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SA *oleh* dodges bullet on his birthday

TALI FEINBERG

South African *oleh* Jonathan Zausmer wasn't planning on doing much to celebrate his birthday on Sunday, 7 June, but a higher power showed him that he still has a lot of living to do.

He miraculously avoided a terrorist attack on the day he turned 72.

That morning, he and his wife, Janice, decided to head to nearby Ra'anana for coffee, stopping to fill up with petrol on the way out of their hometown, Kochav Yair. They then continued on their way. Minutes later, they heard that a terrorist had opened fire at the very petrol station they had just left, and realised that where they had been standing would have put them in the exact line of fire.

"We dodged a bullet, literally," Zausmer told the *SA Jewish Report* in his strong South African accent. "Looking at where the terrorist stood, we would have been exposed to his shots. When we heard about it, we couldn't believe it. We were just very lucky. In the 40 years since Kochav Yair was established, nothing like this has happened before."

The drive-by shooting attack began at Kochav Yair and continued to Tzur Yitzhak, Tzur Natan, and Sal'it. The terrorist killed Master Sergeant Haim Kalomiti, 55, a reservist soldier from Tzur Natan who was a member of the community's civil defence squad. Five other people were wounded before security forces shot the gunman. Police later arrested a second man accused of involvement in the attack.

South African *oleh* Dave Kaplan spoke to the *SA Jewish Report* from his home in nearby Kfar Saba while the attack was still unfolding. He said his daughter was "locked down" in her home in Tzur Yitzhak while security forces worked to confront the terrorist.

"I was suddenly watching Israel news on Channel 12 not as a typical news watcher but as a horrified parent and grandparent, knowing our daughter Dana and our

three precious grandkids were under lockdown and a terrorist, who had already injured five and killed one, was roaming the streets all too familiar to me," he says.

"We saw the streets that we walk were suddenly the scene of a manhunt for a killer with a submachinegun looking to kill Jews - any Jews. It could be our loved ones."

He and his wife, Hilary, "wanted to dash out there, but

says.

The situation was made even more difficult because her husband is up north in the army. Eventually, she was allowed to collect her children. "I ran out to fetch them all ... my daughter was supposed to finish school at 12:45, but I could only fetch her at 14:20. I never imagined something like this happening here."

That evening, Zausmer visited his friend Jonathan

and residents of the neighbouring Arab towns of Tira, Tayibe, and Kalanswa. Many of the staff in the local shops are Israeli Arabs, and customers are a happy mix of Jews and Arabs. Despite this incident, I will continue to shop in Tira."

Kochav Yair is a quiet suburban town close to the Green Line and in between these three Arab towns, known as "the triangle". "We often go into Tira to do shopping," says Zausmer. "My electrician and plumber come from there. Most people just want to get on with their lives - no one wants a civil war in Israel."

The attacker came from Tayibe, north of Kochav Yair. Hamas praised the attack, but the mayor of Tayibe immediately condemned it.

Mayor Yahya Haj Yahya, along with the city council, emphasised that he firmly rejects all violence, and reaffirmed the city's commitment to peace and coexistence. He also stressed that the actions of the individual attacker do not represent the broader Arab sector.

Zausmer says that all Kochav Yair residents stop at that petrol station regularly, which is why the attack has hit so close to home. Furthermore, there are many South African *olim* in the area, as aliya organisation Telfed played a key role in establishing the town. South Africans were drawn to it because it offered houses as opposed to apartments, but is still in a central area, 10 minutes from the city of Kfar Saba.

Because Kochav Yair is close to the Green Line, the possibility has always existed that a terrorist would attack from the West Bank. The fact that the attacker came from within Israel surprised and saddened Zausmer and other *olim*, but they believe it was a "once-off" event, and say they still feel extremely safe.

Dave Bloom, who is originally from Harare, also lives in Kochav Yair and says the South African presence in the

Continued on page 3>>

The petrol station where the terror attacks began



Jonathan Zausmer

that was impossible with the lockdown, so we kept in touch over the phone until it was safe".

His daughter, Dana Dvir, says it was excruciating being locked down at home without her children, knowing they were locked down at their school and kindergarten. "They were in the *mamad* [safe room] for two hours," she

Schwartz, another South African *oleh* who has lived in nearby Tzur Yigal for about 30 years. "The attack definitely was too close to home and too close for comfort," says Schwartz.

He says that the commercial area in which the terrorist started his attack "is generally a microcosm of cooperation between residents of Kochav Yair, Tzur Yigal,

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Jewish leaders put their heads together at AJC Global Forum



DANIEL BLOCH

OPINION

A strong South African delegation, including the South African Jewish Board of Deputies (SAJBD) and the South African Union of Jewish Students, joined around 2 000 Jewish communal leaders, advocates, policymakers, students, and activists from around the world at the American Jewish Committee (AJC) Global Forum in Washington, DC from 31 May to 2 June. Together, we addressed the most pressing issues facing the Jewish people in Israel, the United States, and internationally.

One message emerged clearly from the three days of engagement: while combatting antisemitism remains an essential priority, it's equally important to celebrate and strengthen the positive aspects of Jewish communal life.

Back home in South Africa, Jewish life continues to thrive. Unlike in some countries where Jews feel compelled to conceal their identity, South African Jews proudly and openly express their Jewishness. We attend shul, celebrate our traditions, host Jewish and Israel-



Daniel Bloch in conversation with Kwaku Appiah-Menka from Ghana at the AJC Global Forum

related events, and participate actively in public life.

This is not to suggest that challenges don't exist. Anti-Israel protests continue to take place, media bias remains a concern, and online hatred continues to spread. Yet we remain resilient, vibrant, and optimistic.

We met with various important expats and Americans with a keen interest in the well-being of the Jewish community in South Africa. The international perception of South Africa and the lived reality of our community is clearly different. We gave a real overview of what Jewish life here is really like. Attendees left with a sense of positivity and renewed commitment to supporting our community.

Hostage survivors Aviva and Keith Siegel gave the opening speech, sharing their experiences following the atrocities of 7 October. They delivered a message of hope for the future. Aviva, originally from South Africa, inspired everyone with a vision of resilience, remembrance, and a brighter future for the next generation.

The parents of Sarah Milgrim and Yaron Lischinsky, the young couple murdered in Washington, DC in May 2025, spoke about how despite their unimaginable loss, they choose to honour their children's memories by advocating for a future built on hope, community, and peace.

While Jews at South African universities generally feel safe and supported on campus, students in parts of the United States and Europe continue to experience antisemitism, exclusion, and, in some cases, physical violence. The AJC is working with university leadership, empowering Jewish students and developing strategies to combat discrimination and antisemitism.

While we hope such measures will never be necessary in South Africa, understanding the challenges faced elsewhere and the solutions being implemented remains invaluable.

One of the most pressing issues discussed throughout the conference was the challenge of combatting online antisemitism. While levels of physical and in-person antisemitism vary from country to country, the rise in online hatred is affecting Jewish communities everywhere.

Senior representatives from TikTok, Meta (Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp), Google, and YouTube addressed delegates, acknowledging shortcomings in their efforts to combat antisemitic content. They outlined new strategies, particularly the use of artificial intelligence, to identify and remove harmful content more effectively, and committed to strengthening partnerships with Jewish communities around the world.

Our delegation was involved in a private discussion with more than 20 Jewish leaders from around the globe and senior representatives from these technology companies, including leaders from X. The discussion was candid and robust, with some community leaders arguing that online platforms have, at times, contributed to or enabled the environment that has fuelled recent attacks on Jewish communities.

The SAJBD delegation raised important questions regarding legal processes, local support mechanisms, content removal procedures, and the ability of social media companies to assist communities facing online

hate campaigns. Perhaps the most valuable outcome of the meeting was the direct relationships established with key decision-makers at Meta and Google. These connections will help the SAJBD combat antisemitism online and advocate more effectively on behalf of the South African Jewish community.

The session on antisemitism and antizionism argued that antizionism often operates not as neutral policy critique but as a driver of antisemitism and Jewish exclusion, echoing earlier campaigns that delegitimised Zionism and pushed Jews out of public life.

It suggested that campuses and institutions have been slow to grasp this shift because they treated antizionism as a purely political stance while concentrating their efforts on more classical forms of antisemitism. In response, the speakers called for Jewish and allied communities to reclaim and reteach Zionism as a normal, legitimate national movement, to name antizionism as a hate movement when it veers into denying Israel's right to exist, and to build internal spaces where critique of Israeli policy is acceptable but demonisation and delegitimation are firmly challenged.

Africa emerged as an important focus with many countries increasingly looking to the continent as a strategic partner, with the demand for innovative water, food security, and energy solutions continuing to grow. Israel remains at the forefront of developing technologies that address these fundamental needs and countries like Nigeria, Ghana, Zambia, and others have chosen to prioritise practical partnerships, development opportunities, and the needs of their own citizens, over political rhetoric.

The AJC Global Forum was an incredible platform for learning and sharing experiences. It also enabled us to validate the work we do, as the SAJBD, in protecting our rights as South African Jews and our way of life.

• Daniel Bloch is the executive director of the Cape SA Jewish Board of Deputies.

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Our insatiable hunger for honour

One of the deepest human desires is the need to be recognised, respected, and honoured by others. While this craving may begin subtly, it often grows stronger with age and can become a dangerous force if left unchecked. As American Rabbi Yissocher Frand wisely observed, "What candy is to a child, *kavod* is to an adult." Human beings naturally long for recognition, but Judaism warns us that this desire can cloud our judgement and lead us away from truth and responsibility.

Our sages famously teach in Pirkei Avos that "jealousy, physical desire, and the pursuit of honour remove a person from this world". This does not merely refer to the next world, but to the loss of perspective and common sense in this world. When a person becomes consumed by honour or status, they can no longer think clearly or make balanced decisions.

A powerful example of this appears in this week's Torah reading, where the *meraglim*, the spies, were sent to scout the land of Israel. According to the *Zohar*, the spies were leaders of the Jewish people who feared that entering the land of Israel would cost them their positions of prominence. In the desert they held authority and influence, but in the new reality of the land, they might lose their status.

