



# ***ISRAEL MATTERS!***

Publication of the Israel Affairs Committee of Temple Beth Shalom  
1809 Whitney Avenue, Hamden, CT 06517-1401



Issue Number 72  
September 2013

## **Netanyahu: “Europe Wants to Erect New Berlin Wall in the Middle of Jerusalem”**

### **Court Bars “Jerusalem, Israel” as Birthplace on U.S. Passports**

American citizens born in Jerusalem cannot claim Israel as their place of birth on their passports. The U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia unanimously declared unconstitutional a 2002 law that required the State Department to record Israel as the birthplace of Jerusalem-born citizens, despite a long-standing position in the executive branch of strict neutrality toward sovereignty of the disputed city.

Though the United States has recognized Israel since it declared independence in 1948, no president has ever taken a position on Jerusalem.

The case was brought by the family of Menachem Binyamin Zivotofsky, now 10, born to American parents in Jerusalem. When his mother applied for a passport for him with the birthplace as “Jerusalem, Israel,” the U.S. Consulate listed only “Jerusalem.”

Zivotofsky was born weeks after Congress passed the passport provision in September 2002 as part of a foreign relations appropriations bill. When President George W. Bush signed the law, he issued an executive statement that the policy on Jerusalem, if construed as mandatory rather than advisory, would “impermissibly interfere” with the president’s constitutional authority in matters of foreign affairs. In its decision the Court of Appeals agreed.

The ADL responded that it was “deeply disappointed” by the news. “The court has effectively given a stamp of approval to the offensive State Department policy that singles out Israel for ‘special’ treatment.” [JPost and AP]

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu recently held a series of talks with European leaders and European Union officials to protest, and hopefully defer, the EU’s decision to impose a de facto funding ban on Israeli institutions operating beyond the pre-1967 borders, which includes Judea and Samaria, East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights.

The EU revealed a draft resolution limiting the financial cooperation between its principal bodies and member nations and Jewish bodies in the settlements. The directive means that the EU will no longer be party to any economic, social or academic cooperation with Israeli institutions based in what it considers the “occupied territories.” The new funding guidelines, which could cost Israel billions of dollars, go into effect in 2014.

Netanyahu spoke with French President François Hollande, Greek Prime Minister Antonis Samaras, Maltese Prime Minister Joseph Muscat and Austrian Chancellor Werner Faymann, stressing, “There are more urgent and pressing issues in the Middle East that should be dealt with first, such as the civil war in Syria and the Iranian nuclear threat.”

Sources in the Prime Minister’s Office said the European leaders claimed they had not been informed of the decision taken in Brussels and that in any case, it will not be inclusive or mandatory, as Brussels will allow each of the bloc’s 28-member nations to decide if, and to what extent, they wish to adhere to it.

Netanyahu also spoke with European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso and urged him to delay the EU’s official announcement on the matter, as Israel requires further clarifications on the matter. Sources in the Prime Minister’s Office said that while Barroso made no promises, it is likely that the EU will yield to Israel’s pressure and defer releasing an official directive.

Netanyahu also briefed U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry on the matter, saying such a move would impede his efforts to resume the stalled Israeli-Palestinian peace talks.

Netanyahu said that the EU was “trying to impose permanent borders by applying financial pressure on Israel rather than pursuing negotiations. That is an unfair move at any time, not just now, when U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry is trying to get the parties back to

(Continued)



## Sar-El: Crossing Generations and Oceans to Enlist for a Zionist Cause

At 76 years of age, Lillian Schoenfeld is unlike many of her counterparts. Instead of choosing to spend her golden years on the golf course or idly playing mahjong, she bucked the tradition of the stereotypical grandmother by joining the ranks of the IDF volunteer program, Sar-El. "I'm doing my thing," the Aventura, Florida, septuagenarian told The Jerusalem Post, beaming proudly in her IDF-issued uniform.

