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Attacks from Hamas proxies triggered by false rumor of discontinuing Qatar aid

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Iran, Turkey & Palestine lash at agreement with Israel, other countries follow UAE

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Netanyahu & Trump kept UAE deal secret from those who would foil the agreement

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Palestine condemns UAE deal & called an urgent meeting determine a position

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08.14.20 – Fr - - -

Attacks from Hamas proxies triggered by false rumor of discontinuing Qatar aid

08.14.20 – Fr - - -

Qatar gains from the latest Gaza escalation

Analysis: Gulf state received fair amount of backlash for money transfers to Strip, but renewed incendiary balloon attacks from Hamas proxies, triggered by discontinuation of Qatari aid, forced former critics to turn to Doha with a new appreciation  
Elior Levy | Published: 08.14.20 , 23:17

What did the Qatari envoy to Gaza Mohammad al-Emadi mean when he said that his country's aid to the coastal enclave is facing ongoing challenges?

About two months ago, Ynet reported that the Qatari leadership was dissatisfied with the thankless reaction of of the international community to its efforts in the Gaza Strip.

The international criticism claims that hundreds of millions of dollars sent by Qatar to aid needy families in Gaza was actually being used to fund terrorism in the Strip. Similarly, some extremist factions within the Strip have mocked the aid, saying that Qatar is effectively buying Hamas' silence.

Doha naturally did not like these accusations. The Qataris went to great lengths to safeguard their aid mechanism, utilizing organized lists of names approved by the Israeli defense establishment.

In addition, they emphasized that all the aid money is delivered to Gazan families via the Strip's postal service, a civilian institution, and that Hamas had no way of interfering with the transfers.

While Doha's indignation over this criticism slowed the transfer of the pledged funds, the aid money was eventually transferred as promised. Until September.

Palestinian sources told Ynet this week that due to the criticism, Qatar has decided to refrain from announcing a continuation of its aid program to the Gaza Strip.

The sources said that Qatar expected its silence on the extension of the aid to provoke a Hamas reaction, which would immediately lead the UN, Egypt, Israel and others in the international community to move to persuade Doha to continue transferring the money. Qatar's forecast was right. A month before the end of the current program, Hamas began to escalate tensions, using proxy organizations to carry out attacks against Israel in the form of incendiary and explosive balloon clusters.

In the wake of the Hamas attacks, the international community - including Israel - asked Doha to continue transferring the aid money to the Strip, in order to stop the escalation and calm the situation in Gaza.

According to various reports, Mossad chief Yossi Cohen also spoke this week with senior officials in Doha, to ensure the continuation of the Qatari funds.

In the end, Qatar got what it wanted - the appreciation of the international community. In a speech Tuesday, al-Emadi said that "Qatar will continue to support the Palestinian people so that it can emerge from the crisis."

The crisis in Gaza is still ongoing, but according to al-Emadi, Qatar's aid program will most likely be extended very soon for a period of 6-12 months.

After that, another solution will have to be found to satisfy Hamas and keep the peace along the Gaza border.

08.14.20 – Fr - - -

Iran, Turkey & Palestine lash at agreement with Israel, other countries follow UAE

08.14.20 – Fr - - -

Iran, Turkey lash out at UAE over agreement with Israel

Islamic Republic labels historic deal 'dagger struck in the backs of Palestinians, all Muslims'; Turkey says region's peoples 'will never forget, never forgive UAE's hypocritical behavior'

Associated Press| Published: 08.14.20 , 14:19

Iran and Turkey lashed out at their regional rival the United Arab Emirates on Friday over its decision to normalize diplomatic relations with Israel, accusing it of betraying the Palestinian cause, even as much of the international community welcomed the move.

Iran's Foreign Ministry called the U.S.-brokered deal a "dagger that was unjustly struck by the UAE in the backs of the Palestinian people and all Muslims." Turkey said the peoples of the region "will never forget and will never forgive this hypocritical behavior" by the UAE.

