

Ynet-News January 30, 2020 – Thursday

01.30.20 – Th - - News Placed in Jan 29 spot - Wednesday

Former Hamas leader of Palestine, living in Doha, Qatar, claims he will make it fail  
Replaced former note of Ynet-News January 28, 2020 – Tuesday  
Hamas to join emergency Palestinian talks in West Bank over Trump plan

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Health Minister Litzman bans flights Tel Aviv to Beijing China until March 28

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Airstrike on Gaza observation posts for Mortars, incendiary balloons, & shooting at IDF

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Israel to apply jurisdiction of West Bank after March 2 elections, as teams study maps

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Vladimir Putin is first leader to discuss the Israel jurisdiction plan with Netanyahu

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Iran factory thrives on making 2,000 Israeli and U.S. flags a month for burning

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Negev concerned their high-tech industry & farms are part of territory exchange

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Palestinian leader rejects Trump peace plan with 'a thousand no's'

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WHO declares global coronavirus emergency; 19 countries; 7,800 cases; 170 dead

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Gulf Arabs encourage Palestinians to grasp this opportunity to begin talks

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Kushner: Palestine must divorce from all the history trappings of bad leadership

01.30.20 – Th -

Former Hamas leader of Palestine, living in Doha, Qatar, claims he will make it fail

01.30.20

Former Hamas leader: Palestinians working to foil Trump plan

Peace plan envisages two-state solution, but with strict conditions that Palestinians have balked at; Mashal calls to return to traditional position which 'holds onto Palestinian rights'

Reuters| Published: 01.30.20 , 20:26

Palestinians around the world are uniting to thwart U.S. President Donald Trump's Middle East peace plan, former Hamas leader Khaled Mashal said Thursday, criticizing Arab governments who supported the plan.

"We completely reject this deal and we are confident it will fail. But we will not wait for its failure, we will make it fail," Mashal told Reuters from his residence in Qatar's capital Doha.

Trump's plan, unveiled alongside Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, envisages a two-state solution with Israel and a future Palestinian state living alongside each other, but with strict conditions that Palestinians have balked at.

POTUS proposed a demilitarized Palestinian state, with borders drawn to meet Israeli security needs while granting U.S. recognition of Israeli settlements in the West Bank and of Jerusalem as Israel's indivisible capital.

Mashal said Palestinians were talking with each other about how to mobilize against what Trump has called the "deal of the century".

"The consensual Palestinian position is to reject it," the former terror group leader said.

"We have begun positive steps to unify the Palestinian side. Allah willing, it will cause this deal to fail."

On Mashal's wall is a huge cityscape photograph of Jerusalem, prominently featuring the Dome of the Rock and the Al-Aqsa Mosque, two Muslim holy sites that Palestinians seek as part of the capital of a future state in the east of the city.

RETURN TO THE "TRADITIONAL" STANCE

Trump's plan diverges from previous U.S. policy and a 2002 Arab League-endorsed initiative that offered Israel normal relations in return for an independent Palestinian state and full Israeli withdrawal from territory captured in the 1967 Six-Day War.

Mashal criticized certain Arab states for turning their back on the Palestinian cause in endorsing the proposal, saying this was "not an honorable position."

At the plan's unveiling, Trump publicly thanked the ambassadors of the Gulf states of Bahrain, Oman and the United Arab Emirates for their support of peace efforts and for attending the event.

Some analysts say Arab powers appear to be prioritizing close ties with the United States that are vital to countering Iran over traditional unswerving support for the Palestinians in their reaction to Trump's plan.

"No country, Arab, Muslim or international, has the right to accept something the Palestinians have rejected," said Mashal, calling for a "return to the traditional, Arab, Islamic position which holds onto Palestinian rights".

Mashal said the Trump deal was not new but was launched now to coincide with domestic politics in the United States and Israel.

Trump is going through an impeachment trial, and Netanyahu has been formally indicted in court on corruption charges. Both men deny any wrongdoing. Netanyahu also faces a difficult election in March.

"Our people have thwarted many poisonous deals and settlement plans that others have tried to impose on our people," said Mashal. "The righteous are stronger than the unrighteous."

01.30.20 – Th -

Health Minister Litzman bans flights Tel Aviv to Beijing China until March 28

01.30.20

Litzman bans all flights from China due to coronavirus outbreak

Health minister announces directive at end of meeting with senior health officials over confinement, treatment of virus; El Al suspends all flights to East Asian country  
Itay Blumenthal, Inbar Tvizel | Published: 01.30.20 , 19:29

Health Minister Yaakov Litzman banned on Thursday the entry of flights from China to Israel as a precautionary against the coronavirus outbreak in the East Asian country, which has already infected thousands and claimed dozens of lives.

Litzman announced the new directive at the end of a meeting at the Emergency Department of the Ministry of Health revolving around confinement and treatment of the virus.

"After extensive consultations, we've made a number of decisions pertaining to the coronavirus," said Litzman. "The numerous cases of the virus discovered in Europe require us to do everything we can to keep the Israeli people safe. We do not currently allow flights from China to Israel until further notice."

"We shall examine tourists arriving in Israel from other countries as well and those who return from China will have to spend two weeks in solitary confinement at their homes - the period when they may still be contagious."

The health ministry is expected to publish precise guidelines on **Thursday** regarding domestic confinement of Israelis returning from China.

Health Ministry Director-General Moshe Bar-Siman-Tov said that the ministry will take special measures to ensure the public's health, even forcing confinement on people suspected of carrying the deadly pathogen.

