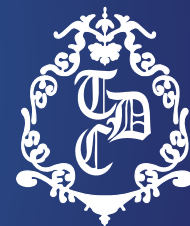


The Diplomatic Club

July 2018 | Since 1998



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France to Israel Her Excellency
Ms. H el ene LE GAL*

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Dear friends,

This issue was composed in the atmosphere of the celebrations of the 70th years of Israeli Independency.

The people of Israel are celebrating this event in deep believing in peace and prosperity in the very buzz situation.

What did we have last months?
Mondeal, Modmdel, Mondeal

Earlier this month Donald Trump arrived in Singapore promising to make history. That he did by shaking Kim Jong-un's hand for the world's cameras - becoming the first sitting US leader to meet his North Korean counterpart.

But what have they really achieved, what are the implications and what might happen next? Trump's trade war against China is officially underway.

Eurovision song contest for the fourth time with the song "Toy", appropriate for these times, by Israeli singer Netta Barzilai and next year will be hosted by Israel. Jerusalem or Tel Aviv?

USA delegation celebrated the opening of the U.S. Embassy in Jerusalem. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called it a "glorious day" that had "made history." Trump appeared on video and asked God to bless the embassy.

"May there be peace," he said.

At the exact same time, along Israel's border with the Gaza Strip, some 40,000 Palestinians were protesting not only the opening of the embassy but also their being in a large "open prison" and their desperate decline in living standards. Some tried to breach the fence to enter Israel and to

harm Israeli soldiers. The Israeli reaction was swift. Soldiers used tear gas, rubber-coated bullets and live ammunition. At least 59 Palestinians were confirmed dead and 2,400 wounded, making Bloody Monday the bloodiest day in the enclave since the 2014 war with Israel.

The two simultaneous events created a jarring juxtaposition. On social media and cable news, footage of Trump administration officials laughing and celebrating with Israeli leaders appeared next to footage of largely unarmed Palestinian civilians in Gaza wounded or dead from Israeli gunfire. These photos may hurt Israel for a longtime.

So, what is the aim of the diplomatic media in this world?

Only provokes intelligent discussion from the heart of the Diplomatic Community and to the heart of the Diplomatic Community. This why we back to our activity of diplomatic trips, organized every year since 1998.

The idea of the Diplomatic Club was born from the success of Tennis Tournament on 1998 dedicated to 50th Jubilee Celebration of Israel. This date become a birthday of the Diplomatic Club and first issue of the Diplomatic Club magazine was published dedicated to this event.

I'd like remind you – The Diplomatic Club Magazine does not take any political side: not left, not right.

We pretended for objectively given information. We are taking you to the places that no any one will take you in hope that you will receive objective information and right conclusions.

By your self.

So, I am happy to invite you to the UMM-EL FAHM. You will meet in person the people, children from Israeli Arab City. Hope, you will join us. Don't miss the registration, that will open soon.

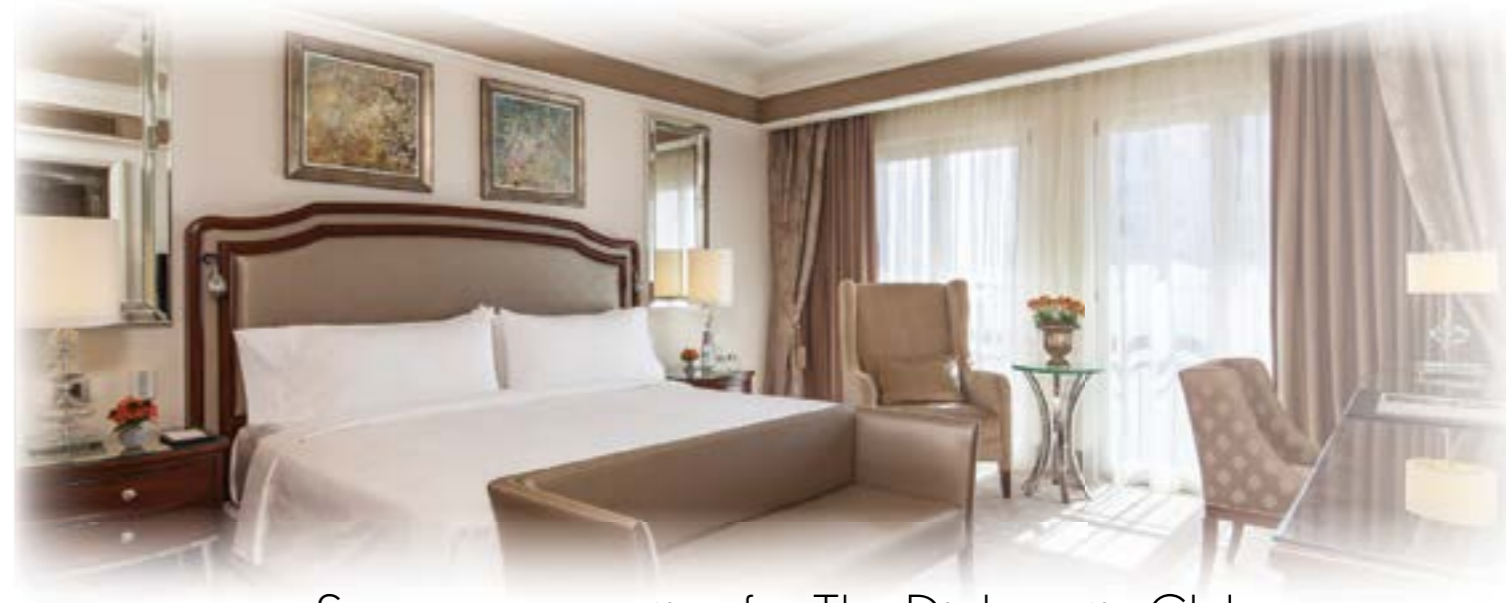
Looking forward to see you as participants in our activity.

Thanks a lot.

Julia Verdel
CEO & Publisher
And the Editorial team

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Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the State of Israel



Ambassade de France en Israël / Elodie Sauvage

The Diplomatic Club was lucky enough to get the chance to interview the Ambassador of France to Israel H.E. Ms. Helène LE GAL who shared with us her vision so far, her position as position of her country, its advantages and disadvantages. We spoke with a professional diplomat, women and person.

DC: What is Bastille Day and why does France celebrate it?

