



south african

Jewish Report

The source of quality content, news and insights

■ Volume 27 - Number 31 ■ 12 September 2024 ■ 9 Elul 5784

www.sajr.co.za



JULES AND SELMA BROWDE
2011 Helen Suzman Lifetime
Achiever Award in honour
of Abe Abrahamson



Absa Jewish Achiever Awards 2024



Bookings Now Open

Sunday 17 November 2024 at 16:00

Table of 10 people
R50 000 ex VAT
or seats R5 000 ex VAT

BOOK NOW



bit.ly/jaabook



rsvp@sajewishreport.co.za



Britt 082 2929 520



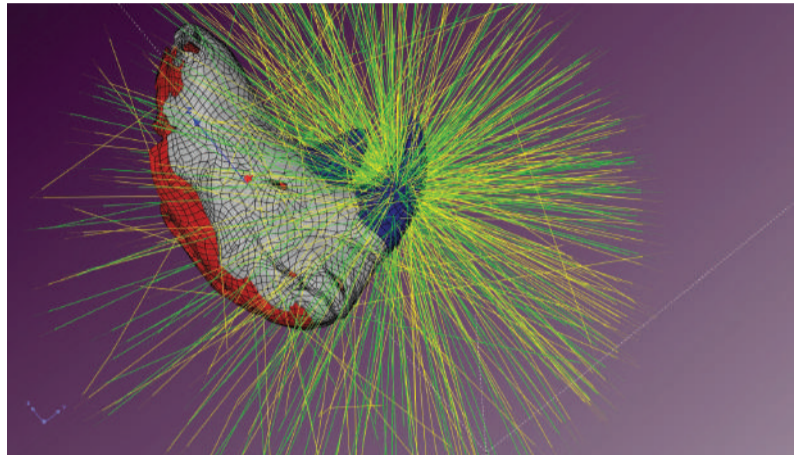
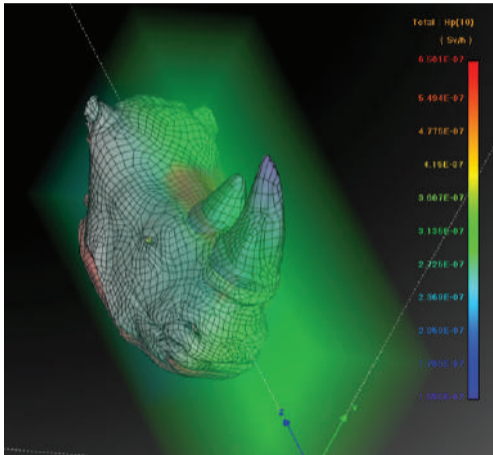
THE KIRSH
FOUNDATION





Wits Rhisotope Project

The Power of Nuclear Science for Rhino Conservation



What if nuclear science could be the key to rescuing our majestic rhinos from the brink of extinction? This is what Wits University's innovative Rhisotope Project, an initiative that harnesses the potential of radioisotopes to protect our beloved rhinos, hopes to achieve.

In the Wits Rhisotope Project, science meets conservation in a revolutionary way, as measured doses of radioisotopes are delicately inserted into the horns of live rhinos. This innovative approach offers a non-lethal yet formidable solution, that has the potential to significantly diminish the demand for rhino horns and shield these magnificent creatures from the imminent threat of extinction, through poaching.

Science Saving Rhinos

By rendering rhino horns radioactive, we diminish their allure as a commodity. This heightened radioactivity increases the likelihood of detection at international borders, exposing smuggling syndicates to prosecution under anti-terrorism laws.

People Saving Rhinos

The Wits Rhisotope Project extends beyond science, fostering a strong philanthropic ethos. Our efforts focus on empowering communities through education and support initiatives, cultivating a new generation of rhino champions. Together, we enable communities to benefit from the presence of living rhinos, rather than mourning the loss of dead ones.

Rhinos Saving People

Wildlife crime ranks among the top four black market activities, ranking alongside drug-, human- and weapons trafficking. By combating wildlife crime, we can strike a blow against international terrorism, making the world a safer place for all.

Join us in the fight to safeguard our rhinos and secure a brighter future for generations to come.

Together, we can make a difference for good.

Visit <https://rhisotope.org/>



Take part in our upcoming
Spring Wunderkammer Auction
 Thursday, 19th – Sunday, 29th September
 Full Catalogues will be live online on Sunday, 15th September for pre-bidding.
Register online now.

For more information 011 789 7422 • info@rkauctioneers.co.za • www.rkauctioneers.co.za
 Bram Fischer Centre, Lower Ground, 95 Bram Fischer Drive, Cnr George Street, Ferndale, 2194

View all the upcoming lots
 in-person at our showroom

Tuesday, 17th &
 Wednesday, 18th September
 at 9:30am - 8:00pm

Thursday, 19th &
 Friday, 20th September
 at 9:30am - 4:30pm



SCAN THE QR CODE TO
 REGISTER NOW



south african

Jewish Report

The source of quality content, news and insights

■ Volume 27 - Number 31 ■ 12 September 2024 ■ 9 Elul 5784

www.sajr.co.za

Africa-Israel summit – 'right thing at right time'

NICOLA MILTZ

Parliamentarians from 25 African countries, with representatives from Europe and the United States, gathered in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, this week for the first Africa-Israel Parliamentary Summit in a clear show of solidarity with Israel.

The members of parliament came from countries including Angola, Botswana, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Republic of the Congo, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

They joined Israeli Knesset members as Israel faces increased global scrutiny over the ongoing 11-month conflict with Hamas in Gaza.

"We are gathered to build on the Abraham Accords, and as children of Abraham pursue peace, progress, and prosperity," said the founder of the Africa-Israel initiative, Erik Selle, who is the leader of the Conservative Party in Norway.

"As African economies are growing, a mutual, prosperous relationship between emerging nations and the start-up nation of Israel will be significant for the people of Africa," he said.

The South African Zionist Federation (SAZF) welcomed the initiative and growing support for Israel.

"These 25 African countries recognise that Israel has a right to exist, and that African countries and Israel must both fight against Islamic extremism and the threat to their countries' safety and civilians that radical Islamism poses," said SAZF spokesperson Rolene Marks.

"These Africa-Israeli relationships mimic the Abraham Accords, which brought economic co-operation, friendship, and peace between Arab countries – the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Sudan, Morocco – and Israel," she said.

The two-day summit took place against the backdrop of a diplomatic battle in Africa between Israel's allies and detractors. South Africa has become one of Israel's most outspoken critics on the global stage, having taken the Jewish state to the United Nations' International Court of Justice (ICJ) on accusations of genocide. It also takes place against the backdrop of rising antisemitism and radical Islamism on both continents.

Speaking to the *SA Jewish Report* from Ethiopia, Knesset member Sharren Haskel of the United Right Party said, "This Africa-Israel Parliamentary Summit is the right thing at the right time."

Haskel said the world was enduring the consequences of the rise of radical Islam. "We see it not only in Israel with the 7 October massacre, but with terror groups that are rising all over the world, including African states suffering from ISIS, Boko Haram, Al-Shabaab, and so many more.



Member of the Knesset Sharren Haskel pins a yellow ribbon on Prosper Kasongo Lukali Tunda of the Democratic Republic of the Congo

"All of them are operated, supported, and funded by the main force of evil in our world today – Iran. This summit is the opportunity to create co-operation that crosses continents in our righteous fight to protect our culture, values, way of life, and right to practice our faith the way we see fit as sovereign in our homeland."

Haskel said these were things radical Islam was trying to take away.

"We cannot budge on human rights," she said. "We cannot budge on women's rights. We cannot budge on our right to go to a synagogue or church and practice our faith. We are here, parliamentarians from 25

African nations and Israel, to say together that we stand in the face of this evil and that we call the respective African nations to stand side-by-side with Israel in the fight against terror and radical Islam."

Marks said South Africa was "out of step" with much of the Western World, the Arab world, and its African brothers and sisters who support Israel.

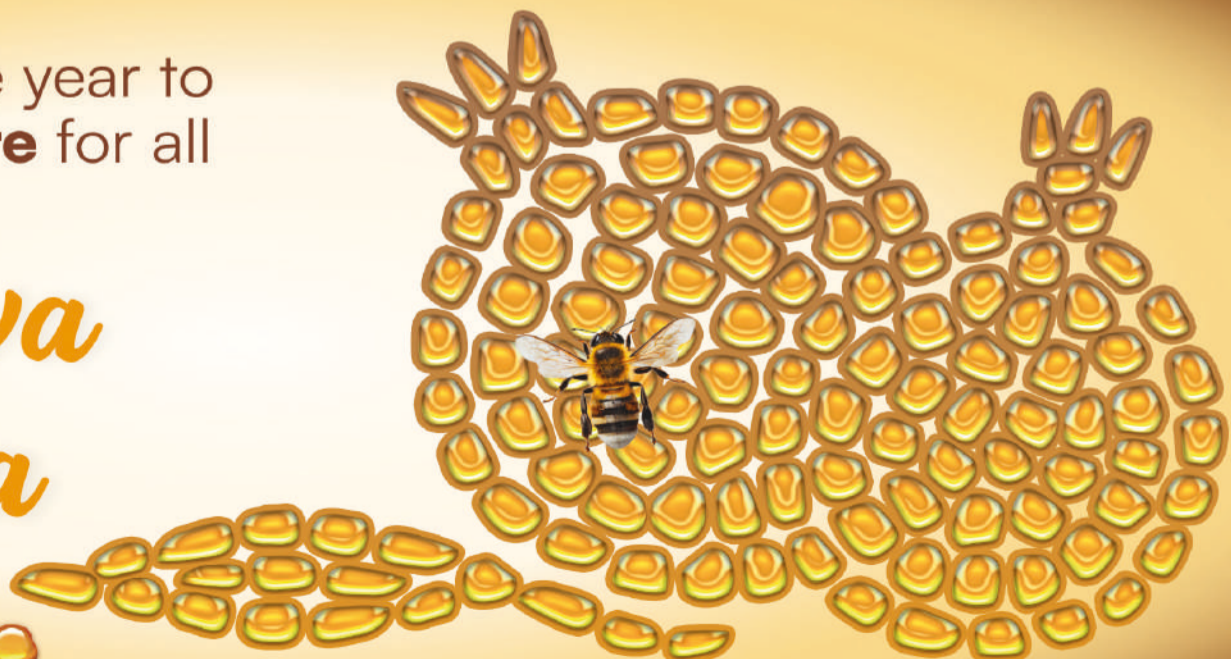
"While 25 African countries are sending legislators to the summit, South Africa continues to fight Israel at the ICJ and falsely accuse Israel of genocide. South

Continued on page 4 >>

Working throughout the year to ensure a **sweeter future** for all

Shana Tova
 U' metuka

www.jhbchev.co.za



Dukes Gold & Diamond Exchange

We buy all your gold jewellery, Krugerrands, diamonds, luxury watches & gold coins.



072 048 6812 www.dukesgde.co.za info@dukesgde.co.za



Appliance Repairs on Site

Fridges, Dishwashers, Washing Machines, Stoves Tumble Dryers & more
Call Jason 082 401 8239 / 076 210 6532
FREE QUOTATIONS

ETERNAL MEMORIALS

Rabbi Ryan Goldstein
083-458 9965
RabbiRyanG@gmail.com

"I will help you through this difficult time in your life with all the necessary tombstone requirements"

Continuing Rabbi Sher's z"l Legacy

War zone: Israel lights up Harris-Trump debate

RON KAMPEAS – JTA

In the first debate between Kamala Harris and Donald Trump, Harris said Israel's fight against Hamas was justified but that the war "must end immediately" in part because of how many Palestinians have been killed.

Trump predicted that if Harris won, Israel would disappear "within two years".

Moderators at the debate on Tuesday night, 10 September, in Philadelphia asked Harris to explain her repeated claims that Israel had the right to defend itself, but also that "it matters how" Israel conducts the war.

Harris made the same arguments she has made in the past, saying she would ensure Israel could defend itself and she believed Hamas was to blame for the war.

"Let's understand how we got here. On 7 October, Hamas, a terrorist organisation, slaughtered 1 200 Israelis, many of them young people who were simply attending a concert, women were horribly raped, and so, absolutely, I

said then, I say now, Israel has a right to defend itself. We would," she said.

"How it does so matters," Harris said, "because it's also true that far too many innocent Palestinians have been killed – children, mothers. What we know is that this war must end. It must end immediately."

She didn't lay out her own plan to end the war, instead leaning into the efforts of President Joe Biden to bring about a hostage-release deal before he leaves office. Hamas and Israel have been negotiating for months over a deal that hasn't materialised, and hopes have recently dimmed that the sides will come to an agreement in the near future.

"The way it will end is we need a ceasefire deal, and we need the hostages out," she said. "And so we will continue to work around the clock on that."

As the Democratic nominee, Harris has had to contend with two Democratic constituencies, supportive and critical of Israel, that are at odds with each other, and has sought to stick to Biden's policies of backing Israel while conveying

sympathy for mounting Palestinian casualties. She called for Palestinian statehood, which the current Israeli government forcefully rejects.

"We must chart a course for a two-state solution, and in that solution, there must be security for the Israeli people and Israel, and an equal measure for the Palestinians," she said. "But the one thing I will assure you always, I will always give Israel the ability to defend itself, in particular as it relates to Iran and any threat that Iran and its proxies pose to Israel."

Trump, as he has before, claimed the 7 October attack wouldn't have happened on his watch because of sanctions he placed on Iran, which funds the terror group. He said Iran was "broke under Donald Trump" and unable to fund its other proxies including Hezbollah in Lebanon and the Houthis in Yemen, both of which have attacked Israel. About the war, he said, "I will get that settled, and fast," though he didn't elaborate.

He also mentioned that Harris didn't attend Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's

Continued on page 3>>

Releasing the captive within

Torah Thought



Rabbi Shmuel Ozhekh
Ohr Somayach Cape Town and the founder of Rejewvinate and The Eden Meditation App

As the Jewish people face one of the most trying times in recent memory, the words of Deuteronomy 21:10: "When you go out to war against your enemies, and Hashem delivers them into your hands, and you take captives," strikes with a poignant relevance. The idea of captivity, however, extends far beyond the physical realm, reminding us of a deeper spiritual struggle that many face today.

In an age of constant news updates and social media, it's easy to feel consumed by grief, anger, and anxiety. Heartfelt posts flood online platforms, and many feel growing animosity toward our enemies. Yet, we must ask ourselves, is this response enough to address the profound pain we're feeling? Is there another way to seek relief and healing during such dark times?

The Sochatchover Rebbe, known as the Shem Mishmuel (1910-1926), offers a profound perspective on captivity, one that applies not only to the external world but also to our inner lives. According to his teachings, within each person lies a deep, spiritual connection to their true self. When that connection is lost, it feels as if our soul has been taken captive, leaving us disconnected from our essence.

This week's Torah portion outlines a metaphorical process for releasing captives, one that provides a roadmap for reclaiming our inner selves. The Torah describes a process for someone who takes a captive with the intention of marriage: bringing them into their home, shaving their hair, allowing their nails to grow, dressing them in mourning, and giving them time to cry for their parents. If the captive chooses not to marry after this process, they are set free. While this may seem unrelated to the inner struggle of modern life, the Shem Mishmuel reveals a deeper, symbolic meaning behind these steps.

Step 1: Enter the home

The "home" in this context refers to the Beit Hakneset (synagogue) and Beit Midrash (study hall), both spiritual homes. The first step to freeing our captive selves is to immerse ourselves in these environments of prayer and study. Reconnecting with our spiritual roots helps us to regain our sense of identity and purpose.

Step 2: Shave the hair
In Kabbalistic teachings, hair represents thoughts that have been "excreted" from the mind – negative influences and distractions. Shaving the hair symbolises cutting away these mental distractions, including the constant barrage of social media, entertainment, and superficial updates. Instead, we're called to focus on meaningful learning, meditation, and self-growth.

Step 3: Let the nails grow
Nails, in Kabbalah, symbolise our attachment to physicality and materialism. Letting them grow is a reminder that our endless pursuit of material success isn't the key to true happiness. Rather, we must recognise that lasting contentment comes from beyond the physical realm.

Step 4: Dress in mourning garments
Dressing in mourning reminds us of life's fragility. It's a call to live each moment with intention, recognising that our time

is finite and that what truly matters is the present – our connection to the here and now.

Step 5: Cry for your parents
Finally, the Torah instructs the captive to cry for their mother and father. This symbolises yearning for a connection to our divine source, the root of all true joy and freedom. By striving to reconnect with this source, we can begin to experience true inner liberation.

As we collectively mourn, worry, and pray for the release of Israel's captives, it's important to recognise that we also have a captive within ourselves – our true essence – waiting to be freed. By following these five steps, as outlined in this week's Torah portion, we can work toward redeeming our personal and national souls.

May we soon witness the redemption of our captives and the restoration of peace and freedom for all of Israel.

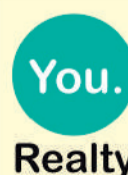
Shabbat Times brought to you by



Spencer Schwartz from You Realty
Residential Property Sales and Rentals + Auctions

	Starts	Ends
Johannesburg	17:42	18:32
Cape Town	18:19	19:11
Durban	17:30	18:21
Bloemfontein	17:49	18:40
Gqeberha	17:50	18:42
Plettenberg Bay	17:59	18:51
East London	17:41	18:33
Jerusalem*	18:11	19:23
Tel Aviv*	18:27	19:25

Spencer Schwartz • 084 524 4616 • spencer@yourealty.co.za



The Torah specifies that one must pay one's worker on the day that he completes his work. The Torah recognises that often a worker is in urgent need of his wages – to postpone paying him may cause him distress. By keeping this mitzvah, we train ourselves to be compassionate and kind.

The Roof Master Gauteng Pty Ltd
John 082 294 3550
THE ROOF MASTER
Painting, waterproofing & general repairs
Marinoss Trading

Fifteen on Orange Guest Lodge
• Self-contained spacious cottages each with enclosed garden
• Family and pet-friendly
• Walking distance to Shuls and shopping
• Boomed area
• Wi Fi and garage parking
Beverley Marcus | 083 449 1140
stay@fifteenonorange.co.za
www.fifteenonorange.co.za

Accommodation in Umhlanga
Call or email Sarit 0655792972
info@flamingorocks.co.za
www.flamingolodge.co.za
Walking Distance To Chabad Shul And Umhlanga Main Beach

VEHICLES WANTED
ANY MAKE ANY MODEL ANY CONDITION
BEST PRICE GUARANTEED
Arnold Orkin 082 823 7826

Pro-Hamas ANC undermines SA and US relations

TALI FEINBERG

The African National Congress (ANC) in the Western Cape has confirmed its full support for Hamas, an internationally-designated terrorist organisation.

In a statement on 5 September, it put its full weight behind Muslim Judicial Council (MJC) President Sheikh Riad Fataar, who said on 1 September, "I am Hamas! Cape Town is Hamas! Viva Hamas, viva!"

Fataar's statement was reported in the *SA Jewish Report* on 5 September, and since then, most leading Muslim community organisations in South Africa have said they fully support Hamas.

