

Ynet-News, August 09, 2020 – Sunday

08.09.20 – Su - - - News Placed in Aug 07 spot – Friday

Israel re-imposed public restrictions as wards reach full capacity & death toll at 600

08.09.20 – Su - - - News Placed in Aug 09 spot – Sunday

Current stand-off between Likud rescue package & Gantz's faction agenda stalls budget

08.09.20 – Su - - -

Trump fundraising for November vote nudges major donors for more campaign money

08.09.20 – Su - - -

10,000 Beirut protesters angered over blast & Hezbollah government ministers

08.09.20 – Su - - - News Placed in Aug 08 spot – Saturday

Lebanese say Hezbollah is security at the port, response was boycott news channel

08.09.20

Israel re-imposed public restrictions as wards reach full capacity & death toll at 600

08.09.20

Israel marks 600 coronavirus deaths since start of pandemic

There are 393 patients in serious condition, with 118 connected to ventilators; ministry reports only 254 new virus cases, citing low number of testing over weekend; ministers reimpose new public health restrictions

Ynet| Updated: 08.09.20 , 20:02

The Health Ministry Sunday evening reported four new coronavirus-related fatalities, raising the national death toll from the pathogen to 600.

The Ministry also reported 254 new virus cases, citing a lower number of daily tests, with only 3,776 conducted as of Sunday evening.

There are 393 patients in serious condition, with 118 connected to ventilators.

The number of active coronavirus patients currently ill with the disease stands at 24,554, bringing the number of people infected with the virus since the start of the outbreak to 82,515.

Hadassah Ein Kerem Hospital, Shaare Zedek Medical Center, Ichilov Medical Center and Sheba Medical Center all reported their coronavirus wards have reached full capacity, even though they continue to accept more patients.

According to Coronavirus National Information and Knowledge Center, the main COVID-19 hotspots in the country remain cities and towns with Haredi-dominated majority: Bnei Brak, Modi'in Illit, Elad and Beit Shemesh.

The Arab communities of Illit and Kafar Bara have also been designated by the center as virus hotspots.

Earlier on Sunday, Israel's ministerial committee on handling the pandemic decided to reinstate some of the earlier restrictions that had been lifted, in an attempt to slow the spread of the pathogen.

Ministers decided to once again restrict the number of people allowed to travel in a car to three, including the driver; extend a ban on more than 10 people at any indoor gatherings, including restaurants and synagogues, while outdoor meetings will be limited to no more than 20 people at a time.

Closures will also be re-imposed on all nightclubs, bars, event halls, cultural venues, water parks and amusement parks.

Existing restrictions on public events, including conventions, parties, festivals and organized trips, will be extended until further notice.

In workplaces, employees will still have to maintain a distance of two meters, wear a mask, use their own personal equipment where possible, have meetings of no more than 15 participants and abide by other social distancing guidelines.

Regional health officials will also be empowered to close down any businesses found in violation of the directives.

08.09.20

Current stand-off between Likud rescue package & Gantz's faction agenda stalls budget

08.09.20

Likud cancels weekly gov't meeting over row with Blue & White

Netanyahu's party claims that Gantz's faction refused to put the new coronavirus rescue package on the agenda, while Blue & White say the move is a political spin for PM to find a way to call snap elections and the aid program has not been formulated yet

Moran Azulay | Published: 08.09.20, 09:20

In a move that could signal another election, the Likud party has cancelled a weekly government meeting that was set to take place on Sunday morning over the Blue & White's alleged refusal to discuss a new coronavirus rescue package.

The latest row adds to the current stand-off between Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defense Minister Benny Gantz over the passage of the state budget, which threatens to trigger Israel's fourth election in a little over a year amid the coronavirus pandemic.

Likud in a statement blamed Blue & White for "refusal to put the new coronavirus aid program on the meeting's agenda".

Gantz's party, however, refuted the claims calling the move "an excuse" and saying, "this is not the first time the Likud has failed to fulfill its commitment".s

"This is a multi-billion, long-term aid plan that has not presented in full and has not been finalized," said Blue & White. "The attempt to table it overnight is nothing more than an irresponsible political spin. We expect the Likud to abide by the coalition agreement and approve the government's bylaws," it added.

"Israeli citizens expect stability and credibility from the government, and Blue & White will not agree to undermine this ... Blue and White informed the Likud that any vote related to coronavirus bills will not be delayed and will go through via a telephone vote."

According to the Likud, the latest rescue package, drafted by Netanyahu and Finance Minister Israel Katz, will cost the taxpayer around NIS 8.5 billion and seeks to help the population sectors hit the most by the economic crisis brought upon by the pandemic.

08.09.20

Trump fundraising for November vote nudges major donors for more campaign money

08.09.20

Trump to Adelson: Give me more money for campaign

In call with one of his major donors, president reportedly demanded why casino magnate 'wasn't doing more to bolster his reelection'; Politico says GOP officials 'rushed to smooth things over' but unclear if relationship damage is permanent

Ynet, Associated Press| Published: 08.09.20 , 14:14

U.S. President Donald Trump held a heated phone call this past week American Jewish magnate Sheldon Adelson, Republican officials said, in which Trump asked the GOP megadonor to contribute even more to his reelection campaign.

