



Credit: Reuters

Ein Qiniyye, one of the four Druze villages in the beautiful Golan Heights annexed by Israel.

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THE GOLAN HEIGHTS... PART 3

A summer and winter wonderland

By Shira Sorko-Ram

When President Donald Trump publicly declared the Golan Heights to be part of the State of Israel, there arose a hue and cry from many European and Muslim countries, and, of course, the UN – all of whom cried foul.

The UN quoted its own Resolution 497, in which the Security Council declared that Israel's annexation

of the Golan Heights, is “null and void and without international legal effect,” and therefore, Israel must rescind its action. That was in 1981, three days after Israel declared approximately two-thirds of the Golan as now part of the sovereign State of Israel.

Nevertheless, the same UN position is still in effect

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today. One of the leading conservative candidates of the upcoming election for a new British Prime Minister, Jeremy Hunt, condemned Israel saying, “We should never recognize the annexation of territory by force.”

What the world doesn’t recall is that for the first two decades of Israel’s nationhood, it was the Syrians who used those Heights to continually attack Jews living below them in Galilee.

Nor did they remember to mention that twice the Syrian tanks rolled down the slopes of the Golan Heights with the assignment to conquer northern Israel and destroy the state of Israel.

Furthermore, the UN ignores the fact that in the year 2000, Israel’s Prime Minister Ehud Barak, worked hard to return the Golan Heights to Syria in exchange for peace. The sticking point was Syria would accept nothing less than a border up to the Sea of Galilee, Israel’s main source of fresh water. There was no way Israel could agree to such an arrangement.

During the Syrian civil war in 2011 - 2018, 400,000 Syrians were slaughtered by their own government, and 6.1 million displaced while another 5.6 million fled the country altogether.

No matter. Israel must, according to the UN’s definition of “international law,” hand over the Golan Heights to Syria’s President Bashar Assad.

Yes, as outlandish as it is, every year, right on time, the UN passes a resolution demanding Israel turn over the Golan Heights, along with its 27,000 Druze citizens to the Butcher of Damascus. Of course, Israel, full of disgust for the UN’s total lack of concern for the Druze, if not the Israelis living there, has never considered withdrawing from the Golan Heights for a minute.



In a first, an official U.S. government map depicts Golan Heights as Israeli territory.

REALITY CHECK

Outside of the eternal bias and knee-jerk double standard the UN continually applies to Israel, what can we learn about the Golan Heights in the real world in which Israel lives?

First, a simple statement: If Israel were to give the Golan Heights back to Syria, it would be an act of self-destruction. Syria and its allies, Hezbollah and Iran, would put into action a plan to use the Golan as a staging area to attack the Jewish state until it was destroyed.

It is now more serious than ever, as the worst-case analysis scenario for Israel is a war in the north against Hezbollah, Syria and Iranian militias. Israel fears a new northern front from which commando and missile attacks can be launched against Israel.

So, believe it or not, Israel’s possession of the Golan Heights even strengthens Israel’s position in defending Jordan from Iranian attempts to undermine the stability of the Hashemite Kingdom. Jordan borders Southern Syria, and shares the Israeli interest in keeping the Iranians out of that area.

Yet with all these facts, it is still worthwhile to discuss the international legal rationale of Israel

incorporating the Golan Heights into its sovereignty.

PRECEDENCES DURING DEFENSIVE WARS

The highly respected Harvard professor, Alan M. Dershowitz, states categorically, “No country in history has ever given back to a sworn enemy militarily essential territory that has been captured in a defensive war.”

The Harvard emeritus professor of law calls the European Union a hypocrite when it comes to Israel. He recalls that at the end of the first and second



Credit: AP

world wars, European countries made territorial adjustments to help preserve the peace – a necessity they refuse Israel today.

Dershowitz states: “No reasonable person would ask the Israelis to give the Golan Heights to the Syrian mass murderer Assad. It would be suicidal to hand off the high ground overlooking northern Israel.”

Sure, if Syria became a democratic peaceful state alongside Israel, there might be reason to reconsider giving this land to Syria. But who can imagine, let alone predict, that the Islamic government of Syria would agree to end all belligerency and recognize Israel as the nation state of the Jewish people?

