

INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN EMBASSY JERUSALEM // JUNE 2021 // USA EDITION



WORD

FROM JERUSALEM



THE ROCKETS OF REJECTION

The Latest Palestinian War against Israel in Context



FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK



The International Christian Embassy Jerusalem was established in 1980 in recognition of the biblical significance of all of Jerusalem and its unique connection to the Jewish people. Today the ICEJ represents millions of Christians, churches, and denominations to the nation and people of Israel. We recognize in the restoration of Israel the faithfulness of God to keep His ancient covenant with the Jewish people. Our main objectives are:

- To stand with Israel in support and friendship;
- To equip and teach the worldwide church regarding God's purposes with Israel and the nations of the Middle East;
- To be an active voice of reconciliation between Jews, Christians, and Arabs, and to support the churches and congregations in the Holy Land.

From its head offices in Jerusalem, the ICEJ reaches out into more than 170 countries worldwide, with branch offices in over 90 nations.

Our vision is:

- To reach every segment of Israel's society with a Christian testimony of comfort and love, and
- To reach and actively represent to Israel the support of denominations, churches, and believers from every nation on earth.

The Christian Embassy is a non-denominational faith-based ministry supported by the voluntary contributions of our partners and friends across the globe. We invite you to join with us as we minister to Israel and the Jewish people worldwide by donating to the ongoing work and witness of the ICEJ.



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INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN EMBASSY JERUSALEM - USA

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Dear Friends,

The International Christian Embassy Jerusalem stands in solidarity with Israel in the face of the reckless Palestinian rioting, terror attacks, and rocket barrages over recent weeks and condemns Palestinian leaders for intentionally enflaming Muslim passions during Ramadan to ignite a dangerous religious conflict over Jerusalem.

Through the courageous decisions of both Arab and Israeli leaders, the Middle East region has recently experienced a significant and unprecedented momentum toward normalization and peace through the Abrahamic Accords. However, from the start, both Fatah and Hamas have deliberately sought to undermine these developments and incited Palestinians toward the recent escalation of violence and terror.

Besides their efforts to disrupt this newfound dynamic of peace for the entire Middle East, their actions also cover their failures, such as the canceling of Palestinian elections. Together with their backers in Iran and Turkey, they share full responsibility for this recent escalation. By ratcheting up their attacks on *Yom Yerushalayim* (Jerusalem Day) in particular, Fatah and Hamas also viciously displayed that neither accepts any Jewish claim to historical, biblical Jerusalem. They instead have threatened to ignite a regional conflagration over the city, and thus we call upon world leaders to firmly stand against the inflammatory Palestinian rhetoric and actions.

We are so grateful for our generous partners who have enabled us to order another 13 bomb shelters to be placed in southern Israel. This will bring our total to 133 shelters provided for the safety and security of the people of Israel.

We ask Christians around the world to earnestly pray for peace and calm in Jerusalem, the Land of Israel, and the entire Middle East.

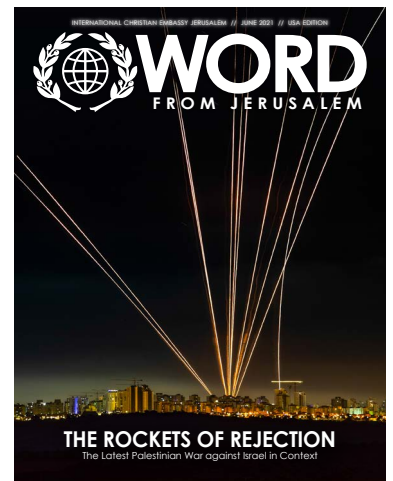
Blessings from Jerusalem!

Dr. Jürgen Bühler
President
International Christian Embassy Jerusalem

COVER PHOTO:

A long-exposure image of an Iron Dome battery intercepting rockets launched by Hamas in Gaza toward the Israeli coastal city of Ashdod in May (*Photo by Avi Roccah/Flash90*).

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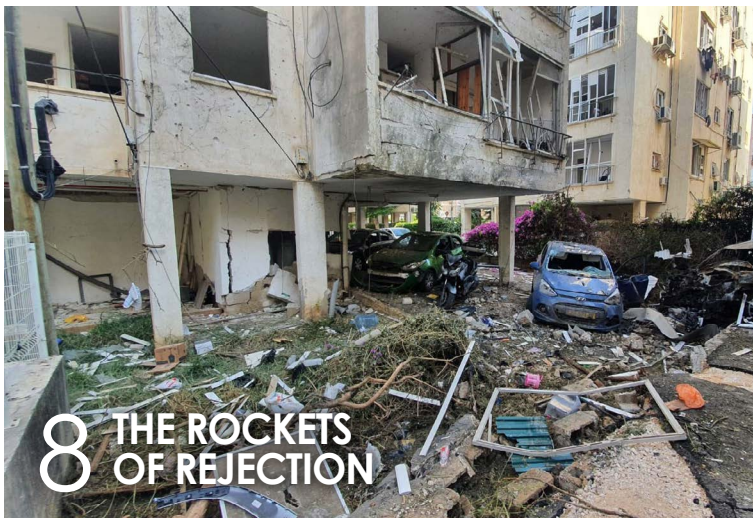


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WHY JERUSALEM IS IMPORTANT TO CHRISTIANS

BY DR. MOJMIR KALLUS
VICE PRESIDENT FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

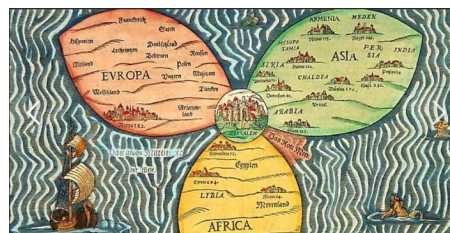
Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: “May they prosper who love you. Peace be within your walls, Prosperity within your palaces” (Psalm 122:6–7).

As recent events have shown, peace in Jerusalem is sometimes a rare commodity. Last month, as Israel marked *Yom Yerushalayim* (Jerusalem Day), violence was sparked on the Temple Mount, leading to widespread incidents of terror attacks and the launching of over 4,000 rockets from Gaza by Hamas. In this turbulent climate, we must understand why Jerusalem holds such a central place in Christian thinking. The importance of Jerusalem to Christians is rooted in the significance attached to Jerusalem in the Bible.

