



## ISRAEL NEWS

*A collection of the week's news from Israel  
From the Bet El Twinning / Israel Action Committee of  
Beth Avraham Yoseph of Toronto Congregation*

UNRWA - the Great  
Refugee Charade  
By Nadav Shragai

Finally, someone is shaking the foundations beneath one of the biggest charades, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency. Thanks to the twisted mandate it got from the U.N. in the 1950s, it has perpetuated the

plight of Palestinian refugees from one generation to the next. The mandate prohibits UNRWA from resettling those "refugees" and find them a permanent home, ensuring that they keep entertaining the idea that one day they will get the "right of return."

Now the Trump administration has taken steps to defund the organization, perhaps not for the right reasons, if the Palestinians fail to return to the negotiating table. It has so far put on hold half of the funding it normally gives each year.

Unlike UNRWA, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has been properly tasked with ending the plight of refugees, but UNRWA has perpetuated the status of refugees and has been essentially tasked of ensuring the Palestinians remain displaced. There is not other agency in the world that does that.

The U.N. has never asked that Hindus be allowed back to Pakistan or that Greek Cypriots be allowed back to the Turkish-controlled Cyprus, nor has insisted that Muslims be allowed to return to Bulgaria after being expelled.

Over the years, tens of millions of refugees from a whole host of ethnicities have been resettled in their new countries and rebuilt their lives.

But the sanity ends when the refugees – I mean the descendants of refugees – want to "return" to Tiberias, Lod, Nazareth, Acre, or Jaffa. In a way, UNRWA has created a lineage of displacement, almost genetic, that passes from father to son, and from one generation to the next.

The original Palestinian refugees totaled no more than 500,000 to 800,000, and their numbers are constantly in decline. But the Palestinian displacement industry is thriving because the sons, grandchildren, great-grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren have received eternal refugee status. This is in accordance with what the U.N. has decided when it gave UNRWA its mandate.

It's no surprise, then, that Palestinian refugees number 5.5 million people and counting. Unlike other displaced people who lose their refugee status once they receive citizenship from their new country, the Palestinian refugees continue to hold that status as refugees even after they are naturalized.

UNRWA may be doing humanitarian work, but it has acted more like a large pharmaceutical corporation that makes sure the public never adopts a healthy way of life, thus ensuring that its profits continue.

The drug is addictive, and so is the refugee status. UNRWA should have been eliminated and financially depleted regardless of the state of the peace process. Its very existence is designed to maintain the notion of the right of return, another name for Israel's destruction.

Even the descendants of the original Palestinian refugees in Iraq who have recently been settled in Chile by the UNHCR because of the hardships they faced cannot relinquish their refugee status. Many of the Palestinian refugees have been leading successful and happy lives around the world, but because of the ongoing perpetuation of UNRWA, there are 59 refugee camps in Lebanon, Gaza, Judea and Samaria, Syria, Jordan and Jerusalem. These camps have ensured that a large Palestinian population would continue to entertain the illusion that they would one day return to Israel, on our backs, and kick us out.

UNRWA has made sure their problems would never end, by ensuring continued pain and by focusing attention on younger generations that still live in the camps. Billions of dollars of U.N. funds have been used over the years to ensure that the lives in camps stay as they are rather than to resettle them or shut down the camps.

It is no wonder then, that Zakaria al-Agha, who sits in the Palestine Liberation Organization's Executive Committee and is a senior official at UNHCR, told the Israeli media that defunding UNRWA would "breach a red line for the Palestinians." It is also hardly a surprise that the

## Commentary...

### The Filth-Mongering Media By Haim Shine

Having worked in education for many years, I understand that the remarks made by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's son Yair in a secret recording leaked this week are both morally wrong and extremely serious. The recording, which featured a lewd exchange between Yair Netanyahu and his friends outside a strip club more than two years ago, stirred massive controversy.

King Solomon, the wisest of men, said: "Curse not the king, no, not in thy thoughts, and curse not the rich in thy bedchamber; for a bird of the air shall carry the voice, and that which hath wings shall tell the matter" (Ecclesiastes 10:20). In recent years, it has become clear that several of the employees in the prime minister's residence, much like birds, are happy to betray every kind of trust in exchange for kickbacks. These employees sold information obtained while at work, raising questions over the confidentiality of the sensitive state secrets discussed there.