Among the **attendants at the meeting** were representatives of the health ministry, hospitals and HMOs, **Magen David Adom**, IDF Medical Corps Commander Brigadier General Dr. **Tarif Bader**, Israel Fire and Rescue Services and representative of the Chinese embassy in Israel.

Earlier Thursday, Israeli airline **El Al** on **said it will suspend all flights to China** starting Thursday **for a period of at least two months**, due to the outbreak of the deadly coronavirus in the country.

The **death toll from the virus currently stands at 170**. The figures released early Thursday cover the previous 24 hours and represent an increase of 38 deaths and 1,737 cases for a **total of 7,711**. Of the new deaths, 37 were in the **epicenter of the outbreak in Hubei** province and one in the southwestern province of Sichuan.

"After assessing the situation, El Al decided to suspend its flights to China until March 25," said the company in a statement. "The severity level of the disease remains unchanged."

The company added the spread of coronavirus among humans is lower than the spread of other diseases, such as measles, although the **symptoms of the virus might only appear two weeks into being infected**.

"We want to reiterate guidelines for prevention: maintaining personal hygiene, avoiding contact with animals, eating unprocessed animal foods and avoiding crowded places when traveling to China."

In addition, **Chinese company Hainan Airlines** also said it has **suspended flights from Tel Aviv to Beijing until March 28**, leaving Israelis wishing to travel to China's capital with no option of a direct flight.

"As of this hour, the company will continue to operate from Tel Aviv to Shenzhen twice a week, in accordance with the developments and instructions of the authorities," said the company in a statement.

The new virus has now **infected more people in China than** were sickened there during the 2002-2003 SARS outbreak.

The **death rate** of the new virus currently **stands at 2%** but said the figure was very **preliminary**. With fluctuating numbers of cases and deaths, scientists are only able to produce a rough estimate of the fatality rate and it's likely many milder cases of the virus are being missed.

In comparison, the **SARS virus killed about 10%** of people who caught it. The new virus is from the **coronavirus family, which includes those that can cause the common cold** as well as more serious illnesses such as SARS and MERS.

01.30.20 – Th -

Airstrike on Gaza observation posts for Mortars, incendiary balloons, & shooting at IDF

01.30.20

IDF strikes Hamas posts along Gaza perimeter fence

Retaliatory strikes come following host of acts of aggression carried out recently from the Hamas-ruled enclave; military says Hamas 'will carry the consequences'

Elior Levy, Yoav Zitun | Published: 01.30.20 , 17:56

The IDF on Thursday attacked several Hamas observation posts and positions along the Gaza-Israel perimeter fence.

The strikes were carried out as retaliation to a host of recent acts of aggression from the Hamas-ruled enclave, such as flying of incendiary balloons into Israeli territory and shooting at an IDF post earlier Thursday.

Mortar fire landed in an open area in Eshkol Regional Council after rocket sirens blared near the Gaza Strip border, IDF Spokesperson's Unit said on Wednesday.

The IDF also reported it had detected two more rocket launches from the Palestinian-ruled enclave that haven't crossed the border and landed within the Gaza Strip.

Israel carried out several retaliatory airstrikes on Hamas positions in the southern Gaza Strip, including arms manufacturing facilities and underground infrastructure.

IDF officials say that the military holds Hamas responsible for what is happening in and out of the Gaza Strip and it will carry the consequences for any action against Israeli citizens.

Earlier Wednesday, an object wrapped in gift wrap tied to several balloons, suspected to be an explosive device, landed in Sdot HaNegev Regional Council near the Gaza Strip. Military bomb disposal units and police forces arrived at the scene.

01.30.20 – Th -

Israel to apply jurisdiction of West Bank after March 2 elections, as teams study maps

01.30.20

Kushner repeats call for Israel to wait on West Bank sovereignty

Head of team behind on Donald Trump's Mideast peace plan says Jerusalem should wait until after March 2 elections to declare jurisdiction over its settlements in the territory,

tells news website that Washington preparing to discuss technical details with Israel, but this 'will take time'

Ynet, Reuters | Published: 01.30.20, 12:06

The chief architect of the newly unveiled U.S. plan for Middle East peace has reiterated an American warning against Israel rushing to annex the areas of the West Bank in which it has settlements.

White House senior adviser Jared Kushner - the son-in-law of U.S. President Donald Trump - said Washington wants Israel to wait until after its March 2 elections before making any moves towards annexation following the announcement of the Trump peace plan, which was embraced by Israel but rejected by the Palestinians.

Kushner raised the stop sign in a video interview with GZERO Media posted online Thursday.

He told the global affairs website, a subsidiary of political risk analysis firm Eurasia Group, that the U.S. is preparing to discuss the technical details with Israel, but that this discussion "will take time."

When he was asked about Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's announcement to have a governmental vote next week on applying Israeli jurisdiction in the West Bank, Kushner responded: "Let's see what happens. The hope is that they'll wait until after the election." Netanyahu's initial remark that the settlements could be brought under Israeli jurisdiction as soon as Sunday was quickly downplayed in Israel officials after Kushner on Tuesday expressed his opposition to the move.

Netanyahu spokesman Jonatan Urich on Tuesday speedily deleted a tweet he posted immediately after the announcement of the Trump plan, in which he claimed that sovereignty would soon be announced.

When Kushner was asked by GZERO whether the Trump administration would support an immediate annexation measure, Kushner replied: "No, we've agreed with them on forming a technical team to start studying the maps."

