



## Without universal PCR tests, officials won't have clear picture of COVID trend

Ido Efrati

Given the rapid rise in COVID infections, the transition to the widespread use of rapid (antigen) testing as Israel's official diagnostic tool, thereby opening the bottlenecks that had formed in the PCR testing system, was inevitable.

PCR tests will now be administered only to at-risk

groups. That makes sense: PCR tests are more reliable and precise in diagnosing variants, which is important for higher-risk populations.

Other Israelis will from now on be asked to check themselves with a home

test (at their own expense) or to undergo a rapid test at one of the official antigen-testing sites. But, the antigen test is less sensitive and reliable than the PCR, especially in identifying asymptomatic infections, and there is a price to pay in missing the risk of missing infected individuals.

Home testing has the

advantage of producing fast results, thereby saving precious time in making diagnoses and preventing COVID carriers from inadvertently infecting others. But reliability is a problem vis a vis home testing, which is by nature done by people without the necessary skills or understanding to always complete it properly.

Beyond that, the new testing policy will be leading to a major change in the epidemiological picture available to decision makers. Like many other countries, Israel has relied on the PCR test as its main barometer for measuring the extent and change in the number of coronavirus infections. The number of confirmed

COVID cases is the immediate and tangible number for the spread or the containment of the virus.

The PCR test is not precise: There are many cases that are not successfully detected or are only detected after the fact by serological testing, including apparently many children. Nevertheless, it has served as an epidemiological measure along wide more concrete data, such as the number of

hospitalized and seriously ill patients.

The change in the testing policy to limit PCR testing to only part of the population and to put the burden of rapid testing and reporting on individuals will widen the gap between the information decision makers have in hand and a true picture of the growing omicron pandemic. The data

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## Provoked, Bennett blows a fuse

"I didn't lose my temper," Prime Minister Naftali Bennett said Wednesday. "I wanted to show [Yamina MK] Nir Orbach and other friends in the right wing of the coalition that we're living in an intolerable reality, that I support them, literally, physically." Even if his motive was collegial, the picture of Bennett shouting at Likud MK Miri Regev, making his way through a forest of Knesset ushers and MKs toward opposition leader MK Benjamin Netanyahu (who fled the hall), conveyed fragility and exposed nerves.

No prime minister has ever acted that way; on the other hand, no prime minister has been the target of one thousandth of the scorn, the hatred and the curses that Bennett has. No wonder that when MK Orit Strook (Religious Zionism) approached and spewed billions of dangerous airborne bacteria at him, he fired back: "Get out of my face." It wasn't "misogynistic" (as Likud members quickly and ridiculously claimed. It was medicinal.

The Electricity Law, proposed by United Arab List MK Waleed Taha, enshrines in law the prevailing situation in which illegal structures are connected to the power grid, water and phone lines. In 2014 this was done by means of an order published by the Netanyahu government's interior minister, Gideon Sa'ar. In 2016, the finance

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## Likud MKs angered by Arabic, 'aye' vote

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## Hula Lake morphs from sanctuary to cemetery for cranes

Nir Hasson and Zafir Rinat

Over the past decade, the Hula Lake Nature Reserve has become the most important domestic tourism site in the Galilee. Hundreds of thousands of Israelis have visited the site to bird-watch from designated hideaways or to ride a bicycle or electric vehicle along the trails amongst the birds.

This tourist pilgrimage would peak each year with the arrival of the cranes in the fall. The migration turned into a sort of national event, with the images of the majestic grey birds against the verdant fields gracing the news pages.

But in the past two weeks, the pond is the absolute opposite of an attractive tourist site. It is an epidemiological quarantine site – a sort of COVID ward from hell. Red signs and barricades bar the entrance, and to get past them you need the approval of the Agriculture Ministry, the Health Min-

istry, the Jewish National Fund and a briefing from the district physician.

Inside, the valley is as green and lovely as every year. But instead of hikers walking from green fields to waterholes, there are dozens of workers in white overalls, gloves, and masks, collecting crane carcasses with a bulldozer's shovel. Trucks filled with carcasses crisscross the trails.