Sar-El, which hosts approximately 4,000 volunteers from across the globe every year, originated during the First Lebanon War in 1982. At the time, the country was in dire need of additional troops to help transport goods, especially to remote moshavim on the Golan Heights. Aharon Davidi, founder of Sar-El and a veteran of the Unit 101 special forces commandos, suggested that the IDF bolster its forces by bringing in Jewish volunteers from the US. That year, the IDF brought in 680 volunteers and provided them with food, shelter, and transportation from the airport to the army base. After their service, many of them pleaded to return because "they felt they were helping to build the country," explained Michael Allouche, who served under Davidi at the time and is the current deputy commanding officer of the program.

Although over 30 years have elapsed, not much has changed – other than the statistics. Sar-El now hosts volunteers from 40 countries, and in years of greater conflict – such as the second intifada in 2002 and the First Gulf War in 1991 – it welcomed a staggering 8,000 volunteers.

Cleaning guns, working with electrical equipment and ensuring storage units are well stocked are only some of the various roles assigned to Sar-El volunteers.

According to Allouche, the benefits of Sar-El are many. For example, some bases – including the Medical Support Base in Tel Hashomer – are run almost exclusively by the program's volunteers, which offers the IDF a significant cost-saving measure.

Also, because of their positive experience with Sar-El, many volunteers return to their home countries and become *de facto* goodwill ambassadors for Israel. What's more, approximately 10 percent of those volunteers decide to take their love for Israel one step further by making aliya.

Ariel Kartashev, 27, is a proud member of that small yet passionate demographic. The Washington state native arrived with his family earlier this summer and is currently in the process of making aliya. "If there's a war, I don't want to be watching the news on TV and cheering. I want to be a part of it," Kartashev said, explaining what it is about the the Sar-El program that appealed to him.

Another staunch pro-Israel advocate among Sar-El's ranks is 66-year-old Morris Ryvak. Having volunteered 14 times for the unit, Poland-born and Brooklyn-raised Ryvak is no stranger to the program. "When I discovered Sar-El in 1999, I thought, I must do this," Ryvak said. Much of his support for Israel, he explained, comes from his experiences facing rampant anti-Semitism as a child in Poland.

Chicago native Dan Ramano, who converted to Judaism in May, enrolled in Sar-El as a way to fully immerse himself in Jewish life and culture. While he was initially introduced to Judaism through his girlfriend, Ramano decided to formulate a personal relationship with Israel by joining both Birthright and Sar-El on his own. "I think it's good for me to have my own experience here. I don't want my entire connection to be based just because of her. I want my own relationship with Israel," he explained. Although Ramano has only been in Israel for a few weeks, he is already settling in well. "I feel safer here than in Chicago," he said.

Ryvak, too, expressed his strong bond with Israel, saying, "The other day I was at the Kotel, and I mentioned going back home. But then a man turned to me and said, 'You are home.' And he was right." [JPost]

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the negotiating table."

Netanyahu told the German publication Die Welt that Brussels "wants to erect a new Berlin Wall in the middle of Jerusalem, but anyone who has ever visited Jerusalem knows that you cannot turn back time and divide neighborhoods that would clearly remain under Israeli control as part of any peace agreement."

"Under these circumstances, when we are trying to resume negotiations, it is important that the EU allows the Israelis and the Palestinians to set the course of the negotiations, instead of using unilateral moves to set it for us," he said.

"If the EU's directive becomes a reality it would deal a crushing blow to the very peace process the Europeans are so eager to see resumed," Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee Chairman Avigdor Lieberman (Yisrael Beytenu) said.

"Such a move would show Abu-Mazen [Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas], who is already reluctant to resume the peace talks, that he has no reason to negotiate with Israel and every reason to keep making impossible demands. The Europeans' move is absurd, because if it comes to fruition Israel will no longer be willing to offer the Palestinians any goodwill gestures, even after the peace talks resume," he said.

[IsraelHayom]

## Across Forbidden Border, Doctors in Israel Quietly Tend to Syria's Wounded

The 3-year-old girl cried "Mama, Mama" over and over as a stranger rocked her and tried to comfort her. She had been brought from Syria to the government hospital in the northern Israeli town of Nahariya five days earlier, her face blackened by what doctors said was probably a firebomb or a homemade bomb. In the next bed, a girl, 12, lay in a deep sleep. She had arrived at the pediatric intensive care unit with a severe stomach wound that had already been operated on in Syria, and a hole in her back. Another girl, 13, has been here more than a month recovering from injuries that required complex surgery to her face, arm and leg. She and her brother, 9, had gone to the supermarket in their village when a shell struck. Her brother was killed in the attack.

