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# Jewish Report

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## CSO awaits forensic results on Glenhazel device

LEE TANKLE

A waste picker who routinely collects rubbish in the Glenhazel area is believed to have placed the two devices, that led to panic and an area in Glenhazel being cordoned off last Friday, 24 October.

This Wednesday, CAP and CSO confirmed that “the individual, understood to be a recycler, was located by CAP, with the assistance of SAPS [the South African Police], and subsequently detained for questioning on Wednesday, 29 October.”

At this point, there’s no clear evidence of malicious intent and, according to CAP, his explanation has been verified, and police forensic analysis will provide final confirmation in due course.

“During questioning, the individual explained that he had found a discarded black box, attempted to sell its components, and later discarded the remaining pieces,” said CAP. “This account has been verified, although final confirmation will depend on the outcome of ongoing police investigations.”

However, CSO Chief Executive Liron Sanders said these devices cannot be dismissed as irrelevant or without malicious intent at this point. He said SAPS was still doing forensic testing on the remaining one of two identical devices to discover what they were. Sanders said they would know for certain what the person’s “intention was in behind putting the device there” only once the investigation was complete.

“To my mind, it’s still a highly suspicious and concerning event,” he said. “And until we hear back from the bomb squad, we’re treating it as that.”

The device in the photograph that

was circulated appeared to resemble an explosive, CAP said that the object that “initially appeared highly suspicious, is now believed to be the internal components of a specialised product used for commercial purposes that was simply discarded and later picked up by the recycler, who further discarded parts he couldn’t sell for scrap value”.

However, an expert who cannot be named, maintained that this should not easily be dismissed as “nothing” because very similar devices have been found elsewhere in South Africa and overseas and were definitely dangerous.

The alert was initiated when 12-year-old

Yeshiva College scholar Sara Perez, on her way home from school, spotted one of two suspicious devices outside KoshersWorld, which resulted in CSO securing the area last Friday afternoon.

“I was walking from school at about 15:00, and I was looking at a tree. I saw this thing on the floor that looked like a bomb,” said Sara. “My gut told me that it looked weird.” So, she rushed home to her mom and described it. “I drew a picture for her, and she notified the security guard at our school and CSO. Five minutes later, they started blocking the road.”

Sara’s mother, Tziva, said, “I was proud of her suggestion to draw it for me, and immediately realised it was something to be

concerned about.”

As soon as CSO got the call from Perez, teams were dispatched to the scene and started closing off roads.

Sanders said, “Our protectors who were at KoshersWorld and Yeshiva were sent to investigate, while we simultaneously dispatched our response team.”

They soon blocked off the road, evacuated KoshersWorld and nearby complexes, and moved people to safety.

Unsure if the devices could explode but aware any blast could be

severe, CSO expanded the perimeter, and closed multiple surrounding roads before alerting police and security teams.

Sanders described the devices as “tubular with wires and tape” and said they resembled an effective bomb. “At first,

we didn’t know if the devices contained explosives, so we treated them as a real threat,” he said.

The police were notified, and the Sandringham police sector vehicle arrived first on scene. From there, the provincial police arrived, as did the K9 unit, and the bomb squad. They found the two suspicious objects, one was safely detonated, and the other taken for investigation. The police noted in its initial investigation that there was no explosive material in the devices, but said it had to do proper forensic tests, according to Sanders.

After the all-clear shortly before Shabbat came in last Friday, CSO and CAP launched a co-ordinated investigation using CCTV, video-enhancement, analytical tools, informers, and partnerships with SAPS and other law-enforcement agencies to determine who had placed the devices and why.

“Multiple CAP teams canvassed footage and information from more than 50 homes across the greater Glenhazel area, reviewing hundreds of hours of video,” CAP said.

“Through this combined work, a person of interest believed to be responsible for

Continued on page 3>>



## SA ‘FAMILY’ SUPPORTS BRIDE



Photo: Screenshot from video

See story on page 3

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# SA off the grey list, but still in the shadows



MICHAEL KRANSORFF

Most South Africans would be surprised, perhaps even incredulous, to learn that the country has been removed from the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) grey list. With police capture, tender fraud, cosy relationships with rogue states and terrorist organisations, and the continued impunity of implicated officials, it hardly feels as if South Africa is suddenly on a path toward financial probity.

The FATF's grey list identifies countries with

"strategic deficiencies" in combating money laundering and terrorist financing. South Africa was placed on it in February 2023, following years of weak enforcement and deliberate institutional decay. Reserve Bank Governor Lesetja Kganyago has described grey listing as both reputationally damaging and financially costly. According to an International Monetary Fund study, the so-called "time-out" probably reduced South Africa's gross foreign capital inflows by an estimated \$50 billion to \$110 billion over the past 30 months. Its removal, announced last week at the FATF plenary in Paris, is a welcome development but it's far too early to declare victory against financial crime and corruption.

South Africa has now met all 22 technical requirements to exit the list, including improved financial intelligence sharing; tighter regulations; beneficial ownership registers; and strengthened supervisory frameworks for banks and professionals. Yet these are procedural achievements, not evidence of transformative change. The bar is low: countries like Mozambique, Nigeria, and Burkina Faso were also taken off the grey list alongside South Africa.

There have been some measurable improvements. In 2024/25, the Financial Intelligence Centre logged roughly 13.5 million regulatory reports. Enforcement activity has increased, with Anti-Money Laundering (AML) fines rising from R25 million in 2022 to R175 million in 2024; and a 50% increase in prosecutions by the National Prosecuting Authority's dedicated AML/CFT (Countering the Financing of Terrorism) unit. Yet this is off a very low base: the rise represents an increase from just 65 to 98 cases, and not every case resulted in a conviction. Broader commercial-crime convictions actually fell by 10% to 333 over the same period. Meanwhile, the politically connected remain untouched: of the 95 senior

African National Congress (ANC) figures named in the Zondo Commission, not one has faced meaningful repercussions in court.

Pretoria also continues to turn a blind eye to terror financing – a core FATF concern. The ANC maintains close ties to Hamas, while groups linked to the organisation, such as the Al-Quds Foundation, continue to operate freely and fundraise with impunity. Earlier this year, a United States-sanctioned Islamic State cell leader even attempted to form an Islamic State of Africa political party in South Africa. With porous borders and weak oversight, South Africa remains a haven for extremist networks to launder funds and facilitate terrorism, precisely the vulnerabilities that grey listing is meant to address.

South Africa's institutions are ill-equipped to tackle these threats. In an environment where five prosecutors have been murdered in five years, and nearly 150 municipal employees assassinated, the notion that South Africa is winning the fight against financial crime strains credulity. Prosecuting

authorities and financial intelligence services lack resources, while courts remain overloaded. Worse, because of political interference, successful investigative units are the ones that are shut down.

While the FATF may have restored South Africa's financial *hechsher*, many of its leading trade partners remain unconvinced. Just last month, the US placed South Africa on its Tier 2 Watch List for human trafficking, while the US-South Africa Bilateral Relations Review Act (H.R.2633), which could result in Magnitsky sanctions on senior ANC officials, continues to advance through Congress.

The World Bank estimates that crime and corruption cost South Africa up to 10% of gross domestic product each year, a staggering self-inflicted wound. Exiting the grey list may ease regulatory pressure, but it won't rebuild trust, attract investment, or restore integrity. Real progress demands more

than compliance checklists: it requires accountability at the highest levels, independent institutions, and a decisive break from the criminal and ideological networks hollowing out the state.

Until South Africa confronts these entrenched interests with courage and conviction, it will remain what it has become: a country off the grey list, but still trapped in the financial shadows.

• Michael Kransdorff is chief executive officer of the Institute of International Tax and Finance.



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## The G-d of Abraham, take 2

Torah Thought



Rabbi Dr David Nossel

According to oral tradition, Abraham discovered G-d, not once, but twice. The first time was when he was three years old. The second time when he was 40.

Instead of saying that Abraham suffered from amnesia and had to rediscover at 40 what he had already discovered at three, it makes more sense to say that he began his discovery of G-d when he was three, and upgraded it to a new level at 40. But why is this upgrade at 40 considered an entirely new discovery of G-d?

When the apple fell on Isaac Newton's head, and he "discovered" gravity, his subsequent insightful gravitational theory was a formulation of his original core discovery, not a new one.

Thus, the oral teaching must be revealing something else. And indeed it is. Something revolutionary that changes our understanding of G-d, of Abraham, and of ourselves, completely and irreversibly.

There isn't one type of discovery of G-d, but two. The first type of discovery of G-d pertains to a three-year-old. Yes, a three-year-old can discover G-d. Abraham did. Abraham may well have been highly precocious and gifted at three, but a three-year-old he was. And in truth, I would say that my own son, who, by the way we named Abraham, also knew about G-d at the age of three. Certainly, we were actively feeding him a spiritual high-in-G-d diet, and by three, he was already a yarmulka and tzitzit clad Jew, being made aware of Hashem pretty much all the time.

At 40, Abraham discovered that his first discovery of G-d needed not upgrading but replacement. He needed to discover G-d anew. G-d as "the One who exists as invisible, but wishes to be revealed" was good for a three-year-old, but was no longer good for a 40-year-old. When he reached 40, he discovered G-d as "the One who exists as invisible, and wishes to remain so". It's the discovery of a G-d who doesn't want our

preoccupation with Him. Quite the contrary. It's the discovery of a G-d who wants our occupation with Him to be about "other-than-Him".

