

# Israel News Desk

With BPF Secretary  
Steve Lloyd  
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Happy New Year 2023! and I hope you enjoyed a Happy Chanukah.

*John 10:22-24* **Then came the Festival of Dedication at Jerusalem. It was winter, and Jesus was in the temple courts walking in Solomon's Colonnade. The Jews who were there gathered around him, saying, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly."**  
Oh for the scales to fall off the Jewish peoples eyes so that they can see that Jesus IS their Messiah!

**Israel** - At the end of November Prime Minister Yair Lapid wrote to more than 50 world leaders, urging them to stop the UN sending Israel to the International Court of Justice. He stated that a Palestinian attempt to take the status of disputed territories to The Hague is meant to delegitimise Israel. A UN committee had voted overwhelmingly to ask the ICJ to consider whether the IDF's ongoing presence in Judea and Samaria, east Jerusalem and the Golan Heights can be considered de facto annexation.

The resolution also questions the status of Jerusalem.

The motion must be approved in a full General Assembly vote, which Lapid seeks to prevent, before it can go to The Hague. Lapid wrote *"The resolution is the outcome of a concerted effort to single out Israel, to discredit our security and to delegitimise our very existence. It has long been accepted that the status of disputed territory will be subject to direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians. A one-sided change to such a policy will have detrimental effects on the entire region. Bringing the matter to the ICJ will only play into the hands of the extremists"*.

A wooden box containing 15 silver coins that serve as **proof of the Chanukah story** of the Maccabees which was found recently in the Negev Desert will be displayed at the Hasmonean Museum in Modi'in, Israel. The coins dating back to the years leading up to the maccabean revolt around 2,200 years ago, were discovered in the Whadi Muraabat Caves in Nahal Darga in May 2022 during an excavation project in the Judean Desert caves.

The uniform group of silver tetradrachm coins found in the box were minted by Ptolemy VI, King of Egypt, who reigned at the same time as his uncle - Antiochus IV who headed the Seleucid Empire. Three of the coins were minted in 176 BCE and another dates from 171-170 BCE.

The Maccabean revolt forms the basis of Chanukah, which celebrates the victory over the Seleucid empire and the miracle of the 1 day's oil lasting 8 days.

On Wednesday, 21<sup>st</sup> December 2022 Israel's most right wing government was agreed seeing Benjamin Netanyahu return to power. Some of Netanyahu's partners in government have driven a hard bargain in negotiations, securing concessions that will drive judicial reform, expand West Bank settlements and introduce far-right influence in secular education.

One of his far-right partners in government, Avi Maoz of the Anti-LGBT Noam Party, has called for Jerusalem's Gay Pride event to be banned and disapproves of equal opportunities for women in the army.

**USA** - Disgraced American rapper **Kanye West** has been named 'Antisemite of the year' by a watchdog group responsible for tracking hatred against Jewish people.

West, who has legally change his name to 'Ye' tweeted last month that he was going to go "Death Con 3" on Jews, followed by a slew of antisemitic rants on twitter. In a TV interview with conspiracy theorist Alex Jones, West Said "I like Hitler...I'm not trying to be shocking, I like Hitler. The Holocaust is not what happened, let's look at the facts of that and Hitler has a lot of redeeming qualities".

The dishonourable title "Antisemite of the year" was conferred upon him by the group Stop Antisemitism after thousands of online votes.

**Saudi Arabia** - The Saudi's want to normalise ties with Israel, but it will take a while for this to happen, reported i24NEWS in early December. In addition to this Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman listed three main demands that had to be met in order for Saudi Arabia to join the Abraham Accords and normalise ties with Israel.

However, these demands had nothing to do with the Palestinian conflict. Rather, they hinged entirely on America confirming a US-Saudi alliance, weapons supplies to the kingdom as if it were a NATO country and allowing Riyadh to have a civil nuclear programme. The demands were revealed in a meeting with American officials visiting Riyadh. Saudi Arabia would be the latest Arab nation to normalise ties with Israel through the Abraham Accords, following the UAE, Bahrain and Morocco. UN Ambassador to the UN Danny Danon spoke at the first Abraham Accords Global Leadership Summit held in Rome stating that after Benjamin Netanyahu is sworn into office as PM, his new Government's "first priority will be to increase signatories to the Abraham Accords". "Netanyahu's first visit will be to Abu Dhabi, and we hope Riyadh will follow".

**Iran** - Four people have been executed in Iran for allegedly co-operating with Israel's Mossad and committing kidnappings.

The semi-official Mehr news agency said that they had "committed the crime of co-operating with the intelligence services of the Zionist regime"

It added that the four had been sentenced to death and they had acted with guidance from Mossad, it said "this network of thugs was stealing and destroying private and public property, kidnapping and obtaining fake confessions".

Three other people were given prison sentences of between 5 - 10 years for allegedly committing crimes such as acting against national security, aiding in kidnapping, and possessing illegal weapons.

Please keep praying for the peace of Jerusalem and for the men and women of the Israel Defence Forces.

Maranatha,

Steve