The Trump plan makes clear that the settlements would remain in Israeli hands as part of a final peace agreement, something hinted at in November when Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said that, "the establishment of Israeli civilian settlements in the West Bank is not, per se, inconsistent with international law."

A senior Jerusalem official made clear Wednesday that the government would not be voting on annexation in any event, despite speculation that this would be on the cards. "The term is 'applying jurisdiction'," he said. "The areas in question are not currently in the hands of any other state and therefore annexation is not the correct term."

Hawkish Defense Minister Naftali Bennett, however, said Wednesday that postponing a decision to apply jurisdiction over the settlements would be a grave mistake.

"Whatever we fail to do before the [March 2] election will never get done - and we all understand that," Bennett said.

He said he has set up a special team comprising of IDF and government officials to work on the immediate implementation of any decision to extend Israeli jurisdiction.

"They will now have to provide services to 500,000 [West Bank] settlers," the defense minister said.

Attorney General Avichai Mandelblit also struck a note of caution Tuesday, saying that his job is to assist the government in carrying out its policies but **there must be restraint** on the part of a transitional government.

He said, however, that annexation would not be illegal solely because the government was a transitional one.

"One must examine why the need for haste and why the subject cannot be left for a new government," he told the INSS security conference in Tel Aviv.

Mandelblit is expected to outline for Netanyahu the difficulties with an interim government declaring Israeli sovereignty over all West Bank settlements.

The main legal problem facing such a drastic move stems from the fact that interim governments such as the one currently installed in Israel don't normally have the right to make impactful decisions that will affect future administrations.

"My view is that it is my duty to help the elected administration apply its policies, and that means there are certain rules to follow," said Mandelblit on Tuesday. "Interim governments need to be restrained. If a request is made [by the interim government], I will review it legally, but the current government has other things to worry about first." According to Mandelblit, requests made by the current administration are approved 99% of the time.

"If the request is not approved for some reason, the exception becomes the rule. We need to remember that in the end **we're a nation governed by laws.**"

Twenty years ago, at the end of Ehud Barak's term as prime minister, then-attorney general Elyakim Rubinstein opposed the continuation of his administration's negotiations with the Palestinians, reasoning that even though **it wasn't technically illegal**, it was **not proper for an outgoing administration to conduct negotiations that might lead to future binding decisions.**

"The authority of a government before elections is meant to prevent any potential power vacuum," wrote Rubinstein in a letter to Barak. "Such a government is in no way meant to bring such changes that are sure to have ramifications on a global scale. Your government needs to **avoid making any substantial changes**, all the more so **on the eve of the elections.**"

**01.30.20** – Th -

**Vladimir Putin is first leader to discuss the Israel jurisdiction plan with Netanyahu**

**01.30.20**

**PM in Moscow to discuss U.S. peace plan, retrieve Issachar**

**Netanyahu thanks Putin for pardoning the Israeli backpacker**, jailed over drug offenses, and says the Russian president is the first world leader with whom he discusses Trump's 'Deal of the Century'

Associated Press, Ynet| Published: 01.30.20 , 11:41

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu visited Moscow on Thursday to discuss the U.S. Mideast peace plan and take an Israeli woman who had been jailed in Russia back home.

Netanyahu landed in Russia's capital just minutes after Naama Issachar was released from prison. Putin pardoned the 26-year-old backpacker, who was arrested in April at a Moscow airport where she was transferring en route from India to Israel, a day earlier. Russian authorities said more than nine grams of hashish were found in her luggage and the New-Jersey born woman was later sentenced to 7.5 years in prison.

Russian President Vladimir Putin asked Netanyahu to give his regards to Issachar and her mother, saying he decided to pardon Naama after meeting with Yaffa at World Holocaust Forum event in Jerusalem last week.

The president, nevertheless, emphasized the woman had illegal drugs in her possession when she was arrested.

"I would like to thank you on behalf of all the people of Israel for granting a pardon to Naama Issachar," Netanyahu said. "We are all touched by this. This visit symbolizes an even greater warming in the relations between us."

The prime minister made the stopover after visiting Washington where President Donald Trump as he unveiled his long-awaited Mideast peace plan Tuesday.

Trump's plan envisions a disjointed Palestinian state that turns over key parts of the West Bank to Israel. It sides with Israel on key contentious issues that have bedeviled past peace efforts, including borders and the status of Jerusalem and Jewish settlements, and attaches nearly impossible conditions for granting the Palestinians their hoped-for state. Netanyahu told Putin as they sat down for talks in the Kremlin that he wants to discuss the plan and hear his opinion about it.

"You are the first leader I am speaking with after my visit in Washington for Trump's Deal of the Century," he said. "I think there is a new opportunity here, maybe even unique opportunity, and I'd like to discuss it with you and hear your insights."

01.30.20 – Th -

Iran factory thrives on making 2,000 Israeli and U.S. flags a month for burning

01.30.20

Iranian factory thrives on making Israeli and U.S. flags for burning

Diba Parcham plant in Khomein, southwest of Tehran, produces some 2,000 flags a month in its busiest periods - more than 1.5 million square feet of flags a year; 'The people of America and Israel know that we have no problem with them,' says owner

Reuters| Published: 01.30.20 , 09:12

Business is booming at Iran's largest flag factory which makes U.S., British and Israeli flags for Iranian protesters to burn.

At the factory in the town of Khomein, southwest of the capital Tehran, young men and women print the flags by hand then hang them up to dry.

The factory produces about 2,000 U.S. and Israeli flags a month in its busiest periods, and more than 1.5 million square feet of flags a year.

