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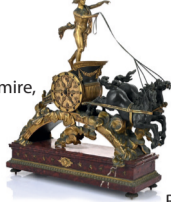
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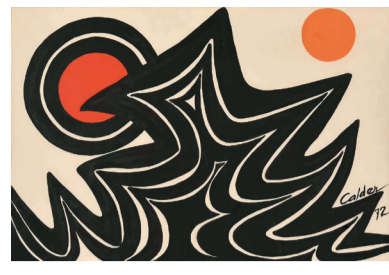
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Lawyers urge US to probe ANC's windfall

NICOLA MILTZ

The mystery surrounding the African National Congress's (ANC's) sudden financial turnaround may eventually unravel amid serious corruption allegations linked to Iran. These have been made by a group of international lawyers who are pressing United States (US) authorities to investigate the party's highest leadership, including President Cyril Ramaphosa, for bribery and corruption.

In a dramatic appeal, the group of 160 lawyers from several countries, led by the Israel Law Center (Shurat HaDin), on 15 May called on US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, the justice department, and congressional leaders to investigate top ANC officials including Ramaphosa and minister of the department of international relations and cooperation, Dr Naledi Pandor. Included among those mentioned are ANC Deputy President Paul Mashatile; National Chairperson Gwede Mantashe; Secretary General Fikile Mbalula; Deputy Secretary General Nomvula Mokonyane; Minister in the Presidency Maropene Ramokgopa; and Treasurer-General Gwen Ramokgopa.

If an investigation goes ahead, it could reveal how the ANC's financial fortunes suddenly turned around, and whether the party's support for Hamas, a stark departure from Nelson Mandela's legacy, is rooted in

corruption.

The Israeli civil-rights organisation said leaders of the cash-strapped and debt-ridden ANC should be investigated for alleged illicit complicity with Iran in the International Court of Justice (ICJ) case against Israel. South Africa has accused Israel of genocide for its military operation in Gaza against Hamas. Israel has rejected the accusation as "baseless", and says South Africa is acting as an emissary of Hamas, which seeks to eliminate the Jewish state.

It's no secret that the ANC has strong ties with Hamas, a designated terrorist organisation.

Israeli attorney Nitsana Darshan-Leitner, the founder and president of Shurat HaDin, told the *SA Jewish Report* this week, "If South Africa wants to bash Israel, it will have to deal with the consequences."

"South Africa decided to serve as the legal arm of Hamas, and has joined Hamas in its fight against Israel, and so we'll fight South Africa. We have lawyers from around the world involved in this," she said.

The lawyers have called upon American authorities to investigate the ANC leaders under the Magnitsky Act for participating "in acts of significant corruption involving bribery".

The Magnitsky Act, passed in 2012, allows for the imposition of government sanctions against foreign individuals who have committed human rights abuses or have been involved in significant corruption. Such sanctions may include the freezing of perpetrators' assets, and may also limit their travel internationally.

In their letter, they allege that officials accepted bribes from Iran which were intended to cover ANC debts in return for which party members agreed to pursue the case in the ICJ blaming Israel for committing genocide in Gaza.

According to the letter, "There's reliable information that the ANC

leadership has participated in acts of significant corruption involving bribery. Specifically, the ANC leadership has allegedly accepted funds from Iran to support the ANC party in exchange for serving as a diplomatic proxy for Iran against Israel. This reprehensible behaviour attacks Israel, America's closest Middle East ally, violates principles of international law, undermines efforts towards peace and stability in the region, and directly opposes the interests of the United States."

The letter outlines a timeline that raises more questions than answers and warrants a thorough investigation, the lawyers urge.

It draws attention to a series of events that began in October 2023, shortly after the outbreak of the war, when Pandor travelled to Tehran to meet with the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ebrahim Raisi, who died in a helicopter crash this week, to discuss the Israel-Hamas war. Less than two months later in December, South Africa filed the complaint against Israel at the ICJ. In January, in spite of well-known crippling financial difficulties within the ANC, the party surprisingly announced that its finances had been stabilised.

The ANC has over the years had severe financial troubles as it struggled to meet its financial obligations to staff and creditors. In 2021 and 2022, under the leadership of then Treasurer-General Paul Mashatile, its staff held regular protests at its headquarters, Luthuli House, because of unpaid salaries,

Continued on page 8 >>



Campus campout

See pages 3 and 9

Photo: Ilan Ossendryver

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Meta seeks help with hate-filled posts

Independent organisation the Oversight Board is reviewing three recent posts that Meta removed, and considering recommending changes to the company's hate-speech policies.

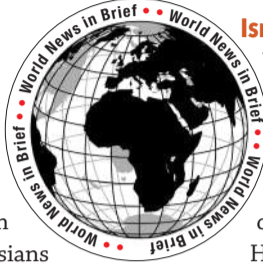
In a post from January, a Threads user, replying to a video on the Israel-Hamas war, wrote, "All Israelis are criminals." In December, a Facebook user writing in Arabic referred to Russians and Americans as "criminals". In March someone commented on an Instagram post, "All Indians are rapists."

All three cases were flagged for review by Meta's automated systems, and the company ultimately concluded that all three violated its hate-speech policy prohibiting attacks on groups of people on the basis of nationality.

But there's sometimes room for interpretation, especially during military conflict and other crises, Meta told the board.

The board is asking for public perspectives on the impact of Meta policies on the ability of users to speak out against actions by governments and the impact of posts calling an entire group of people "criminals". The board also wants suggestions for criteria to distinguish between attacks on a group of people and attacks on institutions.

It's not the first time Meta has strained to apply its policies to real-life situations since the start of the Israel-Hamas war. The board is evaluating whether the Palestinian rallying cry "From the river to sea" should be allowed on Meta's platforms.



Israel will get 'everything it needs' to fight Hamas - Biden

United States (US) President Joe Biden told a White House reception on 20 May marking Jewish American Heritage Month that he would ensure that Israel had "everything it needs" to fight Hamas, a pledge that comes after weeks of tension between the governments over his pause on the delivery of large bombs.

He also denounced the charges of genocide against Israel in the International Court of Justice and at the International Criminal Court.

The comments come weeks after Biden alarmed some US Jewish leaders by pausing the delivery of large bombs to Israel as its government prepared to enter Rafah, a city where hundreds

of thousands of displaced Palestinians sought refuge, and where Netanyahu says Hamas maintains a substantial force. Biden said he was concerned about Israel's conduct of the war and its preparedness to protect civilians.



United States President Joe Biden at the Jewish American Heritage ceremony at the White House on 20 May

Biden has yet to lift the pause, but tensions appear to have diminished. Israel says hundreds of thousands of Palestinians have been safely evacuated from Rafah.

• All briefs supplied by JTA

A lesson from Anfield

Torah Thought



Rabbi Gavriel Abramson Sandton Shul

My recent flights to the United States to visit our family over Pesach was via the United Kingdom - let's put those Discovery Miles to work - and being that I would be in Britain, a lifelong friend invited to me join him to watch a football match together at Anfield Stadium, the home of Liverpool Football Club (LFC).

To be entirely honest, having supported LFC since my early childhood, this was simply an offer I couldn't refuse. So, I found myself the only rabbi, I assume, among 57 000 people - a rowdy bunch I may add - all singing at the top of their lungs, "You'll never walk alone" in a stadium designed and engineered for maximum volume effect. It was simply breathtaking! I looked at the people around me, and couldn't help but admire their passion and venerate their enthusiasm. Their ecstasy when Liverpool scored, their horror when Spurs scored. It appeared as though their lives depended on this game, almost as if for many of these people, this could be their religion. It probably does give many of them a sense of hope in life, and it certainly gives them all a sense of belonging.

I couldn't help but imagine a shul filled with 57 000 Jews all singing Hallel or answering, "Amen - Yehei Shemei Rabba..." with the same passion and fervour. I learnt many things on that day, but most importantly, I learnt just how fortunate I am to have my religion. To have an acute sense of my Jewish identity that centres on truth and all the values our Torah of truth espouses.

What comes to mind is the *Aleinu* prayer with which we conclude each of our services. According to Rabbi Hai Gaon, this prayer was originally

composed by Joshua, who led the Jewish people into the land of Israel for the first time as a nation more than 3 000 years ago. It's a call to recognise and value our Jewish responsibility to ascribe greatness to the creator. It's a call to be proud and grateful for this awesome mandate, and to be eternally cognisant that we're different. We're to be passionate about Hashem and bringing His Light into a world that can often seem so dark. We're to live lives filled with integrity and truth, with kindness and compassion in the face of distortion and perversion. Perhaps this is something that

Joshua clearly understood as he traversed the holy land and composed this prayer to remind us daily - three times a day in fact - that our divine right to the land of Israel is predicated on this very realisation.

Our Torah portion this week couldn't be clearer when it says, "Perform my decrees and observe my laws and act upon them; then you shall dwell securely on the land." (Lev 25:18). Hashem is teaching us that with this sincere and genuine awareness that permeates all aspects of our lives, it will be obvious to all that we as Jews truly never walk alone!

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East London	16:54	17:48
Jerusalem*	18:59	20:17
Tel Aviv*	19:15	20:20

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 Lag Ba'Omer - Sunday 26 May - is a festive day on the Jewish calendar, celebrating the anniversary of the passing of the great sage and mystic Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, author of the Zohar. In the weeks between Passover and Shavuot, a plague raged among the disciples of the great sage Rabbi Akiva. On Lag Ba'Omer the dying ceased.
 *Israel is one hour ahead of South Africa

Students abandon encampments, but Jew-baiting continues

TALI FEINBERG

While top universities around the world continue to battle to end extremist pro-Palestinian encampments on their campuses, the small encampments at the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) and University of Cape Town (UCT) quietly closed down without any resistance on 19 May.

Wits Senior Communications Officer Buhle Zuma told the SA Jewish Report that the Wits student encampment ended "given the commencement of a moratorium on all student activities in the lead-up to June examinations". The UCT encampment said it had shut down because members had tested positive for COVID-19.

However, pro-Palestinian students and staff continue to target Jewish students. This includes Wits senior lecturer and senate member, Dr Kezia Lewins, screaming and swearing at Jewish students on 16 May. The chairperson of the South African Union of Jewish Students (SAUJS) at Wits, Dani Frankel, says his organisation is in the process of reporting Lewins to the university. Zuma said "all complaints related to the conduct of staff and students are dealt with in line with the university's rules for discipline".

The lecturer's abuse occurred when Jewish students joined a Wits Student Representative Council (SRC) protest against "mid-year exclusions", which result in some students being barred from writing mid-year exams, forfeiting their academic year. However, the protest against mid-year exclusions was hijacked by pro-Palestinian students and staff, who turned it into a hate-fest targeting the Jewish students attending. "Included in this group of hijackers were staff members, alumni, and lecturers employed by Wits," says Frankel.

A student who covered her face with a mask and wore a keffiyeh told the Jewish students, "You've got nothing to promote except genocide." Speaking to a camera, she yelled, "It's clear that they [Jewish students] only care when the victims look like them. They only care when the victims are white and Jewish. So f**k the Zionists!" The video has since been deleted from social media.

Wendy Kahn, the national director of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies (SAJBD) says, "It's outrageous that students are sworn at and abused by a member of staff. There's never an excuse for a person tasked with educating students to behave in this manner."

Furthermore, she says, "Jewish students have every right to speak on campus on any issue without fear. We're proud of our students for engaging in university life, supporting fellow students, and for standing up for what they believe."

"Recently, SAUJS witnessed something on campus that it has never seen before, namely, the allowance of protest acting as a precursor to blatant antisemitism," says Frankel. "However, due to the hard work from SAUJS and related bodies such as the South African Zionist Federation [SAZF] and SAJBD, South African campuses

have remained safe for Jewish students and have kept their position as some of the safest campuses to be an open and proud Jew across the world.

"In spite of what happened at the SRC demonstration, Jewish students remained proud of their identity, and

Israeli and Israel-aligned institutions and companies; a "public position in solidarity with Palestine"; the adoption of a Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions-allied position; that Wits doesn't employ members of staff who are active members of pro-Israeli Zionist organisations

and academic freedom, and self-determination; and commits to provide meaningful academic and other support to the re-building of the education and health system in Palestine".

Before the Wits encampment shut down, the dean of health sciences, Professor Shabir Madhi, wrote to his staff on 16 May saying that "it has been resolved that students participating in the encampment will receive full academic support from their departments. These students are not to be penalised for missing academic activities. Additionally, when necessary, provisions should be made to offer these students catch-up support to ensure their academic progress isn't hindered."

Madhi's feed on the social media platform X shows that he is vehemently anti-Israel, and that this may be dictating how he runs his department. Madhi also stated that "the [health] faculty board resolved for the faculty of health sciences to align our efforts to address the ongoing healthcare crisis in Gaza".

SAZF spokesperson Rolene Marks says, "The SAZF condemns any singling out of Jewish students at universities, and the

fact that some report feeling ostracised. While the SAZF upholds the right to free and peaceful protests, it's unacceptable for a protester to accuse Jewish students of genocide. This is false, inflammatory, and antisemitic.

"We note that the encampments in support of Palestine at both Wits and UCT were shut down quickly and peacefully," she says. "The SAZF upholds the right of academic freedom at universities, and rejects any calls for boycotts of partnerships with Israeli universities."



Photo: Ilan Ossendryver

Encampment at Wits University in solidarity with Palestine

didn't falter at the blatant attempts to demonise our undeniable right to practice our beliefs," says Frankel. "We commend our university for working with SAUJS to ensure the safety of Jewish students during this challenging period."

The UCT encampment was initiated by a new splinter organisation, UCT4Palestine, which has distanced itself from the radical UCT Palestinian Solidarity Forum (UCT PSF). An eyewitness, whose identity is protected for security reasons, said there were only nine tents on UCT campus. "Students said they didn't know why there was an encampment as the university was starting exams. No-one wants to get involved. They don't care enough. They [the encampment] don't have that kind of support."

Regarding the encampments, Kahn says, "We're disappointed to see that a small group of students, at the instigation of [Minister of International Relations and Cooperation] Dr Naledi Pandor, attempted to host encampments. They were poorly attended, and got no traction with the student body, given that they dealt with none of the real challenges facing students."