This discovery is clearly not a continuation but a complete turnaround of the first discovery. To the three-year-old mindset, at the centre of one's discovery of G-d is a relationship of "two selves": G-d Himself and me myself. Everything else is secondary. To the 40-year-old, at the centre of one's discovery of G-d is a relationship of "two un-selves": G-d not for Himself; and me not for myself. Everything else is primary.

Mind-blowing. Sensational. Unequaled.

So, Abraham didn't suffer from amnesia. He was blessed with clarity. He discovered that his first discovery of G-d was a temporary, self-involved one. It was good enough for a three-year-old, but not good enough to become the father of the altruistic Jewish people who serve the altruistic G-d: The G-d of Abraham, take 2.

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# South African 'simcha sisters' respond to bride's call

CLAUDIA GROSS

When Devorah Freedman, a young South African woman living in Israel, posted on Facebook that her wedding to her Israeli fiancé would be without family and close friends from home dancing with her, she could never have imagined that strangers would fill the gap.

Her heartfelt message was simple. If anyone nearby could come dance with her on her big day, she would be deeply grateful. Most of her loved ones back home in South Africa couldn't travel to Israel for the *simcha*. All she wanted was to feel the warmth of women around her as she took her first steps as a bride. What happened next was pure South African magic.

In Ra'anana, Kayla\* was scrolling through her family WhatsApp group when something caught her eye. Her cousin, Sigal Josselowitz, had shared the bride's post on an aliya Facebook group. "It pulled at my heartstrings," Sigal said. "My whole family had just travelled from South Africa for my cousin's wedding. I couldn't imagine someone celebrating without that kind of support."

For Kayla, who works as a youth *madricha* and teacher at a synagogue in Ra'anana, it was an instant call to action. "I saw it as a good opportunity to do a *chesed*, to help create *sameach chatan v'kallah* [bring joy to the bride and groom] and to do a *mitzvah*," she said. "So I messaged the group of girls that I teach and asked who would be keen to come. Seven of them said yes straight away."

The shul stepped in to sponsor a private bus, and within hours, plans were set in motion. A group of young women, most of them South African *olim*, packed dresses, energy, and an abundance of *ruach*, ready to head north to Haifa to make a stranger's wedding shine. As the bus wound its way out of Ra'anana, there was laughter and anticipation. "We knew we were going to be a vibe," said Kayla. "Our mission was to make this bride the happiest we could."

When they arrived at the venue, they were met with a mixture of curiosity and surprise. "At first, they were looking at us like, 'Who are these people?'" Kayla recalled. "But when the music started, we all just went in bouncing, and created a complete vibe. From the second we walked in, we didn't stop dancing."

They sang, clapped, spun in circles, and lifted the *kallah* high. Strangers became sisters in *simcha*. "The bride was so grateful," Kayla said. "All of my girls described it as the most meaningful, inspirational experience to be able

to make someone's wedding day. We literally went crazy dancing, in the best way."

Though Kayla and her group knew exactly why they were there, the bride herself had no idea who the energetic guests were when they arrived. "I was taking photos with my husband, and I saw a whole bunch of girls standing at the entrance," said Devorah. "I thought maybe they were from his side of the family. Then they came over, and they had even brought me a *challah* board as a gift. They told me they came all the way from Ra'anana, and I was like, wow, that's amazing!"

At first, she noticed one familiar accent. "I heard her accent, and realised she was from South Africa," Devorah said. "Then I found out that all of them were from South Africa, and I thought, that's incredible, they answered my post!"

The surprise transformed her wedding day. "They were full of energy and fun," she said. "If it wasn't for them, it would have been much less lively. They literally made my wedding. It was amazing, and I felt so supported. Even the fact that they travelled all the way from Ra'anana to Haifa was moving. They were there the whole time, right until the end, even lifting me up on the chair. They were great."

For Kayla, who made aliya recently, the experience was deeply personal. "It made me appreciate having had my family at my wedding," she reflected. "Maybe I took it for granted, but this made me realise the power and strength of Israel. Nowhere else in the world would people drive more than an hour just to make someone they don't know happy at their wedding." That, she said, is the essence of living in Israel. "It's this country's heart. You wouldn't find that anywhere else." The gesture had a rapid ripple effect. Photos and videos from the wedding, shared in community groups, drew admiration and pride from South Africans around Israel and abroad.

"Only South Africans!" wrote one commenter. "Such warmth and *ruach*, that's our girls!" Another said, "This is exactly why I love being part of this community. We show up for each other,



South African *olim* supporting the bride at her wedding

even when we have never met."

Sigal, who first saw the bride's plea online, said it was surreal to see how fast her cousin mobilised. "I just shared the post. Kayla did everything. It reminded me how connected South Africans are here. We may live all over Israel, but we're still one extended family."

For Devorah, the gesture was about

more than dancing. It was about feeling held by a community that stretches across oceans. "It was really special," she said. "I was so moved that they came; that they made such an effort to support me; and that they stayed until the very end. They made me feel like I was surrounded by family, even though mine were far away."

Even the wedding guests who didn't know the women were moved by their enthusiasm. By the end of the night, everyone was on the dance floor together – family, friends, and newfound community members, united in celebration.

"There is a kind of South African Jewish DNA that says if someone needs something, we will show up," said Kayla. "It's the way we were raised – with community, kindness, and *chesed* at the centre of everything."

For many new *olim*, moments like this ease the loneliness of starting over in a new country. "Aliya can be hard," said Kayla. "You miss your people, your family, and your culture. But when you see South

Africans coming together like this, it makes you feel like you aren't alone. It's home, just in a different place."

What struck Kayla most wasn't just the dancing, but the girls' willingness to give of themselves, on a weeknight, far from home, for someone they had never met. "They didn't hesitate," she said. "It wasn't 'Should we?' It was, 'Of course we should!' They understood that making someone else happy is what it means to live here. It's how we build each other up."

The experience has already inspired others. Since the wedding, Kayla has received messages from people wanting to know how they can do something similar, whether visiting elderly *olim* without family nearby; volunteering for new brides and grooms; or simply spreading joy.

For Kayla and her group, that night in Haifa will always stand out. "It was honestly one of the best experiences of my life," she said. "The girls felt the same. We came back on the bus completely exhausted but glowing. We couldn't stop talking about it."

"This is what it means to be part of *Am Yisrael*," Kayla said. "We dance for each other, even when we have never met."

\*Kayla isn't her real name. She asked not to be identified because she wanted to do good, not seek *kavod* or recognition.

## CSO awaits forensic results on Glenhazel device

>>Continued from page 1

placing the objects was identified."

A shopper, who asked to remain anonymous, said she initially thought people were overreacting, but soon realised the gravity of the situation. "When I stepped outside, I realised it was very real," she said.

A Johannesburg psychologist driving to a beauty appointment in the area said that initially, she thought the roadblocks were due to an accident and walked into the scene.

Inside the salon, she said, no one seemed concerned. "People knew about the devices but thought it was just a precaution, so we carried on as normal. I feel silly for not taking it seriously, but everyone was calm. When I later heard more details and sensed the panic, I realised I might have been in real danger."

Joel Back, the owner of KosherWorld, said that as soon as the news came through and they were ordered to evacuate, people left the store as they had been asked.

"There was some nervousness and definitely concern. But fear was mitigated as the area was cordoned off and secured," he said.

Marian Nussbaum was shopping at KosherWorld just before CSO closed the store. She said she sensed something was wrong, but didn't realise how serious it was and tried to finish quickly. "I wasn't so much scared for our lives as anxious because no one knew what was happening. CSO assured us we were safe, but it was still frightening," she said.

A grandmother living opposite Yeshiva College said she was initially frustrated when road closures prevented her from leaving

for Shabbat. "I was scared to leave my house once I heard there were potential bombs so close," she said.

Steven Sacks, the owner of RTG, said that though he and his customers were initially nervous, fear lingered even after learning that the devices couldn't explode or cause harm as there was little to no clarity on what had actually happened.

At 17:30, the CSO instructed responders that shul services should continue as usual. However, with Yeshiva College too close to the scene, Rabbis Alon Friedman and Yehoshua Asulin moved their Friday night services to the Bnei Akiva Bayit to keep the area clear.

"Friday's events serve as a powerful reminder of the vital partnership between our community and the various security and emergency organisations that work tirelessly to keep us safe," Friedman said. "Thanks to this close co-operation, we were able to continue our regular *tefillot*, albeit at a temporary venue."

Sanders said that the whole procedure lasted about three hours, and by 18:30, the area was declared safe.

Professor Karen Milner, the national chairperson of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, said, "The community mustn't draw conclusions or overreact as we wait for the outcome of the investigation. Our communal leadership is committed to safeguarding this community in co-ordination with all the key bodies required to protect us."

Said Sanders, "Carry on as normal with a higher level of awareness. Leave it to the CSO to do what's necessary to make sure you're safe."