Tensions between the United States and Iran have reached the highest level in decades after top Iranian military commander Qassem Soleimani was killed in a U.S. drone strike in Baghdad on Jan. 3, prompting Iran to retaliate with a missile attack against a U.S. base in Iraq days later.

In state-sponsored rallies and protests in Iran, demonstrators regularly burn the flags of Israel, U.S. and Britain.

Ghasem Ghanjani, who owns the Diba Parcham flag factory, said: "We have no problem with the American and British people. We have [a] problem with their governors. We have (a) problem with their presidents, with the wrong policy they have."

"The people of America and Israel know that we have no problem with them. If people burn the flags of these countries at different rallies, it is only to show their protest."

Rezaei, a quality control manager, who declined to give her first name, said: "Compared to the cowardly actions of the United States, such as General [Qassem] Soleimani's assassination, this [burning an American flag] is a minimal thing against them. This is the least that can be done."

For hardliners, anti-American sentiment has always been central to Iran's Islamic revolution, and Iran's clerical rulers continue to denounce the United States as the Great Satan.

Last November, however, many Iranians took to the streets to protest against the country's top authorities, chanting "our enemy is not the U.S., our enemy is here."

During protests this month that erupted after Tehran belatedly admitted shooting down a passenger plane by mistake, young demonstrators in Tehran refused to step on American and Israeli flags painted on the street.

01.29.20 – We -

US, Japan & Israel pull diplomats from China, as flu emerged in wild animal market

01.29.20

Israel evacuates diplomats' families from China amid deadly virus outbreak

Health ministry considers ordering Israeli travelers returning from China to refrain from going to public spaces for several days, even if not showing symptoms

Inbar Tvizer, Itamar Eichner | Published: 01.29.20, 18:32

The Foreign Ministry decided on Wednesday to evacuate Israeli diplomats' families stationed in China, with its diplomatic missions operating at a reduced capacity.

Several diplomats have extended their Chinese New Year vacations and remained in Israel.

As of now, some 20 people were evacuated by the ministry from areas affected by the deadly pathogen.

Also on Wednesday, the health ministry announced it was considering ordering Israeli travelers returning from China to refrain from going to public spaces for several days, even if they do not show any symptoms.

A statement by the ministry said that its officials are "examining the entry policy into China on a wide scale," though it did not specify whether it includes halting flights to and from the Asian country.

"The issue will be discussed by the epidemics research team at the ministry at upcoming meetings and as a decision is made on the issue it will be officially published," said the ministry.

The United States and Japan flew citizens out of the Chinese city at the epicenter of a new virus outbreak on Wednesday, as the death toll rose sharply to 132 and the first case of the virus was discovered in the Middle East.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has said it is confident in China's ability to contain the coronavirus, but concerns are mounting, as its health authorities reported the number of confirmed cases had jumped by 1,459 to 5,974.

The number of deaths from the flu-like virus rose by 26 to 132, almost all in the province of Hubei, the capital of which is the city of Wuhan, where the virus emerged last month in a wild animal market. The central province of about 60 million people is under virtual lockdown.

01.29.20 – We -

Negev concerned their high-tech industry & farms are part of territory exchange

01.29.20

Negev communities raise concerns over Trump peace plan

Locals worry territorial exchanges as part of Mideast deal will turn area into an enclave within a future Palestinian state, putting Jewish settlement in the region at risk

Ilana Curie | Published: 01.29.20, 18:07

Local leaders raised criticism on Wednesday against a peace plan for the Middle East proposed by U.S. President Donald Trump, which suggests Israel should hand over lands in southern Israel to Palestinian hands as part of territorial exchanges.

Ramat HaNegev Regional Council head Eran Doron was shocked to discover Trump's peace plan includes the transfer of lands near which 200 families live mainly off agricultural crops.

"When they presented the map, I spotted some of my area of jurisdiction got taken away," said Doron. "No one spoke to me, neither before, nor after. Maybe now that the celebrations in Washington are over some will talk to me."

We say it simply – with all due respect to the preservation of the Jewish settlement in the West bank, not at the expense of the Jewish settlement in the Negev."

Doron also sent out an official brief to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, expressing his discontent with the proposed peace plan.

"Unfortunately, I learned yesterday evening that in order to preserve Jewish settlement in the West Bank, you are willing to give up on the Jewish settlement in the Negev," read Doron's letter. "I invite you to come and get an impression of the pioneering Zionist settlement here before you agree to hand it over. I expect you to commit to protecting the Jewish settlement in the Negev at least as much as you are committed to protecting the Jewish settlement in the West Bank.

Some residents of southern communities affected by Trump's plan, who were evacuated from their homes in past territorial exchanges, also raised their concerns over the initiative.

"The Deal of the Century takes us, the evacuees of Kadesh Barnea, many years back," said Tzadok, a resident of the southern community, named after another community of the same name in the Sinai Peninsula that was handed over to Egypt following the Israeli withdrawal from the territory, as part of the peace agreement with the neighbor to the south.

"The first thing we looked for was a place where we can establish a community knowing that it is within Israeli territory and we won't get evacuated again. We were proven wrong, however. This plan wants to turn us into an enclave within a different country."

It's completely ludicrous and very insulting. Instead of further developing this area – they want to hand it over to the Gazans. Everybody knows what will follow after. It is insulting to treat an area of settlement like that. It could potentially house 1,500 households, but there's no chance for the area to develop if they handed it over and turn it into an enclave in 'the state of Hamas-tan'."