The pond, the last remnant of the Hula Lake, which was the cranes' sanctuary, has become their graveyard. Thousands of carcasses have fallen into the water and mud, cranes that dropped from the skies, either exhausted or dead, all victim to an extraordinary and ominous outbreak of avian flu.

According to estimates, some 7,000 birds out of a flock of some 24,000 cranes left in the pond have died of the disease so far. It is likely that smaller fowl, from

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A crane crashing to its death over the Hula Lake Nature Reserve.

Gil Eilahu

## Palestinians around Homesh paying price for settler's terror killing



A resident of Burqa in the village's vandalized cemetery.

Hagar Shezaf

For three weeks all traffic from Nablus to Jenin has been funneled to a small, narrow, broken road. The reason for this is an IDF checkpoint erected near the settlement of Shavei Shomron on Route 60, the main road connecting the two districts, and is manned by soldiers 24 hours a day since the killing of Yehuda Dimentman near the settlement of Homesh last month. According to Palestinians from nearby villages,

driving the bypass road extends their travel by about 10 kilometers. "It's crazy, all the traffic between the districts goes through our little town, they let the settlers pass but they block us," says Mohamed Azem, mayor of Sebastia, through which the bypass runs. He says that two days before settlers threw rocks at cars driving along that road.

The soldiers at the checkpoint allow passage only to cars belonging to people of the illegal yeshiva erected at Homesh. This is a settle-

ment evacuated as part of the disengagement of 2005, but shortly afterward the settlers returned to the site and have been maintaining the yeshiva as an outpost. The soldiers at the checkpoint admitted they are letting through cars "from the yeshiva," or "the yeshiva settlers," but couldn't say how they distinguish the yeshiva settlers from other settlers. Our car, bearing a yellow license plate, was also allowed by the soldiers to pass toward Nablus, as they said,

"You're from the yeshiva, right?" without waiting for a reply. Cars bearing Palestinian plates were ordered to turn around.

This is not the only road blocked by the army. Immediately after Dimentman's slaying, many other roads were blocked by dirt mounds. At the village council of Burqa, near Homesh, some of whose residents own the land on which the yeshiva sits, they counted 17 local roads blocked off by the army. "They closed the

entrances to the village and we have already opened them up ourselves four times," says Burqa council head Ziad a-Din Abu Ammar. Two weeks ago, the day after the mass march from Shavei Shomron, attended by 10,000 far-right activists, the Burqa council cleared the dirt barrier placed between Burqa and Sebastia. Since then, this side road has remained open. In addition, the main entrances to both Burqa and Sebastia have been blocked by military jeeps on several

occasions over the past few weeks: On the day of Dimentman's funeral, the day of the mass march as the shiva ended, and again over the past two Saturdays. During these Sabbaths, settlers tried to reach Homesh by car but were blocked by the army, and then went on by foot and were stopped near Sebastia. In each of these incidents, Burqa residents confronted IDF soldiers, with some throwing rocks and burning

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## Israel grants asylum to 1.5% of Eritreans – latest EU rate is 81%

Bar Peleg

Since June 2019, the state has turned down 98.5 percent of asylum requests from Eritreans.

This 1.5-percent approval rate for asylum requests compares to the average 63-percent approval rate among EU countries.

The data, obtained through a freedom of information request by the HIAS refugee aid organization, shows that in this period the state began examining 2,400 asylum requests and made a final decision on 1,063 of them, of which only 16 were approved.

The rejections were made through an abbreviated process without being reviewed by the advisory committee to the interior minister. The requests that were reviewed are part of 13,000 asylum requests by Eritreans that the state announced in 2019 it would reexamine – on the basis of stricter criteria set by the government for approving asylum requests

from Eritreans who deserted or dodged army service in their country.

However, since then, the government has only begun to review 2,500 requests. The criteria were formulated following a decision by a special team established to address the subject after the

## Ugandan's citizenship appeal rejected

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Jerusalem Court of Appeals ruled last year that desertion from a national army could be a justification for granting refugee status.