The UAE, which has never fought Israel and has quietly been improving ties for years, said the agreement put a hold on Israel's plans to unilaterally annex parts of the West Bank, which the Palestinians view as the heartland of a future state.

But the Turkish Foreign Ministry said the UAE had no authority to negotiate with Israel on behalf of the Palestinians or "to make concessions on matters vital to Palestine." The agreement would make the UAE the first Gulf Arab state - and the third Arab country, after Egypt and Jordan - to have full diplomatic ties with Israel. The Palestinians say the deal amounts to "treason" and have called on Arab and Muslim countries to oppose it.

The historic deal delivered a key foreign policy victory for U.S. President Donald Trump as he seeks re-election and reflected the changing Middle East in which shared concerns about archenemy Iran have largely overtaken traditional Arab support for the Palestinians. Trump has predicted that other countries in the region will follow the UAE's lead.

Israel, the UAE and other Gulf countries that view Iran as a regional menace have been cultivating closer ties in recent years. Turkey has had diplomatic relations with Israel for decades, but under President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has positioned itself as a champion of the Palestinians. Turkey and the UAE support rival camps in the conflict in Libya.

Germany's Foreign Minister Heiko Maas welcomed both the agreement and the decision to suspend annexation and called to congratulate his Israeli counterpart Gabi Ashkenazi on "this historic step."

"We stand by our position that only a negotiated two-state solution can bring lasting peace to the Middle East," Maas said in a statement. "Together with our European partners and the region we have campaigned intensively in past months against an annexation and for the resumption of direct negotiations."

China also said it welcomes "any measure that helps in easing tensions between Middle Eastern countries and promotes regional peace and stability."

Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said Beijing will "continue to firmly support the Palestinian people's just cause of restoring their legitimate national rights and building national independence."

08.13.20 – Th - - -

Netanyahu & Trump kept UAE deal secret from those who would foil the agreement

08.13.20 – Th - - -

Netanyahu kept UAE deal from coalition 'frenemies'

PM claims he was asked to keep the pending agreement secret from top Blue & White ministers due to risk of leaks - an indirect reference to allegations made by his supporters during the last election campaign that Gantz's phone was hacked by Iran

Moran Azulay ,Itamar Eichner| Published: 08.13.20 , 23:10

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Thursday said he was asked to keep the pending agreement to forge relations with the UAE in secret from his foreign and defense ministers.

Netanyahu informed the two most senior members of the Blue & White party - Defense Minister and Alternate Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Gabi Ashkenazi - only after U.S. President Donald Trump announced the agreement.

Trump announced the agreement from the White House after a three-way call with Netanyahu and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan to finalize the deal.

"There are many who would have wanted to foil the agreement," Netanyahu said in a press conference in Jerusalem. "Iran for example could not be happy with the agreement."

Top UAE official: Israel ties are 'death blow' for West Bank annexation  
Netanyahu's comments alluded to allegations made by his allies during the March 2020 election campaign that his then-rival and now defense minister was compromised after his phone was hacked by the Iranians.

Gantz and Ashkenazi both welcomed the agreement, while Ashkenazi also hailed the decision to halt annexation of parts of the West Bank.

Gantz thanked Trump, whom he called "a true friend of Israel." He said added that "the agreement represents the cooperation of nations who strive for stability and prosperity in the region and emphasizes Israel's eternal hope for peace with its neighbors."

Ashkenazi said the agreement would reduce security threats and increase the chance for more agreements with other Arab nations, in line with the policies of the Blue & White party.

"I commend the prime minister for the agreement and thank President Trump and Secretary of State Pompeo for their contributions," Ashkenazi said.

