



Israel: Shalit deal 'within weeks'

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Rightists planning 'day of rage' to protest West Bank settlement freeze

Settlers to block roads across Israel

By Chaim Levinson, Mazal Mualem and Avi Issacharoff

Settlers are preparing for a heated confrontation with security services over the construction freeze imposed on West Bank settlements. For the first time, settlers are seeking to organize demonstrations and block roads in several Israeli communities within the Green Line.

Yesterday morning, the residents of Kedumim demonstrated the force being used in the campaign against the freeze.

After settlers blocked police and Civil Administration officials from entering the settlement for several days, the latter finally made their way in yesterday, by breaking through the fence separating Kedumim and the Palestinian village of Qadum.

When the security convoy tried to leave the settlement, it was blocked by several dozen youths, led by regional council head Hananel Durani and his deputy Kobi Bar-On.

Police were not able to disperse the demonstrators. Only after settlement rabbi Zvi Farbstein asked the female protesters to stop, in order not to violate modesty norms, was the convoy able to leave the settlement, along with two demonstrators they had detained.

Thus, the simple matter of distributing orders to freeze construction in Kedumim took 200 officers and lasted three hours.

Durani said afterward, "Despite the police officers' steady determination, we in Kedumim will fight for our right to continue building up the Land of Israel."

Officials in the Yesha Council of settlements expressed satisfaction, saying that should residents of other settlements put up similar resistance, the Civil Administration will find itself facing serious problems.

In two weeks, inspectors are scheduled to return to the settlements where they distributed the stop-work orders to verify that construction has indeed halted. If it has not, the inspectors are authorized to issue demolition orders.

In the meantime, settlers are preparing to wage a nationwide protest, including roadblocks on key traffic arteries and demonstrations outside officials' homes. The campaign is being spearheaded by activists from the northern West Bank settlement of Yitzhar.

This weekend's edition of the "Hakol Hayehudi," a newspaper prepared by students of Yitzhar rabbi Yitzhak Ginsburg, said, "This Monday at 5 P.M., several demonstrations are expected across the country in light of the freeze order."

The rationale behind the demonstrations is that if the Jews of Judea and Samaria are being stopped in their tracks, so will the Jews across the country.

Right-wing activists have also been circulating text messages with the addresses of senior officials in the State Prosecutor's Office, police and Civil Administration.

Rabbi Yosef Elitzur, one of the heads of the "Od Yosef Hai" yeshiva in Yitzhar, published an article recommending other means of action.

"If there is no quiet for the Jews, there will be no quiet for the Arabs. A Civil Administration base can serve as a target for a quick, precise infiltration that could damage and destroy one of their offices. You destroy ours, we destroy yours!"

Yesterday morning, Yitzhar settlers burned cars and tractors in the nearby village of Einbus.

Resident Nader Hashem Alan, 36, his wife and eight children were sleeping when settlers attacked his home. He told Haaretz that at 1:45 A.M. he heard noise outside, and saw a Subaru van with five armed men.

"At first I thought they were car thieves. But then they poured gas on the cars and tractors. I yelled at them, but they torched my car and told me to go inside," he said.



Settlers clashing with police in the West Bank settlement of Kedumim yesterday.

Tomer Appelbaum

No wink, no nudge / Amos Harel

This time, the government means it

"One thing, at least, is emphatically different this time from all the previous rounds," said an Israel Defense Forces officer intimately who has been involved with the situation in the West Bank for over a decade.

"The political echelon has finally stopped winking. This is the first time we're receiving clear, detailed instructions on how to deal with building in the settlements," he said. "No one is trying to cut corners - instructions were given and we're operating according to them."

If he is right, the inevitable consequence will be a more heated, potentially violent conflict between security services and settlers. Opponents of the freeze have an interest in inflaming tempers to move a large number

of protesters to join a demonstration planned for two days from now. They also need media noise - the more students of religious girls' seminaries dragged on the ground by masked police officers the better.

The distribution of freeze orders in the Gav-Havar outposts, which draw large numbers of ideologically heated settlers, is likely to meet violent resistance. There is also the potential "price tag" policy - of bringing violence and destruction upon nearby Palestinian villages.