One way to determine the importance of a subject in the Bible is to see how often it is mentioned. By this measure, Jerusalem appears to be quite significant, as it is directly mentioned 660 times in the Hebrew Scriptures and 146 times in the New Testament. If we add

synonyms and endearing terms, such “Zion,” we get another 165 times—almost 1,000 verses that mention Jerusalem, the only city declared “holy” in the Bible.

However, this is a quantitative answer. We must ask a qualitative question: What is it that makes Jerusalem so prominent? You may have seen the medieval painting in which Jerusalem is depicted as the center of the world. It is actually based on a Scripture from Ezekiel



where God declares that He has set Jerusalem in the midst of the nations (Ezekiel 5:5). So, again, what makes the city so special?

First, Jerusalem is close to God’s heart.

God makes some strong statements about Jerusalem that reveal His desire, His emotions. The prophet Zechariah declares that the Lord has chosen Jerusalem (Zechariah 3:2) and that He is zealous for Zion with great zeal (Zechariah 1:14). We find a key passage in the book of Psalms: “For the Lord has chosen Zion; He has desired it for His dwelling place: ‘This is My resting place forever; here I will dwell, for I have desired it’” (Psalm 132:13–14).

So, Jerusalem is a dwelling place for the presence of God. He is omnipresent, and we can experience His presence anywhere in the world. Where two or three are gathered in the name of Jesus, He is present. When the Holy Spirit fills us, we experience the presence of God. Yet God’s presence rests in Jerusalem in a special way, because God chose this place.

God makes choices. He draws distinctions. Just as He loves all nations, He also has chosen one particular nation as a “special treasure, a special possession” (Exodus 19:5). God made



a covenant with the Jewish people and set them apart for His redemptive plan to bring blessing to all mankind. This plan appears when God first called Abram, saying: “In you all the families of the earth shall be blessed” (Genesis 12:3). The New Testament affirms this, such as when Paul explains that the advantage of a Jew is “much in every way, mainly because to them were committed the oracles of God” (Romans 3:2). All the world owes a debt of gratitude to the Jewish people because they brought us the very word of God. And from them came the Messiah—Jesus, our Savior.

So we can see that God makes choices for a purpose. He chose Israel to be the vehicle through which to bring salvation and blessing to the whole world. Likewise, He chose Jerusalem for a special purpose. And again, we see that it is meant not only for Israel but for all nations. Isaiah declares: “My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations” (Isaiah 56:7).

In this city, His Son was also sentenced, crucified, and put into the grave. In this city, Jesus rose from the dead, demonstrating the power of God that overcomes even death. In this city, the Holy Spirit fell upon the first disciples, and the Church was born.

This alone explains why Jerusalem is so important to Christians. Different denominations may have their particular centers—some look to Rome, others to Constantinople, Moscow, Geneva, or Wittenberg. These locales emphasize their differences. But when Christians look to Jerusalem, we emphasize what we have in common. Focus on Jerusalem brings unity—or at least it should. In my experience, when we pray for the peace of Jerusalem, we are united despite our differences.

But there is more to Jerusalem than just the past. The Lord has chosen Jerusalem for a central role in His still-unfolding plan. The Hebrew prophets spoke of a future time when

Jerusalem will be prominent once more. Jeremiah foresaw Israel being gathered “out of the land of the north to the land that I have given as an inheritance to your fathers” and “at that time Jerusalem shall be called the Throne of the Lord, and all the nations shall be gathered to it, to the name of the Lord, to Jerusalem. No more shall they follow the dictates of their evil hearts” (Jeremiah 3:17–18).

So we see in this city a unique connection between Israel and the nations. When the Jewish people return to their land, all nations shall come to Jerusalem. The prophet Zechariah explained that after a great conflict over the city, the nations shall come at one particular season of the year: “And it shall come to pass that everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles” (Zechariah 14:16).

It has been the mission of the ICEJ to make the



The Parade of Nations, Feast of Tabernacles

global Church aware of this prophetic call, and thus we started a Christian celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles (*Sukkot*) more than 40 years ago.

This connection between the Jewish return and Jerusalem exalted among the nations is being confirmed by history. When the first waves of Aliyah started in the 1880s, Jerusalem turned from a neglected provincial town to a highly coveted place. In those days, all the major powers insisted on having a foothold in the city—even today we have a German Colony, a Russian Compound, an American Colony, a French Quarter, etc.

And as the Jewish nation grew, so did the global importance of Jerusalem. The United Nations tried to make it an international city. The Arabs ignited a war in 1948 that tragically left Jerusalem divided. In 1967 it was reunited under Jewish sovereignty, but the world has largely refused to recognize this. Jerusalem is the only national capital in the world not recognized by most governments. US President Donald Trump broke from the consensus and moved the US Embassy to Jerusalem, but the pressure on other nations not to follow is enormous. It all confirms the special importance of the city. It is as if the whole world is irrationally fixated on Jerusalem, which brings to mind the words of the prophet Zechariah:

Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of drunkenness to all the surrounding peoples, when they lay siege against Judah and Jerusalem. And it shall happen in that day that I will make Jerusalem a very heavy stone for all peoples; all who would heave it away will surely be cut in pieces, though all nations of the earth are gathered against it. (Zechariah 12:2–3)

There have been numerous UN resolutions about Jerusalem and yet no peaceful resolution over its fate. Indeed, Jerusalem seems to have an intoxicating influence over people. Recall all the major Arab/Muslim riots in recent decades over minor Israeli moves in the city.

The prophets foretell of a coming conflict over Jerusalem that will involve all nations. This is one of the signs of the coming of the Messiah. The disputed status of Jerusalem is an indication of our prophetic times. If you want to discern the times, look to Jerusalem. Jesus said: “Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled” (Luke 21:24). Jerusalem was occupied—trampled—by the gentiles from the Roman destruction in AD 70 until June 1967. With the liberation of Jerusalem, a paradigm shift occurred. Jerusalem is now at the center of world attention. And God is restoring Israel. We are moving toward the fulfillment of all the remaining prophecies, of salvation for Israel and judgment on the nations. And then His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives. Jesus will come

to reign from Jerusalem, and all nations shall come up to Jerusalem to worship Him. And in the end, there will finally be a “New Jerusalem” coming down from heaven—pure and holy.

So Jerusalem is close to God’s heart. It is the place where significant events in salvation history occurred, and it is the future throne of God to rule over all nations.

