

Report from Israel

Shalom. I sincerely thank you for always praying for Israel. I would like to tell you about the current situation of Israel, which changes rapidly every day,

First of all, the news which are the most talked about in Israel show that Iran is making missile attacks on the Israeli Golan Heights. Iran is transferring weapons to Lebanese Shi'ite Muslim group Hezbollah, and that is why Israel attacked the Syrian airport, which contained weapons sent from Lebanon to Syria. It seems that Iran is also trying to make a stand against Israel. Currently the northern part of Israel is very tense and in a very difficult condition.



Recently there were some happy news in Israel. Israel won a singing contest called Eurovision which is held every year in Europe, after 20 years that Israel did not win this contest. Ms. Neat Barilla, who was the singer of the winning song, loves Japan very much, and during this Eurovision she appeared in clothes that resemble Japanese fashion. Israel won the contest, causing the Israelis to be very excited, and because of her I feel that people are more interested in Japan than before. Following this victory, the 2019 Eurovision is supposed to be held in Israel because the Israeli song won the contest. Israeli officials insist that the next Eurovision will be held in Jerusalem but organizers are struggling to find a suitable location, so it might be held in a different city.

Another event that attracted big public attention was the moving of the US Embassy to Jerusalem. This was a statement by the USA that Jerusalem is clearly the capital city of Israel, as a part of the pro-Israeli approach taken by the US president Donald Trump. After that, two more countries moved their embassies to Jerusalem, and this also received many reactions. Israeli citizens, especially the right wing of the political map, were very pleased about this relocating of the American Embassy, but some left wing citizens were not very happy and expressed their worries regarding the future of Israel following this event.

The Palestinians were the most unsatisfied from the moving of the embassy. The Palestinian government spokesman Nabil Abu Rodina said, "The US government abandoned the role of the peace process by themselves, insulted the world, the Palestinian citizens, Arab countries and Islamic countries". He also expressed criticism and claimed that it will cause incitement.

In Gaza there was a demonstration of criticism against Israel, which led to many casualties and injured. In addition, right after the US Embassy was relocated, during the Palestinian "Day of Nakba (Disaster Day)" stating the day when Israel occupied Palestine, there were many more casualties and injured during the demonstrations in Gaza and Haifa.

Arabs and Jews on the left wing also demonstrated in Jerusalem, but it seems that there was not much conflict. When I was watching this news, in the speech of the US president Donald Trump, he said that "I will continue to do my utmost to promote a permanent peace agreement". I felt that although he is talking

about peace his actions lead us far away from peace, which reminded me the biblical end of days. Since such peace agreement will be the starting point of the end of days, it seems that we have to wake up and carefully see what is going to happen.

Another news are regarding the relationship between Turkey and Israel. In the past, there was good friendship, but now it has deteriorated from this situation. Turkish President Erdogan is publicly pro-Palestinian, and following the relocation of the US Embassy and many casualties due to the demonstration in Gaza, the Turkish President kicked the Israeli and American ambassadors, together with other Israeli and American officials, from Turkey. The current economic situation in Turkey is getting worse and the situation in Turkey is not very good, but as the presidential elections are approaching, Erdogan stated that after the elections he will carefully consider if his country would continue its economical relationship with Israel.

The situation in Israel is like a rollercoaster. The Muslim Ramadan holyday, (fasting for one month) has started, but Japanese businessmen that have businesses in the Palestinian authority say that they do not feel any tension in Jericho, Ramallah and Nablus. Apparently, Muslims are trying to keep the holiness of Ramadan as much as possible even in this situation. However, as some people are unsatisfied with the current situation of Israel, it is suspected that sudden terrorism acts might occur, so it is still necessary to pay attention every day and keep praying. Currently I live in the northeast side of Tel Aviv in Israel, but as various situations are occurring every day like this, I do not feel that the situation is so tense while actually living. I also go to Tel Aviv, and go to Jerusalem every weekend for church, but I did not notice much change since the security was not increased. Of course it is Israel so the situation can change any day, so it is necessary to watch out and pray constantly. Personally I feel that there is a big difference between Gaza and the west bank, which are both under Palestinian authority. I feel that, while in Gaza they have demonstrations and casualties almost every day, in the west bank people are peacefully celebrating Ramadan and do not want to cause any problems.

During the relocation of the American Embassy in Israel, a big demonstration was held in East Jerusalem. Everybody thought that there are going to be casualties like in Gaza, but in fact there was not such a big collision and the demonstrations without any serious results. Comparing what happened there to what happened in Gaza or Haifa it appears to me that it shows how much the Palestinians are divided when one side is angry about Israel but the other side is actually angry with Hamas policies.

In recent news, a Palestinian man attempted suicide by burning as a result of the anger he felt regarding Hamas politics. From this incident we can see that there are Arabs who want to live their lives peacefully without seeking conflicts. The Arabs who live in Israel and have an Israeli citizenship do not want to be under Palestinian authority and throw away their relatively good lives here.

It feels like there is a change in Israeli Arabs relation to Hamas, and we need to see what will happen in the future. This is also a time of dramatic changes here in Israel, so I continue to pray for peace in Israel, as a first hand witness who sees and feels the situation while living here in Israel. Shalom and God bless.