Furthermore, Professor Dershowitz notes that the Arabs really don’t care about the Golan; it has no religious significance to Islam. Besides, the

fact is, Israel has possessed this land longer than any other nation since the Ottoman Empire! France ruled the Golan Heights for 21 years, and Syria 23 years. Israel has ruled the Golan Heights for 52 years.

In other words, Dershowitz argues that Israel’s possession of two-thirds of the Golan Heights actually increases the chance for peace, since Syria or Hezbollah does not have the high ground at their disposal to attack Israel.

THE DRUZE

Another point: the Golan has no Arab refugees. There are no “classic Muslims” living on that quite empty land – only about 27,000 Druze who claim Moses’ father-in-law, Jethro, as the founder of their religion. The Druze do not follow

President Donald Trump holds up a signed proclamation recognizing Israel’s sovereignty over the Golan Heights, as Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu looks on in the Diplomatic Reception Room of the White House in Washington, Monday March 25, 2019.

the Quran and, therefore, do not have a natural hatred of the Jewish people.

There are no Palestinians in the Golan Heights, and the Druze residents don’t protest Israel. Even while a civil war rages next door, the Golan is tranquil. In fact, of the other 116,000 Israeli-Druze citizens who live mostly in Galilee, a higher percentage of their young men serve in IDF combat units than do Jewish citizens!

The Druze living in the Golan Heights reside mostly in four



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu gives a speech before the newly-unveiled sign for the new town of "Ramat Trump," or "Trump Heights" in English, named after the incumbent U.S. President during an official ceremony in the Israeli-annexed Golan Heights on June 16, 2019.

picturesque villages. Several thousand have asked for Israeli citizenship. Others have been ambivalent because of close relatives

in Syria, and, furthermore, they have been afraid Israel might one day return the Golan Heights to Syria. In that scenario, Druze who have taken Israeli citizenship would then face terrible retribution.

However, as they have watched their Syrian relatives, without food at best and being slaughtered at worst, during the seven-year Syrian civil war, many more are applying for Israeli citizenship.

U.S. RECOGNITION CHANGES EVERYTHING

On March 21, 2019, on the Holiday of Purim (celebrating when the Jews were saved from Haman's order to kill all Jews), U.S. President Donald Trump tweeted that the time has come to "fully recognize" Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights. It was another monumental shift in U.S./Mideast policy by his administration.

"After 52 years, it is time for the United States to fully recognize Israel's sovereignty over the Golan Heights, which is of critical strategic and security importance to the State of Israel and regional stability!" Trump tweeted.

As you might guess, according to statistics, Trump is more popular in Israel than in any other nation of the world.

FUTURE PLANS FOR GOLAN

Since America's recognition, Israel's government has gone into high gear drawing up plans to accommodate 250,000 more Israelis migrating to the Golan by 2048. Right now there are 22,000 Jewish Israelis living in 33 towns and villages in the Golan – the largest being Katzrin with 7,000 residents. The Ministry of Housing plans to build 30,000 housing units, two more towns, provide 45,000 new jobs, and invest in infrastructure related to transportation and tourism.

Israel also plans to clear 20,000 acres of minefields in order to prepare for commercial and housing development projects and tourism.

THE BEAUTIFUL GOLAN HEIGHTS

Tourism! Do you know that the Golan Heights already boasts 95 hotels, hostels and B&B's in some of the most luscious surroundings anywhere? Do you know you can climb up or ski on the 9,232 ft. Mount Hermon, as you look 40 miles east into the city of Damascus? Or stay in a hotel overlooking the Sea of Galilee to the west? Just go to booking.com and type in Golan Heights! Even the Druze have gotten into the hotel business! I want to get up there myself!

With Ari, of course! ■



THE FERGUSONS

In this time of transition from the leadership of Ari and Shira to Kobi and Shani, together we are able to combine experience with fresh new perspectives, skills and passion, enhancing Maoz' ability to reach the lost and help make believers strong in Israel.

Kobi is the Executive Director of Maoz Israel. He oversees all the operations of Maoz in Israel as well as our six Maoz Israel branches around the world.