One final thought on why Jerusalem plays such a critical role. Genesis 14 tells the story of Abraham returning after defeating five kings and meeting Melchizedek, the king of Salem (Jerusalem) and also meeting the king of Sodom. The two kings are opposites. Melchizedek is a righteous king and priest of the one true God. He offers bread and wine to Abraham, who accepts the gifts and offers back a tithe of his increase. In contrast, the king of Sodom offers him the ill-gotten spoils of war and is refused (Genesis 14:17–23).

Abraham was put to a test. He had to make a choice. Would he choose material possessions from Sodom or a humble life of righteousness and peace before God? Abraham understood the choice perfectly—and chose well!

I believe Jerusalem represents this choice for all peoples and nations. This city demands a decision. God chose Jerusalem to be a measuring stick by which He is going to judge all nations. May Jerusalem never lose its spiritual importance to us. 🌍

STAND UP FOR ISRAEL AT THE ICC: SIGN THE ICEJ PETITION!

The International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague has an important role to play in world affairs: to fairly and independently guard against impunity for war crimes, genocide, and other atrocities that “shock the conscience of humanity.” However, the ICC has recently diverted from this mission by opening an official probe against Israel for alleged war crimes committed during and since the 2014 rocket war with Hamas in Gaza and Israel’s actions to build and maintain Jewish communities in the West Bank and eastern Jerusalem.

In response, the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem has launched a global petition that allows you to express your opposition to this ICC war crimes probe against Israel. The results of this petition will be presented to the member states of the ICC and the judges and prosecutor of the Court.

BACKGROUND

The ICC made a highly politicized decision to investigate Israel for war crimes, basing the move on spurious claims. And in the process, it has unlawfully expanded the Court’s jurisdiction. The probe was prompted by an overzealous chief prosecutor, Fatou Bensouda, who harbors bias against the Jewish state, as seen in her extensive private consultations with Palestinian Authority officials on this matter over recent years.

The Palestinians, in turn, are seeking to exploit the Court to deprive Israel of its right of self-defense, while also criminalizing the legitimate rights of Jews to live in peace and security in their ancient homeland.

Therefore, this probe against Israel must be opposed by all those concerned with fairness and justice in world affairs. Christians especially have a historic, moral duty to stand up against such discriminatory actions against Israel.

MAKING THE CASE

The ICC is considered a “court of last resort,” which can only exercise jurisdiction over criminal cases expressly assigned to it by the Rome Statute, its signatory member states, or the United Nations Security Council. Thus, its current actions against Israel are improper and flawed for several reasons:

- 1 Israel is not a signatory to the Rome Statute governing the ICC, has not consented to the Court’s jurisdiction in this matter, and has its own long-established and respected judicial system for investigating and trying such crimes.
- 2 The Palestinians do not qualify as a sovereign state under the Rome Statute, and under the Oslo Accords, they have no authority to assert or confer criminal jurisdiction over Israelis in the West Bank and Gaza.
- 3 Therefore, the Court has no legal standing or authority to investigate and indict Israelis for war crimes in the “occupied territories”—a view held by numerous Western democratic states and international legal scholars.
- 4 The ICC’s chief prosecutor, Ms. Fatou Bensouda, has exhibited bias against Israel through her extensive and secretive consultations with Palestinian Authority officials on this matter since 2015. This bias is further evidenced by her dating the period for the formal probe back to June 13, 2014—the day after three Israeli teenage boys were kidnapped and murdered by Hamas—thus deliberately focusing on Israel’s response to a heinous crime and not the original crime itself committed by Palestinians.
- 5 In the Oslo Accords signed with Israel, the Palestinians expressly agreed that they have no criminal jurisdiction over Israelis in the West Bank, Gaza, and eastern Jerusalem, which also means they have no authority to delegate that criminal jurisdiction to another body. Thus, the ICC itself is flouting the Oslo agreements and undercutting this critical source of stability for the region.
- 6 The ICC is sullyng its impartiality and prestige while also weakening the prospects for peace in the region by unlawfully intervening in a bilateral political dispute on the side of the Palestinians, right when Israel has made historic advances in peace and normalization with several Arab nations. 🌐



Cour
Pénale
Internationale
International
Criminal
Court



Help reverse this illicit and unjust war crimes probe against Israel by signing our petition to the International Criminal Court.

SIGN THE PETITION TODAY AT:
icejusa.org/iccpetition

THE ROCKETS OF REJECTION

The Latest Palestinian War against Israel in Context

BY DAVID PARSONS, ICEJ VP AND SENIOR SPOKESMAN

As usual, one of the first casualties of war is truth.

Many would have us believe the latest Palestinian rocket war against Israel was triggered by the land dispute in Sheikh Jarrah and the desecration of the al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem. But those are just a pretext to hide the real agenda behind this campaign of Palestinian violence and terrorism. The riots and rockets causing mayhem and loss across the Land of Israel were a message from both Fatah and Hamas that they continue to reject peace and particularly the dramatic move toward Arab-Israeli normalization embodied in the Abraham Accords.

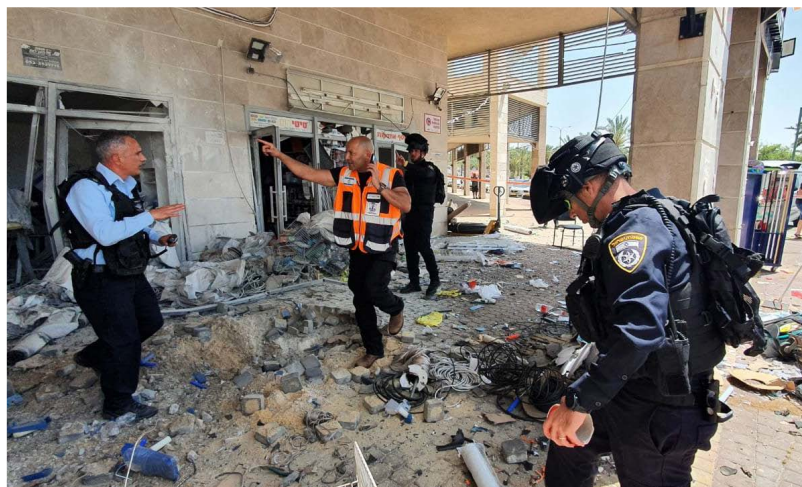
For the record, tensions indeed were building in Jerusalem over recent weeks until a convergence of events brought them to a boiling point. Small groups of Arab and Jewish agitators were facing off almost daily at the site of the disputed homes in Sheikh Jarrah—nothing new there. But this time, the dueling protests came as Muslims were observing the month of Ramadan, a time when Islamic passions and prejudices can easily be stirred against Israel and the Jewish people—especially over Jerusalem. Several Jerusalem Arab youths then began slapping Orthodox Jews walking through the Old City and posting video clips of the humiliating slaps on TikTok. A group of far-right Jews responded by accosting Arabs on Jaffa Road one evening, forcing Israeli police to repel them with anti-riot gear. Meanwhile, the police also barricaded the entrance to the Damascus Gate, where Palestinians were congregating to stage their own attacks. Palestinian leaders cried foul at Israel and incited their people to even more violence.