ANC Western Cape Provincial Spokesperson Khalid Sayed said his party stood in solidarity with Fataar, who "exercised his right to free speech in his support for the resistance movement Hamas". Sayed specifically targeted the South African Jewish Board of Deputies (SAJBD), which was one of several sources the *SA Jewish Report* approached in the article,

saying that the SAJBD's words were "a smear campaign" to "wrongfully accuse anyone that dares to exercise their right to support Hamas".

Local and international experts say that the ANC Western Cape statement could further exacerbate the tenuous relationship between South Africa and the United States (US). Furthermore, "Fataar's shouts of 'Viva Hamas!' along with the ANC Western Cape's solidarity with him, could destabilise South Africa's government of national unity," says Michalya Schonwald Moss, the chief advancement officer at October 7 Justice Without Borders, a legal initiative pursuing justice for victims.

"The ANC's continued claim that Hamas is a legitimate resistance movement blatantly undermines national unity, morality, and international law," she says. "South Africa cannot afford to normalise support for terrorists, especially after the US Justice Department charged Hamas leaders with orchestrating decades of mass violence. These atrocities constitute crimes against humanity."

Toby Dershowitz, the managing director of FDD Action, a non-partisan organisation that lobbies the US Congress on national security issues, says, "The US House of Representatives overwhelmingly passed legislation in June that requires the president to review US-South Africa relations. Pretoria shouldn't take for granted that Congress and the American administration will look the other way in the face of South Africa cozying up to terrorists that have murdered US citizens and those of its allies."

"South Africa should take serious note of the fact that Hamas engages in terror around the world," she says. "Its incitement to violence poses the same danger to South Africans that it does to citizens around the globe. Should the

ANC and its allies align themselves with Hamas, South Africa risks alienating itself and harming its own population."

She also notes that such statements won't help South Africa get off the Financial Action Task Force's grey list. "South African financial institutions should undertake the necessary due diligence to ensure they aren't aiding a web of Hamas-linked fundraising organisations," Dershowitz says.

Local political analyst Steven Gruzd agrees that it won't improve South Africa's relations with the US or endear

Fataar holds the highest position in the MJC, the most representative and influential Muslim religious organisation in the Western Cape. Though it deals mainly with religious matters, it has evolved into an extremist political entity, openly supporting Hamas and its atrocities on and since 7 October.

In an interview with *Salaamedia* on 5 September, Fataar doubled down on his message, saying, "If it makes you scared to hear the name of Hamas, then you will have to shake in your boots, because the world is praising Hamas. [Support for Hamas] is a general trend in Cape Town, South Africa, and in the world. Everybody says it. The MJC has had numerous meetings with Hamas, [including] shahid [martyr] Ismail Haniyeh and [Hamas leader] Khaled Mashal."

In an interview with *Muslim Views* on 9 September, Fataar said, "As the MJC, we support Hamas." The MJC also made a statement in support of Fataar, saying it wasn't against Jews, and "while there may be disagreements over Hamas's methods, it remains a legitimate political force. Describing its struggle as mere 'terrorism' oversimplifies a complex situation."

In a statement on 10 September, the United Ulama Council of South Africa, an umbrella body of the Muslim community, said it "sides with, aligns with, and generally supports Hamas". The Jamiatul Ulama of KwaZulu-Natal also endorsed Fataar, saying, "Hamas's resistance is an inspiration. We are all Hamas."

Youth For Al-Quds stated, "We are proud when we say, 'You are Hamas, I am Hamas, we are all Hamas!'"

while its parent body, the Al-Quds Foundation, said that the *SA Jewish Report's* article on Fataar "constitutes Islamophobia". United for Palestine said it "reaffirms its support for Muslim clerics who have taken a stand with Hamas".

Political party Al Jama-ah said it "applauds and commends" Fataar's Hamas support and emphasised "We are proud when we say: 'You are Hamas, I am Hamas, we are all Hamas!'"

Terrorism expert and senior training co-ordinator at the Institute for Security Studies, Willem Els, says "You can see [the ANC statement] against the backdrop of the ANC wanting to make inroads in the Muslim community. I don't think it considers the consequences of such inflammatory statements. It's its prerogative who it supports, but it should be done responsibly in order not to inflame sentiment and incite possible attacks."

"Some groups might take these statements literally and act," he says. "In addition, PAGAD [People Against Gangsterism and Drugs] culprits of the late 1990s are now out on parole. We don't know if they've been deradicalised in prison, but it's a volatile situation."

However, some Muslims disagree with Fataar. Dr Taj Hargey, the president of the Open Mosque in Cape Town says, "It's a complete fabrication to assert that all Muslims back Hamas. Indeed, even most Palestinians don't endorse the puritanical theology and violent extremism of Hamas."

"Fataar is notorious for despotic misgovernance within his tainted organisation, as well as for his sycophantic relationship with the ANC," says Hargey. "This delusional hypocrite certainly doesn't speak for the Open Mosque, let alone for all Muslims in South Africa."



Photo: Screenshot

Muslim Judicial Council President Sheikh Riad Fataar giving his support for Hamas on 1 September in Bo-Kaap, Cape Town

the ANC to the Americans. "The ANC has come out quite strongly here in support of a public figure identifying with Hamas which isn't going to be viewed favourably by most of the American political establishment," he says.

South African Zionist Federation spokesperson Rolene Marks says, "The ANC has proven once again its intentions to marginalise the South African Jewish community. The South African government is proving, once again, that it cannot be an honest broker for any kind of negotiated two-state solution, which is actually its official foreign policy position. It cannot be trusted if one of the leading political parties sides with a terrorist organisation."

Cape SAJBD Executive Director Daniel Bloch says, "We strongly oppose the MJC's support for Hamas, an organisation that employs violent means targeting civilians. Such support is counterproductive to the goal of peaceful coexistence in our diverse society."

"Six innocent Jewish hostages were executed last week. This led to an outpouring of grief among the local Jewish community and the world at large," he says. "As the representative body of the Jewish community, in all its diversity, we make no apology for having railed against another unpardonable act."

"The Cape SAJBD condemns the tragic loss of all lives in this conflict, and we continuously call for peace," says Bloch. "Yet, the MJC supports an organisation committed to killing Jews. It talks about love for its Jewish neighbours, but protests outside our schools, synagogues, Holocaust centres, and other institutions. We urge community leaders to focus on de-escalation, mutual respect, and constructive engagement. There can be no justification for supporting violence against civilians."

War zone: Israel lights up Harris-Trump debate

>>Continued from page 2

speech to Congress this summer, instead speaking at an event in Indiana. Netanyahu met both candidates later in the week.

On Tuesday, Trump made a new claim: that Israel would disappear in two years if Harris were elected.

"She hates Israel," he said. "If she's president, I believe that Israel will not exist within two years from now, and I've been pretty good at predictions. I hope I'm wrong about that one."

He also sought to appeal to Harris's perceived vulnerabilities among Arab Americans who have been critical of Israel's actions in Gaza.

"At the same time, in her own way, she hates the Arab population, because the whole place is going to get blown up, Arabs, Jewish people, Israel will be gone," he said.

Harris shot back that she doesn't hate Israel. "Oh, that's absolutely not true. I have, my entire career and life, supported Israel and the Israeli people," Harris said. "He knows that."

In another section of the debate, about the pro-Trump riot at the Capitol on 6 January

2021, Harris brought up Trump's remarks after the deadly neo-Nazi march in Charlottesville, Virginia, in 2017. Biden repeatedly cited the Charlottesville rally and Trump's response as the reason he ran for president in 2020.

"Let's remember Charlottesville, where there was a mob of people carrying tiki torches, spewing antisemitic hate, and what did the president then, at the time, say? There were fine people on each side," she said. She also brought up something Trump said in a debate with Biden in 2020, where he told the Proud Boys, a far-right group, to "stand back and stand by".

Trump said that the "very fine people" claim had been "debunked". Trump backers have pointed out that in the same press conference where he said there were "very fine people on both sides", he also condemned neo-Nazis, suggesting that the "fine people" remark was referring to peaceful protesters who wanted to preserve Confederate statues and who were marching alongside the extremists. The vast majority of protesters at the rally were white supremacists and neo-Nazis.

JAWITZ PROPERTIES | *Leading* REAL ESTATE COMPANIES OF THE WORLD

FOR SALE

GLENHAZEL | R 2 180 000

4 3 Web Ref: JRL22623

Joel Harris: 082 926 0287
Laureen Shalpid: 083 789 0229

FOR SALE

GLENHAZEL | R 4 900 000

4 3 Web Ref: JRL22112

Joel Harris: 082 926 0287
Laureen Shalpid: 083 789 0229

FOR SALE

WAVERLEY | R 2 495 000

3 2 Web Ref: JRL19343

Chrissie Hammer: 082 568 0440

FOR SALE

MORNINGSIDE | R 2 799 000

2 2.5 Web Ref: JRL16079

Linette Oosthuizen: 082 572 5314

The *real* estate agents™

HOLD REAL ESTATE

SECURING YOUR FUTURE IN ISRAEL



WATCH THE WEBINAR

TEL AVIV'S
URBAN
REAL ESTATE
EVOLUTIONThe city is
evolving,
unlocking exciting
opportunities
for future buyers

Watch our webinar to discover the dynamic real estate market and cutting-edge urban planning strategies transforming Tel Aviv. Gain exclusive insights from urban planners, developers, and real estate experts.

- ✓ How urban renewal is shaping the city
- ✓ The impact of the new Metro in Gush Dan Metropolitan on urban planning
- ✓ Pre-sale developer incentives for new buyers

Guest Panelists



Daniela Paz-Erez
CEO & Founder
Paz Group

Back by popular demand! Daniella will be discussing the dramatic impact of the Metro in Gush Dan Metropolitan on urban planning in the city.



Julian Nathan
Managing Director
Hold Real Estate (Sales & Marketing)

Julian will be discussing real estate market trends and the process for foreign buyers looking to invest in Israel.



Kate Kabili
International Sales Director
Hagag Group

Kate will be presenting Hagag's brand new luxury projects in Tel Aviv with a special promotion for webinar attendees!

Facilitated by



Nicci Raz
Head of Marketing & Sales
Hold Real Estate

FEATURING NEW DEVELOPMENTS

Infinity Tower, Tel Aviv



20% Deposit to secure an apartment
80% Balance due on delivery - ETC 2028

Masterpiece Bavli, Tel Aviv



15% Deposit to secure an apartment
85% Balance due on delivery - ETC 2030

In association with



This webinar
took place on
September 4th 2024
Register by email
info@hold.co.il

Contact us:
+972 58 631 9754

Visit our website www.hold.co.il

Disclaimer - Specific apartments and prices are subject to availability, and advertised materials are as of the date of advertising. Prices and availability could change and vary from time to time without prior notice. We cannot guarantee a specific apartment or price without signing a registration form.

Proposed peace plan has no wings, say experts

STEVEN GRUZD

With Israel's war against Hamas in Gaza dragging on relentlessly and no deal to free the hostages captured on 7 October within grasp, a kernel of a new peace proposal has emerged.

Put forward by former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and former Palestinian Foreign Minister Nasser Al-Kidwa at the end of August, it both covers familiar territory and breaks new ground.

Although mentioned briefly in the Israeli media, the joint proposal gained prominence when the two statesmen were interviewed by CNN's Fareed Zakaria on Sunday, 8 September. Analysts the *SA Jewish Report* spoke to, however, don't think these ideas would go anywhere in the current climate.

The Olmert-Al-Kidwa proposal calls for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza; the return of the hostages and release of selected Palestinian prisoners; and a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict based on the borders before the June 1967 Six-Day War. We've heard all that before. It proposes that Israel annexes 4.4% of the West Bank – mostly the areas where Jews live across the Green Line – swapping this for land that would go to a Palestinian state, including a land corridor between Gaza and the West Bank. This echoes the failed peace plan put forward in 2008 by Olmert when he was Israel's 12th prime minister.

The proposal calls for “a full withdrawal of Israeli forces and the creation of a Palestinian entity to administer and rebuild the Gaza Strip in the form of a council of commissioners composed of professional technocrats and not political representatives”. This council shall be “organically linked” to the Palestinian Authority (PA), and prepare the Gaza Strip and West Bank for elections in two to three years. The two leaders also called for a temporary Arab security presence “to stabilise the situation” and prevent attacks on Israel from Gaza.

The proposal, controversially, calls for the redivision of Jerusalem that would serve as the capital of both states, with no restriction of worship or movement in “the Holy basin”, which includes the Temple Mount precinct.

Larry Benjamin, a Middle East expert at the University of the Witwatersrand said, “I have always considered [Olmert] to be the prime minister who together with Ehud Barak was most likely to implement the essence of the Oslo Accords and chart a way to a two-state solution. The latest proposal, while laudable, is in my view totally at odds with where popular sentiment in Israel is anchored.

“The Saudi peace plan of 2002 remains the most realistic basis for a political solution on paper. However, attitudes on both sides have hardened, and it seems highly improbable that this latest proposal will have any traction at least in the short-to-medium term.”

Dr Glen Segell of the University of Cambridge said, “Two former

politicians suffering from their lack of achievement in office have paraphrased elements of previous proposals, including and since the 1947 partition plan. In doing so, they have highlighted the stumbling points for negotiations.

“Hopefully the ploy will work in that their joint statement will provoke current leaders to discuss their viability or negotiate better. Notwithstanding that, there are many points that wouldn't be acceptable to the Israeli defence establishment. The other side still wants us dead. Independence isn't the solution.”

The proposal will also be judged by the profile of its proponents. Olmert is far from a revered and respected figure in Israel. Segell said, “Olmert went to jail for crimes when he was mayor of Jerusalem. No-one trusts him. Security guards in supermarkets joke that they follow him to make sure he doesn't shoplift.”

Not much is known about Al-Kidwa, besides him being a moderate and the nephew of the former president of the Palestine Liberation Organization, Yasser Arafat. His profile on Wikipedia is sparse.

“Right now, any conversation about two states is really remote,” said journalist Rolene Marks in Israel. “The focus is on the hostages and the best way to attain our war goals. So this hasn't stirred much interest and the reception has been lukewarm, if any. A Palestinian state is seen as a reward for terrorism, there is zero trust between Israelis and Palestinians, and we have a trust deficit with our own government. Benjamin Netanyahu's

approval rating is in the doldrums, 70% of the country want him out, and in Gaza, all we think of is getting our hostages back and defeating Hamas. Having said that, we do have enormous empathy for the terrible and untenable suffering.”

And, “the proposal is certainly interesting,” Marks said, “until you get to Jerusalem. Israelis won't agree to any division or ceding of parts of Jerusalem.”

Professor Hussein

Solomon at the University of the Free State said, “It's an important step. First of all, to point out the positives. It's an Israeli and a Palestinian, and there's no political 'day after' coming from Netanyahu and his moribund cabinet.”

Solomon said the proposal was short on details about land swaps and the composition of the Arab force, for example. “What about Netanyahu's viewpoint about not giving up the Philadelphi Corridor? And would the existing right-wing Israeli government actually accept this, given the fact that the West Bank is considered by it to be *Eretz Yisrael*? They talk about elections and a council headed by the PA, which has been notably absent in this entire crisis. When you hear about Palestine, you link it with Hamas, not [PA president Mahmoud] Abbas. There's a big question about who succeeds him, given his advanced age. There are polls suggesting that Hamas might win the elections, then what happens?”

History will judge whether this proposal sparks a sustainable solution or is just another damp firework in the elusive quest for peace in the Middle East.

Africa-Israel summit – ‘right thing at right time’

>>Continued from page 1

Africa's foreign policy makes it an outlier as it sides with rogue states such as Iran and is no longer a diplomatic leader on the world stage as it was in 1994,” she said.

According to reports, many of the African parliamentarians at the conference are members of Israel Allies caucuses in their respective parliaments, actively championing pro-Israel legislation through faith-based diplomacy.

“This gathering brings together dozens of nations across Africa, Europe, the United States, and, of course, Israel, united by a shared commitment to strengthening ties and co-operation to contribute to this meaningful dialogue and I'm inspired by the shared vision that is taking shape here,” Gedaliah Blum, the

co-founder of the Heartland Initiative that aims to strengthen Israel and its connections, posted on Facebook.

“Together, we are building bridges and creating partnerships that will have a lasting impact on our communities and beyond.

“The conference created a platform for people to be openly pro-Israel and quash the levels of intimidation and fear coming from the other side,” Blum said. “The representatives see that Israel isn't like other countries that exploit people, instead they see Israel as an altruistic nation that wants to help for the good of the world.”

Steven Gruzd, the head of the African Governance and Diplomacy Programme at the South African Institute of International Affairs, said South Africa

was “noticeable in its absence” and that “Israel does have friends in Africa despite the war. It should be seen in the context of Israeli re-engagement with Africa since 2016.”

Bishop Dennis Nthumbi, the Africa director of the Israel Allies Foundation said, “The purveyors of hate, jihadism, and antisemitism have no moral standing, and nations must stand against this demonic posture.”

Josh Reinstein, the president of the Israel Allies Foundation posted on X, “The relationship between Africa and Israel is getting stronger every day thanks to men and women of faith who are taking their Biblical support for Israel and turning it into real political action.”



Fareed Zakaria with former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and former Palestinian Authority Foreign Minister Nasser Al-Kidwa

Politician's antisemitic rants raise alarm about safety

TALI FEINBERG

It's rare to encounter openly antisemitic sentiment in South Africa, but self-styled politician Mehmet Vefa Dag, who has Turkish roots, delves into anti-Jewish tropes on a daily basis, sharing his hate-filled thoughts across social media.

While his nonsensical rants are often not taken seriously, alarm about his Jew-hatred has increased, with concern that he could put his words into action or incite others to do so.



Photos: Screenshot from Facebook

"As premier of the Western Cape, the first thing I will do is shut down Herzlia school," wrote Dag on Instagram, about his Land Party, shortly before South Africa's national elections in May 2024. This is one of Dag's frequent refrains. On 1 June, he wrote, "We are coming to eliminate the development of Zionists in South Africa. There will be no Zionists left in South Africa. We will close Herzlia High School."

Tim Flack, an ally of the Jewish community who has been tracking Dag, told the *SA Jewish Report* that the way "he talks about Herzlia, I'm worried about people's safety".

He believes that Dag himself is the danger, and that he doesn't have a wide following on social media. He has noticed that Dag has

shifted his language from talking about "Zionists" to openly talking about "Jews". For example, he posted that "68% of black South Africans are living in shacks, because of Jews".

Advocate Mark Oppenheimer, who has appeared in the Supreme Court of Appeal and the Constitutional Court in cases that seek to determine the boundary between freedom of expression and genuine hate speech, says, "The test for hate speech hinges on whether the words uttered propagate hatred against a protected group. These groups could include Jews or Zionists, based on religion, belief, or ethnicity. It must also be shown that the words are either harmful in themselves or incite harm against the group."

"Dag has uttered a range of statements which revile Jews and Zionists, even calling for the elimination of Zionists from the Western Cape and the closure of Herzlia school," says Oppenheimer. "If litigation were initiated against him in the Equality Court on the

grounds of hate speech, harassment, and unfair discrimination, there would be reasonable prospects of success."