As fighting between Syrian government forces and rebels has raged in recent months in areas close to the Israeli-held Golan Heights, scores of Syrian casualties have been discreetly spirited across the hostile frontier for what is often lifesaving treatment in Israel, an enemy country. Most are men in their 20s or 30s, many of them with gunshot wounds who presumably were involved in the fighting. But in recent weeks there have been more civilians with blast wounds, among them women and children who have arrived alone and traumatized.

Israel has repeatedly declared a policy of nonintervention in the Syrian civil war, other than its readiness to strike at stocks of advanced weapons it considers a threat to its security.

Israeli authorities have sanctioned this small, low-profile humanitarian response to the tragedy taking place in Syria, balancing decades of hostility with the demands of proximity and neighborliness. "Most come here unconscious with head injuries," said Dr. Masad Barhoum, the director general of the Western Galilee Hospital in Nahariya, on the Mediterranean coast, six miles south of the Lebanese border. "They wake up after a few days or whenever and hear a strange language and see strange people," he said. "If they can talk, the first question is, 'Where am I?'" He added, "I am sure there is an initial shock when they hear they are in Israel."

The identity of the patients is closely guarded so they will not be in danger when they return to Syria. Soldiers sit outside the wards where the adults are to protect them from possible threats and prying journalists.

Like many Israeli hospitals, this one serves a mixed population of Jews and Arabs; its staff includes Arabic-speaking doctors, nurses and social workers. In the lobby, a glass display case contains the remnants of a Katyusha rocket that was fired from Lebanon and hit the hospital's eye department during the 2006 war between Israel and Hezbollah. The rocket penetrated four floors but nobody

was injured because all the north-facing wards had been moved underground.

Since late March, almost 100 Syrians have arrived at two hospitals in Galilee. Forty-one severely wounded Syrians have been treated at the Western Galilee Hospital, which has a new neurosurgical unit as well as pediatric intensive care facilities. Two of them have died, 28 have recovered and been transferred back to Syria, and 11 remain. An additional 52 Syrians have been taken to the Rebecca Sieff Hospital in the Galilee town of Safed. The latest was a 21-year-old man with gunshot and shrapnel wounds. A woman, 50, arrived with a piece of shrapnel lodged in her heart and was sent to the Rambam hospital in the northern port city of Haifa for surgery.

Little has been revealed about how they get to Israel, other than that the Israeli military runs the technical side of the operation. The doctors say all they know is that Syrian patients arrive by military ambulance and that the hospital calls the army to come pick them up when they are ready to go back to Syria. The Israeli military, which also operates a field hospital and mobile medical teams along the Syrian frontier, has been reluctant to advertise these facilities, partly for fear of being inundated by more wounded Syrians than they could cope with.

Lt. Col. Peter Lerner, a military spokesman, said that "a number of Syrians have come to the fence along the border in the Golan Heights with various levels of injuries." He added that the military has, "on a purely humanitarian basis, facilitated immediate medical assistance on the ground and in some cases has evacuated them for further treatment in Israeli hospitals."

Now, efforts are under way to bring over relatives to help calm the unaccompanied children. When the 13-year-old arrived, she was in a state of fear and high anxiety, according to Dr. Zeev Zonis, the head of the pediatric intensive care unit. "A large part of our treatment was to try to embrace her in a kind of virtual hug," he said. Days later, the girl's aunt arrived from Syria. She began to care for the Syrian children here, living and sleeping with them in the intensive care unit. The staff and volunteers donated clothes and gifts.

The aunt said a shell had struck the supermarket in their village suddenly, after a week of quiet. A few days later, she said, an Arab man she did not know came to the village. "He told us they had the girl," she said. "They took me and on the way told me that she was in Israel. We got to the border. I saw soldiers. I was a little afraid." But she added that the hospital care had been good and that "the fear has passed totally."

Asked what she will say when she goes back home, the aunt replied: "I won't say that I was in Israel. It is forbidden to be here, and I am afraid of the reactions."

[New York Times]