One of the new criteria requires that the asylum seeker prove that the desertion from the army was due to a clear and long-standing ideological motive. This is a more stringent demand than what appears in the

directives of the UN High Commissioner on Refugees.

The second criterion stipulates that refugee status will be granted when the desertion is accompanied by "circumstances that in conjunction with the draft-dodging/desertion form a pretext for persecution." This criterion calls for consideration of various circumstances for which the asylum seeker was or would be exposed to serious harm in Eritrea "for having a specific background, or if, due to these circumstances, the asylum seeker was denied basic rights."

The rate of approval for asylum requests by Eritreans in Israel is a tiny fraction of the rate in Europe. Data from the UN High Commissioner on Refugees shows that from 2014-2017, the average approval rate for these requests in EU countries was 63 percent, with 88 percent of the Eritrean asylum seekers also

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## HAARETZ Online now

### Falling star?

Ninja, Eurovision co-host accused of sex assault



Roy Berkowitz

haaretz.com

## State Archive error shows worries over nat'l image guided censorship

Ofer Aderet

What are the State Archive's considerations in deciding to censor historical documents? Officially, it's a matter of state security and Israel's foreign relations, or personal privacy. But quite a few historians who peruse archival materials assume that the censor might be too quick to protect other interests, like Israel's good name or the image of its leaders.

A peek at censorship behind the scenes is provided by a document from the War of Independence that the State Archive posted on its website recently. The document is the minutes of a meeting held in July 1948, when members of the provisional government discussed, among other things, war crimes committed by Jewish soldiers and civilians against Arabs. A few sentences from the minutes were censored, blacked out, by the Archive. But due to a technical glitch, a click



Zisling, fourth from right, at the first Knesset session in 1949.

Hans Pinn/GPO

of the mouse could remove the blackout and reveal the hidden text.

It turns out that Israel's first agriculture minister, Aharon Zisling, who was a signatory to the Declara-

tion of Independence, said in 1948 that he "can forgive instances of rape" committed by Jews against Arab women. Seventy-four years have gone by since then, but the State Archive still believes

that the public must not know this. Here is the entire statement: "Let us say that instances of rape occurred in Ramle. I can forgive

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# Knesset speech in Arabic, passage of bill to aid poor Arabs, enrages Likud MKs

Allison Kaplan Sommer and Noa Shpigel

The Knesset is often the scene of shouting, heckling and exchanging verbal insults. But the eruption on Wednesday morning from the ranks of Likud, the largest opposition party led by former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, wasn't so much about legislation or policy, but mainly over a speech given in Arabic.

The incident occurred after the passage of a hotly debated bill, commonly called the Electricity Law, which has to do with connecting tens of thousands of Arab Israelis living in unrecognized villages in southern Israel to key infrastructure like electricity, water and telephone lines.

When the subject was raised in the Knesset session, chaired by MK Mansour Abbas of the United Arab List, the bill's sponsor, Walid Taha of Abbas's party, delivered a speech partly in Arabic, one of Israel's official languages. Taha also exchanged words in Arabic with Abbas in between his remarks. As he spoke, Likud MK David Amsalem shouted, "You are in the Knesset! You need to speak Hebrew!" Likud MK Shlomo Karhi yelled at Taha: "Keep speaking in Arabic, so they can see who took over the country."

By law, Knesset members

may speak from the podium in either Hebrew or Arabic. Arab Israeli members, who represent Israel's largest minority – 21 percent of the population – usually give speeches in Hebrew. But on this occasion Taha, who fought for months to see the Electricity Bill become law, chose to address his mostly Arabic-speaking constituency.

Amsalem's angry remarks were followed by a torrent of furious reactions from other Likud members of Knesset.

"Disgraceful!" tweeted MK Miri Regev. "This morning in the Knesset of Israel, MK Walid Taha delivers his speech on the Electricity Law in Arabic. (Prime Minister Naftali) Bennett sits, amused in the plenum, allowing this shameful act in the Knesset to go ahead."