According to the maps published as part of the Trump plan, two areas on the Sinai border will be transferred to the Palestinians. One will be used as an industrial zone and a high-tech hub, while the more-southern area, will be used for housing and agriculture.

The Ramat HaNegev Regional Council is currently working on a plan to establish another locality on the site. Its economy is planned to depend on tourism in the area.

01.29.20 – We -

Israeli Arabs vow to fight nightmare of land transfer to Palestinian state

01.29.20

Israeli Arabs vow to fight 'nightmare' of land transfer to Palestinian state

Trump peace plan singles out 10 Arab communities that it says could be part of future Palestine 'subject to agreement of the parties'; 'There will not be another Nakba,' says Taibeh mayor, while MK from Umm al-Fahm calls for Jews and Arabs to unite against the move

Hassan Shaalan| Updated: 01.29.20 , 14:37

Israeli Arabs in what is commonly known as the Triangle of Arab communities have slammed U.S. President Donald Trump's newly unveiled Mideast peace plan, under which their communities face being transferred to a future Palestinian state.

In its section on borders, the U.S. plan mentions by name the communities of Kafr Kara, Arara, Baqa al-Gharbiyye, Umm al-Fahm, Kalanswa, Taibeh, Kafr Qasem, Tira, Kafr Bara and Jaljulia.

The plan states: "These communities, which largely self-identify as Palestinian, were originally designated to fall under Jordanian control during the negotiations of the Armistice Line of 1949, but ultimately were retained by Israel for military reasons that have since been mitigated. The Vision contemplates the possibility, subject to agreement of the parties that the borders of Israel will be redrawn such that the Triangle Communities become part of the State of Palestine."

Some of the residents of the area are calling for Netanyahu and Trump to be jailed for the proposal and some branded the plan as a population transfer, something illegal under the Fourth Geneva Convention.

"This is a nightmare that cannot be implemented," Taibeh Mayor Shuaa Massarweh Mansour said.

"The peace plan has three objectives and all three are far from peace-related," he said. According to Mansour, the aims were to divert public discourse from Trump's impeachment, to distract from Netanyahu's own serious criminal indictment and to make Blue & White leader Benny Gantz appear a failure.

In all three, Mansour said, "Trump and Netanyahu failed."

The mayor also drew parallels to what the Palestinians call "Nakba" ("catastrophe") - the 1948 Israeli declaration of independence, which led to many Arab residents of pre-state Palestine fleeing or being driven from their homes.

"The plan is delusional, but we say in the clearest way possible - there will not be another Nakba. No one can possibly believe that such a plan could pass, even if it costs us the sanctity of our lives," Mansour said.

"Peace is made with the enemy. We are residents of the state, and we are not the enemy. The prime minister wants to save his skin at the expense of inciting hatred against the Arab population," he said.

"History will remember this plan as a regressive plan, an insignificant idea that aims to serve a delinquent whose intoxication has exceeded all basic human values," he said. "The will of the people is stronger than any plan, especially when it comes to the will and determination of the heroic Palestinian people. **Peace is made between nations and not by unilateral moves.** "

Kalanswa Mayor Abdulbast Salameh also called the peace plan a "political aid and political propaganda," which he said was "at the expense of Arab citizens."

"We are here on our land and no one can decide how we live," he said. "Trump is out of control... We are in favor of a just peace and we all strive for peace. It will not be so easy to transfer us to the [Palestinian] territories, it's all slogans. Peace is not made by force but by love."

Mariam, a resident of Umm al-Fahm, was equally defiant.

"The people are staying here, even if it doesn't suit Netanyahu, Gantz and Trump," she said.

"They are all racist and works for the benefit of their election campaigns. They should know that **we are willing to sacrifice our lives if someone harms us.** Netanyahu is shooting himself in the foot, if this plan comes to light, there will be terrible consequences. It will all blow up."

Knesset Member Yousef Jabareen, who is also a resident of Umm al-Fahm, said: "Umm al-Fahm is my hometown. Wadi Ara is the landscape of my life. Hundreds of thousands of Arab citizens live in the Triangle and this is their homeland. Trump and Netanyahu's annexation plan includes a section that lays the groundwork for transfer and the revocation of their citizenship.

**"Netanyahu is dangerous and will do everything to keep his throne.** The far-right government is out of control, and all of us, every Arab citizen, is in existential danger in our homeland. Every citizen, Arab or Jewish, to whom the values of democracy and equality are important, must stand with us and fight this dangerous plan."

Wadi Ara resident Abdel Masaruwa warned that, **"Netanyahu and Trump are launching a new war.** They are saying that the plan will lead to peace, but they are lying. Such people belong in prison, they are **two corrupt men trying to stay in power at all costs.**

On Tuesday, a **senior official in Jerusalem** confirmed that Israel was considering an exchange of land with the Palestinian Authority but **stressed that it was not a population transfer rather a transfer of territory.**

**"Most of the territorial exchange will be in [the Negev Desert] with a part near Hebron,"** the official said. **"Wadi Ara is also a possibility, in the area where 250,000 residents live, but this would require a referendum."**

**01.29.20 – We -**

**Dutch throw out Dutch Palestinian war crimes case against former IDF chief Gantz**

**01.29.20**

**Dutch court throws out war crimes case against Gantz**

Ismail Ziada was seeking damages for his family's home in Gaza, which was bombed in June 2014 airstrike that killed six of his family members, but presiding judge says Dutch justices 'not competent to rule on the case'

Reuters| Published: 01.29.20 , 14:01

THE HAGUE - A Dutch district court on Wednesday threw out a case alleging war crimes against White & White leader Benny Gantz brought by a Dutch Palestinian who lost six relatives in an Israeli air strike on Gaza in 2014, saying it did not have jurisdiction.