At the same time, a media outlet that is reportedly willing to pay a large sum for yellow, disgusting material like this is a filthmonger dealing in sewage – even if it tries to link the exchange to the prime minister in a lame effort to justify its publication. In the past, sanctimonious opposition MKs Eitan Cabel and Shelly Yachimovich were quick to voice outrage over secret recordings, but only when the recordings pertained to them.

Apparently some media outlets refused to pay for the recording, understanding that even in the constant witch hunt against the Netanyahu family, there are boundaries that must not be crossed.

The abysmal hatred toward Netanyahu and his family is not limited to the media or the political arena. It is deeply rooted in the psychological phenomenon described by Sigmund Freud in his book "Moses and Monotheism." The radical Left and its indentured media servants are unwilling to accept the fact that Netanyahu has tossed into the dustbin of history their naive belief that if we only relinquish land, including parts of Jerusalem, peace will reign. They hold on to their childish belief in a peace that would make Israel's military presence in Nablus and Hebron unnecessary and that would stop young Israelis from emigrating, traveling en masse to Berlin or Los Angeles to seek out peaceful lives.

The old elite, which, until 1977, controlled the country unchallenged, grew tired and put away the flag. New elites emerged in their stead, but they have always been viewed by the original elite as socially inferior. Netanyahu was responsible for this magnificent reversal of the elites, and they will never forgive him for that.

The broadcast of this filth in the media was not intended as a commentary on moral failings. We all know about the lack of moral fiber among some prominent media figures, particularly those who write tell-all autobiographies. The objective of the broadcast was to generate disgust for the Netanyahu family by creating an atmosphere of corruption, thereby making the prime minister more likely to step down of his own accord. I have never seen the family of any other prime minister or president of Israel receive this kind of prying, humiliating coverage in the media. Out of respect for the dead, I will refrain from mentioning far worse affairs that were kept out of the media and away from the public.

The delays in the corruption investigations against Netanyahu known as Case 1,000 and Case 2,000 – as well as the fact that Case 3,000, on which hopes and dreams were built, actually has nothing to do with the prime minister – have forced the leaders of the witch hunt to look for an alternative path to unseat the prime minister. They found it in Yair Netanyahu's nonsensical rambling. But the citizens of Israel are smart. They are not easily misled by atmosphere, mudslinging attempts and fabricated tales of corruption. (Israel Hayom Jan 10)

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Palestinians have asked Arab states to apply pressure on Washington.

Without the charade called UNRWA, the Palestinians would find it extremely hard to define themselves as refugees. Without being refugees, their leaders would be unable to demand their "return" to Israeli cities.

(Israel Hayom Jan 7)

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## How Can 'Pro-Israel' Groups Support the Tamimis?

By Ronn Torossian

Palestinian teen Ahed Tamimi enters a military courtroom escorted by Israeli Prison Service personnel at Ofer Prison, near the West Bank city of Ramallah, Dec. 28, 2017. Photo: Reuters / Ammar Awad.

On December 1, 2017, Ahed Tamimi — a teenage Palestinian girl — was documented repeatedly punching, hitting and kicking soldiers of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF). Israel's defenders faced her impassively, never striking back.

The 16-year-old has been indicted on five counts of assault. Her mother, who filmed the event, was charged with assault and incitement, after posting a video of the teen on social media — in which she urged others to protest against Israel with stabbing attacks and suicide bombings.

Following this incident, the worldwide media has celebrated the Tamimi family as "struggling against the resistance" — with NBC News describing the blonde-haired, blue-eyed teenager as the "poster child" for the Palestinian struggle.

The reality, however, is far different.

Investigative journalist Petra Marquardt-Bigman has revealed troubling truths about this family:

Bassem Tamimi, the father, has long served as the spokesman for Nabi Saleh's supposedly non-violent protest movement. In an interview published in early May 2011 on the website Electronic Intifada — and promptly cross-posted at the website of the Hamas-affiliated al-Qassam Brigades — Bassem Tamimi outlined his dream of killing Israelis, and destroying Israel.

Bassem Tamimi also expressed his hope that the regular protests in Nabi Saleh would provide "the basis for the third intifada."

Some of Bassem Tamimi's Facebook activity also indicates that he "likes" the al-Qassam Brigades, the armed wing of the Hamas terrorist movement. And a few other examples of social media posts by the Tamimi family reflect their true nature.