At UCT, the UCT PSF continues to endorse terrorism. The same can be said of the extremist Student Justice for Palestine group at Stellenbosch University, which posted "all glory to the intifada" on 2 May. Both groups continue to support terrorism without any condemnation or action from their universities.

Also at Stellenbosch, a group called Student Action 4 Palestine hosted a "sit-in" at a university administration building on 17 May to pressure the university to "release a statement officially condemning Israel; to cut ties with all Israeli educational institutions; to end all contracts and investments with Israel; and not to participate in any cultural or sporting activities that are sponsored by Israel".

On 16 May, the Wits senate met to respond to demands made by pro-Palestinian groups. These demands include full disclosure of Wits's relations with

and former members of the Israeli military forces; and that the university allow for the free expression of Palestine solidarity activities on its campuses.

One motion was passed by the senate, but it's subject to an amendment and refinement of the wording, which will be ratified by the senate. The SA Jewish Report has seen a draft of the motion, which "supports an immediate humanitarian ceasefire to ensure that food, medical, and all forms of aid are urgently provided; upholds the Palestinian right to life, health, education,

Revolution – one K-Way tent at a time

A SATIRICAL RESPONSE TO UNIVERSITY ENCAMPMENT

FORMER YOUTH MOVEMENT MADRICH

We all know the feeling, you wake up, covered in sweat, back aching from a floor mattress. You struggle to find the zip for the tent flap, and eventually let in that nice cool breeze...

Usually, you walk out into a beautiful Cape campsite, but some of our fellow students have found themselves walking out into the scenic grounds of the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) or the University of Cape Town (UCT). While camping isn't for everyone, it has been quite interesting for those of us who love camping to see the latest version of it, a phenomena commonly named "encampment".

Columbia University has caused a bit of a trend, even reaching the tip of Africa *nogal*. As an experienced camper of 12 years, I thought I'd give some sage advice to these encampers or whatever these fledgling ground-huggers are called.

The weather

Every good *maddie* knows that to keep your campers happy, you have to keep them dry. A camp in

mid-May comes with its weather challenges, and as the temperature drops, so does morale. It's very important to make sure the nice Wits management turns off the university's sprinklers, just saying. Such surprises never make *channies* very happy...

Wet tents mean wet belongings means grumpy kids who'll call their parents while grumpy and sick. Or in this case, local or international news stations.

The not so happy campers of *machaneh* east campus made their complaints known. In a JacarandaFM article they wrote, "We're really hoping that Wits will respond because it's getting really cold, and we don't want to stay here every night, but we'll stay here every night, and it's going to lead to people getting sick, and we don't want that."

We get it. It's tough being a revolutionary, but being a cold revolutionary may just be too much of a challenge for some. So, just a hint to the encampers: it's never a bad idea to watch the weather and if it's winter, cabins might work

Continued on page 9>>

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Unterhalter's appointment welcomed after years of snubbing

NICOLA MILTZ

The fifth time proved to be the charm for Judge David Unterhalter, who finally received the green light from the Judicial Service Commission (JSC) for a position on the Supreme Court of Appeal (SCA).

This week, in his fifth appearance before the JSC since April 2021, Unterhalter, along with Judges Raylene Keightley and John Smith, earned a coveted recommendation for the higher court. He made it onto the list of candidates recommended to President Cyril Ramaphosa to fill three vacancies.

Previously, Unterhalter, a judge of the Gauteng High Court, had been turned down by the JSC four times in his bid for positions on the SCA and Constitutional Court.

Unterhalter, acclaimed as one of South Africa's top legal talents, has finally secured the JSC's nod for the appellate court. Insiders suggest that key to this success was the absence of commissioner Julius Malema, the leader of the Economic

Freedom Fighters, at the SCA hearings, and Unterhalter's display of humility, something which the commissioners see as crucial.

Throughout his past attempts, Unterhalter's legal acumen was undisputed. His "white male privilege" and association with the South African Jewish Board of Deputies (SAJBD) appeared to be two of the major factors that worked against him during the interview process in April 2021.

He was also questioned about his record in appointing black women to his legal teams, and his failure to recuse himself from a case he had previously adjudicated while serving as an acting judge at the Constitutional Court. For these various reasons, among others that include what some might describe as "a general animosity towards him", he wasn't successful.

Unterhalter's experience at the hearings has drawn widespread criticism of the JSC, not least from the Jewish community, and mired the body in controversy. Twice regarding interview rounds in which he and several candidates were grilled at length

and relentlessly put through their paces, the JSC has been forced to re-run those interviews after non-governmental organisations took the body to court.

Some have suggested Unterhalter's challenges arose during the controversial and "tumultuous" April 2021 JSC interviews for the Constitutional Court, when the South African Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions coalition tried everything to prevent him from being interviewed for the position, including attacking him for his association with the SAJBD. After this was brought to the JSC's attention, Unterhalter was relentlessly grilled about his philanthropic involvement with the SAJBD during the COVID-19 pandemic, and his views on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Milton Shain, a local antisemitism expert and emeritus professor of history at the University of Cape Town, said at the time it was "preposterous" to penalise someone for generously assisting a legitimate civic organisation in a democratic country. Shain



Judge David Unterhalter

said to identify involvement in a legitimate Jewish organisation which serves a specific minority that enjoys full constitutional rights as harmful to career prospects "reeks of antisemitism", not least of all because this organisation also enjoys full constitutional

rights.

After the April 2021 round of interviews for the Constitutional Court, the non-governmental organisation, CASAC (the Council for the Advancement of the South African Constitution) took the JSC to court on review for the deplorable way it ran that round of interviews. After a series of negotiations, the parties reached an out-of-court settlement: the JSC wouldn't concede it was wrong, however, it would re-run the interviews for the Constitutional Court and re-invite all the candidates.

During his other interviews, Unterhalter has faced ugly and harsh criticism by members of the JSC for being "arrogant", "subtly racist", and "too clever". This was highlighted in transcripts of confidential deliberations by the JSC after interviews last October to fill four vacancies in the SCA.

In spite of Unterhalter's seniority, wealth of experience, and competence, he appeared to continue to face one setback after another, having been snubbed and rejected for top judicial posts time and again.

Insiders said it wasn't just Unterhalter, but many other well qualified jurists had experienced this intense grilling during the interview process from the commissioners, and that the JSC needed urgent reformation.

The SCA interview round from 20 to 21 May this year was essentially a re-run of the October 2023 interview session. Then, the JSC interviewed 10 candidates, but bizarrely failed to recommend candidates for two vacancies on the appellate court.

The non-governmental organisation Freedom Under Law took the JSC to court over this issue. In an out-of-court settlement, the JSC agreed to re-run the interviews.

There since appears to have been a shift. Retired judge, academic, and jurist, Dennis Davis, told the *SA Jewish Report* he was "delighted" with the choice of the three judges, and noticed that this week's interviews were shorter and tighter and the list of candidates were "the best we've seen in a long time. This is encouraging and should be welcomed.

"The interviews were kept to the straight and narrow. It was the best list of potential candidates, and I was astounded that they managed to get through them," Davis said. "Hopefully, this is the start of something. All three of the recommended candidates will make a significant contribution to the SCA, and will grace the court with great ability."

Until his 2018 appointment as Gauteng High Court judge, Unterhalter had been one of South Africa's leading silks (senior counsel). He had appeared in various high-profile cases which have landed up in the SCA and the Constitutional Court.

In addition to his legal practice, Unterhalter was also an academic. He was lecturer, senior lecturer, full professor, and visiting professor at several local and international universities.

Since his high court appointment, Unterhalter has written several important judgments. He also spent stints as an acting judge of the Competition Appeal Court from June 2018 to December 2021; the SCA, from June 2020 to Nov 2023; and the Constitutional Court, from January to May 2022.

Unterhalter, a former winner of the Professional Excellence Award at the Absa Jewish Achiever Awards, was born and raised in Johannesburg. He attained his Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Cambridge; Bachelor of Laws from the University of the Witwatersrand; a Bachelor of Civil Law from the University of Oxford; and a Masters from Cambridge. In 1990, he was called to the Bar in South Africa, where he practised as an advocate for 27 years. He was appointed judge in November 2018.

Promises, promises: this party's just getting started

STEVEN GRUZD

Just 10 days before South Africa holds its sixth democratic national and provincial elections since April 1994, the Jewish community in Johannesburg hosted two different events on 19 May around the vote. These were opportunities to hear from politicians and pundits about what to expect on 29 May and beyond as the country faces its most competitive and significant election yet. And some drama ensued.

At the Rabbi Cyril Harris Community Centre at the Great Park Shul in Johannesburg, eight political parties set out their platforms.

The debate was entertainingly chaired by journalist and author Mandy Wiener, organised by the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, and introduced by self-proclaimed election junkie Wayne Sussman.

Parties represented were ActionSA; the African Christian

Democratic Party (ACDP); Build One South Africa (BOSA); the Congress of the People; the Democratic Alliance (DA); the Freedom Front Plus (FF+); #Hope4SA; and the Patriotic Alliance (PA).

The Board confirmed that the African National Congress (ANC) and Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) weren't invited "after the way they treated us" especially in the wake of the 7 October massacre in Israel. That meant there was little to differentiate between the centrist and centre-right parties represented. All of these parties are to a greater or lesser extent supportive of Israel in its war on Hamas.

Sussman pointed out that this election would be different, as voters would receive three – very long – ballots to select national, provincial, and regional candidates, as well as independents. More than 50 parties are competing nationally. He also reminded voters that they could vote on 29 May only at the polling station where they had registered.

Sussman said his biggest trends from the 2019 election were the growth of the EFF and the revival of "ethnic" parties, like the FF+ for white Afrikaners, and the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP). This time, he sees the trend of voters going "inward" continuing, including to the PA and Jacob Zuma's uMkhonto we Sizwe (MK,) with the ANC's "rural firewall" giving it strong support outside the big cities.

One of the most eloquent and impressive speakers was BOSA's Mmusi Maimane, the former

leader of the DA, who stressed his party's aim to have "a job in every home in South Africa".

It was also striking to hear migrants being openly scapegoated for South Africa's problems, including from ActionSA, the ACDP, and the PA. The latter promised "mass deportation of all illegal immigrants" and the reinstatement of the death penalty.

The politicians were generally long on promises and short on how to deliver practically on them, given how little support some of these parties have.

Michael Bagraim, the shadow minister of labour, pointed out the DA's track record of good

governance in the Western Cape and elsewhere, and the fact that the party had many MPs to deploy to parliamentary portfolio committees. Other parties argued that this wasn't a numbers

game, and that the DA and the ANC must ditch "the big-brother syndrome", as deputy president of the PA, Kenny Kunene, put it. "The DA and the ANC are devils with the same horns."

In terms of possible post-election coalitions, Bagraim said an ANC-EFF coalition was "the worst outcome that should be stopped at all costs". He said that an ANC-DA coalition would be "the second-worst option". He didn't rule it out, though,

and said the voters' choice must be respected. Bagraim said the DA would consult with the Multi-Party Charter before making any such political moves. While respectful and civil, the debate also exposed low levels of trust between parties.

The second event was a *SA Jewish Report* webinar, featuring Chairperson Howard Sackstein in conversation with Sussman, political analyst Ivor Chipkin, and political journalist Queenin Masuabi.

Sackstein said the ANC had dug up "dead leaders" like Thabo Mbeki and Kgalema Motlanthe to campaign for them, IFP posters featured the

deceased nonagenarian Mangosuthu Buthelezi, and DA posters in the townships didn't feature the face of its white leader, John Steenhuisen. "It's the ghosts versus the dead versus the invisible man!" he quipped.

Sackstein calculated that a party would need about 45 000 votes and an independent about 90 000 votes to win a seat in the 400-member National Assembly. Early results are expected by the evening of 1 June.

Chipkin emphasised the "extraordinary record" and "professionalism" of the Independent Electoral Commission to ensure a free, fair, and credible poll. He couldn't rule out some political violence, possibly in the hotly contested KwaZulu-Natal, in a four-way fight between the ANC, EFF, IFP, and MK.

Masuabi's assessment was that the major parties had run good campaigns, including in the realm of social media. The factionalised ANC has appeared to pull together for the election, she said, especially in the last few weeks of campaigning, commonly called "the squeeze".

Chipkin said that the genocide case against Israel that South Africa brought to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) was an attempt to recast the ANC as a party of integrity and principle. This might persuade ANC supporters not to switch parties or to stay at home. He said allegations that Iran had funded the ANC to take the case to the ICJ needed "to be backed by real evidence".

Recent polls by the Brenthurst Foundation and Social Research Foundation suggest, however, that the ICJ is a vote-loser for the ANC. Voters consider many things when marking their ballots, and foreign policy usually gets trumped by economic and social issues which affect voters' lives more.

The analysts predicted that if the ANC receives less than 50% of the vote, it will first try to form a coalition with smaller parties rather than either the DA or the EFF, where it would have to pay a higher price to cobble together a government. They were also confident that

a coalition could be formed within 14 days, as mandated in the Constitution.

Sackstein said, "We have a chance to overthrow our government every five years," and urged everyone registered to make their crosses on 29 May, and not complain about the government they got if they declined to vote.



COPE leader Terror Lekota (left) answering a question at the SAJBD elections debate

Photo: Ilan Ossendryver



A screenshot from the *SA Jewish Report* webinar

ANC refuses debate at Jewish museum

TALI FEINBERG

The African National Congress (ANC) demanded that an election debate be moved from the historic South African Jewish Museum (SAJM) in Cape Town because it didn't want to attend an event at a Jewish venue. When the host, eNCA, refused to move it, the ANC boycotted the live televised event, held on the evening of Sunday, 19 May.

"The ANC's decision to not participate in a debate because it was held at a Jewish institution is insulting and discriminatory, and contradicts our constitutional value of South Africa belonging to all who live in it," says Cape SAJBD Chairperson Adrienne Jacobson. "Sadly, the ANC decided to put its political agenda first, and missed an opportunity to engage with voters."