Daniel Bloch, the executive director of the Cape South African Jewish Board of Deputies, says, "We are aware of Dag's comments. They are antisemitic and totally unacceptable. We are exploring our options at this time."

Dag often delves into antisemitic tropes of Jews being after blood; stealing land and assets; secretly taking over society; being responsible for societal ills; and being white supremacists and Nazis. When a building collapsed in George, killing builders on the site, he said "Zionist Jewish owners [have] stained George with blood." He refers to Israel as "the devil nation" and Herzlia as "the devil school".

Dag also recently burned an Israeli flag outside the Cape Town Jewish community campus housing the Gardens Shul, South African Jewish Museum, the Cape Town Holocaust & Genocide Centre, the Gitlin Library, and a kosher restaurant.

Milton Shain, the author of *Fascists, Fabricators and Fantasists: Antisemitism in South Africa from 1948 to the Present*, said, "Dag's language and his use of well-worn antisemitic tropes betray a Nazi-like mindset."

"Many of his ideas come straight out of the Nazi playbook," says Shain. "To close down Herzlia school, for example, would be in line with the abolition of Jewish human rights under the Nazis, while to talk of a 'Zionist mafia' controlling the economy replicates Nazi propaganda in the 1930s. The trope of a Jewish man sexually harassing a black man's wife fits perfectly with the smut of Julius Streicher's *Der Stürmer*. Similar is the claim that 'Zionism is a cancer.'"

"In his political adverts, Dag even warns of 'expropriating Zionist land'," notes Shain. "He makes it absolutely clear that he wishes to 'remove Zionists' and claims that Sea Point is 'in the hands of Israeli real estate'."



"We have heard this all before," says Shain. "Clearly, Dag is obsessed with the so-called Zionist presence in the Western Cape. Put simply, he has a mind poisoned by Jew-hatred. The real question is to what extent the voice of

this clearly disturbed man resonates beyond his tiny circle."

Dag has often called for the South African Zionist Federation (SAZF) to be closed down, stating, "The problem is the Zionist mafia controls the entire economy, which is where we finance the Israeli war. Zionists are terrorists. Netanyahu has reached a level of genocide that would make Hitler jealous."

He also stated, "Zionists hate black people. Come to the streets and fight for your rights. Zionists must leave. This is Cape Town, not Tel Aviv. They must f**k off from our country." On the day of South Africa's national elections, 29 May, he said, "Zionists are going to leave from tonight."

SAZF spokesperson Rolene Marks, believes that Dag's comments, which are "often nonsensical, absurd, and hateful", deserve to be ignored, just as voters ignored him. His Land Party, which competed provincially in the Western Cape, received only 1 865 votes, or 0.09%.

"Dag's comments are anti-constitutional, discriminatory, and border on hate speech or incitement to violence against Jews," she says. "His election promises, such as shutting

down Herzlia and ridding the country of Jews who support Israel, thankfully found no resonance with voters. Moreover, even if he had won a seat, he couldn't legally shut down a school. That would be unconstitutional.

"Many of his comments, while antisemitic, are also absurd, such as suggesting that Zionists control the South African economy, that all Jews are rich, powerful, and dominant, and implying that no other South Africans have a stake in the economy. They are disturbingly reminiscent of Nazi Germany in the 1930s. The SAZF condemns antisemitic hate speech, the targeting of Jewish people, false claims, and divisive rhetoric."

From analysing his social media posts, Flack says Dag sees being a Jew as the worst insult, and that Dag called him "Jewish Tim" when lashing out at him. "He sees everyone who is white as being Jewish," says Flack. Asked why he has come out in defence of the Jewish community in this way, Flack says, "During the Holocaust, the King of Denmark wore a Star of David on his clothes. So, at this time, I figured I should too."

THE GAUTENG

September 15, 2024
17:30

COUNCIL CONFERENCE

Session 1

The GNU Horizon? Discussion with Wayne Sussman

Political Analyst and Director of the Africa Institute of the AJC



Session 2

Antisemitism post October 7 – panel discussion with

Dr David Hirsh and Prof Karen Milner, moderated by Danny Mofsowitz



Dr David Hirsh
Academic Director and
CEO of London Centre for
Study of Contemporary
Antisemitism



Danny Mofsowitz
Deputy Chairperson of
Gauteng Council SAJBD



Prof Karen Milner
National Chairperson
SAJBD

Booking here: <https://bit.ly/GCConference24>



Rosh Hashanah Special
Talleisim: R99
12 - 20 September

011 640 3596



✓ Curtains ✓ Bridal Wear ✓ Duvets ✓ Seamstress on site

Cnr George Avenue & Bradfield Drive, Fairmount

We are not Hamas

When the leadership of a community – especially the spiritual leadership – stands up in support of an internationally recognised terrorist organisation, we cannot ignore it.

“I am Hamas! Cape Town is Hamas!” shouted Muslim Judicial Council (MJC) President Sheikh Riad Fataar, who went on to say why he and his community are so committed to giving these heinous terrorists their absolute support. We ran this story on our front page last week because we believe you need to know.

There has been an outcry from the ANC in Cape Town and various Muslim organisations who claimed we were being Islamophobic because the MJC leader’s words distressed us. They were clearly angry that we, the Jewish community, had allegedly launched a smear campaign by calling out the MJC leader for doing this.

Well, here’s the thing, we have no issues with the Muslim community in this country. In fact, we live happily side by side. We’re all South Africans and neighbours, and we’re happy with that. I have always believed both Muslims and Jews are happy with that.

However, it’s not about having problems with Muslims, it’s about having a problem with people who openly support an organisation not just calling for the death of all Jews, the total eradication of the Jewish state “from the river to the sea”, but which is actually doing its best to carry that out.

We have a problem with people so deeply supporting the self-same terrorists who broke through the border between Israel and Gaza, brutally murdered 1 200 innocent Israelis, including babies, children, and women. They violently gang raped G-d knows how many people before murdering them. The gender-based mutilation perpetrated on 7 October in Israel knew no bounds, especially at the Nova festival, a festival in the name of peace.

These monsters, whom the MJC leader supports, went on to kidnap 250 innocent people violently and took them hostage into Gaza. Today, almost a year later, there are still more than 100 of our people being held hostage in the most inhumane conditions.

Less than two weeks ago, this same terrorist organisation executed six young hostages, most of whom were taken from the Nova festival and somehow managed to survive 11 months of incarceration.

Just this week, we were able to see the tunnel where they were held. It was so low, they couldn’t stand up, nor could they be side by side in the width of the tunnel. It was dark and frightening, with no air. It was accessible through a door in the floor of a children’s room in a house. The 20 metre shaft went straight down to the tunnel that then ended in an iron door.

No matter what Sheikh Fataar and all those who came out in support of him said, I don’t believe that Hamas represents Islamic ideals and beliefs. I don’t believe that all Muslims support Hamas or that they believe this organisation represents them.

That would be like saying that they all support ISIS, which I know isn’t true.

Saying that, I find it concerning and distressing to see that people are coming out in support of the MJC leader’s declared support for Hamas. I understand that they respect him and his position. However, defending Hamas is defending the indefensible.

Having run this original story on our front page because it was so shocking, we also had minor backlash from a few members of our community. However, their anger was because they believed we shouldn’t be running stories like this but rather sticking to good news and happy stories.

In all honesty, we love happy stories, and we wish we only had these stories to tell you. However, we are a news publication and, as such, we believe it’s incumbent on us to tell you the truth about our situation. We don’t believe we should be hiding things that are unpleasant or distressing. That would be tantamount to us shoving all our heads in the sand.

We do, however, look far and wide for happy stories and stories with happy endings. And hopefully, this story and others that are hard to read will have uplifting endings too.

I do believe there are many Muslims in this country who may well support the rights of Palestinians – and they have every right to – but don’t support Hamas in what it does.

They may well hate the fact that there are so many Palestinians being killed in this war, and they aren’t alone. However, I’m also sure they are aware of how Hamas uses innocent Palestinians – especially women and children – as cannon fodder in this battle.

The truth is that in every community, there are people with opposing opinions. Some people in one family may declare undying support for Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, believing him to be Israel’s saviour, while others in that same family believe he is the worst thing that happened to Israel. Everyone in that family believes 100% in the Jewish state, but they may never agree on this, among other issues.

This week, I heard someone in our community claiming that the hundreds of thousands of Israeli protesters, who are demanding that their government comes to an agreement to bring the hostages home, may as well have been working for Hamas. However, so many others in this same community wholly support the protesters and what they stand for.

So, though I can see that we struck a chord in uncovering this clear allegiance to Hamas from a South African Muslim leader, I don’t believe this is a sentiment shared across the board within our Muslim community. I believe we all want the same things – to live a stress-free, secure and peaceful life in this country.

Shabbat Shalom!

Peta Krost
Editor



Ramaphosa’s optimism on ICJ case has little merit

OPINION

GAVIN ROME



President Cyril Ramaphosa appears optimistic about his government’s prospects of winning the International Court of Justice (ICJ) case against Israel. However, this could be misguided.

Following the interim orders issued by the ICJ in the case, he addressed Parliament on 29 August, saying that his administration was in the process of preparing an “almost 500-page case” for the ICJ, and that South Africa would prove that a genocide was taking place in Gaza.

He then repeated his view that the only solution for “the horror that is unfolding in Palestine” is for Palestinians to have their own state “side by side with Israel”. Charitably interpreted, each of these statements appear to be steeped in the naivete of a blinkered and partisan ideologue.

First, the length of a party’s papers doesn’t of itself say anything about the merits of its case. If the rule of thumb in litigation were that the party with the heftier volume of papers was the one more likely to prevail, then not all the unharvested timber in the world would suffice to accommodate the appetite for lengthy and lengthier court papers.

Second, and as to the president’s expression of confidence in South Africa’s prospects of success, I trust that his legal advisers at the very outset informed him that a full prosecution of South Africa’s case would, especially at the merits stage, be very, very expensive. A team of four or five local silks and four of five junior advocates assisted by several other Pound-earning foreign advocates is unlikely to be paid at legal-aid rates.

The very reason why the government will be sure to brief so large a legal team is that unlike what may occur at a provisional or interim stage, at the final hearing, a charge of state genocide is notoriously hard to prove. Where a state is charged with the crime of crimes – genocide – the bar of proof is, by design, set very high indeed.

The ICJ has previously held that to sustain a charge of genocidal intent, the prosecution must prove intention at the level of *dolus specialis* – essentially a specific and direct intention to commit genocidal crimes. In terms of the ICJ’s own binding precedent, prosecutors need to show that the intent of committing genocide “is the only reasonable inference” that can be drawn from the facts.

If the preliminary hearings are any indication, South Africa’s case on the merits will be heavily based on statements made by Israeli officials vested with command authority or responsibility.

Thus, the somewhat bellicose statements made by President Isaac Herzog,

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, and Defence Minister Yoav Gallant during the anguished aftermath of 7 October 2023 are likely to be proffered as evidence of Israel’s alleged genocidal intent. However, it’s trite that in law, as in so much in life, context is everything. Apart from each of these three leaders having clarified that their statements were directed at the destruction of Hamas and not the people of Gaza, there’s also this very pertinent context.

A powerful, highly-armed state, Iran, has as its sworn and oft repeated aim the utter obliteration of another. It’s thus to be expected that in the context of an Iranian proxy’s invasion and slaughter, Israel’s leaders in their reaction to the infamy of 7 October, might – and likely would – make patriotic and sometimes bombastic speeches intended to boost the morale of a society under frenzied yet sustained attack.

In war, leaders harness and give expression to society’s anger at the enemy. In a speech made

on the day after the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union, Sir Winston Churchill promised, “We shall bomb Germany by day as well as by night in ever-increasing measure, casting upon them month by month a heavier discharge of bombs and making the German people taste and gulp each month a sharper dose of the miseries they have showered upon mankind.”

The historical context in which the above speech was made would give the lie to any counterfactual and revisionist claim that the Royal Air Force’s subsequent years-long mass bombing of the German civilian population constituted a crime of genocide.

At the interim hearings before the ICJ, South Africa’s written charges were largely advanced through references in footnotes, which were proffered as evidence in support of its allegations.

These footnote references were themselves peppered with disputed and carefully selected statements and reports. If the ICJ is to remain a court of law bound by its own precedents, this sort of evidence won’t suffice at the final hearing on the merits of South Africa’s case.

Third, the president ought to have known that a Jewish state, understandably, recoils from outsiders advising it on its only “solution”, and that Israel is also entirely unconvinced that the envisaged state of Palestine would mean peace. After the 2005 withdrawal, Gaza could have been a prototype of a sustainable and prosperous Palestinian entity. It instead became an armed camp. Although Gaza is just 40km in length, its underground network of tunnels traversed an area of about 480km. This underground military installation was built by Hamas at an estimated cost of \$1 billion dollars. As the saying goes, for the past two decades Hamas spent the resources of Gaza “building down but never up”.

South Africa’s legal team would be aware of the difficulties involved in proving a case of genocide. On 4 April 2024, the ICJ fixed the dates by which the parties are to file their respective pleadings, known as “memorials”, on the merits. South Africa is required to submit its memorial by 28 October 2024. Just as this piece was being finalised, news

broke that South Africa’s lawyers are attempting to extend the October deadline by several months. In litigation, it’s most often the party bringing the case – the plaintiff – who seeks to expedite the hearing and it’s the defendant who might seek to delay proceedings.

South Africa’s requested postponement is therefore surprising, and indicates that the president’s confidence in the adequacy of South Africa’s “almost 500-page” case was misplaced.

In any event, the president’s views on the only solution won’t fall on receptive ears. Hamas’s founding charter proclaims that its solution isn’t neighbourly co-existence but rather the total elimination of Israel. Israel’s founding document, the Declaration of Independence, states that Israel seeks peace but will remain ever prepared to defend itself.

Between these two contrary poles, and for so long as Hamas sets the Palestinian agenda, the emergence of a state of Palestine existing side by side with Israel will remain more illusion than solution.

• Gavin Rome is a senior counsel at the Johannesburg Bar.



South Africa’s legal team presenting its case at the International Court of Justice in January 2024

'Speaking about suicide saves lives,' says expert

NICOLA MILTZ

Rabbi Shalom Hammer and his family were blindsided by the devastating loss of his beloved daughter, Gila, 18, who tragically took her own life in 2019.

Gila, had been facing serious mental health challenges after being sexually assaulted two years earlier.

She went from being a "happy-go-lucky" joyful teenager to spiralling into a deep depression while living with a terrible secret which led to her demise.

"I was at shul with my son when I received the news," said Rabbi Hammer, "Everything changed. It's a day I will never forget," he said.

Since that day, he has devoted his life to honouring Gila's memory by raising awareness about suicide prevention. With deep compassion and determination, he strives to change the way society understands and addresses mental health, hoping to save lives one talk at a time and spare other families the grief his own has endured.

"We never believed our daughter would tragically die from suicide," he told the *SA Jewish Report*.

Hammer is in South Africa this week to address the community, from school children to parents to healthcare professionals, on the importance of education about suicide. He is doing so in the face of a concerning rise in the number of suicides and attempted suicides in the community and their devastating aftermath.

His visit coincides with World Suicide Prevention Day on Tuesday, 10 September, which aims to focus attention on this growing issue, reduce stigma about suicide, and raise awareness, giving the message that suicides are preventable.

"A simple 'Howzit', or 'How are you today?' can save a life. This greeting could be throwing someone who is

struggling a lifeline," said the American Israeli lecturer and author of several books who has visited South Africa numerous times.

"It's a myth to think that talking about suicide promotes suicide. The opposite is true. The more we talk about it, the more we can lower the suicide rate and save lives," he said.

"When a person suffers from mental illness, we should view it like any other illness and believe that it can be curable with time and care. The vast majority of

change.

"I used to wake up with a tremendous amount of pain and reflection. I now wake up with motivation and reflection. Everyone grieves differently. There are no rules. The only way I know to confront death is to help to save lives," Hammer said.

He started a non-profit organisation called Gila's Way, which implements programmes on mental health awareness and suicide prevention in order to save lives. "It all starts with communication and dialogue," Hammer said.

"The vast majority of people who die from suicide don't want to die. Particularly adolescents, who are still developing and who may impulsively make a decision within a few seconds, not realising that it's finite. When people understand that most people who die from suicide didn't want to die, they also understand that this means we're capable of saving that person."

For the first 16 years of her life, Gila was happy-go-

devastating trauma, things spiralled out of control, ending tragically," he said.

He urges parents to pay attention to what their child is "saying".

"A child – or anyone for that matter – who is dealing with mental health challenges or experiencing a crisis won't necessarily explicitly say, 'I need help', but they will often send 'cries for help' and share those signs because they really want help. Some of those warning signs can be familial/social isolation, spending long hours in their bedroom, and refusing to join the family for activities which they normally enjoyed. In addition, they may be exhibiting exhaustion, or become physically unkempt, and they might desist from performing expected activities like going to school, doing their homework, participating in events, or may resort to substance abuse.

"I consistently emphasise to people to trust their parental instincts. We know our kids best, and care about them the most," Hammer said.

Sheila Furman, the co-coordinator of Chevrah Kadisha Bereavement Services, said death by suicide had far reaching consequences for families and the broader community, even more so following the increase in occurrence over a short period of time.

"Since January, we have sadly witnessed a rise in the number of suicides, mainly of men. Rabbi Hammer has insight and offers a message of hope to the community. Having been through this process, he could help those who have been affected by suicide deal with that pervasive sense of helplessness," she said.

"There's a difference between moving on and moving forward," said Hammer. "No-one moves on. We have the capacity to move forward and to take that person with us. Gila comes with me wherever I go."

People who have lost a child often struggle with the question of how many children they have. "My wife and I say we have six children, and one is not with us physically right now."

• For more information on Gila's Way see his website www.Gilasway.com



Rabbi Shalom Hammer with his daughter Gila

adolescents and others are able to overcome and go on to lead successful lives. They just need someone to recognise their pain. I've seen it."

In the aftermath of his devastating loss and soon after sitting shiva, Hammer channelled his grief into action, using his expertise as a rabbi and educator to promote awareness. He now speaks tirelessly on the issue, and leads workshops across a wide range of settings – from schools and prisons to army bases and synagogues – emerging as a passionate advocate for

Should you need help, contact:

The Chev's 24-hour confidential helpline on 082 499 1010

Hatzolah's 24/7 Toll free Emotional Support line on 0800 233 711 or Connect teen text line SMS Talk to 44918 (free)

Koleinu SA helpline 011 264 0341

The Ki (counselling service) 065 533 4442

ChaiFM 24-hour national toll free confidential helpline 0800 242 436

Life Line Crisis Line 0861 322 322

South African Depression and Anxiety Group 0800 12 13 14

lucky, vivacious, rosy cheeked, and vibrant, he said.