In one picture, Bassem Tamimi has his arm around his nephew, the terrorist Nizar Tamimi, who murdered Chaim Mizrahi — a resident of Bet El — in 1993. Nizar married Ahlam Tamimi — the murderer from the Sbarro restaurant suicide bombing, in which 15 people were killed and 130 were wounded (half of them children). The entire Tamimi family from Nabi Saleh participated in the wedding of the murderers Ahlam and Nizar Tamimi, who were released in the Gilad Shalit exchange in 2011.

Nariman Tamimi, the mother, meanwhile, justified the Sbarro massacre as "an integral part" of the Palestinian struggle, adding that "everyone fights in the manner in which he believes. There is armed uprising, and there is popular uprising. I support every form of uprising."

Her Facebook activity during the recent wave of stabbing attacks provides ample evidence that she meant what she said. A particularly graphic example is a post that she shared on October 14, 2015, providing "a map of the spots that have to be targeted in the filthy body of the Israeli soldier."

Manal Tamimi once shared her views on the subject of Yom Kippur, the holiest day in the Jewish calendar: "Vampire Zionist celebrating their Kebore day by drinking Palestinian bloods, yes our blood is pure & delicious but it will kill u at the end."

When the October 2015 violence was launched with the brutal murders of Eitam and Na'ama Henkin in front of their four young children, Manal Tamimi tweeted jubilantly: "2 zionist settlers (a man and his wife) was killed near #Etamar settlment #Nablus #ressistance\_is\_existnace #time\_to\_pay\_the\_price." A few hours later, she threatened: "all settlers in West Bank should stay at their house, Pal lions still free & can reach u & kill you where ever u r."

The Tamimi family is committed to terrorism — and to murdering innocent Israelis.

Despite this overwhelming evidence, some organizations funded by the radical "pro-Israel" New Israel Fund have supported the Tamimi family.

B'Tselem, for example, brought the Tamimi family cameras. And Nariman Tamimi is reportedly a volunteer with B'Tselem. From 2008-2016, the New Israel Fund authorized grants worth \$2,271,107 to B'Tselem (2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016).

The radical Breaking the Silence organization took foreign tourists on guided tours of the Tamimi family home, and the Association for Civil Rights in Israel read a speech by Nariman at one of the organization's marches. Both groups receive money from the New Israel Fund.

In addition, Libby Lenkinski, Vice President for Public Engagement at the New Israel Fund, wrote:

Ahed Tamimi and her father Bassem do not deserve to be occupied — not because they are nice people of upstanding character (which they are — I know them myself) but because nobody deserves to be occupied. And no soldier ... can kindly enforce an occupation.

The New Israel Fund has a moral duty to immediately halt funding organizations that cooperate with the terrorist Tamimi family. (Algemeiner Jan 10)

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## Panicky Critics of Israel Push Fake 'One State' Threat

By Stephen M. Flatow / JNS.org

You know that critics of Israel are getting panicky when they start trotting out the old "one state" bogeyman.

"As a 2-State Solution Loses Steam, a 1-State Plan Gains Traction," a New York Times headline announced on January 5, above an article so palpably absurd that it can only reflect the mad panic among advocates of Palestinian statehood, as they see their dream fading away. And the fact that the Times chose to make this page one news says a lot about the fearful mindset among the left-wing news media, Israel-bashing pundits and Jewish peace camp types.

The article was written by David M. Halbfinger, who became the Times' Jerusalem bureau chief six months ago. Before taking up that position, Halbfinger served as one of the newspaper's Hollywood correspondents, and as its New York City metro political editor. It doesn't sound like those previous posts prepared him very well for understanding Israel and the Palestinians.

On the other hand, sometimes it seems as if the only "qualification," the Times requires for someone to serve as its Jerusalem correspondent (or bureau chief) is the ability to come up with ways to harangue and smear Israel, and to make Palestinians look sympathetic. That's certainly what Halbfinger seemed up to with his "one state" declaration.

The basic idea is to threaten Israel: If you don't agree to create an independent Palestinian state adjacent to your major cities and airports, then you'll really be in trouble, because the Palestinians will demand that they become part of a single state, then they will outnumber you, and then — suddenly — no more Israel.