Then came the last Friday of Ramadan—decreed “Al-Quds Day” by Iran’s late Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini to provoke jihad for Jerusalem. Right on cue, Palestinians stashed piles of rocks in the al-Aqsa mosque at the south end of the Temple Mount to stone Jews praying at the Western Wall down below. Israeli forces intervened, the rock-throwers retreated into the mosque, and the standoff escalated from there over the weekend.

On Monday, Hamas—feeling sidelined down in Gaza—decided to enter the fray and trigger an explosion, which was also timed to spoil Israel’s annual celebration of *Yom Yerushalayim*. The military wing of the Islamist terror militia issued an ultimatum, calling for the removal of Israel’s security forces from the Temple Mount compound and Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood and the release of Palestinian terrorists imprisoned in Israeli jails—all by 6:00 p.m. that evening. When its conditions were not met, Hamas fired seven rockets at Jerusalem, and the fourth Hamas rocket war with Israel began.

Yet the conflict must be viewed in a much broader context.

Ever since the Trump administration forged the Abraham Accords between Israel and four Sunni Arab states (United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Sudan, and Morocco), the regional momentum toward peace has been growing, leaving the Palestinians isolated and under pressure—including from Arab leaders—to finally start coming to terms with Israel. Even Israeli Arab members of the Knesset were joining in, as the Ra’am party was poised to break a long-standing political taboo by joining a coalition government as an outside partner.



Trapped by the push for peace, the Palestinians initially tried to escape by calling for elections—their first in 16 years. But when Fatah realized they would likely lose to Hamas, Palestinian Authority head Mahmoud Abbas called off the elections (while falsely blaming the delay on Israel). This led to growing discontent at home, and Palestinian officials figured the only other way out was to play the Jerusalem card, something they are experts at doing. For 100 years now, Palestinian leaders have repeatedly fed their people and the entire Muslim world the lie that Israel is endangering the al-Aqsa mosque. And sadly, this false accusation always seems to find an audience.

For weeks, both Fatah and Hamas ratcheted up the rhetoric against Israel, especially on Jerusalem. Increasingly during Ramadan, they openly called for confrontation with Israel in the city and “on the roads,” while also amplifying their appeals for martyrdom. They also urged the ‘48 Arabs (Israeli Arab citizens) to join the battle—which, tragically, many have. This deliberate incitement campaign has been

meticulously documented over recent weeks by the monitoring group Palestinian Media Watch. Hamas then instantly leapfrogged Fatah in their internal rivalry by launching rockets at Jerusalem to “defend al-Aqsa,” something Fatah (thankfully) cannot do right now.

The truth is that the Sheikh Jarrah land disputes have been winding their way through the Israeli courts for several years now. They involve private litigants seeking legal recourse in delinquent rent cases, rather than any draconian Israeli government demolition orders, as is widely portrayed. In addition, Israeli authorities had already decided to postpone any court decisions on the properties until after Ramadan to lower the temperature.

And concerning the al-Aqsa mosque, it was Palestinian rioters and rock-throwers who desecrated the mosque (yet again) by amassing stones there for precalculated use against Jewish worshipers and Israeli police and then by seeking refuge in the mosque to evade arrest for their blatantly criminal behavior.

Thus, neither the Sheikh Jarrah disputes nor the Palestinian scam at al-Aqsa could ever justify the current wave of violence and terror that Fatah and Hamas have now unleashed upon all the peoples of this Land. These riots and rockets, viewed in proper perspective, were simply a means for both Palestinian factions to express their unwavering rejection of peace with Israel.

The shame is that Israelis were coming so close to a genuinely historic breakthrough of reconciliation with their Arab neighbors, both in the region and within their borders. But alas, those hopes are now badly battered, the pressure is off the Palestinians to make peace, and who knows when the raging flames they ignited will be extinguished. 🌍

FOR MORE on this topic, watch the ICEJ Webinar, “The Escalation over Jerusalem” from Thursday, May 13, 2021, featuring ICEJ Vice President & Spokesman David Parsons, Amb. Paul Hirschson from Israel’s Foreign Ministry, and Shmuel Bowman of Operation Lifeshield. View it at: on.icej.org/ICEJWebinar

PLEASE HELP BY DONATING TO: WWW.ICEJUSA.ORG/ESCALATION-OVER-JERUSALEM



A grateful Jewish family on their way from Kazakhstan to Israel in April



Ksenia and Emilia were determined to reach Israel

A FRUITFUL SEASON OF ALIYAH

BY ANASTASIYA GOODING

The year 2021 is quickly turning into one of our most fruitful seasons of Aliyah ever, as the ICEJ has already sponsored flights for over 880 Jewish immigrants since January. This includes a group of 302 Ethiopian Jews who landed in February, a flight with 226 Jewish immigrants from across the former Soviet Union who came in March, and a third flight with 102 *Olim* (newcomers) from Kazakhstan.

This is remarkable when you consider it has happened during a time of coronavirus lockdowns and travel bans, including the first-ever closure of Ben-Gurion Airport. But thankfully, they have been able to make the journey home to Israel on “rescue flights” arranged by the Jewish Agency for Israel and sponsored by the ICEJ.

Many of these new arrivals were planning to make Aliyah last year but were delayed by lockdowns in Israel. Some had already sold their homes and quit their jobs but were left in limbo when Ben-Gurion was completely shut down in January and February. Yet the skies are now opening back up, and the ICEJ is in a

position to help bring home an expected surge in Aliyah to Israel.

Many of the Russian-speaking immigrants also needed lengthy connecting flights, traversing up to eight time zones from across the former Soviet republics, before boarding the final four-hour flight to Tel Aviv.