"People fell in love with her. Gila was innocent and joyful. You would never have known she was someone who was suffering and who fell into a deep dark depression or would even think about taking her own life. However, for the last year and a half of her life following a

Advertorial

Emmarentia Shul joins with Victory Park Shul

On the 5th of August 2024, Emmarentia Shul joined with Victory Park Shul. The move had been discussed between the respective Shul committees and Rabbis for several months and was unanimously and enthusiastically endorsed by both communities.



Rabbi and Rebbetzin Uzvolk

For more than five decades, Victory Park shul and Emmarentia shul have been pillars of Jewish life in the north-west of Johannesburg. Their rich histories, vibrant traditions, and unwavering sense of community have left an indelible mark on the lives of all their members wherever they may be in the world today.

We invite anyone who has yet to experience the warmth, energy, and dynamism of Victory Park shul to join us on a Shabbat or over the upcoming High Holy days. We look forward to welcoming you!

As we trailblaze a dynamic and vibrant new path with the merger of the two shuls, spearheaded by Rabbi and Rebbetzin Uzvolk and Rabbi and Rebbetzin Richard, and embark on this new and exciting chapter, we invite you to join along.

Our vision:

- To be THE Orthodox Jewish community centre for all Jews on the west side of Johannesburg, offering religious, social, cultural, recreational, educational, and youth activities 365 days a year, 24/7
- To reconnect with, inspire, and empower our youth through active engagement with them at shul and at school
- To be a "home away from home", where every Jew feels accepted and no Jew is turned away
- To build a multi-purpose community/activity centre - "The Space".

In his address at the deconsecration service for Emmarentia shul on 4 August 2024, Rabbi Richard said, "The sanctity of a shul isn't found solely in its bricks and mortar. The true holiness of a shul comes from the people who gather in it, the community that breathes life into its walls and halls. It's our shared faith, our dedication to Torah, *mitzvot*, and one another that makes it holy.

"Our decision to join Victory Park shul is a testament to our commitment to these principles. While we cherish the memories we have made here, our future lies in the strength and vitality of our new combined community."



Rabbi and Rebbetzin Richard

Together, we can build bridges across generations, celebrate our shared heritage, and create a truly remarkable community, one that echoes with the laughter of children, the self-discovery of youth, the wisdom of elders, and the heartbeat of unity.

For more details, please contact the Shul office on 065 891 7637.



WE ARE THE
NER HAMAARAVI
THE WESTERN FLAME!

Tunnel vision: the subterranean tactics of Hamas

ROLENE MARKS

"From a military perspective, this war is all about the tunnels. They are used for weapons manufacturing, storage, and they are used to manoeuvre. The golden rule for any military is manoeuvrability," says military expert Major Andrew Fox.

I had the pleasure of sitting down for an interview with Fox last week as he visited Israel. We spoke about the visuals of vast amounts of damage to neighbourhoods in Gaza that have outraged many in the international community.

Images of the damage have been used in information warfare and are guaranteed to elicit a robust response from the international community, but to fully understand what's happening above ground, you need to look below ground, he said.

"Let's tackle the damage head on. The tunnels are a weapons system of their own. People, think of them as hidey-holes, a way to avoid Israel Defense Forces [IDF] airstrikes, and they are. But they are much more than that. To destroy the tunnels, you must destroy what's above." Fox said Hamas is able to turn this into a weapon to get the international community to pressure Israel to stop. It has worked before. "Every tunnel is connected to every mosque, every hospital, every school, so above ground is where damage is done," he said.

A former British Army officer who completed three tours in Afghanistan, including one attached to the United States Army Special Forces, Fox also served in Bosnia, Northern Ireland, and the Middle East, is a senior lecturer at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst,

and serves as a research fellow at the Henry Jackson Society focusing on defense, the Middle East, and disinformation. He has visited Israel numerous times since the start of the war with Hamas following the atrocities of 7 October, and has spent a considerable amount of time with the IDF in Gaza.

In recent weeks, Fox visited Gaza with a cohort from the High Level Military Group (HLMG). The group is "an independent body of former chiefs of staff, senior military officers, and cabinet ministers from NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] countries with many decades of expertise at the highest level of land, air, and sea conflict and the legality thereof".



Major Andrew Fox at the site of the Nova festival

The HLMG has filed a counter-claim at the International Criminal Court (ICC) following the announcement by Chief Prosecutor Karim Khan of warrants of arrest for Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defense Minister Yoav Gallant.

Fox explained what the HLMG had observed. "The IDF looks at rules of engagement; at collateral damage; at civilian presence; at sites of a protected nature; what munitions need to be used; and the target. This is all stuff we use as well," he said. "One in every two airstrikes is cancelled because they fail one of those six standards. This is absolutely moral, correct, and legitimate."

In order to have genocide, you have to prove intent, and you can't take politicians' comments in press conferences as intent, he said. "Armies don't take orders from press conferences, they take orders from war cabinets and the chain of orders".

Regarding the issue of humanitarian aid, it's Fox and the HLMG's assessment that Israel has gone beyond the requirements under international law – building roads, and more calories per person are going into Gaza than before the war. Israel has also facilitated polio vaccines, and repaired water pipes, and electricity supplies destroyed by Hamas on 7 October. There have been 16 000 aid co-ordinations in Gaza between the IDF and aid agencies. "There have been thousands more on top of that," Fox said.

In recent weeks, the British government announced that it would retract its objection to ICC arrest warrants against Netanyahu and Gallant. This change in attitude towards its ally was followed by Foreign Secretary David Lammy's announcement to suspend 30 out of 350 arms export licenses. The timing couldn't have been worse as Israelis reeled with grief following the execution of six hostages.

Fox opines on this decision, "The double insult is performative," he said. "The weapons won't make a difference at all to the war in Gaza. None of the thresholds of international humanitarian law were remotely breached. This is just performative spite."

Fox weighed in on the information battlefield. It's not just on the kinetic battlefield where wars are fought, he said, but in the media, and over the past 11 months, the statistics are staggering.

"The media have platformed Hamas. I've seen a study that looks at five key media platforms including Sky News, CNN, and the BBC. One hundred percent of the time, they cited Hamas's fatality statistics. Seventy-five percent of the time, they mentioned that they were from Hamas but not always, and 4% of the time they cited IDF statistics. That's the scale of the imbalance. I'm trying to tell the truth as I see it, and I have a better idea because I've been to Israel multiple times, I've been on the ground in Rafah, I've spoken to the IDF at every level," said Fox. "I know it to be true; I've seen it with my own eyes."

This past Sunday, 8 September, *The Telegraph* published a damning exposé showing the BBC's bias and violation of its own impartiality clause.

In Fox's opinion, three things need to be understood in order to have a better understanding of this war and Israel's response: 7 October, the taking of hostages, and the tunnels.

One area where the IDF could improve is in running its information campaign in parallel with its military campaign. This is a lesson for all Western militaries.

There are many other lessons that militaries can learn from Operation Swords of Iron and the IDF's conduct. Fox believes this war will be studied hard and other militaries can learn from the IDF about urban manoeuvrability. Militaries will have to look at urban warfare above and below ground at the same time, how to integrate air power, how to integrate drones, co-ordination, and other elements that have never been done before. "The Israelis have had to learn it on the job," he said. "The IDF can clear the tunnels out much more rapidly now than in the beginning."

Achiever Awards humbling and empowering, say past winners

DYLAN BERGER

Awards come in all shapes and sizes, but when an award comes from your own community and recognises your contribution to it and South Africa in general, it strikes a chord.

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the Absa Jewish Achiever Awards. For a quarter of a century, these award ceremonies honoured the remarkable people in our community and have helped elevate their lives and careers.

"I was, of course, humbled to receive the award," said Judge David Unterhalter, the 2018 winner of the Absa Professional Excellence Award. "Recognition by your community is a special validation. But most important of all was to witness how many individuals in our community do such important work that registers for the good in so many ways."

Fundraising maestro for the King David Schools Foundation, Raelene Tradonsky, who won last year's Mann Made Community Service Award said, "In the world of philanthropy and fundraising – particularly international fundraising – the award holds a lot of credibility. I've come to see that first-hand."

In 2014, the Creative Counsel Young Jewish Entrepreneurs Award winner was Nadav Ossendryver, who was still in high school at the time. "Winning the inaugural Rising Star Award remains one of the most memorable moments of my life," said Ossendryver. "It was such an honour to be acknowledged by my community, and it gave me a sense of validation that I was on the right path." He was awarded for Latest Sightings, his national platform for sharing game sightings, which now has 5.5 million subscribers on YouTube.

"The award not only boosted my confidence, but also provided great exposure for my work among the Jewish community," Ossendryver said. "I hope that many other young entrepreneurs in our community see the significance of the recognition in the Absa Jewish Achiever Awards, and get motivated to build up their businesses."

The Young Entrepreneurs Award was a precursor to the new Ichikowitz Family Foundation Rising Star Award, which honours those under 25 who have achieved extraordinarily in many different spheres, including business. The first winner of this award last

year was young cricketer David Teeger. This is the only award specifically given to youthful candidates.

The winner of the Absa Business Award in 2018 was advertising executive Mike Abel, who said, "What made it more special was the calibre of the judges, their questions, and the evaluation



Joint winner of the 2023 Europcar Women in Leadership Award, Gia Whitehead

itself went way beyond business success to evaluating contribution and social impact within the community and broader South Africa. I'm most passionate about this." Abel, who is executive chairperson and founder of the M&C

Saatchi group of companies and M&C Saatchi Abel, said, "I've always looked at past winners and my fellow winners on the night with respect, and in certain cases awe, so I was truly humbled to be included in such a distinguished group."

Gia Whitehead, the joint winner of the 2023 Europcar Women in Leadership Award, said that almost a year later, she was still beaming from her award.

"It was a deeply moving experience, not just for me personally, but for the entire TSIBA Business School community," said Whitehead. Whitehead won the award for the business school, which offers disadvantaged young South Africans a top education, giving them a lift out of poverty into becoming potential business leaders.

"It was a beautiful acknowledgment of the work we have been doing for more than two decades to shift the future trajectory of our students and, by extension, our country. It also gave me the opportunity to meet the powerful panel of judges individually and build on these important relationships for TSIBA," said Whitehead.

On Sunday, 17 November, the winners of the 25th Absa Jewish Achiever Awards will be announced at a glittering banquet award ceremony. Book your seats or table at bit.ly/jaabook.

You'll also be able to vote for the finalists you believe should win awards in our online voting which opens on Thursday, 19 September.

south african
Jewish Report
The source of quality content, news and insights
www.sajr.co.za

FAITH & PAIN:
SOUTH AFRICANS IN THE CROSSHAIRS
RABBI DORON PEREZ & HOSTAGE AVIVA SIEGEL

MONDAY 16 SEPTEMBER AT 20:00 SAST
Register NOW: bit.ly/jrlive173

Dancing again: Yeshiva artwork shows Israel's recovery

LEE TANKLE

Artists Danit Gordon and Treatwell Mnisi felt drawn to creating an artwork for Yeshiva College to commemorate 7 October, but each for personal reasons.

"Being so close but so far away to what happened on 7 October, I wanted to commemorate it but in a beautiful and hopeful way," said Gordon, who is herself an alumnus of Yeshiva College, with children at the school.

Said Mnisi, "When the tragedy happened, I was touched. I felt pain for what had occurred to the young people in Israel, especially the families who lost their children, and those still being held hostage.

"I knew that I could contribute something tangible, something that can speak from the other side because being in South Africa and not being a Jewish artist myself means that I have to be involved in the community and try my best to show my support," he said.

upstART Galleries owners Jaclyn Ellert and Gila Abramson commissioned Gordon and Mnisi to create a collaborative art piece, titled *We Will Dance Again*, that will be auctioned off in commemoration of 7 October and to show the country that Israel cannot be broken.

Ellert and Abramson got Kerri-Lee Epstein and Nikki Fichardt, the heads of the Yeshiva



Treatwell Mnisi and Danit Gordon working on the 7 October commemorative artwork

Primary School parent teachers' association, on board. The idea was to display the artwork at the Yeshiva College campus and use it to raise funds for the school and Israeli charities.

The framed original artwork for this commission is being auctioned on WhatsApp, with bidding closing on 8 October. The reserve price is R18 000. A much larger iteration of the work will be painted on a central wall at the school that students and teachers will walk past every day.

Members of the community are also able to sponsor a block of the artwork, and while they won't be able to take their block home, they will get to keep an individual print of the work.

upstART Galleries' focus, said Ellert, is to

"empower artists and give them a platform to promote their work. We wanted to put a South African artist together with a Jewish artist and see what they would come up with.

"Being passionate about art as well as Israel, and watching what has been going on, we wanted to do something in some way to commemorate 7 October and partner with an institution that would appreciate it," Ellert said.

"The idea was to create an original piece inspired by 7 October and bring in both Dani and Treatwell's backgrounds to raise funds for the school and hostage charities," Ellert said.

Gordon and Mnisi's artwork contains the Israeli and Jewish community drawn in charcoal dancing beneath the canopy at

the Nova festival, with a large yellow ribbon flying over the top.

Said Gordon, "The canopy of the Nova festival represents *am Yisrael* [the nation of Israel]. So, you have soldiers, women, rabbis, and kids, and everyone is included because everyone was affected. Ultimately, we're one nation. It promotes the concept that as a nation, we will dance again, and we aren't broken."

Gordon, who is a self-taught make-up artist, doesn't primarily work with painting on canvas, but over the past few years, has turned her sights to painting watercolour and oil paintings.

"The piece is about hope," she said.

"It's not about brokenness. It recognises the brokenness and damage done to our community, but it's about looking forward and saying that we will dance again. Our community won't be broken."

Mnisi has two major solo shows under his belt and has previously worked with Ellert and Abramson. When asked to join the project, he jumped at the chance.

Said Gordon, "We spent a lot of time making many sketches and trying to put it all together. We cut out pieces of paper many times and just continued until eventually we got to a finished product, but it was a process of trying, persisting, and trusting our vision."

Said Mnisi, "The beautiful thing is that

we found common ground because I work with fluidic charcoal, and she works with watercolour, so it's liquid. We had to work to make these two mediums come together."

The piece was created in Gordon's home which greatly improved the creative process, Mnisi said. "I'm happy that it took place in a home. A home filled with love, a place where there are children, a husband, and a wife. Because that's exactly the kind of feeling, the integral substance, that we wanted to insert into the concept of the work."

Said Ellert, "It's nice to know that it started as just an idea and we didn't know where we wanted to take it in terms of being too literal about 7 October. The focus wasn't on devastation and destruction. It was on bringing hope and putting a positive spin on it."

Said Epstein, "We thought this was going to be a commemoration – that the hostages would be home and the war is over. We had no idea that we were going to be celebrating an anniversary still at war, so everybody's emotions have grown with this piece. At a soft launch of the project on 6 September, some [in the community] came and said, 'All we can see is the yellow ribbon'. Others said, 'All we can see is the community together'.

There's something in there for everybody, and every time you look at it, you see something different."

Right-wing intransigence takes heavy toll on Israel

OPINION

BEN LEVITAS



Like Tisha B'Av, 7 October will be a day seared in the memory of Jews. It evokes memory of the Holocaust as the largest calamity to befall the Jewish people since World War II and calls into question the adage, "Never Again!"

It has rent asunder Israeli society, which was already being torn apart by the mass street protests against judicial reforms before 7 October. Like then, the right-wing government led by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu seemed determined to ride roughshod over existing judicial structures to wrangle more control over the appointment of judges. This would ultimately tame the independence of the judiciary.

In spite of all the trauma of the street demonstrations and even the events of 7 October, Justice Minister Yariv Levin still appears determined to push ahead with these judicial reforms.

Since Hamas's cold-blooded assassinations of hostages Hersh Goldberg-Polin; Alexander Lobanov; Carmel Gat; Almog Sarusi; Eden Yerushalmi; and Ori Danino, the tempo and urgency of the street protests has only increased.

Hundreds of thousands of Israelis are blocking highways and even storming the Gaza border to try to influence Netanyahu to change his unyielding stance on the hostage negotiations. The axiom on all their placards is, "Bring them home NOW".

Sadly, the right-wing government appears to be unmoved by the pleas of the families and friends of the hostages and by the street protests. Instead, Netanyahu has doubled down on his demand that any hostage deal that doesn't incorporate all his redlines would be a victory for Hamas and a reward for it to continue to murder hostages.

This Solomonic dilemma between a hostage deal with a ceasefire as opposed to continuing the mission to destroy Hamas is rupturing Israeli society to its core and is unsustainable. Its resolution will ultimately require a political solution in which the prime minister will have to

come to an accommodation with a largely diminished but not completely eliminated Hamas.

The prime minister's resolute and uncompromising stance has also exerted a heavy price on Israel in the international sphere.

Relations between South Africa and Israel are at the lowest ebb ever. Diplomatic relations have been severed and embassies closed.

The South African government openly supports Hamas, and Hamas leaders are accorded red carpet treatment when they visit. Hamas has an unofficial embassy in the Bo-Kaap, and even charities like Gift of the Givers supports and sustains Hamas.

A number of South African universities have severed academic exchanges with Israeli universities. Even President Cyril Ramaphosa has appeared at events calling for Palestine to be free "from the river to the sea", unwittingly endorsing the total elimination of the Jewish state.

It's a shameful and poignant gesture that neither Ramaphosa nor his government have found it in their hearts to be able to condemn Hamas for its murderous actions on 7 October. Instead, they have accused Israel of committing genocide in Gaza, and launched a case against Israel in the International Court of Justice (ICJ).

Immediately after 7 October, then International Relations and Cooperation Minister Naledi Pandor led a delegation to Iran, where it's commonly believed that she received funding to launch the genocide case against Israel and finance for the African National Congress's 2024 election campaign.

Since launching the case, a host of other countries including Columbia and Turkey have indicated that they wish to join South Africa in the ICJ case.

The multifarious enemies of Israel know full well that nothing could be more hurtful to the Jewish state and its long-suffering people than the accusation of committing genocide. Even though the actions of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) in Gaza have resulted in a horrendous death

toll and great suffering, its actions can in no way be equated to a genocide.

The IDF has gone to unprecedented measures to move civilians out of harm's way, only to be accused of "forced migrations". When the IDF has used the "knock bomb", it has been accused of not giving occupants sufficient time to vacate.

When pamphlets have been dropped, fault has been found with the IDF's instructions. When the IDF succeeds against all odds, as is the case at present, in allowing for the vaccination of 650 000 children, it receives little to no recognition.

When every country including Israel's closest allies tried to persuade Israel not to enter Rafah, warning it of unleashing a "human catastrophe", and Israel succeeded beyond all imagination to relocate safely nearly one and a half million refugees, the press ignored this achievement.

Israel's closest allies have sung from the same hymn sheet, always cautioning it against any further attacks against Hamas for fear of causing more civilian casualties. The media war now portrays the war against Hamas as the "Gaza War", and Israel is now portrayed as committing genocide against the Palestinian people. This attempt to rewrite the narrative is so remorseless and persistent, Israel will forever be tarnished by it.

Israel is now facing an existential war on all its fronts. This has been likened to the "Second War of Independence", and its grinding persistence over nearly a year is weakening its economy and eliminating all sources

of income such as tourism and trade. Calling up all its reservists is knocking the ability of many of its companies to function.