On 14th July, the French celebrate the Republic and its values Liberté, Egalité,

Fraternité (Liberty, Equality, Brotherhood). The National Day commemorates two essential events for the French republican soul: first, the anniversary of the storming

of the Bastille prison on 14th July 1789, often considered as the starting point of the French Revolution, and which gave its common name in English Bastille Day; second, the celebration of the Fête de la Fédération (Festival of the Federation) on 14th July 1790, held in honour of the French Revolution itself, as well as National Unity. It is the precursor of the National Day which is celebrated every year in France on 14th July, officially since 1880. Celebrations are held throughout France, with parades, concerts and fireworks. A large military parade takes place on the Champs-Élysées in Paris in front of the President of the Republic, along with other French officials and foreign guests.

DC: Is there an increased terror threat on Bastille Day? Is there some cooperation in this field with Israel?

The threat is real, has always existed, and has grown over the last years. We remember, there was an attempt in 2002 to shoot French President Jacques Chirac during the Champs-Élysées parade. We remember of course the terrible attack in 2016 during



Ambassade de France en Israël / Elodie Sauvage



the celebrations in Nice, where a truck drove into crowds killing 86 people and injuring 434. Police forces are on high alert in order to counter any terror threat, and it is even more the case during the big popular celebrations such as the National Day. But the French people never changed their way of life because of terrorist threats and continues to go out to restaurants, cafes and concerts, and, of course, to celebrate our National Day. We cooperate on a general basis with Israel on multiple security issues.

DC: France was one of the first countries to establish diplomatic relations with Israel, on 11 May 1949, marked by constant support for the State's existence. Before the 1967 Six Day War France was the Jewish state's main Western ally, wasn't it?

France was indeed among the first countries to establish diplomatic relations with Israel, on 11 May 1949. France then actively helped

consolidate the young State by contributing to its defense effort, by providing advance arm systems such as combat aircrafts (Mirage). France and Israel even fought side by side during the 1956 Suez Crisis. Security and military cooperation continue until today. It reflects the French policy towards Israel which remained unchanged since 1949: an unconditional support to the State of Israel, of which the right to exist and right to security cannot be undermined.

DC: What is the French position on the situation in Middle East in general? (Iran's ballistic missile program, its expanding influence in the region, and the weakening of partners Jordan and Egypt; Syria).

France is worried by the deteriorating situation in the Middle East, a region shaken by multiple political crisis and security issues, as well as civil wars. French foreign policy aims for fighting against terrorism and the stability of

the region because turmoil in the Middle East threatens the security of Europe and France. Regarding Iran, we regret the American decision to withdraw from the nuclear agreement (JCPOA) which prevents Iran to develop a nuclear weapon at least until 2025. We are convinced that this agreement is key to our security (as well as to the security of Israel) and the stability of the region. However we also believe the nuclear agreement is not sufficient and that it needs to be completed with agreements on Iranian ballistic program, the destabilizing actions of Iran in the region and the future of JCPOA after 2025.

DC: What is the French position on issues relating to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Palestinian terrorism and Israeli settlements in the West Bank?

France remains convinced that the only solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, in conformity with international law and our



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long term commitment, is the establishment of two States, living side-by-side in peace and security. Such a solution can only emerge through negotiation between the parties. We will support any initiative that would help reach such a goal.

Israeli settlements policy in the West Bank is contrary to the international law, as reiterated by the UN Security Council resolution 2334 (2016). We disagree with decisions taken by Israel to build more settlements. We believe these decisions send a negative signal about the will of Israel to make peace with the Palestinians.

France condemns terrorism in all its forms, and also condemns all incitement to commit terrorist attacks or to use violence. We cooperate with Israel in the fight against terrorism. We are in solidarity

with the victims of terrorism, and there are among them several French citizens.

DC: During the 1947 deliberations on partition at the UN, France pressed for the internationalization of Jerusalem and the holy places (the Corpus Separatum). This was due to the importance it placed on the city's numerous religious and welfare institutions, a concern that is still manifest today. What is Jerusalem status, suggested by France today? Will embassy move to Jerusalem?

France considers – like the rest of the international community – that the status of Jerusalem should be decided by Israel and the Palestinians as a result of a negotiation, because both of them have political claims about Jerusalem. Moreover,

we also believe that the only reasonable solution should be Jerusalem to be the capital of the two states: Israel and Palestine. Jerusalem has also a religious dimension, especially for the Jewish people. The French embassy will move to Jerusalem the day an agreement has been reached between Israel and the Palestinian.

DC: France has established a robust bilateral relationship with Israel. What is the development of economic relations between countries?

The French economic presence in Israel has developed considerably since the turn of the century. Some 80 subsidiaries of French companies are now located in Israel and employ more than 6,000 people in key sectors including energy, consumer goods, tourism, services, infrastructure, health, transport, telecommunications and electronics.

Our trade relationship is stable and developing within the framework of agreements concluded between the EU and Israel. In 2017, French exports of goods to Israel amounted to €1.52 billion (aircraft and automobile vehicles, pharmaceuticals, chemicals and industrial products). In 2016, imports of goods from Israel amounted to €1.25 billion.

French foreign direct

investment stock in the country had increased in 2015 more than threefold since 2006 and now stands at €2.73 billion, equivalent to about 30% of French FDI in the Middle East (excluding Turkey and Egypt).

Interest in the Start-Up nation keeps rising amongst French businesses. Several French companies have already built partnerships and more of them intend to go further. Over the past two years, we have also created tools to promote connections between French and Israeli innovation ecosystems, such as the French Tech hub, launched in 2015, which gathers 400 French and Israeli entrepreneurs committed to create bridges between the two countries.

DC: Cultural, scientific and technical cooperation is based on a 1959 bilateral agreement and Embassy has substantial resources for this purpose. Please, comment it.

France is Israel's fifth-largest cooperation partner in scientific and technological research. This cooperation is based on academic partnerships and exchanges of young researchers. For instance, space is one of the area where the cooperation is the most active. In 2017 the French and Israeli Space Agency collaborated on the Venus program, a satellite aimed at fighting Climate



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change through environmental monitoring. The two agencies are now working on a new project of satellite. France also works to develop the use of French, given that the French-speaking community in Israel is estimated at over 500,000 people, and to bring members of civil society closer together through cultural events and an intensive communication policy.

The 2018 Israel-France Cross Season will provide a great opportunity to strengthen ties between our two nations through a variety of events that will bring together business leaders, artists, scientists, researchers, public officials and others. These forums will encourage the further exchange of ideas and foster mutual understanding. More than a hundred events will



Saison France Israel Opening ceremony / T.Chapotot

take place all over Israel from 1st June to end of November celebrating artistic creation and innovation, in various areas such as contemporary art, cinema, music, science, education, design, visual art, etc.