Among the 226 Jews who arrived in March were Ksenia and her daughter Emilia. They came all the way from Kazan, the capital of Tatarstan, and will be settling into a kibbutz in the Negev desert as part of the “first home in the homeland” program. Ksenia has a master’s degree in land use engineering and hopes to see the Negev bloom.

Ksenia has always dreamed of making Aliyah, but she constantly ran into delays every time she tried. Last year amid the coronavirus pandemic, her mother and younger sister managed to arrive in Israel, which motivated Ksenia to pursue Aliyah too. After completing all the needed preparations, Ksenia and Emilia were scheduled to come in November—but then

Ben-Gurion Airport went into lockdown, forcing them to wait once more.

They grew discouraged with no hope in sight until they heard the fantastic news that a “rescue flight” was leaving Moscow on March 15. After much perseverance, Ksenia and her daughter finally reached their new home in Israel.

Thousands of Jews are still waiting to make the move to Israel. Interest in Aliyah is dramatically rising, as many Jewish families worldwide now view Israel as safer health-wise and better positioned for economic recovery than other countries. Israeli and Jewish Agency officials anticipate up to 250,000 new Jewish immigrants to arrive over the next three to five years.

Since we were founded in 1980, the ICEJ has assisted more than 160,000 Jewish immigrants to return to Israel from all around the world—and this work is continuing to expand in 2021. Please help us bring more Jews home to Israel in the days ahead by supporting the ICEJ’s many Aliyah efforts. 🌍

DONATE TODAY AT: www.icejusa.org/support-aliyah



MENTORING PROGRAM GIVES JEWISH IMMIGRANTS A SPRING IN THEIR STEP!

BY LAURINA DRIESSE

Deciding to leave one's country is a huge and often daunting step, especially when you are a single parent with a child whose life will be greatly impacted by your decisions.

For Natali, a single Jewish mother from Colombia, weighing up her life-changing options was a two-year process. Facing economic hardship, she finally completed her Aliyah application to move to Israel, despite complications with her son's father. However, her strong desire to seek a better future for herself and her son propelled her to overcome the hurdles, and she finally arrived in Israel in February 2019.

Feeling extremely blessed to be in Israel, Natali and her son entered an absorption center in Beersheva. She soon joined a mentorship program for new immigrants sponsored by the ICEJ. The mentors are trained professionals who help each family over the first year and a half as they adjust to Israel. They offer a range of practical advice and assistance—from showing new immigrants how things work in this country or helping them find jobs to providing support as they overcome barriers and resolve personal issues.

Natali's mentor, Lital, has been a lifeline for her, guiding her each step of the way as she has settled into her new homeland. Natali

recalled how hard it was to adjust to a new language and job—and see her son struggling too.

"My son had a hard time to start speaking," said Natali. "He missed his grandparents. He was crying. He was cranky. It was very difficult for me as a mother. . . . I know that we don't have control of everything, but I felt like my son was changing a lot—and not for the good."

Thankfully, she could turn to Lital for sound advice and support. Working with Lital, Natali started to focus on how her own feelings impacted her son too. As Natali began to shift her focus and change her attitude, life improved for both mother and son.

Natali's time in the mentorship program will soon end, and she expressed great admiration toward her mentor and the program.

"This is what I have learned," she noted. "To look at your life and not blame everybody or blame the government because they don't give me money. No, it is part and part . . . The government gives, but you also need to give and to work . . . and be positive and happy."

"So, for me, this experience with you guys—I always say this to Lital, and I say it again—'It is amazing!'" she said with a smile.

"It is a beautiful job what you do, and my mentor

has inspired me to do the same. I want to help people and build them up and to tell them this is not the end. If something bad happened, it does not mean that life stops. No, let's go, let's continue, let's be strong . . . and this is what I want to do. I want to coach others," Natali concluded.

Nicole Yoder, ICEJ's Vice President for AID and Aliyah, explained why the ICEJ has supported this mentoring program since it began as a pilot some 14 years ago.

"I love to see the deep impact having a personal mentor makes in the lives of these Jewish immigrants as they seek to reestablish their lives anew and realize their dreams in Israel," said Nicole. "We have witnessed again and again how stabilizing this assistance is, and we are thrilled to do what we can to ensure that immigrants receive this essential help."

Please consider partnering with us to help more Jewish immigrants get a jumpstart as they begin their new lives in Israel. A gift of \$2,750 enables a brand-new Israeli immigrant less than a year in the country to enjoy the supportive care of a mentor, whereas aiding immigrants who are a little longer in the country but who have fallen into distress generally requires a larger investment. Your donation of any size is greatly appreciated and will help us provide professional mentors for newcomers to Israel like Natali and her son. 🌍

DONATE TODAY AT: www.icejusa.org/immigrant-assistance

MAKING ALIYAH ONE STEP AT A TIME

For over four decades, the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem has been helping Jewish families make Aliyah to Israel. Among the Jews we have helped bring back to their ancient homeland are doctors, teachers, artists, engineers, and people from many other professional backgrounds—each one making unique contributions to the success of modern Israel. Amazingly, we are eyewitnesses of the fulfillment of Isaiah's vision that one day a restored nation of Israel would make the desert bloom and fill the earth with its fruits (Isaiah 27:6).

This divine work of restoration is taking place one family at a time, and each family must make the journey home to Israel one step at a time. As Aliyah continues, we want to acquaint you with some touching life stories of the new Jewish immigrants making the journey to Israel, starting with the Lagunova family from Kazakhstan.

MEET THE LAGUNOVA FAMILY (KAZAKHSTAN)

BY ANASTASIYA GOODING

Lydia Lagunova, along with her husband Yuri and their young daughter, made Aliyah in early April. They arrived on a special “evacuation flight” from Kazakhstan sponsored by the ICEJ. Lydia insisted the entire family had no doubts when they finally decided to begin the process of Aliyah.

“We wanted to live and work in our homeland and nowhere else,” she said.

Lydia was an actress with the Russian academic theater and first performed as an actress in Ukraine and later in Kazakhstan, in the National Russian Academic Theater in Almaty. Lydia and her husband also organized a theater school, where Lydia was teaching stage speech, choreography, rhetoric, and stage performance. Her husband, Yuri, has higher education in engineering and economics and worked in the automobile industry. Their nine-year-old daughter Alexandra is already an actress in her own right.