The threatened reprisals by Hezbollah for the death of its top commander, Fuad Shukur, and by Iran for the death in Tehran of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh, are hanging over Israel like the sword of Damocles. They are further

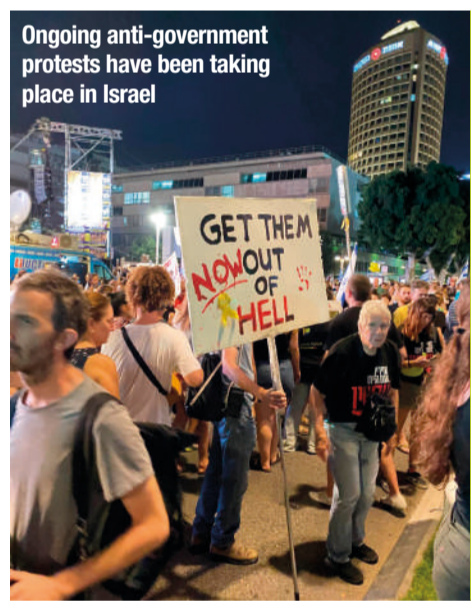
curtailing a return to normalcy for the people who have to stay within proximity to bomb shelters, and for the economy, with all major airlines halting flights to and from Israel.

America's resolve to stand by Israel if it's attacked by Iran speaks volumes for the success of American deterrence and offers a ray of light in an otherwise dreadful predicament.

After a year out of hell, Israel needs a return to normality and relative calm to allow its soldiers and people time to recover from their trauma.

Most of all, it needs a government that will hearken unto the needs of its populace and empathise with their suffering. It needs new elections that hopefully will lead to a government without extremists that represents those in Israel who want to achieve national reconciliation and peace with all the people in the Middle East.

• Ben Levitas holds a Bachelor of Arts from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem; a Master of Sciences from the London School of Economics; and a Master of Business Administration from the University of Pretoria. He is a three-term chairperson of the Cape Council of the South African Zionist Federation.



Ongoing anti-government protests have been taking place in Israel

curtailing a return to normalcy for the people who have to stay within proximity to bomb shelters, and for the economy, with all major airlines halting flights to and from Israel.

America's resolve to stand by Israel if it's attacked by Iran speaks volumes for the success of American deterrence and offers a ray of light in an otherwise dreadful predicament.

After a year out of hell, Israel needs a return to normality and relative calm to allow its soldiers and people time to recover from their trauma.

Most of all, it needs a government that will hearken unto the needs of its populace and empathise with their suffering. It needs new elections that hopefully will lead to a government without extremists that represents those in Israel who want to achieve national reconciliation and peace with all the people in the Middle East.

• Ben Levitas holds a Bachelor of Arts from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem; a Master of Sciences from the London School of Economics; and a Master of Business Administration from the University of Pretoria. He is a three-term chairperson of the Cape Council of the South African Zionist Federation.

ISRAEL PROPERTIES
BY STAMELMAN & PARTNERS

Large Selection of Options One Stop For All Your Real Estate Products & Services
Buy-Sell-Invest-Manage-Rent & Much More!

NETANYA

NEVE SHALOM

RAMAT BEIT SHEMESH ALEPH

TEL AVIV

JERUSALEM

Tel/WhatsApp: +972 50 446 9515 | www.israel-properties.com

SA musician's *Justice* gives anti-Israel hypocrisy the rap

ELKA COHEN

In a recently released single titled *Justice*, musician Joey Avinir (26) holds nothing back, expressing frustration at Israel being blamed, shamed, and silenced in its defence against terror and war crimes.

Avinir, a South African born and bred, Israel Defense Forces soldier, and Nova festival survivor, talks through his musical compilation about the fact that he shares this pain of betrayal with the nation of Jewish people. He sings of them having witnessed the truth being masked by mass media and carefully withheld from the rest of the world.

"My goal is for those who hear it and relate to it, to share it," Avinir told the *SA Jewish Report* this week. "I didn't record it to claim accolades; I want it to go viral for the sole purpose of spreading Israel's truth to as many people as possible."

Justice is an anthem for a heartbroken nation that highlights the powerful force of extremist propaganda. It's also a desperate plea for truth in a world shrouded by escalating antisemitism, and it's hitting a chord among many Jews worldwide.

Avinir's strong message is punctuated by anger, not least because he believes the nation's year-long plea for the right to exist has simply been ignored.

His personal experience of 7 October permeates every chord he plays. Fierce, fast-rhyming lyrics are hard-hitting, but the rage they hold is tenderly embraced by a deeply moving and melodic piano.

Avinir references Hitler's Nazi party's chief propagandist, Joseph Goebbels, who said, "If you tell a lie big enough and keep repeating it, people will eventually come to believe it."

"This is the reason I wrote the song," he says.

In the song, Avinir belts out a slew of examples of misinformation in mainstream media, "Hospital bombing you blamed it all, families were taken you praised it all, October the seventh, you tamed it all, shooting up lines to erase us all."

His truth-laden lyrics are interlaced by a gentle and catchy chorus, "They say it's gonna be alright, I know the world's full of lies, they think they're on justice side..."

Avinir's experience was a catalyst to writing the song, "A few hours after escaping the Nova festival, I arrived home only to receive an emergency call to be dispatched to the northern border as a reservist to defend Israel from further attack," he says.

"Through a frantic flurry of events that spanned hours, days, and weeks, I had no time to ingest my reality, to process any of it, or talk about what I was

experiencing. I just jumped from one traumatic experience to the next – from escaping Nova, to heading up north to high alert reports of more attacks, to loud ongoing



threats of rocket fire every day for more than a month."

Eventually symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder began to take hold and hinder Avinir's focus on the force. With encouragement from his commanding officer and the support of his unit, he made the

difficult decision to go home to recover. It was during this time that Avinir wrote *Justice*.

Seated alone in his studio behind his keyboard, Avinir was flooded by emotions that until that moment he had been unable to express.

"I had no plans or intention of writing a song," he says, "I just started playing two chords over and over again, and the floodgates opened. I screamed out all my frustration, everything that was in my head, everything I felt and experienced came rolling out over two chords I played repeatedly.

"I guess it was a therapeutic outburst that turned into a song," Avinir says.

"It's funny that in the genre of black rap culture where expressions of generational trauma and emotional and social hardships are told, here I am, this white, privileged Jewish South African Israeli, expressing [myself] in the very same way. But it's raw, true, authentic, and

honest. It opened me up to the powerful healing capacity of this genre."

Without the pressure of a complex music compilation, the song took shape within a few days. *Justice* now exists as an undeniable expression of the thoughts and feelings of a nation.

Says Avinir, "When I was confronted by mass media wrongfully translating the reality that I had experienced first-hand, I had no words for the anger and frustration I felt until I found them."

Avinir's lyrics in *Justice* appeal to ears who want to hear the truth: "They're not freedom fighters, they're liars, I've seen with my eyes." The rhymes are intricate and expressive, "I'm calling out all of the feminists, who stand on the side all anonymous. I'm calling out all of the activists who turned themselves over to populists. All the numbers you see in the papers, are my sisters and brothers, my neighbours. Fighting at war, trying to hold up the fort and your cameras are rolling, this can't be ignored."

The song was released in the same week news headlines

whispered of the "death of six Israeli hostages", with no inclination to describe the blood-soaked hands of the Hamas terrorists who perpetrated violent assassinations of the innocents one by one.

Says Avinir, "All eyes on Rafah" flooded Facebook, Instagram, and other social media platforms, but the silence was deafening when the world suddenly turned a blind eye to Rafah. Just another greatly guarded mistruth.

"So far, there has been a grateful response to the song from many Jews around the world. Israelis are thanking me for expressing it in English, saying it brings a closer connection and greater transparency from a Hebrew to English-speaking world. Many say it's a direct translation of how they feel."

The music video for *Justice* will be officially released on 7 October. It's a clean, meaningful, and understated production dedicated to the memory of Nitai Matodi (23), a close friend of Avinir's and a soldier who was murdered defending Israel during the week the song was released. Matodi was the son of Lara Matodi, also from a South African family of *olim*.

Jewish-Palestinian content creation? It's a complicated business

LEE TANKLE

An Israeli and a Palestinian content creator walk into a room in San Francisco. War doesn't break out, rather they engage in dialogue on how better to advocate for the lives of innocent people in the fight against Hamas.

This is the situation that ex-South African content creator Josh Buchalter found himself in when he attended the Nas Summit in San Francisco on 7 September, a conference started by Arab-Israeli vlogger and online influencer Nuseir Yassin, known to millions of followers as the founder of the popular online community *Nas Daily*. Buchalter was a delegate with Israel-Is and Talk Israel, organisations that prioritise the voices of Israelis on social media.

Yassin, born in the northern Israeli city of Arraba, grew up with conflicting views as a Muslim Palestinian living under the Israeli government with an Israeli passport. In 2016, after completing his studies at Harvard University and working in the global hi-tech industry, he decided to leave everything and travel the world. He started documenting his travels on his YouTube channel *Nas Daily* – "nas" means mankind – and it became one of the most popular channels on the platform, where he interacts with people he meets.

Nas Daily has amassed more than 4.4 million followers on Instagram, 22 million followers on Facebook, and 13.7 million followers on YouTube.

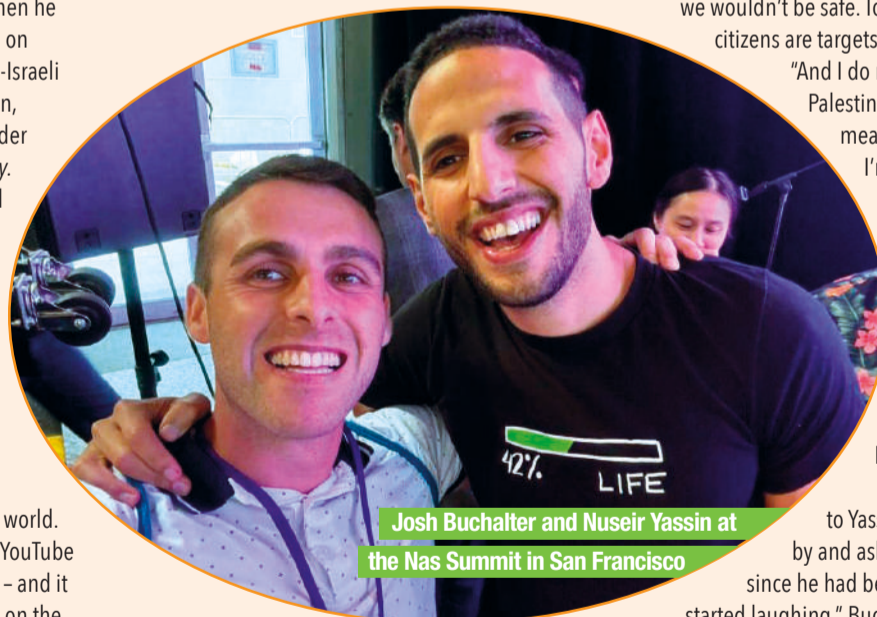
"My unique, controversial background helps me see things not many people can see," Yassin said in a video posted to his social media pages. He said in the video that he had been called a terrorist by a 15-year-old Jewish girl, had been attacked by an Israeli soldier, and had been stuck at checkpoints. He also said he had seen rockets fall on Israel, had hidden in bomb shelters with his Israeli friends, and had seen Jews fearing for their lives.

"Suffering, pain, and anger exist on both sides. No-one can deny that. This isn't a game where people get to pick sides. It's life and death."

With a combined one million views on his page,

Buchalter was lucky to be chosen as one of three content creators to attend the Nas Summit to network and see how they could spread the message further after growing his Instagram page post 7 October.

"Before 7 October, I had a private Instagram, but after seeing everything and knowing that I work in media, I thought I could help. So I turned my page almost into a *hasbara* [public diplomacy] account," said Buchalter.



Josh Buchalter and Nuseir Yassin at the Nas Summit in San Francisco

He was one of the lucky few to meet Yassin at the summit.

"Everyone was trying to get his attention," he said. "I used my networking skills and was able to ask good questions that maintained his attention. And then, obviously, that was converted into an actual photograph as well. Not everyone gets a photo with him. Not everyone gets to talk to him."

Buchalter didn't just want to network with Yassin and pick his business brain, he was also drawn to his background and outpouring of support for Israel in its fight against Hamas.

After Hamas attacked Israel and murdered more than 1 200 people, Yassin posted on X (formerly Twitter) which has since been shared by millions, "For the longest time, I struggled with my identity. A Palestinian

kid born inside Israel. Many of my friends refuse to this day to say the word 'Israel', and call themselves 'Palestinian' only. But since I was 12, that didn't make sense to me. So I decided to mix the two and become a 'Palestinian-Israeli'. I thought this term reflected who I was. Palestinian first. Israeli second.

"But after recent events, thoughts turned to anger. I realised that if Israel were to be invaded like that again, we wouldn't be safe. To a terrorist invading Israel, all citizens are targets."

"And I do not want to live under a Palestinian government," he said. "Which means I only have one home, even if I'm not Jewish: Israel. That's where all my family lives. That's where I grew up. That's the country I want to see continue to exist so I can exist."

He concluded his message with, "So, from today forward, I view myself as an 'Israeli-Palestinian'. Israeli first. Palestinian second."

While Buchalter was speaking to Yassin, someone from Iran walked by and asked Yassin if he would go to Iran since he had been to so many countries. "Nas started laughing," Buchalter said. "He's like, 'I travel on an Israeli passport. I'm an Israeli citizen. I would get arrested if I tried to come to Iran.'"

The pair spoke about content creation and what it takes to make compelling social media. "We talked about his summits and the benefits of giving creators an opportunity to network and learn from each other."

Buchalter came away from the conversation with a deeper understanding of Yassin. "His situation is complicated in a way that even as an Israeli South African Zionist, I don't understand what it's like for someone like him, born to Arab parents who identify as Palestinian who is trying to balance his Israeli identity. It's extremely complicated, and I think 7 October was a test for a lot of Arab Israelis. He set it straight, making it clear that he preferred living under Israeli leadership, that he was against Hamas. But at the same time, he's not going to disconnect from his Palestinian identity."



RAYMOND ACKERMAN
2010 Helen Suzman Lifetime
Achiever Award in honour
of Abe Abrahamson



Absa Jewish Achiever Awards 2024

25 YEARS Bookings Now Open

Sunday 17 November 2024 at 16:00

Table of 10 people
R50 000 ex VAT
or seats R5 000 ex VAT

BOOK NOW

bit.ly/jaabook

rsvp@sajewishreport.co.za

Britt 082 2929 520




TO GIVE. TO LOVE. TO LIVE.

In tumultuous world, Jews vote with their feet

OPINION

DAN BROTMAN



Last September, I wandered among the hundreds, if not thousands, of graves at the Jewish cemetery in Samarkand, Uzbekistan. The country's third-largest city is located on the ancient Silk Road, where a Jewish presence has been documented since the 12th century AD. In 1989, as the Soviet Union began to collapse, Samarkand had 35 000 Jewish residents. Today, there are fewer than 100, and the local synagogue is able to muster a minyan only when enough tourists are in town. Like Uzbekistan, many other Jewish communities experienced significant depopulation between 1970 and the present, driven by major political, social, and economic changes that resulted in mass migration.

Today, 85% of the 15.16 million Jews worldwide live in either the United States (US) or Israel, but this is a relatively recent phenomenon. On the eve of the Holocaust in 1939, 70% of the then 16.5 million Jews were concentrated in the US, Poland, and the Soviet Union, the only countries home to at least one million Jews. Just 10 years later, five million Polish and Soviet Jews had been murdered. At the same time, the establishment of Israel and mass immigration from Europe and the Arab world caused Israel's Jewish population to balloon from less than half a million in 1939 to 2.5 million by 1970. The largest Jewish communities were now in the US, Soviet Union, Israel, and France, the latter of which had risen to nearly half a million, partly due to mass Jewish immigration from North Africa in the 1960s.

As exemplified by Uzbekistan, the biggest shock to Jewish world demography was the fall of the Iron Curtain. Nearly two million Jews emigrated from the former Soviet Union, emptying the present countries of Moldova, Georgia, Uzbekistan, Belarus, Ukraine, and Lithuania of at least 90% of their Jewish populations. In 1970, the Soviet Union had the second-largest Jewish population at 2.62 million. Today, the Russian Federation ranks seventh, having lost 80% of its Jewish population, with only 150 000 Jews remaining. Other countries that lost 80% or more of their



Dan Brotman in conversation with the rabbi's wife inside the Gumbaz Synagogue in Samarkand, Uzbekistan

Jewish populations between 1970 and the present include Iran, Morocco, Ethiopia, and Romania.

Although there was a significant decline in Jewish populations in many countries from 1970 to 2021, there were also stories of growth. The most dramatic increase occurred in Germany, whose Jewish population grew nearly 300% between 1970 and 2021, largely due to the immigration of more than 200 000 Jews from the former Soviet Union to what had been a post-World War II community of just 30 000. Today, nine in 10 Jews in Germany speak Russian, and the country continues to receive newcomers from Israel.

Israel's Jewish population grew 166% between 1970 and 2021, and today, 17% of Israel's Jewish population was born in the former Soviet Union. Australia grew by more than 80% during the same period, largely due to the influx of nearly 30 000 Jewish immigrants from South Africa, the former Soviet Union,

and Israel.

In 1970, South Africa had 118 000 Jews, while Australia had just 65 000. Today, the situation has reversed: Australia now has 118 000 Jews, while South Africa's population has shrunk to 52 000, a decrease of nearly 60%. Similarly, Turkey has lost nearly 63% of its Jewish population since 1970 due to political changes that have made Jews uncertain about their future in the country.

Once sizeable Jewish communities in Latin America continue to shrink, primarily due to security and economic concerns. The 1970s was the era of the rise of military dictatorships in countries with large Jewish communities such as Argentina, Uruguay, and Chile. Since then, Argentina has lost nearly 40% of its Jewish population, while Chile and Uruguay have each lost nearly 50%. While many immigrated to Israel, tens of thousands settled in more stable North and Central American countries like the US, Panama, and Mexico. Smaller communities in Colombia and Venezuela, which had between 10 000 and 12 000 Jews in 1970, have faced periods of extreme political instability and violence, reducing their Jewish populations to only a few thousand each today.

Two years ago, I co-chaired a trip for young professionals to Miami, where we explored the impact of the tens of thousands of Latin American Jewish immigrants on Jewish life. We visited the Michael-Ann Russell Jewish Community Center in North Miami Beach, where more than 80% of its members are from Latin America. Right next door, the Brazilian Jewish community was building its own synagogue. Country clubs and sport forms an integral part of Latin American Jewish life, and these immigrants have recreated their

institutions in their new countries of residence.

Just last month, I was in Panama, one of the few Jewish communities in Latin America that is growing. The community is more than 90% Sephardic, mostly of Syrian origin, but has recently become a magnet for Venezuelan Jewish immigrants, many of whom are of Moroccan descent. Ashkenazi Jews from other Latin American countries are also immigrating to Panama, which boasts several dozen kosher restaurants, is the only country outside of Israel to have had two Jewish heads of state, and whose capital city currently has a 37-year-old Jewish mayor.