This fear affected the way they viewed the land itself. Subconsciously, they interpreted everything negatively and delivered a discouraging report to the nation. Their desire

for honour distorted their perception of reality and led to disastrous consequences for the Jewish people. This teaches us how the desire for honour can quietly distort our opinions and decisions without us even realising it.

A similar lesson emerges from a famous story about Rabbi Yonason Eibshitz, one of the greatest Torah scholars of the 18th century. After being appointed rabbi of the city of Altona in Germany, Rabbi Eibshitz tried to arrive there in time for Yom Kippur. However, he did not make it and had to spend Yom Kippur in a small nearby town. During Mincha on erev Yom Kippur, he noticed a man who appeared exceptionally humble and devout. The man cried intensely during the Viduy confession, especially while reciting the words "I am but dust in my lifetime".

Rabbi Eibshitz was deeply impressed and chose to sit beside him throughout Yom Kippur. However, during the Torah reading, the man was offered the fifth aliya. Furious, he lashed out at the *gabbai*, insulted others who had received earlier honours, and rejected the aliya entirely.

After davening, Rabbi Eibshitz asked how someone who prayed so humbly before Hashem could react with such anger over an honour in shul. The man replied, "Before Hashem I am nothing, but compared to those people, I am greater."

Torah Thought

Rabbi Danny Sackstein
 Sunny Road Kehilla

This troubling response captures a weakness found within all human beings. Judaism therefore calls upon us to constantly examine our motivations and guard ourselves against the craving for recognition.

True greatness, and the ability to make clear and honest decisions, is not measured by titles or honours, but by humility, integrity, and the ability to serve Hashem without seeking applause from others.

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The Hebrew word *challah* refers to the bread traditionally eaten on Shabbat. In its more basic biblical and halachic meaning, however, *challah* is the piece of dough that is separated and consecrated to G-d when we bake bread. The separation of *challah* is one of the three primary *mitzvot* of the Jewish woman.
 *Please note that Israel time is 1 hour ahead

SA faith leaders land in Israel amid missile alert

CLAUDIA GROSS

South African faith leaders expected a summit on antisemitism. Few expected their first lesson to begin on the airport tarmac. Minutes after landing at Ben Gurion Airport near Tel Aviv this week, members of the largest South African Christian delegation ever to attend the Jerusalem Summit found themselves rushing to bomb shelters as warning sirens sounded.

For many in the group, it was their first visit to Israel. The experience gave them an immediate glimpse into Israelis' reality while also shaping the tone of a visit focused on strengthening ties between Christians and Jews and addressing the global rise of antisemitism.

The delegation was organised by the South African Friends of Israel (SAFI) and travelled to Israel to participate in the Jerusalem Summit, hosted by the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem from 9 to 11 June. The gathering brought together Christian leaders, theologians, educators, and pastors from 54 countries.

In the bomb shelter, I was struck by how Israelis accepted and embraced us by letting us share the safety of their shelters, especially considering we are coming from a country whose government is vocally anti-Israel.

Among the South African delegates were church leaders from different denominations and ministry organisations. According to SAFI, the South African group was the second largest national delegation attending the summit after the United States.

Pastor Ronnie Matras, from Glory Ministries International Potchefstroom, said the journey became dramatic before they had even landed. "The plane had to circle around for something like 20 minutes and wait for approval to land," he said. After touchdown, the situation intensified. "When

that we needed to get into a shelter.

"In the bomb shelter, I was struck by how Israelis accepted and embraced us by letting us share the safety of their shelters, especially considering we are coming from a country whose government is vocally anti-Israel,"

timers to Israel had to experience that."

The summit was convened against a backdrop of growing concern about antisemitism around the world. Organisers said it was designed to help Christian leaders better understand contemporary antisemitism and strengthen biblical literacy regarding Israel and the Jewish people.

Yakcobi said the conference was also intended to strengthen cooperation between Christians and Jews. "We are here to address

antisemitism arising globally and the church playing a pivotal role, an important role, in our Christian-Judeo alliance," he said.

Pretorius said that despite the dramatic arrival, daily life in Israel appeared remarkably resilient. "Since our arrival it has been

quiet. Yesterday the schools were closed but today everything is back to normal."

The South African delegation included leaders representing substantial Christian constituencies. SAFI said the participation reflected growing interest from some South African Christians in engaging with Israel and strengthening relationships with Jewish communities.

Pretorius said that motivation was central to his own involvement. "It is our duty as Christians to support Israel. We are here to build relationships."

He added, "We Christians support and pray for Israel."

For Yakcobi, the events at the airport underscored the importance of the visit. Rather than deterring delegates, he said it was a direct encounter with realities often viewed only through news reports. "What better understanding can you have than your own experience? You're becoming a living testimony," he said.

For a group that travelled to learn about Israel and stand against antisemitism, the journey began not in a conference hall, but in a bomb shelter shared with strangers who quickly offered them safety.



South African faith leaders arrive in Jerusalem on 8 June 2026

we landed, there was the threat of the siren that went off, so we had to go into the shelter."

Although the experience was frightening, Matras said airport staff and local residents had helped put visitors at ease. "We were scared, but I was actually at peace because of how they made us feel safe in that panic state, because we are not used to it. Even at the airport, we were welcomed warmly."

Pastor Willem Pretorius, a pastor in the Full Gospel Church of G-d in South Africa and a tour leader with Menorah Tours, described how events unfolded. "At Addis Ababa we were about to board our connecting flight to Tel Aviv when we saw the news," he said. "Before landing in Tel Aviv, our plane circled. As soon as we landed, we received warnings on our phone

he said.

Daniel Yakcobi, the chief executive of SAFI, said the experience exposed first-time visitors to the realities many Israelis face regularly. "That is the Israeli way of living at the moment. Unfortunately, the first-

SA oleh dodges bullet on his birthday

>>Continued from page 1

town can be epitomised by the fact that "three of my wife's classmates from primary school in Cape Town now live in Kochav Yair".

Bloom's wife, Gail, was also minutes away from the petrol station when the attack happened, and she quickly turned around and headed home. "I pull up my car there every few days," says Bloom, as the petrol station has shops, a pharmacy, and restaurants around it.

He agrees that the area exemplifies Israel's quiet diversity. "My cardiologist and eye doctor are from Tira, and I teach English voluntarily there once a week," he says. "What is most upsetting is that such an incident can put these good relations at risk. It's only a small minority that wants to undermine the vast majority who want

to live peaceful lives. The problem is that it's very hard to prevent a 'lone wolf' attack."

Telfed Chief Executive Dorron Kline says there are approximately 157 South Africans adults in Kochav Yair today, and 19 in nearby Tzur Yitzhak and Tzur Natan.

Kline says that while no South African *olim* were wounded or killed in the attack, "one of the victims shot in the shoulder and moderately wounded is the brother-in-law of one of our staff members. He is Israeli." Footage of this man being shot at the petrol station has circulated online.

The day after the attack, Kaplan spent the morning with his grandchildren, who had been locked down at school during the attack. "We played games as if nothing had happened. "Such is 'normal' life in Israel."

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Young doctors are qualified and willing, but unemployed

CLAUDIA GROSS

South African medical graduates are some of the best in the world, but hundreds of them cannot find work.

This generation of young South African doctors has done everything required of them. They spent years studying medicine, completed internships, served the country through compulsory community service, and prepared to begin their careers. Yet many have been left sitting at home, sending applications, and waiting for phone calls that never come.

The situation has created a striking contradiction. South Africa continues to suffer major healthcare challenges and shortages of medical professionals in many communities. At the same time, hundreds of qualified doctors struggle to secure permanent employment. Among them are several young Jewish doctors who say the experience has been frustrating, financially damaging, and emotionally exhausting.

Talia* completed her community service in the Eastern Cape in December 2025. She expected to move into a permanent position soon afterwards but instead, found herself unemployed. "People assume that because you're a doctor, you'll always have a job," she says. "The reality is that I send out applications every week and often don't even receive a response."

She moved back in with her parents "because I simply couldn't afford rent without a stable income".

People assume that because you're a doctor, you'll always have a job.

The unemployment of young doctors has received growing national attention over the years. Medical organisations, labour unions, and professional associations have repeatedly warned that qualified doctors are struggling to find posts despite the country's healthcare needs.

In early 2025, government acknowledged that about 1 800 doctors were unemployed. Additional funding was later allocated to absorb some of them into the public healthcare system. However, concerns remained that many qualified doctors would still be left without

positions.

In March 2025, Finance Minister Enoch Godongwana announced additional funding to employ 800 post-community service doctors who were without work.

Healthcare organisations welcomed the announcement, but it also illustrated the scale of the problem. At the time, an estimated 1 800 qualified doctors were unemployed across South Africa. Even after the additional funding, about 1 000 doctors would still be left without permanent posts.

The situation remained a concern the following year. In early 2026, the South African Medical Association Trade Union (SAMATU) conducted a survey of doctors whose community service contracts had ended in December 2025. The survey found that only 411 of the 1 891 doctors in the cohort had secured employment by January 2026.

That meant about 1 480 newly qualified doctors remained unemployed only weeks after completing community service. The findings intensified concerns about the public healthcare system's ability to absorb young professionals.

SAMATU said the results highlighted the growing disconnect between South Africa's healthcare needs and the employment opportunities available to qualified doctors. The union warned that prolonged unemployment risked pushing more young doctors to seek opportunities overseas while hospitals and clinics continued to face staffing shortages.

For doctors on the ground, the explanations offer little comfort. Kayla* completed community service in the Northern Cape in December 2025. Months later, she is still looking for work. "Every

rejection feels personal, even though I know it's usually about budgets rather than qualifications," she says.

Kayla says she has broadened her search significantly. "I've applied in multiple provinces and across different disciplines because at this stage, I'm simply looking for an opportunity to serve and gain experience."

The uncertainty affects more than finances. "I don't know whether to wait, relocate, or consider leaving the profession altogether," she says.

Some doctors have spent extended periods unemployed. Daniel* completed community service in

Limpopo in December 2024, but spent almost a year without a job before finally securing a medical officer position earlier this year.

"I did everything that was asked of me," he says. "I completed internship, community service, and applied for every position I could find, but month after month there was nothing." During that period, Daniel relied on savings and occasional locum work to survive.

