



ISRAEL MATTERS!

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Thousands Gather in Israel for Funeral of Four Jewish Men Killed in Paris

Netanyahu Says Israel Would Welcome European Jews With Open Arms

Israel's prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, told French and European Jews they would be welcomed with "open arms" if they chose to emigrate to Israel. His statement was issued on the Sunday before he left for Paris for a march in solidarity with victims of the Paris killings – including four French Jews murdered in a kosher supermarket. Netanyahu's remarks came as his office announced that the bodies of the four French Jews killed in the HyperCacher supermarket would be flown to Israel for funerals.

The Israeli prime minister's appeal, however, was quickly criticized by the head of the European Jewish Association, Rabbi Menachem Margolin, who said that it risked "severely weakening and damaging the Jewish communities that have the right to live securely wherever they are."

Former Israel justice minister Tzipi Livni, who is running against Netanyahu in the March elections, was also critical, saying Jews should come to Israel because they are "Zionists" and "not because it is a safe haven," adding that the invitation would not increase the safety of European Jews.

About half a million Jews live in France, making it the second largest diaspora population after the US. In the last few years the number of French Jews emigrating to Israel has jumped sharply. Last year some 7,000 made aliyah to Israel, with some estimates that number could double this year. [The Guardian]

Israelis and their leaders mourned alongside the grieving families of four Jewish men killed by a gunman at a kosher supermarket in Paris in early January as they were buried at an emotional funeral in Jerusalem. Relatives of the victims spoke briefly at the service, in a mixture of French, English, and Hebrew, and lit candles in memory of their loved ones. An uncle called his nephew an angel; a wife said her husband was perfect; a son remembered that his father always wanted to live in Israel. "He's here now," the son said.

"This is not how we wanted to welcome you to Israel," Israeli President Reuven Rivlin said at the funeral, his voice shaking. "This is not how we wanted you to arrive in the Land of Israel, this is not how we wanted to see you come home, to the State of Israel, and to Jerusalem, its capital. We wanted you alive, we wanted for you, life. At moments such as these, I stand before you, brokenhearted, shaken and in pain, and with me stands and cries an entire nation."

The January killings of Yohan Cohen, 20; Yoav Hattab, 21; Philippe Braham, 45; and Francois-Michel Saada, 64, at the Hyper Cacher market in Paris by an Islamist militant shook France's half-million-strong Jewish community, the largest in Europe. It also deeply moved Israelis, and several thousand of them came to the hillside cemetery on the outskirts of Jerusalem where rows of white stone markers met a clear blue sky after a week of rain and snow. A few mourners held signs with photographs of the victims and the words, "Je suis mort parce que juif," meaning "I died because I am Jewish."

The four men did not know one another—they were shopping in the same kosher grocery store on a Friday afternoon before the start of the Sabbath — but were united in death. The four were killed in a hostage standoff at the store on Paris's eastern edge during a three-day wave of attacks by gunmen claiming allegiance to al-Qaeda and the Islamic State. They were among 17 people killed in the back-to-back attacks, including 12 at the satirical newspaper Charlie Hebdo.

At the funeral, Braham's wife, Valerie, spoke softly in French and Hebrew over her husband's body, which was wrapped in a Jewish prayer shawl, as is customary. "My darling, the love of my life," she said. "You were perfect. You were someone who always put others first. You were an amazing husband and a father who loved his children and lived for them." She added, "I just can't believe that this has happened."

Energy Minister Ségolène Royal, representing the French government,

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told mourners: “The four people were killed because they were Jews. Your pain is our pain, your pain is the pain of France, and we are crying with you. France is suffering just like you.” Royal promised, “There is no room for anti-Semitism in France — that was the message of millions of people who marched in France.” She added, “France is proud to hold the largest population of Jews in Europe.” Royal said the four would be posthumously awarded France’s highest honor, the Legion d’Honneur.

The killings prompted calls from Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for European Jews — and, in particular, French Jews — to immigrate to Israel in the face of rising anti-Semitism, comments that some in France deemed divisive.