DC: The bilateral relationship between France and Israel is also supported by the presence in Israel of a large French community (150,000 people), while France is home to Europe's largest Jewish community. Is this the fact that Jews would like to go to Israel because they don't feel safe in France?

We need to be cautious when considering the reasons that drive French Jews to come to Israel and make their Alya. Security may be a factor but it is hardly the only one. Between 2013 and 2015 we saw a big

increase in the number of people coming to Israel. It happened after terrible anti-Semitic attacks and murders. It is true that people had legitimate security concerns, and the government took very strong measures in response. The situation returned to normal after 2016 regarding the number of people doing their Alya. We can assume now that the French Jews who come to Israel have various reasons: religious, cultural, economic, security, family. They may come to find a work, in particular in the digital economy, or they come to live their faith, or they come to meet up with parents or children who have already immigrated. Furthermore, for a large portion of these people, Alya is often not permanent. Many French Jews come back to France after a few years,

nourishing the already deep human relations between our two countries.

DC: It is worth pointing out that France is home to both the biggest Jewish and Muslim populations in Europe. Do you think the two communities are doing enough to come together?

I don't know if France has still the biggest Muslim population in Europe. Anyway, polls have shown the French Muslim community to be one of the most moderate Muslim communities in Europe, and France is the country where you see the biggest number of mixed marriages.

Nonetheless, we have observed an increasing Islamic extremism, which led to murders in terror attacks. The government must ensure security for all French citizens, and fighting radical Islam is part of that job. It's about security (closing extremist mosques and expelling radical imams, for example), but radicalization can also be fought through a variety of means including a better integration of French Muslims into French society. French Muslim leaders must encourage their communities to assist the authorities to identify those at risk of radicalization or already radicalized. Political parties committed to the values of the French Republic, in particular tolerance and non-

discrimination, must prevail over parties who oppose those principles.

DC: What is the perspective of French national team in World Cup Russia by your opinion?

We have a young and strong team, very able to win the trophy. I see them in the finals on 15th July. If they win, the day following our National Day, what a party it will be!

DC: How do you feel in Israel? Where do you like to eat? What do you think about Israeli wine and cheese?

I feel very well in that country that I knew before being appointed as the French Ambassador. This country offers a variety of landscape, lifestyle, and above all people. I like to eat with Israeli people at their home for Shabbat. You can taste all kind of cuisine from North Africa to Eastern Europe. I love Israeli wine and cheese. A lot of French people have been investing in Israeli wineries.

DC: What do you think about Israeli fashion, hairdressing?

I must admit I don't know a lot about that subject. I see a lot of different styles among Israeli people, which reflects the diversity of the population.



Helene LE GAL is a French career diplomat.

She has been designated as the French Ambassador in Israel in August 2016.

Her experience focuses on conflicts and international security, African affairs, European Affairs, Middle East, defense issues, development and consular affairs.

After the French presidential election of May 2012, she has been appointed Counsellor of the President of the French Republic, François HOLLANDE, for Africa. In this position, she was an important actor in the French initiatives concerning the Sahel region, CAR, and Lake Chad Basin.

Previously, she spent half of her 28 years of experience dealing with African Affairs (at the French Embassy in Ouagadougou, at the African Affairs Department of the Quai d'Orsay, and at the private office

of a Minister for Development).

She is experienced in European Affairs (she has been posted at the French Embassy in Madrid and at the French Permanent Representation to the European Union in Brussels).

She has been already posted four years at the French Embassy in Israel (1994-1998). She was following political affairs and the peace process.

She was also Consul General in Quebec, Canada.

Helene LE GAL has been awarded by the Ordre National du Merite and the Legion d'Honneur in France and has also received the highest honors in Mali, Senegal, Niger and Guinee.

She speaks French, English and Spanish with notions of Hebrew. She graduated at the Political Studies Institute of Paris.

French Ambassador's Home in Israel



TWO-FAMILY HOME

On a high ridge overlooking Israel's Mediterranean coast stands an elegant, cream-colored villa with a distinctive Modernist design that has long been caught in the crossfire of the Mideast conflict. But the mansion, which is in Jaffa, is the product of an unusual—and eventually ruptured—friendship between a Jewish Zionist architect and his Arab Muslim client.

The story begins at the Tel Aviv Rotary Club, established in 1934 with a membership one-third British, one-third Arab, and one-third Jewish. There, soon after the club was established, Mohammad Ahmed Abdel Rahim, one of Jaffa's wealthiest residents, met Yitzhak Rapoport. After seeing an innovative hospital design by Rapoport on a nearby street, Abdel Rahim asked the Ukrainian-born architect to design his new house.

Abdel Rahim owned vast citrus groves and flour mills and was a major exporter of Jaffa oranges. He was open to new technology, and, like the Jews in Tel Aviv, he wanted a forward-looking home with modern amenities. But he also wanted to adhere to his own religious and cultural customs. In response, Rapoport began to devise a minimalist exterior in the spirit of the Bauhaus. The interior was designed with a clear separation of public and private realms, with distinct areas for men, women, and children.

Soon after the ambitious project got under way, it became ensnared in tensions between Arabs and Jews in British-ruled Palestine. But the two men were committed to the project. To ensure his safety during deadly Arab riots in 1936, Rapoport would drive to the neighborhood of Manshiyeh on the outskirts of Jaffa, where he would disguise himself in

Arab dress. There, he would be picked up by Abdel Rahim and brought to the construction site. Rapoport would spend the night and work the next day overseeing the execution of his design—all the while being introduced to his client's other guests as a relative from Kuwait. The following night, Rapoport would return to his regular life in Tel Aviv.

"Abdel Rahim had already broken ranks with his cultural milieu to build a Modernist house," Oded Rapoport told later in his office, where he spread out a file of documents relating to his father's life. "He couldn't afford to be seen with a Jewish architect." Let alone one who was—unbeknownst to Abdel Rahim—also a spy.

It was an open secret that Abdel Rahim was the treasurer of the Arab group orchestrating the uprising and attacks on Jewish civilian targets in Palestine. What no one knew—or at least no one knew inside the emerging structure in the Ajami area of Jaffa—was that Rapoport was also involved in the fight, as a senior officer of the Jewish paramilitary organization Haganah. During his frequent stays with Abdel Rahim, the architect overheard conversations about planned Arab attacks to protest against Jewish immigration to Palestine, and he would subsequently inform the Haganah about their plans.