"There were times when I wondered whether all those years of study had been worth it," he says. "My classmates overseas were progressing in their careers while I was



hustling to support myself on a daily basis."

When a permanent position became available, the relief was immense. "When I got the call offering me a position, I just sat in silence for a few minutes," he says. "It felt like my life could finally start moving forward again."

Others have decided they can no longer afford to wait. Joshua* completed community service in KwaZulu-Natal in December 2024. After months of unsuccessful applications in South Africa, he began exploring opportunities abroad.

"Leaving South Africa wasn't part of my plan," he says. "I wanted to build my career here."

His experience overseas contrasted sharply with what he encountered at home. "After months of unsuccessful applications, I started looking abroad and within a few weeks I had interviews lined up," he says.

Joshua eventually accepted a position with the National Health Service (NHS) in the United Kingdom. "The NHS offered me a contract, a clear career path, and support with relocation," he says. "It was difficult to say no when I wasn't getting opportunities at home." Although he has settled into his new role, he hasn't ruled out returning. "I still hope to return to South Africa one day, but right now I need to go where I can actually practise medicine."

The departure of young doctors has raised concerns about the long-term impact on South Africa's healthcare system. Training a doctor requires substantial public and private investment, and many healthcare professionals believe the country cannot afford to lose skilled graduates.

Michael*, who completed community service in the Free State in December 2024, currently survives on intermittent locum work while searching for a permanent position. "Locum shifts help me pay the bills, but they don't provide the stability or training opportunities that a permanent post would," he says.

"My biggest concern is falling behind professionally," Michael says. "Medicine moves quickly, and long periods without structured work can affect your development."

He believes many young doctors share his frustration. "We keep hearing about doctor shortages, yet

there are many of us who are qualified and ready to work immediately."

For patients, the issue may seem difficult to understand. South Africa faces significant healthcare pressures, particularly in rural areas and under-resourced communities. Yet the availability of doctors depends not only on need, but also on funded posts, provincial budgets, and broader government spending priorities.

As health departments continue searching for solutions, many newly qualified doctors remain in limbo. They are trained, licensed, and ready to serve. For now, however, many are still waiting for the opportunity to do so.

**Sources have asked for their names to be changed due to privacy concerns.*

Sydenham-Highlands North shul burgled

LEE TANKLE

Congregants arriving at the Sydenham-Highlands North Shul in Johannesburg on Shabbat, 6 June, were met with an unexpected disruption after a burglary at the synagogue overnight. It prompted a police investigation and the temporary relocation of services.

In a statement sent to the congregation on



Inside the Sydenham-Highlands North Shul

8 June, Rabbi Yehuda Stern explained that while preparing for the Shabbat morning services, the shul's security team had discovered that a burglary had taken place through a broken window.

CSO and CAP were immediately called to the scene.

"Fortunately, the damage and loss were limited. Two television screens from the foyer, two brass candelabras from the bima, and a small number of other items were taken. No Sifrei Torah, ritual items, or other significant communal assets were affected,"

said Stern in the statement.

The burglary appeared to be a purely criminal act. "At this stage, there is no indication that this was an antisemitic incident or any other form of targeted attack against the community. There is also nothing at present to suggest that this was a sophisticated or coordinated operation," said Stern.

"The South African Police Service was called to the scene, where statements were taken and forensic evidence, including fingerprints, was collected. The matter remains under investigation, and we will continue to cooperate fully with the authorities," said Stern.

In order to allow the investigation to proceed, Shabbos services were relocated to the community centre and continued as scheduled.

"Once the police had completed their forensic work, the main shul was reopened and is now fully operational," he said.

Stern said that shul management is conducting a thorough review of the incident to identify possible additional security measures, and that it remains committed to maintaining a safe, secure, and welcoming environment for all who visit the shul.

Glenhazel robbery suspects arrested

LEE TANKLE

Residents of Glenhazel, Johannesburg received a measure of reassurance this week after three suspects were arrested in connection with a violent home invasion that left one victim in hospital.

The suspects were tracked down following an extensive investigation and a coordinated operation involving CAP Specialised Operations, Tracker Connect, the South African Police Service (SAPS) Gauteng Tactical Response Team, and the Gauteng Traffic Police Airwing in the hours after the attack.

On 4 June, armed suspects held up the victims in their home in Glenhazel and assaulted one, before fleeing with household items and a vehicle. The victims immediately reported the incident to CAP and secured the area to make sure there was no further interference or loss. The injured person was treated at the scene and transported to hospital, where they are expected to make a full recovery.

"We ensured that all physical and forensic evidence was carefully preserved and collected

for investigation," said Sean Jammy, Deputy Chief Executive of CAP.

Subsequent investigations by CAP indicated that the gardener employed at the



house had likely supplied information to the suspects, who then used it to carry out the robbery.

In the hours after the incident, CAP teams were able to track the vehicle and locate it in Alexandra. "We observed the suspects believed to be responsible for the robbery in the act of handing the vehicle over to a second group of individuals presumed to be purchasing it," said Jammy.

A coordinated operational plan was then executed with the SAPS, resulting in the arrest of three suspects, who were charged for involvement in the robbery, as well as the alleged vehicle buyers.

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Two kinds of abnormal

On Monday morning, waking up to news that Iran had fired missiles towards central Israel again sent shivers up my spine. Not again, was my first thought. The idea that the war had resumed was too much to absorb. After a 40-day full-scale war where there were missiles many times a day every day, Israel has had relative quiet since the ceasefire agreement on 8 April. And life was getting back to normality, if there is such a thing in Israel.

And then on Monday, it seemed war was resuming and school was being halted again. *Miklatot* (bomb shelters) were opened and that same sinking feeling that it was all starting again was felt across Israel. Memories of not being able to shower in peace because of worry that the sirens would go off. Reminders of having gone to an appointment and the siren sounding and having to seek out a public shelter at the last minute.

And which Israeli working mom could forget having to continue their jobs while looking after their littlies, who were frustrated because they couldn't go to school or run around whenever they wanted.

With all of this going through the minds of Israelis, those of us in the diaspora once again had that feeling of foreboding. That constant worry when you know the missiles are on their way, and you're in South Africa, but your family or loved ones are having to run for shelter in Israel. Out here, we have no idea exactly where missiles have actually struck. So, our minds and imaginations go ballistic. Will they be safe? Should I call or should I wait? I don't want to pester them, but they haven't messaged me yet to say they're okay. And you cannot concentrate on anything until you hear from them. And so often they forget once they get back to work or sleep or whatever.

All this was invariably going through people's minds on Monday.

And then, within 24 hours, a tentative ceasefire resumed and the country heaved a sigh of relief. The Jewish world could breathe again. And it did so, tentatively and slowly, worrying that this could be just a smokescreen and the missiles would resume. But so far, as of Wednesday afternoon 10 June, they haven't.

What this reiterated for me and for many of us is just how connected we are to that crazy wonderful nation in the Middle East, the one that is smaller than the Kruger National Park.

The impact of the terrorist attack the day before, Sunday 7 June, reverberated through our community as so many South Africans live in Kochav Yair, and the area around it, which is where the attack began. Hence our front-page story.

Interestingly, on Wednesday morning, Israeli family sent messages to us in South Africa asking if we were okay. They wanted to know if we had had a terrorist attack in Johannesburg. Most of us didn't know what they were talking about.

However, considering their concern, I realised they were referring to the news that at least 12 people were killed and nine wounded in a shooting in Johannesburg. Police reported that gunmen had opened fire in an informal settlement in Cleveland, east of the city.

For those of us in South Africa, or at least in Johannesburg, terrorism was never even a consideration when we heard about this shooting. Don't get me wrong, it was a heinous attack and clearly a massacre. Twelve human beings were mowed down and even those wounded might not make it.

If the same story had emanated from Israel, it would have been terrorism, no question, because Israel doesn't have the kind of crime and gang violence we have here.

Police believe the attack might be part of an illegal-mining turf war and are on the hunt for the 10 or so perpetrators. In Israel, the likelihood is those perpetrators wouldn't have made it home alive. Not that I believe in violence, I don't, but those shooters wouldn't be able to commit murder or massacres again. That's not a bad thing.

In South Africa this year, there are an average of 58 murders a day. That is more than 21 000 people a year. And these figures are lower than they have been for many years.

We are not at war and still there doesn't seem to be an outcry from our government or leaders about the murder rate. Hence the massacre in Cleveland makes news today but may well be forgotten by tomorrow. Sadly, most of the 58-a-day murders happen without even making news.

The leading causes of these killings are interpersonal violence, socioeconomic challenges, and then, organised crime.

The most frequent triggers for murders are domestic disputes, jealousy, road rage, and friction between relatives, friends, or acquaintances. Alcohol and substance abuse is the next biggest trigger, before mob justice, or gang violence.

Then, down the line, there is robbery with aggravated circumstances and other crime.

So, I totally get why our family in Israel find such a massacre terrifying and send messages that we should come to Israel because it is much safer there. For most in the world, that statement sounds absurd because, despite the ceasefire, Israel is in an almost permanent state of war.

It is also a difference of perspective.

However, much like I am sure they are grateful that we worry about them in Israel, I am pleased that they are also keeping an eye out for us.

Next week, we commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Soweto Uprising. On 16 June 1976, 176 people – mostly schoolchildren – are believed to have been murdered. As the revolt spread across South Africa that week, there were at least 575 deaths.

In this week's edition we bring you a personal story by Dr Melville Edelstein's daughter Janet, who writes (on this page) about how his murder has altered her life. Dr Edelstein was the only Jewish person killed on that fateful day.

We also bring you essays by King David High School pupils who consider what the youth of 1976 were fighting for, and what their own battle is for in 2026.

We wish you a memorable Youth Day and, while we won't be producing a print edition next week, we'll catch up with you online.

Shabbat shalom!

Peta Krost
Editor



The man who went into Soweto

PERSONAL STORY

JANET GOLDBLATT



Every morning, my father, Dr Melville Leonard Edelstein, drove into Soweto.

Let that sit for a moment.