“We had been thinking about Aliyah for a long time, but a lot of difficulties prevented us from realizing our aspirations,” Lydia recalled.

The first time they tried to make Aliyah in 2014, their plans were thwarted by the military conflict in eastern Ukraine that forced their move to Kazakhstan. The Lagunova family faced many hardships, but the moment finally came when they resolutely decided it was time to move to Israel.



They contacted the Jewish Agency for Israel, which helped fulfill their dream of living in Israel.

“We passed the consular check successfully, and for us, it was the most important and desired gift in the difficult year of 2020,” Lydia confided. “What a miracle, that despite the acute issues with crossing borders and no air traffic, there was still an opportunity to take a direct flight to Israel, the country of which I have long dreamed of.”

The Lagunova family’s dream came true when a special Aliyah “evacuation flight” from Kazakhstan, sponsored by the ICEJ, landed at Ben Gurion Airport earlier this month with a group of 102 Jewish immigrants on board.

“Thanks to everyone who was involved, who gave us the opportunity to start a new life here,” Lydia said gratefully.

Many more Jewish families are waiting to take their next steps in making the journey home to Israel, the Land where they truly belong. As Christians from the nations, we are invited to play a key role in the prophetic return of the Jewish people back to their ancient homeland. You can play your part by supporting the ICEJ's Aliyah efforts.

GO TO: [ICEJUSA.ORG/SUPPORT-ALIYAH](https://www.icejusa.org/support-aliyah)



MEET THE ADDIS FAMILY (ETHIOPIA)

BY ESTER HEINZMANN
ICEJ GERMANY

Yaliganesh had not seen her mother Nana for 20 years. When Nana and her three sons left their home village of Gojam and moved to Gondar to await permission to immigrate to Israel, Nana's other four children, including Yaliganesh, remained in Gojam. After waiting nine years in Gondar, Nana finally received permission to make Aliyah. "We were so happy," her son Kafale remembers.

But then they received bad news: only the mother and three sons could come to Israel. "They told us: 'You go now, and once you're in Israel, the others will follow,'" Kafale remembers.

In the years that followed, three more siblings were able to make Aliyah, but not Yaliganesh. "I cried so much when they left for Israel and today, 10 years later, I am still crying," she says. "I couldn't even say goodbye to them."

As a young man, Kafale tried to help Yaliganesh make it to Israel. After his military service in the IDF paratroopers, he traveled to Gondar and was shaken by the conditions his sister faced in the transit camps. He found Yaliganesh living in a small mud hut, with no electricity or running water—like most Jews in Gondar. For years, Yaliganesh stored away her few belongings in suitcases—always ready for her journey to Israel.

Last November, Yaliganesh finally received permission to make Aliyah. "I will be so happy to see my family again. It feels like a dream," she smiled.

Her family in Israel also was excited. "At last, the time has come. After 20 years of tears, we can embrace her and let out all this longing," said a relieved Kafale.

Yaliganesh and her family arrived in Israel on an ICEJ-sponsored flight, and she was finally able to hug her mother Nana!

MEET THE SHALAEV FAMILY (RUSSIA)

BY ANASTASIYA GOODING



Leonid Shalaev, along with his wife and two children, arrived in Israel on a "rescue flight" sponsored by the ICEJ on March 15. Leonid's arrival was marked by a long-awaited reunion with his brother, who had already made Aliyah to Israel.

Leonid was born into a family who had lived for several generations in Kamchatka, in the Far East of Russia—a long 5,600 miles distance from the promised land. As a young man, he moved to southwest Russia to study at the Polytechnic University. There, he met and fell in love with Irina, who became his wife. The young couple decided to move back east to Vladivostok, a port city on the Sea of Japan. They soon welcomed the birth of a son, Savely, and daughter, Polina. Yet despite now having a family, Leonid was not ready to settle down in the Far East.

"We had a dream to live in a warm climate. I also always dreamed of becoming a computer programmer. And I really missed my brother, who now lived in Israel," Leonid shared. "Israel makes all dreams come true!"

From then on, Leonid started pursuing his dream to reach Israel. He and his wife began to study Hebrew. He also prepared for the entrance exam to Tel Ran, a computer programming school in Israel, and was accepted last August.

Everything seemed to be going smoothly, and in November 2020 the Shalaev family received their entry visas to Israel. But then Ben-Gurion Airport was completely shut down for the first time in its history. "This was such a disappointment, and we didn't know what to do," recounted Leonid. "We had already quit our jobs and sold our apartment."

"And then, we got the best news ever that we would fly with the whole family to our dream—our new home in Israel!"

This door suddenly opened when the ICEJ stepped in to sponsor a "rescue flight" for 226 Jewish immigrants from across the former Soviet Union, including the Shalaev family.

"Thanks to all those who helped make this flight happen! Many thanks to you all," said Leonid. 🌍



EMERGENCY ALIYAH FLIGHTS CONTINUE TO 'BRING THEM HOME'

If there has been a “silver lining” to the global pandemic over the past year, it is the increased interest among Jewish communities worldwide in making Aliyah to Israel. Right now, there are literally thousands of Jewish families anxiously hoping and waiting to come home to Israel, which they view as safer health-wise and better suited to recover economically from the coronavirus crisis. And the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem has an opportunity to help bring hundreds of them to Israel on emergency Aliyah flights being scheduled to land from the four corners of the earth—including France, Ethiopia, the United States, Latin America, and Russia—as well as from countries like Argentina and the former Soviet republics, which currently are being hit hard by COVID-19.

Another country struggling with a devastating spike in coronavirus is India. Tragically, India leads the world by far in the daily number of deaths and new infections, with new cases now at nearly 400,000 per day. As of early May, more than 20 million infections have been confirmed

in the country, while the number of deaths has exceeded 226,000 since the pandemic began. The country now accounts for well over 30 percent of all COVID cases worldwide, and its healthcare system is being overwhelmed beyond capacity.

Due to this exceptionally dire situation in India, the Israeli government took immediate action to bring a group of 548 Bnei Menashe from the northeast corner of India to Israel. These Bnei Menashe Jews were already approved for Aliyah and were waiting to come later this year—but they were desperate to reach Israel and the ICEJ immediately committed to sponsor flights for up to 100 of these new Bnei Menashe immigrants due to arrive later this month as well as many Jewish families as possible arriving at Ben-Gurion Airport. But we need your help!