Shani serves as the Chief Creative Officer. She oversees all the creative aspects of Maoz. Anything that has to do with how Maoz Israel looks and feels online or on paper goes through her. She writes music in Hebrew and English and her audio and video music (on iTunes and YouTube) are in both languages.

They divide their time between the *Fellowship of Artists* recording studio in Jerusalem and the workings of the Tel Aviv office. They also travel and minister with their five children.

In the following pages we want you to meet the wonderful members of our Maoz Team in Tel Aviv and explain what they do! We are indeed fortunate to have such a talented and committed team to help us carry out the vision and purpose of Maoz Israel!



Prayer Line in Israel

Email your prayer request to prayer@maozisrael.org from anywhere in the world!

Liraz manages our Hebrew Publishing!

Thanks to her, our Hebrew-language faith-based books are available to anyone in the world on www.maozstore.co.il, on Amazon, and also on the biggest eBook company in Israel www.mendele.co.il. She is responsible for the entire publishing process, from obtaining publishing rights all the way through to distribution.

LIRAZ**KATI**

Kati is our executive secretary and personal assistant. If you have ever tried to get in touch with us, no doubt, you have talked with her first... she makes us look good! She communicates with pastors and leaders in Israel and around the world. She also coordinates requests for aid from IstandwithIsrael.com. With her skills in four languages, she easily translates a myriad of resources for us. She is the face of Maoz for many!

Israel Office

**WHO MAKES MAOZ TICK!****ALISA**

Alisa is our Maoz receptionist and secretary. If you visit the Maoz offices in Tel Aviv, she is your first impression—and a good one! She is a terrific organizer and manages the operations of the office. She makes it look easy! She helps anyone and everyone here in the office—and is always smiling.

**IRINA**

Irina is our bookkeeper in charge of all the daily office financial routines: banking, invoices, payments to suppliers, and keeping the lights on! She supervises sales of Maoz books and CDs and manages employees' work hours and vacation time. When you ask her to do something, you know it's done! She coordinates seamlessly with Veronica.

VERONICA

Veronica is our financial manager. She is an independent contractor who works for us two days a week. It is her

job to work with our bookkeeper, accountant, bank and lawyer and to administer, coordinate and monitor the organization's financial activity – and to fill out mountains of government stuff. She's important! And we are thrilled to have her expertise.

YONI

Yoni is our webmaster, professional photographer and videographer. He's our newest hire, and we are constantly discovering his many talents! His position includes website maintenance, content creation and promotion in social network outreach. He's also the one we call on when some technical device doesn't work!



KATY

Katy is responsible for partner relations and communications with our online subscribers. She has worn many hats over the years, starting her tenure in our U.S. office, then moving back home to work here in the Land. She formats the online version of the Maoz Israel Report in several languages and gathers content for social network posts. She works closely with all Maoz Israel departments in Tel Aviv and our international offices.

Our Maoz Team prays daily at work for our nation Israel and its leadership, for our partners who send us requests for prayer, and for the entire outreach of Maoz throughout Israel.



TANYA ROMAN

Tanya has led our *Music Making for Kids* program from the very beginning! And now she has built that program to serve 60 Messianic children from across the country. She and husband Roman are responsible for composing, recording and editing children's Hebrew-language CDs and music videos.

Roman is a fantastic musician. He is our media guru, plays professionally many musical instruments. He also distributes Maoz books to congregations and bookstores around the country. He is our "everything" guy!

Tanya and Roman are actively involved with several children's choirs, ministering in camps, conferences and holiday events, and both are on the worship team at Tiferet Yeshua Congregation in Tel Aviv (the congregation we founded).



OMER

Omer, our graphic design artist, has worked side-by-side with Shira at least ten years, preparing

the monthly Maoz Israel Report, along with many other projects. Our readers have responded over and over to his magnificent gift of design. Omer also serves as our representative for Maoz in Latin American countries, where we have several volunteers introducing Maoz and its ministry into Spanish-speaking regions.



IstandwithIsrael.com

A seamstress in need received!

