

Ynet-News, May 14, 2022 – Saturday

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PA journalist funeral riot, resumed raid on Jenin, an Israeli police officer killed

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Likud activist & Netanyahu fan arrested for sending threatening letters to PM

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Israel approves 4,427 settler homes after demolish of 18 in W. Bank

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NATO expect Finland & Sweden membership as Ukraine shut gas flows

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Jordan king meets Biden Friday; issue of Jerusalem main topic for Waqf control

05.13.22

PA journalist funeral riot, resumed raid on Jenin, an Israeli police officer killed

05.13.22

Israeli forces clash with rioters at Palestinian journalist's funeral

Footage shows police officers facing scores of flag-waving and chanting Palestinians at the St. Joseph Hospital compound in East Jerusalem, who then began throwing stones at the forces and the hospital

Reuters, Ynet| Published: 05.13.22, 18:48

Israeli police clashed with Palestinian mourners who rioted around the coffin of slain Al Jazeera reporter Shireen Abu Akleh during her funeral procession in Jerusalem on Friday.

Masked police officers faced scores of flag-waving and chanting Palestinians in the St. Joseph Hospital compound in East Jerusalem, television footage showed.

Officers then stormed the crowd and at one point the pallbearers were backed against a wall and almost dropped the casket, recovering it just before one end hit the ground. Abu Akleh, who had covered Palestinian affairs and the Middle East for more than two decades, was shot while reporting on an Israeli raid in the West Bank on Wednesday. Palestinian authorities described Abu Akleh's killing as an assassination by Israeli forces. Israel's government initially suggested Palestinian fire might have been to blame, but officials have also said they could not rule out it was Israeli gunfire that killed her, adding no conclusion could be made until the Palestinian Authority transfers the bullet that killed her to be probed.

On Friday, Israeli police said the group of Palestinians they described as rioters had begun throwing stones in the hospital compound. "The policemen were forced to act," they added. There was no immediate comment from Palestinian authorities.

A few minutes later, Abu Akleh's coffin was placed in a vehicle that headed toward the Cathedral of the Annunciation of the Virgin in Jerusalem's walled Old City, where the ceremony proceeded peacefully.

Investigation and raids

The Israeli military said on Friday that its initial investigation "concluded that it is not possible to unequivocally determine the source of the gunfire which hit and killed Ms. Abu Akleh."

The inquiry has raised two possibilities, the military said in a statement. The first, that Abu Akleh was hit by Palestinian militants who fired dozens of bullets toward Israeli military vehicles, "which is also the direction where Ms. Abu Akleh was".

The second, that an Israeli soldier returning fire from a jeep toward a gunman had inadvertently hit her. The vehicle was around 200 meters from Abu Akleh, the military said.

Israeli forces on Friday resumed raids on the outskirts of Jenin, where Abu Akleh was killed. The military said that an Israeli police officer was killed in what it said was counter-terrorism activity. At least 13 rioters were wounded, the Palestinian Health Ministry said.

The Jenin Brigade, an armed wing of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad militant group, said its fighters were engaging in armed clashes with Israeli forces in Jenin and residents said the Israeli forces arrested a militant from the Islamic Jihad Group.

Abu Akleh's death has drawn widespread condemnation. Video footage from the moments after she was shot showed Abu Akleh, 51, wearing a blue vest marked "Press". At least two of her colleagues who were with her said that they had come under Israeli sniper fire and that they were not close to militants.

Israel, which has voiced regret at Abu Akleh's death has proposed a joint investigation with the Palestinians, asking them to provide the bullet for examination. The Palestinians have rejected the Israeli request. Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas on Thursday said Israel was fully responsible and called for an international investigation.