Gantz was IDF chief of staff at the time of the conflict.

The civil case for damages was filed referring to universal jurisdiction rules by claimant Ismail Ziada.

Judicial authorities in countries that recognize universal jurisdiction for serious offences such as war crimes and torture can investigate and prosecute those crimes no matter where they were committed.

"A Dutch judge is not competent to rule on the case of the claimant," presiding Judge Larisa Alwin said, explaining that universal jurisdiction could be applied for individual criminal responsibility but not in a civil case.

In civil cases in national courts, Gantz enjoys immunity from prosecution due to his government function at the time of the alleged crimes, Alwin said.

A career soldier, Gantz was chief of staff from 2011 until his retirement in 2015.

About 2,200 Palestinians are estimated to have been killed, up to 1,500 of them civilians during the conflict. On the Israeli side, 67 soldiers were killed and five civilians. The low Israeli death toll is due to its defensive capabilities in the face of massive rocket fire from Gaza.

Ziada was trying to claim damages for his family's home in the Gaza Strip, which was bombed in a June 2014 airstrike that killed his mother, three brothers, a sister-in-law and his 12-year old nephew.

Besides Gantz, he also sought the possibility of getting damages from the former commander of the Israeli Air Force, Amir Eshel, who is now Gantz's political adviser.

Ziada told reporters he was very disappointed with the verdict but said he would fight on. "Israel still enjoys impunity, everybody sees that and then the only opportunity to get justice is denied. This is unacceptable to me," he said.

He is expected to appeal but said he would study the ruling before making a final decision.

Gantz is the main rival to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in the March 2 election, Israel's third in less than a year after inconclusive ballots in April and September last year.

## Palestinian leader rejects Trump peace plan with 'a thousand no's'

01.28.20

### Palestinian leader rejects Trump peace plan with 'a thousand no's'

In an emotional televised address, Mahmoud Abbas brands the proposal a 'conspiracy' and says Jerusalem and rights of Palestinian people are 'not for sale'

Associated Press, Reuters | Published: 01.28.20 , 22:26

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas said "a thousand no's" Tuesday to the Mideast peace plan announced by President Donald Trump, which strongly favors Israel.

"After the nonsense that we heard today we say a thousand no's to the deal of the century," Abbas said at a press conference in the West Bank city of Ramallah, where the Western-backed Palestinian Authority is headquartered.

He said the Palestinians remain committed to ending the Israeli occupation and establishing a state with its capital in East Jerusalem.

"We will not kneel and we will not surrender," Abbas said, adding that the Palestinians would resist the plan through "peaceful, popular means."

The 84-year-old added that his people's rights "are not for sale."

"I say to Trump and Netanyahu: Jerusalem is not for sale, all our rights are not for sale and are not for bargain. And your deal, the conspiracy, will not pass," Abbas said.

Abbas then joined the Hamas terror organization in calling the peace plan a "conspiracy." The militant group ruling Gaza earlier said the Palestinian people "will not let these conspiracies pass. So, all options are open. The (Israeli) occupation and the U.S. administration will bear the responsibility for what they did," senior Hamas official Khalil al-Hayya said.

The plan would create a Palestinian state in parts of the West Bank, but would allow Israel to annex nearly all of its settlements in the territory. The plan would allow the Palestinians to establish a capital on the outskirts of East Jerusalem but would leave most of the city under Israeli control.

01.30.20 – Th -

WHO declares global coronavirus emergency; 19 countries; 7,800 cases; 170 dead

01.30.20

### WHO declares global emergency over virus from China

Health ministry publishes guidelines for Israelis traveling back from areas hit by coronavirus; directive urges patients not to go to public spaces for two-week period

Reuters, Itay Blumenthal, Inabr Tvizer | Published: 01.30.20 , 22:54

The World Health Organization declared the outbreak sparked by a new virus in China that has been exported to more than a dozen countries as a global emergency Thursday after the number of cases spiked more than tenfold in a week.

The UN health agency defines an international emergency as an "extraordinary event" that constitutes a risk to other countries and requires a coordinated international response.

China first informed WHO about cases of the new virus in late December. To date, China has reported more than 7,800 cases including 170 deaths. Eighteen other countries have since reported cases, as scientists race to understand how exactly the virus is spreading and how severe it is.

Experts say there is significant evidence the virus is spreading among people in China and have noted with concern instances in other countries - including the United States, France, Japan, Germany, Canada and Vietnam - where there have also been isolated cases of human-to-human transmission.

Speaking to reporters in Geneva, WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus noted the worrisome spread of the virus between people outside China.

The main reason for this declaration is not because of what is happening in China but because of what is happening in other countries, Ghebreyesus said. "Our greatest concern is the potential for this virus to spread to countries with weaker health systems which are ill-prepared to deal with it."

"This declaration is not a vote of non-confidence in China...on the contrary, WHO continues to have the confidence in China's capacity to control the outbreak," Ghebreyesus said.

On Thursday, France confirmed that a doctor who was in contact with a patient with the new virus later became infected himself. The doctor is now being treated in an isolated room at a Paris hospital. Outbreak specialists worry that the spread of new viruses from patients to health workers can signal the virus is becoming adapted to human transmission.