08.13.20 – Th - - -

Palestine condemns UAE deal & called an urgent meeting determine a position

08.13.20 – Th - - -

Palestinians unite in condemnation of UAE deal for Israel ties  
Palestinian Authority official Hanan Ashrawi slams United Arab Emirates for 'normalizing' relations with Jerusalem, while the rival Hamas terror group accuses Gulf state of stabbing Palestinians in the back; Egypt's Sisi says move will help bring regional stability

News Agencies, Ynet | Updated: 08.13.20 , 22:27

Rival Palestinian factions were unanimous Thursday in their condemnation of a newly announced agreement between Israel and the United Arab Emirates to open full diplomatic ties in return for the suspension of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's plan to annex parts of the West Bank.

Palestinian official Hanan Ashrawi, slammed the UAE for "normalizing" relations with Israel, while the Hamas terror group accused the Gulf state of stabbing the Palestinians in the back.

Asked if Palestinian Authority or Palestine Liberation Organization were aware the deal was coming, Ashrawi said: "No. The PLO, the PA, the Palestinian leadership did not know this was coming. We were blindsided. Their secret dealings are now completely out in the open. It is a complete sell-out."

"Israel got rewarded for not declaring openly what it's been doing to Palestine illegally & persistently since the beginning of the occupation," Ashrawi wrote on Twitter.

The official Palestinian broadcaster **Palestine TV reported** that President Mahmoud Abbas called an **urgent meeting** of his top leadership to discuss the agreement and **determine a position on it.**

"This announcement is a reward for the Israeli occupation's crimes," said Fawzi Barhoum, a spokesman for Hamas, which seeks Israel's destruction and has fought three wars against Israel since seizing control of the Gaza Strip in 2007.

"The normalization is a stabbing in the back of our people," he said.

**Relations between the UAE and the Palestinian Authority are rocky**, due to the close ties between the UAE's ruling family and **exiled former PA official Mohammed Dahlan**. Dahlan, who now lives in Dubai, was **tried and convicted in absentia in a 2016 corruption trial in Ramallah.**

**Egyptian** President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, however, **welcomed** the **agreement** as a positive step towards regional **stability.**

"I followed with interest and appreciation the joint statement between the United States, United Arab Emirates and Israel to halt the Israeli annexation of Palestinian lands and taking steps to bring peace in the Middle East," Sisi said on Twitter.

"I value the efforts of those in charge of the deal to achieve prosperity and stability for our region," said the **Egyptian** leader, whose country **made peace with Israel in 1979.**

**Jordan**, the only other Arab nation to have active ties with Israel, **offered a more muted response**, with Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi **saying** only that the impact of the deal **"depends on what Israel will do."**

The Gulf state of Bahrain also welcomed the accord which it said stops Israeli annexation plans and raises the chances of peace, state news agency BNA reported.

The small island state of **Bahrain** is a close **ally of Saudi Arabia**, which **has not yet commented** on the agreement to normalize diplomatic ties.

**Bahrain praised the United States** for its efforts towards **securing the deal.**

But the agreement was **condemned by Iran**, whose regional aspirations are often credited with playing a role in the warming of ties between Israel and predominantly Sunni Muslim Gulf states.

"UAE's new approach for normalizing ties w/fake, criminal #Israel doesn't maintain peace & security, but serves ongoing Zionists' crimes," tweeted Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, special adviser on international affairs to the speaker of Iran's parliament and a former deputy foreign minister.

"Abu Dhabi's behavior has no justification, **turning back on the Palestine cause.** W/ that **strategic mistake**, **#UAE will be engulfed in Zionism fire,**" he said.

First published: 19:38 , 08.

**08.13.20** – Th - - -

**UAE stress end Israel plan to annex, Netanyahu said plans are on temporary hold**

08.13.20 – Th - - -

Netanyahu hails 'new era' in Israel's relations with Arab world  
PM thanks Trump for his involvement in agreement with UAE, says annexation still on the table, could be implemented in future with U.S. coordination, says 'full and official peace' will lead to cooperation in many spheres, 'wonderful future'  
Ynet, Associated Press| Published: 08.13.20 , 21:05

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Thursday said that the announcement that full diplomatic ties will be established with the United Arab Emirates has ushered in a "new era" in Israel's relations with the Arab world.