05.12.22

Likud activist & Netanyahu fan arrested for sending threatening letters to PM

05.12.22

Netanyahu fan who threatened PM, outed

Likud activist Ilana Sporta Haniya 65, arrested after a joint police and shin Bet investigation, weeks after allegedly sending threatening letters containing live bullets to wife and son of Prime Minister Naftali Bennett, Denies wrongdoing

Liran Levy | Published: 05.12.22, 16:15

Ilana Sporta Haniya, a Likud activist from southern Israel, is the woman arrested earlier this week on suspicion of sending threatening letters to Prime Minister Naftali Bennett's family, Israel Police revealed Thursday.

Sporta Haniya, a 65-years-old resident of the southern city of Ashkelon, was arrested at the tail-end of a joint police and shin Bet investigation, launched shortly after both Gilat Bennett and her 16-year old son Yoni both received threatening letters each containing a live bullet.

Sporta Haniya -- who has thus far denied any wrongdoing -- is a known Likud activist, a staunch supporter of former premier Benjamin Netanyahu, and a vehement critic of the current coalition.

She was previously documented during an anti government protest calling on New Hope party MK Benny Begin to "walk out into the sea and die."

Bennett himself issued a statement shortly after the death threats against his family were made, saying at the time that political disagreements, no matter how deep, should never turn violent. "We must do everything to make sure that does not happen," Bennett said. "We are all human beings and can have arguments and disagreements but not bullying and threats. I am a prime minister and a politician, but I am also a father and husband and my duty is to protect my wife and children. We must tone the discourse down," he said.

Yoni, in a story posted on Instagram, said the death threats were the result of incitement by right-wing supporters, who deserve to go to prison.

Bennett has been criticized by members of the Right after he opted to join a coalition made up of parties from the left, including the Islamist Ra'am faction -- which earlier this week announced it would stay in the coalition despite disagreements over the handling of riots on Temple Mount.

Members of his Yamina party have also received threats, including his long-time political ally and Interior Minister Ayelet Shaked - who has since been assigned a special security detail.

05.12.22

Israel approves 4,427 new settler homes after demolish of 18 in W. Bank

05.12.22

Rights group says Israel approves 4,427 new settler homes

The approval comes a day after Israel demolished at least 18 buildings in W. Bank following a court decision; approval considered the biggest advancement of settlement projects since the Biden administration took office

Reuters| Published: 05.12.22, 15:59

Israel on Thursday approved the construction of more than 4,000 settler homes in the West Bank, an Israeli rights group said.

It's the biggest advancement of settlement projects since the Biden administration took office. The U.S. opposes settlement construction and views it as an obstacle to any eventual peace deal with the Palestinians. Most of the international community views the settlements as illegal.

Hagit Ofra, an expert on the settlements at the anti-settlement watchdog Peace Now, says a military planning body approved 4,427 housing units at a meeting that she attended.

Israeli officials did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

The approval came a day after Israel's military demolished at least 18 buildings and structures in the West Bank following a Supreme Court decision that would allegedly force around 1,000 Palestinians out of an area Israel had designated a firing zone.

B'Tselem, another Israeli rights group, said in a statement that Border Police and soldiers leveled a total of 18 structures, including 12 residential buildings, in villages in the hills south of the West Bank city of Hebron on Wednesday.

Last week, the Supreme Court upheld an expulsion order that would force out residents of a cluster of Bedouin communities in Masafer Yatta, where they say they have been living for decades. The military declared the area a firing zone in the early 1980s.

Neither COGAT, the Israeli military body in charge of civilian affairs in the territory, nor the army responded to requests for comment about the demolitions.

The Palestinians seek the West Bank to form the main part of a future state. They view the expansion of settlements as a major obstacle to any future peace deal because they reduce and divide up the land on which such a state would be established. Most of the international community views the settlements as illegal.

05.12.22

NATO expect Finland & Sweden membership as Ukraine shut gas flows

05.12.22

NATO to welcome Nordic members as Ukraine pushes back Russian forces
Finland and Sweden expect to be granted membership quickly, paving the way for increased troop presence in the Nordic region during the one-year ratification period
Reuters| Published: 05.12.22, 11:17

Finland is expected to announce on Thursday its intention to join NATO with Sweden likely to follow soon after, diplomats and officials said, as Russia's invasion of Ukraine reshapes European security and the Atlantic military alliance.