The design and realization of the house, meanwhile, kept Abdel Rahim and Rapoport in collaboration, and they remained steadfastly protective of one another—but their histories would continue to intersect in complicated ways. After completing the residential commission, Yitzhak Rapoport went on to design a flour mill for Abdel Rahim and warehouses for his many business interests. During the 1948 war, the flour mill's tower became a strategic post for Arabs, and Rapoport was in the Jewish military unit that blew it up—using his knowledge of the site to



determine exactly how to topple it.

Abdel Rahim was able to enjoy living in his new house for only a decade. He was part of a small group that signed the declaration of Jaffa's surrender to the Jewish troops, and, during the Israeli War of Independence in 1948, his family fled to Lebanon. According to Oded Rapoport, Abdel Rahim left for Beirut with his family, but a nephew of his, Hasan Hammami, says his uncle stayed alone in the mansion for over a year under house arrest before going into exile.

In any case, before the ceasefire, Abdel Rahim transferred ownership of his property to Rapoport, fearing he would lose all claim and have it expropriated. At first, the architect was incredulous, asking, "Why leave it with me? You have family." Other Arabs, too, remained in Jaffa.

The wealthy man replied, according to Oded, "I don't trust any of them. I trust you." He gave Yitzhak Rapoport a proxy for his entire property, even as the architect became Haganah's chief engineering officer for the Tel Aviv district. "I know the Jews will win the war," Abdel Rahim told Rapoport.

At war's end, the newly established Israeli government attempted to nationalize the property, but Oded Rapoport's father refused to comply. "This is mine," he told his fellow

Zionists. Oded Rapoport explained: “They tried to convince him to drop it. They said, ‘We need it. We’re a new country.’ My father said, ‘I gave of myself to the country, I fought, I gave what was expected of me as a patriot. But I cannot betray my friend.’”

In 1949, the French government purchased the house from Yitzhak Rapoport to serve as the official residence of its ambassador to the fledgling Jewish state. The architect then passed on the money to Abdel Rahim, traveling to Naples in the 1950s to meet with him and complete the transfer. Abdel Rahim died in Lebanon in the early 1960s, and Rapoport gradually lost contact with the family as personal communications between Israelis and Arabs became increasingly suspect.

Arab residents of Jaffa have periodically cast doubt upon the story of whether the property was actually sold, most recently in interviews in a 2006 documentary by filmmaker Gadi Nemet broadcast on Israeli television. French authorities counter that Abdel Rahim appointed Rapoport as his agent, that the Foreign Ministry in Paris bought the four-bedroom house from the architect at full market value, and that he, in turn, gave the proceeds to the original owner. I recently confirmed that a transaction of some kind took place by locating the original bill of sale for 20,000 British pounds at the Tel Aviv municipal land registry office.

Yitzhak Rapoport died in 1989. Oded Rapoport took over his practice and has helped successive French ambassadors carry out minor renovations to the original residence. “Whenever a new ambassador arrives, I get a call,” said the younger Rapoport.

By the last odd twist of fate in a story littered with them, Oded Rapoport’s experience with Arab architectural commissions has ended up mirroring that of his father. In 1983, Oded

designed a house in Gaza for a Palestinian friend. The project got under way during the First Intifada, and the client would meet Oded every other week at the border crossing between Israel and Gaza and then safely ferry him through barricades to a construction site in a car that flew the flag of the Red Crescent.

The client was Akram Matar, an ophthalmologist who ran an eye clinic in conjunction with Israeli doctors. Matar, a wealthy Muslim who studied in England and Germany, wanted a modern house in the upscale Rimal neighborhood of Gaza City, and in the process of designing the project Oded Rapoport and his wife became good friends with Matar and his wife.

Sometime after the house was finished, and following the Oslo accords, Matar invited Rapoport—a pilot in the Israeli Air Force—to Gaza for a celebration at his home in 1994. “We came to the main gate accompanied by the Palestinian police in a convoy,” Oded recalled. “Suddenly Yasser Arafat came in. It turned out to be a surprise birthday party for Arafat.”

The architect doesn’t know what happened to his design in the 2009 bombardment of Gaza during Israel’s Operation Cast Lead. Matar’s children had become more religious as Islamic fundamentalism gained influence in Gaza in the late 1990s. “Somehow the circle was closed,” Oded said quietly, before explaining that Matar died 10 years ago. “Unfortunately, personal stories are so different from the national story.”

The United States celebrated the opening of its embassy in Jerusalem, making it the first country to make a move from Tel Aviv.



Ronen Zullun / AFP / Getty Images

(L to R) Sara Netanyahu and her husband Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu applaud as Guatemalan President Jimmy Morales and his wife Hilda Patricia Marroquin cut the ribbon during the inauguration ceremony of the Guatemalan embassy in Jerusalem on May 16, 2018.

The United States received intense international criticism on Monday when it celebrated the opening of its embassy in Jerusalem. It was the first country to make the "provocative" move from Tel Aviv.

But on Wednesday, Guatemala joined the U.S. in moving its embassy to Jerusalem.

More countries are preparing to make the leap. Paraguay's Foreign Ministry announced that its embassy will also

relocate to Jerusalem, while the Czech Republic, Romania and Honduras reportedly considering the move.

These smaller countries, especially those in Latin America, may be looking to cement good relations with the U.S. in hopes of preserving foreign aid and trading status. Some are also enhancing relationships with Israel, which has courted some of them with aid and even arms sales.

Jonathan Cristol, a fellow at the World Policy Institute, said that he doesn't believe the U.S. pressured countries like Guatemala into moving, but the U.S. embassy opening did make it possible for these countries to do so without "bearing the political cost."

The U.S. took a political hit in December when the United Nations voted to condemn President Donald Trump's decision to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital,



which angered leaders throughout the Middle East.

Palestinian protests turn violent

On Tuesday, the UN Security Council held an emergency meeting that rebuked Israel after its forces killed more than 60 Palestinian protesters on the Gaza border the same day the U.S. unveiled its new embassy. Monday also marked the 70th anniversary of Israel's founding, a day the Palestinians call Nakba, or Day of Catastrophe.

Palestinians have been protesting at the Gaza border since March, asserting that

they also have a claim on Jerusalem, which has deep significance to the Jewish, Muslim and Christian faiths.

With the U.S. bearing the brunt of the international blowback, smaller countries that have had historically close ties to Israel are able to consider making their moves, but Cristol said this does not signal a mass relocation of embassies to Jerusalem.