MK Miki Zohar called the event "unbelievable" on Twitter and said "I heard Walid Taha explain the Electricity Law in Arabic on the podium and I felt as if I had been elected to the Palestinian parliament."

Following the vote on the bill, which passed 61 to 0 after the Likud-led opposition refused to participate in what Netanyahu termed a "farce," the session deteriorated into extended shouting and finger-pointing. Opposition members directed their remarks at Prime Minister Naftali Bennett,



Knesset members arguing during Wednesday's debate on the "electricity law."

Ohad Zwigenberg

saying "Shame on you!" and "Leave!" Bennett responded by calling the lawmakers "thugs," on Twitter and promised he would not allow them to "burn the country."

An argument broke out between Bennett and members of the opposition, who claimed that Bennett does not support the settlement outpost movement. The prime minister got up from his seat, approached the op-

position bench and told them that he does more for them than they do. He also reminded them that Netanyahu was the one who supported Israel's evacuation of the Gaza Strip settlements. At this point, Netanyahu arose and distanced himself from the verbal brawl.

After the discussion, Bennett released a statement in which he called the opposition "bullies," and said: "We

will not capitulate to bullying that is directed by the head of the opposition, who is fed up with the rules of democracy and sows chaos. Netanyahu, who voted for the Gaza disengagement and [Likud MK Miri] Regev, who acted as its spokesperson, will not preach morality to me. They will continue shouting, and we will continue doing."

Merav Michaeli, leader of the Labor Party, said in response to the bill's passage that she is "proud" to see the government take action to connect Israelis to basic infrastructure. Environmental Protection Minister Tamar Zandberg of Meretz called "the opposition's tantrum" over Taha's speech "further proof of why it's so good to have a different government in power."

## FUSE: Bennett

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minister in the Netanyahu government, Moshe Kahlon, extended the order. The United Arab List, as a member of the coalition, demanded that it be enshrined in law. This is not "the sale of the Land of Israel," "the end of Zionism," or "another step in granting the right of return" (the last exaggeration came from Netanyahu). It is banal legislation, which is also a matter of life and death. Pirate hookups to the electric grid have caused fatal tragedies in the Arab community. Families have burned to death.

Likud on Wednesday pretended to issue the cry of equality: Why the Bedouins, and not the "young settlers" – the illegal settlements built on private land in the West Bank. What unholly hypocrisy. For 12 straight years Netanyahu and the right were in government. Four of those years were simultaneous with the Trump administration, and they didn't bother to pass such a law. Now they're screaming like hyenas.

If MKs Bezael Smotrich and Itamar Ben-Gvir (Religious Zionism) had not blocked the way of UAL chairman MK Mansour Abbas, and Netanyahu had been able to form a government with the votes of the Islamist party, that government would have received

a premium electricity law from him; he would have sent Avi Fahima, his own private electrician, to the Negev to oversee implementation. Even on Yom Kippur if necessary. And he would have canceled the Kaminitz Law, which stiffens the punishment for building without a permit, as he promised Abbas.

For Bennett, what we saw in Knesset on Wednesday brought up images of January 6 last year in Washington. It wasn't an exact parallel, of course, but that was the spirit. And there is one clear outcome: the dubious connection between the coalition's components grew stronger.

The zoo-like unruliness in the opposition benches, together with the nationalist-racist metaphors that accompanied it, gave no one a mood to cross the lines. Not MK Orbach nor MK Yom-Tob Kalfon (Yamina), who were the target of repulsive, low insults; nor Abbas, Taha or their colleagues who were privileged to see Likud in its naked racism. "Our problem is that you are speaking here," was just one of the interjections hurled at them.

"Better unruliness in the opposition than in the government," Taha told them. And Abbas, in the Zen calm of his Cheshire-cat smile, mocked them: "Calm down. What happened? It's just electricity-grid hookups."

## Appeal to grant Israeli citizenship to Ugandan convert rejected

Judy Maltz

Israel's Interior Ministry rejected on Wednesday an appeal to reconsider the application for citizenship under the Law of Return from a member of the Jewish community of Uganda who was converted through the Conservative movement.