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## UWC demands tender bidders 'disassociate' from Israel

TALI FEINBERG

The University of the Western Cape (UWC) this week published a request for business owners wishing to tender to provide sporting attire for the university to issue a "signed certificate in respect of non-affiliation with the state of Israel". The demand, published on 24 October, was one of the "mandatory

criteria" for those wanting to tender.

The requirement comes amid virulent hatred of Israel and the West on UWC's campus. On 7 October 2025, the UWC Palestinian Solidarity Association posted on Instagram: "Glory to the resistance, victory to the martyrs, f\*ck Israel, f\*ck settler colonialism, f\*ck USA, free all Palestinian hostages, break the siege." It also hosted a talk on 8 October 2025 to explain "Why

Al-Aqsa Flood [Hamas's 7 October 2023 massacre] was so very necessary, and asked participants to download Hamas content beforehand".

The university now has a Palestinian flag permanently raised in front of its main hall, and on 15 May, it encouraged students to attend a rally on campus protesting the "Nakba".

Daniel Bloch, the executive director of

the Cape South African Jewish Board of Deputies, says his organisation is aware of the tender demand, and "we are exploring all avenues to challenge this discriminatory practice".

Despite the South African government's political stance on the Jewish state, "South Africa continues to maintain economic, political, and trade relations with the state of Israel," says Bloch. "No official anti-Israel

policies have been implemented at national level. It's therefore deeply concerning that a public institution, funded by South African taxpayers, believes that it has the authority to impose unilaterally this type of exclusionary measure."

The policy "not only undermines national policy consistency, it also discriminates against South African citizens and businesses based on perceived associations

## UCT case shows it put Gaza before South Africa

TALI FEINBERG

When Professor Adam Mendelsohn took the University of Cape Town (UCT) to court over two resolutions it adopted in June 2024, he did so out of a deep concern for the institution, its students, staff, and ordinary South Africans. This was made apparent in the arguments of his legal team, led by Advocate Eduard Fagan SC, when the case was heard in the Western Cape High Court on 23 and 24 October.

However, Advocate Tembeka Ngcukaitobi SC, representing UCT, repeated multiple times that UCT had adopted the resolutions "for Palestine", knowing that it would give up funding that would have benefited its constituents and ordinary South Africans, and that it would curtail academic freedom. Their supporters reinforced this in court.

Outside court, anti-Israel extremists hurled abuse at anyone who supported Mendelsohn's concern for UCT and the South Africans who would have benefited from donations. "Look at these disgusting Zios," said Professor Usuf Chikhe, the co-ordinator of the Palestine Solidarity Campaign, telling the media that "the Zionists are prioritising Jewish supremacy over everybody else".

"One settler, one bullet. One Zionist, one bullet," stated one female protester. Others yelled, "Long live the resistance!" and "There is only one solution: *intifada* resolution." Mendelsohn's supporters held signs saying, "Let ideas compete, not identities," and "Universities should teach, not preach."

The case was heard before Judges Robert Henney, Tandazwa Ndita, and Mark Sher. Mendelsohn, the director of the Kaplan Centre for Jewish Studies at UCT, was also head of UCT's history department until he was suspended because colleagues expressed opposition to his legal application. He has since been cleared of any wrongdoing, but UCT hasn't reinstated him.

Mendelsohn is calling on the court to order UCT to review or set aside two resolutions that its highest decision-making body, its Council, adopted in June 2024. He says UCT didn't follow its own processes when adopting the resolutions, which curtail academic freedom and research.

The first resolution "resolves to reject the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's [IHRA] definition of antisemitism" because of the IHRA's "conflation of critique of Zionism and Israel's policies as antisemitism". However, Sher stated that this was "just an interpretation" of the definition.

Fagan noted that Mendelsohn's application raised no issue with the other points of this resolution, such as calling for a ceasefire. It demonstrates that Mendelsohn's case isn't about the legality of UCT's actions.

That includes his allegation that the UCT Executive (Exco) hid from Council members that the university was in breach of a contract with the Donald Gordon Foundation (DGF) if it rejected the IHRA definition, meaning that the DGF would pull millions of rands of funding, including the donation of a hospital and R200 million towards UCT's Neuroscience Institute.

Ngcukaitobi argued that because there was no explicit statement in correspondence from donors saying they would cancel funding, there was no need to warn Council. However, he ignored the fact that there were also verbal discussions and a contract that UCT signed which bound it to adopt the IHRA definition. Henney pointed out that this clause was



Adam Mendelsohn supporters outside the Western Cape High Court

drafted by UCT itself.

But court papers show that both the DGF and the Dell Foundation, which also removed funding in light of Hamas support on campus and the resolutions, tried to salvage the relationship with UCT. The fact that UCT had ongoing engagements to "resolve their concerns" suggests that there was a real risk of losing the donations, Fagan said.

Fagan also pointed out that universities aren't for profit, so the narrative of UCT being "strong-armed" by donors is nonsensical. Donations are given only to help the university thrive and to benefit the disadvantaged, he argued, which is why UCT owed its constituents a thorough process.

All three judges showed discomfort with the fact that UCT didn't reveal the full risk to Council. Sher compared this to a pharmaceutical company rushing to release a new drug and stating that there were related "health concerns"; but not elaborating, leading to a consumer having an allergic reaction. The judges also questioned the actions of Council chairperson, Advocate Norman Arendse SC, as Mendelsohn and the DGF both allege that he lied in his answering affidavit.

A major point of contention was whether UCT should have consulted with stakeholders before adopting the resolutions. As *amicus curiae* (friend of the court), the South African Jewish Board of Deputies' (SAJBD's) legal counsel, Advocate Mushahida Adhikari, argued that deciding on a definition of antisemitism without engaging with Jews is like "a group of men deciding on a definition of sexism without talking to women".

But Ngcukaitobi argued that there was sufficient representation on Senate and Council.

Arguing for South African Jews for a Free Palestine (SAJFP) as *amicus curiae*, Advocate Geoff Budlender SC said it was "absurd" to ask the university to consult. When Henney pointed out that "those who experience antisemitism are Jews", so maybe they should be consulted, Budlender responded that "those who are accused of antisemitism" should also be consulted. The SAJBD later said this was like "asking the Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging [AWB] to be consulted on racism".

The second resolution states that "no UCT academic may enter into relations with, or continue relations with, any research group or network whose author affiliations are with the Israel Defense Forces [IDF] or the broader Israeli military establishment".

The judges asked what was meant by "enter into relations"; "network"; and "broader Israeli military establishment". They questioned whether the resolution hindered academic freedom and human rights, for example,

by ending a research project on tuberculosis between a South African and Israeli academic.

Ngcukaitobi said, "We don't want our academics affiliated with the army of Israel", and stated that "broader military establishment" meant auxiliary organs that "support the children they send to kill other people".

He argued that the resolutions still needed to be refined into policy, so the way they were adopted and how they should be interpreted didn't matter. He ignored the fact that Israeli academics were forced to sign statements declaring that they weren't part of the IDF when attending a recent UCT conference.

He also said that the resolutions were put before Council twice after June 2024, with more information, and both times, it voted not to rescind them. Therefore, he said, it did nothing wrong in adopting them.

SAJBD National Director Wendy Kahn said the SAJBD joined the case to demonstrate "the hostile environment in which these resolutions were adopted, and their impact on Jewish students and academics at UCT.

"We need to ensure that diversity is respected [at UCT], where no individual is targeted based on their identity, including being Jewish and Zionist," she said.

Kahn emphasised that this was a watershed case, the outcome of which extended beyond UCT, with implications for Jewish communities locally and internationally. It would help determine whether Jewish South Africans could "continue to rely on constitutional protections when their dignity and safety was at risk in public institutions".

South African Zionist Federation spokesperson Rolene Marks said the case revealed "grave governance failures" and "how a faction within council has wilfully undermined the institution through its obsessive campaign against the Jewish state".

Academic freedom "has been curtailed, Jewish students and academics no longer feel safe on campus, and a chilling effect has taken hold over engagement with Israeli academia", Marks said. "It's a travesty that ideological activism has been allowed to eclipse good governance, integrity, and the university's duty to its students and staff."

Sara Gon, the director of the Free Speech Union of South Africa, said Council "serves the provision of education to every person at the university, irrespective of their views on the most contentious issues".

This is why many universities had decided that "political issues must not be expressed by the ultimate managerial body," Gon said. Debate and controversy "are the lifeblood of a university, but not of the administration".

The case continues on 30 October.

or beliefs – a clear violation of our Constitution's principles of equality and non-discrimination", he says.

Advocate Mark Oppenheimer, an expert on hate speech, says "UWC's tender requirement that suppliers of sporting apparel provide a certificate declaring that they are 'non-affiliated with the state of Israel' is highly discriminatory and actionable under the Equality Act." It amounts to "discrimination on the grounds of ethnicity and, arguably, religion. It's notable that no other state is singled out in this way, and it would be prudent for UWC to withdraw this condition before it finds itself a defendant in a lawsuit", he says.

Antisemitism expert and emeritus professor of history at the University of Cape Town, Milton Shain, says the requirement is outrageous. "The collective identity of Jews began in the land of Israel, which has always been central to Jewish history. In exile, the connection endured. Jews pray towards Jerusalem. The connection is physical and spiritual. Must this be disavowed in a 'signed certificate'?"