The sprawling township southwest of Johannesburg was under the architecture of apartheid, and for a white man to enter willingly, every single day, not as an enforcer of the system but as a servant of the people within it, was not ordinary. It was, in its quiet way, revolutionary. He has been referred to, by the late journalist Jon Qwelane, as “the unsung hero of the Soweto riots”.

My father worked for the West Rand Administration Board as a social worker. He was a mediator between worlds that the government had declared must never meet. He sat with families ground down by impossible circumstances and helped them find a way to cope. He created workshops for disabled members of the community – people who had been doubly excluded, by race and by ability – giving them not just a place to work, but a place to belong, a place to find dignity, purpose, and a small income they could call their own.

And alongside all of this, he was conducting research. His second thesis, the work that occupied so much of his intellectual life, was titled “What do young Africans think”. Not what should they think. Not what are we afraid they think. But what, in their own hearts and minds and voices, do they actually think? It was a question that required listening. And my father was, above all else, a man who knew how to listen.

He was loved by those he worked with. By everyone in Soweto. They knew, because they could feel it, that this white man came with no agenda, no ulterior motive, no performance of charity. He came because he believed it was right. He came because they mattered. He came back because they had always mattered, and tomorrow they would still matter, and that would never change.

There are people who choose their purpose, and there are people whose purpose chooses them. My father was the second kind. He did not set out to become a hero. He set out, every morning, to do what

was right. And in doing what was right, in a country that had made doing right a dangerous and radical act, he became something far greater than a hero. He became a witness. A bridge. A quiet, unwavering flame in the middle of a very long darkness.

He was a man of few words and many actions. My father did not speak about justice. He enacted it. He did not debate the humanity of those around him. He simply treated every human being as human.

On the morning of 16 June 1976, something broke open in South Africa. Pupils in Soweto, thousands of them, rose up against the decree that they must be educated in Afrikaans, the language of their oppressors. They marched. They were met with police. What followed is now written into history as the Soweto Uprising, one of the most significant turning points in the long and agonising story of apartheid's undoing.

My father was in the wrong place at the wrong time. That is what they said. His offices were at the Morris Isaacson High School, the very heart of where the uprising ignited. In the chaos and fury of that day, in the eruption of decades of suppressed pain, my father was

bludgeoned to death a week before my Batmitzvah.

He was killed by the very community he had spent his life serving.

I have sat with that sentence for nearly 50 years. I am still sitting with it. In fact, I have ended up working in a school, not even on purpose, around the corner from where he was killed.

The day my dad passed was obviously the worst day for me and my sister, Shana. We were taken away to the home of my aunt's best friend while the chaos was carrying on. And when we were fetched to go home, we didn't know the fate of my father.

I said to her, “Is my father okay?” And she said, “Janet, I don't know.” She obviously did. “But whatever happens, you're the oldest. So, you have to look after your mother and your sister.”

That was the narrative that also changed my life in some way. I just took on this role, a leadership role, and I probably am still in it. It didn't make it that simple for me in terms of grieving.

My mom needed to go out and start working again. She had sold her business a year before and now had to find a way to bring in an income. While we had my grandfather's help, she still needed to work full-time, and so I took over caring for my sister. I navigated from then, and I probably am still trying to navigate, why this happened and how it impacted on me.



The Edelstein family before 16 June 1976 – Melville, Shana, Rhona, and Janet

Later, I was asked to go to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and asked what we would like as reparations. I said I just wanted my father's name to be acknowledged in history. I wanted it known that he was killed on that day. I think I made an assumption here that he was also seen as a protagonist of the apartheid regime because he worked between the two worlds. His heart though was in Soweto, and his heart was with the children.

My mother, who is now 91, remains healthy, with only very slight dementia – not bad at all for her age.

My sister, Shana, went on to build an incredible fashion design school. She has four children, and after selling her business to a conglomerate, she has turned her talents to pottery, creating beautiful cups for *vassing*. In many ways, it feels like her story has come full circle.

Hashem blessed us with two wonderful men, Shana's husband, Sean Rosenthal, and my husband, Allen Goldblatt. They have been extraordinary partners, supporting us and helping to care for our children throughout the years.

• Janet Goldblatt is Dr Melville Edelstein's daughter and a transformational catalyst.

Telfed volunteers help 7 October kibbutzniks return home

LEE TANKLE

For Selwyn Margolis, 87, returning to his home on Kibbutz Kissufim near Gaza last week was not about unpacking boxes and rearranging furniture. It was a return to keeping the memory of his son Sa'ar, who was killed defending the kibbutz more than two and a half years ago. Helping make that return possible was a dedicated team of volunteers from Telfed.

"My dad wanted to go back home, and he wants to be with Sa'ar," said Selwyn's daughter Beora Margolis. "He said, 'I want to go back so that I can go and sit with my son and talk to him when I want to.'"

On 31 May, 14 Telfed volunteers went to Kibbutz Kissufim to help move displaced families back into their homes. Thirty families are returning, two to three a day. The younger residents can manage alone, but the volunteers wanted to bring the seniors home together as a group.

Debbie Dash, the Vice-Chairperson of Telfed, has been in regular contact with the Margolis family for more than two years. Because they are South African expats, Kissufim has never been just another kibbutz to her. So when Telfed organised the day to help seniors return home, it was clear to Dash that she needed to be part of the team unpacking Selwyn Margolis's home. They were joined by his daughters, Beora and Marcelle, who wanted to prepare the house before their father returned.

"When we arrived, the atmosphere was a blend of anticipation, heaviness, and quiet determination," she said. "We knew that volunteers had once rushed into these same homes to pack up lives in minutes. Since then, families have rebuilt temporary lives in Omer, replacing clothing, household items, and daily

essentials.

"Now came another difficult chapter – returning to Kissufim, sorting through boxes from different stages of displacement, and trying to create order and comfort again. All of this while carrying the emotional weight of coming home to absence: to a child who is no longer there, to grandchildren who are not returning. There was a shared, unspoken understanding that this wasn't simply 'moving day'. It was a homecoming layered with memory, grief, and extraordinary resilience."



Telfed volunteers helping unpack boxes

Selwyn wasn't at home on the day of the move as his daughters wanted to shield him from the pain and chaos of unpacking. "But in them I saw a full spectrum of emotions: honesty about their grief, deep gratitude for our help, and a profound sense of humanity. These are not people asking for pity. They are people reclaiming their lives," said Dash.

One of the volunteers, Lara Stein, explained that they were tasked with bringing in the items that made the house a home. They unpacked boxes and made sure that everything was set up to make the move back in seamless.

"The emotional load is already immense. After nearly three years of displacement, trauma, and uncertainty, the last thing anyone needs is logistical chaos layered on top of psychological pain," said Dash. "The support we offered may seem small: unpacking a kitchen cupboard, lifting a box, listening, standing quietly beside someone navigating grief and memory. But Telfed's role was to absorb as many practical burdens as possible so residents could focus on the far more complex inner journey of returning."

Stein said that all she could think about while putting clothes into a cupboard was, "If the walls could talk and the stones could tell their stories, they would reveal just how shocking those events were. Yet today there is also a sense of renewal. New walls are being built, pavements repaired, and fresh coats of paint applied. Amid the memories of what happened, there is a tangible regrowth and a feeling of newness."

"This was a humbling experience in every sense," Dash said. "You aren't just carrying boxes; you're carrying pieces of interrupted

lives. Every cupboard we opened, every item we unwrapped held emotional weight. We were stepping into homes where the air still held the absence of loved ones who would not be returning.

"The residents' emotions were layered and varied – relief, longing, fear, and grief, often all at once. Some were grateful to finally return to familiar walls. Others were anxious about what 'home' would feel like now. Many carried the pain of returning to a place that no longer holds everyone it once did. But beneath all of that was a quiet, unmistakable strength. Choosing to come home was, in itself, an act of courage," she said.

Margolis explained why her father returned. "He wanted to be back in his own home. He wanted the memories of Sa'ar."

She herself was extremely nervous about going back as the area holds a lot of trauma for her.

"It's not easy. It's quite confusing, and it's quite difficult because all of a sudden I was there, and Sa'ar wasn't there, the dogs weren't there, the kids weren't there, my sister's not on the kibbutz next door. So all of a sudden you find you're actually by yourself. I'm still nervous that my dad's gone back, because I don't think it's hitting yet," she said.

"I was there alone, and it's still a blow. It's a very strong blow. It actually hurts very much."

However, she and Dash say that having the volunteers there is making a world of difference in how people are now coming back.

"We barely had to explain anything. I'd simply point to a carton and say where it needed to go, and they just knew what to do. They were incredibly caring, making sure everything was in the right place, and they kept asking if we needed any more help," said Margolis.



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Can ChatGPT be your therapist?

GILLIAN KLAWANSKY

"It feels like I'm speaking to someone who knows me, says Shira Jacobs*, who frequently turns to AI-powered conversational chatbot ChatGPT when she's feeling stressed or needs emotional support.

"When you share information about yourself, your likes, dislikes, and daily routine, it stores the information and tailors its response to you," she says. "So it starts to feel like you're talking to someone you trust. It can be your friend, your researcher, your therapist, your adviser, or a sounding board."

Counselling psychologist Dr Hanan Bushkin explains why people may develop such a relationship with ChatGPT. "Google gives you search results. ChatGPT gives you dialogue. That matters," he says. "Human beings are wired to respond socially to anything that speaks fluently, remembers context, sounds empathic, and answers directly. So, for some people, ChatGPT can start to feel less like a tool and more like a responsive, trusted presence."

While one should be careful not to overstate how much we tend to form emotional attachments to ChatGPT, Bushkin says, its conversational nature unquestionably makes it easier to humanise. "Once something sounds warm, thoughtful, and available, the mind starts relating to it socially, even when we know intellectually that it is not a person."

That's why artificial intelligence (AI) is an increasingly appealing option for those in need of an emotional outlet. "AI is immediate, private, available at 23:00, and doesn't put you on a waiting list, or make you feel embarrassed for asking the same question five times," Bushkin says.