Countries like Guatemala and Paraguay have something to gain by moving their embassies to Jerusalem. Jon Alterman, a senior vice president and director of the Middle East Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, said that Israel has long courted smaller countries.

"It has conducted extensive outreach in Africa, for example, and it has ties throughout Latin America," Alterman said in an email.

Cristol said these smaller countries have received developmental assistance or arms sales, so "they'll do better with a close relationship with Israel."

Cristol also noted that Latin American countries, including Guatemala, have Evangelical Christian heads of state, so it is a "natural inclination" for those countries to move their embassies to Jerusalem.

Evangelical connection

Some evangelicals believe the transfer of the embassy and the recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital will help bring about the so-called Rapture, an event in which they believe all Christians, living and dead, will join with God, the Independent wrote.

Evangelical Christians supported Trump's decision to relocate the U.S. embassy, according to CNN.

But would larger countries like Russia, China and Western European nations make the move?

"I would be very surprised," Cristol said. "I would be astounded, frankly, if the major Western European powers, with the possible exception of the United Kingdom, would move their embassies any time soon."

Cristol mentioned the UK as a possibility because the current British government is more conservative than other European powers and it "has a fairly large, but often overlooked, Christian constituency that is highly supportive of Israel," he said.

Cristol added that Russia and China are also unlikely

candidates. Those countries will continue to do business with Israel regardless of where their embassies are located, he said, "so why take the risk?"

If any of them do make future moves to Israel, however, they will need to do what the Trump administration did not do, Alterman said, "which is to explicitly state that the embassy is located in West Jerusalem and endorse the idea of East Jerusalem becoming the capital of a future Palestinian state."

Going forward, Israel will surely encourage more countries to move their embassies, Alterman said.

And for some countries "on a practical level, Jerusalem is the capitol of Israel," Cristol added.

Most Israeli government officials and offices are located in Jerusalem, so countries with embassies in Tel Aviv have to travel to do business.

Relocating to Jerusalem is a smart money move for smaller states, making things more "effective and efficient," Cristol said.

"Tel Aviv is only about an hour away," he added, "but also sort of a world away."

At the UN general assembly in December 2017, nine countries, including the US and Israel, voted against a resolution that,

in effect, called on the US to withdraw its recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel.

(The full list is the United States, Israel, Guatemala, Honduras, the Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Palau and Togo.)

Countries including the UK, China, France and Russia and countries in the Middle East including Egypt and Saudi Arabia voted in favor of the resolution.

The US officially opened its new embassy on 14 May to coincide with the 70th anniversary of the creation of Israel.

Palestinians claim East Jerusalem as the capital of a future Palestinian state, and see the US move as backing Israeli control over the whole of the city.

Countries which had embassies in Jerusalem relocated to Tel Aviv after Israel passed a law in 1980 formally making Jerusalem its capital. Israel occupied the east of the city in the 1967 Middle East war and, in effect, annexed it, in a move not recognized internationally.



Deputy Minister Michael Oren, third from left, with Arab dignitaries at an event marking Ramadan at the Knesset, June 12, 2018 (Raphael Ahren/TOI)

Deputy Minister Michael Oren on 12.06 evening hosted the first-ever fast-breaking event in honor of Ramadan held under the auspices of the Prime Minister's Office.

The traditional iftar dinner was originally planned to take place at the PMO itself — where Oren (Kulanu) has an office — which would have also marked the first time an event marking the holy month of Ramadan was held at the epicenter of Israel's executive branch.

“The State of Israel is proud of its minority populations, who enjoy freedom of religion — Druze, Bedouins, Circassians and Christians,”

Oren said. “This is true democracy.”

At night's event was attended by members of Israel's Arab, Druze and Bedouin communities, including religious leaders, heads of regional councils and social activists. A handful of foreign diplomats, including the ambassadors to Israel of Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Denmark, Norway and Paraguay, were present as well.

Jerusalem Mayor Barkat to Fire Ramadan Cannon

Above 150,000 Muslims visited Temple Mount each Friday. Mayor festive with unprecedented expensive preparations.



Photo Credit: Jackie Levy



Israel makes "historic" concessions to Muslim populations in Judea, Samaria and Gaza in allowing direct access to the Temple Mount - the holiest site in Judaism - for the Muslim fast month of Ramadan that begins Thursday, the Jerusalem municipality is making its own special preparations to enhance the aesthetic experience of Arab visitors.

Mayor Nir Barkat: "This year, we have made unprecedented investments in improving the city's appearance, infrastructure and cultural events in honor of Ramadan, for the benefit of the city's residents and visitors. We are proud, this year as in ever year, of Jerusalem's freedom of worship, tolerance, and acceptance for all religions in our city. I am proud to take part in the festivities surrounding the holiday and send best wishes to Muslim residents for a joyous Eid al-Fitr."

Ancient Ramadan cannon was held together with the family of Haj Yahya Sandoka, who have been responsible for the operation of the cannon during Ramadan and Eid al-Fitr since the Ottoman period 200 years ago. The month of Ramadan falls this year between May 15 and June 17, when the Muslim residents of the city will celebrate Eid al-Fitr, marking the end of the fasting period.

In preparation for Ramadan, the municipality carried out a comprehensive cleaning operation in the neighborhoods and cleared large garbage dumps, including removing dirt and building waste. In addition, holiday lighting was deployed on the streets of East Jerusalem, 40 greeting signs and colorful festive banners were hung in three languages throughout the city, and large budgets were invested in paving roads and filling street potholes. In addition,

new benches and shaded areas have been installed around the Old City.

Throughout the holy month of Ramadan, the municipality continued these intensified cleaning operations, through increased rounds of garbage collection on main roads and ensuring public parks were cleaned. This was done in order to provide a festive and dignified atmosphere throughout the holiday.

In the field of transportation, parking lots were prepared for the use of visitors and worshipers, and the light rail line ran more frequently to make it easier for visitors to reach the Temple Mount and the Old City.

In addition to sanitation and infrastructure investment, cultural and social events were held in cooperation with the community administrations in 12 neighborhoods. For these events, school grounds were opened with night lighting for the benefit of local sports tournaments and general community use. In addition, the municipal welfare department distributed food stamps to those in need at welfare offices.



Great opening of the photo exhibition Swedish Dads in Jisr al Zarqa.

Glad to see such interest in the exhibition and the Swedish system of parental leave. Inspiring discussions on the importance of fathers' participation in child care - improves both the lives of women, children and not least the fathers themselves.

Interesting and encouraging to learn more



about Haifa Municipality/Health Bureau's projects on social inclusion, gender equality and economic development in the area.