According to the "one state" idea, this would give the Palestinians "equal civil rights, including the freedom of movement, assembly and speech, and the right to vote in national elections."

What Halbfinger forgot to mention is that Israel already gave the Palestinians all of those things — it's only the Palestinian Authority (PA) that interferes with them.

In 1995, then-Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin pulled Israel's forces out of the areas where 98 percent of the Palestinians live. As of 1995, Israel no longer determines the Palestinians' freedom of movement, assembly, speech or right to vote. They can move, assemble, speak and vote whenever the PA leadership lets them.

In fact, just last May, hundreds of thousands of Palestinians went to 461 polling stations, and chose the members of the 391 municipal and village councils in the PA-controlled portions of Judea and Samaria. A total of 3,489 council members were elected.

The only reason that there has not been a Palestinian election for president is that the current occupant of that position, Mahmoud Abbas, won't allow a presidential election. Why doesn't Halbfinger write about Palestinians who are angry not at Israel, but at the fascist dictatorship under which they suffer? I think we all know the answer to that question.

Israelis laugh at the "one state" talk. Of course they would never accept a demand for one state with an Arab majority. It doesn't matter how many clever slogans that the Palestinians invent (with the help of their Western PR firms). And it doesn't matter how many critics of Israel shout phony accusations of "apartheid," or how many attacks-disguised-as-news Halbfinger writes in The New York Times.

The "one state" threat is a cheap propaganda exercise, whose only purpose is to try to scare Israelis and their American Jewish supporters. The irony is that it's The New York Times and J Street who are the ones that are genuinely scared. They're scared because their dream of setting up a Palestinian state a few miles from Tel Aviv is slipping away.

For eight years, they had an American president who really believed

that a Palestinian state would bring peace in our time. The New York Times and these groups turned the Democratic Party virtually into an advocate for the Palestinian cause. They pressured Israel to freeze all Jewish construction in the territories for 10 months.

But then democracy intervened. In 2013 and 2015, Israelis chose to elect a government that recognizes the deadly dangers of a Palestinian state, and nine-miles-wide borders. In 2016, Americans elected a president whose party platform dropped its previous support for Palestinian statehood. The people — on both sides of the Atlantic — have spoken. All that Israel's critics are left with is a bunch of stale slogans and pathetic scare tactics. (Algemeiner Jan 10)

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### **Appreciating Israel's Miracle at 70 with Unity** By Martin Oliner

Pirkei Avot teaches that a 70-year-old has reached a "ripe old age" ("seiva" in Hebrew), a term used in the Book of Chronicles to describe King David, who died at age 70.

On Yom Ha'atzmaut, Israel's Independence Day (April 19), the Jewish State will become 70, with hopes for a long future ahead.

During those seven decades, Israel's population has grown from 806,000 to 8.68 million, and its main export has shifted from oranges to hi-tech start-ups purchased by Apple.

A country started by destitute people with no experience in farming made the desert bloom, beleaguered Holocaust survivors built the IDF into a strong army, and there are now more people studying Torah in the land of Israel than ever before, despite the loss of Europe's Torah teachers.

The light that the Nazis tried unsuccessfully to extinguish is now brighter than ever. Israel is striving to be the light unto the nations that its prophets predicted.

On Hanukka, Jews are commanded to light their hanukkiot in the window where their neighbors can see them, in order to "publicize the miracle." On Yom Ha'atzmaut, we should behave similarly.

We should want the world to see Jews around the world celebrating the miracle of Israel turning 70 against all odds and thriving despite all logic. The best way to publicize the miracle is to bring Jews together to unite behind Israel.

History has proven that when Israel faces challenges of war, Jews around the world have been able to set aside their differences and come together to help ensure the country's survival. But families must also come together in good times and celebrate what God gave them.

Religious Zionists in particular believe in thanking God for the modern State of Israel. We endured 1,878 years of exile with no state to save the Jewish people from pogroms, crusades, inquisitions and the Holocaust.

We can see the contrast of what happens when we have a state of our own to absorb Jewish immigrants from the four corners of the earth. Israel took in a million people from the Former Soviet Union, brought Africans to the promised land on the wings of eagles, and became a destination for aliyah by choice of Americans seeking better quality of life.

When Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu addressed the United Nations General Assembly, he said he had visited six continents in a year and a half, because the world wants to know about Israel's expertise in innovation and its unfortunate experience in successfully fighting terrorism.

