

Israel News Desk

with Pastor Steve Lloyd
BPF Secretary

News concerning Israel - May 2023

Happy 75th Birthday Israel.

Israel - Rockets have been fired into Israel from Gaza in their hundreds over the last few days. The Iron Dome defence system has stopped so many of the rockets, but some do get through and some have caused widespread damage and loss of life.

Watching a video clip of the Iron dome engaging with the incoming missiles was like watching a fireworks display with the amount of explosions above Israel's cities.

The Israeli military even had to use Davids Sling for the first time to intercept a rocket.

Yet Israel remain very guarded in their response as they seek to keep the civilian population of Gaza safe. They are in a no-win situation because if they do respond by attacking the missile sites and the bases of the attackers, civilians will be killed, no matter how hard they try not to, and then the worlds media will make Israel out to be the aggressor.

Israel so needs our prayers at this time, not only that God would intervene against the terrorists, but in the political and social life of the country.

The rockets are being fired against Israeli according to an umbrella organisation of Palestinian factions in Gaza, including Hamas, stated it was in retaliation for the killing by Israel of three Islamic Jihad commanders as well as several civilians.

This has been the most intense fighting between the sides for months and may lead to an all out war. But both sides are trying to show restraint with Israel not targeting Hamas, only the smaller Islamic Jihad faction.

Israel Military spokesman Admiral Daniel Hagari stated "Israel is not interested in a war".

Time will tell if they are forced to take further action.

Meanwhile, protests internally in Israel continue over the proposed overhaul of the judicial system. The protests have been going on for 18 weeks, and have recently seen the biggest yet with 180,000 people rallying against the Government.

If the overhaul went ahead, It would give PM Benjamin Netanyahu, who is on trial on corruption charges, and his partners in Israel's most hardline coalition in its history, the final say in appointing judges. It would also give the Knesset authority to overturn Supreme Court decisions and limit the court's ability to review laws.

Artificial Intelligence is taking the world by storm. In almost every field, it is at least beginning to exert a massive influence. One such A I tool is ChatGPT. This natural language processing tool allows people to have human-like conversations with a chatbot, but it is also able to answer questions and assist with tasks such as composing emails, code, and in some cases articles. If Israel is aware of anything, it is aware of the power of technology. But what does Technology think of Israel? With that question in mind, ChatGPT was tasked with writing a 400 word poem about the state of Israel.

We have not got room for it all here but it starts:

*From ancient times to modern day, Israel stands as a beacon, they say,
A land of promise, a land of hope, A land where generations learn to cope,
It then ends with*

*So let us celebrate this great land, A place where people from all walks of life can stand,
A nations that's rooted in faith and love, Israel shines bright, like the stars above.*

Strangely, on Tuesday, April 18th 2023, an entire battalion of crack Israeli troops from the Golani Brigade walked off the job.

Unlike strike-hit Britain where most strikes are about pay, these soldiers from the 51st Battalion of the Golani Brigade put down their weapons to protest, not about pay, but the removal of their commander from his position. His removal was precipitated by being unfit for the job. Following the walk out, the soldiers were called for a “disciplinary conversation” in regard to their weapons. The soldiers emphasised that they did not leave their weapons unattended, but had left them under the supervision of others. The soldiers had been silent for too long over the treatment that they had been receiving from their Battalion commanders and the removal of this officer had been the last straw. This is not the first time that the 51st had faced disciplinary measures.

USA - The speaker of America’s House of Representatives, Kevin McCarthy, pledged on Monday, May 1st that America would stand shoulder to shoulder with Israel against Iranian aggression when he addressed the Israeli Knesset. He also told them that the US would continue to fully fund Israel’s security needs.

“We remain resolute in our commitment that Iran will never acquire nuclear weapons” he stated. “Most of the region’s turmoil, violence and instability can be traced back to that source, which continues to fund terrorism, arm its proxy militias, and pursue nuclear weapons. We cannot allow the Iranian regime’s evil campaign to succeed.” He went on to say “As long as I am speaker, America will continue to support full funding for security assistance in Israel”.

Another US President hopeful, Ron Desantis of Florida, also visited Jerusalem recently. He attended the Face of Israel Conference, sponsored by the Jerusalem Post and Museum of tolerance. Whilst he was there, on the sidelines of the event he stated that he was in favour of West Bank settlements and keeping Jerusalem under full Israeli control. He wants America to be more aggressive towards Iran’s nuclear programme and he vehemently opposes the movement to boycott Israel. But the Republican VIP declined to take a position on the Israeli government’s effort to sap the Supreme Courts of much of its power, which President Joe Biden, a democrat, has repeatedly criticised as a danger to Israeli democracy.

Hungary - In April, as many as 50,000 Jews travelled to a Hungarian town for the anniversary of a noted rabbi’s death, marking significant growth for the annual pilgrimage and generating what the town’s mayor called “culture shock” for non-Jewish locals.

Since the fall of communism in 1989, Jewish pilgrims have been visiting Bodrogkeresztur, known as Kerestir in Yiddish, in April, timed to coincide with the anniversary of the death of Rabbi Yeshaya Steiner, also known as Reb Shayelev whom some believe had special powers of healing. He also famously advised a follower about how to rid mice from his granary, which led to the practice of fixing a picture of the “Mouser Rabbi” in homes to keep mice away.

The town has not had a significant Jewish population since 1944 when the town’s Jews were murdered in the Holocaust, but during the pilgrimage season tents have to be erected to house the visitors and shuttle buses run to and from the airport in Budapest. Dozens of buildings have been purchased by people affiliated with the pilgrimage.

Please continue to pray for the IDF forces on land, sea and in the air, as they continue to defend the Promised Land,
Maranatha

Steve