"Israel is a member of the family of nations, created by the United Nations," Shain says. "One can agree or disagree with her policies, but why does 'affiliation' amount to a crime? Can a Christian Zionist be a service provider? Are we moving towards a society in which one will have to declare one's affiliations to the satisfaction of 'Big Brother?' Perhaps a yellow star will be next at UWC for those 'affiliated' to Israel."

Gasant Abarder, the manager of media and marketing at UWC, told the *SA Jewish Report* that the requirement aligns with the university's decision in June 2024 to "disengage academically" from Israeli institutions. "UWC will interact with Israeli institutions – universities or organisations – only if the institution supports, through policy and facts, the basic human rights of every individual," says Abarder.

The decision to "disengage academically" was made by a motion endorsed by the UWC Council, Senate, Convocation, and Student Representative Council in June 2024. The motion says that the university's management is tasked with "disclosing all UWC investments in Israeli products and companies".

UWC will also advocate at national level for "South African universities to adopt full academic disengagement from Israel". Senior attorney Ian Levitt says, "This is one of the most astounding requirements for a tender that I've ever seen, more so because it requires a formal, signed certificate declaring 'non-affiliation' to the state of Israel."

Continued on page 5>>

# 'See you in court,' lawyers tell Albanese

NICOLA MILTZ

The legal storm surrounding United Nations Special Rapporteur Francesca Albanese has intensified, with the United States-based National Jewish Advocacy Center (NJAC) confirming that she has now been served electronically in a US civil lawsuit after a messy attempt in Johannesburg last weekend.

"We also served her over email and at her office so there would be no excuses," said Mark Goldfeder, the director of the NJAC. Goldfeder told the *SA Jewish Report*, "If she doesn't show up, we will proceed without her."

The confirmation follows a chaotic attempt on Saturday, 25 October, by the Sheriff of the High Court to hand Albanese a summons at the Nelson Mandela Foundation's 23rd Annual Lecture in Johannesburg, where she was guest of honour. A sheriff and local attorney acting for the NJAC tried to approach her under Section 40 of the Superior Courts Act following her lecture at the Sandton Convention Centre.

Albanese, a fierce and outspoken critic of Israel who has been accused of antisemitism and sympathising with Hamas, is being sued in the US District Court of Colorado by two American Christian organisations – Christian Friends of Israeli Communities, and Christians for Israel USA – for defamation, trade libel, and interference with economic advantage.

Earlier this year, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio imposed sanctions on Albanese accusing her of spewing "unabashed antisemitism".

The US complaint, filed on 8 September 2025, stems from a report Albanese released earlier this year accusing companies and faith-based groups with ties to Israel of being "complicit in war crimes and crimes against humanity".

On 26 October, Minister of Justice and Constitutional Development Mmamoloko Kubayi issued a statement attempting to distance the South African government from the embarrassing episode which took place at the Convention Centre.

The minister apologised for what she called the "irregular service of process". She explained that neither she nor the director-general had authorised it, as required under Section 40(2) of the Superior Courts Act, which mandates that foreign civil procedures must be transmitted through the justice department with ministerial approval.

Kubayi described the service attempt as "irregular", and said she had withdrawn it, offering an "unconditional apology" to Albanese, the Nelson Mandela Foundation,

and the United Nations. The statement also promised an internal investigation and "consequence-management process" for the officials involved. The minister reaffirmed South Africa's commitment to "respect for international law and diplomatic obligations".

NJAC immediately rejected the government's explanation, releasing what it says is written proof of official authorisation.

Responding directly on X, Goldfeder wrote: "Dear @FranceskaAlbs and Minister @mmkubayi: You claim that service was unauthorized? Here is the authorization letter, signed, sealed, and delivered. You both love to lie, but please remember that @NJACLaw always brings receipts. Ball is in your court; we'll see you in ours."

He told the *SA Jewish Report* that the government's apology amounted to political interference to protect a UN official aligned with Hamas-friendly rhetoric.

"Everything was done according to the law and with official authorisation," he said. "The paperwork was processed correctly, and the service is valid whether Albanese likes it or not."

"Shockingly, rather than aiding NJAC's process servers, including a sheriff, in carrying out service pursuant to the authorisation they had received from the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development, South African government officials at the Nelson Mandela lecture aided Albanese's attempts to evade service," said Goldfeder.

"Albanese accuses American Christian Zionists of war crimes and threatens them with legal retribution, but hides when faced with service of a complaint in a civil suit," he said. "Albanese's cowardly – and failed – attempts to duck service, and the corrupt assistance in this that she received from the South African government, are an affront to the US justice system. To Albanese we say, 'Stop

Photo posted by Steve Reichman



Francesca Albanese appears to fall asleep while listening to Palestinian

Professor Haider Eid speaking at UCT on 27 October

remarks, Albanese was hero-worshipped by South Africa's pro-Palestinian establishment during her visit. Her lecture drew a crowd of activists, diplomats, and politicians, who treated her like a celebrity figure. She was applauded as a champion of "justice for Palestine", and hailed by the African National Congress and allied lobby groups.

The atmosphere of adulation made the sudden attempt to serve her with court papers all the more startling, an unexpected and embarrassing moment for both Albanese and the South African government.

The incident also sparked debate about whether Albanese enjoys full diplomatic or UN immunity while visiting South Africa. Legal observers note that though UN special rapporteurs hold limited functional privileges when carrying out official duties, they aren't full UN diplomats.

The government's quick apology and withdrawal of the service have therefore

prompted criticism that South Africa may have overreached in trying to shield her.

Albanese remains a deeply divisive figure. To her supporters, she is a courageous advocate for Palestinian rights. To her critics, she is a partisan activist who abuses her UN platform to vilify Israel while excusing Hamas's violence.

The Johannesburg confrontation and government apology have fuelled heated debate online, much of it laced with antisemitic abuse. Supporters of Albanese called the service attempt a "Zionist plot", while critics accused the government of shielding a UN official from accountability.

The Nelson Mandela Foundation said the incident was regrettable, and welcomed the apology by the minister.

For Albanese, it has become a legal battle that will follow her far beyond the podium.

Although condemned internationally for her anti-Israel

## UWC demands tender bidders 'disassociate' from Israel

>>Continued from page 4

He points out that Israel is a democracy, with Arab political parties, LGBTQIA+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, intersex, asexual) rights, women's rights, and judges of all nationalities and religions. He therefore asks if UWC wants service providers to sign a certificate declaring that they aren't aligned with democracy and diversity, and what this means for South Africans.

"If it looks like a duck and quacks like a duck, it's probably a duck," says Levitt. "I'm sure there's more to this requirement than meets the eye."

Michael Bagraim, shadow labour minister for the Democratic Alliance; trustee at the Cape Chamber of Commerce & Industry; and a labour law expert, says, "The advert, certainly on the face of it, appears to be incredibly discriminatory. I'm not sure who would sign a certificate in respect of non-affiliation. That sounds like a real fiction."

He doesn't believe that the tender is legal "but it would take a lot of research to see the rules and regulations of tender requirements at UWC. I certainly don't believe that a general tender could bring in a comment of this nature. For instance, if it said non-affiliation with any other country, everyone would look at it aghast."

He believes "UWC is trying to take a leaf out of the University of Cape Town's (UCT's) book in a very crude manner," referring to UCT adopting two resolutions that aim to criticise Israel, which are being challenged in the Cape Town High Court. "It's a tragedy how universities are behaving in South Africa."

South African Zionist Federation (SAZF) spokesperson Rolene Marks says the organisation is appalled by the requirement. "This is blatant discrimination, pure and simple," she says. "It has nothing to do with supplying sports attire and everything to do with importing divisive Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions politics into university procurement."

It's also "discrimination against the nation state of the Jewish people – and therefore inherently antisemitic", Marks says. "When the Jewish state is singled out for opprobrium, while countless other global conflicts are ignored, it exposes a gross double standard and clear act of prejudice."

And it's "deeply hypocritical", Marks says. UWC already "relies on Israeli-developed technologies across its daily operations, from cybersecurity systems and data storage to agricultural and medical innovation". To demand that suppliers "disavow Israel, while benefiting from its inventions, is indefensible."

Marks emphasises that a South African university should "champion inclusivity, fairness, and academic freedom, not impose political loyalty tests on service providers. This kind of ideological gatekeeping erodes academic integrity and sets a dangerous precedent for all public institutions."

The SAZF has called on UWC to "remove this discriminatory clause immediately", and "uphold the constitutional principles of equality, freedom of association, and non-discrimination that should define our country's public universities".

# THIS SUNDAY

2 November 2025

Awards Ceremony at 17:30 SAST

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# South African Jewish Report

## The biased and the beautiful

This week has been jam-packed with news. There was the story of the visit of Francesca Albanese, United Nations special rapporteur on the Occupied Palestinian Territories, who has been widely accused of antisemitism and blatant anti-Israel hatred in her position, one that demands no bias.

Albanese was issued a summons while she was visiting South Africa as a guest of the Nelson Mandela Foundation. While so many supposedly smart South Africans hero worship this woman who has been so blatantly hateful towards Israel, she has finally been called out legally for her racism.

Then, there's the court case between Adam Mendelsohn and the University of Cape Town that the *SA Jewish Report* helped stream live so that our readers could have access to what was happening in the court room.