According to Politico, Adelson called Trump to discuss the U.S. aid bill for pandemic relief and the economy, but the president steered the conversation to the November vote and demanded to know why Adelson "wasn't doing more to bolster his reelection."

Politico cited three people who were familiar with the call, and reported that one of the three had said "it was apparent the president had no idea how much Adelson, who's donated tens of millions of dollars to pro-Trump efforts over the years, had helped him." The report said that Adelson "chose not to come back at Trump."

The call reportedly "alarmed" GOP officials, who feared upsetting one of Trump's most generous donors in the run-up to a challenging election.

The officials "rushed to smooth things over," the report said, but it was unclear whether Adelson was ready to be mollified or whether the call would impact on his future donations this cycle.

Adelson has been a staunch supporter of Trump since before the 2016 election that put him in the White House. The casino magnate and his Israeli-born wife Miriam donated \$30 million to Trump's campaign in the final months of the 2016 race and another \$100 million to the Republican Party for the 2018 Congressional elections.

They also gave \$10 million to a pro-Trump political action committee (PAC) in 2018 and each donated more than half a million dollars during this cycle, the New York Times reported.

With less than 100 days until the November election, in which Trump will presumably face off against former vice president and current front runner Joe Biden, the president is focusing on fundraising to bankroll the final stretch as he faces the prospect of being outraised by his rival.

After a fundraiser at a yacht club on Lake Erie on Thursday, Trump raised money at a pair of events Saturday in the Hamptons on New York's Long Island, including one hosted by his eldest son.

On Sunday, before returning to Washington, Trump was scheduled to attend another, in Deal, New Jersey, at the home of the late Stanley Chera, a friend and donor who died in April from the coronavirus.

08.09.20

10,000 Beirut protesters angered over blast & Hezbollah government ministers

08.09.20

Beirut protesters hurl rocks as anger over devastating blast reignites

Demonstrators gather around the capital's Parliament Square, call for the government and its Hezbollah ally to leave from power; top Christian cleric calls for cabinet to resign 'if it is unable to help the country'

Reuters| Published: 08.09.20 , 21:35

Lebanese protesters hurled rocks at security forces blocking a road near parliament on Sunday in a second day of anti-government demonstrations after the devastating explosion in Beirut last Tuesday.

Riot police wearing body armor and carrying batons clashed with demonstrators in chaotic scenes in central Beirut.

Thousands of demonstrators were converging on Parliament Square and nearby Martyrs' Square, a Reuters correspondent said. "We want the entire government to leave, we want elections now," demonstrator Yusef Dour said

"We gave these leaders so many chances to help us and they always failed. We want them all out, especially Hezbollah, because it's a militia and just intimidates people with

its weapons," Walid Jamal, an unemployed demonstrator, said, referring to the country's most influential Iran-backed armed grouping that has ministers in the government. Christian Maronite Patriarch Bechara Boutros al-Rai said the cabinet should resign as it cannot "change the way it governs".

"The resignation of an MP or a minister is not enough ... the whole government should resign as it is unable to help the country recover," he said in his Sunday sermon. Information Minister Manal Abdel Samad said she was resigning on Sunday, citing the explosion and the failure of the government to carry out reforms. Saturday's protests were the biggest since October when thousands of people took to the streets to demand an end to corruption, bad governance and mismanagement. About 10,000 people gathered at Martyrs' Square, which was transformed into a battle zone in the evening between police and protesters who tried to break down a barrier along a road leading to parliament. Some demonstrators stormed government ministries and the Association of Lebanese Banks.

People defied dozens of tear gas canisters fired at them and hurled stones and firecrackers at riot police, some of whom were carried away to ambulances. One policeman was killed and the Red Cross said more than 170 people were injured.

"The police fired at me. But that won't stop us from demonstrating until we change the government from top to bottom," Younis Flayti, 55, a retired army officer, said on Sunday.

Nearby, mechanic Sabir Jamali sat beside a noose attached to a wooden frame in Martyrs' Square, intended as a symbolic warning to Lebanese leaders to resign or face hanging.

"Every leader who oppresses us should be hanged," he said, adding he will protest again. Soldiers in vehicles mounted with machineguns were stationed beside the square on Sunday.

Tuesday's catastrophic explosion killed 158 people and injured more than 6,000, destroying parts of the city and compounding months of political and economic meltdown.

The army said that hope was fading of finding more survivors, Al Jadeed TV channel reported. The health ministry said on Saturday 21 people were missing.

"People should sleep in the streets and demonstrate against the government until it falls," said lawyer Maya Habli, as she surveyed the demolished port where the blast erupted. The prime minister and presidency have said 2,750 tonnes of highly explosive ammonium nitrate, which is used in making fertilizers and bombs, had been stored for six years without safety measures at the port warehouse.