The world has also been seeking out Israel due to its natural gas discoveries off its coast after decades of believing incorrectly that the Land of Israel was not blessed with the most lucrative natural resources.

The world leaders Netanyahu meets with often still criticize Israel, but that has become a small part of a larger conversation, as the world realizes more and more how much Israel has to offer.

The fact that, amid all that success, there are too many poor Israelis being left behind means that there is still much to be done by the Jewish Diaspora to support Israel, even as the relationship becomes more of a two-way street.

Politics must not be permitted to get in the way of that relationship. Just like we do not always understand all the decisions made by our children, we must continue showing them love.

Israel remains a work in progress, as its politicians and world renowned legal system continue their give and take, figuring out what it means to be a Jewish, Democratic state. "Israel" itself means struggling with God, in both present and future tense.

The messiah has not yet come and brought about the prophecy of 70 nations from around the world coming to Zion (though former president Shimon Peres's funeral came close). That miracle has not yet transpired.

So the Religious Zionist of America have decided to bring 70 inspiring speakers from Israel to speak on the Shabbat before Yom Ha'atzmaut in

North America's 70 largest Orthodox synagogues. Those communities will be marking the milestone of Israel's 70th birthday by expressing gratitude to God in their prayers and learning from their Israeli guests about the Jewish state's bright future. (Jerusalem Post Jan 8)

*The writer is co-president of the Religious Zionists of America.*

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### **What Happened to Lieberman?** By Meir Indor

Shai Maimon was seriously wounded in a shooting attack in mid-2015, as he was coming home from a basketball game in northern Judea and Samaria. His friend, Malachi Rosenfeld, was murdered in the attack.

After the perpetrators were caught, Maimon dug through the prosecution documents filed against them and learned that the terrorist who funded the attack was Ahmed Najar — a terrorist Maimon himself had arrested in 2003 as an officer and team leader in the Israeli army's special Egoz unit.

Najar was convicted and jailed for several life terms for the murders of Shuli Har-Melech, Gideon Lichtman and three IDF soldiers in Ein Yabrud, a Palestinian town near Ramallah. In 2011 he was released as part of the Gilad Schalit prisoner exchange deal and was deported to the Gaza Strip and then from there to Jordan. It was from Jordan that he orchestrated the murderous terrorist attack that killed Maimon's friend. Where did this terrorist get the money to fund the murder? From the salary he received during his time as a prisoner from the Palestinian Authority, a salary he still receives today as a former prisoner.

The phenomenon of funding murderers can be stopped through legislation. U.S. President Donald Trump understands this, and he sternly spoke about it with PA President Mahmoud Abbas. The U.S. Congress is in advanced stages of ratifying the proposed Taylor Force Act, which aims to withhold U.S. funding from the PA as long as it continues to fund terrorists.

Taylor Force, the namesake of the bill, was a U.S. Army veteran and tourist to Israel who was murdered by a Palestinian terrorist from Qalqilya who went on a stabbing spree in Jaffa in 2016.

But what about us? The Israeli government transfers great sums of money to the PA, which in turn pays a monthly stipend to some 7,000 terrorists. Abdullah Barghouti, for example, a mass murderer with the blood of 66 Israelis on his hands, has received 745,000 shekels (\$216,000) from the PA.

MKs from both the Right and the Left have submitted proposals for legislation that would require the salaries of these terrorists to be deducted from the money Israel hands over to the PA. It is unthinkable that the PA subsidizes murderers with money that Israel transfers to it.

Very surprisingly, however, just before such a bill was to be submitted for a vote, Yisrael Beytenu MK Robert Ilatov asked to defer the vote so that the Defense Ministry, headed by Yisrael Beytenu Chairman Avigdor Lieberman, could "study the issue." Furthermore, Defense Ministry officials refused to provide an end date for this review, despite Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee Chairman MK Avi Dichter's request for a time frame.

As the representative of Almagor, a terrorism victims advocacy group, I sat next to Shai Maimon during this proceeding. I warned him that if the Israeli legislation is frozen at this point, it could prompt the Americans to freeze their own legislation on the matter, as they have no reason to go further on the issue than us. MK Dichter also expressed similar concerns.