Psychologist Emma Porter agrees, saying that AI plays into our need for immediate gratification. "More and more, people are looking for quick fixes or easy-to-digest answers, and AI is very good at making lists and action points, and talking to you in your own 'language'. Real therapy is hard and imperfect, it takes time and vulnerability, trial and error, and people who have tried it and not seen results as quickly as they would like are

frustrated." Yet there are multiple in-person treatment modalities available today as well as more affordable options, especially in our community, she says.

Nevertheless, the fact that so many people are turning to AI with their psychological needs speaks to the state of mental health in our society, Porter says. "Mental struggles are so prevalent, so difficult to sit with, and so isolating – people obviously feel they have nowhere else to turn for a non-judgemental space to help them."

Where AI is useful is in breaking a problem into doable steps, or providing psychologically recommended exercises. "The way people speak to ChatGPT about their problems is very similar to journaling, which has always been a go-to tool suggested by therapists," says Porter. "It can be helpful to get your thoughts out of your head and see them in a solid form, making them less overwhelming, and to bounce ideas around to process your needs and options for moving forward."

Jacobs often uses ChatGPT for this purpose and feels supported by a tool that she says not only helps her, but also suggests she fix herself a cup of her favourite coffee brand. "I use it a lot to share and put my thoughts and feelings down when times are tough, providing an instant response that helps me the moment I need it."

"On difficult days," she says, "it really becomes a form of comfort knowing that there is 'someone' always there to listen to me. Of course nothing beats speaking to a qualified therapist one-on-one, but ChatGPT gives you the freedom to chat when and where you want to about anything that's on your mind. If you don't feel like chatting to it for a while, that's okay too. There's no pressure, only a space to feel heard."

While Bushkin acknowledges that AI has its place, she stresses the importance of understanding its limitations. "My concern is not that people are talking to AI. My concern is when convenience starts masquerading as care, or when fluency gets mistaken for wisdom. A system can sound warm, organised, and confident without holding ethical responsibility for the human being on the other side."

AI can, in fact, reinforce delusions or dangerous thought patterns, including those around self-harm, Porter cautions. "AI can be wrong and often fabricates things to give you an answer you will like," she says. "It is a quintessential people pleaser. In contrast, a good therapist should not always validate you and justify your thoughts and actions. Sometimes you need someone to gently push you out of your comfort zone or challenge what you believe about yourself and others."

Furthermore, AI lacks the human-centred expertise that takes years to master. "A real psychologist doesn't just answer the words you say," Bushkin says. "We assess the person saying them. We look at context, history, patterns, severity, risk, personality structure, coping style, family system, trauma history, medical issues, and the difference between everyday anxiety and something more serious."

So, while it may provide practical suggestions for calming your nerves before a big presentation, for example, ChatGPT cannot eliminate the need for a psychologist when you're tackling serious mental health challenges. These include

suicidality, self-harm, psychosis, mania, severe depression, trauma, substance misuse, panic attacks, an abusive relationship, an eating disorder, or compulsions, Bushkin says. "AI can also not assist if you're experiencing a level of distress that is affecting sleep, work, parenting, or daily functioning. All these challenges are no longer support-tool territory but professional territory."

Yet it's sometimes hard to know where to draw the line. Bushkin provides guidance here, saying, "Use AI when you need help thinking; use a mental health professional when you need help carrying. If the problem is mild, situational, and you still have perspective, AI may help you clarify things. If the problem is persistent, escalating, frightening, or impairing your ability to function, stop outsourcing it to a chatbot and speak to a real person trained to hold the weight of what you're carrying."

*This name has been changed due to mental health sensitivities.



People are increasingly turning to AI for emotional support

Maputo synagogue still active 100 years later

GILANA LAB

As more than 100 members of Mozambique's Jewish community, past and present, gather on 11 June to celebrate the centenary of the Maputo Synagogue, they hope to highlight that their community is still alive.

Community President Sam Levy says although most people assume it doesn't exist, there is still a small but active Jewish community in Mozambique. So much so that more than 100 people are to gather in person on Thursday and about 100 will join online. Among them are people who live or lived in Mozambique. They are to be joined by the President of Mozambique, Daniel Francisco Chapo.

"There's been a Jewish community here for many years now," says Levy, who lives in Maputo. "It waxes and wanes because some of the people are Mozambican, but some are from outside and come and go. So, there's a community and we have services and observe the *chaggim*."

For Levy, the celebration this week is about far more than the survival of a building, although that is important.

"The synagogue kept going until independence," he says. "Then most of the Jews left. The synagogue, along with many other places of worship, was closed because religion was not in favour at the time."

The years following independence in 1975 proved difficult. As much of the Jewish population emigrated, organised Jewish life came to a standstill and the synagogue was nationalised. "It was used as a warehouse, unfortunately," Levy says. "It was always either a synagogue or, when it wasn't a synagogue, a warehouse waiting to be a synagogue again."

That wait ended in 1989 when businessman Alkis Macropolous helped secure the building's return to the Jewish community. "The government said, 'Of course', and gave it back," he recalls. "The Jewish community reformed around the synagogue and its restoration from that time."

The Jewish story in Mozambique began long before the synagogue's doors first opened. According to community records, Jewish immigrants arrived in Lourenço Marques during the late 19th century. Drawn by growing commercial opportunities, they established a congregation in 1899 before eventually building the

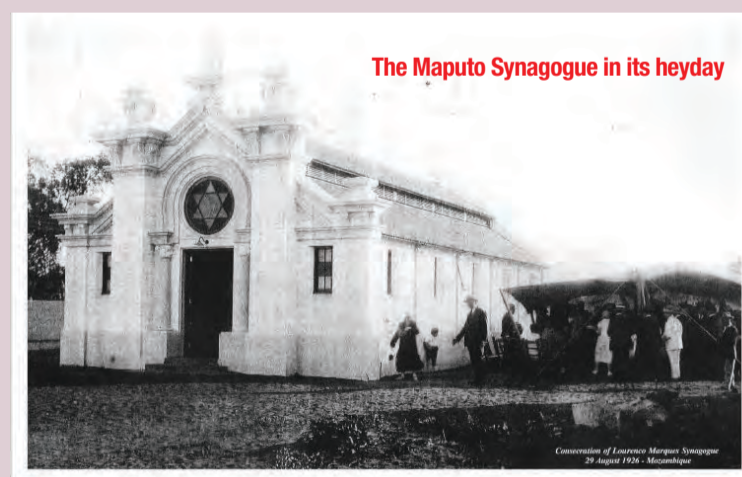
synagogue, which was consecrated in 1926.

Levy traces the communal origins to the close relationship between Mozambique and South Africa. "The community really got started when gold was discovered on the Witwatersrand because Lourenço Marques, now Maputo, was the railhead for all the supplies going in and out of the country. There was always a very strong connection between Maputo and Johannesburg and the Jewish communities in the two places."

One of the community's early champions was British-born Rabbi Joseph Herman Hertz. "He told the Jews here to organise themselves into a proper community," Levy says. "It took 20 years, but they did, and that's when the synagogue was finally inaugurated."

Today, maintaining Jewish life in Maputo remains a challenge. The community numbers just 35 to 40 people.

"We rarely get a *minyan*," Levy says. Yet that has never stopped the community from practising Judaism.



The Maputo Synagogue in its heyday

"If there's no *minyan*, there's no *minyan*. But that doesn't mean you can't pray," he says. "There are prayers you can't do, and we don't do those prayers. We do what we can under the circumstances."

The community grew to around 70 or 80 people before the COVID-19 pandemic, even operating a small *cheder* (school). While numbers have declined, Levy believes the community remains strong.

"There's a critical mass between Mozambicans and foreigners to celebrate the *chaggim* and to be together for Shabbat," he said. As the community gathers on Thursday, Levy sees the celebration as a reminder that Jewish life in Mozambique has endured against the odds.

More than 100 years after its establishment, and decades after many thought the community had disappeared altogether, the Maputo Synagogue continues to fulfil the purpose for which it was built.

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Anne Frank still speaks to young people today

CLAUDIA GROSS

More than 80 years after her death, Anne Frank remains one of the most recognised voices of the Holocaust. Yet many people know only part of her story. They know about the diary, the secret annex, and the teenage girl who wrote about hope while hiding from Nazi persecution. They often know less about what happened after her arrest, the history of the building where she hid, and the ways her story is being introduced to new generations.

Aaron Peterer of the Anne Frank House in Amsterdam explored these themes at an event the Cape Town Holocaust & Genocide Centre and the Jacob Gitlin Library hosted on Wednesday 3 June.

Peterer has worked with the Anne Frank House since 2002 and has spent many years taking its educational programmes to audiences around the world. His connection to South Africa is both professional and personal.

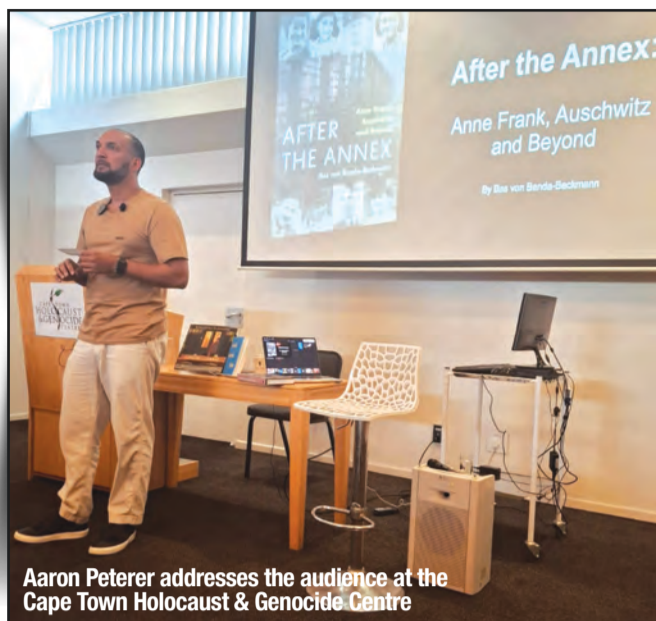
"My mother is originally from Durban," he told the audience. Her family emigrated to the United Kingdom in the late 1950s, where she grew up. Peterer was later born in London to his South African-born mother and an Austrian father.

He has helped bring exhibitions and educational programmes to Johannesburg, Durban, and Cape Town, working with pupils, educators, and Holocaust centres across the country.