Yesterday a house and vehicle went up in flames near Nablus. The army fears such acts will only grow more serious in the days to come. Shin Bet security service estimates point to a large segment of the so-called hilltop

youth supporting this kind of violence.

Maj. Gen. (Res.) Amos Gilad, who yesterday handed the position of coordinator of government activities in the territories to Maj. Gen. Eitan Dango, told participants at a conference marking the handover that the Civil Administration now stands before "an unprecedented [law] enforcement challenge."

Even the operational headquarters of the army's combat brigades are preparing an operation to implement the freeze; the Civil Administration is likely to lead the confrontation, while under police security. The army will soon have to increase its involvement, too. A broader distribution of orders -

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On eve of green summit, Israel's situation is black

By Zafir Rinat and Jonathan Lis

Israel has not taken the basic steps necessary for dealing with climate change and lacks the professional capability to monitor the phenomenon, according to a state comptroller's report released yesterday ahead of the UN climate change conference opening today in Copenhagen. Also yesterday, the Ministerial Committee for Legislation approved just two out of four bills that Israeli lawmakers are due to speak about at the event.

Emergency summit in Copenhagen

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The report by State Comptroller Micha Lindenstrauss addressed the subject of greenhouse gas emissions in Israel. It states that the meteorological service which is charged with observing climate change is not equipped for long-term monitoring, due to a lack of professional manpower and problems involving maintenance of the country's network of meteorological centers.

Israel has also not formulated a national plan of action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, according to the report, which notes that local authorities have also not gathered sufficient data to inspect and oversee the sources of emission.

In the wake of the state comptroller's report, the Environmental Protection Ministry began to implement an operational plan, drafted by the international consulting firm McKinsey & Company, but its efforts have stalled.

The ministry response to the report was that since Environmental Protection Minister Gilad Erdan took over, "he has determined that the issue [of dealing with climate control] is one of the ministry's five central goals, and quickly established a panel to implement a national plan for reducing greenhouse gases."

"Contact was also made with McKinsey, which in the past few weeks completed a plan for setting up an operational infrastructure. The minister has adopted McKinsey's recommendations and has asked the prime minister to hold an immediate meeting at which a national program

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The new fraud squad head, Commander Ziva Agami-Cohen.

Critics say new fraud squad chief lacks experience

By Liel Kyzer

There have been rumblings at the Israel Police recently following the appointment of Commander Ziva Agami-Cohen as head of the police department's National Fraud Investigation Unit. The unit is in charge of spearheading Israel Police efforts to combat public corruption.

Sources among the Israel Police questioned whether the relatively unknown commander, who did not have significant experience in investigating corruption, was up to the job. The unit is responsible for combating civil service corruption as well as sophisticated criminal activity requiring special expertise.

Agami-Cohen's last posting with the police was head of the real estate division in the national unit combating economic crimes. As of next summer, she will be in charge of a unit whose cases in recent years have included the investigation of current Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman, former prime minister Ehud Olmert, and the "kissing

incident" involving former minister Haim Ramon.

The unit also conducted a series of investigations against local politicians, resulting in the recommendation that several be put on trial. The National Fraud Investigation Unit is also responsible for following some of Israel's organized crime families.

Although Agami-Cohen has served in a variety of positions with the Israel Police, none approaches the magnitude of responsibility in her new job as head of the National Fraud Investigation Unit. Other than in her most recent position, none of her police experience related to government corruption or organized crime. Nonetheless, she has been praised by those with whom she has worked in the past and present - who describe her as a professional and pleasant officer greatly devoted to her work, and who carries it out extremely well.

In a conversation yesterday with Haaretz, Agami-Cohen dismissed the criticism

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Jerusalem's mayor Nir Barkat urges 'ghost residents' to rent out empty homes

By Nir Hasson

In addition to the 800,000 residents for whom Jerusalem Mayor Nir Barkat is responsible, there are also tens of thousands of city residents who are virtually invisible for much of the year. They don't shop at neighborhood kiosks, occupy parking spots or send their children to nursery school, yet they affect life in the capital as much as the rest of the inhabitants, perhaps even more so.