NATO allies expect Finland and Sweden to be granted membership quickly, five diplomats and officials told Reuters, paving the way for increased troop presence in the Nordic region during the one-year ratification period.

In the wider Nordic region, Norway, Denmark and the three Baltic states are already NATO members, and the addition of Finland and Sweden would likely anger Moscow, which says NATO enlargement is a direct threat to its own security.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has cited the issue as a reason for his actions in Ukraine, which has also expressed a desire to eventually join the western alliance.
Moscow has repeatedly warned Finland and Sweden against joining NATO, threatening "serious military and political consequences".

Asked on Wednesday if Finland would provoke Russia by joining NATO, President Sauli Niinisto said Putin would be to blame. "My response would be that you caused this. Look at the mirror," Niinisto said.

On the frontlines, Ukraine on Wednesday said it had pushed back Russian forces in the east and shut gas flows on a route through Russian-held territory, raising the specter of an energy crisis in Europe.

Ukraine's armed forces' general staff said on Wednesday it had recaptured Pytomnyk, a village on the main highway north of the second-largest city of Kharkiv, about halfway to the Russian border.

The advance appears to be the fastest that Ukraine has mounted since it drove Russian troops away from the capital Kyiv and out of northern Ukraine at the beginning of April. If sustained, it could let Ukrainian forces threaten supply lines for Russia's main attack force, and put rear logistics targets inside Russia within range of artillery.

But Russian forces were regrouping to prevent further advances, and had crossed the Donets River, where fighting was underway, the Ukraine general staff said on Thursday. In Vilkhivka, another village near Kharkiv recaptured by Ukrainian forces in early April, resident Tatyana Pochivalova returned to find her home blasted to ruins.

"I have not expected anything like this, such aggression, such destruction," a weeping Pochivalova said. "I came and I kissed the ground, I simply kissed it. My home, there is nothing. Where am I to live, how am I to live?"

In the south, Ukraine's military said early on Thursday it had destroyed two tanks and an ammunition depot in the Russian-controlled Kherson region.

Viacheslav Chaus, governor of the northern Chernihiv region, said some civilians had been killed and wounded in the city of Novhorod-Siversky by Russian airstrikes on critical infrastructure, administrative buildings and private houses overnight.

Russia calls its actions in Ukraine a "special operation" to disarm Ukraine and protect it from fascists. It also denies targeting civilians.

Ukraine and the West say the fascist allegation is baseless and that the war is an unprovoked act of aggression, in which thousands of civilians have been killed and towns and cities destroyed.

Gas supplies

Wednesday's move by Ukraine to cut off Russian gas supplies through territory held by Russian-backed separatists was the first time the conflict has directly disrupted shipments to Europe.

Gas flows from Russia's export monopoly Gazprom to Europe via Ukraine fell by a quarter after Kyiv said it was forced to halt all flows from one route, through the Sokhranovka transit point in southern Russia.

Ukraine accused Russian-backed separatists of siphoning supplies.

Should the supply cut persist, it would be the most direct impact so far on European energy markets.

Moscow has also imposed sanctions on the owner of the Polish part of the Yamal pipeline that carries Russian gas to Europe, as well as Gazprom's former German unit, whose subsidiaries service Europe's gas consumption.

The implications for Europe, which buys more than a third of its gas from Russia, were not immediately clear.

Burned out tanks

In southern Ukraine, where Russia has seized a swathe of territory, Kyiv has said Moscow plans to hold a fake referendum on independence or annexation to make its occupation permanent.

The Kremlin said on Wednesday it was up to residents living in the Russian-occupied Kherson region to decide whether they wanted to join Russia, but any such decision must have a clear legal basis.

Russian forces have also continued to bombard the Azovstal steelworks in the southern port of Mariupol, the last bastion of Ukrainian defenders in a city.

Ukraine says it is likely that tens of thousands of people have been killed in Mariupol.