In a recent interview with the Atlantic magazine, French Prime Minister Manuel Valls said that if 100,000 French Jews left his country—one-fifth of France’s Jewish population — “France will no longer be France. The French Republic will be judged a failure.” Last year, 7,000 French Jews moved to Israel, official Israeli figures show, and the country already has a sizable French population. The figure is now forecast to double this year.

At the funeral, Netanyahu said world leaders he met in Paris understood, “or at least are beginning to understand, that the terrorism of radical Islam is a real and tangible threat to peace and the world in which we live.”

Rather than be buried in France, the families of the four men, who were not Israeli citizens, asked that they be buried in Israel, in one of its largest cemeteries, Har Hamenuhot, just a mile from parliament.

It is not unusual for Jews who have lived outside Israel their entire lives to ask to be buried there, but some family members of the slain men expressed fears that if they were buried in France, their graves could be desecrated, news reports said.

“Jews in France are scared,” said Marc Buchwald, a close family friend of Saada, a retired pension fund manager. “People are thinking about leaving.” Buchwald, who traveled to Israel from Paris overnight with the family, said his friend’s widow will probably move to Israel now. “She has nothing left in Paris,” he said.

Pascale Mimouni, a relative of Philippe Braham, who worked as a computer engineer, said the family was in shock. “Their whole life has changed,” she said. “But it is also a concern for the whole world.”

Nathan Levi said he had met Hattab two weeks ago when the 21-year-old Tunisian, who was studying in Paris, came on an organized trip to Israel. “He was madly in love with Israel,” Levi said. “He planned to move to Israel when he completed his studies. And now he is gone. But he is here, too.” [Washington Post]

Israeli ECG T-shirt Monitors Hearts, Saves Lives



An Israeli company is one of the first in the world to market a T-shirt that can read a patient’s heart rate, blood pressure, cardiac irregularities, and other vital signs that could be the key to preventing heart attacks. Speed is the key — data is generated in real time and reaches the doctor immediately.

HealthWatch debuted its hWear line of 15-lead ECG-sensing garments at the recent annual meeting of the American Telemedicine Association. It allows doctors and medical workers to keep track of a heart condition remotely, without having to hook the patient up to a heart-measuring device in a doctor’s office.

The shirt is made with standard cotton or synthetic yarn, with special electrodes woven in that include extremely thin electrocardiogram sensors that read vital signs and upload them to a monitoring device via Bluetooth or a Wifi connection to a cloud-based database, where the data is processed. If anything abnormal is detected, the patient’s doctors can be alerted, and a treatment protocol can be instituted right away.

Our hWear T-shirt garments measure the highest quality vital signs, all without adhesives, gels, or shaving preparations for both men and women. The garments are machine washable and compatible with most cardiac telemetry systems,” according to Uri Amir, HealthWatch CEO.

Currently, the T-shirts are registered with the FDA as Class I devices, but the company is applying to have them “upgraded” to Class II devices, so they can be used in professional medical settings. Only a few other companies have come out with similar shirts, so HealthWatch is ahead of the curve, said Amir. “The eHealth, TeleHealth, mHealth, and tele-cardiology industries can now deploy intensive-care quality telemonitoring without affecting the lifestyle of their users that range from patients in a hospital environment, to homecare settings, to heart attack survivors, to the active elderly seeking better health coverage, or to users wishing to have direct contact with their expert personal physician from anywhere.”

The T-shirts are designed to work with HealthWatch’s MasterCaution sensor reader, which provides real-time alerts to both doctors and patients on cardiac events such as arrhythmia, ischemia, respiratory abnormalities, and sudden patient falls or prolonged immobility. “We are restoring the ‘wear’ into wearable technology,” said Amir. “Unlike other products that report only heart rate, our new healthwear garment is a true medical device, monitoring full 15-lead ECGs along with other physiological vital signals. It will change the future of personal monitoring offering around-the-clock peace of mind to users — wherever their lifestyle takes them.” [TimesofIsrael]