

Ynet-News, August 27, 2020 – Thursday

08.27.20 - - - News Placed in Aug 26 spot – Wednesday

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08.27.20 - - - News

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08.27.20 - - - News Placed in Aug 27 spot – Thursday

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08.27.20

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08.26.20 - - - News

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08.26.20 - - - News

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08.26.20

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08.26.20 - - - News Placed in Aug 28 spot – Friday

Turkey hosting Hamas – prompts US to suspend NATO F-35 & threaten sanctions

08.27.20

Pelosi: Biden Shouldn't 'Legitimize' Trump By Debating Him

08.27.20

High Court rules 2018 outpost mapped in the West Bank is Palestinian land

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High Court rules for removal of settler homes from Palestinian land

Overturning previous District Court ruling, judge panel orders state to evict residents of Mitzpe Kramim from their homes and find them alternative housing within 36 months

Reuters| Published: 08.27.20 , 20:48

The High Court of Justice ruled on Thursday that a cluster of homes in a Jewish settlement outpost in the West Bank was built on privately-owned Palestinian land and must, therefore, be removed.

Accepting a petition by Palestinian plaintiffs, the justices overturned a 2018 District Court ruling which had broken judicial ground by recognizing Mitzpe Kramim settlers' claim to the land, despite it being owned by Palestinians.

The District Court had declared the settlers the legal owners, finding that Israeli authorities were unaware the land was privately owned when they originally mapped out the area.

That ruling was based on an Israeli law which states that transactions with legal faults could be valid if they were conducted in "good faith."

Established 20 years ago on a hilltop overlooking the Jordan Valley, Mitzpe Kramim is home to about 40 families, most of whom live on Palestinian-owned plots and say they received Israeli authorities' approval to set up there.

But the High Court said that the Israeli authorities had not acted in good faith by "turning a blind eye to the many warning signs given over many years" which showed the plots were actually owned by Palestinians.

Placing most of the responsibility for what it called "the painful outcome for Mitzpe Kramim's residents" on the state, the court gave authorities 36 months to find alternative housing for them.

Most countries consider the settlements built on land Israel captured in the 1967 Six-Day War as illegal. Israel and the United States dispute this. The Palestinians want the West Bank as part of a future state.

About 450,000 Israeli settlers live in the territory among some three million Palestinians. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's plan to extend Israeli sovereignty over parts of the West Bank as part of the U.S.'s Mideast peace plan was shelved this month in a diplomatic deal with the United Arab Emirates for normalization of relations between the two countries.

08.27.20

Ukraine ban due to virus, forces return to Israel of Rosh Hashanah pilgrims

08.27.20

Israeli pilgrims rush to fly to Ukraine in bid to beat ban

Hundreds of Hasidic Jews dash to Ben-Gurion Airport as extra flights laid on before Ukraine closes its borders; protesters descend on Safed hotel where PM is vacationing, accusing him of working with Kiev to keep them from traditional visit to Rebbe Nachman's grave

Itay Blumenthal, Itamar Eichner, Kobi Nachshoni | Published: 08.27.20, 16:55

Ukraine International airline on Thursday added additional flights from Israel in an effort to fly thousands of Hasidic pilgrims into the country before Kiev shuts its gates to foreigners due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Ukraine on Wednesday imposed a temporary ban on most foreigners from entering the country until September 28 due to a recent spike in COVID-19 cases. The ban is set to take effect on Friday.

The move effectively scuppers the annual mass pilgrimage by members of the Hasidic Breslov movement to the city of Uman, where they traditionally make a Rosh Hashanah pilgrimage to the gravesite of the movement founder Rebbe Nachman.

Kiev had initially agreed to admit a small number of pilgrims after a plea by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, but later decided to ban all foreign visitors. In wake of Kiev's decision, Ukraine International added flights to the capital and to Odessa before the embargo takes effect, prompting hundreds of Israeli pilgrims to rush to Ben-Gurion Airport in an effort to beat the ban.