Meanwhile, MKs from both the Left and the Right wondered about the reasons behind the delay. MK Elazar Stern posited that this was simply a battle over credit for the bill, and offered to remove the name of the MK who proposed the bill and to attribute it to solely to Yisrael Beytenu, but Ilatov refused this offer.

The Americans have already passed their bill in two committees, in the House of Representatives and in the Senate. And us? This week the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee will hold another meeting.

What happened to Lieberman? Why are his people trying to delay the passing of this bill? In my assessment, the Civil Administration, which oversees Judea and Samaria under the authority of the defense minister, is not interested in the law or the deduction of funds from the Palestinian Authority. The administration is trying to water down the bill and erode its effectiveness. The method is endless deferment. Meanwhile, this absurd conduct has continued for decades.

In the meantime, the terrorists in Israeli prisons and their families celebrate with money that Israel gives them. Until the next murder, God forbid, unless Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu wakes up and puts his full weight behind the bill. (Israel Hayom Jan 8)

## **The Palestinians' Race to the Bottom** By Caroline B. Glick

The PLO and the Palestinian cause more generally are sinking into irrelevance and rather than reform their policies to rebuild their position, they have adopted a scorched earth policy that only intensifies their race to the bottom.

On the face of things, the situation isn't bad. Last month the PLO got 128 nations to vote in favor of their anti-American resolution rejecting US President Donald Trump's recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital. One of the states that voted with them was India.

Israel was shocked by India's move.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu rightly touts the growth of Israel's bilateral ties with the largest democracy in the world. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's extraordinary visit to Israel last July highlighted the change. Netanyahu's visit to New Delhi later this month will cement the new alliance.

Not only has Modi enthusiastically cultivated close ties with Israel, he has moved closer to Israel in its conflict with the PLO than any of his predecessors. In 2015, India abstained from an anti-Israel resolution at the UN Human Rights Council. Modi refused to visit the Palestinian Authority during his visit to Israel. And PLO chief and PA chairman Mahmoud Abbas's visit to India earlier this year, Modi refused to say – as his predecessors have said – that the capital of a Palestinian state should be located in eastern Jerusalem.

And yet, last month at the UN, it felt like none of this had happened. India reverted to its previous posture of blind support for the PLO and joined the chorus in attacking America for recognizing that Jerusalem is Israel's capital.

The Palestinians for their part were justifiably elated. Now, they thought, they were back in the driver's seat. Trump is an aberration and the world – including India, continues to support them no matter what. They are today where they were in 1975 when the UN General Assembly passed Resolution 3371 defining the Jewish national liberation movement as a form of racism.

Then, less than a week after the UN vote, the PLO's envoy to Pakistan, Walid Abu Ali, shared a stage in Rawalpindi with the mastermind of the 2008 terrorist attacks in Mumbai.

Lashkar e-Taibi leader Hafiz Muhammad Saeed is wanted by India not only for the massacre of more than 160 people in the Mumbai attacks. He is also wanted for his involvement in terrorist attacks in the city in 2006, which killed more than 200 people, and for a shooting at the Indian Parliament, an incident in which another 14 were killed in 2001.

Abu Ali didn't think there would be any price to pay for his decision to embrace a mass-murdering terrorist. It's what the PLO has always done. And so he posted photos of himself with Saeed online.

But it turns out that despite India's vote, things have changed. A lot.

Indian social media exploded in rage against the Palestinians and the PLO. The most common sentiment was, "This is how they pay us back for abandoning the US and Israel to support them at the UN."

Abu Ali's embraces of Saeed were widely and angrily reported in the Indian media.

In response, Abbas announced that he was recalling Abu Ali. This would have been fine if it were true.

But this week it was reported that Abu Ali is back in business in Islamabad.

The PLO's behavior with Abu Ali and India indicates three things. First, that the PLO/PA is no longer immune from criticism in quarters where it received five decades of unconditional support. Second, it indicates that the PLO/PA is incapable of changing its behavior, even when it is aware that it ought to. Finally, the PLO/PA is still operating under the impression that nations will continue to support them forever because the basis of that support is unchanged.

The problem for the PLO/PA is that the world has changed fundamentally while they were busy embracing terrorists and getting away with it.