To celebrate Europe Day on 9 May, the EU Ambassador, Emanuele Giaufret, and EU Member State Ambassadors, gathered at the Rabin Square to watch the Tel Aviv Municipality building lit with colours of the EU flag



June 2 is an Italian national holiday for the Festa della Repubblica, or the Festival of the Republic. Similar to Independence Day in the US and other countries, it celebrates the official formation of the Republic of Italy after World War II.



Italian Republic Day 2018 was marked in Israel by the Italian Embassy in Israel, the Italian Cultural Institute, the Italian Trade Commission and the Israel-Italy Chamber of Commerce in several high-quality musical events. On Wednesday, May 30, the traditional reception was held at the residence of the Italian Ambassador, Janeluigi Benedetti, during which an extraordinary concert was held by the ensemble of saxophones of the National Jazz Orchestra of the Conservatoires of Music in Italy and a special performance by the very well known pianist Danilo Rhea.

Some 700 guests attended the event at the ambassador's residence, representing the diversity of contacts held by the Israeli embassy during the year. Among those present were many members

of the Italian community in Israel and some of the veterans of the Jewish Brigade, who received the highest medal of honor from the Italian parliament in 2017 - the gold medal

for military heroism. The Israeli government was represented by Energy Minister Yuval Steinitz, Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Office Michael Oren, and Cabinet Secretary Tzachi Braverman.

Ambassador Benedetti spoke and stressed the international status that Italy had reached in the 72 years since the establishment of the Republic. He noted in particular the excellence of the country's economic-industrial system, research and culture. He also mentioned the important contribution of the Italian Jewish community to the growth of Italy as well as the development of Israel. Thanks to this human bridge, relations between Italy and Israel have developed and deepened in the past 70 years, until

a strategic partnership was created, especially in areas such as science and technology. Minister Steinitz agreed with his remarks and noted the close ties between the two countries, especially in the area in which he is trusted. He mentioned the EastMed project as an example of regional cooperation between Italy, Israel, Cyprus, Greece and the European Union.

The next day, Thursday, May 31, the second event of the Italian national holiday 2018, "Music on the Beach", was held at the Gordon Beach in Tel Aviv, a free open concert for the general public, which is being held for the second year. This is an initiative of the Italian Cultural Institute, together with the Tel Aviv-Jaffa Municipality. This year the program was a performance by Danilo Raya's trio of jazz, "Doctor 3", and before him a performance by the National Jazz Orchestra of the Conservatoires of Music in Italy.

The initiative is part of the cultural program of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs - "Italy, Cultures, the Mediterranean" - and aims to offer the Israeli audience a quality program of Italian jazz in a festive and friendly atmosphere.

#VIVEREALLITALIANA

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his wife Sara attended a reception in honor of Russia's National Day at Sergei's Courtyard in Jerusalem, first national day to be held in Jerusalem by any country.



Attached photo credit: Amos Ben-Gershom (GPO)

Ambassador of Russia to Israel HE Anatoly Volkov

Prime Minister said:

"We are pleased to be here for two reasons. First of all it is Russia's holiday and it is a holiday that is being dedicated and marked here in Jerusalem. I anticipate that there will be many more such days in Jerusalem. Second, as you know, it is the opening of the World Cup. I am also Foreign Minister and can only express the hope that everyone will win."

Netanyahu also thanked Russian President Vladimir Putin for his "fight against anti-Semitism."

In April 2017, Russia surprised many by recognizing Western Jerusalem as Israel's capital. However, Moscow has made plain that it considers East Jerusalem the capital of a future Palestinian state and vehemently opposed the US administration's December 6 decision to recognize all Jerusalem as Israel's capital.

In his speech on the reception, new arrived Russian Ambassador Anatoly Viktorov highlighted the fact that this year's Russia Day celebration is being hosted in Jerusalem. However, he stressed that the recognition of West Jerusalem

as the capital was contingent on the eastern part of the city becoming the seat of a future State of Palestine after a peace deal has been reached.

"We stand ready to facilitate such an agreement," he said.

Viktorov, who arrived in Israel earlier this month and has still to present his letter of credence to President Reuven Rivlin, hailed the growing friendship between Moscow and Jerusalem.

"It is obvious that in recent years our bilateral ties have been significantly upgraded," he said.

He also thanked Netanyahu for participating in person in this year's Russia Day celebration.

"Let me suggest that your presence here today is a clear indicator of transformations in the relations between Russia and Israel," he said, adding that Netanyahu's presence sends "a very positive message."

Sergei's Courtyard, a historic complex in the Jerusalem neighborhood known as the Russian Compound, which Israeli authorities handed to Russia a decade ago in a goodwill gesture.

Viktorov also referred to Sergei's Courtyard, noting that it was built more than 100 years ago.

"This place was established as the first permanent spiritual and cultural mission of Russia in the Holy Land," he said, thanking the Israeli government for handing it back to Russia in 2009.

Built in the 19th century for Russian pilgrims by Grand Duke Sergey Alexandrovich, the son of Tsar Alexander II, the courtyard was nationalized during the British Mandate.

"President Putin, with whom we cooperate in so many areas, asked me to finalize the transfer of this unique property to its Russian owners. This was held up by bureaucracy," Netanyahu said.

"But I was especially honored to have had the opportunity to tell him, 'Here are the keys to Sergei's Court,' and now I'm especially honored and deeply moved to be able to celebrate Russia Day here."

White Night Tel Aviv

The Tel Aviv White Night (Laila Lavan) is one of the biggest cultural nights of the year in 'the city that never sleeps'. Taking place late each June, the Tel Aviv White Night sees tens of amazing events taking place throughout the night across the city, from beach concerts and parties, to special exhibitions and tours, the wide-ranging focus of the night means that there's something for everyone!



During the "White Night" artists, performers and cultural institutions come together to celebrate Tel Aviv's vibrancy and openness. For the third time in a row, there were an European contributions by cultural institutions in Tel Aviv. Named "Performance Europa" exciting performances and interactive shows were opened to the public.

The Delegation of the European Union in Israel and the Municipality of Tel-Aviv-Yafo were collaborated for White Night, and this year was presented:

Follow the Stars – celebration of live performances and interactive installations from seven EU Member States.

For the entire evening, Bialik Square was turn into a European performance art complex that operated with an urban-happening atmosphere for the entire family. the artistic program included live shows of acrobatics, breakdance, circus and even a flamenco performance.