In a nationally broadcast statement delivered on Thursday, Netanyahu said the "full and official peace" with the UAE would lead to cooperation in many spheres between the countries and a "wonderful future" for citizens of both countries.

His comments came shortly after U.S. President Donald Trump announced the agreement, which was finalized Thursday in a three-way telephone call between the American and Israeli leaders and Emirati Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

Emirati Foreign Affairs Minister Anwar Gargash was quick to stress that the agreement was aimed at ending Israel's plan to annex parts of the West Bank, which his country feared would end any prospect of a two-state solution between Israelis and Palestinians.

Netanyahu said Thursday night that Trump had asked him to suspend annexation plans, but said that it may still go ahead someday with U.S. coordination.

He said there was "no change" to his intention to annex parts of the West Bank, but the plans were on "temporary hold."

The prime minister also denied that the agreement "was not related to political deadlines or elections," despite his ongoing row over the state budget with political partner Benny Gantz of Blue & White, which threatens to plunge the country into a fourth round of voting in less than two years.

He also confirmed that Alternate Prime Minister Gantz and Foreign Minister Gabi Ashkenazi, also of Blue & White, were kept in the dark about the imminent announcement in order "to protect the success of the agreement."

Netanyahu has seen his popularity plummet as the country grapples with a renewed coronavirus outbreak and skyrocketing unemployment as the result of earlier lockdown measures.

Among Arab nations, only Egypt and Jordan have active diplomatic ties with Israel. Egypt made a peace deal with Israel in 1979, followed by Jordan in 1994.

For Israel, the announcement comes after years of boasting by Netanyahu that his government enjoys closer ties to Arab nations than publicly acknowledged.

Netanyahu has sought to build settlements on lands sought by the Palestinians and embraced a Trump proposal that would allow him to annex large parts of the occupied West Bank while granting Palestinians limited autonomy in other areas.

For the UAE, home to skyscraper-studded Dubai and the rolling, oil-rich sand dunes of Abu Dhabi, it further burnishes its international campaign to be seen as a beacon of tolerance in the Middle East despite being governed by autocratic rulers. It also puts the UAE out first in a regional recognition race among neighboring Gulf Arab states.

The joint statement from the U.S., the UAE and Israel said delegations would meet in the coming weeks to sign deals on direct flights, security, telecommunications, energy, tourism and health care. The two countries also will partner on fighting the coronavirus pandemic.

The UAE is a U.S.-allied federation of seven sheikhdoms on the Arabian Peninsula. Formed in 1971, the country like other Arab nations at the time did not recognize Israel over its occupation of land home to the Palestinians.

Next year, Israel will take part in the UAE's delayed Expo 2020, the world's fair being hosted by Dubai. A secret synagogue also draws practicing Jews in Dubai.

The UAE also has announced plans to build the Abrahamic Family House in Abu Dhabi, which will house a mosque, a church and a synagogue.

Israelis traveling with Western passports routinely enter the UAE without a problem, though one still cannot make a phone call between the two countries. Israelis also work in Dubai's gold and diamond trade.

Emirati officials also have allowed Israeli officials to visit and the Israeli national anthem was played after an athlete won gold in an Abu Dhabi judo tournament. Israel also has a small mission representing its interests at the International Renewable Energy Agency in Abu Dhabi.

08.13.20 – Th - - -

UAE minister promise of a relationship & opening of embassies to cancel annex

08.13.20 – Th - - -

Top UAE official: Israel ties are 'death blow' for West Bank annexation

Emirati minister for foreign affairs says Gulf state 'is using its gravitas and promise of a relationship to unscrew a time bomb that is threatening a two-state solution,' says 'will not be long' before mutual opening of embassies

Associated Press | Published: 08.13.20, 20:04

A top Emirati official said Thursday that the newly announced deal for the United Arab Emirates to establish full diplomatic ties with Israel has dealt a "death blow" to moves by Jerusalem to annex Palestinian lands in the West Bank.

