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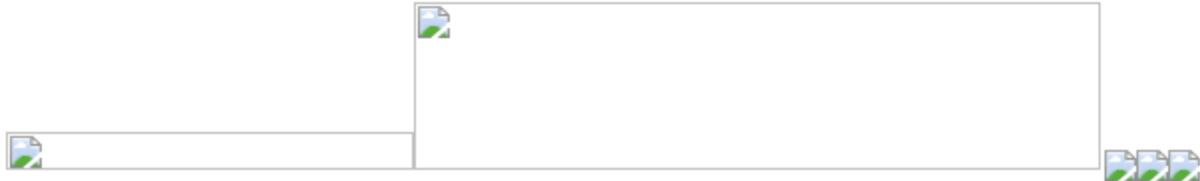
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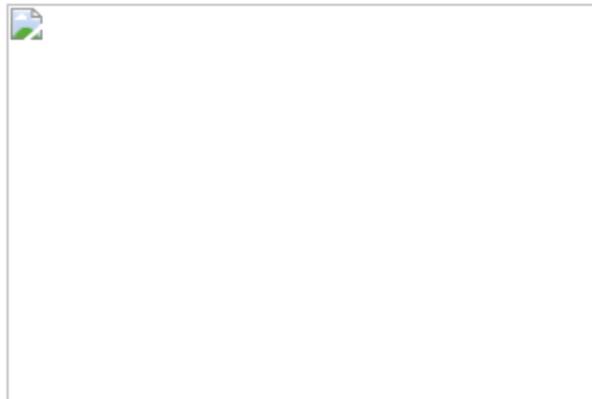


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**Convicted killer of Israelis
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Former U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry (left) shakes hands with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Tel Aviv in July 2014.

Media and politicians overhype chances of Israeli-Arab regional deal, experts say

By Ariel Ben Solomon/JNS.org

The chances of a formal peace agreement between Israel and the wider Arab world in the near future are slim, contrary to media reports and the posturing of Israeli opposition politicians, experts say. Citing unidentified former senior Obama administration officials, the Haaretz newspaper reported Sunday that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had met with Egyptian and Jordanian heads of state in a secret meeting last year in Jordan, in order to promote a regional peace agreement. The talks led nowhere, and Haaretz's report blamed Netanyahu for the negotiations' failure because he backed out over opposition from within his governing coalition. "This was a one-sided leak by Obama officials, suggesting there is no reason to believe there was any real prospect of negotiations on serious terms," said Eugene Kontorovich, a professor at Northwestern University School of Law and an expert on international law.

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Convicted killer of Israelis finds friends on the Jewish left

By **Stephen Flatow/JNS.org**

A Palestinian terrorist who murdered two Hebrew University of Jerusalem students has found a new ally, the far-left Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP) group. How mainstream Jewish liberal groups respond to JVP's hosting of Rasmia Odeh at its national conference in March will be telling.

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Convicted Palestinian terrorist Rasmia Odeh speaks in March 2016.

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What Israel's counter-terrorism experts are saying about their 'art'

By **Eliana Rudee/JNS.org**

In 1996, when Boaz Ganor founded Israel's International Institute for Counter-Terrorism, top security figures around the world gave short shrift to the academic study of terrorism. That is, of course, until the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. Only then did the world take note of the great importance of bridging the gap between academics and practitioners. But while the study of counter-terrorism is now considered crucial in the fight against global terror, the "art" of counter-terrorism, as Ganor calls it, is anything but intuitive for heads of state. The Israeli academic and his team believe that world leaders often self-sabotage with counter-productive policies and doctrines. Israel correspondent Eliana Rudee reviews the factors that counter-terrorism experts like Ganor deem some of the most important current challenges in their field.

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Boaz Ganor, the founder of Israel's Institute for Counter-Terrorism.

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Ancient Hebrew inscriptions found in Galilee synagogue

(JNS.org) Two ancient Hebrew inscriptions dating back some 1,800 years to the Roman period were found on the capital of a limestone column during restoration work being carried out in an ancient synagogue in the Western Galilee town of Peqi'in in Israel.

According to archaeologists, the stone was found upside down in the synagogue's courtyard. A preliminary analysis of the inscriptions appear to indicate they were dedicatory inscriptions honoring donors to the synagogue, the Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA) said.

"The Talmudic and Midrashic sources tell of the Galilean sages that lived in Peqi'in, including Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai, who hid from the Romans in a cave," IAA inspector in the Western Galilee Yoav Lerer said. "However, there are those who disagree with the identification of the location of Peqi'in. I believe that these inscriptions will add an important tier to our knowledge about the Jewish settlement in the village of Peqi'in during the Roman and Byzantine periods."

Restoration work has been underway for the past year in Peqi'in's ancient synagogue and nearby Beit Zinati in order to upgrade the visitor center there, which will tell the stories of the Jewish presence in the town over the last 2,000 years as well as the Zinati family, the town's oldest Jewish family. Margalit Zinati, the last member of the Zinati family, still resides in a house next door to the synagogue.

Israeli Minister of Jerusalem Affairs and Heritage Ze'ev Elkin said that Peqi'in "is one of the most significant sites in the Galilee and is a place where there has always been a Jewish presence."

"It is a great honor for me that during my tenure in office such an important discovery has been made that tells this 2,000-year-old story of the land of Israel," he added.



The entrance to the ancient synagogue at Peqi'in, Israel.

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