



# ISRAEL MATTERS!

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## Israel, Turkey Announce Reconciliation Deal

### Amar'e Stoudemire Signs Deal to Play Basketball in Israel



Fourteen-year NBA veteran and six-time All Star, Amar'e Stoudemire — who recently announced his retirement from the league in which he played last with the New York Knickerbockers — has signed to

play basketball with Hapoel Jerusalem, a club in which he bought an ownership stake in 2013.

“I may be retiring from the NBA, but I’m not saying goodbye to basketball just yet,” Stoudemire wrote. “My next step is playing for Hapoel Jerusalem, one of the top teams in Europe. This isn’t about collecting a paycheck overseas, though; it’s a spiritual journey, too. The Scripture speaks about Jerusalem as a holy place, and I can feel that whenever I’m in the city. This is a chance for me to be a better husband and a better father, to help me lead my family into righteousness. The opportunity to play there, and grow as a player and person, is a blessing.”

As part of the contract agreement, Stoudemire — who refers to himself as “culturally Jewish” — will sell his ownership stake to Dr. Ori Allon, President and majority owner of the club. “We are thrilled to have a player of Amar’e’s caliber join our team, solidifying our place among the top echelon of Israeli and European basketball,” Allon said in a statement. [USAToday.com]

Israel and Turkey announced a reconciliation deal that both sides claim will normalize relations that were ruptured more than six years ago when Israeli commandos seized a Gaza-bound Turkish ship, killing nine Turkish activists in the ensuing melee. The accord should put to rest years of hostility that began with Israel’s December 2008 Cast Lead incursion into Gaza and culminated in the May 2010 raid on the Mavi Marmara, part of a flotilla that aimed to bust Israel’s maritime blockade of the Gaza Strip.

At coordinated news conferences in Rome and Ankara, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Turkish Prime Minister Binali Yildirim hailed the agreement after protracted and painstaking negotiations as a strategic achievement. “Relations have normalized,” Yildirim told reporters in Ankara. Yildirim said the two countries would exchange ambassadors “as soon as possible.”

In Rome, where Netanyahu was meeting with US Secretary of State John Kerry and Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi, the Israeli premier described the agreement as having “strategic importance for the state of Israel, for security, for regional stability and for the Israeli economy.” “Israel and Turkey are two major powers in the region and the break between us is not good for our vital interests and prevents us from cooperating in those instances — and there are more than a few — in which cooperation is warranted,” Netanyahu said.

In remarks targeted not only at Washington and supporters of the Israel-Turkey rapprochement but at the many domestic and international skeptics of the accord, Netanyahu insisted the agreement was “part of a clear strategy to create centers of stability in the stormy Middle East.” He said repaired ties with Turkey mark the latest manifestation of a cooperation-based strategy involving all major stakeholders in the region. “We are doing so with our close neighbors, Arab countries. We are doing so with Greece and Cyprus. We are doing so with Russia. We are also doing so with Turkey.” Netanyahu stressed that he and his representatives have updated leaders of Egypt, Jordan, Cyprus, Greece, Russia and the United States on all aspects of the agreement.

In exchange for Israel’s agreement to pay \$20 million in compensation for victims of the Mavi Marmara event, Netanyahu said the agreement augurs important achievements. He listed them as:

- Protection of Israeli commanders and soldiers from prosecution due to deaths and injuries from the Mavi Marmara seizure.

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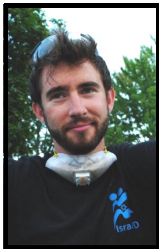
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- Maintaining the maritime blockade of the Hamas-controlled Gaza Strip.
- Humanitarian rehabilitation of Gaza through Turkish construction of power plants, desalination systems, and other projects.
- Turkey's commitment to limit Hamas' base of operations in Turkey.
- Turkey's assistance in the mediation of Hamas' potential repatriation of the remains of two Israeli soldiers killed in the 2014 Gaza war, along with two Israeli citizens thought to be held in Gaza.
- Turkey's agreement not to block Israel's entry or participation in international organizations.

Finally, Netanyahu said the agreement will serve as a springboard for expanded economic cooperation in the energy and natural gas sector.

In his remarks, Kerry said he was delighted at the progress made by Netanyahu in negotiations with Turkey. "We obviously have been encouraging a movement towards the resolution of the differences between Turkey and Israel," Kerry said, according to a statement released by Netanyahu's office. [DefenseNews.com]

## Israeli Aid Worker Wins Muhammad Ali Humanitarian Award



The head of the Israeli international aid group IsraAID has won the Muhammad Ali Humanitarian Award for 2016 for his work to provide relief in areas of crisis throughout the world. Twenty-nine-year-old Navon Glick will be presented the annual award in September, along with five other under-thirty humanitarians who the Muhammad Ali Center deems to be role models "transforming communities and bringing about positive change in the world."

IsraAID, founded in 2001, is known for its response to high profile disasters around the globe. The genesis of its work goes back to the Rwandan genocide, and it was the first international team on the ground in Haiti. In addition to serving in Japan, the Philippines, and South Sudan, IsraAID was in the United States during Hurricane Katrina, Hurricane Sandy, the Colorado floods, and the Arkansas tornado.

The Israeli-Canadian Glick is IsraAID's Chief Operating Officer and manages the organization's daily operations from Tel Aviv.

This year's awards ceremony will commemorate Ali, who died in June at the age of 74 after decades of battling Parkinson's Disease. [TimesofIsrael]

## Israeli Start-ups Take Top Prizes in Prestigious China Competition

For the second year in a row, Israeli start-ups recently took top honors in one of the major start-up events in the world. NiNiSpeech — which has developed a revolutionary digital platform for treating speech disorders — took first place in the Global Innovation Awards 2016, a competition featuring start-ups from around the world competing for \$1.5 million in cash prizes. And AerialGuard — which has created an autonomous navigation system for unmanned aircraft — won second place.

The two Israeli winners of this year's contest competed against finalists from across the globe — 10 from China, six from the US, three from Israel, and two from Europe. The finalists were selected from 3,000 international start-ups in an eight-month process that spanned four geographic regions.

That Israel is the source of more start-ups selected to participate in the contest than the entire continent of Europe is testimony to how highly China thinks of Israeli technology, according to Xueling Cao, director of the Shengjing Group and Shengjing Fund of Funds, which partnered with Jerusalem Venture Partners to sponsor the Israeli portion of the event. "When we came to Israel several years ago, we knew almost nothing about the country, other than that it had some good potential technology," she said. "Now we realize the level of Israeli innovation, and how important partnering with Israel is."

The winners were selected on the basis of rankings by 13 international judges, in addition to real-time rankings of the start-up companies by an audience of over 1,000 people at the Zhongguancun International Entrepreneur Festival, which attracts entrepreneurs and investors from all over the world.

This year's winner, NiNiSpeech, has developed technology to assist people who stutter using mobile technology. NiNiSpeech provides a platform that lets individuals in stuttering therapy connect with therapists via their mobile devices, so they can practice without worrying about scheduling or social discomfort. AerialGuard, the second-place winner, develops advanced autonomous navigation systems for unmanned vehicles. The company targets the civilian drone industry and helps drone manufacturers automate their drones by providing them with autonomous capabilities such as "sense and avoid" and intelligent navigation in compliance with the drones' missions.

According to JVP partner Yoav Tzruya, who served as a judge in the finals, "the fact that an Israeli start-up won the competition for the second year running not only demonstrates Israel's technological edge and out-of-the-box thinking, but also the Israeli tech market's relevance for global markets, specifically with a focus on China.

[TimesofIsrael]