The agreement between the Gulf state and Israel was announced Thursday evening by U.S. President Donald Trump and confirmed by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

UAE Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Anwar Gargash told reporters that the Emiratis wanted to "try and put one on one together" and develop an organic relationship that was already existing in many fields.

"Let us try and get something tangible," he said.

He described it as a "bold step."

"We've come up with a realization," he said.

"Our relationship has not always been central... but we come out and argued that in every difficult political file in the region, when you do have bridges and contacts you become more important and influential in trying to affect results and trying to help," Gargash said.

"The UAE is using its gravitas and promise of a relationship to unscrew a time bomb that is threatening a two-state solution," he said.

When asked about a time frame for embassies opening, Gargash said it will not be long and "this is for real."

"We are not talking about step by step," he said.

"Is it perfect? Nothing is perfect in a very difficult region," he said. "But I think we used our political chips right."

08.13.20 – Th - - -

Stalled promise to annex may be a fair price to eventual West Bank sovereignty

08.13.20 – Th - - -

Settlers slam Netanyahu agreement to halt annexation in exchange for UAE relations  
Mayor of West Bank settlement of Beit El says future of Israel cannot depend on an agreement not worth the paper it is written on, while other settlement leaders say Netanyahu 'took settlers for a ride'

Elisha Ben Kimon | Published: 08.13.20 , 19:35

Settlers slammed the agreement announced on Thursday to normalize relations between Israel and the UAE which was reached after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu agreed to halt his plans to annex parts of the West Bank.

he United Arab Emirates will launch full diplomatic ties with Israel in an agreement that will see Jerusalem halt its plans for annexation of West Bank land, the leaders of Israel, the UAE and U.S. said

"The settlers were taken for a ride," Shai Alon, Mayor of the West Bank settlement said, "Our future is in Judea and Samaria and in the courageous decisions our leaders must take and not in agreements that are not worth the paper they are written on.

The Mayor of Har Hebron Regional Council, Yochai Damri also condemned the agreement claiming the land of Israel cannot be the subject of negotiations. "I call on Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to fulfill his promise to extend Israeli sovereignty over the West Bank, made to millions of his voters. No normalization of relations can come at the expense of half a million Jewish settlers.

Yossi Dagan a leading member of Netanyahu's Likud party called the move a stab in the back of the settlement movement.

But not all settlers agree, the Mayor of the settlement of Efrat, Oded Revivi claimed the suspension of annexation in order to clear the way for diplomatic relations with the UAE is a fair price to pay.

"I am certain that the change in perception of settlements, no longer seen as impediments to a future peace deal, will continue and we must prepare ourselves to eventual Israeli sovereignty over the area," Revivi said.

08.13.20 – Th - - -

Israel, UAE to launch diplomatic ties in return for halt to annexation

08.13.20 – Th - - -

Israel, UAE to launch diplomatic ties in return for halt to annexation

Netanyahu lauds 'historic day'; White House says agreement sealed in Thursday phone call between president, prime minister and crown prince; officials from both nations to meet in coming weeks on bilateral deals

News Agencies, Ynet| Published: 08.13.20 , 18:52

The United Arab Emirates will launch full diplomatic ties with Israel in an agreement that will see Jerusalem halt its plans for annexation of West Bank land, the leaders of Israel, the UAE and U.S. said Thursday.

The agreement makes the UAE the first Gulf Arab state to do so and only the third Arab nation to have active diplomatic ties to Israel.

Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the day-to-day ruler of the UAE, confirmed Thursday that the Gulf state had reached an agreement that would end Israel's annexation plans.