As ChaiFM host, Howard Feldman, said on his morning show the next day, "This is an important turning point because the ANC has spent a lot of time trying to convince us and themselves that it isn't antisemitic."

When the Cape South African Jewish Board of Deputies (Cape SAJBD) joined forces with broadcaster eNCA to host the "town hall" election debate, it aimed to ensure that tough questions regarding the Western Cape were put to the parties who will stand in this historic election.

Spurred on by extremists on social media and the rabidly antisemitic *Media Review Network*, the ANC asked that the debate be held at a "neutral venue" on the day of the event, even though it had agreed to attend at the SAJM in April. In a victory for the Jewish community and freedom-loving people in the country, the debate went ahead at the SAJM, and was broadcast internationally, with the ANC's seat glaringly empty.

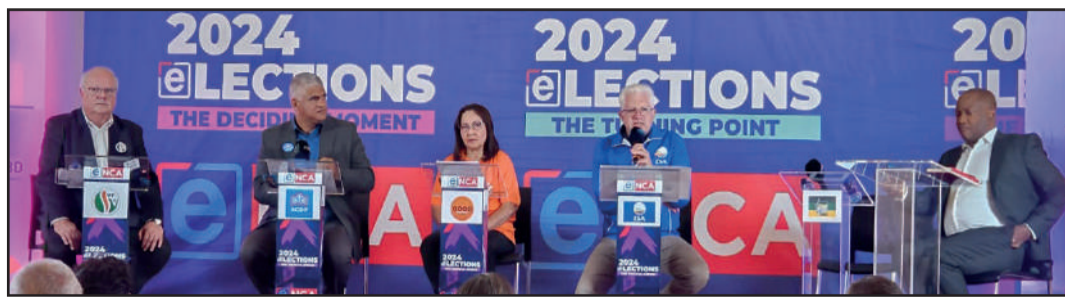
The debate was hosted in the Old Shul section of the museum, which is the oldest synagogue in the country. The SAJM is a widely-utilised event venue, and is a totally separate building and campus to the SAJBD and South African Zionist Federation.

"We've done these debates with eNCA many times – the last was during the mayoral election in 2021," says Cape SAJBD Executive Director Daniel Bloch. "It was about the Western Cape, and had nothing to do with international politics. Host JJ Tabane ran it well."

The SAJBD invited participants from a variety of parties on 25 March. "ANC Member of the Provincial Legislature Cameron Dugmore was keen from the get-go, confirming participation on 6 April. The ANC later informed us that

Khalid Sayed was the ANC's premier candidate for the Western Cape, and would participate in the debate. Even though Sayed has targeted the Jewish community and tried to get a Jewish school closed, the SAJBD agreed that he should participate."

However, on the evening of 18 May, the Cape SAJBD picked up on social media that "anti-Israel groups were asking how eNCA could allow this to happen at a 'pro-Israel venue,'" says Bloch. This included Sayed sharing an ANC letter to the SAJBD asking for the venue to be moved.



Dr Corné Mulder, Ferlon Christians, Patricia de Lille, and Alan Winde at eNCA elections debate at the South African Jewish Museum hosted by JJ Tabane

"Mr Dugmore called me on Sunday morning to ask us to change the venue," Bloch says. "I explained that it was the Jewish Museum, and had nothing to do with Israel. I asked if he ever asked other town hall debates to change venues. He said no, but 'it's Israel, it's sensitive'. I said this wasn't about Israel, and explained that if they withdrew because it was held at the Jewish Museum, it would be seen as antisemitic."

"We accepted the invitation to the 2024 debate, and then were approached by members and civil society who raised reservations about the venue," Dugmore told the *SA Jewish Report*.

"The SAJBD openly supports the conduct of the Israeli state, promotes Zionism, spreads propaganda that being anti-Zionist equates to being antisemitic, and attacks our government's application to the ICJ," he says. "We communicated concern early on the Sunday morning in writing and telephonically to both the SAJBD and eNCA, and asked that they consider changing the date, given that there may be logistical challenges."

On social media, one user questioned if the SAJBD had paid eNCA to host the debate with it, leaning towards the antisemitic trope of Jews paying to control media and government. In response, on social media, Dugmore replied that it was a "good question".

"It's a fair question to get clarity on the actual agreement between the

SAJBD and eNCA," he told the *SA Jewish Report*. "If an entity is in any way financially or logistically supporting a debate hosted by a news channel, questions of impartiality arise."

However, "eNCA said we couldn't move the broadcast," says Bloch. "It's a huge production to put on a live broadcast. It had no problem with keeping the ANC podium with the logo on it to show the ANC was meant to be there. On air, Tabane explained that the ANC withdrew at the last moment. When it re-broadcast the debate, eNCA made the point of saying that 'The [Jewish] community shouldn't be held responsible for the ongoing conflict in the Middle East', and that 'some commentators are questioning if this decision [to withdraw] demonises the Jewish community in South Africa.'"

The managing director of eNCA, John Bailey, told the *SA Jewish Report*, "Anybody who knows anything about TV production knows it's virtually impossible to change venues for a production of this size at that point.

"The reason we've created this platform is to allow political parties to debate," he says. "It was a missed opportunity for the ANC. These debates allow for a variety of people to engage, and is a form of 'outreach' from our side."

Expressing his disappointment, Bloch says, "We've had a good relationship with the ANC in the Western Cape. We met with them last year, and some members came to our sukkah lunch. When we speak, we agree that we don't agree on Israel, but they have always respected us and said they want to work with the Jewish community."

Dugmore agrees that "the ANC has a long relationship with the Jewish community, not only due to the fact that many South Africans of Jewish origin were freedom fighters in the struggle, but there has always been engagement with the SAJBD over the years".

However, "hundreds of Jewish South Africans have also said that the Israeli government isn't acting in their name," he says. "We strongly object to the propaganda pushed by the SAJBD that being anti-Zionist is antisemitic. Our appeal is to respect the diversity of views, both within the Jewish community and in the broader society."

"Irrespective of who rules South Africa after 29 May, the Jewish community will continue to be proud and vocal South Africans," says Jacobson. "We call on the ANC to accept that for our country to succeed, it will need the support of every South African, including the Jewish community."

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Uncovering the truth



In the run-up to this year's election, so many of us were questioning how the African National Congress (ANC) – our governing party – went from effective bankruptcy to being able to bankroll this election and more.

While on holiday in December, I remember front-page news in our national press about how the ANC was broke despite almost R2 billion worth of donations and fundraising. I wondered then what impact that would have on our national elections to be held this coming week.

The next thing we knew, South Africa was taking Israel to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) for “genocide”, and our ruling party no longer seemed to have any financial woes. We wondered and, for the most part, that was where we left it. Somehow, it seemed almost absurd to think that our government, or any upstanding and honest leaders, would accept money to do such a thing. The fact that they took Israel to the ICJ because they believed in what they were doing was bad enough, but to then accept money to do it from Iran would be a whole other low.

And it didn't stop there. At great cost to us, I guess, our government has just been back to the ICJ for a fourth time, and the end isn't yet in sight.

So, when we heard that the marvellous Israel Law Center (Shurat HaDin) and a group of 160 top lawyers had taken up this issue and called on United States (US) Secretary of State Antony Blinken and other US leaders to investigate this matter, it warmed my heart.

What's the saying, “No good deed goes unpunished”?

I'm grateful to these lawyers and the phenomenal Nitzana Darshan-Leitner of Shurat HaDin who are pursuing this. I don't know about you, but I want to know the truth about this party that has ruled our country since 1994, and, as it is said, will still be the predominant party going forward after next week.

What will happen to this party if the investigation goes ahead, and it's found guilty? I can't say, because so often, our leaders get away with murder. However, I'm happy that something is being done to uncover this, one way or another.

At least we will know because it is so important to make decisions based on knowledge. It is important to take charge of your own destiny with research-based decisions, rather than based on what people say and chat about in the streets.

So, when we head for the polls next Wednesday in what's said to be the most important democratic election we've had to date, we need to do it consciously after having done our homework.

According to the experts, the ANC won't have an outright win, so it really matters who it gets into bed with and who the kingmaker is. The latter is always important because he or she often gets away with crazy demands.

This may be frustrating for many of us because we could be in for more of what we already have – corruption, mismanagement, and neglect. But this is why it's essential that we use our vote wisely.

We dare not sit back and let it all happen, and then complain about the outcome. This is our country, and it's up to us to do our bit to ensure the best future for all of us.

I get frustrated on hearing people saying they don't know who to vote for, so they won't vote. Isn't that a bit like saying, “I can't choose anything to eat, so I won't eat”. Or, “I can't decide which route to take home, so I won't go home.” It simply doesn't make sense.

It also doesn't make sense to vote for a party because you've always voted for it. If you have always voted for the ANC, let's just say, and it hasn't delivered what you had hoped it would, why would you keep voting for it? Another analogy: you buy bread every day to be delivered, but it rarely arrives. When it does sometime arrive, it's stale. Do you keep buying bread from the same place, or do you change your supplier? I know what I would do.

For most of us, it's not easy to trust politicians because we believe they'll say what they believe we want to hear. The point is, who will put their money where their mouth is? Who will make it their business to turn our economy around, tackling unemployment, and other ongoing crises? I don't have the answer. My crystal ball is on the blink, but I have read and listened a lot, and have made my choice. Have you?

It was so encouraging to see the turnout of South Africans around the world – other than Israel – to place their vote. Some travelled far to make their mark. From those of us who actually live here, I thank them.

As we move into voting week, there have been concerns about rioting and violence.

It's important to note that the CSO and its police and security counterparts are and will be on high alert. I can almost guarantee that there will be fearmongering social media on the day of elections. For some reason, there are people who get a kick out of frightening us.

Make sure you don't automatically forward what arrives in your inbox. Check that it's true, and if you can't see it with your own eyes and it's not from a verifiable source, don't trust it.

As a community, we're really good at overreacting. Perhaps it's in our genes, or maybe it's something we find in the Pronutro or shakshuka we eat every morning. It gets us nowhere. Staying calm and working out the best way forward is first prize.

Our community has an exemplary security network that does an amazing job of protecting us. Let's leave it to them, but at the same time, let's not take unnecessary risks.

Let's take care, and go out and vote for our future and the future of this magnificent country.

Shabbat Shalom!

Peta Krost
Editor

ANC panders to the myth of the Muslim vote



OPINION

HOWARD SACKSTEIN

It's unseasonably warm this winter in South Africa, and the trees and street poles are in full bloom, bursting in the vibrant red of the Economic Freedom Fighters; the fading fortunes and yellow of the African National Congress (ANC); and the photosynthesising green of ActionSA; uMkhonto we Sizwe; the Freedom Front Plus; and the jihadi dreams of Al Jamah-ah. The smell of elections permeate the air, and everyone's talking about a democratic revolution.

The Americans have taught us that people lie, they lie to pollsters, and they lie to themselves. However, all the polls are telling us that the ANC is in the grip of an increasing death spiral, desperate to cling to power, willing to forge any coalition to hold frantically onto the vestiges of power and access to the public purse that has fed the trough of ANC corruption.

At dinner tables around the country, people question the motivations of the ANC and whether its foreign policy has been sold for commercial gain. There's little doubt that that death of Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi has deprived South African Foreign Minister Dr Naledi Pandor of her Islamist soulmate.

South Africa has ideologically aligned itself to the rogue Islamic Republic of Iran. It has protected the former Peacock Throne from the scrutiny of the International Atomic Energy Agency; has welcomed the ayatollahs as partners into an expanded BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, Iran, Egypt, Ethiopia, and the United Arab Emirates) alliance; and has done the mullah's bidding at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague.

Pundits believe that the ANC's newfound respect for law and justice, something it has never shown any affinity for in the South African context, is a cheap attempt to gain support from South Africa's Muslims and an attempt to unseat the Democratic Alliance in the Western Cape.

President Ramaphosa is now seen regularly donning a Palestinian keffiyeh and, awkwardly and devoid of rhythm, chanting “From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free”, bowing down in Muslim prayer at every opportunity – but probably not yet five times a day – and meeting Islamic organisations pledging mutual support, love, admiration, and presumably *intifada*.

But we do know that communities don't vote as a block.

In the 2019 general election, 31 468, Muslims voted for the Al Jamah-ah Islamic religious party, indicating that Islamic issues were the most fundamental issue in their lives. In the 2021 local government election, Al Jamah-ah increased its votes to 61 189, producing two of Johannesburg's most incompetent and cringeworthy mayors, Thapelo Amad, and subsequent to him being removed from office, Kabelo Gwamanda, a name that almost no-one in the city of Johannesburg knows or cares to remember. Al Jamah-ah has failed to have Sharia law introduced into Johannesburg, or name Sandton Drive after Palestinian terrorist Leila Khaled. Miraculously, the American consulate is still not situated on a road named after a terrorist who hijacked an American TWA flight, as entertaining as that would be for the ANC and as devastating as that would be for South Africa.

For those Muslims whose primary voting objective is to support Islamist causes and perpetuate the Iranian and Palestinian state capture of South African foreign policy, they are likely to continue to support Al Jamah-ah over a watered down “fong kong” ANC replica.

For those Muslims, particularly in the Western Cape, they have a choice to continue to vote for the Democratic Alliance (DA), which has turned Cape Town into one of the few thriving cities in South Africa, or vote against their own economic best interests and support the return of the ANC, with its package of looting, cronyism, destruction, and chaos.

The Muslim community, which is made up of astute businesspeople, talented professionals, and exceptional cricketers, is unlikely to select chaos and self-destruction for the sake of Palestine. As sympathetic as it is to the Palestinian cause, the DA's silent ambiguity on Israel may have won it no friends in the Jewish community and lost it few voters in the Western Cape.

The ANC took a gamble in supporting the Palestinians. It did so out of a long-standing deep commitment to the Palestinian cause which is rooted in the childishness of the Cold War, from which the ANC never evolved. It has sacrificed South Africa's key international commercial interests to become Iran's proxy in the Global South.

South African's are by and large conservative Christians.