Meanwhile, central Glenhazel came to a total standstill last Friday afternoon, when two devices that apparently looked like explosives were discovered.

And then, of course, there is the University of the Western Cape (UWC) that has come out with its own ugly bias against us in demanding that anyone tendering for a job to make clothing for the university has to send a signed document giving assurance that they have no affiliation to Israel. As we all know, by virtue of being Jewish, we pray about Israel every day, and have for centuries. It seems apparent that UWC has also now made its antisemitic views known.

As you can see, so much has been happening for us in South Africa, and many of these issues were discussed this week in our community.

I have to say, watching the mainstream media about Albanese, I'm astonished how in organisations where there isn't supposed to be bias and I had once believed there wasn't, the clear anti-Israel and antisemitic discrimination is so evident. I'm astonished that fellow journalists call Albanese their hero openly on social media. How can you be an unbiased journalist when you hero worship someone who is so blatantly one-sided?

There are many that may attribute bias to us at the *SA Jewish Report*. However, we do our utmost to tell the truth under the clear proviso that we, as a Jewish organisation, support the continuity and survival of the Jewish state. We don't unequivocally support any specific leader in Israel, and we have no qualms in criticising issues that arise in Israel, but we do support the state.

The point is, with all this news going on around us, there was a particular story that hit me hard. It wasn't in the news. It was a personal and beautiful story about a bride and her wedding day.

Perhaps its impact was because it was close to home. As many know, I have just returned from Israel, having been there to celebrate a family wedding. It was special being there, and I count myself fortunate to have been able to be there for it. I come from a large family, most of us were there, and we celebrated big, as my family does!

So, when one of us spotted a Facebook post of a young *olah* who was getting married to an Israeli and wasn't able to have her close friends and family from home around her, she posted it on our extended family group. Trust me, if I was able to head off for her wedding, I would have, but I was on my way home.

A precious relative of mine, who lives in Israel, took it on herself to arrange a bus and find women to join her to enable this woman, who turned out to be a fellow South African, have the wedding she wanted. She ensured that the young South African-born bride was surrounded by South African women dancing with her on her special day. And did they bring good old South African *gees* (spirit, enthusiasm, and a vibe) with them!

When I heard about this, I was so moved. The importance of family and friends was reiterated for me. I also realised, once again, how special our South African community is, whether its members are here in South Africa, Israel, or anywhere in the world. Jewish South Africans can argue and fight with each other, but when push comes to shove, we are there for each other.

I know this is about my family, friends, and our South African Jewish community, but it was so incredible to witness this in action in Israel.

You know, around the world, Jewish communities look to us here on the southern tip of Africa. They don't look at us and envy our government. Why would they? Our government isn't kind to us. They may envy our weather, but certainly not the value of our land.

They may wish they had our beaches, but there are other wonders of the world out there. But there's no Jewish community like we have here.

South Africans who emigrate hopefully find what they are looking for outside this country. They no longer worry about crime. They potentially no longer have to pay for medical aid; insurance; massive school fees; and I can go on. These are all gifts, considering how much we spend on all those things.

However, so many tell us how much they miss the close-knit community we have here. They miss the fact that we are there for each other. They miss the fact that people care about each other and, as Jews, we look out for each other. When we see someone genuinely needing help and support, we reach out willingly and without any expectation of being honoured or recognised for it.

This was evident in the scare in Glenhazel this week. CAP and CSO got involved, and worked together with the police to figure out what had happened and why. Hatzolah honoured them publicly, as did other Jewish organisations. That's what we do.

This weekend is the Investec Jewish Achiever Awards, the most awesome way of honouring those who do so much without expectation. It's a night in which we give *kavod* where it's due. It's a night where we witness the massive footprint our community leaves in this country. It's an annual event that inspires us for the rest of the year in the knowledge just how much our community punches above its weight in this country.

I have to say, it's my favourite night of the year. So often, people do so much more than is expected of them with no conditions. So often, there's just a sense of people doing it for the good of humanity or to step up to the plate when they are needed. And it's an honour to honour them. I look forward to being there to honour those who deserve it.

**Shabbat shalom!**

**Peta Krost**  
Editor



## Beyond the rugby field: when bullying becomes a crime

OPINION

CLINTON FEIN AND BRYAN SCHIMMEL



When a line between banter and brutality is crossed, a community is forced to ask itself what it has been teaching its children about power, loyalty, and leadership. The recent incident at Milnerton High School, where first-team rugby players were filmed assaulting a fellow student with hockey sticks and belts, wasn't schoolyard mischief, it was violence: calculated, collective, and criminal.

The shock rippled across South Africa, yet beneath the outrage lies a deeper truth: this isn't an isolated story, it's a reflection of what happens in our culture when dominance is mistaken for strength and silence is confused with loyalty.

Each time such an incident occurs, we fall into a predictable rhythm of reaction. Outrage on social media. Statements from the department of education. Whispered conversations among parents about "not their kids." And inevitably, the blame lands squarely on the school's doorstep. But schools don't manufacture cruelty; they inherit it. They are mirrors, not factories. When young men reach for violence as a language of belonging, they are often repeating lessons learned long before the rugby field. Lessons about power, toughness, and what earns respect. Schools become convenient scapegoats for family failures, community silences, and cultural scripts that celebrate dominance while shaming vulnerability.

This doesn't absolve institutions of responsibility; it expands it. What happened at Milnerton wasn't only a moral collapse among a few students; it was a leadership failure at multiple levels. Being chosen for the first team in any sport should be an honour, not an excuse for hierarchy. It's a role that calls for the protection of others, not the abuse of power. Yet somewhere between practice drills and school assemblies, that message got lost. The young men involved weren't just bullies, they were betrayers of what leadership should represent, taught by adults who glorify aggression as discipline, and coaches who confuse toughness with cruelty.

In the aftermath of these types of events, the outrage metastasises online. WhatsApp groups of parents turn into digital war rooms. Names are shared; faces circulated; accusations amplified. Some justify it as accountability. Others

as justice. But let's call it what it is: digital vigilantism. When we respond to violence with more violence – albeit behind screens – we perpetuate the very harm we claim to condemn. Doxxing, trolling, and public shaming create new victims, often teenagers ill-equipped to withstand the onslaught. And in the frenzy of it all, something essential gets lost: the possibility of repair.

We've spent decades trying to eliminate bullying through zero-tolerance policies. Expel the offender. Suspend the ringleader. Make an example of them. But zero tolerance eliminates people, not problems. It removes the symptom, while preserving the system. What's needed isn't eradication, it's evolution. We must move from "anti-bullying" campaigns to harm-reduction frameworks. That means distinguishing between bullying and criminal behaviour, understanding the roots of both, and building systems of accountability that heal rather than simply punish. Harm reduction asks harder questions: what conditions made this harm possible? How can both victim and perpetrator grow from this experience? What forms of justice actually prevent recurrence?

Leadership can be taught if sports teams were to treat it as stewardship rather than status; captains are trained in emotional intelligence rather than just strategy; and schools implement peer accountability

circles where young men can unpack the pressures of masculinity, loyalty, and dominance.

Parents must also confront uncomfortable truths. Many of these boys don't act out because they are inherently cruel, but because they are confused about what manhood requires. They are rewarded for aggression, and punished for empathy. They are told to be strong, but rarely taught what strength looks like when it's kind. When adults laugh off cruelty as "character-building", they normalise harm. When families defend rather than discipline, they model denial. And when schools are left to clean up the consequences, everyone loses.

If we truly want to prevent another Milnerton, we need to stop asking, "How do we eradicate bullying?" and start asking, "How do we reduce harm?" Because

**The opposite of bullying isn't kindness, it's accountability, which requires calm rather than chaos.**

bullying is inevitable in any human community. What defines us is how we respond to it. Harm reduction doesn't mean going soft; it means going deeper. It insists that we can hold people accountable

while also holding space for their redemption. It believes that punishment without rehabilitation is just another form of cruelty. And it reminds us that the measure of a community's strength lies not in how it expels its wrongdoers, but in how it transforms them.

The opposite of bullying isn't kindness, it's accountability, which requires calm rather than chaos. Real accountability doesn't end when the punishment is handed down; it begins when understanding takes root. It asks us to look at the systems that produce bullies,



Protesters outside Milnerton High School after the video went viral

not just the individuals who enact them. It invites us to transform the environments that reward aggression, from locker rooms to boardrooms. Bullying doesn't end with adolescence. It grows up, puts on a suit, and calls itself "company culture". It runs for office, and calls itself "tough leadership". It hides in social media mobs and calls itself "justice". The field changes, but the behaviour remains, unless we teach a different kind of strength.

The Milnerton assault isn't an isolated event. The solution won't come from expulsions or hashtags. It will come from dialogue, from the hard, human work of confronting our complicity, challenging our traditions, and rebuilding our definitions of power.

What happens on the rugby field is never just about rugby. It's about who we are when the whistle blows, what kind of men, parents, teachers, and leaders we choose to be when no one's watching. Power means nothing if you can't use it responsibly. And until we start teaching that lesson, we'll keep mistaking brutality for belonging.