"It was always very special for me to return to South Africa," he said. Working in Durban, the city where his mother was born was "really, really emotional for me".

A major focus of Peterer's presentation was the travelling exhibition *Anne Frank: A History for Today*, which has toured extensively in South Africa. The exhibition uses peer-guide training, allowing scholars to guide fellow pupils through Frank's story and its contemporary relevance.

Peterer said some of the most memorable lessons came from interactions with South African pupils. During one training session, a child asked him, "How is it possible that white people can be racist towards other white people?" Peterer said the question reminded him that every audience brings its own experiences and perspectives to history. Those conversations, he said, often become some of



Aaron Peterer addresses the audience at the Cape Town Holocaust & Genocide Centre

the most meaningful aspects of educational work.

The first book he discussed during the event was *After the Annex* by Bas von Benda-Beckmann. "Many people's understanding of Anne Frank and her story ends at the betrayal and at the arrest," Peterer said. But the book follows the Frank family, and the other inhabitants of the secret annex, after their arrest on 4 August 1944. Drawing on eyewitness testimony and extensive research, it traces their experiences through prisons, transit camps, concentration camps, and, in some cases, liberation.

Peterer said one of the book's strengths is its examination of how historians reconstruct events. Witnesses often remembered incidents differently, especially when recounting experiences many years later. The book explores these challenges while piecing together the journeys of each person who lived in hiding.

Readers follow the group from Amsterdam to the transit camp of Westerbork and later to Auschwitz. The book details the separation of family members and the different paths they took through the Nazi camp system.

For Peterer, one of the most moving sections is its account of Anne Frank's final months in Bergen-Belsen. "When you read that, you hear how day by day Anne Frank gets weaker and weaker," he said.

The book describes the harsh conditions in the camp and the suffering endured by

Anne, her sister Margot, and thousands of other prisoners. It also chronicles the experiences of Otto Frank, Anne's father, who became the only member of the immediate family to survive the Holocaust.

The second publication Peterer discussed was *The House on the Canal* by Thomas Harding, illustrated by Britta Teckentrup. In this story of the building at 263 Prinsengracht in Amsterdam, where the secret annex was located, the house itself becomes the central character.

Peterer described it as an ideal introduction for younger

readers because it presents history through storytelling and illustrations. The book traces the building's history from the 17th century to modern times, exploring Amsterdam's growth during the Dutch Golden Age, the development of its famous canal system, and the many families and businesses that occupied the building over centuries.

"It's a very, very beautiful read," Peterer said.

The final publication he spoke about was *Antisemitism: Myths, Masks & Misconceptions*, newly released by the Anne Frank House. The publication builds on earlier editions but was substantially revised because "antisemitism has increased and morphed and transformed in so many different ways", Peterer said.

Part reference guide and part educational resource, the book addresses common questions about Jewish identity, antisemitic myths, and historical misconceptions. It also examines contemporary manifestations of antisemitism, particularly in digital spaces.

The book explores how stereotypes and conspiracy theories spread online and discusses antisemitism in areas such as sport, including football fan culture. It also addresses debates around antizionism, criticism of Israel, and the circumstances in which political discourse can cross into antisemitism.

According to Peterer, the goal is to provide readers and educators with reliable, research-based information that can help answer difficult questions and challenge

misconceptions.

The event concluded with a discussion of the *Anne Frank Video Diary*, a 15-part web series produced by the Anne Frank House. The project imagines what might have happened if the girl had chosen a video camera instead of a diary for her 13th birthday.

Peterer admitted that he was initially sceptical about the concept. "At the beginning, I didn't really like the idea of giving Anne Frank a video camera," he said. However, he came to appreciate the project as a way of reaching audiences who increasingly engage with visual content rather than books.

The series uses Frank's own words while using video recordings to place viewers alongside her in the secret annex. It asks modern audiences to imagine how she might have documented her life if she had had access to contemporary technology.

Throughout the discussion in Cape Town, a common theme emerged. Whether through books, exhibitions, museums, or digital media, educators continue searching for ways to ensure that Anne Frank's story remains meaningful to new generations.

More than eight decades after her death, her voice continues to inspire new forms of storytelling, encouraging readers and viewers to look beyond her diary and engage with the broader history that shaped her life and legacy.

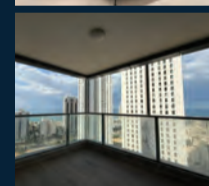
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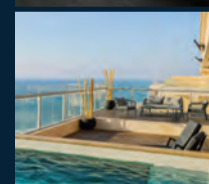
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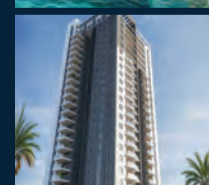
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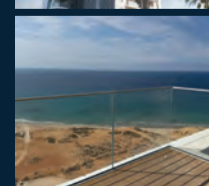
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Wits ranks No. 1 in Africa, joins global top 200

CLAUDIA GROSS

The University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) has achieved a milestone that places it at the forefront of higher education on the continent and in the top 1% of universities worldwide.

It has ranked first in Africa and 200th globally in the 2026 Center for World University Rankings (CWUR).

The achievement has generated excitement among alumni, academics, and supporters of the university. Many see it as recognition of years of investment in teaching, research, innovation, and leadership.

The CWUR rankings assessed 21 291 universities around the world on education, graduate employability, faculty achievements, and research performance. Unlike some ranking systems, CWUR relies on outcome-based measures rather than surveys and institutional submissions.

Professor Zebulon Vilakazi, vice-chancellor and principal of Wits, said the ranking was an important achievement despite ongoing debates about university rankings in general.

"We are proud that Wits has earned its place in this ranking. Being ranked number one in Africa and among the top 1% globally is a testament to the collective excellence, resilience, and ambition of our students, staff, alumni, donors, and partners."

One of the strongest aspects of Wits's performance was

graduate employability. It achieved an employability ranking of 97 globally, highlighting the success of its former students in the international job market.

Its faculty ranking of 87 reflected the standing of its academic staff and researchers.

The university pointed to achievements in fields including artificial intelligence (AI), quantum technologies, infectious diseases, climate change, and inequality research.

Among those helping to strengthen Wits's reputation in the rapidly growing field of AI is entrepreneur and technology leader Professor Benji Rosman.

"This is a wonderful affirmation of Wits's excellence, ambition, and impact," he said of the CWUR ranking. "In fields such as AI, we have become a distinctive centre of mass in Africa, combining world-class research with a deep commitment to solving problems that matter."

Rosman said the recognition highlighted not only the university's current standing. "This ranking recognises not just what Wits has achieved, but the momentum we

are building for the future." Arnold Basserabie, chairperson of the Wits Board of Governors, described the ranking as a reflection of strong leadership and institutional commitment. "I am proud of this objective ranking

Continued on page 11>>



Students in a lecture at Wits

Hyrox has everyone pushing and pumping

LEE TANKLE

For most people, spending a Saturday or Sunday running, rowing, sled-pushing, and lunging their way through a fitness competition seems daunting. Yet for a growing number of South Africans, Hyrox has become the ultimate challenge, drawing everyone from seasoned athletes to first-timers.

Some are chasing personal bests; others are celebrating weight-loss journeys or milestones in recovery. At the same time, many simply want to prove to themselves that they are capable of more than they ever imagined. What unites them is a willingness to embrace discomfort in pursuit of a goal.

Hyrox follows a fixed format: eight 1km runs, each separated by a functional workout station, including the ski erg machine, rowing machine, sled push, sled pull, burpee, broad jumps, farmer's carry, wall balls, and sandbag lunges.

"People who train for a Hyrox event gain 'hybrid fitness', which combines cardiovascular endurance with functional muscular strength. Unlike traditional weightlifting, which builds muscle mass, or long-distance running, which focuses purely on aerobic stamina, Hyrox teaches the body to produce force under severe cardiovascular fatigue repeatedly," says Ilisa Waksman, a Hyrox competitor and trainer.

After foot operations, she thought she wouldn't be able to run again. She decided to try a Hyrox class at Urbanlight Gym and found she could manage a two-minute treadmill run. She then tried the

Deadly Dozen race, which is 12 x 400m runs instead of the 8 x 1km, at Hyrox in May last year. Two Hyrox races followed, with Waksman and her partner missing second place by four seconds, coming third in the 40-49 age group in May.

"Hyrox was the ultimate challenge for me to try. I have done two so far, in November 2025 and May 2026. I compete in doubles with my bestie Meagan Dos Santos, who is 10 years younger than me. The beauty of Hyrox is that people can do it at any age, with any partner, male or female, individually or as a relay race. It has gained popularity among couples, who compete in the mixed event," she says.

Samantha Fanaroff and Andy Sostak decided to compete in the Hyrox competition on 31 May after meeting on a tour to Poland in 2024.

"Something shifted there. Standing in places where so much life had been taken, Andy and I discussed that the greatest tribute we can pay to those who no longer have a voice is to live loudly and fully on their behalf, to spread light where there was darkness, and to say yes to life. Somewhere along the way, Hyrox became another opportunity to do just that," says Fanaroff.

Sostak, who is wheelchair-bound, took this on as an additional challenge after completing the New York Marathon in November 2025.

"I wasn't the athlete competing. I was one small part of the team lucky enough to be alongside her. We got to witness the discipline, determination, and sheer

stubbornness it took to prepare for something so far outside our comfort

"The finish line was extraordinary, but it was never really the point," says



Ilisa Waksman and Meagan Dos Santos competing on 31 May

zone. We also got to witness a lot of laughter," says Fanaroff.

The duo spent only four months training and finished the adaptive Hyrox in just under 59 minutes, coming in first place for the Hyrox adaptive women's group. They found a training home at Urbanlight, where Waksman and Jordan Naidu welcomed them with open arms. "They understood that this wasn't simply about preparing for a race. It was about possibility," says Fanaroff.

Sostak. "The real victory was discovering that it's never too late to surprise yourself, that reinvention doesn't come with an expiry date, and that impossible things become a little more possible when people believe in you and stand beside you."

Fanaroff says, "There were afternoons when I'd arrive tired, distracted by life, only to remember that Andy had already fitted in a session before work and was back for more. Faced

with challenges that would give most people a perfectly acceptable excuse to opt out, she kept choosing to lean in."

