012—Political-science professor Julien Bauer at the Université du Québec à Montréal had the door of his office vandalized with anti-Semitic slogans recently, during the Gaza/Israel flare-up…

What Your Son Did to Deserve This: Nathan Elberg, National Post (letters), Nov. 16, 2012—I would like to respond to the question posed by Jihad Misharwi in your article today regarding Israel’s Gaza response. He asks what his son did to deserve death at the hands of an Israeli shell. The answer is in the old adage, “every people has the government it deserves.”

The Palestinians at the UN and the International Criminal Court: Allan Baker, JCPA, Nov. 15, 2012—It is incorrect to assume that by upgrading their status in the UN to a non-member state, the Palestinians would necessarily be able to refer complaints against Israeli leaders to the International Criminal Court.

Jerusalem to Rebuild Iconic Synagogue Destroyed in 1948: Melanie Lidman, Jerusalem Post, Nov. 28, 2012—The Jerusalem Municipality awarded initial approval to a plan to rebuild the iconic Tifereth Israel synagogue in the Old City’s Jewish Quarter, a magnificent domed synagogue from the 19th century which was destroyed in the 1948 War of Independence.

Colombian Evangelical Christians Convert to Judaism, Embracing Hidden Past: Juan Forero, Washington Post, Nov. 24, 2012—They were committed evangelicals, devoted to Jesus Christ. But what some here called a spark, an inescapable pull of their ancestors, led them in a different direction, to Judaism.

On Topic Links

Israel’s UN Ambassador: Speech at the UN: Ron Prosor, Elder of Zivon (text), UN WebTV, Nov. 29, 2012
Canada, Question of Palestine, UN General Assembly: H.E. Mr. John Bair, UN Web TV, Nov. 29, 2012
Palestinian Search for UN Status Will Undermine Hopes of Statehood: Irwin Cotler, National Post, Nov. 29, 2012
Ant-Jewish Apartheid at the UN: Joel B. Pollak, Breitbart, Nov 29, 2012
Thoughts on a Visit to Warsaw: Dr. Catherine Chatterley, Winnipeg Jewish Review, Nov. 13, 2012
‘SETBACK FOR PEACE’: ISRAELI ENVOY

Ron Prosor
National Post, November 29, 2012

The Vote: 138 votes in favour; 41 abstentions; voting against:
Canada, Israel, USA, Czech Republic, Panama & Pacific Island states: Nauru, Palau & Micronesia

In a speech to the General Assembly before the vote, Israel’s ambassador to the UN, ron Prosor, said granting non-member observer status to the Palestinians would be a setback for peace.

“For as long as President Abbas prefers symbolism over reality, as long as he prefers to travel to New York for UN resolutions, rather than travel to Jerusalem for genuine dialogue, any hope of peace will be out of reach,” he said.

“The truth is that 65 years ago today, the United Nations voted to partition the British Mandate into two states: a Jewish state, and an Arab state. Two states for two peoples. Israel accepted this plan. The Palestinians and Arab nations around us rejected it and launched a war of annihilation to throw the ‘Jews into the sea.’”

Mr. Prosor said Mr. Abbas had “asked the world to recognize a Palestinian state, but you still refuse to recognize the Jewish state.”

Mr. Prosor said, “The UN was founded to advance the cause of peace. Today the Palestinians are turning their back on peace. Don’t let history record today the UN helped them along their march of folly.”

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said the UN decision would not “change anything on the ground. It will not further the establishment of a Palestinian state, but will make it more distant.

Top of Page

UQAM PROFESSOR’S OFFICE DOOR
VANDALIZED WITH ANTI-SEMITIC SLOGANS

Montreal Gazette, November 21, 2012

[Political-science professor Julien Bauer at the Université du Québec à Montréal had the door of his office vandalized [recently, during the Gaza/Israel flare-up] with anti-Semitic slogans. The professor said he had an email from the [political science] department head saying it was “unacceptable.” …[T]he door has been cleaned and, Bauer said, while such incidents are upsetting, “I’m not afraid.”

[Prof. Bauer is a long-standing member of the CIJR executive and one of its early co-founders. We at CIJR roundly condemn this act of intolerance and wish the Professor continued success, in peace and safety, at UQAM. – Ed.]