Today, only 9% of Jews live in Europe, primarily concentrated in Western Europe, whose Jewish populations – apart from Germany – continue to decline. Rising antisemitism, right-wing populism, and the longer-term impact of the Russia-Ukraine war could accelerate further demographic change on the continent. An indicator of European Jewish sentiment is that 38% of French Jews this year expressed the desire to immigrate to Israel.

When Jews get nervous about the future, they move in higher percentages than the general population. Today, 20% of Jews live outside their country of birth, compared to 3.6% of the global population. We aren't living at the end of history, and given the tumultuous times we live in, we cannot predict the impact of wars in Europe and the Middle East on Jews' sense of safety and opportunity. At the same time, further normalisation between Israel and the Gulf states and increased pressure on wealthy Asian countries with ageing workforces to encourage immigration could also lead to further demographic changes in the Jewish world.

For all you know, your great-grandchildren may be living in the thriving Jewish communities of Riyadh or Seoul.

• Dan Brotman is an immigration coach and is pursuing his Master of Science in International Migration and Public Policy at the London School of Economics. You can follow him on Instagram at @danbrotman.

Claiming EU ancestral citizenship possible but not straightforward

LEE TANKLE

Eastern Europe once had one of the world's largest Jewish populations, but it now ranks among the smallest.

Throughout its history, people from various communities left Europe in search of greener pastures or to escape murder or persecution. In recent years, many around the world have tried to reclaim their historic rights by gaining European citizenship.

Eva Hussain, the founder of translation and European Union (EU) citizenship services company Polaron, said half a billion people outside Europe had a claim to European ancestry but often didn't know where to start.

Hussain was born in Poland where her family was one of the last few surviving families who remained in the country after World War II. "My grandparents were in the Warsaw Ghetto. The rest of the family were in Poland. Many who did survive immigrated to Australia and America, but our family stayed."

In 1980, Hussain immigrated to Australia as a refugee due to the state of Poland at the time, so she's no stranger to the plight of immigration.

Polaron has assisted those who wish to reclaim their citizenship in various European countries since 2000. "Many people know that they have European ancestry, but they often have no way to prove it," she says.

"There are roughly 500 million people who qualify for European ancestry citizenship around the world, though most are in the Americas. For example, Poland has 38 million residents, but it also has roughly 22 million people who have

Polish citizenship and live outside of Poland," Hussain said.

Seventeen countries inside the European Economic Area offer EU citizenship, she said.

"Most countries allow dual citizenship, but don't recognise it. For example, Austria does allow dual citizenship, but it isn't recognised, meaning that if you are born in Austria and naturalised in another country, you lose your Austrian citizenship. Also in South Africa, if you are to acquire another country's citizenship, you need to apply for an exemption, which is easily given. But if you are born Polish because one of your parents was Polish, then you don't need to apply for an exemption.

"It's probably obvious, but many people want to have EU citizenship and access to the 27 EU member states because they want to have a Plan B," said Hussain, "Most of our clients are American, and at any given time, half of them aren't happy with the state of the country, so they like to have the option."

"We also need to understand what to do with citizenship," Hussain said. "For example, previously, if you had German citizenship and you wanted to naturalise in South Africa, you would lose your German citizenship."

Though some countries like Germany and Austria were reticent to allow dual citizenship, that's slowly changing, with both Germany and Austria introducing a category of citizenship for people who were subject to oppression by the Nazi regime, meaning that they don't have to be ethnically German or Austrian to be able to reclaim citizenship. "As long as the area was absorbed into the Third Reich, and you can prove

it, and you can prove that discrimination or oppression, Germany and Austria will give you citizenship," Hussain said.

However, in the case of Poland, since it was partitioned for 123 years and there was no Polish citizenship for a long time, there's another level for citizenship. Hussain said. "The first set of laws was introduced in 1920 for people that were in Poland but also for future generations, which is why it's termed 'citizenship through descent'. So, they not only get citizenship for the residents of Poland at the time, but also for people outside of Poland if they met certain criteria and future generations."

Similarly, Hussain said that if your ancestors lived in the former Czechoslovakia, you must prove where your family was from because that will determine if they are eligible for Czech or Slovakian citizenship, as it's not possible to have both.

She said depending on the country that you seek citizenship from, it can take a long time. "Generally speaking, for Poland, it's about 12 months, Germany 24 months, Czechia maybe about nine months. It depends on how many applications they get. Germany is quite blocked

up right now because it has been getting so many applications from across the world.

"Italy is the biggest diaspora, and it's difficult to get Italian citizenship, not because the laws are difficult or there's not enough generational history for

Italians, but because of the difficulty of getting an appointment at the consulate. In some countries, it takes up to five years to get an appointment," said Hussain.

One of the biggest barriers Hussain has experienced in helping people get dual citizenship is the fact that "there's no checklist that these governments give you. For example, in Poland and the

Czech Republic, there are key documents like your documents and the documents of your ancestors. That's because, when you think of your ancestors' journeys, they didn't each live with one document. In a way, they're making it flexible by saying, you know, we're not making this very prescriptive. On the other hand, they don't tell you what they need."

Hussain said that in terms of getting ancestral citizenship, "there's no generational limit. As long as you can provide evidence that it's your direct ancestor and you have documentation to prove it, you can start the process".



Eva Hussain speaking at the Johannesburg Holocaust & Genocide Centre on 5 September

By G-d's design: dressmaker's journey to Judaism

GILLIAN KLAWANSKY

From designing gowns for the upcoming Mrs Universe pageant to teaching sewing to religious schoolgirls, dress designer Talitah Helmand blends her love for fashion and Judaism. Also known as Tehila Chaya since she converted in 2022, she says her calling to the faith came in her dreams.

"I always felt strange where I was," says Helmand. "I felt like a square peg in a round hole." Yet when her dreams began to include Jewish symbolism including a chai necklace, she felt a strong calling to the religion. "I didn't know about the chai until I dreamt about it. I was so surprised to hear later that it meant life.

"I studied theology, and I was interested in the Torah," she says. "I was always attracted to Judaism. In my own spiritual life, it was like I was standing at Mount Sinai, and I saw the Jewish nation in front of me.

"My *neshama* [soul] was always there, but I wasn't. It was only when I came out of the mikvah, when I actually felt, 'I'm in Mount Sinai. I'm where I belong'. I came home."

Growing up in a religious Christian home, she says she always wanted to know the "real" creator, the one who created Shabbat and the fathers and mothers of Israel.

"It was only when I went through a divorce that I davened to Hashem and said, 'Please take me to your people, for these aren't my people.'" Though she came across Jewish

people, Helmand was never fully exposed to the religion. "When I approached the Beth Din, I knew this was where I belonged. So, I gave up everything and moved from the West Rand to the northern suburbs. It took me many years to find out what Judaism was really about, because you don't really know the intricacies, you just know that you belong there."

The conversion itself took Helmand just less than four years. During that time, her daughter also began the conversion process but ultimately decided she was too young to make the commitment. Unwavering, Helmand put her career as a successful designer aside to focus on her Jewish journey. While she admits it was difficult, she says it wasn't really a sacrifice. "I just knew I had to go, and I couldn't take my business – a bridal studio – with me when I moved. There was too much stuff to bring to Joburg, and all I wanted was to come and learn."

During her move, she learned of a business initiative aimed at generating income for Jewish food fund Yad Aharon & Michael in the pages of the *SA Jewish Report*. She ultimately donated the contents of her store to this campaign. Though most of her time was dedicated to Jewish studies, Helmand also worked for Yad Aharon's former managing director, Alice Friedman.

Today, in addition to reviving her bridal boutique, Talitah Couture, where she handmakes original wedding gowns, Helmand also teaches dressmaking. During her conversion, which she completed almost two years ago, Helmand was asked to teach sewing to young girls in the Jewish community. This opened the door to a job teaching at a local cheder.

She has also continued to build up clientele through her work in fashion design, which led her to the Mrs Universe South Africa pageant.

"This is the second year that I'll be dressing the winner competing in the Mrs Universe pageant, due to take place in South Korea from 2 to 10 October," she says. "She'll be wearing two of my gowns."



Talitah Helmand (Tehila Chaya)

After matriculating at 17, Helmand studied fashion design. During her studies, she entered and won a competition and was subsequently asked by a successful designer to design matric farewell dresses. "I was only 18, and I was already in her business making evening wear for boutiques. I eventually also began making wedding dresses and, through an agent, expanded my work to Cape Town."

Helmand later opened a bridal studio at Oakfield Farm along the wedding mile in Muldersdrift, which progressively grew. She also started an online shop making linen and bedding, which she closed upon embarking on her conversion.

Helmand is planning to create more sewing

classes for the Jewish community. "Most of the girls are religious, so I teach them fashion skills in a safe environment, because they don't really have phones or use the internet." She's therefore writing a book and recording some videos to give the girls resources. "They make their own Shabbos and festival clothes. It's absolutely amazing to see how from a very young age, they are creating their own gowns."

While she's contemplated making aliya, Helmand says she loves this community and her students. "My daughter doesn't live with me and Hashem is giving me comfort through interaction with these young girls. Their laughter and brightness is something I could never exchange."

Helmand loves infusing modesty into her bridal gowns, and dresses a growing number of women in the community. She also makes dresses for *Droom Troue* (Dream Weddings) broadcast on Afrikaans digital television network NET Afrikaans that follows couples' journeys to becoming husband and wife. "I think I've made about 80 dresses for it alone in the past two years," she laughs. "I work alone under extreme pressure, but I'm used to it. I'm focused on my creations."

In creating her Jewish identity, Helmand says she always knew that the name "Chaya" would be included in her Hebrew name. This was in recognition of her dream about the chai necklace. Yet Tehila came as a surprise.

"Before my conversion, I asked Hashem what my name would be and for him to send me someone to help with this. After some time, I had a phone call one day and the lady at the other end said she really liked the name 'Tehila' because it sounded like a flower. It just grew on me, and so I became Tehila Chaya."



Mrs Universe South Africa Monique Weyers in a dress designed by Talitah Helmand

'From river to sea' not always hate, Meta rules

ASAF ELIA-SHALEV – JTA

Pro-Israel groups decried a ruling by Meta's independent oversight body on 4 September that social media posts containing the phrase "from the river to the sea", a longstanding Palestinian rallying cry, shouldn't be automatically removed.

The Oversight Board, a Meta-funded panel made of experts and lawyers overseeing content moderation for Facebook and Instagram, ruled that the phrase can continue to be used as an expression of solidarity with Palestinians as long as it's not accompanied by calls for violence, praise for dangerous organisations, or what company policy considers hate speech.

In its ruling, the board said that because the phrase can have multiple meanings, the context in which it is used must be considered.

"While it can be used by some to encourage and legitimise antisemitism and the violent elimination of Israel and its people, it's also used as a political call for solidarity, equal rights, and self-determination of the Palestinian people, and to end the war in Gaza," the board said.

The slogan is a reference to the land between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea encompassing the state of Israel and Palestinian territories. It has proven popular in pro-Palestinian messaging online and at in-person demonstrations. In the six months following the war's outbreak, Facebook experienced a 50-fold increase in the use of the phrase, according to the Oversight Board.

The Anti-Defamation League (ADL), which regards the phrase as an inherently antisemitic attack on Jewish existence in Israel, called the Oversight Board's conclusion "short-sighted".

"Usage of this phrase has the effect of making members of the Jewish and pro-Israel community feel unsafe and ostracised. There are many ways to advocate for Palestinian justice and rights, including a Palestinian state, without resorting to using this hateful phrase, which denies the right of the state of Israel to exist," the ADL wrote.

Another advocacy group, the Combat Antisemitism Movement, took a more directly critical view of the issue, attacking the board and its rationale. The group argued that the phrase is a "violent call to genocide" in a white paper when the board solicited input about the issue in May.

"It shows conscious bias that some on the Meta Oversight Board use twisted logic and verbal contortions to protect antisemites," said Sacha Roytman, the group's chief executive.

The Oversight Board's ruling noted that a minority dissented from the decision based on the fact that the phrase appears in the 2017 charter of Hamas, a group designated by Meta as a dangerous organisation.

The minority believed that content moderators should default to presuming the slogan represents a "glorification of Hamas, a designated organisation, and be removed unless it's clear that the content using the phrase doesn't endorse Hamas and its aims", according to the Oversight Board.

The South African Board of Jewish Education invites dynamic and motivated applicants for the position of

Educational Psychologist

King David High School Linksfield seeks to appoint an experienced Educational Psychologist.

The essential qualities, skills and requirements for the position are:

- Professional registration with the HPCSA.
- Specialisation in his/her field with Remedial experience.
- The role will include, but is not limited to Psycho-educational assessments, Individual therapy, social skills groups, parent guidance, meeting attendance, consultations with teachers, therapists and parents.
- Experience in curriculum support.
- Develop and implement learning plans for learners with barriers.
- A good understanding of accommodations, differentiation and mainstream curriculum for the appropriate Grades.
- Patience, empathy, and a genuine desire to help students overcome their challenges.
- Create a warm and patient classroom environment to encourage student engagement and confidence.
- Monitor and assess student progress, adjusting teaching strategies as needed.
- Exhibit excellent communication and classroom management skills.
- Be able to use and integrate technology into the classroom where appropriate.
- Required to work collaboratively with the school's multi-disciplinary team of therapists and teachers in order to address the learning, emotional and social needs of our learners.
- Demonstrate high levels of professionalism, competency and initiative.
- Prepared to embrace the ethos of a Jewish Day School.

A Curriculum Vitae, cover letter and contact information of three referees should be e-mailed to: rosenfeldeb@sabje.co.za. The school reserves the right to contact short listed candidates.

CLOSING DATE FOR APPLICATIONS: 30 SEPTEMBER 2024
EFFECTIVE DATE: 28 OCTOBER 2024

King David Schools are a network of Jewish day schools offering pre-primary through to high school education across five campuses in Johannesburg. Our purpose is to instil Jewish values, deliver exceptional education and inspire a life of purpose

In line with POPIA (Protection of Personal Information Act), King David will attempt to ensure the confidentiality of all applicants for this role. All reasonable measures will be in place to protect personal information but will be used in the recruitment, selection, and reporting process. By submitting your application for this position, you are recognising and accepting this disclaimer.

NESHAMA KOACH EXCELLENCE CREATIVITY COMMUNITY TORAH & ISRAEL

King David's got talent, Culture Fest shows

HANNA RESNICK

Students who excel in the arts have "their moment to shine" at the King David High Schools annual Culture Fest, said head of culture at King David Linksfield, Claudia Caldeira.

King David High School Linksfield (KDL) and Victory Park held their Culture Fests this month, with Victory Park's festival running from 1 to 8 September, and Linksfield's from 8 to 11 September.

They celebrate students who dedicate their time to the plethora of cultural subjects and extracurricular activities offered by the schools.

"These kids deserve a space to showcase skills that they work on every single day, whether it's practising musical instruments, writing, or performance. This hard work isn't always recognised," said Caldeira. Additionally, the experience of participating in cultural activities such as public speaking or debating gives students

"skills that will be incredibly valuable in their future lives and careers", she said.

Sunday's market and talent showcase was a highlight of the event at Linksfield. The student-run market boasted stalls with various snacks and activities such as water balloon painting, pot plant decorating, and face painting. At the centre of it all was live outdoor entertainment from KDL's Got Talent Showcase, which featured four bands formed by students across the grades, singers, solo musicians, poetry readings, and a duet from King David's own Mrs Debra Mizrachi and Mr Peter Szewach. Just next to the market, inside The Studios, improv and public speaking activities were held, as well as an art, pottery, and photography installation.

After the market, parents and students were invited to watch a

performance of Tom Stoppard's *Dogg's Hamlet*, which was originally directed and performed by the students at this year's Festival of Excellence in Dramatic Arts, at which it won merit certificates for comedy

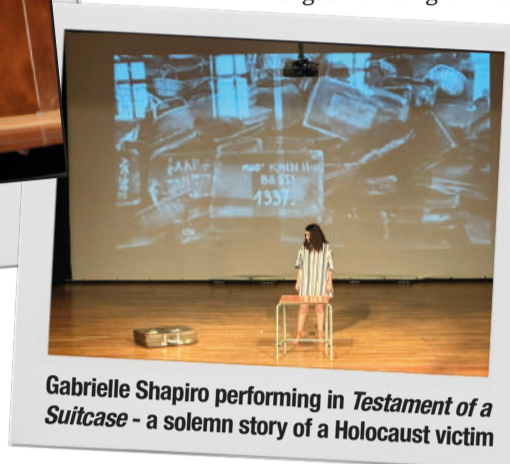


Festival of Excellence in Dramatic Arts performance of *Dogg's Hamlet*

(full cast); directing (Grey Kerem); sound (Ethan Atie); and costume and styling (Leah Kerr-Phillips). The short, absurdist piece plays with language, particularly the perception among some students that understanding Shakespeare is like trying to learn a different language. The first section of the play is performed in a made-up language, known as Dogg, which gives completely different meanings to arbitrary English words. Then, the characters perform a highly condensed version of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, comedically highlighting the

most well-known quotes and intense dramatic moments, and for the first time, the audience can understand the language in the play.

On Monday evening, the school hosted a one-act play competition, featuring six short plays selected or written by the students themselves, who were then given full creative control over direction, props, set, and lighting. The performances ranged from single



Gabrielle Shapiro performing in *Testament of a Suitcase - a solemn story of a Holocaust victim*

soliloquist to full comedy ensembles, covering a diverse variety of subject matter from blind dates and school science fairs to a solemn story of a Holocaust victim, to depictions of marriage and family. The winning play of the evening was *No Signal*, an original story that painted the picture of a family in crisis – the crisis being their momentary loss of Wi-Fi connection. Most audience

members could relate to its chaotic sibling dynamics or frantic Facebook mom. Other awards such as best actors, direction, and set design were announced, and each play received encouraging feedback from the adjudicator.

The "Praat Afrikaans of Hou Jou Bek" eisteddfod was held at King David Victory Park on 10 September. Each Afrikaans class from Grades 8 to 10 at KDL prepared a poem, and competed against each other.

"We like to include the eisteddfod as part of our Culture Fest because it incorporates one of our national languages with cultural activities," said Caldeira. "It's something that our Afrikaans teachers are really passionate about, and it allows them to bring a bit more fun into the subject."

The final activity of the Culture Fest was "Model UN" debating, in which groups of students are allocated different countries and tasked with debating various issues.

In the King David Victory Park Culture Fest, teachers shared their flair in Teachers Got Talent. There was a mixed martial arts workshop and an afternoon with Banyana Banyana goalkeeper Kaylin Swart. They held a *Mamma Mia* Movie Night and had a Clash of the Titans wrestling event, among other fabulous, unique, and fun events.

ANDREA'S ATTIC BUYS

Old Jewellery, Old Coins and Antique Hallmarked Silver Items

Fair and Friendly Buyer
I Come To You!

083 760 0482 • andrea.attic@gmail.com

JOB OPPORTUNITY FOR HEBREW SPEAKERS!