Oxana and her husband came to faith in Ukraine where a large community of Jews resides. After their life-changing experience in the year 2000 they felt a deep urge to immigrate to Israel. Three years later, they set foot on the Promised Land, not knowing a soul – except for a distant relative of her husband.

They finally heard of a congregation of Messianic Jews in Haifa and decided to take a bus to visit. It was a fresh wind of encouragement to them. But on the way home, their bus overturned, and it was not clear if Oxana would live or die.

She had just given birth to their second child and she sustained a broken back, ribs and hip, plus internal bleeding. But the congregation in Haifa put out the word and many people prayed. She was miraculously healed and returned to perfect health!

In the Ukraine, Oxana had been a professional seamstress and she wanted to continue her trade in Israel. Through another miracle, a man whom they had helped, an alcoholic, turned his tailoring business over to her. She purchased his equipment and immediately her new livelihood took off and became very profitable.

However, her husband began to stray from the Lord. He quit work and with his new friends he splurged on trips abroad and other luxury items, while Oxana, now with four children, labored to make ends meet.

For 12 years she toiled, while her husband piled up a very large debt in loans. He was taking all her income and beating and abusing the children. She finally decided she must divorce her husband. He left, leaving her all the debt.

In her broken state, she found a gracious and warm congregation in the outskirts of Tel Aviv, pastored by Tony Sperandio. With great generosity, they helped her in every way possible; a member even repaired her terribly leaky roof.

Oxana worked daily from 2:00a.m. until 7:00a.m., then got the children ready for school, and afterwards continued working until 8:00p.m. But she was sinking. Her sewing machine was worn out and from stress and sitting all the time, she developed a herniated disk.

She cried out to God for help. Her sisters in Ukraine took out a loan and came to help her for a month as doctors nursed her back to health. Her congregation submitted an application to IstandwithIsrael. With the funds, she was able to buy a new professional sewing machine, and create a work space in her house for her sewing business.

She writes: *The help from IstandwithIsrael gave me energy, joy, a desire to work and move forward even more. From the bottom of my heart, I am grateful to IstandwithIsrael. May the Lord bless you, your labor, and your hearts. May you always have the ability to help others and receive a blessing for it from God.* ■



Would you like the opportunity to host Israeli backpackers in your home?

Every year, as Israeli young people finish the Israeli Defense Forces, thousands of them take off for a year to visit the islands of the sea, a country or a continent, North or South America, Europe, India, Australia – anywhere to take a break after serving in the army.

“Chiburim” (meaning “Connections” in Hebrew) is a non-commercial network that connects Christians and Messianic believers who would like to host Israelis who are traveling in your area.

They help Christians and Messianic believers to bless the nation and people of Israel by connecting Israeli world travellers to their network of international hosts, who offer a warm welcome and hospitality to Israelis as a way to demonstrate their love and support for the Israeli/Jewish people.

35,000 Sabra (Israeli-born) Israelis have used the network since 2002!

Hosts are asked to offer a warm welcome and accommodations to Israelis, and may choose to provide accommodations for free, or may ask for a small donation to help toward covering hosting costs.

This has presented absolutely amazing opportunities. Try to imagine how many multiple thousands of conversations and testimonies have been shared, seeds sown and friendships established!

WHAT IS UNIQUE ABOUT CHIBURIM?

- It is the first international hosting network for Israeli travellers in the world, commencing in 1999.

- All of the hosts in Chiburim are Christian and Messianic believers who love the Israeli/Jewish people.

- It is the only non-commercial hosting network

for Israeli travellers, providing the host's contact information to Israelis free of charge.

- The host's address is not displayed on the website and is only given to the Israelis by the host.

- As a web-based hosting network, hosts have the flexibility and freedom to update their listing, take a break or stop at any time. So, just host when convenient, according to your preferences.

- Our non-commercial operation encourages respect and appreciation between Israelis and hosts.

You can visit their Hebrew and English hosting website and join in. Contact hosts if you are an Israeli, or become a host to Israelis with Chiburim at www.chiburim.com/english.

Just one more way you can bless Israel and her people! ■



**Want to bless
some young
Israeli travelers?**

Invite them to your home! (See page 11)

Another way to bless Israel...