The application, submitted by Yosef Kibita, was rejected last month on the grounds that he had not undergone a proper conversion program. Kibita, a member of the 2,000-strong Abayudaya community, has been living in Israel for the past four years and has undergone three separate conversions to Judaism – two in Uganda and one in Israel.

The Israel Religious Action Center, which appealed the decision, noted that Kibita has been living in Ketura, a kibbutz affiliated with the Conservative-Masorti movement, since moving to Israel, where he is an active member of the religious community. It noted that back in Uganda, he had studied in a Jewish school and was an active member of the Jewish community there.

In its rejection letter, the Interior Ministry said that Kibita must leave Israel within 30 days. The letter was signed by Ronit Elian, director of the foreign visas department.



Yosef Kibita

Sarah Nabagalla

His application for citizenship had been viewed as a test case for the landmark Supreme Court ruling last March that recognized conversions performed in Israel by the Conservative and Reform movements. Kibita is the first member of the Abayudaya community to apply for citizenship in Israel.

In 2018, he applied for citizenship under the Law of Return but was rejected. The Interior Ministry told him that his conversion did not meet the required criteria. In response, Kibita, together with the Conservative movement in Israel, petitioned the High Court. They were represented by IRAC, the advocacy arm of the Reform movement in Israel.

In February, the court ruled in favor of the Interior Ministry, noting that Kibita was converted in 2008 – a year before the Abayudaya were accepted into the international Conservative-Masorti movement and a year before they obtained recognized status from the Jewish Agency. Kibita's work visa was, however, extended until the end of December, and the court recommended that in the meantime, he convert again in a recognized Jewish community.

When the High Court ruled a month later that non-Orthodox conversions performed in Israel would be recognized for the purpose of the Law of Return, the Conservative movement decided to take up the

court's suggestion and have him converted in the country. Since Kibita had already been practicing Judaism from a young age, the movement decided to suffice with a conversion that did not require a lengthy period of study.

Responding to Elian's letter, Alon Tal, a lawmaker from the centrist Kahol Lavan party, sent an urgent letter to Interior Minister Ayelet Shaked on Wednesday urging her to intervene. "The issue of Mr. Kibita's status has already sparked debate in the Jewish world because the decision would seem to delegitimize the Conservative movement, which has one million members around the world."

Tal, an active member of the Conservative movement, wrote that IRAC planned to appeal the decision in court – a move he supported. "Regardless of how the court rules, I assume we can all agree that any person facing fateful decisions about his future deserves at least to have his day in court without the threat of deportation. This is especially true when it comes to a Jew who arrived in Israel on a Jewish Agency program, is active in the community and the synagogue of Kibbutz Ketura and, of course, has proven himself to be a law-abiding resident who has integrated well into the Israeli economy."

## Jew gets year in jail for attack on Arab during Gaza war

Ran Shimoni

A 20-year-old man from Bat Yam was sentenced to a year in prison on Wednesday for his involvement in an attack on an Arab driver in the city last May, while Operation Guardian of the Walls was going on in Gaza.

Lahav Nagauker admitted in August to his involvement in the attack on Said Moussa as part of a plea bargain, and was convicted of incitement to violence, racist incitement, disorderly behavior with racist motives and damaging a vehicle. He was sentenced to a year in prison, half a year of probation and will be required to pay compensation of 2,000 shekels (\$650) to the owner of a restaurant he and others damaged.

Two of the most serious charges in the original indictment against Nagauker – incitement to terror and theft for racist motives – were removed as part of the plea deal, and if convicted of these crimes his punishment would have been much more severe.

Judge Benny Sagi of the Tel Aviv District Court said in his verdict that the responsibility of the court is to "examine concrete actions he carried out, and in order to determine his sentence it is not possible to make do with viewing him just as a part of the group of rioters that arrived at the scene."