They are the so-called "ghost residents" - Jews from abroad, mostly from the United States and France, who have acquired thousands of apartments across the city, homes that remain empty for most of the year, apart from the holidays. Barkat recently wrote a letter to these holiday residents, asking them

to spend more time at their Jerusalem properties in an effort to help stem the city's decline.

"We'd like to congratulate you on being homeowners in Jerusalem, the eternal capital of the Jewish People," Barkat wrote in the letter, which is being sent to 9,000 absentee Jerusalemites.

"An empty apartment essentially remains outside the housing market, and has a negative effect on Jerusalem," Barkat wrote. "An empty apartment means fewer buyers at local kiosks, fewer children in schools, fewer customers in cafes and most importantly, fewer young families living in Jerusalem. Nine thousand such apartments [according to the Jerusalem Municipality's figures] cause growing damage to the city's economy and housing market."

The mayor asked homeowners living abroad to rent out their apartments: "As mayor, I see fit to ask you to rent out your property to students or young families during the months when you are not in Jerusalem."

'A paradise for thieves'

The municipality, in conjunction with Hebrew University of Jerusalem and other institutions of higher learning in the capital, are currently promoting programs to help rent out apartments, including a Web site.

"Every apartment that joins the housing market and is rented to a young family or students will allow us to better provide for the population," Barkat said in his letter. "Renting apartments to students

creates a win-win situation for you, for young people and for the City of Jerusalem."

City officials will hold a special meeting with the "ghost residents" in two weeks. Jonathan Levirer - a resident of the Talbieh neighborhood who owns a company that advises local councils - called the situation "a tragedy for the city."

"A city is a meeting place for people. The moment that encounter no longer exists, there is no city. The next step is that there will be no kiosks and no laundromats and no playgrounds. My street has no playgrounds anymore, none. The streets have turned into a paradise for thieves," he said. "Ultimately, the only people who will be left in Jerusalem will be the ultra-Orthodox and the Arabs - non-Haredi Jews will turn into a minority."

Dead can still be fruitful and multiply

Haifa court allows woman to use frozen sperm of deceased man she never met

By Fadi Eyadat

A woman can become pregnant using the frozen sperm of a deceased sperm donor whom she did not know. This was the ruling by a domestic relations court in Haifa in a precedent-setting case, which overturned the state's objections.

The ruling makes it possible for someone other than a deceased sperm donor's spouse to use his sperm.

The court was asked to weigh in on a case involving a woman's desire to be a mother, and the desire of the deceased man and his parents for another generation

in their family - along with the interests of both the baby and the general public. In the end, the court ruled that the various interests complemented one another.

"It is a courageous and reasonable decision," the father of the deceased man said.

The case arose after the sperm donor, Idan Snir of Kiryat Bialik, died in 2007 of cancer at the age of 22. Shortly before beginning chemotherapy treatments, he deposited his sperm in a sperm bank. In the court's opinion, Snir was quoted as saying that in donating his sperm he was "giving his parents their grandchildren

in a plastic cup."

Eight months after Snir's death, a 39-year old single woman, an economist, approached Snir's parents, who had cared for him during his illness, asking if she could use their son's sperm to get pregnant. The parties signed an agreement for the use of the sperm, however Rambam Medical Center in Haifa and the state objected, saying the arrangement was contrary to the attorney general's directives limiting sperm of a deceased donor to his spouse.

The woman filed a lawsuit through the New Family Organization. In response, the state argued that Snir's in-

attention to have children after his death had not been proven, adding that depositing sperm in a sperm bank prior to chemotherapy is standard practice to avoid infertility problems.

Judge Esperanza Alon ruled that the question brought up in the case was not addressed by current legislation. She noted the primary role of Snir's parents in his life and their knowledge of his hopes and intentions. She ruled that Snir's interests as well as those of his parents and the woman seeking to be the recipient of his sperm all complemented one another.

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Gone in 76 seconds

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No way home

Residential projects stymied by poor transport systems

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