A declaration of a global emergency typically brings greater money and resources, but may also prompt nervous governments to restrict travel and trade to affected countries. The announcement also imposes more disease reporting requirements on countries. The health ministry published on Thursday guidelines for Israelis traveling back from areas hit by the coronavirus.

The new directive urges Israelis who have been to China in the past 14 days not to go to public spaces for a two-week period.

In any case of a fever, coughing or shortness of breath, patients are instructed to contact a health care provider or emergency room and notify them in advance that the patient has been in China recently.

Patients are also instructed to cover their mouth and nose with masks or other available cloth.

Absence from work during this two-week period would not require patients to obtain sick leave from a physician.

Earlier Thursday, Health Minister Yaakov Litzman banned the entry of flights from China to Israel as a precautionary against the coronavirus outbreak in the East Asian country.

Litzman announced the new directive at the end of a meeting at the Emergency Department of the Ministry of Health revolving around confinement and treatment of the virus.

"After extensive consultations, we've made a number of decisions pertaining to the coronavirus," said Litzman. "The numerous cases of the virus discovered in Europe require us to do everything we can to keep the Israeli people safe. We do not currently allow flights from China to Israel until further notice."

"We shall examine tourists arriving in Israel from other countries as well and those who return from China will have to spend two weeks in solitary confinement at their homes - the period when they may still be contagious."

Also on Thursday, Israeli airline El Al on said it will suspend all flights to China effective immediately for a period of at least two months, due to the outbreak of the **deadly pathogen in the country**.

**01.30.20** – Th -

**Gulf Arabs encourage Palestinians to grasp this opportunity to begin talks**

**01.30.20**

**Gulf Arabs back Trump's Mideast efforts, but not peace plan**

Arab world watches eagerly for Saudi reaction to Trump's so-called Deal of the Century as Gulf states remain reluctant to officially endorse plan

Associated Press| Published: **01.30.20** , 21:11

A tectonic shift in relations quietly underway for years now was on full display as representatives of Gulf Arab states attended U.S. President Donald Trump's unveiling this week of an Israeli-Palestinian plan that heavily sides with Israel and all but crushes Palestinian aspirations.

The audience at the White House, when Trump presented the plan alongside Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, included Christian Zionist leaders and staunch pro-Israel supporters, such as Republican party donor Sheldon Adelson. Rounding out the crowd were ambassadors of the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Oman, who posed for a photo at the White House ceremony for the plan, which Palestinians have outright rejected.

For the **Arab perspective**, however, **Saudi Arabia's reaction was the one most closely watched**. The kingdom expressed support for the Trump administration's efforts, but did not send its ambassador to attend the ceremony.

The Saudi response was also significant for what it didn't say - the **kingdom did not endorse the plan**, but also made no explicit mention of long-held Arab demands for a Palestinian state on occupied land with east Jerusalem as its capital.

Rather, **Saudi Arabia encouraged Palestinians to start "direct peace negotiations,"** essentially urging the Palestinians to accept the White House's **framework as the starting point for talks.**

"The Saudis crafted their message to appeal to two audiences: their domestic public and the Trump administration," Kristin Diwan Smith, a scholar at the Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington, said. Their formal statement, she said, does nothing to offend Trump or deter the Israelis.

**With the exception of Kuwait, all Gulf Arab countries have engaged** in outreach with Israel or pro-Israeli figures in recent years. The effort has accelerated as Saudi Arabia and Israel share a common threat in Iran.

Avi **Berkowitz**, a White House staffer intimately **involved in drafting the plan**, immediately **thanked Saudi Arabia** for its statement. In five separate tweets, he shared the Saudi response, as well as an article on the conservative Fox News network that carried the headline: "Saudi Arabia backs U.S.-Israel efforts to achieve Mideast peace." That tweet was shared by Trump's daughter Ivanka Trump, whose husband Jared Kushner was the chief architect of the plan.

Prominent Israeli-American Zionist figure Joel Rosenberg, who has led two Christian evangelical delegations to Saudi Arabia for meetings with Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, described the Saudi statement as "quite positive."

The optimistic spin on the Saudi response underscores how important the kingdom's support is to any future peace deal.

Less talked about, though, was a second Saudi statement published minutes after the first, announcing that King Salman had spoken with Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas and affirmed Saudi Arabia's "steadfast stance on the Palestinian issue and the rights of the Palestinian people."

Palestinian officials said that during their call, Abbas explained to the 84-year-old monarch why the Palestinians reject the plan and emphasized the issue of Jerusalem. They said King Salman told Abbas that Saudi Arabia supports any decision the Palestinians make.

Relations between the Palestinian leadership and Trump fell out after he recognized Jerusalem as Israel's capital and moved the U.S. Embassy there from Tel Aviv. In a show of support for Palestinians that year, King Salman renamed the 2018 Arab League conference "The Jerusalem conference" and pledged \$200 million in aid for Palestinians. Still, Saudi Arabia appears to have shelved its own Arab Peace Initiative, drawn up in 2002, that offers Israel normal ties with Arab states in return for Palestinian statehood on territory captured in 1967 - a plan that now starkly contradicts the White House's blueprint.

The U.S. plan skews in favor of Israel and shunts many of the Palestinians' core demands by keeping some 750,000 Jewish settlers in place, recognizing Israel's sovereignty of the strategic Jordan Valley, and **asserting Jerusalem as the "undivided capital" of Israel.**

Saudi Arabia's position has shifted with the rise to power of the king's son, Prince Mohammed. Unlike his father's generation, the 34-year-old crown prince appears primarily concerned with fighting off Iran and not with defending the Palestinian cause.

Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Bahrain have sought close ties with Trump and have used interfaith efforts to build ties with his evangelical base and pro-Israeli Jews, chiefly to counter Iran's footprint in the region.

As Trump campaigns for re-election, he's counting on his base of Christian evangelicals, who hold support for Israel at the very core of their faith. Most believe the return of the Messiah can take place only after the Jewish Temple Mount is rebuilt on the site of the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound in East Jerusalem.

Bahrain hosted a White House workshop last year to shore up Gulf Arab financial incentives that could woo the Palestinians to back the plan. Oman, which has ties with Iran, hosted Prime Minister Netanyahu in a surprise visit last year that served to remind Washington of its unique ability to be a conduit for talks.

The extent of Gulf Arab ties with Israel is still mostly kept private, though. Saudi Arabia and the UAE have allegedly used Israeli spyware to go after government critics.

In an interview with the Saudi-owned Al-Arabiya news channel this week, Kushner emphasized the threat of Iran as he tried to sell the channel's pan-Arab audience on his plan.

"The biggest threat right now is not Israel," Kushner said. "Iran is the big threat, Iran is who's shooting rockets at your airports and shooting rockets at your palaces."

"Israel could be the biggest ally to Saudi Arabia in terms of helping them have more advanced technology and defense and being safe," Kushner said.

Saudi Arabia this week rebuffed suggestions again it could normalize ties with Israel before Palestinians reach a settlement. That's in part because Saudi kings have long used their custodianship of Islam's holiest sites to vie for ideological supremacy over rivals Turkey and Iran. Each has historically competed to show their defense of Muslim claims to Jerusalem.

Responses to the White House plan fell along these political fault lines once again.

Turkey's Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu warned that "Jerusalem is our red line" while his Iranian counterpart, Mohammed Javad Zarif, told Muslims "to wake up" and reject any notion of the U.S. as an honest broker.

A column in the Saudi Al-Riyadh newspaper said Turkey and Iran could try to use the moment to gain political and social advantage through slogans of resistance to Trump's plan in the name of Islam and Palestinian rights.

Prominent Saudi writer Abdulrahman al-Rashed, who has close ties with the kingdom's crown prince, penned a column carried by several Saudi-owned news outlets urging Palestinians to "grasp this opportunity to begin talks."

01.29.20 – We -

Kushner: Palestine must divorce from all the history trappings of bad leadership

01.29.20

Jared Kushner Palestinians Have Never Done Anything Right in Their Sad Pathetic Lives

THE FIRST SON-IN-LAW JARED KUSHNER: PALESTINIANS HAVE NEVER DONE ANYTHING RIGHT IN THEIR SAD, PATHETIC LIVES

The first son-in-law has warned Palestinians not to “screw up this opportunity” at peace that he’s so graciously given to them.

BY BESS LEVIN

JANUARY 29, 2020

Jared Kushner Palestinians Have Never Done Anything Right in Their Sad Pathetic Lives

BY SAUL LOEB / GETTY IMAGES.

Last June, more than two years after his father-in-law assigned him the task of bringing peace to the Middle East, Jared Kushner held a big kickoff conference in Bahrain to unveil the economic portion of his plan—and it did not go well. For starters, Palestinian leadership boycotted the entire event, feeling that the plan was missing a few key details, such as, just as an example, solutions for control of the West Bank and Palestinian statehood. Kushner, ever the real estate agent, gave a speech in which he spoke of transforming the Gaza Strip into a tourist destination, failing to mention Israel and Egypt’s 12-year blockade of the Hamas-controlled territory, in addition to Israel’s 52-year-long occupation of the West Bank, which restricts trade and labor movements. When the **Boy Prince of New Jersey** touched on politics, it was to offer the savvy take that if everyone just stopped “doing terrorism,” it would “allow for much faster flow of goods and people.” Not surprisingly, the whole thing was panned by experts, one of whom **described Kushner’s plan as “the Monty Python sketch of Israeli-Palestinian peace initiatives.”** Undeterred, Kushner got on a call with Arab and Israeli reporters and, putting on his salesman cap, explained that his vision was 100% workable if Palestinian leadership would stop being so “hysterical and stupid.”

Was this the greatest way to convince people to get on board? Probably not! Yet, incredibly, **Kushner apparently thought it was exactly the right approach**, and we know this because on Tuesday, after the White House unveiled its full vision for peace in the Middle East—which calls for no evacuation of settlements, limits Palestinian presence in Jerusalem, and includes no path to statehood beyond the vague mention of a “future State of Palestine”—he repeated it again, except this time he cranked the a-hole from a 12 to a 45.

Appearing on CNN, **Kushner told Christiane Amanpour** that critics of his plan—of which there are a comically huge number—must “**divorce [themselves] from all of the history**” and **focus on the deal** he has outlined for them. And speaking of history, Kushner posited that **if this whole thing fails**, it’s not going to be because a glorified slumlord somehow didn’t get it right but because **Palestinians are morons who don’t know what’s good for them**. Sayeth Kushner:

You have 5 million **Palestinians who are really trapped because of bad leadership**. So what we’ve done is we’ve created an opportunity for their leadership to either seize or not. If they screw up this opportunity—which, again, **they have a perfect track record of**

missing opportunities—if they screw this up, I think that they will have a very hard time looking the international community in the face, saying they are victims, saying they have rights. This is a great deal for them. If they come to the table and negotiate, I think they can get something excellent....