Top of Page

WHAT YOUR SON DID TO DESERVE THIS

Nathan Elberg
National Post (letters), November 16, 2012
I would like to respond to the question posed by Jihad Misharwi in your [N.P.] article today regarding Israel’s Gaza response. He asks what his son did to deserve death at the hands of an Israeli shell. The answer is in the old adage, “every people has the government it deserves.” Misharwi, his family, friends and neighbors support a government sworn to the destruction of Israel through the instrument of terrorism. They allowed Hamas to place rocket launchers and munitions depots in densely populated areas, in order to use those populations as human shields. They schooled their children in the value of violence, the beauty of martyrdom, the greatness of killing Israeli civilians. So while it is highly unlikely that Misharwi’s eleven-month-old baby did anything to “deserve” his death, his blood is on the hands of his father, his family, his community. It’s on the hands of all Gazans who rejoice in the spilling of Israeli blood, whether that of a student at his books, a soldier at his post, or a baby in its father’s arms.

THE PALESTINIANS AT THE UN AND THE INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT

Allan Baker
JCPA, Nov. 15, 2012

It is incorrect to assume that by upgrading their status in the UN to a non-member state, the Palestinians would necessarily be able to refer complaints against Israeli leaders to the International Criminal Court.

The politically-driven General Assembly resolution that would presumably be adopted by automatic majority would not create a Palestinian state, and would not turn the Palestinian delegation into that of a state, except for the purpose of seating in the General Assembly hall, between Panama and Pakistan, rather than among the observers.

The UN General Assembly does not have the power or the authority to establish states. Any such General Assembly resolution upgrading the Palestinian delegation would be no different from any other non-binding, recommendatory resolution of the General Assembly, and would have no legally binding status.

The 1998 Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) enables only states – genuine states that are party to the Statute – to refer complaints to the court (in addition to the Security Council and the ICC Prosecutor). In the same way Palestinians failed in 2011 to prove statehood when they attempted to attain membership in the UN, in light of the clear lack of national unity and capability of governance and inability to fulfill international obligations of a state, so now in 2012 it would be highly unlikely, even after an upgrade-resolution, that they will be able to prove to the ICC that they are a genuine state entitled to initiate complaints against Israeli officials and officers.

In 2011, after conducting an in-depth examination and consulting with experts, the Prosecutor rejected the Palestinian attempt to instigate complaints against Israeli officials and officers, and referred their request to the Assembly of States Party to the ICC Statute and to the UN Secretary-General.

While the Palestinians will doubtless attempt to utilize their upgraded status in order to achieve political advantages in various UN bodies such as the Specialized Agencies (which are in any event urged to act pursuant to General Assembly resolutions), this would not necessarily be applicable to the ICC, which is an independent organization, not part of the UN System.

But even if, as a result of political pressures and manipulation of the automatic majority, they do succeed in persuading the ICC Prosecutor to consider them as if they are a state, for the purpose of initiating a complaint, there is no guarantee that such complaints would be accepted by the court, which, since its establishment in 1998, has barely dealt with two complaints against Ugandan and Sudanese officials…. 
Clearly we should not underestimate the Palestinian upgrade exercise, as a blatant political PR exercise to enhance the reputation of Abu Mazen in light of his clear lack of any political achievements, especially prior to his ending his term of office. But it is highly unlikely that this exercise will have any legal or serious political consequences.

Thus, it appears to be absurd to claim, as several Palestinian leaders have recently been claiming, that the upgrade of their UN status would alter the status of the territories, that the Oslo Accords would no longer be relevant, that the 1967 lines would become the recognized border and that Jerusalem would be re-divided, etc.

In my opinion, nothing will change unless Israel decides to view this exercise as a fundamental breach of Article 31 of the 1995 interim Agreement (1995) and declare the Oslo Accords no longer valid, with all that that would imply, but this would be very doubtful in view of the upcoming elections. Ultimately the Palestinians and the Israelis will have no choice but to return to negotiations in order to determine mutually their common border and to solve all the other issues between them, all of which cannot be dictated by a UN General Assembly resolution.

(Amb. Alan Baker, Director of the Institute for Contemporary Affairs at the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, CIJR’s Israeli associate, is former Legal Adviser to Israel’s Foreign Ministry and former Ambassador of Israel to Canada)

Top of Page

JERUSALEM TO REBUILD ICONIC SYNAGOGUE DESTROYED IN 1948

Melanie Lidman

Jerusalem Post, Nov. 28, 2012

The Jerusalem Municipality awarded initial approval to a plan to rebuild the iconic Tifereth Israel synagogue in the Old City’s Jewish Quarter, a magnificent domed synagogue from the 19th century which was destroyed in the 1948 War of Independence.