The images of Ramaphosa bowing down to an Islamic deity has not gone down well with churches around the country.

Frans Cronje's Social Research Foundation polled voters in April 2024, asking them, “Whose actions do you support more in the current Gaza conflict? Israel or Hamas?” A total of



United for Palestine representatives at the ANC manifesto rally in January 2024

The ANC even proposed that its outgoing jihadi foreign minister should stand as its premier candidate in the Western Cape. Another ANC idea that appears to have gone awkwardly wrong.

On the SA Jewish Report's election webinar on Sunday evening, 19 May, one analyst suggested that the ANC's approach in targeting Israel at the ICJ and exonerating all of the sins of the Palestinians and Hamas had restored the ANC's moral authority in the mind of voters, after having it tarnished by decades of rampant corruption, crippling incompetence, and the wholesale looting of state assets.

What's evident from Ramaphosa's regular answering of the *athan*, the Islamic call to prayer, is his expectation that South African Muslims will return the favour in votes and deliver to him victory in the Western Cape.

But do the numbers match the expectations?

According to Wikipedia, there are 892 685 Muslims in South Africa, including a large number of illegal Pakistanis, Bangladeshis, and Somalis. Muslims constitute about 1.2% of the voting age population of the country, and just more than 6% of the population in the Western Cape.

Of this total number of 892 685, the number who hold South African citizenship, register to vote, and actually cast a vote on election day, will be less than 250 000 people. If all of these South Africans voted for the same party, they would be able to affect only a total of six or seven seats in the 400 seat National Assembly.

13.7% of people supported Hamas, while 31.3% supported Israel. The vast majority of South Africans had no opinion or simply didn't care about a conflict far away from their own lives, no matter how pivotal it was to the identity of the ANC. Asked how closely people followed the conflict, only 3% of black South Africans said they followed the conflict very closely.

In March 2024, the Brenthurst Foundation polled the question, “Does South Africa's policy on the Israel/Hamas conflict make you more or less likely to vote for the ANC?” A total of 23% of respondents answered that they would be less likely to vote for the ANC given its policy on the conflict, while 19% of South Africans were more likely to vote for the ANC.

Within the Western Cape, the DA is more likely to lose coloured voters to the proud Zionist and charismatic firebrand, Gayton McKenzie's party, the Patriotic Alliance, than it is to the ANC.

The ANC has miscalculated. Its decision this week to withdraw from an eNCA elections debate because the venue was the South African Jewish Museum, has exposed the ANC as nothing more than a racist, Jew-hating collective of jihadist sympathisers, who would be more comfortable in Nazi grey shirts than in the fading yellow blossoms of their wilting posters.

• Howard Sackstein is the chairperson of the SA Jewish Report, but writes in his personal capacity.

Universities shouldn't sacrifice autonomy for pro-Palestinian politicking



DR HUSSEIN SOLOMON

OPINION

South African Minister of Higher Education and Training, Dr Blade Nzimande, on 6 May expressed his "dismay and disbelief" at the decision of Stellenbosch University's senate to vote against a motion of "genocide and destruction of scholarship and education in Gaza".

He labelled the decision shameful and called on "all progressive members of the council, the alumni, the workers, and the student leadership at Stellenbosch University, to condemn this morally bankrupt and profoundly racist decision by the senate". Three days later, Foreign Minister Dr Naledi Pandor appealed to students and university administrators in South Africa to follow the lead of their United States and other international counterparts to join the Palestinian solidarity cause. Leaving aside the thorny question of the autonomy of universities, should we follow the lead of these two cabinet ministers? My answer is a decisive no.

Often, the full importance of an event or set of events is known to us only years later. In conflict situations, disinformation from all sides is real. How can universities respond to a conflict which we don't fully understand? Universities aren't intelligence services, they aren't militaries, humanitarian agencies, or foreign ministries. In this polarising world, one needs the dispassionate, reasoned, and reflective nature of universities even more to understand the roots of conflict.

According to the Geneva Academy of Humanitarian Law and Human Rights, there are 110 armed conflicts currently taking place in the world. Should South African university senates respond to all of them? Should we issue 110 statements on all these conflicts? The pressure being placed only on Israel gives rise to the question of why Israel is being singled out? This in turn opens South African universities up to the charge of antisemitism.



This begs the question: do African lives matter less than Palestinian lives for South Africa?

It also raises the question of what we hope to achieve with these statements? Just between 2015 and 2024, there have been almost 200 United Nations resolutions against Israel. What has been achieved? Will Jerusalem shake if a South African university condemns its actions in Gaza?

It's also abundantly clear that certain conflicts are privileged over others. No South African university had any discussion of the 377 000 people killed in the war in Yemen or our government's complicity in arming those countries involved in attacking Yemen. How about the six million killed in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, with 31 000 more deaths being added every month? Do they get a mention? What about a statement on the brutal civil war in Sudan, where tens of thousands have been killed, millions have been displaced, and famine has seized the country. Far from condemning the actions of murderers, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa hosted General Hemedti (Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo) in his official residence in January this year. Hemedti has a long history of human rights abuses. He was a commander of the Janjaweed militia in Darfur which committed unspeakable crimes against a defenceless population. In that instance, South Africa chose to protect his boss, field marshal and president, Omar al-Bashir from an international warrant for his arrest from the International Criminal Court. Three hundred thousand lives were lost in Darfur, and South Africa did its utmost to protect the guilty.

This begs the question: do African lives matter less than Palestinian lives for South Africa?

It seems that the African Nation Congress has politicised the issue of Israel-Palestine in a cynical attempt to shore up its faltering support base. Others have suggested more malevolent reasons

for Pretoria's stance. Last week, 160 lawyers wrote a letter to US Secretary of State Antony Blinken urging Washington to investigate the allegations that the South African government accepted bribes from Iran to accuse Israel of genocide at the International Court of Justice. If true, consider this foreign policy capture – a variation of state capture – with grave implications for our foreign policy and our country.

In this situation, what should the role of universities be? In my view, no statement should be issued on any conflict. Universities aren't activists nor ideologues. This position goes to the heart of what a university stands for. We engage in critical reflection. We stand for diversity,


intellectual engagement, and tolerance. We promote peace by teaching our students to respect the proverbial other and divergent opinions. We nurture empathy, and shatter stereotypes by approaching our subject matter in an even-handed manner.

Returning to Israel-Palestine, the only breakthrough in the peace process was the Oslo Peace Accords facilitated by Norwegian academics in a track-two peace initiative. They could successfully engage with both sides since both parties trusted their impartiality. Should South African universities issue a statement at the urging of our cabinet ministers, we'll surrender this impartiality and foreclose any opportunity to

engage constructively in this conflict, end the carnage, and create the conditions for an enduring peace for all.

Perhaps more importantly, no South African university should sacrifice its detached academic stance in favour of the ruling party's agenda in a short-term attempt to bolster electoral support. No South African university should surrender its autonomy to a state which has so spectacularly failed its citizens.

• Dr Hussein Solomon is senior professor at the Centre for Gender and Africa Studies, University of the Free State.



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The curious perversion of international criminal justice



CRAIG SNOYMAN

OPINION

The application by International Criminal Court (ICC) Chief Prosecutor Karim Khan for warrants of arrest for war crimes against Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defense Minister Yoav Gallant amount to an indictment against the state of Israel and all its citizens. Netanyahu, for better or for worse, is its democratically elected leader. Gallant controls a citizen army.

Both Israel and the United States (US) have refused to accept the jurisdiction of the ICC.

The US didn't sign the Rome Statute of the ICC – the Genocide Convention. The actions of the Arab countries in seeking to have the transfer of the population onto occupied land declared a war crime was ample reason for Israel to decline to become a signatory. The Americans went further, and introduced The American Service-Members' Protection Act, widely known as The Hague Invasion Act, to prevent US officials and military personnel from being prosecuted by a foreign court to which the US isn't a signatory.

The ICC has long been regarded as a political body. These warrants would have been applied for only because the ICC recognises the "state of Palestine". Arrest application was also made against three members of Hamas: Yahya Sinwar, Mohammed Deif, and Ismail Haniyeh, and the announcement that Netanyahu and Gallant would be charged was made in the same announcement about the Hamas figures, outraging many. The announcement of the warrant applications was also made on CNN, rather than through official channels, deepening suspicion of a political motive.

The Biden administration publicly condemned the issue of the warrants, and threatened consequences if issued. Not only was the ICC ready to proceed against a non-signatory to the convention, but it was done at the behest of a party not recognised as a country by the US. No doubt Biden must have diplomatically waved The Hague Invasion Act at Khan. This Act provides that if any ally of the US participated in an attempt to arrest an American or an American ally, then action against that country could be taken. Republican senators were more outspoken, and sent a letter warning Khan not to issue arrest warrants stating, "Such actions are illegitimate and lack legal basis, and, if carried out, will result in severe sanctions against you and your institution." When Khan replied that he wouldn't be

threatened, he must have been acutely aware that the Trump administration had imposed sanctions on ICC Chief Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda.

The US, England, the Czech Republic, and Austria issued immediate condemnation. The White House declared, "The ICC has no jurisdiction in this situation, and we don't support its investigation." House Speaker Mike Johnson called on the Biden administration

to "immediately and unequivocally demand that the ICC stand down". The Senate

Foreign Relations Committee claimed it was absurd, and Senator Lindsey Graham was the most righteously outraged.

Not only did he confirm that there had been bipartisan meetings with the ICC previously, but that "Prosecutor Khan's team

was supposed to be in Israel today [20 May] to arrange a meeting for next week with the prosecutor's office about the allegations. I was told by the ICC staff that the investigation would likely take months and not weeks, and there would be meaningful consultation with the state of Israel." He then also published on X, "The ICC lied to me. I will work diligently with colleagues from both sides of the aisle in both Houses to impose severe sanctions against the ICC."

Khan, however, claims that warrants against the Israelis are based on evidence collected and examined by his office. He has suggested that seven charges should be preferred, summarised as first, starvation of civilians as a method of warfare; second, wilfully causing great suffering; third, wilful killing or murder; fourth, intentionally directing attacks against a civilian population; fifth, extermination and/or murder including death caused by starvation; sixth, persecution; and seventh, other inhumane acts. It's not clear what evidence has been collected, but in all likelihood, it's evidence provided by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and the Gazan Health Authorities, both of which have been shown to be highly partial and in certain respects completely discredited.

Most of the charges are generic, and might apply to any conventional war situation. Possibly the most serious charge is the use of starvation as a weapon of war. The statements from the United Nations, echoed largely by UNRWA and recycled at the International Court of Justice, are that mass famine is imminent and there will be thousands of deaths by June. Khan claims evidence of malnutrition, dehydration, and death of babies, children, and women. Hamas records don't seem to suggest that any death from starvation has actually taken place. There's an abundance of evidence that Israel is facilitating large amounts of food going into Gaza. One of the people I follow on X, IMSHIN, on a virtual daily basis shows the markets in Gaza and quotes the prices of the food available for sale. Israel's immediate and obvious defence to the starvation and obstruction charges is found in the convention. Countries are required to allow humanitarian aid into affected areas on condition that the aid reaches the civilian population and isn't being seized by enemy forces. There's abundant evidence that Hamas has been misappropriating vast amounts of aid.

The ICC is "a court of last resort", and can act against persons accused of war crimes, crimes against humanity and/or genocide. However, as a court of last resort, the ICC is governed by the principle of complementarity, which provides that "a case is inadmissible before the ICC if it's currently under investigation by a state with jurisdiction over it". In other words, the ICC may claim jurisdiction only in circumstances where a national legal system fails to act, or to do so in a genuine manner.

Khan confirms having visited Israel after the October massacre. At the time, he stated, "Israel has trained lawyers who advise commanders and a robust system intended to ensure compliance with international humanitarian law."

Israel's competence to investigate and the ability

of its legal system was seen in its handling of the World Central Kitchen (WCK) incident in which WCK aid workers were killed by the Israel Defense Forces, while travelling in vehicles at night and seemingly accompanied by armed personnel. The Israeli legal system worked quickly. Investigation, trial, and seemingly harsh sentences were imposed rapidly and the record made available for official scrutiny.

There doesn't seem to be any reasonable doubt that Israel has the jurisdiction to pursue any such charges and is actively doing so. Based on his own personal investigation and statements, Khan cannot reasonably believe that the ICC can claim to exercise jurisdiction or issue warrants of arrests against the Israelis.

Khan's application to have war crimes warrants of arrests issued is dabbling with former US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld's "known knowns" and "known unknowns". "Known knowns" would probably include huge political fallout; rejection of these charges as being unjustified or politically inspired; political action against the ICC; that the principle of complementarity hasn't been complied with; and that Khan broke his word to American politicians and has acted contrary to the ICC statute. Kahn will be identified by a bipartisan group of powerful politicians as a political pawn in lawfare against Israel. More problematic "known knowns" are that Israel will be wrongfully criminalised again; and America will take some form of action against the ICC and/or Khan. The major "known unknowns" are what the political cost will be; how this will affect future prosecution of leaders acting against non-state actors; and whether the process that has now been initiated by Khan will fatally delegitimise the court

• Craig Snoyman is an advocate of the high court, practising in Johannesburg.



Chief Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, Karim Khan

Photo: Pedro Rances Matthey - Anadolu via Getty Images

Lawyers urge US to probe ANC's windfall

>>Continued from page 1

unemployment insurance, and pension contributions.

However, ANC Treasurer-General Gwen Ramokgopa has recently defended the party's financial status, saying that the party had made "significant strides to stabilise our balance sheet, paying off a lot of historical debt, and successfully funding the operational costs and programmes of the ANC".

"This change of economic fortune coincided

with the South African government's lodging a complaint at the ICJ," the lawyers wrote. "This sequence of events strongly suggests that the ANC party's financial woes were resolved by Iran as a quid pro quo for South Africa's anti-Israel complaint," and that the ANC leadership had engaged "in the corrupt practice of accepting a bribe from Iran in exchange for serving as a diplomatic proxy for Iran against Israel, which constitutes a violation of the relevant articles in the Magnitsky Act".