The government has said it will hold those responsible to account.

Gutted neighborhoods

French President Emmanuel Macron was hosting U.S. President Donald Trump and other political leaders on Sunday for a UN-endorsed donors' conference by video to raise emergency relief for Lebanon.

The emergency donor conference raised pledges worth nearly 253 million euros (\$298 million) for immediate humanitarian relief on Sunday, French President Emmanuel Macron's office said.

The explosion hit a city reeling from economic crisis and the coronavirus pandemic. For many it was a dreadful reminder of the 1975-1990 civil war that tore the nation apart and destroyed swathes of Beirut, much of which has since been rebuilt.

"I worked in Kuwait for 15 years in sanitation to save money and build a gift shop in Lebanon and it was destroyed by the explosion," said Maroun Shehadi.

"Nothing will change until our leaders just leave."

The explosion gutted entire neighborhoods.

08.09.20

Lebanese say Hezbollah is security at the port, response was to boycott news channel

08.09.20

Angry Lebanese say Hezbollah worse than Israel

After catastrophic Beirut blast, Lebanese citizens demand prosecution of corrupt politicians, direct ire at Iranian-backed Shi'ite group and its leader Hassan Nasrallah Daniel Salamij Published: 08.09.20 , 18:28

In the wake of last week's explosion at a chemical warehouse in Beirut's port, criticism keeps mounting in Lebanon on Hezbollah and its leader, Hassan Nasrallah, as more and more voices in the devastated country call for reforms and a transparent investigation into the disaster.

An image of Nasrallah was hoisted with a noose tied around it during protests in Beirut on Saturday, marking the growing pressure on the Shi'ite organization by its opponents in Lebanon.

Social media users suggested repeatedly that Hezbollah had something to do with the blast or at least could have prevented it.

These are only some of the harsh allegations that have been made against Hezbollah for years, chief among them are the accusations that its assistance in Syria to President Bashar Assad's regime and its attacks on Israel endanger Lebanon's security and serve mainly Iran – whose deep involvement in the management of Lebanon's government institutions prevents international parties from helping in the rebuilding of its devastated economy.

This criticism does not necessarily reflect any immediate danger to Hezbollah since the terrorist faction has many supporters in Lebanon, mainly the Shi'ite sector that it represents.

Even the **calls made this week by residents** of Beirut **to French President** Emanuel Macron during his visit – **"Free us from Hezbollah"** – were heard in the heart of a neighborhood that most of its residents are Christians who are not among the organization's natural supporters.

However, the discourse around Hezbollah's responsibility for the explosion and the danger it brings to Lebanon is growing.

A Tuesday report on Lebanese television channel MTV whose credibility is unclear said that Hezbollah personnel disguised as members of a rescue organization belonging to the terrorist organization to enter the site of the explosion and "perform some work there." The report was attributed to "a military source involved in the details of the investigation."

Hezbollah personnel have, indeed, **been spotted at the scene of the blast** taking part in rescue efforts but there is no confirmation that these were not aid workers.

Immediately after the report on MTV, Hezbollah members rushed to attack the channel on social media and call it a "Zionist channel," and the Lebanese army also denied the report vehemently.

Nasrallah himself **launched an attack at the channel** during his speech over the weekend without naming it. He **called on viewers to boycott the channel** and accused it of trying to ignite a civil war.

Shi'ite Muslim journalist Dima Sadek, who worked until recently in media outlets that are unsupportive of Hezbollah, published a video in which she criticizes the Shi'ite organization and Nasrallah.

She claimed that the organization's security personnel were at the port and that it was well aware of the danger lurking there.

"Even Israel, an enemy and criminal state, with everything it has done to us, **has never detonated an atomic bomb on us or anyone else**," Sadek said in her video.

"You claim you're here to protect us. After all, your security people were at the port. You force us to accept you as a part of the state, but what did you do? Do you really want to say you did not know there were 2,750 tons of ammonium nitrate in the port? **Israel has not done to us what you are doing."**

On social media, some Lebanese users claimed that the ammonium nitrate that exploded actually belonged to Hezbollah itself, and others accused the organization of storing weapons in the port.

Hezbollah critics on social media circulated photos, videos and memes that linked Nasrallah to the disaster and attacked him for his attitude towards it.

One photo of the mushroom cloud taken seconds after the explosion with the Shi'ite leader's headdress on top of it - a thick hint that Hezbollah is responsible for the disaster in one way or another.

In two cartoons other cartoons, Nasrallah is seen burying weapons in Lebanese soil, setting them on fire and cutting down the cedar tree, the symbol of the country.

A Lebanese woman shared a video on social media where she is seen throwing a shoe at the television during Nasrallah's speech during the weekend.

Another image shared by many shows Nasrallah smiling during his speech with the caption, "after the deaths of more than 200 Lebanese, 4,000 wounded and the destruction of the port of Beirut and hundreds of nearby houses", and below it is another screenshot showing him crying over the death of Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps General Qassem Suleimani with the caption, "after the assassination of an Iranian terrorist."