The flights and other travel costs per immigrant total around US \$1,000 each. So please consider a generous donation at this critical hour of need to help these Jewish people in distress safely reach Israel. 🌍

DREAMING OF A NEW LIFE IN ISRAEL

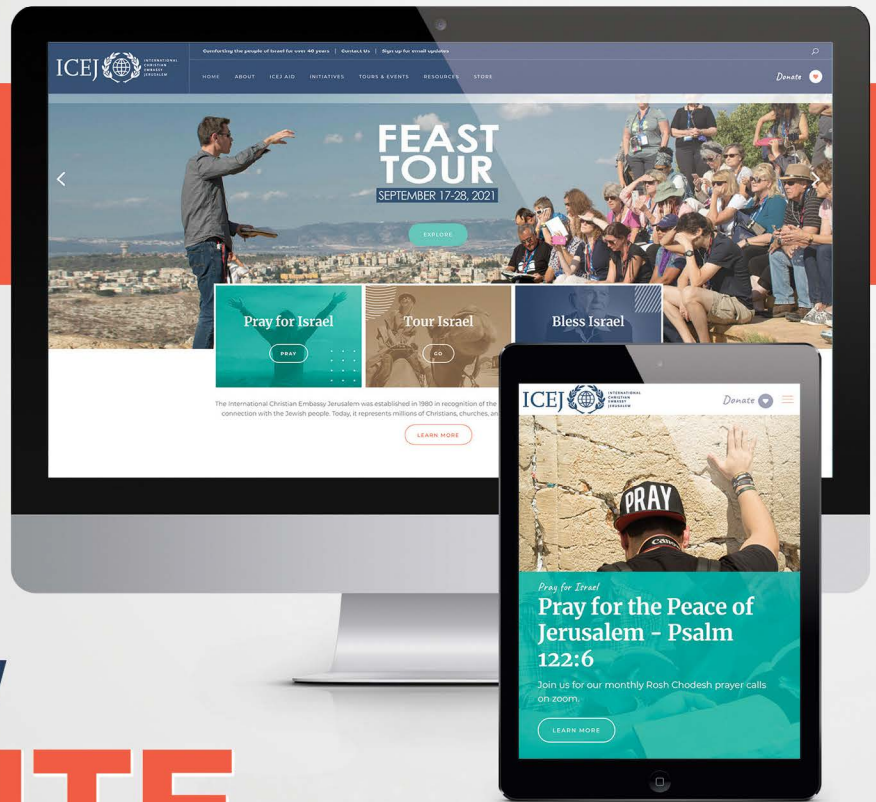
Ari Singson is the oldest brother of five. In 2018 his whole family, except for Ari himself, made Aliyah and settled in Beit She'an—land allotted to the tribe of Menashe in Bible time—something the family finds moving. Ari married his wife, Asher, in 2015, and on January 13, 2020, they were blessed with a son named Benya.

Soon Ari and his family will return to the Holy Land, where the rest of the family—and their ancestors' land—are waiting. Ari says that it's “no less than a miracle for our family, and all of it is possible thanks to Shavei Israel's selfless efforts to bring the Bnei Menashe back to the promised land. God bless Am Yisrael, God bless Shavei Israel.”

Help Ari, his family, and other Bnei Menashe like them who are awaiting their Aliyah dream! 🌍

THANK YOU FOR GIVING TO THIS URGENT NEED!
GIVE TO: WWW.ICEJUSA.ORG/SUPPORT-ALIYAH

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Educational Tools

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Upcoming Tours & Events

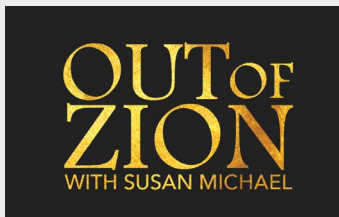
We have all our upcoming tours and what we as the ICEJ can offer your groups who wish to go to Israel.



Israel Advocacy

Most importantly, our website is a great tool to bless Israel through our giving, prayers, and advocacy on the Jewish people's behalf.





THE PLACE GOD CHOSE

BY DR. SUSAN MICHAEL

Dr. Susan Michael is ICEJ USA Director and host of the Out of Zion podcast.

The spiritual and political significance of the Temple Mount has made it the most controversial piece of real estate in the world. The hilltop plateau on which once stood the First and Second Temples now houses two Muslim shrines and is controlled by Muslim authorities. Jews and Christians are only allowed to pray down below outside the western retaining wall. Any

disturbance of this status quo can bring the entire Middle East to the brink of war.

However, the Temple Mount is significant not because of modern political tensions but because God chose it to be the site of sacrifice—not once but twice in Scripture. The first time was when God instructed Abraham to take his son Isaac to be sacrificed in the region of Moriah to a mountain He would show him. Tradition is that this was the mountain.

Later when King David sinned, the Angel of the Lord was seen above that hilltop threshing floor, ready to execute judgment on Jerusalem. When

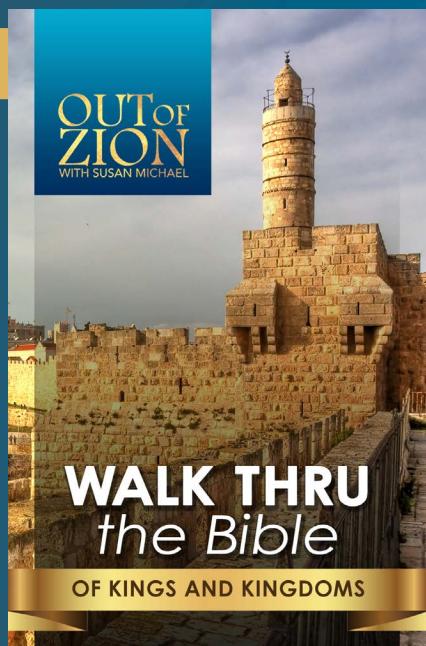
David repented, God instructed him to build an altar and make a sacrifice. Second Samuel 24 records David's purchase of the threshing floor and his sacrifice there.

David's son Solomon later built the temple on that very site, and the sacrificial system continued there for the better part of the next 900 years. Then one Friday afternoon, Jesus was crucified at the edge of that mountaintop plateau. The Lamb of God was slain for the sins of the world in the very area God chose as a place for sacrifice.

Regardless of the political tension surrounding the Temple Mount, it's the spiritual significance of this area that makes it so controversial. It's not only where God chose for Israel to bring their sacrifices, but it's also the place God chose for His name to dwell—and from where Jesus will one day rule God's kingdom. And Satan would like nothing more than to stop that from happening.