Call Centre Administrator (Israeli-based company)

- Work from home (in South Africa)
- Full-day position (8am- 4pm)
- Native Hebrew required
- Basic computer skills required

Email CV : david@maxiprop.co.il
WhatsApp: +972 58 697 5016

הזדמנות עבודה מהבית לדוברי עברית!

מנהל/ת מוקד טלפוני (חברה בארץ)

- * עבודה מהבית (בדרום אפריקה)
- * משרה מלאה (ראשון - חמישי)
- * שעות המשרד: 8:00 עד 16:00
- * חובה עברית שפת אם
- * מיומנות מחשב בסיסית נדרשות

קורות חיים במייל : david@maxiprop.co.il
WhatsApp: +972 58 697 5016

King David completes inaugural Hebrew enrichment programme

King David Schools celebrated the completion of its Hebrew teaching programme on 8 September, spearheaded by Mazal Sacks, and with the deep experience of teachers Hannah Ben Moshe and Hana Makori.

The programme, titled "Hebrew: now is the time", was launched in May 2023 by King David Schools to grow capacity for teaching Hebrew across the school body and to ensure a sustainable teaching pipeline for the future by providing high-level Hebrew training to current and potential Hebrew teachers across the community.

The schools believe Hebrew to be central to the South African Jewish community, offering a core thread



Dani Nerwich and Mazal Sacks

globally, connecting and uniting Jews through time, space, and history, cementing Jewish identity and pride.

The programme was offered to all eligible teachers in the community, and covered rich and relevant content including Hebrew literature, poetry, Tanach, Pirkei Avot, and by all accounts was a monumental step forward in the uplifting and empowering of Hebrew teachers across the community.

Sunday's event paid tribute to the participants for their commitment and their critical role in the South African Jewish community.

Letters

MUSLIM LEADER'S HAMAS ALLEGIANCE A THREAT TO JEWS

I'm sure that like many others, I was alarmed to read the report which appeared in the *SA Jewish Report* on 5 September 2024, headed, "Top SA leader says 'I am Hamas'", in which it was stated that the president of the Muslim Judicial Council (MJC), Sheikh Riad Fataar, told a crowd in the middle of the Mother City, "I am Hamas! Cape Town is Hamas! Viva Hamas, viva!".

Coming from the mouth of the president of the MJC and religious head of the Muslim community, it occurs to me that the words used and the manner in which they were communicated could cause Muslim extremists to take matters into their own

hands to kidnap innocent Jews, hold them hostage, and violently assault and kill them as has happened in Gaza.

It further occurs to me that this kind of rhetoric amounts to hate speech as defined in the Prevention and Combating of Hate Crimes and Hate Speech Act 16 of 2023 assented to on 6 May 2024, as defined in Sections 3 and 4 of the Act, and that as such, the South African Jewish Board of Deputies should at the highest level possible proffer criminal charges against Fataar as a matter of urgency.

- Leslie Kobrin, Johannesburg

Sunday 15 September

- Chevrah Kadisha Social Services hosts a talk by Rabbi Shalom Hammer on *The Anguish of Suicide*. Time: 10:15. Contact: socialservices@jhbchev.co.za
- Yeshiva College - Mizrachi Shul hosts a talk by Rabbi Shalom Hammer on *Your Child's Mental Resilience Unlocked*. Time: 14:30. Donation: R100
- Second Innings hosts a Rosh Hashanah talk by Rabbi Jonathan Fox. Time: 09:45. Cost: R50 (R20 members). Contact: 082 561 322

- The Union of Jewish Women hosts its musical concert *What the World Needs Now* directed by Vicky Friedman. Time: 15:00. Cost: R260. Contact: info@ujw.co.za or 011 648 1053

Monday 16 September

- The *SA Jewish Report* hosts webinar *Faith & Pain* with Rabbi Doron Perez and Hostage Aviva Siegel. Time: 20:00. Register: bit.ly/jrlive173



Schoub's book reveals pandemic's prize fighter: the NICD

Professor Barry Schoub, most recently at the forefront of South Africa's fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, was behind the establishment of the National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD). He has now written a book titled, *Fighting an Invisible Enemy: The Story of the National Institute for Communicable Diseases*. The SA Jewish Report speaks to him.

What inspired you to write this book?

Three motivations. First, since time immemorial, the public has been frightened, overawed, and even bewitched by the great plagues of yesteryear. The recent devastating COVID-19 pandemic similarly brought back the fascination and fear. It was therefore now an appropriate time to talk about the country's NICD.

Second, the colourful history of the NICD itself makes for a good read while also being a needed historical document.

Last and most importantly, there was an important public health motivation – communication with the public. Community buy-in and support are crucial for the control of outbreaks.

What's your relationship with the NICD? What does it mean to you?

In November 1995, as director of its predecessor institute, the National Institute for Virology (NIV), I started urging the department of health to establish a NICD. This became a reality with the advent of the National Health Laboratory Service (NHLS), an important component of the new democratic government's health plan.

Accordingly, Dr Nicholas Crisp, currently a deputy director-general of health, and I sat together for several months in the late 1990s planning and assembling the nuts and bolts of both the NHLS and the NICD. Both were born in early 2002, and I was appointed founding executive director of the NICD. I retired in 2011.

Having been the "father" of that worthy institute, I've watched with considerable pride how the NICD has grown into a major global player in the control of epidemics and pandemics.



IT HAS BEEN A PRIVILEGE AND A PLEASURE WORKING WITH SUCH A MAGNIFICENT TEAM AS THE NICD. I'M PROUD OF THE ENTIRE PERSONNEL OF THE INSTITUTE, PAST AND PRESENT.

Why is this institute so important to South Africa?

Pandemics and epidemics of infectious diseases still feature among the 10 biggest threats to the future of humanity, according to think tanks such as the World Economic Forum. In South Africa and on the African continent, infectious diseases are still the foremost cause of death and disability.

The NICD therefore has a special responsibility to be a sentinel for the early detection of impending outbreaks, to monitor the spread of infectious diseases, and to chart the effectiveness of control measures. Accordingly, NICD laboratories were appointed by the World Health Organization (WHO) to serve as collaborating and regional reference centres, spanning the full spectrum of infectious diseases.

What are its most important findings?

Suffice it to say that many hundreds of publications in prestigious highly cited international scientific publications attest to the quality of the research.

What would you say has been its most notable work over the past 10 years?

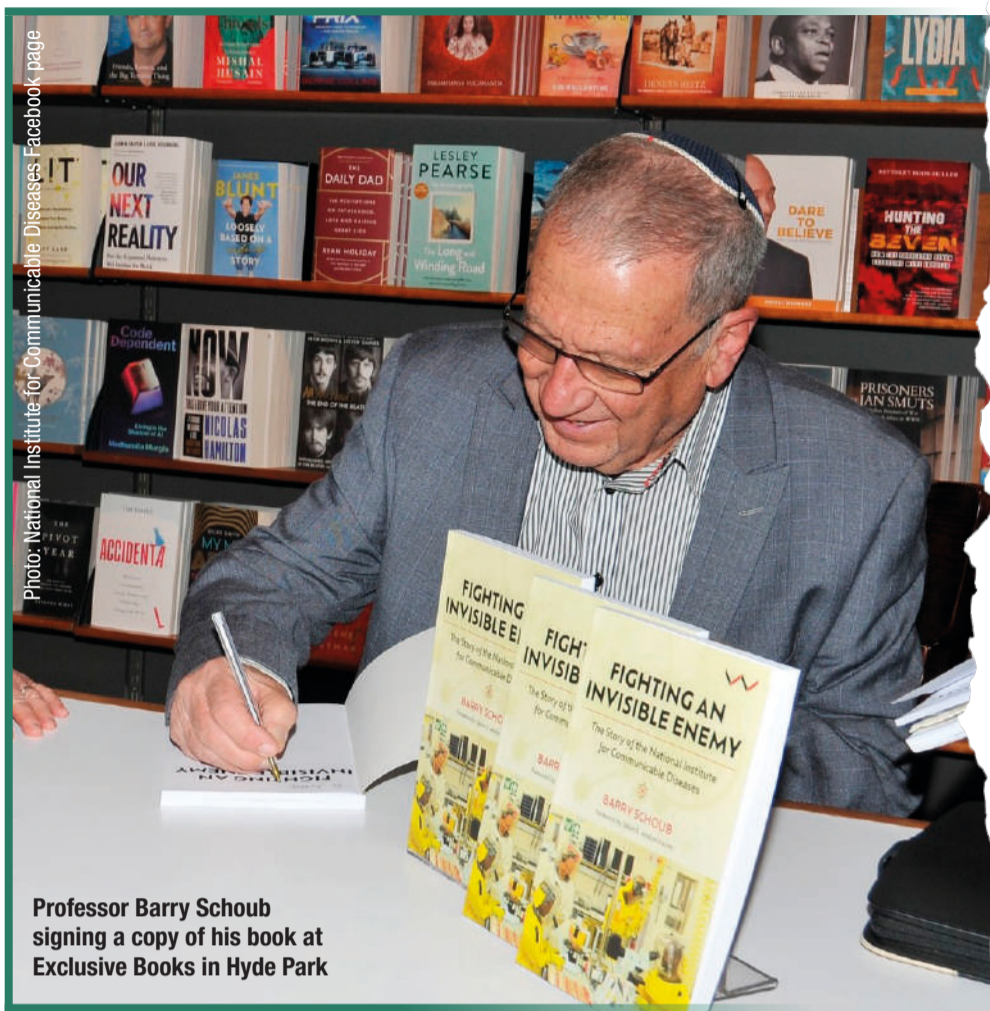
As one example of notable work, I could mention the Special Pathogens Unit. It operates the only maximum-security laboratory on the continent, and plays a key role in outbreaks of Viral Haemorrhagic Fever in Africa and further afield. In addition to laboratory diagnostic support, expeditionary teams assist in some of the most inhospitable places in the world.

These outbreaks have been fearsome in their virulence. For example, 82% mortality in the 1998 Marburg outbreak in Durba in the Democratic Republic of the Congo; and 88% in Uige in Angola in 2005.

What are you most proud of?

The major responsibility of the institute – the surveillance and monitoring of communicable diseases – developed from humble beginnings.

While the NICD commenced life with strong laboratory support from its two predecessor institutions, the NIV



Professor Barry Schoub signing a copy of his book at Exclusive Books in Hyde Park

and the SAIMR (the South African Institute for Medical Research), the critical epidemiology and surveillance responsibility was created *de novo* (from the beginning). It started off as a simple viral watch programme with a retired general practitioner and two nursing sisters tracking influenza within a network of local collaborating doctors and clinics.

Today, the epidemiology of infectious diseases in the country and beyond is an extensive and highly complex operation employing, inter alia, sophisticated mathematical modelling tools for alerting, charting, and measuring outbreaks and epidemics.

Importantly, there's regular communication with the profession; the authorities, locally and internationally; and the public.

What did the NICD do during the COVID-19 pandemic?

The years of the COVID-19 pandemic consumed much of the resources of public health institutions throughout the world, and the NICD was no exception.

Fortunately, the NICD had built up particularly strong molecular and immunological capabilities from AIDS research programmes. Within a few weeks of the first case landing in South Africa in March 2020, the institute had developed its own in-house molecular diagnostic test, which enabled the spread of the infection to be studied early on.

The outbreak was charted using surveillance tools such as clinical specimens and monitoring wastewater for virus load in the community and as an early warning signal of the emergence of new variants and subvariants. Thus, the NICD, as part of the Network for Genomic Surveillance consortium, alerted the world to the advent of two of the five variants of SARS-CoV-2 – the Beta variant in December 2020, and the current Omicron variant in November 2021.

While it seems so long ago, what was the NICD's role in countering HIV-AIDS?

In early 1987, even before HIV had reached South African shores to any significant extent, the Medical Research Council of South Africa established the AIDS Virus Research Unit in the NICD. This unit grew into the largest research unit in the institute.

One of the most important surveillance programmes of the NICD is the annual study of the prevalence of HIV in pregnant persons. The study, involving more than 37 000 pregnant persons from more than 1 500 public health antenatal clinics in all 52 health districts, annually measures the extent of HIV in the South African population. About 30% of these women are found to be HIV positive, making South Africa the country with the largest population of people living with HIV in the world.

What were the toughest issues the NICD faced?

Undoubtedly, the major constraint facing public health institutions like the NICD is financial. Though research programmes are largely funded by local and international sources, the more fundamental financial support takes the form of salaries. It remains a constant challenge to retain qualified scientific staff in a highly competitive environment.

Who have you written this book for?

The book is primarily for a general audience. It's not meant to be a scientific text. For that, there's more than ample biomedical literature. Of course, I anticipate that there will be much interest from members of the medical and allied professions, many of whom have been taught by members of staff of the institute.

What do you want them to take home and why?

A major contribution to the control of outbreaks and pandemics is buy-in and support from the public. This has to be grounded in reliable, scientifically based evidence.

Unfortunately, the potentially malevolent influence of mass communication and a not-always responsible media, what the WHO has dubbed "the infodemic", has been a serious potential threat to public health. The damage from public hostility is graphically illustrated by the resounding success of the earlier smallpox eradication campaign as against the current frustrating inability to reach the goal of polio eradication.

What are you doing now?

I keep abreast of the ever-expanding scientific/medical literature in my field as I continue to be consulted informally. I have also developed other non-medical interests, probing the fields of religion and philosophy of religion.

Looking back, who are you most proud of and why?

As I wrote in my dedication to the book, it has been a privilege and a pleasure working with such a magnificent team as the NICD. I'm proud of the entire personnel of the institute, past and present.

south african
Jewish Report
The source of quality content, news and insights
www.sajr.co.za

FAITH & PAIN:

SOUTH AFRICANS IN THE CROSSHAIRS

RABBI DORON PEREZ & HOSTAGE AVIVA SIEGEL

MONDAY 16 SEPTEMBER AT 20:00 SAST
Register NOW: bit.ly/jrlive173

IN ASSOCIATION WITH

Paralympics completes season of success for Jewish athletes

JACOB GURVIS – JTA

The 2024 Paris Paralympics concluded on Sunday, 8 September, bringing to an end a season full of athletic success for Jewish and Israeli competitors on the international stage.

Weeks after at least 21 Jewish athletes won a total of 18 medals at the Olympics, 15 Jewish and Israeli Paralympians racked up 13 medals of their own.

Israel won 10 medals – four gold, four bronze, and two silver – its first double-digit medal count since the 2004 Athens Games. Swimmer Ami Dadaon led the way with four medals of his own, including two golds. Israel's victories came as the country weathered tragedy and political upheaval at home.

For the United States, track and field star Ezra Frech enjoyed a breakout performance, winning golds on back-to-back days, the first two medals in a career he told NBC he hoped would make him “the greatest Paralympian of all time”.

Gold medallists

Ami Dadaon: two gold, one silver, one bronze

Dadaon led all Jewish Paralympians by medalling in four of his five events, bringing his career total to seven. Dadaon, 23, won gold in both the men's 100m freestyle S4 disability class and the men's 200m freestyle S4. He set a new Paralympic record during heats for the 100m, an event in which he also owns the world record for his disability classification.

Dadaon, a Haifa native who was born with cerebral palsy, also won silver in the men's 150m individual medley SM4, and bronze in the men's 50m freestyle S4. Dadaon had entered the 50m competition with the world record, but it was topped in Paris by the gold medallist, Canada's Sebastian Massabie. In his fifth event, the men's 50m breaststroke SB3, Dadaon finished fifth.

Ezra Frech: two gold medals

United States track and field standout Ezra Frech won his first-ever Paralympic medals, both gold, in the men's 100m T63 and the high jump T63. Frech, 19, who was born without a left knee and shinbone and with only one finger on his left hand, captured the 100m gold in dramatic fashion, beating the German silver medallist by two hundredths of a second.



The following day, Frech won gold in the high jump. He had previously broken his own world record in the event during the US Paralympic trials in July. His 1.94m jump in Paris topped the Indian silver medallist by .06m, and set a new Paralympic record. With that jump, Frech was .03m shy of his world record of 1.97m.

After winning two gold medals in Paris, Frech has his sights set even higher for the 2028 Games, which will take place in his hometown of Los Angeles. Frech said he hoped to earn what he calls the “triple crown” – winning gold in the long jump, high jump, and 100m sprint. Frech finished fifth in the long jump in Paris.

Moran Samuel

Israeli rower Moran Samuel captured her first career Paralympic gold, and third medal overall, in the PR1 women's single sculls. Samuel, 42, suffered a spinal stroke in 2006, paralyzing her lower body. “It's a privilege to be here in this bubble at the Paralympic Games, and to finish with a gold medal. And to be able to scream the anthem from deep inside me is a moment I'll never forget in my life,” Samuel told the Israeli broadcaster Sport5 after her win.

Asaf Yasur

Martial artist Asaf Yasur was the first Israeli athlete to medal in Paris, winning a gold in the men's 58kg K44 taekwondo competition. He defeated Turkish opponent Ali Can Ozcan by a score of 19-12 in the gold medal match after winning his quarterfinal and semifinal matches 23-6 and 16-6, respectively.

Yasur, 22, is a two-time world champion who made his Paralympic debut this summer. Both of Yasur's hands were amputated when he was 13 years old after an electrocution accident.

Silver medallists

Israel's women's goalball team

Israel's six-member team won a silver medal in women's goalball, a handball-style sport for visually impaired athletes. The Israeli team fell to Turkey in the gold medal match after beating Canada in the quarterfinal and China in the semifinal. The team included Lihi Ben David, 28; Gal Hamrani, 31; Elham Mahamid, 34; Noa Malka, 21; Or Mizrahi, 31; and Roni Ohayon, 25.

The silver medal is Israel's first in goalball as well as its first Paralympic medal in a team sport since 1988. Several members of the goalball team wore yellow ribbons in their hair during the semifinal match, a sign of solidarity with Israeli hostages, according to the *Times of Israel*.

Bronze medallists

Mark Malyar

Israeli swimmer Mark Malyar won his fourth career Paralympic medal in Paris, a bronze in the men's 100m backstroke S8. Malyar, 24, who was born with cerebral palsy, had won two gold medals and a bronze in Tokyo. Malyar, whose brother, Ariel, also competed in Paris, finished just 1.84 seconds behind the Spanish gold medallist and just 0.39 seconds behind the Japanese silver medallist.

Shahar Milfelder and Saleh Shahin

Israeli rowers Shahar Milfelder and Saleh Shahin paired up to win their first Paralympic medals in the PR2 mixed double sculls.

Milfelder, 26, is a native of Moshav Beit Yitzchak in Israel who was diagnosed with a rare and serious form of bone cancer at 15 and had part of her pelvis removed. After their bronze medal win, she said she was thinking about the families of the six hostages who were confirmed dead only hours earlier.

“We had in mind to give pride to the country,” Milfelder said, according to the Israeli news site *Mako*. “I cried in the morning from the hard news, and now I cry from the good news and send the biggest hug I can to the families of the hostages and to all the citizens of the state of Israel.”