Ukrainian authorities say between 150,000 and 170,000 of the city's 400,000 residents are still living there amid the Russian-occupied ruins.

Video from Mariupol showed heavy equipment clearing rubble as residents charged mobile devices from a generator set up in a children's playground.

One resident, Sergej, described returning home to find a tank had blown up his apartment.

"I came home (from) the shelter, opened the door, but there was no apartment anymore. It was scary. Actually, it was very scary."

05.11.22

Kosovo moving embassy to Jerusalem: EU allies & Turkey tried to reverse decision

05.11.22

Kosovo FM on moving embassy to Jerusalem: 'We keep our promises'

Donika Gervalla-Schwarz says while decision faced scrutiny from European Union allies,

Balkan country considers itself 'a reliable and a serious partner' to Israel

i24NEWS| Published: 05.11.22, 17:45

Kosovo decided to relocate its embassy to Jerusalem last year, becoming the first Muslim-majority state to do so.

After its decision, the European Union warned Kosovo of moving its embassy, and Turkey tried to make it reverse the relocation.

In an interview with i24NEWS, Kosovo Foreign Minister Donika Gervalla-Schwarz said that the country had to explain its decision to its allies, particularly in the European Union.

However, it did not impact the country's final decision. "It was a promise and a commitment of the former government in Washington that we are going to open our embassy in Jerusalem. And we keep our promises because we are a reliable partner internationally," Gervalla-Schwarz said, adding that it is part of "foreign policy" to disagree.

"You can never tell what will happen in the future, but I do not see any reasons [to move the embassy]. We will work from Jerusalem, and we will try to be very clear that while Kosovo is a small country it is a reliable and serious partner."

Gervalla-Schwarz was on her first visit to Jerusalem a year after Pristina opened its embassy in Israel's capital. She was in the Jewish state to sign a cooperation deal and bolster bilateral ties.

When asked about moving the embassy to be recognized by the Palestinian Authority, she said: "I do not see that, and I do not see the recognition as far as I can judge at this moment."

However, the Balkan country is interested in having a good relationship with both Israel and the Palestinian Authority, Kosovo's top diplomat said.

"It is not either nor. It is like telling partners that if you want a good relationship with Kosovo, you need to have a bad relationship with Serbia."

Additionally, she said that Kosovo could learn from Israel and its experience of integrating diasporic Jews into the country.

“We have people linked to the country, those living in the diaspora, but we need to make our country interesting for our children's children. And that is why we need to learn from Israel's experience.”

05.11.22

Gaza weapons ship & three smugglers seized by Israeli Navy & Shin Bet

05.11.22

Israel thwarts maritime weapon smuggling attempt from Gaza
Joint operation between Navy and Shin Bet leads to arrest of three operatives en route to Egypt from the coastal enclave, among them a veteran smuggler for various Gaza-based terror groups

i24NEWS| Published: 05.11.22, 14:31

A shipment of smuggled weapons destined for Gaza's Hamas terror group was seized in a joint maritime operation conducted by the Israeli Navy and the Shin Bet Internal Security Service, the IDF revealed Wednesday.

The operation was carried out on April 8, and saw three people who left Gaza by ship arrested by Israeli forces off the coast of Egypt and taken away for questioning by the Shin Bet, while the vessel with which they used to leave the coastal enclave was seized.

"We hit a significant route that was used to transfer components to manufacture weapons for terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip," said Col. Eli Sukholitsky, commander of the Navy's Ashdod base.

"The IDF operates constantly to prevent the strengthening of terrorist organizations and their infrastructure."

"The joint efforts of the IDF and Shin Bet intelligence services, supported by the forces on the ground and the naval control system, led to the successful dismantling," Sukholitsky added.

Mahmoud Bakr was identified as one of the three smugglers. He is described as a senior smuggler who worked with several terror groups in the Gaza Strip. The other two smugglers were named as Ahmed Ismail Fasih and Mahmud Nahad Silawi.