Shona Kuming, Sostak's lifelong friend, was there through it all. Every session. Every setback. Every small victory. "Her loyalty and love became part of the foundation that held this whole experience together," says Sostak.

Once a week, Gila Ash, the duo's rebbetzin, trained with Sostak too. "There was something beautiful about that

partnership, tending not only to physical strength, but to spiritual strength as well," says Fanaroff.

Lance Kier, who has been doing CrossFit for about 13 years, explained that when Hyrox came onto the fitness scene about two years ago, he was immediately interested. He has since competed in five events, coming third in the 40-44 age group for doubles pro men at the most recent competition in Johannesburg on 30 and 31 May.

"While training varies depending on an athlete's goals, the race itself is always the same. That consistency sets it apart from CrossFit, where workouts constantly change and often involve more technical, skill-based movements such as gymnastics, alongside rowing, swimming, and cycling," he says. "While anyone can take part in CrossFit, its complexity can be intimidating for newcomers. Hyrox, by contrast, was designed to be accessible and inclusive. Its straightforward format allows people of all fitness levels to participate, which is a major reason for its rapid growth in recent years."

Waksman says Hyrox training often begins as one or two training sessions, but quickly turns into a goal to compete.

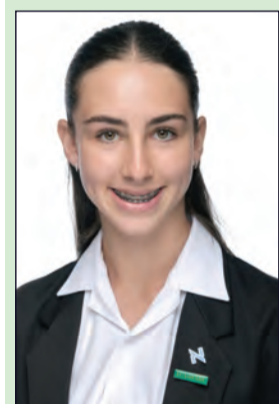
"The actual competition is tough, but it is manageable with some training. It has no strict cutoff time, making it accessible to all fitness levels. While top athletes are driven by time, so many competitors race at a more comfortable pace, happy to be able to compete and just be a part of the wonderful experience."

The battle lines for today's youth

Fifty years after the 1976 Soweto Uprising, the *SA Jewish Report* asked Jewish youth what young people today are fighting for. Here are the responses from three King David High School pupils.

In 1976 it was Afrikaans, now it's truth

Misha Lee Freinkel (Grade 9)



While the pupils of 1976 were fighting for educational equality, today's youth are perhaps fighting for truth.

I remember hearing as a little girl that there are always three sides to every story: his side, her side, and the truth. But surely his side is true to him, and her side is true to her. So where does that leave the truth?

Today, social media dominates almost every part of my life. It has become my news source, my search engine, my classroom, and sometimes even my

judge. It tells me what is happening in Iran, Turkey, Canada, Ukraine, and everywhere else. But I keep asking myself: Am I seeing what is really happening, or only what someone wants me to see? I don't want a version of reality shaped by a government, a media company, an influencer, or a political agenda. I want to know what is true.

George Orwell said, "In a time of deceit, telling the truth is a revolutionary act."

At first, I didn't understand this. Why should truth be revolutionary? Why should something so basic have to be fought for?

But maybe that is exactly the point.

When lies are repeated loudly enough, when opinions are dressed up as facts, when images can be edited, voices can be faked, and stories can be manipulated, truth becomes dangerous. Not because truth is weak, but because truth threatens those who benefit from confusion.

The pupils of 1976 fought against being told what language they should learn in and, ultimately, how they should think. They fought to be educated in a way that respected their dignity and their right to determine their own futures.

Today, we face a different challenge, yet we still have to ask the same question: Who decides what we know? Our fight is not against a language policy, but against misinformation, manipulation, and the distortion of truth.

We must fight to think clearly, question bravely, and resist being manipulated. We must fight for the right to ask: Who is telling this story? What are they leaving out? Who benefits if I believe it? And what evidence proves it?

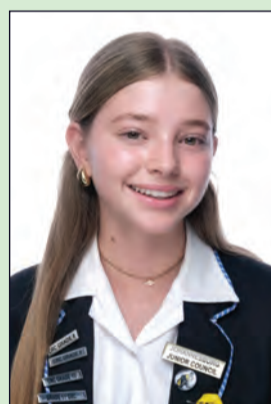
Because truth isn't always the loudest voice. It isn't always the most shared post. It isn't always the story that makes us angriest.

Truth requires courage, patience, and humility.

And perhaps today, in a world overflowing with information, the most revolutionary act is not simply to speak. It is to search honestly for what is real.

A legacy of standing up for our beliefs

Ella Passman (Grade 11)



One of the things that stands out to me about the youth of 1976 is how many of them were around our age when they had the courage to stand up for what they believed in and fight for a better future.

If the pupils of 1976 were fighting for educational equality, I think many young people today are fighting for equal opportunities. Although education is more accessible than it was then, not everyone has the same

opportunities outside of the classroom. Access to technology, universities, jobs, and other resources can still depend a lot on where you come from.

I also think mental health is something many young people are passionate about today. More teenagers are speaking about the

pressures they face and the importance of getting support when they need it.

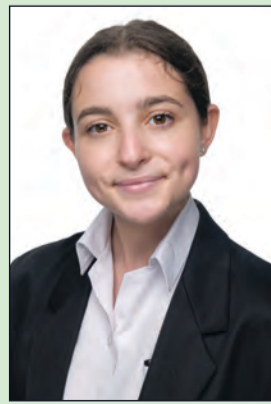
Activism has also changed a lot since 1976. Social media gives young people a platform to share their opinions and create awareness about issues they care about. Information can spread much faster than it could in the past. At the same time, I don't think social media can ever replace the bravery of the students who marched in 1976. Posting online is important, but real change still needs people to take action beyond the screen and stand up for what they believe in.

I do think young people's voices are taken more seriously today than they were in the past, but not always. We have more opportunities to express our views, but we are sometimes told that we're too young to understand certain issues. I don't think being young means our opinions matter less. In many cases, we're the ones who will be most affected by the decisions being made today.

The legacy of the pupils of 1976 is that young people can make a difference. Their courage shows that you don't have to be an adult for your voice to matter, and I think that's a lesson that is still just as important today.

Activists have social media now

Shoshana Krasner (Grade 11)



In 1976, pupils were fighting against an unequal education system and political oppression. Many of the difficulties facing the youth today are still rooted in the desire for fairness and opportunity. Issues such as access to quality education, mental health awareness, gender equality, climate change, and social media safety are major challenges many young people are concerned about. In a world that is constantly adapting and changing,

today's youth is urging digital inclusion because a lot of pupils don't have access to social media. The youth is also fighting against stereotypes, like "men aren't emotional" and "girls aren't as smart as men". These beliefs create an unsafe and negative atmosphere, and cause unfair treatment of pupils.

Social media has dramatically changed activism. In 1976, the youth relied on face to face communication and physical protests to attempt to change society. They risked their safety trying to make their voices heard. Today, social media allows information to spread instantly, helping young people raise awareness and start campaigns that reach a global audience in minutes. However, while online activism can be powerful and convenient, it also has the potential to encourage the youth to support causes without actually taking meaningful action. The activists of 1976 demonstrated their dedication through direct action and personal sacrifice. That is something the youth of today definitely lack.

I believe that young people's voices are heard more easily today because of social media and access to online platforms. The youth is constantly sharing their personal opinions with large audiences, but being heard doesn't always mean that we are taken seriously. Many young people still feel that their concerns are being dismissed by others in positions of power, like the government. This alone is something the youth is still trying to fight. Nevertheless, our history has shown us that young people are capable of making real change in our society. The students of 1976 are proof that the voices of the youth can influence a nation, which still remains true today.

Being considerate rules, okay?

Nobody ever taught me not to stop at the top of an escalator.

No wise elder sat me down and explained that when I reach the top, I should continue moving rather than stopping abruptly to consider my next life decision while a queue of people hurtles towards me.

And yet somehow we all know this. Or at least most of us do.

Nobody needed to tell me that although very few newborn babies are objectively pretty, I should not point out to their parents or grandparents that they look remarkably like Winston Churchill. Some, even like Churchill the morning after one too many. I know better than to mention it.

We live by thousands of unwritten rules. If we borrow a charger, we return it. If somebody lets us merge in traffic, we acknowledge them with a small wave. If someone shows us a photograph of their grandchild, we react as though we've just been granted the privilege of viewing the most beautiful cherub in human history.

These rules are not laws. Nobody enforces them. There are no penalties for violating them. Yet society depends on them.

This thought occurred to me after a discussion on air about the unwritten rules everybody should know by now. The responses poured in. Don't stand in a doorway and have a conversation. Don't use speakerphone in public. Don't bring 15 items into the "10 items or less" queue, and then argue that a watermelon, grapes, peaches, and guavas count as one deconstructed fruit salad.

The funny thing was that almost every answer shared a theme. The rules weren't really about efficiency, but about consideration. The unwritten rules of being human are the ways we say, "I know I am not the only person here."

Some years ago, I was sitting at the Mamilla Mall in Jerusalem with my wife, daughter, and one of my sons, enjoying a particularly underwhelming cup of coffee, when we heard a scream followed by several gunshots. Without thinking, my son, who was 14 at the time, and

INNER VOICE

Howard Feldman



I got up and ran towards the Old City where the incident had occurred.

This was, objectively, not a particularly sensible response. I have no military training or medical qualifications, suffer from flat feet, and spent much of my childhood managing Locol-induced asthma. By the time we arrived, a number of far more capable people had already neutralised the terrorist and were attending to the wounded.

There was very little I could have done other than write a sharply worded email. But remaining at the table and finishing my coffee was never really an option. Because for Jews, one of our most deeply embedded unwritten rules is that we run towards a place of need, not away from it.

Perhaps that is why Judaism places such emphasis on seemingly small acts. Visiting the sick. Comforting mourners. Returning lost property. Giving charity discreetly. Standing for the elderly. Showing up.

In recent years, the world has become obsessed with rights, opinions, identities, and personal expression. All important things. But somewhere along the way, we have become less interested in obligations. Less interested in what we owe one another.

The genius of a community is not that everybody agrees. But everybody understands the rules. No one needs to teach us these things because, deep down, we already know them. And we have endured because enough people choose to follow them.