Shahin, 41, is a Druze Israeli who was

injured in a 2005 terrorist attack while serving in the Israeli army. He called representing Israel “a great honour, but it's also a huge responsibility.”

Guy Sasson

Just three months after he won his first career Grand Slam at the 2024 French Open, Israeli wheelchair tennis player Guy Sasson returned to the same stadium to win his first career Paralympic medal, a bronze in the wheelchair tennis quad singles tournament. Sasson, 44, beat Turkey's Ahmet Kaplan 5-7, 6-4, 6-1 in the bronze medal match.

“It was a match full of emotion and energy, and I imagine that it will set in soon that I'm an Olympic medallist,” Sasson told the Israeli news site Sport5 after his win.

“If I managed to make people watching at

home a little happy, especially the families of the fallen and the hostages, if this hope and this joy can give them a small smile on their faces, then I think we've done our part.”

Ian Seidenfeld

American table tennis star Ian

Seidenfeld won his second career Paralympic medal in Paris, a bronze in the men's singles MS6 competition. He had won gold in Tokyo.

Seidenfeld, 23, won his round of 16 and quarterfinal matches before losing in the

semifinal. The Lakeville, Minnesota native, who was born with Pseudoachondroplasia dwarfism, is coached by his father Mitchell Seidenfeld, a three-time Paralympian and four-time medallist.



Ian Seidenfeld in action at the men's singles MS6 semi-final at the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games

Joburg judo's 'Sensei Irv' turns 80

SAUL KAMIONSKY

Well-known South African judo teacher Irving Ginsberg, whose life-long passion had him mentoring countless judokas from all backgrounds, celebrated his 80th birthday on 3 September.

Ginsberg, who stopped teaching judo only just before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, had a small birthday party at Sandringham Gardens in Johannesburg. “In November, after the *chaggim*, we will have a huge bash and a tribute with all his pupils,” his daughter, Shayne Wolovitz, says.

Ginsberg's dojos ran for 58 years, so he can only imagine how many judokas came through them. He produced Springbok judoka and judoka with provincial colours. Shane Goldsmith, for example, who says his life was largely influenced by ‘Sensei Irv’, won two South African judo championships and a medal at the Maccabi Games.

Ginsberg even taught people who couldn't pay for lessons, says Wolovitz, a judoka herself until breaking her knee at the age of 16. “All he wanted to do was teach people, inspire them, and spread love. He would bring the Torah into his sessions. He taught people of every race and denomination. He didn't care who you were.”

Ginsberg had a challenging start to life. “When my mother was pregnant with me, she had thyroid trouble,” he recalls. “The doctor said, ‘This child must be taken away because she is going to die.’ My mother said, ‘No way, and I was born poisoned.’”

Ginsberg, whose Manchester-born mother and Lithuanian-born father were both born Ginsberg but weren't related, consequently struggled to walk and had to wear leg braces while growing up in Kensington, Johannesburg.

Asked how he overcame his struggle, Ginsberg says judo helped him, and “I just feel that Hashem runs the world.”

Ginsberg was inspired by Mickey Davidow, his greatest mentor. “My dad's passion arose under him, and he grew in confidence,” Wolovitz says. “Judo brought my dad strength. The leg braces came off, and he climbed the ladder.”

Ginsberg worked his way up the judo rankings to surpass a black belt and become an 11th Dan with a red and white belt. He also got into karate, eventually becoming a black belt karateka, and jiu-jitsu, eventually becoming a 4th Dan in that martial art, as well as boxing.

He particularly liked the discipline judo instils in judokas.

Ginsberg competed in four Maccabi Games and represented South Africa, receiving Springbok colours. A former South Africa Judo Sensei of the Year, he was also a national judo referee.

“I had 14 different dojos all over the country,” he says. His Johannesburg-based-dojo, Zen-A-Kwai, was divided into four clubs. “I had instructors that I taught and I used to visit them.”

On his incorporation of Jewish values into judo, Dr Michael Setzer says, “Sensei Irv taught my boys in a way that was not just about judo, but also about life. He did it with warmth, love, and an approach that seamlessly blended Torah, *middos*, and physical discipline.” Ginsberg's “ability to integrate life lessons with physical

training is truly unique”, he says.

“I do a lot of *tehillim*,” says Ginsberg, who runs the shul at Sandringham Gardens. “Whenever I come, he is with his *chumash* and learning,” Wolovitz says.

His career took him to Israel, Australia, and Canada. “My dad's life-long dream is to go to Japan,” she says.

He not only taught his judokas but fought with them, leading by example. When Goldsmith was a young judoka still growing in confidence, an older competitor with provincial colours followed him into the bathroom and began taunting him. “Just then, Sensei [Irv] came out of a stall and looked at this scum bag, who was certainly psyching me out, and said to him, ‘You will never beat the Ox [me],’ and he had a hundred bucks in his pocket that he would give him if I lost.” Ginsberg turned out to be right.

A former photo-lithographer, Ginsberg has three children and five grandchildren.



Irving Ginsberg with his granddaughter, Nava

Ginsberg went to Kensington South School and then King David. “King David was still alive then,” he quips.

Toastmasters helped him to overcome his shyness and become a master speaker. “He could speak about anything, stand up in front of a crowd, everyone would laugh and be motivated,” Wolovitz says.

Ginsberg also served as a *mashgiach* and a kosher supervisor at Pick n Pay in Morningside and Michelo's in Glenhazel, so his favourite food is pizza. “He would treat the staff well, always giving them lift a home so they wouldn't need to take taxis,” Wolovitz says.

Ginsberg used to teach at Selwyn Segal, which he describes as “very rewarding”.

He believes that the ultimate aim of life lies “not in defeat or victory, but in the perfection of one's character”.

Ginsberg changed lives by teaching people with few opportunities, Wolovitz says. “They would come to judo and bring their children, whom my dad would also teach, and try to get them opportunities for work.”

Paula Levin recalls asking Ginsberg if he would be willing to teach her helper's son. “Without thinking twice, he said he was welcome. He taught him for free for years, and gave him certificates and medals like everyone else.”

Saul Joshua Abelson says, “Sensei Irv changed my life. He gave me the thing I'm most passionate about in my life. I'm a black belt judoka under Sensei Irv, a black belt in Japanese jiu-jitsu, and he led me towards Brazilian jiu-jitsu, which helps sustain me physically, mentally, and financially.”

Ginsberg himself didn't make a lot of money but would nevertheless take envelopes with money and put them in people's siddurs at shul if he knew they needed it. “He didn't want people to know what he was doing, but he would do charity like that,” Wolovitz says.

When cage fighting falls flat



INNER VOICE
Howard Feldman

Rumours that I sustained an injury while cage fighting might be greatly exaggerated. By me. The truth is worse. Because it could be argued that the whole episode might have occurred purely as a direct result of antisemitism. That and peer pressure. But that's neither here nor there.

Since 7 October, Hamas's attack on Israel, and Israel's subsequent invasion of Gaza, I've found myself on the front lines in the social media and mainstream media battle. I've always been a big "pen is mightier than the sword" kind of a guy, which is why "armed" with my words and information, I entered the fray.

It came at a cost. The threats, bullying, and what appeared to be a campaign to silence me became intense at times, though truthfully didn't really bother me. Being called a racist doesn't make me one. Being told that I support genocide doesn't make it true, nor does the allegation that I'm paid by the Israeli government or any organisation doing its bidding – though it would be nice if it were true.

But it has made those around me a bit nervous. Which is why, for no good reason at all, I decided to take up Krav Maga. To be clear, I've never been worried about my safety in South Africa, and although I've been called a litany of names; had my face Photoshopped into gas chambers; and been insulted for the baldness and "eggheadness" of my head and the size of my nose, I remain convinced that South Africans, for the most part, aren't committed enough to their own Jew hatred to get them out of bed in the morning.

I'm also no athlete. I've never been an athlete, and probably will never, ever become one so long as I live. When parents tell their children that they can be whoever they choose to be, they clearly haven't considered the reality of being a short, overweight Jewish guy with two flat feet and childhood asthma. I could have been many things, but an athlete isn't one of them. Even my late mother, who thought I could walk on water – maybe because of my flat feet – would have agreed.

Which is why I should never, at 56 years old and afflicted with the above, have found myself in a Krav Maga class. If you haven't heard of it, Krav Maga is an Israeli self-defence system. Developed for the Israel Defense Forces, it uses techniques derived from Aikido, boxing, judo, karate and wrestling. It's known for its focus on real-world situations. It was originally developed by Hungarian-born Israeli martial artist Imi Lichtenfeld.

Although I would love to have everyone believe that it was in a particularly aggressive sparring session when an opponent rushed at me with a knife that I fell in my attempt to disarm him, the real story is a lot less exciting.

Truthfully, I tripped over my shoelaces during the warm-up run. I fell ungraciously over my own two feet, and hit my knee on the yoga mat. And so, x-rays, an MRI, and a leg brace later, I've had to make peace with the fact that my "cage fighting" days are over.

Pretty much even before they began.

Which is why it's not inaccurate to say that it was antisemitism that got me into the situation.

I learned a lot this week. I learned to stick to my knitting, so to speak; that I'm not born to run; and that sometimes our anxiety about something can result in more harm than the "something" itself. I also learned that our private medical care is superb and that modern-day pain medicines are a gift.

Which is why, should an inspired antisemite ever come for me in a dark alley, not only will I spray them with my Ventolin and flat foot it out of there, I'll write a sharply worded missive that will hurt them more than my cage fighting skills ever would.

A column of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies

Expert insight on antisemitism



ABOVE BOARD
Karen Milner

This past week, our community was united in profound grief as we mourned the tragic recovery of six executed hostages. Synagogues across the country lit Yizkor candles and displayed their images, a poignant tribute to lives brutally taken. On Sunday, 8 September, in a powerful show of solidarity, the South African chapter of Werun4theirives hosted a memorial run in Johannesburg. Participants wore images of the six on their shirts, visibly sharing the weight of this sorrow with the world. Werun4theirives organises such runs every Sunday in cities around the globe, and this week's event was particularly moving. The collective display of unity and remembrance, both in our shuls and at the run, offers small but significant comfort as we struggle to cope with the ongoing horror and brutality of the situation.

This coming week, the South African Jewish Board of Deputies (SAJBD) will host Dr David Hirsh, an international expert in contemporary antisemitism. Dr Hirsh is the academic director and chief executive of the London Centre for the Study of Contemporary Antisemitism, where I am a fellow, and a senior lecturer at Goldsmiths, University of London. He has been instrumental in our previous efforts to combat antisemitism, and was one of the expert witnesses we brought out to testify at our landmark Masuku hearing in the Equality Court. Ultimately, the Constitutional Court upheld previous findings of hate speech by the South African Human Rights Commission and Equality Court against former Congress of South African Trade Unions International Relations Secretary Bongani Masuku.

A few years prior to that, Dr Hirsh testified on the Board's behalf in another high-profile hate speech case, namely the equally long running – and from the point of view of South African jurisprudence just as significant – Radio 786 matter. Much of the success we achieved in those two cases can be attributed to his erudition

This column is paid for by the SA Jewish Board of Deputies

and expertise, as well as the respect for and scrupulous adherence to fundamental scholarly norms and standards that characterises all his work.

The Masuku trial was, among other things, concerned with the linkages between anti-Israel or anti-Zionist rhetoric and antisemitism. Among the important outcomes of this landmark case, the right of our community to identify with and express support for Israel without being subjected to antisemitic abuse was confirmed. The question of how and when anti-Israel sentiment becomes antisemitism is one that we deal with on a weekly basis at the Board, and has become ever more important in the 11 months since 7 October and the Gaza war. It's thus ever more important that we host guests of the calibre of Dr Hirsh, and avail ourselves of the opportunities to learn from one of the world's foremost experts on this topic.

Dr Hirsh will be visiting Cape Town from Thursday, 12 September, where he will host a book launch and speak at the SAJBD Cape Council Conference on 15 September. In Johannesburg, Dr Hirsh will deliver a keynote address at the Gauteng Council Conference on 15 September, and host a book launch on 16 September. Email sajbd@sajbd.org if you are interested in attending any of these events.

I strongly encourage everyone to take advantage of these opportunities to hear from Dr Hirsh, one of the world's foremost experts on antisemitism. His work offers essential insights into the challenges we face as a community, and provides invaluable guidance for addressing them.

• Listen to Charisse Zeifert on Jewish Board Talk, 101.9 *ChaiFM*, every Friday from 12:00 to 13:00.

CELEBRATING 60 YEARS | CELEBRATING 60 YEARS
KING DAVID
VICTORY PARK CAMPUS

Join King David Victory Park as we celebrate our 60th birthday!

60th ALUMNI BRUNCH

BIRTHDAY CARNIVAL

COLOUR FUN RUN

SUNDAY 22 SEPTEMBER 2024 FREE ENTRY! BOOKING ESSENTIAL

Alumni brunch – 10:00am Birthday celebration – 12:30pm Carnival – 1:30pm Colour Fun Run – 2:30pm

Scan to register for the event

Herzlia student scales walls to top climber position

SAUL KAMIONSKY

Ten-year-old Herzlia student Luke Heinrich became the top South African climber in the Under-11 category in the recent Western Cape climbing competition. He won two bronze medals at the two-day competition on 3 and 4 August, with two international climbers winning the gold and silver medals.

"I was happy to get bronze because there were two completely insane climbers who I had to compete against," he says.

The winning climber, an American, was exceptional, says Luke's climbing enthusiast dad, Glen. "He probably competed about four age categories higher, and he destroyed everybody. I'm pretty certain the kid will go to the Olympics. He is from an American family living here."

The Canadian climber who came second was in Cape Town with his parents on holiday. "He's a competitive climber in Canada, and he just entered the competition because his family was here," says Glen, who climbs with Luke every week.

Luke competed in top rope and lead climbing events at CityROCK climbing gym in Paarden Eiland, Cape Town,

on the first day. "Top rope is when you climb a route with a harness and rope which is attached to the top of the route, and someone belays you," Luke says. "Lead climbing is when you climb up the route, attaching your rope as you go along to a kind of clip called quickdraws."



Luke Heinrich practising his top rope climbing technique

These two climbs of different routes were each about 50m high. "The higher they reach, the more points they get," Glen says. "You have a rope to support you in case you fall." The second day was at Bloc 11 climbing gym in Paarden Eiland for the bouldering competition, in which "they do six different shorter climbs with difficult problems to work out and no ropes", according to Glen. "Those climbs probably go to about 4m off the ground. If you fall, you fall onto soft mats."

Luke got the highest score in each event to seal two third-place finishes.

He became aware of the Western Cape climbing competition through his climbing schools. "I decided to compete for the first time at the end of last year. I've now done three provincial competitions in both top rope and bouldering. I've been lucky enough to reach the podium in almost every one," he says.

Climbing has been part of Luke's life since he was four. "Back then, my dad would occasionally take me to climb on the mountain when I was five, and he would sometimes take me to CityROCK. One day, when I was eight and a half, I woke up and wanted to climb. I had so much fun that I asked my mom if I could start climbing lessons, and she arranged it for me."

"The sport has many parts to it," Luke says about his love for climbing. "In general, I enjoy problem solving and before you climb a route you need to 'read' the route and work out what to do. The sport needs strength, skill, and patience. In bouldering, when you project by working on a route that's hard for you, it can be social. The sport also takes you to magnificent places."

Climbing takes you into big nature, says Glen. "You can go climb in areas like Silvermine, Paarl, and Cederberg. You can go overseas to places like Thailand, Italy, and Spain, all with beautiful climbing all around."

Glen, whose mother used to climb, started climbing around the age of 19, and it was his major sport at university. He trained at the University of Cape Town's sports centre. "There was no such thing as a CityROCK

climbing gym or anything like that back then," he reminisces. "I climbed a lot around Cape Town and on the rocks in Montagu. I even went on trips overseas to climb in Thailand and a couple of other places."

Whether climbing on real rocks is good practice for climbing walls is a "chicken-and-egg" situation, Glen says. "Some people train indoors in the climbing gym so they can climb on real rocks outdoors, whereas for others, it's all about the competition and indoor climbing. The outdoor and indoor climbs reinforce each other."

Luke attends two coached lessons a week, at CityROCK for longer routes and Bloc 11 for bouldering. He also participates in water polo, swimming, and cross-country athletics, and plays the piano.

Glen describes climbing with Luke as "great quality time together". He says climbing is one of the fastest-growing sports. "Climbing gyms are now national. The sport has become a lot more popular and a lot more mainstream. A number of schools, such as Bishops in Cape Town, offer it as a sport."

Glen says it was phenomenal to watch Olympic climbers competing in Paris last month. "As somebody who does climb, it's not hard to appreciate how difficult climbing is." He may have the privilege of watching his son at the Games in the future.

"I would love to attend the Olympics if I'm good enough one day," Luke says. "I really enjoyed watching Olympic climbers."

KosherWorld

TRULY KOSHER

MANY MORE SPECIALS IN-STORE

Spring is in the Air

באחדותם כוחם

11⁹⁹

PEPSI MAX SOFT DRINK 2L

34⁹⁹

LAMBERTS BAY FOODS GOLD SEAL FRENCH FRIES 1KG

166⁹⁹

ATLANTIS CRUMBED FISH FINGERS ORIGINAL 2KG

27⁹⁹

GENUINE FOODS LOW-FAT PEACH YOGHURT 250G EACH

24⁹⁹

CIAO ITALIAN PEELED TOMATOES 400G EACH

16⁹⁹

GEFEN RAMEN NOODLES ASSTD 85G EACH

83⁹⁹

MONTAGU RAW CASHEWS 200G

38⁹⁹

CRYSTAL VALLEY COTTAGE CHEESE ASSTD 250G EACH

49⁹⁹

DIVELLA 8 SPAGHETTI THREE COLOUR 500G

64⁹⁹

ALL JOY MEAT FLAVOURED SPAGHETTI SAUCE 820G

17⁹⁹

JOLLY JUMBO ICEPOPS JOLLY LONGS ASS 10'S

34⁹⁹

MONTAGU APPLE WEDGES 100G

61⁹⁹

SERENA LASAGNE SHEETS 500G

27⁹⁹

DIVELLA 50 LUMACHE 500G

48⁹⁹

MR MUSCLE TILE CLEANER COUNTRY FIELDS & POTPOURRI 750ML EACH

88⁹⁹

Tray of 6 cheese blintzes

Hometown Pharmacy

For Relief from Sinus Congestion

78⁹⁹

SALEX STARTER KIT SALINE SINUS RINSE (SSR)

087-803-4000 | 082-711-4342

HOMETOWNPHARMACY@PROPHARM.CO.ZA

IN A HURRY?

FRESH BLOOMS, CONVENIENTLY READY FOR YOU.

88⁹⁹

CONCIERGE SHOPPING SERVICE

orders@kosherworld.co.za

KOSHER AT EVERYDAY PRICES

Offers valid till 18 SEPTEMBER 2024 or while stocks last

1 Long Avenue, Glenhazel
011 440 9517 | www.kosherworld.co.za

Actual offers may differ from visuals shown. KosherWorld is available at selected Checkers stores. We reserve the right to limit quantities. While stocks last. E&OE.