- *Bully Dialogues is a cross-platform movement – keynote, podcast, and book – in which Clinton Fein, a former bully and his former victim, Bryan Schimmel, share the same stage to reframe bullying through harm reduction, leadership, and accountability rather than zero tolerance.*

Albert  
Made Aliyah  
Argentina



Lea and Sial  
Making Aliyah  
France



# OD YOTER TOV

Joey  
Made Aliyah  
South Africa



Danielle  
Made Aliyah  
U.S



**Israel is strong and growing  
Now, more than ever,  
is the time to make Aliyah**



# New York Jews fear partisan Mamdani as mayor

LEE TANKLE

As New York's political landscape shifts, the possible rise of Zohran Mamdani, a progressive state legislator known for his criticism of Israel, to mayor of New York City, has stirred unease among Jewish communities far beyond the five boroughs.

For Mica Bloom, an ex-South African schoolteacher who has been living in New York for more than 25 years after leaving South Africa, Mamdani poses a real threat to the modern Orthodox Zionist community in which she lives and works.

"The Jewish community of which I'm a part is jittery and anxious about him. We believe he is antisemitic. He has never held office in terms of doing anything big. He is hypocritical. He really is an inexperienced and dangerous person," she said.

Emma Gordon Blass, who lives in North Carolina but has lived in New York for many years, said she and her family are worried about whether Mamdani will get elected. "Most Jews that I know are the sort of Jews who go to synagogue, they tend to be Israel supporters, and they're worried about Mamdani because he has never denounced his prior support for the bigger Palestinian cause," she said.

For most Jewish New Yorkers, the more worrying thing about Mamdani is that he has been able to appeal to radical Jewish left.

Serena Steinhauer, who has been living in New York for the past two years, said it has been trendy for Jewish people on the left to support Mamdani. "But interestingly, his choice to always 'plead the fifth' when asked directly about his views about the Jewish community in New York City and abroad is worrying."

"I think he will come in. He will be vocal about the conflict, but since Trump effectively created a treaty of some kind, his campaign doesn't hold that much ground anymore. It's more the underground antisemites that would have validation from him," said Steinhauer.



Jerome Blass protesting an anti-Israel rally in New York

Robyn Bluestone, who lives in New Jersey, said she was worried about Mamdani possibly becoming mayor because "he continuously fails to acknowledge Israel's right to exist, and condones 'globalising the intifada' by refusing to condemn it".

Gordon Blass said that she and her 16-year-old son were at the New York Public Library and were quickly surrounded by a counter-protest supporting Israel which was directly opposite an anti-Israel protest that was quickly becoming antisemitic. She worries that Mamdani won't stop protests like this from turning violent.

"In Brooklyn, you've got large Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox populations living right next to communities that are often sympathetic to anti-Israel rhetoric. We've seen before, like during the Crown Heights riots, how quickly that tension can turn violent," she said. "Under mayors like [Rudy] Giuliani and [Michael] Bloomberg, Jews felt safe, but that sense of security has eroded since [Bill] de Blasio, and people are calling Mamdani 'de Blasio 2.0'. The fear is that the Jewish community won't be protected if things flare up again.

"As mayor, you're responsible for keeping

communities safe," said Gordon Blass. "In New York, we've seen these anti-Israel 'global intifada' protests taking over the streets and even the Brooklyn Bridge. The concern, from a Jewish perspective, is how this demoralises the police – who will protect us if recruitment drops and no one steps in to stop it?"

"The mayor has a lot of power and oversight over the police – he can tell them to stand down when protests and demonstrations get out of control, for instance," said Bluestone, "Mamdani has voiced his anti-Israel views loud and clear. How can we trust him to protect the Jewish people under his watch? I'm nervous to wear my Star of David when I'm in New York City so as not to draw unwanted attention to myself."

Bluestone said that her neighbour, who wears a yarmulke and Magen David every day, has stopped wearing them in New York City for his safety, and takes off his five-year-old's yarmulke in certain areas.

"I fear that with Mamdani as mayor, wearing anything identifying oneself as Jewish will become more and more dangerous as his supporters feel even more emboldened when the leader of their city has reiterated his support of 'globalising the intifada'."

Steinhauer does see why Mamdani has become so popular, as he has campaigned for the regular New Yorker and not the uber-rich.

"The incoming of Mamdani mayoral rule won't taint the relationship the Jewish community has with New York, in my opinion. I just feel that he will give access to the voices of those who oppose us, from a place of wanting to play 'follow the leader'. Of course, I'm biased as a Zionist. However, I'm surrounded by such differing perspectives. I do think he has the correct ideology for making New York City more accessible to those who don't fall into the category of the uber-wealthy. But it begs the question, how does that uphold the enormous meritocracy that New York is? The thrill of New York is the diversity. Not poor versus rich, but a world of different people joined by one thing: the possibility that lies for every one of us here."

## Workshop assists religious leaders navigate sexual abuse

OPINION

WENDY HENDLER

Only a workshop this important could draw two Jewish Glenhazel ladies to Pretoria on a Friday morning for most of the day, resulting in a less-than-perfect Shabbos meal for our families. But it was worth every minute.

In a country where statistics show an alarming number of women and children raped or sexually abused every day, the need for proactive, informed, and compassionate leadership in religious communities has never been more urgent.

In the year ending March 2025, South Africa recorded 13 452 sexual offences, including rape, sexual assault, and attempted sexual offences, according to official statistics from the South African Police Service.

Against this backdrop, a recent workshop hosted by the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development aimed at equipping leaders within the various religious sectors with the knowledge needed to address sexual offences, wasn't just timely, it was essential.

Koleinu SA has long recognised that religious institutions are both a source of great healing and, at times, deep harm when issues of sexual abuse are mishandled. Without adequate training and systems in place, even well-intentioned leaders can inadvertently cause further trauma or suppress disclosure.

Leaders of shuls, schools, and communal organisations are often the first people survivors turn to. Yet many lack the legal, psychological, and procedural knowledge required to respond effectively.

This workshop filled that gap by educating leaders on the legal definitions and consequences of sexual offences under South African law, and clarifying roles and responsibilities in reporting, referral, and ongoing support for survivors.

It aligns directly with Koleinu SA's training programmes and policy development work, which aims to standardise responsible reporting protocols and ensure that survivors are protected, not retraumatised.

The workshop underscored a truth central to Koleinu SA's advocacy: places of worship must be sanctuaries of safety. Leaders were encouraged to establish clear, confidential reporting channels within their

communities; foster open conversation about consent, power dynamics, and healthy boundaries; and commit to zero tolerance for abuse regardless of position, seniority, or community pressure.

These principles mirror Koleinu SA's initiatives, such as our ShulSafe and SchoolSafe programmes, which equip institutions to adopt policies that protect children, teens, and vulnerable adults.

Some cultural and religious narratives can unintentionally silence victims or minimise the seriousness of abuse. Through open dialogue and innovative ice breakers, the workshop created space in which to discuss the issues relevant to all religious communities; ask questions about the law within the framework of sexual offences; and share concerns about the challenges that religious communities face when dealing with issues of abuse.

Through an exercise that involved blindfolding a team member and having the rest of the team instruct them on how to draw an object by describing it but without saying its name, we were given firsthand experience of what a victim going through the court system might feel – vulnerability, fear of the unknown, discomfort at having to put your trust into a stranger's hands, and the need for sensitive support and guidance.

The workshop was presented at the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development by Naomi Webster, the founder of the Women and Gender Forum at the South African Human Rights Commission. By bringing together religious leaders from diverse denominations, it also fostered inter-sector collaboration by clarifying the Sexual Offences Act within the context of our Constitution. We were able to understand the aim of the law, and how its application dovetails with the overarching aim of the protection of all members of society, particularly the vulnerable. These include anyone under the age of 18 and people who are mentally disabled.

We found it interesting that sexual grooming has now been classified as a criminal act according to the Sexual Offences and Related Matters Amendment Act 2007, provided that certain elements are met. While very difficult to prove, it's gratifying that strides are being made in recognising grooming as a crime even before it becomes a physical act of sexual abuse. As well as this, the workshop facilitated greater understanding of the sexual offences register and how it functions. It was helpful to be made aware of the fact that individuals can apply in their personal capacity to vet potential employees against the register (justice.gov.za).

Faith leaders are moral compasses. Their participation in this workshop sends a powerful message that the religious sector stands against abuse and for justice. For Koleinu SA, this represents tangible progress toward a community culture rooted in transparency, accountability, and healing. As noted by participant Michael Swaine, from the Freedom of Religion SA organisation, "It reinforced shared commitment to creating safe spaces for all, especially children and the vulnerable, while upholding the values that faith communities stand for."

Koleinu SA came out of the day with new respect for the work done by the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development to position religious institutions as places of refuge with informed, compassionate, and courageous leadership. And please don't worry, our families didn't starve over Shabbos.

• Wendy Hendler is the co-founder and director of Koleinu SA, the helpline for victims of abuse in the South African Jewish community. The helpline number is 011 264 0341, operating on Sunday to Thursday, from 09:00 to 22:00, and after Shabbat until midnight.



Wendy Hendler and Rozanne Sack at the workshop

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# Netflix thriller showcases rising South African Jewish performers

LEE TANKLE

It's not every day that two young members of South Africa's Jewish community appear on Netflix, but for Micaela Tucker and Dean Goldblum, that particular dream has become reality.