This week, The Economist published its annual data on per capita GDP in countries throughout the world. For the first time, Israel's GDP per capita has jumped above \$40,000. According to the Economist's data, per capita GDP in Israel jumped from \$38,127 in 2016 to \$44,019 in 2017. GDP grew 4.4% last year. Today Israel's GDP per capita is higher than GDP per capita in Japan, Britain and France. The gap in Israel's favor is expected to widen

in the years to come as Israel's GDP continues to grow and the GDPs of European states and Japan continue to stagnate due to negative fertility, continued migration of uneducated newcomers and lack of innovation.

In its own neighborhood, Israel's neighbors remain economic and political basket cases. As Dr. Guy Bechor noted in his analysis of the data earlier this week, Egypt's per capita GDP of \$2,519 is one seventeenth of Israel's. Jordan's per capita income dropped last year from \$4,648 to \$4,135 and prospects for 2018 aren't positive.

The situation is similarly bleak in the Gulf States, despite their oil and gas reserves. Iran, for instance, is poor and forecasts for the future are terrible. Last year, despite the \$100 billion windfall the regime received from sanctions relief, per capita GDP in Iran dropped from \$6,144 in 2016 to \$5,879. Wars in Syria, Yemen, Iran, Lebanon and Gaza don't come cheap.

Egypt, Saudi Arabia and other Arab states are drawn to Israel not only because of their joint security concerns about Iran. They are also eager to expand ties with Israel to benefit from its civilian technologies in everything from agriculture and water technologies to digital communications. And they are not about to allow the Palestinians to stop their cavalcade to Israel.

As The New York Times reported last week, Egyptian intelligence officer Capt. Ashrag al-Kholi called four different television hosts last and told them that Ramallah can serve as the capital of a Palestinian state just as well as Jerusalem. Kholi was also taped telling them that the Palestinians have to compromise for peace. In his words, "How is Jerusalem different from Ramallah, really? At the end of the day, later on, Jerusalem won't be different from Ramallah. What matters is ending the suffering of the Palestinian people. Concessions are a must and if we reach a concession whereby... Ramallah will be the capital of Palestine, to end the war and so no one else dies, then we should go for it."

Kholi explained that a new Palestinian campaign of terrorism against Israel will harm Egypt by strengthening Islamic State (ISIS), Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood.

So while it is true that 128 countries – including India, Egypt and Saudi Arabia – voted with the PLO against Israel and the US at the UN last month, it is also true that their votes don't signify as much as they used to. It is equally true that the Palestinians can't try their patience by pushing anti-Israel resolutions every day as they have for the past 45 years. Because as the Palestinians keep playing their old tricks, Israel is becoming a more and more significant regional and global power and the nations of the world aren't interested in weakening Israel when Israel is helping them survive and prosper.

As Abu Ali's continued tenure in Pakistan shows, rather than recognize the shifting power balance and update their positions to align with it, the PLO has become even more brittle and reactionary and extreme. If Egypt doesn't support their war against Israel, then they will take their roadshow to Tehran, or its Lebanese satrapy.

On December 31, Fatah Central Committee member Azzam al-Ahmad met with Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah in Beirut. After meeting with al-Ahmad, Nasrallah told al Mayadeen TV that Fatah – led by Abbas – agreed to "activate a third intifada," or terror war, against Israel. PA parliament members also visited Lebanon and met with Iranian-controlled Prime Minister Saad Hariri.

Sunday night, Israel Channel 2 reported that terrorist incitement is rising steeply in the official PA media and social media networks. One video, of a faked shooting of a Palestinian teenage girl by an actor dressed in an IDF uniform, has gone viral. Thousands of viewers have responded to the fake scene with pledges to kill Israelis to avenge the fake death.

When later this month Netanyahu meets Modi in Delhi, India's UN vote and Abu Ali's embrace of Saeed will be on the agenda. And there is good reason to believe that Modi will recognize the linkage and vote differently in the future. Like Netanyahu, he recognizes that the PLO's basic case is wrong. Peace is achieved by defeating terrorists, not by empowering them.

Moreover, Israel beckons. The economic and strategic realities of Israel cannot be ignored. Modi and his counterparts worldwide are now recognizing that the Palestinians have nothing to offer them, not even gratitude. When a critical mass of Palestinians recognize that the PLO's jig is up, they will make peace with Israel. Until then, they will continue to serve as an irritating irrelevancy and nothing more. (Jerusalem Post Jan 9)