"We have information indicating that this is more than just coincidence, and it needs to be investigated," Darshan-Leitner told the *SA Jewish Report*.

In a press statement, she said, "We're now lifting the veil on the slanderous genocide case against Israel brought by South Africa, which turns out to be nothing more than a paid puppet of the Iranian regime."

"The cynical and political use of one of the most important international conventions, which was inspired by the Jewish Holocaust, by antisemites and corrupt officials who are led by pure greed, cannot – and must not – remain unanswered."

Darshan-Leitner has been lauded as a pioneer in the judicial battle against terrorism, using courts around the world to fight terrorism. Shurat HaDin has represented victims of terrorism and their families in legal actions against Hamas, Hezbollah, the Palestinian Authority, Islamic Jihad, and against countries like Iran, North Korea, and Syria. It has successfully frozen millions of dollars in terrorist assets.

The more than 160 lawyers who signed the letter have urged the White House, attorney general, and US Congress to "investigate how the ANC mysteriously got out of debt; what deal was made with Iran; and why the ANC government is so driven to support Hamas, a radical Islamic terrorist group whose violence and antisemitism goes against everything the late ANC leader Nelson Mandela stood for."

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Dogs of war – why Jews stand against Israel

BEN M FREEMAN



OPINION

To understand why Jews are standing against Israel and with Hamas post-7 October, we need to step back and examine the broader phenomenon of internalised anti-Jewishness.

Before delving into this inquiry, it's crucial to grasp the origins of these particular anti-Jewish ideas.

First and foremost, for those of us studying antisemitism, it's essential to recognise the continuum within which all forms of Jew-hate exist. Whether it's the Spanish Inquisition, the pogroms, or the Holocaust, they all stem from the same core ideas. In the West, the genesis lies in the formation of a distinct Christian identity which used Jews as a point of definition. This ingrained these anti-Jewish ideas in the West, becoming foundational to Western thought. A similar process occurred in the Muslim world, contributing to the depth of Muslim anti-Jewish sentiment today. Essentially, what we witness today are contemporary manifestations of historical hatred.

A unique aspect of Jew-hate is its ability to evolve and adapt to fit the spirit of the times. Anti-Zionism represents a modern iteration of classic Jew-hate. It was pioneered by the Soviet Union to demonise and delegitimise Israel, portraying the Jewish state as the "Jew among nations" or the "collective Jew". Tropes that had targeted Jewish individuals for centuries were now directed at Israel. Anchoring these libels in the period of decolonisation, Israel was framed as a coloniser, imperialist, and white supremacist state. The Soviet Union also persecuted and culturally repressed its Jewish citizens under the guise of anti-Zionism.

Fast-forward to today, the accusations levelled against Israel are that it is genocidal, purposefully targeting civilians – especially women and children – and withholding aid from Palestinians, leading to starvation. It's important to differentiate these accusations from legitimate criticism of Israel. No country is immune to

criticism, and Jews who engage in fair and balanced critique of Israel aren't exhibiting internalised anti-Jewishness. The former allegations strike at the very core of Israel's identity. To those making these claims, Israel is inherently evil, reminiscent of the Soviet Union's portrayal. This provides the specific context for the global backlash against Jews.

It's crucial to note that the process through which Jews internalise the surrounding hate isn't an exclusively



Jews in New York calling for a ceasefire and for the war between Israel and Hamas to end

Jewish phenomenon. As I articulated in my second book, *Reclaiming Our Story*, which delves deeply into this phenomenon, internalised hate is a well-documented manifestation of prejudice. In it, I reference Camara Phyllis Jones, a black anti-racism activist, who, in her paper, "Levels of racism: a theoretic framework and a gardener's tale" defines internalised anti-black racism as one of three major manifestations of prejudice. She describes it as the "acceptance by members of the stigmatised races of negative messages about their own abilities and intrinsic worth. It's characterised by their not believing in others who look like them, and not believing in themselves. It involves accepting limitations to one's own full humanity, including one's spectrum of dreams, one's right to self-determination."

Jews are no exception. It's human to absorb the ideas that surround you in the ether. And due to a multitude of factors, particularly rooted in the Jews' status as a minority and the ensuing power dynamic, the "broken mirror" of

Jewish identity reflects palatable versions of Jewishness back at Jews from the non-Jewish world. This, combined with our yearning for acceptance to escape the hate we've endured, often leads many Jews to internalise aspects of that hate.

Internalised anti-Jewishness isn't solely expressed through Jewish anti-Zionism. While that's one of the most extreme examples in our context, it can manifest in all of us. In *Reclaiming Our Story*, I identified three manifestations of this phenomenon: diminishment, denial, and deployment.

Diminishment involves Jews attempting to make their Jewishness smaller in order to gain acceptance from the majority. It can prompt us to alter our names or physical features. It can also deter Jews from standing up for themselves and striving to make themselves acceptable.

Denial occurs when Jews outright reject their Jewishness. Historically, this might have been expressed through conversion to other religions. However, in the era of secularism, it can simply be a refusal to acknowledge any connection to Jewishness.

Deployment refers to the situation where Jews use their Jewishness as a weapon against other Jews. Anti-Zionist Jews have internalised Soviet propaganda about Israel, and employ their Jewishness to validate it, thereby harming the broader Jewish community.

As a result of Soviet and Arab propaganda, anti-Zionism has become a pillar of leftist ideology, which is why individuals and groups such as the LGBTQ+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer/questioning, asexual) community are joining the hate campaign against Israel. Jews within those circles have internalised the specific negative and hostile attitudes directed at the Jewish state. Furthermore, these Jewish individuals deeply crave acceptance within their specific community and, whether consciously or subconsciously, feel compelled to reject their Zionism and Jewish Pride. This community has effectively made it impossible for them to align with leftist ideals while also maintaining a sense of pride in their Jewish identity. Tragically, these

Jews also lack an understanding of Jewish history and the history of the state of Israel, leaving them unable to defend Israel intellectually against the allegations levelled against it.

This is compounded by the international community's attitude toward Hamas. Its lies are believed, and bogus death-count figures are accepted without any doubt. This is why, following the genocide Hamas perpetrated against Israel and the ongoing attacks on Israel, we're witnessing Jews raising their voices against Israel and standing with Hamas. Funded by bad-faith actors such as Qatar on college campuses, these Jews exist in a culture of radicalisation, from their peers and their professors, wherein Israel and Zionists – the vast majority of Jews – are considered to be a representation of evil.

It's why they are participating in calls for a ceasefire, even though it will perpetuate the cycle of violence endured by both Israelis and Palestinians. It's why they're joining encampments at universities worldwide, shouting, "Not in our name!" Ultimately, Jews in leftist spaces accept the falsehoods they're told and exist within a cultural milieu that restricts their expression of Jewishness to a narrow lens, one that inherently contradicts Jewish history and experience.

In spite of the harm they may cause to our community, these individuals are also victims of Jew-hate. This doesn't absolve them of responsibility for their actions, but it acknowledges their inability to shield themselves from the onslaught of hate directed at Jews and Israel. As Theodor Lessing, the author of the seminal work *Jewish Self-Hate* (1929), aptly wrote, "In order to change humans into dogs, all that's needed is to shout at them long enough, 'You dog!'"

• Ben M Freeman is the founder of the modern Jewish pride movement, a Jewish leader, a Jewish thinker, a Jewish educator, and author of *Jewish Pride: Rebuilding a People and Reclaiming our Story: The Pursuit of Jewish Pride*. His work focuses on Jewish identity and historical and contemporary Jew-hatred.

Revolution – one K-Way tent at a time

>>>Continued from page 3

better, and you can save the tents for summer *machaneh*.

Food

You may think that ideology or activity rosters are the most vital thing on camp, but you're wrong – it's always food. We totally understand that. No matter how x-factor and educational the *peulot* (activities) are, a camper's memory of the day will be their gross veg curry meal. Keep campers fed well, and they'll behave well. Not rocket science!

However, even the most spoilt kugels among us would never expect their *maddies*, or in this case the university management, to hand deliver their meals to their campsite. I mean, come on, you're meant to at least appear to be like revolutionaries, not northern-suburb brats. We did notice, however, that the Woolies shopping bags were delivered to make sure students were well fed and energised.

When catering for camp, it's important to cater for all dietary requirements. From the vegans and the gluten free to the banana allergens, there's always something new these days. However, as good camp co-ordinators do, we check this all out beforehand. A reminder if you're sending meals to your kids on the frontline of campus tents, be sure to take note of the allergies of the campers you're supplying. This has been a problem in some Ivy League hotspots. In the *Daily Bruin*, University of California, Los Angeles' student newspaper, the following was printed, "Due to a student having a severe banana allergy within the encampment [in Columbia], all food is vetted for bananas before entering the food supply. On Friday, counter protesters were seen waving bananas in the air after hearing about the student's allergy."

As Bobba always says, a revolution can't happen on an empty stomach.

Programming

Programming makes or breaks the camping experience. And a campfire will often raise spirits and get bonding going. To ensure a successful campfire, it's important not

to forget to have plenty of Blitz, a few rounds of wood, and a guitar to bring the vibes. It's cool to hang around and sing songs for a bit, but as soon as you hear your second reiteration of *Wonderwall* by Oasis, it gets old.

It's important to ensure that your schedule is jam-packed with educational and insightful activities. And it's essential to have a clear ideological vision about what you want to teach. Think about ways to protest things that can be tangibly achieved, just saying. Is protesting for "sincere reflection" by the university truly the definition of an impactful and sincere cause?

Health

Even before the pandemic, us campers knew that flu spreads and spreads fast in a tight space. Luckily, we have our sick bay and doctors to quarantine the ill, acting as a comfortable retreat for sickly campers. If your campsite isn't as advanced, we recommend trying to maintain good levels of hygiene to ensure you don't get sick. Those at UCT's *machaneh* upper campus faced some bad luck, getting an outbreak of COVID-19. How retro! So always remember, pack some extra masks,

sanitiser, and get your mom to stash some extra Panados.

All in all, it's wise to understand that camping isn't for everyone. You have to make sure that you're adequately prepared. Go down to your local Cape Union Mart for all your equipment needs, and it will surely keep you warm and dry. Don't forget to pre-order and pre-approve your marquee.

It's often best to save camping for December and in the meantime, constructive conversation and critical thinking is a great alternative.

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Fourth time unlucky for SA vs Israel at the ICJ?

STEVEN GRUZD

The South African government has initiated a fourth attempt since December 2023 to force a ceasefire in Gaza at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague, Netherlands. South Africa again accused Israel of genocide in its war on Hamas in Gaza following the 7 October massacre.

This time, Pretoria is focusing on the southern Gazan town of Rafah, harbouring more than a million displaced Palestinians, where a full-scale Israeli operation is threatened. Commentators and legal experts believe, however, that this time, the court may lose patience with South Africa's repeated entreaties.

South Africa launched an urgent appeal for the court to revisit its decisions – termed “interim measures” – and claimed Israel was non-compliant with all the court's previous rulings. The ICJ has declined to order a ceasefire on the three previous occasions, and if it's consistent, it should also rebuff the current lawfare sally by South Africa.

The Israeli team, led by Deputy Attorney General Dr Gilad Noam, and acting legal advisor of the ministry of foreign affairs, advocate Tamar Kaplan-Turgeman, had earlier objected, to no avail, to the short notice given for this hearing.

South Africa presented its arguments to the ICJ on 16 May, and Israel responded on 17 May. Israel was again accused of genocide; a second Nakba – the displacement of Palestinians in 1948; and “the continuing annihilation of the Palestinian people ... which has shocked the conscience of humanity”. The South African team added, “Israel has defied this court by trapping, besieging, and bombarding an overcrowded Rafah, exacerbating the security and the safety of 1.5 million highly vulnerable Palestinians.”

Israel has identified almost 700 tunnel shafts under Rafah, with about 50 linked to Egypt, where Hamas could smuggle weapons, hostages, or its leadership into or out of the strip. The town remains a hotbed for Hamas terrorists.

Noam told the panel of judges, “South Africa presents the court yet again ... with a picture that's completely divorced from the facts and circumstances. Israel is engaged in a difficult and tragic armed conflict. South Africa ignores this factual context, which is essential in order to comprehend the situation. It makes a mockery of the heinous charge of genocide. As Israel has previously stated before this court, when dealing with the law, facts matter, truth should matter. Words must retain their meaning. Calling something a genocide, again and again, doesn't make it true. Repeating a lie doesn't make it true.”

“South Africa warns this court that ‘if Rafah falls, so too does Gaza’. Once again, however, the reality is exactly the opposite. Only by bringing down Hamas's military stronghold in Rafah will Palestinians be liberated from the clenched grip of a murderous terrorist regime, and the road to peace and prosperity may finally be paved,” Noam said.

“I'm hoping it's a step too far, and



Photo: Screenshot YouTube

Israeli Deputy Attorney General Dr Gilad Noam (left) at the International Court of Justice

they have overplayed their hand,” said Gavin Rome, advocate and senior counsel. “South Africa is relitigating, and is seeking through the back door what it didn't get through the front. Its case is again replete with statements from the media, often out of context, and its ‘facts’ are heavily contested by Israel. If the ICJ rules in favour of South Africa this time, it will lose credibility as an impartial, considered court. No key new facts have emerged, and more and more humanitarian aid trucks have been into Gaza.”

David Benjamin, a South African

born international lawyer in Israel said, “This is a highly cynical abuse of the court, and I hope it will say, ‘Enough is enough!’ South Africa has been disgraceful. Its use of disinformation and plain lies from unreliable sources as if they are true is shameful.”

Initially, Benjamin had some empathy for the South Africans using a legal avenue to try stop the suffering. “But it became clear as soon as South African politicians and the legal team opened their mouths that they were going to tap into the whole anti-Israel narrative, supporting Hamas and Iran. It's

not a rational, legitimate debate, but a demonisation of Israel. They have used words like ‘settler colonialism’, ‘apartheid’, ‘ethnic cleansing’, and ‘extermination zones’. This is outrageous,

over-the-top, and scurrilous. It's pseudo law – the abuse of legal processes to achieve political aims.

