

Israeli foreign press official visits South Florida

By SERGIO CARMONA
STAFF WRITER

The senior foreign press coordinator in the office of the Prime Minister of Israel recently visited South Florida.

David Baker discussed the current situation in Israel from a media perspective at Shalom Community Center in North Miami and Broken Sound Country Club in Boca Raton. The Bnai Zion Foundation, an organization which supports diverse humanitarian projects in Israel that improve the lives of thousands in need, hosted Baker.

Baker is a native of Queens, NY and liaises between the prime minister's office and the international press corps where he explains the Is-



David Baker, senior foreign press coordinator in the office of the Prime Minister of Israel, speaks during his South Florida visit.

Staff photo/
Janeris Marte

raeli government's policies, presents the state's spokespeople to the international media and serves on the front lines of Israel's media battleground.

In an interview before his discussion at Shalom Community Center, Baker discussed the difficulty in his capacity with working with the

foreign media on how it portrays Israel in a negative light. He mentioned that there are a lot of misconceptions. He also said that there are many positives to the Jewish State.

"Israel is a world-leader in hi-tech and has one of the highest life expectancy rates, especially for women, in the

world," he said. "Israel is also a fun place and the Israelis are a happy bunch. They're thankful for what they have and we're proud to have a country of our own even with all the problems we confront."

During the discussion, Baker brought up the topic of the difficult peace process with the

Palestinians.

"We do not at this point, unfortunately, have Palestinian partners to sit down at the table," he remarked. The Palestinians continue to boycott the peace process. They refuse to sit down with us. They have these preconditions."

During the presentation's question and answer session, Baker was asked about the issue of Iran. He replied that the issue makes his job much more challenging.

"The Iranian quest for acquiring a nuclear weapon is something that must come to an end," he said. "They must not be allowed to obtain a nuclear weapon. We do believe that a diplomatic solution is preferable but the win-

dow of opportunity for reaching such a solution is closing every day."

Rabbi Rikki Arad, the Bnai Zion Foundation's Southeast Region's executive director, said about the discussion, "I think the questions really show that people care. We can see the passion in the questions and you can tell people are emotionally involved with what is happening in Israel."

Sy Brief, a North Miami Beach resident who attended the discussion, said "It was a very brief analysis of what he does and it was nice. The questions were profound. Everyone wants to help and that's really the issue."

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For more information please contact
 Rabbi Rikki Arad, Southeast Region Executive Director,
 at 305 949 0076 or rikki.arad@bnaizion.org

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