"Opening direct ties between two of the Middle East's most dynamic societies and advanced economies will transform the region by spurring economic growth, enhancing technological innovation and forging closer people-to-people relations," said the joint

statement by U.S. President Donald Trump, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Al Nahyan.

It said the leaders had a three-way call discussing the deal.

Trump tweeted a statement from the countries, acknowledging the deal. He then told reporters in the Oval Office that it was "a truly historic moment."

"Now that the ice has been broken I expect more Arab and Muslim countries will follow the United Arab Emirates," he said.

White House officials said that the agreement was sealed in a phone call Thursday between Trump, Netanyahu and the crown prince.

For Israel, the announcement comes after years of boasting by Netanyahu that his government enjoys closer ties to Arab nations than publicly acknowledged.

The prime minister tweeted in Hebrew on Thursday that this was an "historic day." He was set to address the nation later in the day.

Netanyahu has sought to build settlements on lands sought by the Palestinians and embraced a Trump proposal that would allow him to annex large parts of the West Bank while granting Palestinians limited autonomy in other areas.

For the UAE, home to skyscraper-studded Dubai and the rolling, oil-rich sand dunes of Abu Dhabi, it further burnishes its international campaign to be seen as a beacon of tolerance in the Middle East despite being governed by autocratic rulers.

It also puts the UAE out first in a regional recognition race among neighboring Gulf Arab states.

And for the Palestinians, who long have relied on Arab backing in their struggle for independence, the announcement marked both a win and setback.

The UAE said after the announcement that the agreement was done to deal with the threat that further annexation of Palestinian territories posed to the two-state solution.

The Gulf state's minister of state for foreign affairs, Anwar Gargash, urged the Palestinians and Israelis to return to the negotiating table.

While the deal halts Israeli annexation plans, the Palestinians have repeatedly urged Arab governments not to normalize relations with Israel until a peace agreement establishing an independent Palestinian state is reached.

The joint statement from the U.S., the UAE and Israel said delegations would meet in the coming weeks to sign deals on direct flights, security, telecommunications, energy, tourism and health care. The two countries also will partner on fighting the coronavirus pandemic.

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo praised the deal.

"This is a remarkable achievement for two of the world's most forward leaning, technologically advanced states, and reflects their shared regional vision of an economically integrated region," he said in a statement.

"It also illustrates their commitment to confronting common threats, as small -- but strong -- nations."

He added: "Blessed are the peacemakers. Mabruk and Mazal Tov."

Among Arab nations, only Egypt and Jordan have active diplomatic ties with Israel.

Egypt made a peace deal with Israel in 1979, followed by Jordan in 1994. Mauritania recognized Israel in 1999, but later ended relations in 2009 over the Israel's Gaza war at the time.

08.13.20 – Th - - -

Lithuania designates Hezbollah in full a terrorist group, bans members from entry

08.13.20 – Th - - -

Lithuania designates Hezbollah a terrorist group, bans members from entry  
Country's FM hails 'successful cooperation between the Lithuanian and Israeli national security agencies' as Vilnius slaps 10-year sanctions on Iranian-backed organization;  
Ashkenazi welcomes move as 'courageous and important decision'  
i24NEWS| Published: 08.13.20 , 16:25

Lithuania announced Thursday it was designating Lebanon's Hezbollah organization as a terrorist group in its entirety.

Vilnius also banned the group's members and its affiliates from entering the country, the ban set to remain in place for the next 10 years.

"Having taken into consideration the information acquired by our institutions and partners, we may conclude that 'Hezbollah' uses terrorist means that pose threat to the security of a significant number of countries, including Lithuania," Foreign Minister Linas Linkevičius said in a statement.

"We appreciate the successful cooperation between the Lithuanian and Israeli national security agencies," he said.

Foreign Minister Gabi Ashkenazi welcomed the move as a "courageous and important decision" that will contribute to regional stability.

He urged the rest of the European Union to follow suit and ban Hezbollah in its entirety.