The rising actors feature in *No One Saw Us Leave*, a gripping new series that's been making waves on the streaming platform. For both, it's not just a career milestone but a proud moment of South African and Jewish representation on the global stage.

The Netflix series, a dark, emotionally charged drama exploring themes of loss, identity, and belonging, allowed the pair to work alongside an international cast and crew while bringing a touch of South African authenticity to the screen.

The series, based on the memoir of Tamara Trottner, *Nadie Nos Vio Partir*, starts in the late 1960s in Mexico in a well-to-do Jewish Mexican community where the protagonist, Valeria Goldberg, is in an arranged marriage to Leo Saltzman, the son of a powerful businessman.

Due to an unforgivable misstep, Valeria's

in-laws and Leo decide to take her children, Tamara and Isaac, abroad without her knowledge.

Leo and the children flee to Europe under various pretences while Valeria refuses to give them up. She enlists the help of an ex-Mossad agent turned private investigator to track down her children across multiple countries. The chase takes them from Mexico to France and Italy and finally to Israel, where viewers see the vicious custody battle that ensues.

Filming took place in multiple countries: Mexico, Italy, France, and South Africa, to mirror the storyline of the children being moved far from home and the mother travelling across geographies to find them.

When Tucker and Goldblum heard that the show was going to be filmed in South Africa, they jumped at the chance to audition, especially since they would be able to reflect their culture as the scenes filmed in South Africa form part of the

storyline set in Israel.

Goldblum, whose dialogue was entirely in Hebrew, said acting in Hebrew was an entirely new experience for him.



Dean Goldblum



Micaela Tucker

"As an actor, to immerse oneself in a different character, if that character is in a different language, it feels quite foreign, it

feels quite transformative in a way," he said. "My entire audition process was in Hebrew. I had to pop open those Grade 4 Hebrew books, and channel those lessons, which was amazing and a huge gift, and also a really nice challenge." Though Tucker has played many Jewish characters throughout her career, it was also the first time she has had to speak Hebrew in a role.

"It was great," she said. "I felt like my time at King David served me well. There was also a Hebrew dialect coach who was there to assist with different pronunciation and translations. It was great, especially because of where, you know, the world is with politics and the like, it was great to be able still to be shooting as though we were in Israel and bringing Hebrew stories to life."

Filming in Cape Town took place in October last year, and brought a conclusion to worldwide filming. Tucker said that though they were in Cape Town, they ensured that the setting resembled a kibbutz in Israel as much as possible.

"We shot it more in the Elgin area of Cape Town, which is green and lush," she said, "So I think it did give quite an authentic replication of what a kibbutz would look like. The only thing that was challenging about it was that there were only certain people who actually did speak Hebrew, and a lot of the actors aren't Jewish. The main characters aren't Jewish in real life, but they do fantastic portrayals of Jewish people. And so, of course, it wasn't going to be an authentic situation. But it was a fair enough replication given the shooting constraints and all those kinds of things."

Both Tucker and Goldblum said that it was a unique experience compared to some of their previous projects because they were able to interact with a crew that was predominantly from Mexico and learn more about the film industry there.

"It's a special gift to work on productions around the world," said Goldblum. "We get to meet so many really cool people from around the world, so it was special to be surrounded by awesome people, skilled filmmakers, and learn more about Mexican culture, different parts of Mexico, to hear stories about where various actors in the show were raised in Mexico."

"It was a real learning experience to see how differently the cast and crew operate, as opposed to South African cast and crews that I've worked with," said Tucker. "We had a joint Spanish and South African crew, so there were camera people and crew that were South African, and others that were Spanish, and we all worked together. It wasn't just a solely Spanish experience, and I feel like we were all very productive."

Tucker said that though her role was diminished because of time constraints, "The show is exceptional. I'm not even trying to be biased, but I think it's one of the best things I've watched this year. The portrayal of these real-life characters is fantastic. It's a really gripping story. And I constantly found myself thinking, 'Whose side am I on? Am I on the mother or father's side?' I felt so deeply for both of these characters, and that's a good example of great acting and great storytelling. So, to be a part of this kind of show that I really did enjoy watching is a huge triumph for me in my acting career, in spite of how small my role was, and I look forward possibly to working with these actors and directors again in the future."

## October 8 probes antisemitism beyond echo chamber

GILANA LAB

American journalist and documentary filmmaker Wendy Sachs refused to take no for an answer when major production companies turned away her *October 8* project, exploring the world's reaction to Hamas's attacks on Israel and the rise in global antisemitism that followed.

Companies like NBC and CNN told Sachs the project was "too political" or "too pro-Israel," so she decided to make it independently.

"You tell me I can't do something, and I'll double down to prove that I can," she told the *SA Jewish Report* in South Africa this week to screen *October 8*. Sachs went on to raise about \$3.7 million (R63.6 million) from private donors to make the documentary. "This film is my life's work," she said. "I was determined to move mountains to make it happen."

More than 300 people came to watch the first screening in South Africa hosted by the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, at the Nu Metro cinema in Hyde Park on Sunday, 26 October.

The story behind the film began just one day after the 7 October 2023 massacre. Sachs said she woke up to the horrific images from Israel and the very next day, saw footage of rallies and statements celebrating Hamas and blaming Israel. "That's when I knew something had shifted in the minds of those not Jewish," she said.

She partnered with Israeli editor and producer Nimrod Erez, who was in South

Africa with her this week, and they turned more than 170 hours of footage, a mix of interviews, social media videos, and on-the-ground scenes from protests and encampments, into a fast-paced, 100-minute documentary. The film captures the shockwaves of 7 October and the ideological fallout that followed across the world.

"I filmed more than 80 interviews, only 38 made it into the movie," Sachs said, explaining that her team selected the most compelling and credible stories to create a cohesive and emotionally resonant narrative.

Sachs's intention was to include diverse voices in the production. "It's also an Israeli story," she said. "I wanted an Israeli editor to ensure that I wasn't appropriating the story entirely, and I also had non-Jews, millennials, and Gen Z creatives involved. It was important for me to make a film that resonates outside of the Jewish echo chamber."

At its core, *October 8* explores how, within days of the Hamas attacks, Jewish students and communities outside Israel found themselves under siege in a different way – facing hostility, intimidation, and ostracism.

The film follows several college students across the United States who suddenly find their campuses transformed into battlegrounds of hate. One student describes returning to her university dorm to find her door plastered with "Free Palestine" posters and messages calling Zionists "baby killers". Another recounts being told by

classmates that she deserved what happened in Israel.

At another campus, a Jewish student organisation's event was violently disrupted by protesters shouting, "From the river to the sea," while faculty members stood by silently.

Others tell quieter but equally chilling stories of friends who stopped speaking to them; professors who refused to denounce the Hamas attacks; and of feeling unsafe wearing a Star of David necklace on campus. "They show how antisemitism today doesn't always look like what we think it does," Sachs said. "It's ideological, it's social, and it's deeply personal."

The documentary weaves these firsthand accounts with interviews from public figures, academics, and journalists to reveal a broader pattern, one in which misinformation, performative activism, and ideology have merged into a new form of antisemitism disguised as anti-Zionism. Through powerful visuals and emotional storytelling, it exposes the ripple effects of the 7 October attacks far beyond Israel's borders into classrooms, media spaces, and online discourse.

"I don't think being Israeli made a difference," Erez reflected, "but what happened after 7 October brought Israelis and diaspora Jews closer together. For me, this film became a learning experience. It helped me understand what it means to be Jewish outside Israel."

Sachs said she intentionally made the film accessible beyond the Jewish world. "It's about getting outside the echo chamber and changing hearts and minds." The

film, while deeply emotional, is also educational, exploring how extremist ideologies threaten democratic values everywhere, not just in Israel.

Speaking about the film's global impact, Sachs described screenings in Amsterdam, London, Glasgow, and Mexico City. "In Glasgow, the Hindu community came out in incredible solidarity," she said. "They want to bring the film to India. The reaction from the black community has been powerful too."

Erez said screenings around the world have shown the impact of the film far beyond the Jewish community. "This isn't just a film, it's a movement," he said. The duo has presented *October 8* to diverse audiences, including government officials, university leaders, and interfaith groups, sparking conversations about extremism, media bias, and freedom of expression.

Sachs shared one particularly moving moment from a recent screening in Amsterdam, where the deputy prime minister of the Netherlands attended in solidarity with the Jewish community. "That's what this film is doing, it's opening doors and building bridges," she said.

As the Johannesburg audience prepared to watch the film, Sachs revealed that their next project, titled *Poison Ivy*, will take a deeper look at the roots of modern antisemitism and anti-Western ideology in education systems worldwide.

"We're tracing how foreign money and activist networks are influencing what's being taught, even in schools," she said. "We're also exploring how the apartheid narrative about Israel took root here in South Africa, starting from the Durban Conference in 2001."

She said she hoped to secure wider distribution in South Africa. "We don't have streaming access here yet, but we'd love for more South Africans to see it. The film ends on a message of hope and allyship. Black South Africans must see that Jews are diverse, we're black and brown too, and that antisemitism and racism are interconnected."