“South Africa's reflexive filing of preventive measures without acknowledging the realities on the ground and purposefully misleading the South African public speaks to a sinister campaign of preventing Israel's right to defend itself,” said Rolene Marks, a journalist and commentator in Israel originally from South Africa. “This follows last week's Global Anti-Apartheid Conference for Palestine [held in Sandton], where the stated goal

in its adopted declaration was clearly to dismantle the nation state of the Jewish people. South Africa is making a mockery of the ICJ, and is determined to throw as many legal tantrums as possible on behalf of Hamas while conveniently forgetting to ask for the hostages to be returned immediately, acknowledging the atrocities of 7 October, and ignoring the clarification from Justice Joan Donaghue, the former president of the ICJ, who said that the court's ruling stated no genocide, and was misinterpreted.”

Said Kaplan-Turgeman, “Accepting South Africa's arguments would give Hamas a green light to regain its grip on the Gaza Strip and to repeat the 7 October atrocities again and again, as Hamas itself has vowed to do. It would constitute a death sentence for the hostages.”

“This case has been a nice distraction if nothing else for the ANC government,” said Rome. “Nobody has been asking awkward questions about the cash in the president's sofa.”

The court is expected to rule in the coming days.

SA expats turn out in their thousands to vote

LEE TANKLE

Although they may be far from the country of their birth, South African expats around the globe went out in their thousands to vote on 18 and 19 May.

Businessman Gavin Fait, who emigrated to the United Kingdom (UK) five years ago, said that when he arrived at Trafalgar Square on Saturday, 18 May, he was bombarded with images of home. “We saw biltong being eaten, Savanna and Castle being drunk, Springbok jerseys, and music blaring.”

Founder and director of the Durban Holocaust & Genocide Centre, Mary Kluk, happened to be in the UK for elections. She said, “We couldn't believe the length of the queue when we arrived. Various political parties were walking among the crowds, some handing out pamphlets and one distributing Chappies bubble gum, which I loved. Once we were inside, the voting process was smooth and well-managed in a typically warm and friendly South African environment. This opportunity to vote in spite of not being able to be at home on election day meant the world to me and many thousands of others, it would seem.”

Optometrist, Megan Jacobson, 39, moved to London last year with her family, and was excited to be surrounded by a South African community so far away from the country. “The South African shop was brilliant with its advertising,” she said, “handing out biltong and *droëwors*. I was especially grateful for that. It was so delicious to have a bite of home.”

Stephanie Daleski, a former teacher at King David who has been living in London for two years said, “As soon as we left the tube station, we saw South African flags everywhere, and it was great for my children to see and learn a bit more about their South African heritage.”

Those who were unable to get to Trafalgar Square on Saturday were still able to vote on Sunday, 19 May. Said David Abramovitz, “My wife and I were excited to be voting, especially because we thought initially that we couldn't vote as it would take place only on a Saturday. We were glad when it was extended to Sunday because we could vote and still keep Shabbat.”

Abramovitz works for a large global mining company and left South Africa when he got an unexpected transfer to the UK head office.

Health and wellness coach Lara Maillich, who moved to the UK nine months ago, waited for more than three hours to cast her vote. She said she and her husband were more than prepared to wait any amount of time to have

their say in South African life. “When I walked into the buildings of Trafalgar Square, I just wanted to cry. I thought it was amazing that no matter what anyone feels, I'm South African, and no-one can take that away from me. I felt proud to be South African and to cast my vote.”

It wasn't only in London that South African expats queued

asked them if they were going to vote. Very few intended to vote, and that made me sad because I think it's crucial. Especially as Jewish people saw the stance South Africa took this year against Israel and the fact that South African voters in Israel couldn't vote because

there wasn't a polling station, I felt an even greater responsibility to go to the polls this year and express my dissatisfaction with the policies of the African National Congress government not only towards Israel but also towards the country itself.”

Retiree, Polly Davies, 81, has been living outside of Lisbon, Portugal, for six years and was one of the 600 expats who voted in the country. She said the

process was efficient and “everyone was so happy and smiling. It just makes me proud to be a part of the South African community and have my say in what goes on.”

Errol and Roma Stein, who live in Sydney, Australia,

ensured that they were able to travel to the only place where South Africans could vote in the country on 18 May – Canberra. “We come to South Africa every year and we can see that the country desperately needs change,” they said. “We're delighted to know that our little votes can be counted to make the change that South Africa desperately needs.”

Hughes summed it up, by saying, “We voted for our future selves, as well as for our families and friends. Every vote counts, and if we can queue for seven hours, you can do your bit for an hour or less in South Africa in a few days.”



Stephanie, Hannah, Asher, and Jason Daleski in London

to cast their vote. Michelle Hughes, an ex-South African who lives in Amsterdam and works in marketing, travelled to The Hague to cast her vote. She joined the queue three hours after the voting station opened, and cast her vote only six hours later. Friends of hers who joined the queue a while later queued for seven and a half hours.

“There were only two portable toilets supplied which were overflowing by the middle of the day,” she said. “Some very kind Dutchies opened their toilets to desperate people, and some other Dutch kids started setting up lemonade stands spontaneously.”

“South Africans showed up in high spirits regardless. Wearing South African flags, handing out free braai salt samples [*kuierkos*], rocking their *veldskoene*, African map t-shirts, and necklaces. Being surrounded by so many South African accents was a weird and wonderful experience.”

Similarly, immigration coach Dan Brotman, who identifies as a South African by choice, relocated to Canada from Johannesburg in 2018 and wanted to ensure that he participated in South Africa's democracy. Brotman had to travel from Portland, Oregon, to where he lives in Windsor, Ontario, and then to Toronto to cast his vote. He was disappointed in how few South African expats in Canada made the effort to go and vote.

“Leading up to the election, I reached out to friends and



Errol Stein voting in Australia

Ballad to ballot, a song to inspire voting

LEE TANKLE

“The time has come for us to imagine. Let’s create a space of hope and how. To realise the dream that we all share in, here and now.”

These are the lyrics to the song titled *The Time Has Come*, created to urge South Africans to go to the polls on 29 May.

It was spearheaded by Johannesburg artist Isa Schwartz Gesseau who brought together two local singers, Ms EJM (Esther Khoza), and Daniel “Stompie” Selibe, and artist/photographer Camdon Juby, to urge participation at the polls. The song was produced by David Gresham Records.

“We intend to unite South Africans through our song so everyone can finally rise above the challenges that we face and believe in a future of hope and peace,” said the artists. “We couldn’t let this election period pass without trying to inspire our fellow citizens to act on 29 May to help realise our dream of a fairer and kinder society. This song was produced out of love and hope for the beautiful and bountiful country that we live in.”

The song calls for South Africans to embrace fairness, justice, equality, wisdom, courage, humility, understanding, kindness, and respect.

It was released to radio stations on 20 May in anticipation of the elections.

Schwartz Gesseau was inspired to put her artistic skills to use after one of her students, Professor William Gumede, who chairs the Multi-Party Charter for South Africa, held a networking event at her art studio to drum up support for the Multi-Party Charter and share its aim of presenting a united front in the 2024 general election against the three-decade rule of the African National Congress.



Camdon Juby

From there, a neighbour of Schwartz Gesseau’s approached her to try and brainstorm a way to create a chain of influence to get every South African citizen to vote in the elections.

“After talking to my neighbour and going through many ideas, I had a lightbulb moment and said, ‘Why don’t we use art? We can use music, and it can bring people together,’” said Schwartz Gesseau.

She got in touch with musical powerhouse David Gresham Records to get the song made as a “vision prayer” for the whole country. The company jumped on board and offered to produce it.

Schwartz Gesseau found the three artists to work on the song, and the quartet took only six weeks to produce the song.

“In six short weeks, we turned this vision prayer into this beautiful prayer to inspire the whole of South Africa,” said Schwartz Gesseau, “All of the artists aren’t necessarily big artists, but they are so talented that they should be huge forces in South Africa’s music scene. I’m so happy we were able to work on something this special.”

Juby is heard reciting the last verse of the song: “I have a vision where all people are at peace, fed and housed; Every child is loved and

educated to develop their talents; Where the heart is more important than the head; and wisdom is revered over riches. In this world justice, equality, and fairness rule.”

Said Schwartz Gesseau, “This isn’t a song that will have diminished impact after the elections because it has a bigger message for South Africans to work together that can go beyond 29 May.

“We’re hoping that in some way, South Africa can fulfil the desires of our nation to become a safer place to live in, where we can live together. In my experience, South Africans want safety, good services, and to live a decent life together. I hope our song can provide some kind of beacon of hope.”

CSO advisory

The Community Security Organisation (CSO) has advised that during South Africa’s national election,

- There’s no need for panic;
- Don’t share unverified information or social media posts;
- Watch credible news and social media channels to stay informed;
- If you experience or hear of any possible incidents or protest action near our community, contact the CSO control room;
- When travelling, establish if the destination and the route is safe. Even if it usually is, this may no

- longer be the case, so check first;
- If you do arrive at an area which seems to be problematic, don’t take chances, leave immediately;
- If you do end up being caught in a protest, remain calm and don’t draw any attention to yourself. Work towards de-escalating the situation, and get away as quickly as possible. If you cannot get away, find a safe place to shelter; and
- For any emergency, suspicious activity, or potential threats related to the community, contact the CSO on 086 18 000 18.

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Unity – best defence against terrorism, says freed hostage

GILLIAN KLAWANSKY

When one of her Hamas captors told Sapir Cohen that when Jews are together, they are very strong, she was shocked, but came to the realisation that the main goal of this war is to unite Jewry.

The terrorist's surprising words came one day, when he allowed Cohen to watch television and they saw thousands of people at Tel Aviv's Hostages Square. "I saw all our people together, and I was so happy because before 7 October, I remembered division," Cohen told a Johannesburg audience last week.

Brought to South Africa by the Jewish National Fund South Africa and The Base Shul, Cohen, 30, spoke at a community event held in her honour at the shul on 15 May. Having travelled to multiple countries since her release, Cohen aims to promote unity and the release of the hostages through her story.

Six months before her kidnapping, Cohen began to sense that something bad would happen to her. Thinking she was ill, Cohen underwent medical tests but all they unearthed was a harmless virus.

"For the first time in my life, I decided to pray," she said. Looking for a prayer for recovery, she came across chapter 27 of Tehillim on Instagram. It was written that saying this prayer for 30 days would make one healthy and bring about miracles.

"The 30th day of saying it was 7 October," Cohen said. Only a few days prior to that,

she felt confused when she realised that the prayer was linked to war, and asks G-d to save us from our enemies. Even the word "Hamas" appears in it. "On 7 October, I understood the meaning of my prayer," she said.

On the weekend of Simchat Torah, Cohen and her boyfriend, Sasha Trufanov, visited his parents in kibbutz Nir Oz. In spite of Trufanov's inexplicable misgivings before the trip, the couple went anyway. At 06:00 on 7 October, they awoke to a barrage of rockets.

"We were in the guest house with no bomb shelter, and we couldn't find even 20 seconds of silence to run to his parents' house to enter their shelter," Cohen said. In messages from Trufanov's mother, they heard that terrorists were in kibbutz Be'eri, just ten minutes away. They then read online that Hamas terrorists were slaughtering people with no army around to save them. When Trufanov received another message, Cohen instinctively knew that the terrorists were in Nir Oz. She covered herself with a blanket and the two hid under the bed.

"Then I heard, 'Allahu Akbar!' [G-d is great] and possibly hundreds of terrorists entered the kibbutz. I heard things explode. I heard the screams of the terrorists, and the screams of the people killed by these savages. It sounded like they were going home by home and shooting everywhere and everyone. You just had to wait your turn. I was terrified, I was shaking, my whole body turned to water." Yet, through saying her prayer, Cohen felt a deep sense of peace

that she battled to understand.

When the terrorists finally broke in, they yanked the couple out separately. "I saw Sasha with his knees on the floor, his hands over his head, and his face bleeding. They beat him," Cohen said. "They put me on a bike with two terrorists, and that was the last time I saw him."

To date, Trufanov remains a hostage, and Cohen is dedicated to securing his release. In an address to King David High School Linksfield students during her South African visit, Cohen asked them to shout, "Bring Sasha home now!" on video, something she plans to show him upon his prayed-for return.

"When I entered Gaza, I saw thousands of 'innocent' people in the streets," Cohen said. "They were all encouraging the terrorists. They touched me, and beat me so badly that I put my hands over my head and prayed to G-d to save me." As the goal in most

hostage situations is to take captives alive, the terrorists ultimately saved her. During her 55 days of captivity, Cohen's time was divided between tunnels and houses in difficult conditions. She described the tunnels as dark, narrow, wet, lice and flea-infested, and so smelly that you couldn't sleep.

From the moment I decided to take on this responsibility, I felt strong."

She helped the girl, who was ultimately released, to find humour in the most trying of circumstances. Cohen's attitude even mystified the terrorists, one of whom drew a memorial candle with her name on it. When she asked him why, he said that although she was their enemy and they hated her, while she was there, she filled the place with light.

Cohen spoke of her joy at being among the last hostages released in the temporary November ceasefire. Yet it was undercut by the sadness that came with knowing that there would be no peace. "One terrorist told me, 'When you come back to Israel, we want you to give one message to your people: we'll come back again and again, and the next time, it will be even worse.'"

Nonetheless, she remains dedicated to spreading light and unity in Israel and in

Jewish communities around the world. "It's important that the Jewish community [in South Africa] hears our stories firsthand, and knows that its prayer and fight for the hostages is working. When I came back to Israel and saw how many people had prayed for me, I understood that all the angels I felt in captivity weren't imaginary."



Photo: Benji Stoch
Freed Hamas hostage, Sapir Cohen addressing students at King David High School Linksfield on 17 May

"Yet, I felt a lot of miracles, the biggest of which was that I was supposed to be there," she said. "From the first day onwards, I was with another hostage, a 16-year-old girl. When I saw her, she was terrified and crying, and I said to G-d, 'I don't need more to understand that I need to be in this place.' I wanted to make her happy, and to save her.