Sagi said he took into account that Nagauker was not a member of the WhatsApp groups in which the calls for violence were organized, and arrived at the scene only after the riots in the area began. The judge also accepted the defense's claims that Nagauker only joined the crowd and did not lead them. Sagi also remarked that it was doubtful Nagauker's contribution was meaningful enough to ignite the passions. "The defendant is a young man of 20, who lives on the mar-

gins of society, far from being a central, important or well-known figure," ruled the judge.

However, Nagauker was involved in the attack on Moussa from the beginning. During the evening on May 20, he arrived along with dozens of other people to the promenade in Bat Yam with the intent of harming Arab-owned businesses. In a message in a WhatsApp group opened for that purpose, he wrote: "If we've racist incitement, we don't need to be afraid to finish it." After sending the message, he crowded along with others across from a restaurant owned by an Arab. They caused damage to the restaurant and shouted "Death to Arabs."

While the mob beat Moussa, who just happened to be passing by, Nagauker damaged Moussa's car along with other people. Later, when Moussa was laying on the road, Nagauker spat on him.

A few minutes after the attack, Nagauker told a team from the Kan News public broadcaster at the scene, "We went out into the streets to fight with the Arabs, to show them that they can't send rockets here," he said. "We will beat them and if necessary, murder them too. Little children are dying because of the rockets; I am willing to be arrested."

Dozens of people participated in the attack on Moussa. But even though the incident had been documented in video clips and photographs, it took the police time to arrest the participants.

An indictment was filed 12 days after the incident against only three of them. However, after an analysis of the pictures conducted by Haaretz found that it was possible to identify the faces of about 20 of the active participants in the attack, indictments were filed against seven more people.

## ASYLUM: Few approvals

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receiving supplemental protection. Figures from the Central Bureau of Statistics show that in the EU, from July to September 2021, 81 percent of asylum requests by Eritreans were approved (out of 2,000 requests).

An official at the Population Authority says that majority of the asylum seekers from Eritrea do not want to serve in the Eritrean army, and that this fact alone is not sufficient for their asylum requests to be approved. He says the huge disparity between the approval rate in Israel and the other countries is because Israel does not accept military desertion as a reason for asylum. He adds that the authority recently learned that an Eritrean whose asylum request was approved by Israel had returned to Eritrea before receiving an answer to his application, which seems to show that he was not actually in any danger in Eritrea.

In November, HIAS, the Hotline for Refugees and Migrants, and Tel Aviv University's Refugee Rights Clinic wrote to Attorney General Avichai Mendelblit and Interior Minister Ayelet Shaked to protest the way asylum requests are being handled. The organizations say a review of dozens of rejected asylum requests turned up fundamental flaws that are characteristic of the review process as a whole. They say that in some cases, the interviews that were conducted were extremely brief, and

in the vast majority of the requests that they reviewed, no further interviews were conducted after the new criteria were issued.

"These were shallow interviews in which the authority ignored practically all relevant information related to prison conditions in Eritrea, to lengthy incarcerations, to political persecutions of anyone the Eritrean administration views as an opponent of the regime, and more – questions that could have affected the authority's decisions today and led to recognition of refugees who are entitled to this status by virtue of the Refugee Convention," the organizations wrote.

The Population and Immigration Authority says: "The Population and Immigration Authority examines requests for political asylum in accordance with the directives of the Refugee Convention, Israeli Law and in accordance with the criteria for considering asylum requests from Eritrean asylum seekers. If an asylum seeker proves a well-founded fear of persecution, and the unit that deals with requests for political asylum and the members of the advisory committee on refugee affairs concludes that his case falls under the criteria set in the Refugee Convention, a positive recommendation will be forwarded to the interior minister, who is authorized to decide based on her judgment. If an asylum seeker does not meet the convention's criteria, his asylum request will be rejected."



Asylum seekers in south Tel Aviv.