Austrias contribution was an exhibit “ Austrias contribution was a two innovative objects by Ars Electronica Solutions, which took the audience on an interactive journey – an Interactive projection mapping and sound installation of the Austrian media-artist, director, choreographer and composer Klaus Obermaier – that was projected on the front of Beit Ha'ir.



In “Dancing House” the users are called upon to move, to jump, and thereby – as indicated in the title – bringing the building and themselves to dance.

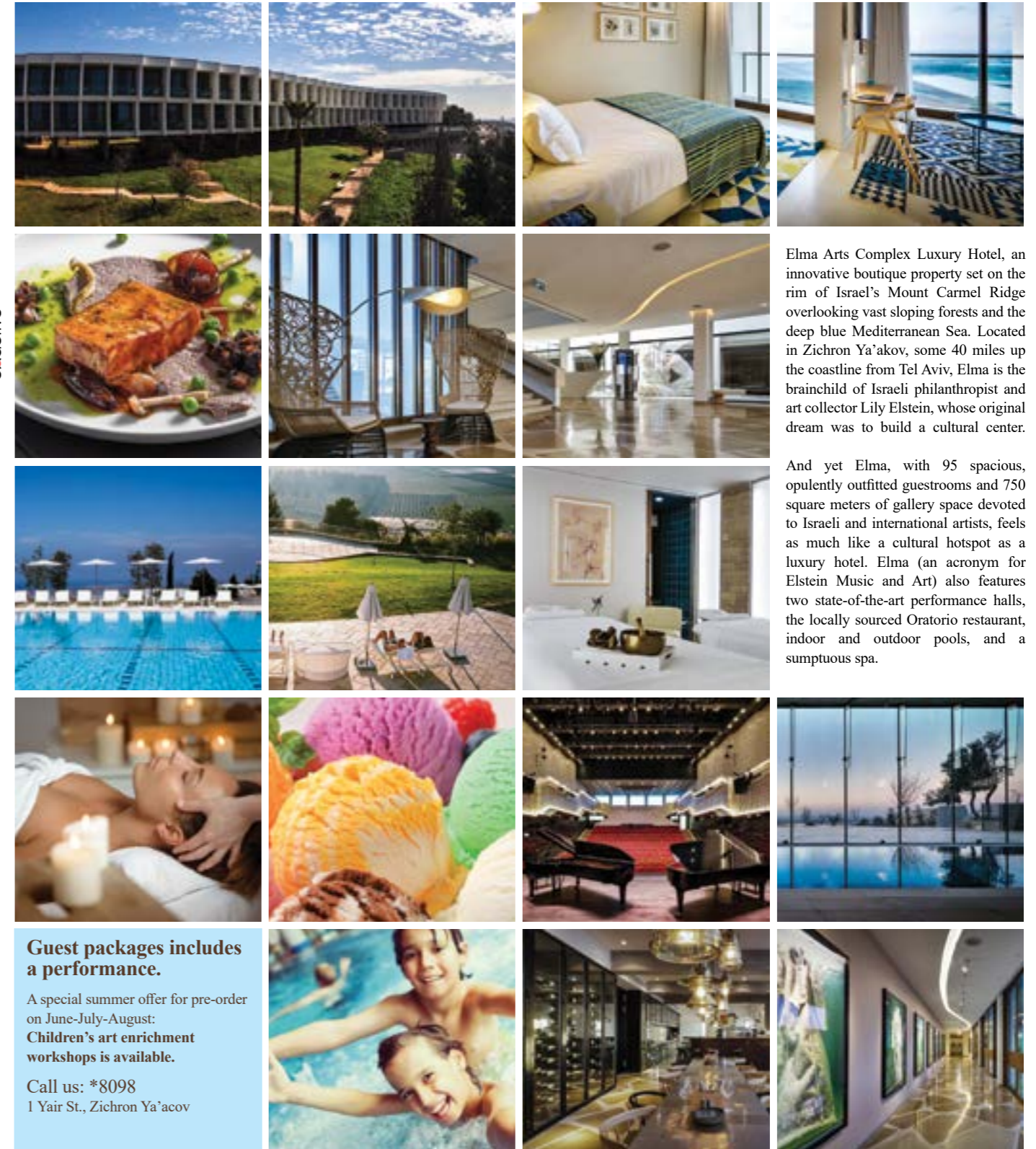
From Lithuania was hosted Konstantin Kosovec – a performer that combines circus, contemporary dance and aerial and pole acrobatics. Kosovec was performing internationally, and now Tel Aviv is also on his list.



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exactive

Elma Arts Complex Luxury Hotel, an innovative boutique property set on the rim of Israel's Mount Carmel Ridge overlooking vast sloping forests and the deep blue Mediterranean Sea. Located in Zichron Ya'akov, some 40 miles up the coastline from Tel Aviv, Elma is the brainchild of Israeli philanthropist and art collector Lily Elstein, whose original dream was to build a cultural center.

And yet Elma, with 95 spacious, opulently outfitted guestrooms and 750 square meters of gallery space devoted to Israeli and international artists, feels as much like a cultural hotspot as a luxury hotel. Elma (an acronym for Elstein Music and Art) also features two state-of-the-art performance halls, the locally sourced Oratorio restaurant, indoor and outdoor pools, and a sumptuous spa.

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Romania represent Ok World Wide – a group of dancers that combines break dance and acrobatics. OK World Wide has been competing in talent shows such as Britain’s Got talent, where they got to the semifinals, and in Romanian’s Got Talent, where they took second place. They have been performing all over the world – and now also in Israel.



From Germany was hosted Duo Piti – an acrobatic and modern dance duo that won the German TV-Show “Got to Dance“ in 2015, and received the title “Best Dance Act Germany”. With their mix of acrobatics and modern dance, Duo Piti are performing on stages all over Europe – and now also in Tel Aviv.



The Czech Republic exhibited the performance “Skiing Odyssey” of The Trick Brothers company that combines street theatre, juggling, handling objects, acrobatics and a lot of humour. Two skiers are lost and undergoing a cross-country odyssey- a journey with an obscure course as well as ending. The audience was both mentally and physically drawn into their performance.



From Spain was presented the Flamenco show TABLAO FLAMENCO by dancer and choreographer Adva Yermiyahu. It is a sweeping, moving and energetic Flamenco show combining singing, guitar and dancing, presenting the art of Flamenco in its authentic form, as it is currently performed in Spain. Special guest: Manuel Cazas, One of the leading guitarists in Spain today that plays with the most known flamenco artists.