Katzin receives SA's highest award for inclusion fund

SAUL KAMIONSKY

When American Donna Katzin received the prestigious 2024 Order of the Companions of OR Tambo award along with a hug from President Cyril Ramaphosa on 30 April, she felt as if she was receiving it on behalf of millions of ordinary justice-loving people around the world.

Katzin's upbringing in a segregated area in the south of America and her family's commitment to *tikkun olam* (healing the world) have driven her to champion the financial inclusion of black-owned small, medium, and micro enterprises in South Africa.

Katzin is the founding executive director of Shared Interest, a non-governmental organisation dedicated to expanding access to loans for black-owned businesses in southern Africa. She received the National Orders at the presidential guesthouse in Pretoria. The orders are the highest awards that South Africa bestows on citizens and eminent foreign nationals who have contributed towards the advancement of democracy and made a significant impact on improving the lives of South Africans.

One of the 32 awardees and one of the six eminent foreign nationals awarded on the day, Katzin was recognised for her innovative thinking in assisting post-apartheid South African businesses get ethical investment by promoting networking between South African businesses and American investors.

This year was the thirtieth anniversary of the founding of Shared Interest in 1994. "Over those 30 years, we've managed to reach 2.3 million low-income black South Africans," Katzin says. "We've worked to make it possible for struggling black South Africans to be able to start businesses, build and have access to

affordable housing, get jobs, and for all of these things, to be able to get credit from mainstream banks and some smaller banks that otherwise wouldn't have a habit of lending to low-income black people in the country. Some of that apartheid legacy continues, not because people are necessarily still biased, but because people have been trained in a certain tradition, and

Tutu's words sparked Katzin and others into forming the Shared Interest fund.

"All of our investors have got their money back in full and on time. There hasn't been a single loss," Katzin says. This has demonstrated something profound about "communities that have been marginalised, economically disadvantaged, and victimised by apartheid and the ongoing scourge of poverty and racism", she says. "It shows they are, in fact, good business partners, with proper technical assistance and facilities. Partnerships with communities and banks have helped us to take this first step into South Africa's democracy."

Katzin grew up in an area with "an apartheid feel, not legally apartheid, but if you crossed a certain street, the community went from black to white or white to black. It went from having facilities to not having facilities, from having streetlights that worked, jobs available, people with housing, and the opposite if you happened to be black".

Katzin's grandparents arrived in the United States as part of the Jewish exodus from Lithuania. Her mother was a teacher, and her father a small businessman. "My family worked hard for Jews to be accepted, to be able to have jobs and houses, and be understood in our community, which was a mix of black and white.

"My family has always been passionately interested in *tikkun olam*. My father was looking for ways to work with young people in the community as his business struggled, but still tried to provide opportunities for those around

him. Some of my closest friends, including my godmother, were black African Americans, and they slowly began to let me know about the situation.

"As I was growing up, I worked on building community reinvestment, helping people fight segregation in housing, and building a bank that would lend to them. I moved to New York, and began working for a Jewish union, doing anti-apartheid work. I was totally bitten by the bug, so much so that my next job was with the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility. It pressed companies to push South Africa for change. That went on through the 1980s until 1994."

However, Katzin and others realised that there was still a role for them in doing the nation-building work that Tutu was so passionate about. "So, we set up Shared Interest to make it possible to accelerate the economic transformation that was so critical to South Africa's success, and still is. I've been working for the company since then.

"I've been coming to South Africa maybe between two and four times a year, working with and visiting project partners in all the provinces, and now beginning to visit some of the neighbouring countries. We've reached so many people, but there are still so many more."

Having just commemorated Pesach, Katzin says the exodus story resonates with so many, particularly in South Africa, as a light to a path of change. "When we know that Israelites wandered in the desert, according to the Bible, for 40 years, it shouldn't be a surprise that South Africa hasn't completely waved a magic wand and transformed itself."

She fondly remembers the then general secretary of the South African Council of Churches, Frank Chikane, saying after the 1994 elections, "Congratulations South Africa. We've just crossed the Red Sea." With his sly sense of humour, he added, "My friends, we are now in the wilderness."



Photo: Shared Interest
Donna Katzin with homeowner Giveth Mazibuko

structures continue to operate as they have."

Pre-1994, Katzin was an anti-apartheid activist who put pressure on the South African government for peaceful change. "We looked at the situation in 1994, and said, 'We must think of how we can use the partnerships that we have built over these years.' At that time, I was working for the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility. One of our partners was Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu."

Katzin recalls the Nobel Peace Prize winner saying, "The end of apartheid was part one of the struggle, but part two was more difficult. To make the miracle endure, we asked you to disinvest, but now we encourage you to invest and make South Africa succeed for the sake of the world."

Doctors urge vaccination as flu cases spike

GILLIAN KLAWANSKY

Amid a rise in influenza cases with some patients experiencing severe symptoms, the flu vaccine has become a hot topic. Just what kind of protection does it offer, and what other ways are there to boost immunity?

"There has been a massive spike in influenza statistics over the past three to four weeks, as shown at my own practice and through chatting to colleagues," says family practitioner Dr Sheri Fanaroff. Laboratory reports from organisations including the National Institute for Communicable Diseases, Ampath, and Lancet confirm this.

Fanaroff says her patients are generally experiencing a sudden onset of symptoms. These often include high fever, body aches and pains, and a sore throat. These early symptoms are quickly followed by a spectrum of coughs, from a mild cough to a severe one with respiratory distress where people struggle with breathing and low oxygen levels. "There have been a number of quite serious flu cases, with some people ending up in hospital or requiring oxygen or treatment for severe flu symptoms," she says.

In light of such trends, building immunity against flu is particularly important. The flu vaccine has long been thought to be one of the most effective means of preventing flu from striking. While no vaccine is 100% effective, says Fanaroff, the flu vaccine is said to offer a 60% to 70% prevention rate.

"In my experience, patients who have been vaccinated against flu for that season generally don't get it in that season," she says. "They obviously may be vulnerable to a multitude of other viruses that are around, but they generally don't get influenza. In cases where they do get it, it's generally a much milder illness than it may have been otherwise."

Anyone over the age of six months can have the vaccine, says Fanaroff. She advises those who are allergic or who have had a severe reaction to the flu vaccine in the past not to have the vaccine. However high-risk groups who are particularly advised to vaccinate include those over the age of 65, pregnant women, anyone with an underlying illness or compromised immune system, and children under the age of two who are vulnerable to becoming ill from infection.

"Regardless, as many people as possible should vaccinate to get better immune stimulation to bring about herd immunity," says general practitioner Dr Tracy Paiken. Though the flu vaccine doesn't protect against all flu-causing viruses, it's still vital in reducing the burden of illness, and the more we do that the better, she says. "Ideally, it will

lessen severity of illness by stimulating the immune system to fight."

Though there are no new mutations of influenza this year, to address the fact that flu viruses do mutate frequently, new strains are regularly added to the vaccine.

"However, if the composition of the vaccine is different to what you are exposed to, and you don't have an optimally functioning immune system, you may still contract the flu," says homeopath and evidence-based

integrative practitioner Dr Jaci Schultz.

For those that argue against the flu vaccine's efficacy, Fanaroff points to the importance of timing. People often wait to hear about multiple flu cases before vaccinating instead of doing so at the beginning of the season, she says. "Once vaccinated, it takes about two weeks for your body to develop antibodies and be protected against flu. So, during that time, you're still quite vulnerable.

"We also regularly get reports of people who are already experiencing that flu feeling and only then decide to vaccinate. Then they go on to have full-blown flu two days later, because they've already been exposed to the virus, but sometimes the flu vaccine gets blamed for causing it. The flu vaccine isn't a live virus, it cannot cause the flu."

People generally report mild side effects after having had the vaccine, the most common of which is a sore arm which generally is resolved within two days. "A number of people do experience a fluey, 'off' feeling for two days after having the vaccine, which can include anything from

headache to mild body pain to even a mild fever. Yet, that's just a sign of your body mounting an immune response to the vaccine," Fanaroff says.

Experts say the reported increase in flu severity could be due to a number of factors. Often other viruses are mistakenly diagnosed as flu, Fanaroff says, pointing to the prevalence of other respiratory infections especially rhinovirus.

Other factors for rising flu cases include the fact that there are three bad strains currently circulating – Influenza A; Swine flu (H1N1); and COVID-19, says Schultz. "All three of these strains are very contagious. While there are some similarities in symptoms between these illnesses such as fever, cough, and fatigue, they are caused by different viruses and may have distinct patterns of transmission, severity, and long-term effects."

She also suggests that many people may have lower immunity due to having worn masks for a

number of years during the COVID-19 pandemic. "As much as this thankfully limited our exposure to COVID-19, it also prevented our immune system from building antibodies to all the other viruses around us," she says.

Paiken suggests mental health may also play a role in flu severity. "We always have a lot of respiratory illness, but perhaps people are more stressed with life circumstances, placing a strain on whole body health."

Aside from vaccinating, flu prevention includes maintaining hand hygiene, staying home when sick, wearing a mask, and keeping crowded rooms well ventilated.

To fight infection proactively, you could also adopt a homeopathic approach, Schultz says. "We want a patient's own immune system to be able to recognise a pathogen and mount an immune response," she says. Schultz prescribes supplements that assist with the allergic responses that increase the risk of infection; well-absorbed antioxidants that assist the patient's own immune response; and specific homeopathic medications that promote flu prevention.



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Young Jewish sports stars make waves

SAUL KAMIONSKY

Whether it's making spectacular saves on the soccer field, playing fine strokes on the tennis court, or showing leadership in the water polo team, three rising sports stars in our community can look back at the past month with pride.

Twelve-year-old goalkeeper Judah Rubenstein is the youngest player to have been selected among the 45 players chosen for the Southern Gauteng inter-provincial team, which will be divided into A, B, and C teams.

This Yeshiva College student played in the most matches (17) out of all the players who featured in games that were played under the watchful eye of coaches scouting for the 45 players for the inter-provincial team.

Rubenstein's fellow Johannesburg-based teen sportsman, 16-year-old Jayden Myers, has been shining on the tennis court. He won three of his four matches at a Central Gauteng tournament at Ellis Park last weekend against Tennis South Africa (TSA) players ranked in the top 50 under-16 players in the country.

Myers, who is being home schooled and is in Grade 10, played singles and doubles at this TSA tournament, which he got into by virtue of his rankings. He is ranked 58th for under-16 boys in South Africa and is 10th in the Central Gauteng rankings.

In Durban, 18-year-old Clifton College matric student Oliver Ditz is preparing

to head for Argentina with the South Africa men's under-18 team to compete at the World Aquatics Water Polo Championships at the Olympic Park Natatorium in Buenos Aires. The Argentine capital will hold the event from 2 to 8 July.



Judah Rubenstein

"It's a massive honour to represent South Africa. It's a dream come true," says Ditz, who captains the Clifton first team. "Since I started playing, the goal has always been to play for the South African under-18 team and going to the championships is literally the pinnacle of my career."

Ditz not only achieved more than 100 caps for his school's first team in his Grade 11 year, but he has also represented KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) at every age group level.

He was selected for the upcoming championships at the Currie Cup water polo tournament, in which Clifton placed second overall in KZN. "I had a nice tournament. I was the highest goal scorer," he says.

At the championships, the

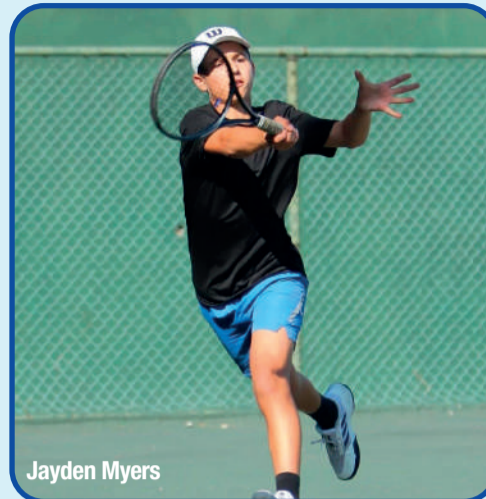
20 competing nations in the men's under-18 category have been split into six groups. Ditz and his fellow South African players will take part in a pool with Australia and Kazakhstan. Ditz describes it as a "very nice pool. The last time I went to SA championships, for the under-16 team in Greece, we played versus Hungary, who won the tournament, and we played Turkey, who won the silver plate."

While Ditz's captaincy experience may make him a contender for South African team captain, which hasn't been announced yet, he's hoping to play in every match. "Hopefully, I'm in form at the time and don't need to be subbed," he says.

The team is hoping to do well, Ditz says. "Our age group holds the South African record for the most games ever won at a world championships. We did it in the under-16 tournament, where we won four or five games. We're seeking to break more records and push the boundaries against the best countries in the world."

While Ditz is focused on the championships for now, Rubenstein and Myers have big goals in their sights. Rubenstein aspires to play in the Gauteng Development League, which consists of teams in the academies of clubs like Kaizer Chiefs, and then to play professional soccer in Europe. Myers aims to be the best tennis player in the world, and win a grand slam.

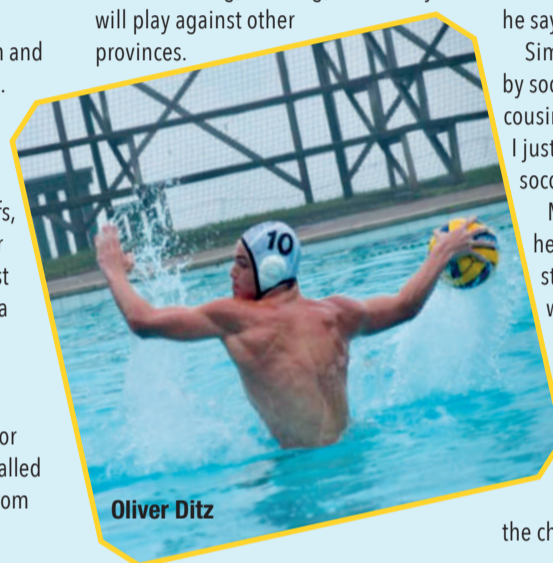
Rubenstein, the only under-12 representing the under-13 inter-provincial team, was scouted for the team while playing for a team called Buffaloes, which included players from Yeshiva and King David Sandton.