Wendy Sachs and Nimrod Erez

# Getting older isn't for sissies



**INNER VOICE**  
Howard Feldman

Getting older isn't for sissies. And while it certainly beats the alternative, my brief hospital visit this week left me wondering by how much.

Where the hospital might have been private, the ward most certainly wasn't. Eight men, each at different stages of decay, confronted me as I was wheeled in after a procedure. And although I might not have been looking my best, I was still alert enough to know that none of them were likely to become lifelong friends.

That didn't stop me from getting to know more about them than I ever wanted to. The man in the bed next me, for instance, seemed to treat modesty as an optional extra. His frequent pilgrimages to the ablution block became a form of ward entertainment. He was trying to pass a kidney stone and, armed with a small sieve-like contraption, was determined to catch the offending pebble so that he could finally be discharged. His every trip became a communal event. We tracked his progress with the same emotional investment usually reserved for a World Cup final.

When a private room eventually became available, my only regret was that I'd never find out if he succeeded in capturing his little asteroid. Plot twist: I did, in fact, follow up. When the night staff came to change my drip, I asked casually after my roommate's progress, only to discover that he'd been using the sieve entirely incorrectly. I'm convinced that he in fact passed the stone sometime in August, and was just hanging around to get a break from the wife and

kids, and for the food, attention, and diligent nursing.

Then there was the older divorcee, entertaining a nervous middle-aged girlfriend who was meeting his children for the first time. She spoke without pause, as if afraid that silence might signal disapproval. At one point, I was certain she'd collapse from oxygen deprivation. Part of me hoped she would, not out of cruelty, but for the peace that would finally descend on the ward.

Hospital wards are strange places. They're equal parts vulnerability, absurdity, and family dynamics. You see too much, hear too much, and are forced into an intimacy no one asked for. There's no hierarchy, just the sound of slippers shuffling to the bathroom, the occasional groan, and the soft glow of machines reminding you that life is fragile, funny, and finite.

As friendly as I usually am, I made no friends there. I suspect the feeling was mutual. When the nurses finally wheeled me into a private room, complete with its own air-conditioner and bathroom, I felt a quiet surge of gratitude. Not just for privacy, but for perspective.

Because here's the thing about getting older: it's not that the body falters, though it does, it's that dignity becomes harder to hold on to. And when you find it again, even in a room of your own with a clean sheet and a closed door, it feels like victory.

A column of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies

# Leadership and vigilance



**ABOVE BOARD**  
Karen Milner

Last weekend, the South African Jewish Board of Deputies (SAJBD) board held its annual National Executive Conference. The event was split into two portions, first, the meeting of board executives and affiliates that make up the SAJBD nationally. At this meeting, I was honoured to be elected for another term as national chairperson. A further *mazel* goes to Zev Krengel, who was also re-elected national president.

I have been involved with the board since I myself was exposed to intimidation by anti-Israel protesters outside of the first Limmud in 2007. During this time, I have become clearly aware of the antisemitism, antagonism, and aggression that underlies the anti-Israel movement.

The SAJBD's mission and mandate was brought into a much sharper focus in the period following 7 October – "8 October" – and, as I described in my acceptance speech on Sunday, 26 October, an emotional interaction with a frightened student at King David Victory Park in October 2023 hardened my determination to ensure that our community remains safe, vibrant, and proud. That exchange has anchored me these past two years, steeling my resolve to safeguard the community. As we step into the next chapter, I carry it forward, humbled by the trust placed in us all.

The theme of combatting the true malicious intent of those who wish us harm was evident in the second section of our event, the screening of the movie *October 8*, a powerful film produced, written, and directed by our esteemed guest, Wendy Sachs. It's a raw, unflinching portrayal of the anti-Israel movement's ascent, particularly in the United States and on American university campuses. The turnout was extraordinary, with all nine theatres at Hyde Park packed to capacity.

The screening was also made more impactful in light of a protest that we witnessed here in Johannesburg last week. The movie outlines the use of an inverted red triangle as a protest symbol. As we know, during the Holocaust, the Nazis implemented a systematic classification system for

prisoners in concentration camps, and the red triangle was one such classification, marking political prisoners.

The symbol first gained widespread modern attention in Hamas propaganda videos released shortly after 7 October 2023 in which red triangles were overlaid as digital arrows to highlight and "target" Israeli soldiers or civilians during attacks. The symbol has been appropriated by the anti-Israel movement as, among other things, a symbol to mark "Zionist" or Israeli targets for boycott, doxing, or harassment. Many international Jewish organisations classify it as a hate symbol that glorifies Hamas terrorism and incites violence against Jews and Israelis.

It was thus so jarring to see its use in graffiti that accompanied a protest outside of the Johannesburg Holocaust & Genocide Centre (JHGC) last week. The protest timed to coincide with the conference of the International Association of Genocide Scholars at the JHGC. To see it scrawled in graffiti strips away any pretence, and exposes the antisemitism that forms the foundation of such movements.

Our vibrant community is built on the ongoing efforts of community members who support us and volunteer in the many groups that make up our structures. Last Friday's incident outside KasherWorld and Yeshiva College stands as poignant proof: a quick-thinking schoolgirl spotted suspicious packages and alerted CSO. It proved to be non-viable improvised explosive devices (IEDs). Our deepest thanks to them, and above all to that young hero whose instinct for family and vigilance may well have averted a potential disaster.

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

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

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# Chiara vaults to glory at SA championships

GILANA LAB

At just 12 years old, Chiara Feinberg has already made her mark in the world of equestrian vaulting, a sport that blends gymnastics, dance, and horse riding into one breathtaking discipline.

At this year's South African Vaulting Championships in Durban from 18 to 21 September, Feinberg made history by coming first in all four categories: individual horse; barrel; pairs horse; and pairs barrel. She also won the prestigious award for top-scoring vaulter across all age groups.

"It felt really good to achieve my goal," Feinberg said. "I wasn't expecting to beat 16-year-olds. That was a surprise!"

She describing her sport as being "like gymnastics, but on a horse".

Feinberg competes in C grade, a level few vaulters her age ever reach. "From C grade and up, everything's in canter," she said. "Then you move up to three star [vaulting] when you go to the world championships."

Her mother described her performance in Durban as a turning point in Feinberg's journey. "She's in for an incredible journey ahead. She's starting to compete internationally to prepare for the Junior World Championships."

Feinberg's love for vaulting began in Grade 1, when a school project unexpectedly introduced her to the sport.

"It was an oral that had to be about a sport," she recalled. "My friend and I both did horse riding, but we wanted to do something more uncommon. So, we googled 'uncommon horse sports' and found vaulting. The more I learned about it, the more I wanted to do it, and a year later, I started. Now, I'm in love with it."



Chiara Feinberg at the SA Vaulting Championships

A background in gymnastics gave her an early advantage. "I've been doing gymnastics since I was three years old, and I started vaulting when I was seven," she said.

Competing at national level comes with unique challenges. "It's an amazing experience," Feinberg said of the championships. "You don't really know what to expect, like the horse's stride, their personality, their size. It's always different. But it's fun getting to know the horse

and hanging out with the Johannesburg and Durban girls."

Because of travel restrictions, Feinberg's team doesn't compete on its own horses. "Our horses can't travel," she said. "The people from Durban use their own horses, so they get a bit of an advantage. But we always do quite well."

Before this year's championship, Feinberg travelled to Durban to train with her competition horse. "We went up the weekend before just to do a practice round and get used to him," she said. "It was good, because on the weekend of the championships, he couldn't train. He is 22 years old. If we hadn't gone before, I would have had to get used to him in one day."

Vaulting is judged on precision, artistry, and connection. "There are three parts to your score," Feinberg said. "Your artistry; movement with the horse; and then the horse itself gets a score. If the horse does a terrible job, it lowers your score. If it's really smooth and good, it brings your score up."

In addition to her individual events, Feinberg and her partner also excelled in *pas de deux*, the pairs competition. "We had been given our routine only a few weeks before the competition," she said. "On the day, the tack started falling off in the middle of our routine, so we just had to improvise in the arena. It was nerve-racking, but we made it work."

Balancing this level of training with schoolwork is no

easy feat. "I do gymnastics about 12 to 15 hours a week; circus training for nine hours; and vaulting three times a week," she said. "I train for eight hours on Saturdays, too. I really listen in class to make sure I don't miss anything, and then do my homework and study after everything, usually until about 22:00."

Her sights are now firmly set on the Junior World Championships. "Next year, there's a qualifier called Concours de Voltige International, an official international equestrian vaulting competition," she said. "I'm finally at the right level to try to qualify. If I make it, I'll get to go six weeks before, train with world champions, stay on a horse farm, and meet vaulters from around the world."

Feinberg has already trained with four-time world champion Lambert Ledezio, who holds workshops for aspiring international vaulters. "I get to train one-on-one with him when he's here in Cape Town. It's amazing," she said.

She credits much of her progress to her coach, Steffi Taylor, who was part of the German national team and has coached South Africa's world championship squad. "It's amazing that I get to train with her every week," Feinberg said. "She's one of the best coaches in the world."

With her determination, grace, and growing list of titles, Chiara Feinberg is fast becoming one of South Africa's brightest young sporting talents. And as her mom says, her journey is only just beginning.

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