With the Gaza Strip blockaded by both Israel and Egypt, Hamas often attempts to smuggle weaponry and other contraband via both smuggling tunnels and the Mediterranean Sea.

05.11.22

Jordan king meets Biden Friday; issue of Jerusalem main topic for Waqf control

Jordanian FM: Israel has 'no sovereignty' over Jerusalem holy sites
Jordanian FM Safadi called the Al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem 'occupied Palestinian land', claiming the Waqf should have 'full authority' over the management of the compound'; says Jordan agrees 'the way forward is to respect the status quo'
Ilana Usmirsky, i24NEWS | Published: 05.11.22, 10:36

"Israel has no sovereignty over the holy sites in Jerusalem," Jordan's foreign minister said Tuesday evening, in response to Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett's comments on the Temple Mount.

"This is occupied Palestinian land," Ayman Safadi said in an interview with a Jordanian daily.

"Israel has no sovereignty over the Al Aqsa Mosque - it is a Muslim place of worship, only the Jordanian Waqf has full authority over the management of the compound," the minister said.

Safadi, however, expressed hope for a return to calm, saying that "the way forward is to respect the status quo."

He accused Israel of "making difficult all Waqf measures to maintain security in Al Aqsa Mosque and interfering with the duties of members of the organization."

"The Waqf office has appointed dozens of new workers at the Al Aqsa Mosque compound, but Israel is putting obstacles in their way," he said.

The Jordanian minister made the remarks ahead of Friday's meeting at the White House between King Abdullah II and U.S. President Joe Biden, with the issue of Jerusalem expected to be one of the main topics of the meeting.

A month and a half ago, a request from Jordan to increase the number of Waqf guards on the Temple Mount by about 50 guards, was rejected, the Prime Minister's Office announced on Tuesday.

According to reports, over the past few weeks, six Hamas-backed Waqf guards have been removed from the Temple Mount.

"There is no change or new development in the situation on the Temple Mount - Israel's sovereignty is preserved," the Prime Minister's Office said.

"All decisions regarding Temple Mount will be made by the Israeli government out of considerations of sovereignty, freedom of religion and security, and not under the pressure of foreign or political factors," Bennett said on Sunday.

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Ynet-News, May 11, 2022 – Wednesday

05.11.22 – We- - - News Placed in May 11 spot – Wednesday
Al Jazeera reporter dead another wounded in IDF fight with PA in Jenin

05.10.22 – Tu- - - News
EU coordinator seeks to salvage Vienna impasse over Tehran nuclear issues

05.10.22 – Tu- - - News
Attorney argues mentally disabled not responsible for smuggling & unfit for trial

05.10.22 – Tu- - - News Placed in May 10 spot – Tuesday
Terror wave sparks death penalty debate, only imposed twice for World War II crimes

05.09.22 – Mo- - - News
 Hamas prestige riding a flurry of lone-wolf terror, fueled by religious sentiment

05.10.22 – Tu- - - News
Russia pounds Black Sea port Odessa as bodies uncovered in collapsed buildings

05.09.22 – Mo- - - News Placed in May 08 spot – Sunday
First Muslim sworn in, to reorganize the 15-justice Supreme Court

05.09.22 – Mo- - - News Placed in May 09 spot – Monday
Arab Joint List & Bennett-Lapid Coalition remains; votes defeat Zionist Party 52-61

05.09.22 – Mo- - - News
Israel nabs woman sending death threats to PM's family & left wing coalition

05.08.22 – Su- - - News
Two arrested for operating drug lab within defunct synagogue in northern Israel

05.09.22 – Mo- - - News Placed in May 09 spot – Monday
Lebanon's election May 15; Hezbollah now has two-thirds of parliament
Lebanon election; Hezbollah majority

05.09.22 – Mo- - - News
Putin at WWII Victory Day: Ukraine action was preemptive move against West

05.08.22 – Su- - - News
Hundreds of security captured terrorists after forcing them to hide in one spot

05.07.22 – Sa- - - News
Drone strike targets Iran militia in east Syria, by US coalition forces