To learn more about God's choice of this site for His purposes, join me for the *Out of Zion* podcast on "The Place God Chose." *Walk Thru the Bible* with me each week by downloading our Bible reading plan, and get started reading right away! Invite your friends and family to join us! I can't wait to *Walk Thru the Bible* with you! 🌐

WATCH AND LISTEN TO THIS EPISODE AND MORE AT: WWW.ICEJUSA.ORG/OUTOFZION



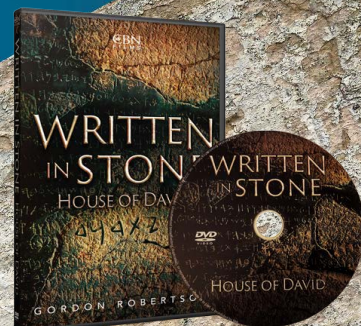
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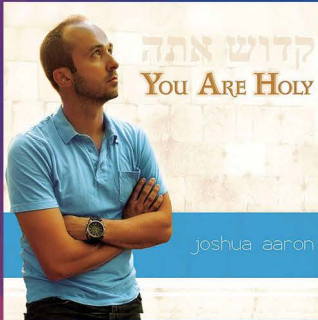
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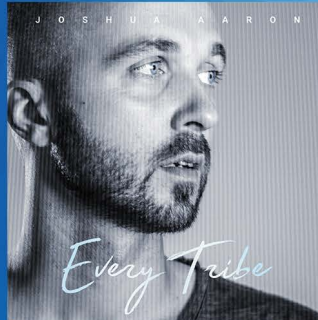
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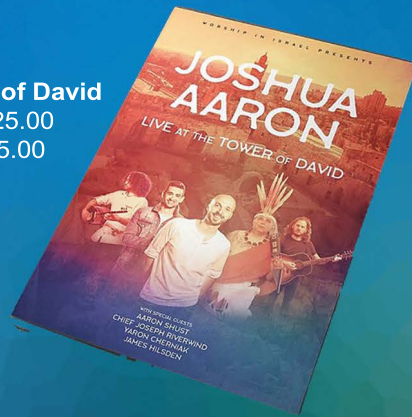
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YOUR ISRAEL ANSWER

No Stopping the Abraham Accords

By David Parsons, Vice President & Senior Spokesman

The series of normalization agreements that Israel recently signed with four Arab nations—known collectively as the “Abraham Accords”—continue to bear fruit for Israel despite several diplomatic hiccups with Sunni Arab leaders and the lack of interest shown by the new Biden administration in Washington.

Over recent months, Israeli officials, businessmen, and tourists have been eager to explore the newly minted relations between the Jewish state and the Arab nations of Bahrain, Morocco, Sudan, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Morocco and the UAE are especially keen to welcome Israeli tourists and shoppers, while wealthy Emiratis are lining up to invest in Israeli start-up companies. One report revealed that a group of Emirati investors is set to sink \$10 billion into Israel’s energy, manufacturing, water, space, healthcare, and agri-tech sectors. Meantime, Bahrain named its ambassador to Tel Aviv, while Sudan canceled its boycott of Israel. For its part, Israel is hoping to host increasing numbers of Arab and Muslim pilgrims coming to see Jerusalem’s Islamic shrines once the coronavirus travel bans are eased.

Nevertheless, there have been a couple of speed bumps along the way. For instance, UAE officials deferred on Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s request to pay a historic visit to Dubai in early March because they reportedly did not want the Abraham Accords to be used as a campaign issue in Israeli elections.

Netanyahu’s route to Dubai also was blocked when Jordan refused to allow his plane to use Jordanian airspace on the way. The move was seen as retaliation for Israel’s demand that Jordan’s Crown Prince Hussein bin Abdullah reduce the size of his large security detail ahead of a planned visit to Jerusalem.

Biden Brakes

Another possible drag on the burgeoning relations is the disinterest of the Biden administration in promoting the deals. In fact, State Department officials are refusing to even use the term “Abraham Accords,” likely because of its close association with former president Donald Trump. Instead, they prefer to speak of building on the recent “normalization agreements”—even as they undermine them by coaxing Iran into a revived nuclear pact. One commentator even claimed it was Washington that insisted the UAE not welcome Netanyahu for a pre-election visit.

Ironically, the Biden team’s return to a policy of courting Iran is doing more to drive the Sunni Arab bloc closer to Israel than if the current White House were openly begging the Arabs to make peace with the Jewish state. Combine that with Israel’s stepped-up regional shadow war with Tehran, and the momentum of the Abraham Accords appears sure to continue bearing fruit—both in public and private.

Peace between People

The people-to-people contacts spawned by the Abraham Accords are perhaps their most promising facet so far. Israelis longed for warmer relations with ordinary Egyptians and Jordanians but were kept at bay by the rejectionist elites in Cairo and Amman. The Emiratis, however, have been quick to embrace Israeli visitors.

After hosting a successful get-acquainted webinar in January for Israeli and Arab businessmen, the pro-peace UAE-based group Sharaka held a groundbreaking online

gathering on *Yom HaShoah* in April to mark Israel’s annual Holocaust Remembrance Day. Arab leaders and activists from throughout the Middle East openly lamented the lack of Holocaust education in the region and vowed to change that.

In another positive sign, the national rugby teams of Israel and the UAE played their first-ever friendly match in March to honor the Abraham Accords.

Another possible sign of progress is that, at least until the recent spate of violence, an Arab party in the Israeli Knesset was seriously considering joining a government coalition—at least by providing outside support. Some analysts see it as an indication that Israeli Arabs are finally starting to ponder why they should remain hostile toward their own country when other Arabs in the region are befriending Israel and reaping the benefits.

Meantime, many Arab Christians have been watching these developments in hopes they could have a positive spiritual impact on the region, according to Tom Craig, the ICEJ’s Middle East coordinator.

“We certainly are experiencing a paradigm shift in the region. As these Arab nations are willing to normalize relations with Israel, it’s opening up the whole idea of cultural exchange, commerce, and various ways to build relationships,” Craig says. “Even in Iraq and Saudi Arabia, there are opportunities for Christian outreach now that were not there before. In many of the Evangelical prayer houses in the region, we are seeing greater faith and boldness about expressing God’s plans for their nations and Israel.” 🌍



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