Long before we were a people bound by geography, language, and sovereignty, we were a people bound by responsibility to one another.

That responsibility has taken many forms over the centuries, but it has always begun in the same place. We show up.

Perhaps that is the most important unwritten rule of all. And it is why we are still here.

Jewish role models linked to 16 June 1976

Next week, South Africa marks the 50th anniversary of the 16 June Soweto Uprising, a day that is a defining part of the moral architecture of this country's history.

Few in our community are aware that one of our own is woven into that story, not at its periphery, but at its heart.

Dr Melville Edelstein was a Jewish social worker who had dedicated his professional life to black South African communities. On 16 June 1976, he was in Soweto to host the official opening of a branch of his Sheltered Workshop Programme in Orlando East, a project designed to create employment for people with disabilities. When police opened fire on pupils and shock turned to fury across the township, Edelstein ensured that some of his colleagues were moved to safety, and then made a fatal decision to return and check on the safety of other colleagues. He was mistakenly killed in the chaos.

The tragedy of Dr Edelstein's story is made more bitter by the fact that, having dedicated his life to the people of Soweto, he was killed in exactly the violence that he had tried so hard to prevent.

Forty years after his death, on 16 June 2016, a memorial was unveiled in his honour in Soweto, and his grandson had his Barmitzvah at the very site where Edelstein was killed. This was an exceptionally moving event, officiated by Board member Rabbi Dovid Hazdan.

A second notable Jewish connection to 16 June comes in the form of the Morris Isaacson High School, one of the key institutions involved on the day. Morris Isaacson was a Jewish immigrant from Lithuania, who was a well-known trade unionist, businessman, and philanthropist. In his later years, Isaacson was instrumental in supporting black education. In addition to the establishment of the Mavis Isaacson Hall in Moroka, named for his late wife, he created a trust and a foundation that granted hundreds of bursaries to black students. The work of the foundation led to the building of the Morris Isaacson Primary School in 1953 and, two years later, the famous Morris Isaacson High School.

ABOVE BOARD

Karen Milner



Significantly, Isaacson himself passed away in 1953 and never saw the establishment of the school, never mind the historic place it would play in the history of South Africa, or the famous alumni it would produce, including activists Murphy Morobe, Tsietsi Mashinini, and Abram Onkgopotse Tiro.

Edelstein and Isaacson's names are connected to the events of 1976, but more significantly, they serve as examples, as *dugmot ishit*, of what it means to dedicate a life to the service of others, and powerful testament to our community's long and sometimes overlooked place in the fabric of this country.

On Monday, South African Jewish Board of Deputies national director Wendy Kahn attended a sitting of the House of Commons at Westminster. During the session, a question was raised about the targeting of actress Helen Mirren in a viral social media clip, in which she was abused as a Zionist.

Member of Parliament Oliver Dowden responded by stating that the attack on Mirren was not directed at her alone, but at what he called "our shared values ... of freedom of speech and freedom of expression". Security Minister Dan Jarvis, for his part, acknowledged the priority his government attaches to combatting antisemitism.

The person who raised the question spoke about the continuous targeting of anyone who maintains any relationship with Israel. Here in South Africa we have witnessed a very similar pattern of intimidation and antagonism directed at anyone who would publicly identify as a Zionist. And it demands the same clarity of response, whether it occurs in the United Kingdom or in our own backyard.

If you witness or are victim to antisemitism, please report it to our Antisemitism Hotline: 078 259 4147.

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

Wits ranks No. 1 in Africa, joins global top 200

>>Continued from page 11

achieved by Wits," he told the *SA Jewish Report*. "It's a testament to the commitment and motivation of the Wits team under its strong leadership, which is now bearing fruit as reflected in these results and achievements."

For many alumni, the ranking represents more than a number on a global list. It reflects their connection to an institution that has shaped generations of South Africans and played a significant role in the country's academic and professional life.

Businessman Doug Smollan said the recognition was "well deserved".

"Wits has been developing over the years almost under the radar," he said. "So many alumni don't recognise the greatness of this university today." Smollan praised the university's achievements in academics, science, innovation, and sport. He described Vilakazi as "an amazing human being" and "a leader of note".

Smollan encouraged alumni to become more involved with the institution and support its future development. His own relationship with Wits spans more than five decades, with he and his wife having met while studying there and both remaining closely connected to the university.

Charles Goldstuck, another alumnus and current PhD candidate, said the result should not come as a surprise given the university's long-standing reputation. "Wits has always represented the highest standards in the academic world, and has continued to do so through the decades," he said.

Goldstuck credited Vilakazi and his leadership team for Wits's continued progress. "His leadership is absolutely inspirational," he said. "As a Witsie now living in the broader world, I can only look on with awe as he and his team keep driving the university forward."

Professor Karen Milner, chairperson of

the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, said, "Wits's achievement in obtaining the number one ranking in South Africa in this survey is a tremendous source of pride for me as an alumnus and staff member."

Milner said the recognition reinforced the prestige associated with a Wits qualification and highlighted the opportunities available to graduates. "My children were both third-generation Witsies and it's amazing for all the young graduates that a Wits degree has such prestige."

At the same time, Milner cautioned that rankings were only one measure of a university's quality. "Rankings are not the be all and end all of quality in a university, but they certainly have a role," she said. She also pointed out that several South African universities performed strongly in international rankings, reflecting the overall strength of the country's higher education sector.

The ranking comes shortly after another major recognition for the university. Wits was recently named the leading university in sub-Saharan Africa for innovation performance in the 2025 Global Innovation Index. The index measures how effectively institutions convert research and knowledge into economic and social impact.

For supporters of the institution, the significance of this moment extends beyond rankings. The result places a South African university at the top of Africa and among the world's leading institutions. It also reinforces the role local universities continue to play in advancing knowledge, developing skilled graduates, and contributing solutions to some of society's most pressing challenges.

As competition among universities becomes increasingly global, Wits's rise to first place in Africa marks an important moment not only for the institution but also for South African higher education.

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The unexpected favourites for the Fifa World Cup

LUKE ALFRED

Germany has emerged as the team best-poised to win the World Cup, which kicked off in Mexico this week, according to two esteemed local football personalities canvassed by the SA Jewish Report.

It's perhaps surprising, given the claims of Spain, France, and Argentina, but both Ronnie Schloss, the former Chief Operating Officer of the Premier Soccer League, and Raymond Hack, former Chief Executive of the SA Football Association, fancy the claims of "Die Mannschaft", as many fondly call the German national team.

"Part of the reason for my decision," says Schloss, "is that the Bundesliga just don't have that many foreign players. It's home-grown talent for them, which will serve the national team well. I also like France as a front-runner, followed by Spain and Portugal."

Hack, who gives the impression of having watched the world's top nations closely in the last few months, isn't sold on either France or Spain. "With both of them it's a case of too many chiefs and not enough Indians,"

he says with what you imagine is a twinkle in the eye.

"I wouldn't write off Belgium, they're a young side, and I think they could do something exciting," he says after watching Belgium's 5-0 home demolition of Tunisia in a pre-world Cup friendly in Brussels at the weekend. "Portugal - they will certainly be there."

Widening his lens, the first South American contender that Hack mentions will surprise many; Paraguay. He says he's watched their recent run of results in qualifying and thinks they might be hitting their straps as they gallop down the World Cup straight.

For those who've forgotten, Paraguay came only sixth in the South American qualifying group. But that's slightly misleading in that they accumulated the same number of points as Brazil, Uruguay, and Colombia but were beaten into sixth on goal difference, a technicality.

During their campaign, they beat qualifying group winners Argentina, 2-1, thanks to a Tony Sanabria bicycle-kick, and also beat Uruguay earlier in the campaign. Hack could well be right in identifying their chances as a dark horse in the outside lane.

In the World Cup Proper they are drawn in Group D with the United States, Australia, and Turkey, a group they should get out of. The caveat to this is that while they don't concede many goals, they don't score an armful of them either. Only Ecuador had a better defensive record in South American qualifying.

And for those who enjoy their obscure factoids: Paraguay conceded the same number of goals in qualifying as Argentina.

Not content to stick his neck out and identify simply Paraguay, Hack names Japan and South Korea as teams he fancies to go further. "Don't underestimate either of them," he says. "They're both fast, technically-accomplished teams."

As for the Africans, Schloss likes the cut of Morocco's, Senegal's, and Egypt's jibs.

"None of those three have been pushovers," he says. "And the heat in the US and Mexico could be in their favour. They won't win the tournament but I think they could surprise a few people."

Schloss likes the idea of a 48-team expanded tournament, saying he thinks it is a good thing from a marketing perspective to expand the competition. Once the opening rounds are over, however, he expects the smaller teams to fall away - this World Cup finds places for Uzbekistan, Jordan, Cape Verde, and both Iran and Iraq - with the usual suspects, more or less, progressing to the round of 16.

By contrast, Hack isn't convinced that 48 teams is the way to go. "The expanded tournament is going to be financially successful, but from a footballing perspective, it's going to be an absolute disaster," he says.

"The cost of everything is exorbitant. Hotel prices have been jacked up. There's too much distance between venues and therefore too much travel. A ticket costs \$3 000, that's R49 500 - it's not designed for the fans. For me, it's not a thing."

He also takes issue with the fact that eight of the third best-placed teams in their group

- there are 12 groups in all - will qualify for the round of 32, the first knock-out round, in other words. "I'm just not in favour of 48 teams from a football point-of-view," he says. "You have a situation where you have three draws and you go through. For me that's not what football is about. It's about skill."

As far as Bafana Bafana's claims are concerned, neither is bullish. One feels that Schloss is erring on the side of diplomacy when he says, "Hopefully Bafana will progress."

He and Hack are asked towards the end of their respective interviews what they would do if given R500 to have a flutter on the team of their choice. I am quietly surprised by both answers, sort of expecting that they might wager on long odds on an outsider like England, say, or even a Norway, who beat second-placed Italy 3-0 and 4-1 for maximum points in qualification.

Perhaps demonstrating the prudence which made them top football administrators, both put their money exactly where they started off, with Germany, which many bookmakers put at 14-1 winners.

It's a tasty bet. Time will tell whether they are right.



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