He accused the Iranian proxy of turning areas in Lebanon into, effectively, Iranian enclaves and holding the Lebanese people, as well as the country's economy and political system, hostage to Tehran's interests.

Earlier this year, Germany also banned Hezbollah in full, while many other EU states only consider the group's military wing a terrorist organization.

Hezbollah itself denies there is a distinction to be made between its military and political arms and frequently mocked this position.

08.11.20 – Tu - - -

## Formal nomination of Biden & Harris at Democratic convention begins Monday

08.11.20 – Tu - - -

### Biden taps Senator Kamala Harris as running mate

California senator will join Biden in Democrats' bid to see the ouster of Republican President Donald Trump from the White House in hopes to recruit the votes of black Americans

Reuters| Published: 08.11.20 , 23:38

Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden on Tuesday tapped Senator Kamala Harris of California as his choice for vice president, his campaign told supporters in a text message.

Harris, 55, becomes the first Black woman on a major presidential ticket in U.S. history and providing him with a partner well suited to go on the attack against Republican President Donald Trump.

"I have the great honor to announce that I've picked Kamala Harris - a fearless fighter for the little guy, and one of the country's finest public servants - as my running mate," Biden said on Twitter.

With social unrest over racial injustice and police brutality against Black Americans rocking the country for months, Biden had been under increasing pressure to select a woman of color as his running mate. She is also the first Asian-American on a major presidential ticket.

In Harris, a senator from California who made her own run for the White House before ending it and endorsing Biden, he gains a deeply experienced politician already battle-tested by the rigors of the 2020 presidential campaign as they head into the final stretch of the Nov. 3 election.

Harris, who became only the Senate's second Black woman in its history when she was elected in 2016, will be relied on to help drive the African-American vote - the Democratic Party's most loyal constituency. Four years ago, the first dip in Black voter turnout in 20 years contributed to Democrat Hillary Clinton's upset loss to Trump.

Biden, whose foundering campaign was rescued by Black voters in South Carolina's primary in February, needs their strong support against Trump. It will be crucial in battleground states such as Michigan, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin that Trump won by the slimmest margins in 2016 but where opinion polls now show him trailing his Democratic rival.

The Black vote is also central to Biden's hopes of winning Southern states Georgia and Florida that Trump carried four years ago but that opinion polls indicate will be competitive this year.

Biden served as vice president for eight years under President Barack Obama, the first Black U.S. president.

Harris, 55, a former prosecutor and state attorney general in California, is well known for her sometimes aggressive questioning style in the Senate, most notably of Brett Kavanaugh during his 2018 Supreme Court confirmation hearing.

As a presidential candidate, she also took Biden to task in a nationally televised debate over his past stances on mandatory busing for students as a means to desegregate schools. Some Biden advisers have told Reuters the attacks made them question whether she would be a trusted working partner because of her political ambitions.

While that exchange failed to boost her White House hopes, the Biden campaign will now look for her to train her prosecutorial fire on Trump and Vice President Mike Pence. Harris is scheduled to debate Pence on Oct. 7 in Salt Lake City, Utah.

The choice of a running mate has added significance for Biden, who will turn 78 in November and be the oldest person to become president if he is elected.

Biden's age also has led to broad speculation he will serve only one term, making Harris a potential top contender for the nomination in 2024. Some of his allies were concerned that would make her a bad fit for the No.2 job and questioned her loyalty.

Biden publicly committed to choosing a woman as his No. 2 in a March debate after discussing the matter with his wife Jill and had considered other former presidential rivals such as Senators Amy Klobuchar and Elizabeth Warren.

After the protests that erupted over the May 25 killing of George Floyd, a Black man, by a white policeman in Minneapolis, Biden's search focused predominantly on candidates of color.

Harris will be confirmed as Biden's running mate at the Democratic convention that begins on Monday, where Biden will also be formally nominated to challenge Trump.