



National & World News Briefly...

UJC TO RAISE \$10 MILLION FOR RELIEF EFFORT

NEW YORK (JTA) — The North American Jewish federation system will raise \$10 million for southern Israel. The United Jewish Communities announced Monday that it will raise the funds to augment humanitarian and social needs programs that its overseas partners, the Jewish Agency for Israel and the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, already run in southern Israel, which has been under attack by Hamas missiles.

The JDC will provide more case workers for 25,000 elderly and disabled residents, expand consulting to municipalities to bolster emergency preparedness, expand trauma relief counseling to children, reinforce networks of emergency volunteers, fortify security structures for the elderly and boost small businesses that have suffered due to the ongoing attacks.

The Jewish Agency will provide 23,500 children with respite trips away from the conflict zone, purchase computers for children so they can continue schoolwork, provide supplies and provisions for bomb shelters, and provide counseling and therapy for immigrants housed in absorption centers.

The federation system is also planning a series of solidarity rallies and will send a delegation of leaders to

Israel to survey the situation, according to the UJC. In coming days the UJC also will open a fund-raising mailbox.

ATTACK ON PARIS SYNAGOGUE GAZA-RELATED

PARIS (JTA) — A car containing Molotov cocktails rammed into the door of a French synagogue and burst into flames. A rabbi and about 10 of his adult students in the Toulouse synagogue during the attack earlier this week fled unharmed. A second car containing Molotov cocktails was found near the synagogue, according to police.

The French Jewish community and government expressed their outrage and concern that anti-Semitism is on the rise in reaction to the current Israeli operation against Hamas in the Gaza Strip.

The National Bureau of Vigilance Against Anti-Semitism also reported that a 29-year-old Jewish man was beaten by a group of assailants last Sunday near the location of a pro-Palestinian protest in Paris that turned violent. The attackers yelled "Palestine will vanquish."

The bureau's president, Sammy Ghozlan, said less violent cases of anti-Judaism were reported to be occurring daily since the Israeli offensive in Gaza began. "Now we'll start to see a rise in young couples making aliyah" in response, he told JTA.

Interior Minister Michele Alliot-Marie condemned the Toulouse attack as "stupid and revolting," and assured that police would do "the maximum" to find those responsible.

FRENCH NETWORK APOLOGIZES FOR GAZA REPORT

PARIS (JTA) — A French television network has apologized for erroneously broadcasting a false report on Israel's Gaza operation.

Assisted by an anonymous posting, the French news blogger site Le Post proved a report by France 2 television used an outdated amateur video of Palestinian casualties from an accidental truck explosion as current footage demonstrating the violence in Gaza.

France 2 also was responsible for a September 2000 report, accused of being a fake, of the supposed shooting death of a 12-year-old Palestinian boy, Mohammed al-Dura, by the Israeli army.

In the new video, the truck in question contained bombs belonging to Hamas and exploded on Sept. 23, 2005. Intended to illustrate the extent of Web reports on the Israeli offensive in Gaza, the video shows dead bodies of toddlers being laid out on a white sheet.

Etienne Leenhardt, the joint director responsible for investigative reports, apologized to Le Post journalists for "an error on our part."

"The person who prepared the topic went too fast," he said. "It reminds us that we must be very attentive on verifying sources."

Leenhardt told Le Post that the network would apologize on its

afternoon daily report.

Meanwhile, a committee of independent experts is being formed to decide whether the video of the al-Dura shooting is indeed a fake. That video roused anti-Israel and anti-Semitic feelings across the globe, even fueling the subsequent mob lynching of two Israeli soldiers.

DEMS PLAN PRO-ISRAEL RESOLUTION

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Top Democrats are planning to introduce a non-binding congressional resolution supporting Israel's goal in its Gaza Strip operation.

U.S. Rep. Steny Hoyer (D-Md.), the U.S. House of Representatives majority leader, told JTA he was looking at such a resolution, which is being drafted in the office of Rep. Howard Berman (D-Calif.), the chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

"Certainly it would not demand a cease-fire," Hoyer said. "It would speak to the conditions that would justify a cease-fire. A cease-fire is not a just cease-fire when it's just Israel" holding fire.

Israel launched its major operation Dec. 27 in a bid to end rocket attacks on its South. Such attacks, carried out by militants allied with Gaza's Hamas rulers, drastically intensified last month following the end of a six-month cease-fire between Hamas and Israel.

Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-Fla.), the ranking member of the Foreign Affairs Committee, also may join the resolution.

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