From Poland was exhibited “JA GORE” – a show of the Polish Teatr Akt company that combines mime, dance, physical theatre and new circus in one. This is a ritual meeting of people living in accordance with the laws of nature in harmony with 4 Elements, especially fire...

The Member States and cultural institutions participating in the event are: the German Embassy, the Lithuanian Embassy, the Spanish Embassy, the Austrian Cultural Forum, the Romanian Cultural Institute, the Czech Centre and the Polish Institute.



A celebration of British Culture



An initiative of the British Council and the Clore Israel Foundation, designed to showcase British festival culture through a roadshow featuring visual arts, theatre, dance and music. A celebration of British innovation and diversity, SHOW UK aims to engage and connect with young people across a range of communities all over Israel through capacity building workshops. We believe that the world of creative arts can inspire a language of love and understanding. It opens our hearts to new friendships and our minds to new possibilities. It has the power to bring people closer and promote understanding. That is the goal of SHOW UK – a new cultural project by the British Council and the Clore Israel Foundation. Bringing British artists, musicians, dancers, and actors to perform at festivals and engage with communities all across Israel, SHOW UK celebrates innovation, embraces diversity, and creates something new and beautiful between Israel and the UK.

I Infinite is part dance, part video installation and is the kick-off performance for SHOW UK.

A solo dance piece that uses hypnotizing imagery and movement to deliver a mesmerizing meditation on the digital world's quest to re-create life. I Infinite is performed in a white cube space. You, the audience, are free to roam the space as you please, to stand close to the dancer or just sit, transfixed, to watch the delicate movement so often missed in more traditional theatre venues.

Created by Tom Dale/ Barret Hodgson/ Maria Olga Palliani. Co-produced by Dance4. Supported by British Council, Dance Digital, Deda, National Lottery through Arts Council England and Nottingham Lakeside Arts. Choreography: Tom Dale/ Digital Media Artist: Barret Hodgson / Performers: Jemima Brown and Maja Furnes.



First Philippine Film Festival opens in Israel

1 July 2018, Tel Aviv - The Philippine Embassy in Israel, in partnership with the Film Development Council of the Philippines (FDCP) and Cinematheque Tel Aviv, Cinematheque Jerusalem, and Cinematheque Haifa, will launch the first Philippine Film Festival in Israel in Cinematheque Tel Aviv on Sunday, 08 July.

The festival will open in Cinematheque Tel Aviv with *On the Job*, a gritty crime thriller which premiered worldwide at the Cannes Film Festival in 2013 and was received with a standing ovation at its first screening. Joel Torre, who won a Best Actor award for his performance at the 17th Puchon International Fantastic Film Festival in Bucheon, South Korea, plays Mario Maghari, a convicted felon who carries out contract killings during his incarceration to earn money to support his family.

Three other films will be shown during the film festival. On 15 July, Cinematheque Jerusalem will screen *An Open Door*, a documentary about Philippine President Manuel Quezon's policy to create a safe haven in the Philippines for Jewish refugees from the Holocaust. On 22 July, Cinematheque Haifa screens *Smaller and Smaller Circles*, a screenplay

based on a Filipino crime novel – the first of its genre in the Philippines – that won both the Carlos Palanca Grand Prize for the English Novel and the National Book Award.

The film festival wraps up on 29 July in Cinematheque Tel Aviv with *Die Beautiful*, a comedy-drama that takes off from a transgender beauty queen's final request to be made up as a different celebrity during every day of her wake. The film, which debuted at the 29th Tokyo International Film Festival, won the Audience Choice Award and netted lead actor Paulo Ballesteros a Best Actor Award.

"We're excited and proud to be holding the very first Philippine Film Festival in Israel," Ambassador Neal Imperial declared. "Philippine cinema has been undergoing a renaissance in the past decade, and we've seen some truly well-made films emerge during this period."



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Alice in Chains perform in Caesarea, Israel.

July 17, 2018

American band Alice in Chains announced their first Israel show on July! Alice in Chains formed in the late '80 and are considered one of the most influencing bands of the grunge period, with 20 million records sold. Their music has elements of rock, alternative rock and metal. After the death of their frontman Layne Staley in 2002 and a break from the business, the band is again active and published their last album in 2013.



The Chainsmokers in Tel Aviv, Israel.

July 19, 2018

American producers and DJs The Chainsmokers will perform in Israel again this summer, after a successful concert last year. After two successful EPs, The Chainsmokers released their debut album in 2017: "Memories...do not open", including the hit "Something just like this" featuring Coldplay. The album has been an immediate success since the release, debuting as number one in the US Billboard 200. The Chainsmokers are also known for their outstanding performances involving multisensorial experiences. The Chainsmokers will perform at Live Park of Rishon Lezion, just outside Tel Aviv, on July 19, 2018. concert at Raanana Amphitheater, at the outskirts of Tel Aviv, on July 4, 2018.

Bomba Estereo in Tel Aviv, Israel. July 23, 2018



Colombian band Bomba Estereo is performing for the first time in Israel this July 2018. Bomba Estereo has a characteristic cumbia style, or "electro tropical". The group was formed in Bogota in 2001 and has released five studio albums, of which the most famous is probably "Amanecer", in 2015. They will bring to Israel their last album "Ayo", published in 2017. Bomba Estereo is performing at Barby, in Tel Aviv, on July 23, 2018.

For more updates, fill out my online form.



Lollipop Festival with Jason Derulo and Rita Ora in Tel Aviv, Israel. August 1, 2018

Lollipop Festival lands to Israel with a first edition full of surprises, this summer 2018. One night of pop-immersion, with world super stars like Jason Derulo and Rita Ora, along with many other local and international artists (Eliad Nahum, Axum and Adi Ulmansky). Tickets are on sale already from 275 NIS. The Lollipop festival is set to be one of the top events of the summer and will take place at Rishon Lezion Live park, at the outskirts of Tel Aviv, on August 1, 2018.



Die Antwoord in Tel Aviv, Israel. August 2, 2018

South African rappers Die Antwoord are returning to Tel Aviv in August 2018, for their second concert in Israel. Die Antwoord are a hip-hop trio whose music has cultural references to “zef”, a counterculture South African movement (in afrikaans “zef” means “common”). Their songs are sung in Afrikaans, Xhosa, and English, and their most popular hits include “Ugly boy” and “I fink u freeky”. Die Antwoord return to Israel after a sold-out concert in 2016, this time accompanied by Moonchils Sannely. Die Antwoord will perform at the Live Park Amphitheater in Rishon Lezion, at the outskirts of Tel Aviv, on August 2, 2018.

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