Jayden Myers

He and the other 45 players chosen by the scouts will now take part in trials, from which they will be split into groups of 15 to form part of the inter-provincial A team, called Southern Gauteng; B team, called Joburg; and C team, called Wits.

Once these inter-provincial teams have been finalised, the players will head off to Dinokeng, Gauteng, where they will play against other provinces.



Oliver Ditz

Myers isn't unfamiliar with taking on players from other provinces, and he has won or come second in tournaments in Polokwane and Mpumalanga.

He says the secret behind his good results is, "working really hard, giving as much as I can, and having mental toughness".

Myers, Rubenstein, and Ditz train most days of the week.

For the latter, managing water polo with doing matric is a challenge. "Matric does come

first. But at the same time, water polo is my passion, and I'm not going to go to a world championships not fully prepared."

Ditz fell in love with water polo as a Grade 2 student watching his older brother, Noah, play at a tournament. "I started watching all Clifton games. Watching their chemistry, skills, and banter led me to playing it in Grade 3," he says.

Similarly, Rubenstein was surrounded by soccer because his dad, uncle, and cousins played it. "When I saw a ball, I just started kicking it. I also watch soccer."

Myers started playing tennis when he was about seven years old. "I started taking tennis more seriously when I started watching Roger Federer, and from there I loved it even more."

Myers feels happy on the tennis court. "When I play, I forget about everything else that's going on in life, and I love the challenge."

In defence of the article I never wrote

"I've been very angry with you." Pause. "For years!" he said. And then he went quiet. Clearly, he was waiting for me to apologise. Which I would have done. Had I known him. Or known what I had done.

I had been minding my own business at an event when I noticed that this older guy had sidled up to me. At first, I paid little attention in the naïve hope that my lack of engagement made it clear that I wasn't open to discussion. After some time, I realised that he was going nowhere, so I turned to face him to see what it was that he wanted. His proximity was starting to make me uncomfortable.

"Hi," I said. "I'm Howard Feldman." Because I wasn't sure what else to go with. "I know," he responded. Grumpily. "I've been waiting to meet you. Because of a terrible article that you wrote years ago. It made me so upset."

"Which article was it?" I asked. "The one about your time in the South African army! I think it was terrible. And I couldn't believe what you wrote!"

"But I was never in the South African army," I countered. "Which means I didn't write the article." Silence. "Oh."

For the record, I'm unbothered by someone not liking an article I wrote. But I'm very bothered when they hate an article I didn't write. "It seems like a waste of a few years," I said shaking my head, after which he mumbled something, and the conversation sputtered to an uncomfortable close.

It was only after I got home that the lesson of the encounter became clear. This bloke, whose name I didn't learn, had spent years being annoyed with me. I have no

INNER VOICE

Howard Feldman



idea how many Friday night dinners were consumed by a discussion about something I didn't write, how often he had regaled his wife – assuming he has one – with his outrage and disappointment. And I wondered how many times he played out the conversation that he would have with me when we finally met.

At first, I thought it was really funny. Until I realised that it was really very sad. And what made it worse was that I had no doubt that I was probably guilty of doing what he had done. Just as we all probably are.

I had no idea who this person was, which meant that I had spent not a minute thinking about him. Yet he had devoted so much energy to being angry with a person who had no idea.

The experts tell us that we choose the space in our heads that we give to others. We can decide who lives in our thoughts and hearts, and who we give power to. It's not only those we don't know but might be someone we've bumped into, had a conversation with, or even an altercation with. There's a good chance that they have moved on, neither thinking or even remembering the incident, where we might let it fester and metastasise inside us.

On a brighter note, whereas I was never a member of the South African National Defence Force and didn't write the article I was accused of writing, I've now penned something that might go some way to make the wasted years somewhat worth it.

A column of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies

Election awareness a core campaign

As the representative voice and human rights lobby of South African Jewry, the South African Jewish Board of Deputies' core mission is proactive and, where necessary, defensive. It promotes and facilitates the community's participation in the wider society on the one hand, while working to uphold Jewish civil rights and combating antisemitism on the other. Our focus has been on helping the Jewish community to deal positively and constructively with the challenges facing its members as citizens of an evolving democratic society. In this regard, one of the flagship projects we've developed over the years and of which we're very proud is our #MakeUsCount election awareness and education campaign. Through this, we've been able to give practical effect to showing the community's commitment to participating in and contributing to democracy in South Africa.

I've already reported on some of the initiatives we've run for the upcoming elections. They have included an initial voter-registration drive; working with the relevant South African missions abroad to assist expatriates in casting their ballots; and putting together an interfaith observer team which will assist the Independent Electoral Commission in ensuring that the elections are conducted in a fair manner, as well as providing logistical assistance as needed. Our team comprises more than 100 members from Jewish and other communities, and is spread nationally. On Sunday, 19 May, both our national and Cape branches held successful events in which our community had the opportunity to engage with some of the various competing parties. In Johannesburg, this took the form of an Election Indaba, at which representatives of more than six competing parties had the opportunity of presenting their positions on the core issues of the day, with party tables set up to provide one-on-one discussions after the event. As on previous occasions, the session was expertly co-ordinated by journalist

This column is paid for by the SA Jewish Board of Deputies

ABOVE BOARD

Karen Milner



Mandy Wiener, while on this occasion, participants also had the opportunity to learn more about the political landscape from Wayne Sussman, who has emerged in recent years as one of the country's leading authorities on elections.

In Cape Town, the Cape Board again successfully collaborated with eNCA in holding a televised multi-party debate, in so doing making a meaningful contribution not just to its own constituency's awareness of the issues around the elections, but the broader society. The premier candidates from the Democratic Alliance, African Democratic Christian Party Western Cape, GOOD, and Freedom Front Plus took part in the event, answering a variety of tough and honest questions from the audience under the lively direction of the host, Dr Onkgopotse JJ Tabane.

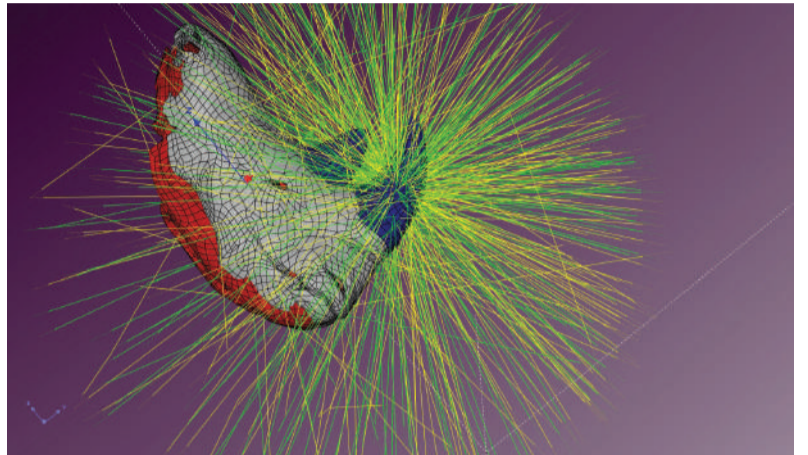
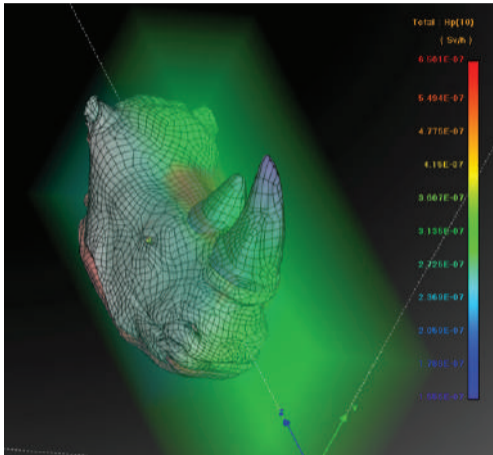
A sour note was introduced, unfortunately, by the eleventh hour withdrawal of the African National Congress (ANC). The stated reason was that the event was being held at the South African Jewish Museum. In spite of the ANC spokesperson having confirmed his participation as early as April, on the very day of the debate, the ANC requested a change of venue, and when this wasn't acceded to, refused to participate. That the ruling party chose to boycott an event because it was being held at a Jewish institution is, as the Cape statement released afterwards put it, both insulting and discriminatory and contradicts our constitutional value of "South Africa belongs to all who live in it". Regardless, our Jewish community will continue to be proud and vocal South Africans, and once again, I call on everyone to ensure that they turn out next week to make their voices count.

• Listen to Charisse Zeifert on Jewish Board Talk, 101.9 ChaiFM, every Friday from 12:00 to 13:00.



Wits Rhisotope Project

The Power of Nuclear Science for Rhino Conservation



What if nuclear science could be the key to rescuing our majestic rhinos from the brink of extinction? This is what Wits University's innovative Rhisotope Project, an initiative that harnesses the potential of radioisotopes to protect our beloved rhinos, hopes to achieve.

In the Wits Rhisotope Project, science meets conservation in a revolutionary way, as measured doses of radioisotopes are delicately inserted into the horns of live rhinos. This innovative approach offers a non-lethal yet formidable solution, that has the potential to significantly diminish the demand for rhino horns and shield these magnificent creatures from the imminent threat of extinction, through poaching.

Science Saving Rhinos

By rendering rhino horns radioactive, we diminish their allure as a commodity. This heightened radioactivity increases the likelihood of detection at international borders, exposing smuggling syndicates to prosecution under anti-terrorism laws.

People Saving Rhinos

The Wits Rhisotope Project extends beyond science, fostering a strong philanthropic ethos. Our efforts focus on empowering communities through education and support initiatives, cultivating a new generation of rhino champions. Together, we enable communities to benefit from the presence of living rhinos, rather than mourning the loss of dead ones.

Rhinos Saving People

Wildlife crime ranks among the top four black market activities, ranking alongside drug-, human- and weapons trafficking. By combating wildlife crime, we can strike a blow against international terrorism, making the world a safer place for all.

Join us in the fight to safeguard our rhinos and secure a brighter future for generations to come.

Together, we can make a difference for good.

Visit <https://rhisotope.org/>



Union of Jewish Women's work 'more important than ever'

"In order not to cave into the wishes of antisemites, we need to thrive, be proud, and continue our wonderful projects," Union of Jewish Women (UJW) co-Vice-Chairperson Ingrid Koor told the organisation's 92nd annual general meeting on 16 May.

"Did we ever visualise in our worst nightmares that we would experience the horrific events of 7 October, that Israel would be at war for more than seven months and still waiting for hostages to come home?" Over the past year, the UJW assisted at least 35 601 men, women, and children through its many projects. It has been serving the Jewish and greater community for 92 years.

Koor emphasised the need for the UJW to continue to raise funds and run projects for the Jewish and broader community. UJW National President Bev Goldman said commitment, dedication, and passion reflect the ethos and values of the women who run and volunteer for UJW Johannesburg.

Howard Feldman, the guest speaker, spoke about finding positivity and optimism after 7 October. The choice is ours to go through life as a pessimist or an optimist who can stand up and make changes, Feldman said.



Danny Mofowitz at the Union of Jewish Women's Annual General Meeting

Yeshiva winner represents South Africa at My Family Story event

Gia Suckerman, a pupil at Yeshiva College, was the My Family Story project winner who represented South Africa at the 2024 My Family Story International Competition in Memory of Manuel Hirsch Grosskopf on 13 May.

In a competitive field comprising submissions from across the globe, Suckerman's project captivated the panel of judges with its inspirational life lessons of kindness and inclusivity which she gained from her beloved grandfather, Lionel Stein. Her project will be showcased in a live

broadcast on 6 June, and it will be featured in the core exhibition of the ANU-Museum of the Jewish People, ensuring its lasting impact.



Gia Suckerman with her My Family Story project

Jewish students join prayer for students

Members of the South African Union of Jewish Students (SAUJS) at the University of Johannesburg (UJ) attended an interfaith prayer walk on Friday, 10 May, at UJ's Soweto campus. The students walked with several Christian groups from the Imbewu residence across campus to the old cafeteria to commemorate the loss of students due to suicide and tragic accidents.

Each religious group had a chance to say a prayer for the families who lost a member, and for the well-being of

students. Tamar Levy, SAUJS Gauteng chairperson, said, "It was moving to see everyone praying for people they don't know personally. I felt honoured to be there. It opened my eyes to the mental health struggles that students go through."

Aiden Zeifert, SAUJS vice-chairperson, said, "The importance of working directly with students and student leaders cannot be overstated. We need to show our classmates that we care about them, and are aware of their struggles." The event concluded with the student representative council reminding students to reach out when necessary, and that there was no shame in doing so.



Jason Joffe, Issa Feks, Aiden Zeifert, and Tamar Levy

Sunday 26 May

• Second Innings hosts a talk by Bafana Modise on *Never Again is Now*. Time: 09:45. Cost: R50 (R20 members). Contact: 082 561 3228

Tuesday 28 May

• ORT SA hosts a Chat GPT masterclass with Dean Furman. Time: 12:30. Contact: 011 728 7154 or admin@ortjet.org.za

• Chabad Longevity Club hosts *Breathing, Stretching and Movement* with Dr Helen

Kennedy. Time: 09:45. Contact: 011 440 6600 or rak@chabad.org.za

Thursday 30 May

• Chabad Seniors hosts *Seniors Fun Physiotherapy* with Talya Drutman and Caron Shapiro. Time: 09:45. Contact: rak@chabad.org.za

Sunday 2 June

• The Jewish Women's Benevolent Society hosts its R30 book sale. Time: 09:00 to 14:00.

Contact: 011 485 5232 or office@jwbs.co.za

• Chevrah Kadisha Bereavement hosts its *Growth from Grief* support group. Time: 10:00. Contact: 011 532 9711 or socialservices@jhbchev.co.za

• New Beginnings hosts a talk by Tanya Gordon on biokinetics. Time: 10:00. Cost: R50. Contact: lynarch@worldonline.co.za



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