The project will recreate the three-story-tall synagogue as well as the iconic dome on the top, with only minor changes to the original, such as the introduction of an elevator to make the building more accessible. On Tuesday, the municipality’s Local Planning and Building Committee approved the plan for the next step of the process, where it must receive the approval of the Interior Ministry. An anonymous donor who has been active in previous rebuilding projects in the Old City donated nearly NIS 50 million needed for reconstruction…

Ashkenazi hassidim bought the land for Tifereth Israel Synagogue in 1843, though the building wasn’t inaugurated until 1872. The synagogue is also known as the Nissan Bek synagogue, after its founder. The prominent white dome on top of the building was informally known as “Franz Joseph’s cap,” after the Austrian emperor who visited Jerusalem in 1869. On a tour of Jewish sites, Franz Joseph inquired as to why the unfinished synagogue had no dome, to which one quick-thinking rabbi replied, "Your majesty the Emperor, the synagogue has doffed its hat for you!" The emperor donated the sum needed to finish the roof.

During the Independence War in 1948, the building was used as a Haganah defense position, similar to the nearby Hurva synagogue. Arab League forces demolished the synagogue with explosives at 1 a.m. on May 21, just a few days before the Hurva met the same fate. Following the Six Day War, the city decided to leave the ruins of the synagogue as they were…. 
The Jerusalem Post first reported plans to rebuild the Tifereth Israel Synagogue in June. A UNESCO report expressed apprehension over the project due to the possibility of wide-spread rioting. In March 2010, riots broke out across east Jerusalem and the Old City with the dedication of the Hurva Synagogue, located in the same plaza.

The Hurva synagogue, which stood since the early 18th century, was also destroyed in the 1948 Independence War. As the dedication neared, Palestinians called for a “day of rage,” stoked by Muslim extremists who said the rededication was the first step towards building the Third Temple and destroying the Dome of the Rock. Police arrested sixty people, and more than 100 protesters were injured, as well as 15 policemen.

A municipality spokeswoman said the city is unconcerned about the possibility of a resurgence in violence sparked by the reconstruction project. “The synagogue is a symbol of the Jewish Quarter and is not controversial,” she said.

COLOMBIAN EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANS CONVERT TO JUDAISM, EMBRACING HIDDEN PAST
Juan Forero
Washington Post, November 24

They were committed evangelicals, devoted to Jesus Christ. But what some here called a spark, an inescapable pull of their ancestors, led them in a different direction, to Judaism. There were the grandparents who wouldn’t eat pork, the fragments of a Jewish tongue from medieval Spain that spiced up the language, and puzzling family rituals such as the lighting of candles on Friday nights.

So, after a spiritual journey that began a decade ago, dozens of families that had once belonged to a fire-and-brimstone church became Jews, converting with the help of rabbis from Miami and Jerusalem. Though unusual in one of the most Catholic of nations, the small community in Bello joined a worldwide movement in which the descendants of Jews forced from Spain more than 500 years ago are discovering and embracing their Jewish heritage.

They have emerged in places as divergent as the American Southwest, Brazil and even India. In these mostly remote outposts, the so-called Anusim or Marranos, Jews from Spain who fled the Inquisition and converted to Christianity, had found refuge.

“There’s a real awakening that’s taking place,” said Michael Freund, who directs Shavei Israel, a Jerusalem-based group that helps new Jewish communities such as Bello’s. “The Jewish spark was never quenched, and these Anusim are really fulfilling the dreams of their ancestors in that they are taking back the Jewish identity that was so brutally stolen from their forefathers.”

This northwest state of Antioquia, with its high purple mountains, picturesque pueblos and fervent, almost mystical Catholicism, is surely one of the most unusual corners of the world for such Jewish stirrings. For the families of Bello, the journey to Judaism began after the minister of a 3,000-member evangelical church, the Center for Integral Family Therapy, visited Israel in 1998 and 2003 and began to feel the pull of Judaism.