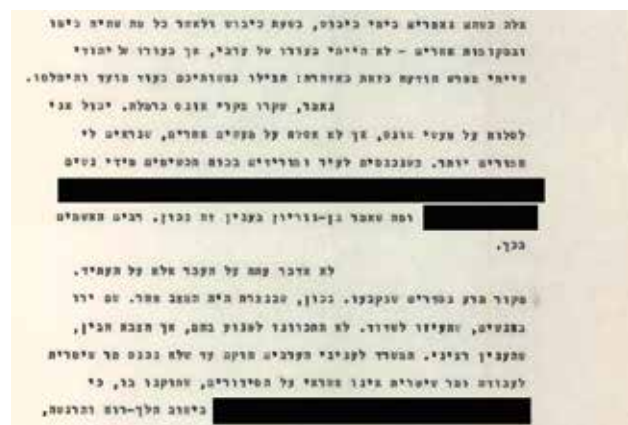
Tomer Appelbaum

## ARCHIVE: National image guided censorship decisions

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instances of rape, but I will not forgive other acts." The next statement, which was not blacked out, now gains additional significance, and explains what the minister considered an act more serious than rape: "When they enter a city and forcibly remove jewelry from women and from their necks – that is a very serious matter."

Twenty pages later, in the same discussion, once again the State Archive censor blacked out sentences. In that case, by a click on the mouse the blackout can be removed and the censored sentence revealed. This time it was Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion who was speaking. In the censored version he said: "I am against the wholesale demolition of villages." Now, the full statement is revealed. It turns out that he then added: "But there are places that constituted a great danger and constitute a great dan-



A document the State Archive recently published online. State Archive

ger, and we must wipe them out. But this must be done responsibly, with consideration before the act."

The minutes were posted at the request of Akevot Institute, which documents the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and fights to uncover censored archival materials that have public and research importance. Its publication is presented in continuation of the research of the historian Adam Raz, a

researcher at Akevot, who is following crimes committed by Jews against Arabs in the War of Independence, as he described in an article recently published in Haaretz.

The fact that the State Archive chose to censor the agriculture minister's remarks about the rape of Arab women and the prime minister's call to "wipe out villages" makes one wonder: Remarks in a similar vein, including identical sentences, have

been published many times in articles, books and archival documents that are open to the public. A quick search of Google Books reveals that Zisling's remarks about the rape of the women can also be read in their complete form in a catalogue of an exhibition at the Haifa Museum of Art, which is found on the shelves of the large public libraries in Israel, including the National Library.

Alongside the blacked-out parts, which as noted can be revealed, the other 50 pages of the minutes now posted on the State Archive website are also interesting. Particularly harsh are the remarks by Minorities Minister Bechor-Shalom Sheerit on the matter of ties between Jews and the Arab citizens in villages and cities conquered by the Israel Defense Forces. He said that he had hoped that as a minority "which suffered for thousands of years in the Diaspora, we would know to appreciate the minorities and set a humane and fair policy

toward them. ... We always declared our desire to live in peace with the Arabs, we declared that in our state there would be no racial or religious discrimination whatsoever, between one citizen and another." But according to Sheerit, this hope was set aside: "Unfortunately I must note that everything that was done (and this is well known to you) is not likely to be encouraging."

Sheerit subsequently describes expulsion, destruction, looting and false arrests. "We were all shocked at the first revelations of lawlessness and robbery, in which civilians also took part," Ben-Gurion responded. "This happened especially in Jaffa and Haifa. All circles took part in this without exception. In Jerusalem educated circles took part."

Ben-Gurion added that not only the army had transgressed. "I oppose those who attribute the robbery only to the army. The affliction is much deeper. The best of our people transgress in

this. Non-combatants rob as much as combatants. I was shocked at this phenomenon. I did not think it would be this way, but that's the way it is," he said. However, he qualified his statement by saying that people are working too hard to "save themselves" because the official orders of the government prohibit these actions. The army, he added "is much fairer" in its attitude to the conquered people than "many veteran armies." This statement was actually never censored.

The State Archive responded: "The State Archive decided to reveal and fully publish the stenogram, without any blackouts and confidentiality of the information in the text. A technical error led to the appearance of the blackouts – this error led to the possibility of moving them and reading the text beneath them. The State Archive is strict and will be strict to cover any information that the legislature has determined a reason exists to conceal it."