Juan Carlos Villegas, who has taken on the Hebrew name Elad, then told his flock that he planned to convert. Dozens joined him. “These people had the capacity to say, yes, I’m open to finding the roots of my family,” said Villegas, 36, speaking in the community’s synagogue, a white-washed, two-story building on a street of rowhouses.
Villegas and the others said they felt history coursing through their veins as they explored the past and put together pieces of a puzzle that pointed to a Jewish ancestry. “It was like our souls had memory,” he said. “It awakened in us a desire to learn more — who were we? Where were we from? Where are the roots of our families?”

At the University of Antioquia, geneticist Gabriel Bedoya and his team of scientists found in a 2000 study that 14 percent of the men in Antioquia are genetically related to the Kohanim, a priestly Jewish cast that is traced back three millennia to Moses’s brother, Aaron.

**Top of Page**

---

**ON TOPIC**

**Israel’s Ambassador to the UN: Speech at the UN:** Ron Prosor, *Elder of Ziyon* (text), *UN WebTV*, Nov. 29, 2012—Today I stand before you tall and proud because I represent the world’s one and only Jewish state. A state built in the Jewish people’s ancient homeland, with its eternal capital Jerusalem as its beating heart. We are a nation with deep roots in the past and bright hopes for the future.

**Canada, Question of Palestine, UN General Assembly:** H.E. Mr. John Bair, *UN Web TV*, Nov. 29, 2012—Statement by Minister for Foreign Affairs of Canada on the Question of Palestine at the 44th plenary meeting of the General Assembly.

**Palestinian Search for UN Status Will Undermine Hopes of Statehood:** Irwin Cotler, *National Post*, Nov 29, 2012—...declarations opposing the Palestinian unilateral bid for observer-state status can be said to be anchored in a series of foundational principles and related precedents of international law…

**Anti-Jewish Apartheid at the UN:** Joel B. Pollak, *Breitbart*, Nov 29, 2012—Today, for the first time, the United Nations will name Palestine a (non-member) “observer state” by first engaging in exactly the charge that they press against Israel: apartheid…[T]he UN Division for Palestinian Rights sent a letter to the UN pass office to insist that they step in to deny invitees of the UN-accredited Touro Institute on Human Rights and the Holocaust…

**Thoughts on a Visit to Warsaw:** Dr. Catherine Chatterley, *Winnipeg Jewish Review*, Nov. 13, 2012 — The ghetto was completely destroyed by the Germans in May 1943 after the uprising so everything in the Muranow district with the exception of two buildings is postwar construction.

**Touch Judaic History at Penn’s Herbert D. Katz Center:** Jacque Posey, *Univ. of Pennsylvania*, Oct. 12, 2012—At the University of Pennsylvania’s Herbert D. Katz Center for Advanced Judaic Studies, you can touch some of the oldest tomes in the history of Judaism… Approximately 200,000 volumes, including 17 Hebrew and 15 Latin incunabula and more than 8,000 rare printed works, in Hebrew, English, German, French, Yiddish, Arabic, Latin and Ladino are at the Library at the Katz Center.

---

**VISIT CIJR’S BI-WEEKLY WEBZINE: ISRAZINE.**
![](http://t2.gstatic.com/images?q=tbn:ANd9GcT6VWj76hRq79K__pW9qAOfdN-0v1TYv2dM5vmtW3zI7AP5EyQ)

CIJR’s *ISRANET Daily Briefing* is available by e-mail.

Please urge colleagues, friends, and family to visit our website for more information on our *ISRANET* series.

To join our distribution list, or to unsubscribe, visit us at http://www.isranet.org/.
The **ISRANET Daily Briefing** is a service of CIJR. We hope that you find it useful and that you will support it and our pro-Israel educational work by forwarding a minimum $90.00 tax-deductible contribution [please send a cheque or VISA/MasterCard information to CIJR (see cover page for address)]. All donations include a membership-subscription to our respected quarterly **ISRAFAX** print magazine, which will be mailed to your home.

CIJR's **ISRANET Daily Briefing** attempts to convey a wide variety of opinions on Israel, the Middle East and the Jewish world for its readers' educational and research purposes. Reprinted articles and documents express the opinions of their authors, and do not necessarily reflect the viewpoint of the **Canadian Institute for Jewish Research**.

Ber Lazarus, Publications Editor, *Canadian Institute for Jewish Research/L'institut Canadien de recherches sur le Judaïsme*, [www.isranet.org](http://www.isranet.org) Tel: (514) 486-5544 - Fax:(514) 486-8284