"I have been flying to Ukraine every year for the past seven years," said Elisha, one of the arrivals at the airport.

"If they close the airlines, we will come by sea; and if they close the sea - we will find other ways to go to Uman. The government should have come to an understanding with the Ukrainians, and it is a pity that we are forced to do it this way."

Rahamim, who was also expected to depart for Kiev, added: "I am going to Uman until after Rosh Hashanah. Regarding the coronavirus, we will follow the guidelines, wear masks and keep our distance. We are not afraid. If they do not let us in - we will accept it with love and return to Israel."

Despite Netanyahu's request, Israel's coronavirus czar Prof. Ronni Gamzu wrote personally to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy asking him to ban the pilgrimage, which he branded "a life-threatening hazard."

"I have said it several times and I do not want to revisit this. I will not change my mind," said Gamzu of the pilgrimage.

Dozens of furious would-be pilgrims descended Thursday on the hotel in Safed at which Netanyahu and his wife are staying to protest the Ukraine ban. They accused the prime minister of intervening with Zelenskiy to trigger the ban.

"We are law-abiding people who want to visit our blessed holy rabbi in Uman," said one of the protesters.

"We are here to raise our voices over the great humiliation that was handed to us by [Netanyahu]. Every week tens of thousands of people protest but we, tens of thousands who want to reach Rebbe Nachman, are denied a basic right," he said.

He warned that Netanyahu "will pay dearly for this," as would the ultra-Orthodox political parties.

08.27.20

Arab world has no mandate to recognize Israel; UAE deal hinges on sale of F-35

08.27.20

Pompeo heads home after pushing Israel deal in Mideast tour

Secretary of state's stops in Bahrain, Oman and Sudan failed to produce any public commitments to normalize ties with the Jewish state despite U.S. push to have Gulf states recognize Israel following a peace deal with UAE

AFP| Updated: 08.27.20, 16:00

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo headed home Thursday after a Middle East tour aimed at encouraging Arab countries to follow the UAE's move and normalise relations with Israel.

However, stops in Bahrain, Oman and Sudan failed to produce any public commitments to recognize the Jewish state, after the landmark U.S.-brokered deal with the United Arab Emirates announced earlier this month.

"Met today with Omani Sultan Haitham bin Tarik Al-Said on the importance of building regional peace, stability, and prosperity through a united Gulf Cooperation Council,"

Pompeo tweeted as he left Oman, the last stop on his itinerary.

"Grateful for our strong security partnership and economic ties."

The official Oman News Agency said that "aspects of the existing bilateral cooperation between the sultanate and the United States were reviewed within the framework of the strong relations that bind them," but made no reference to relations with Israel.

Pompeo was the first high-level Western official to meet Sultan Haitham, who succeeded Sultan Qaboos on his death in January after some five decades in power.

Oman has long had dialogue with Israel and welcomed the UAE's August 13 announcement that it had normalised ties, while reaffirming its support for the Palestinians.

The U.S. chief diplomat had said he was hopeful other nations would follow the UAE, which became only the third Arab country to establish relations with Israel, after Egypt and Jordan.

However, Sudan's transitional government on Tuesday dashed hopes for a speedy breakthrough, saying it has "no mandate" to take such a weighty step.

And Bahrain echoed the sentiments of its ally, regional heavyweight Saudi Arabia, that an accord with Israel would not materialize without the establishment of an independent Palestinian state.

"After American and Israeli officials spent days hyping the prospect that other Arab countries would soon follow the UAE in normalizing relations with Israel, the lack of any additional public commitments during Secretary Pompeo's regional tour looks like an anti-climax," Hugh Lovatt of the European Council on Foreign Relations said.

While in Israel on the first stop of the tour, Pompeo made a symbolic video in Jerusalem for the Republican National Convention in which he touted the Trump administration's support for the Jewish state.

The issue will likely feature prominently in campaigning for the US presidential election in November.

The UAE's controversial recognition of Israel has been met with criticism from some parts of the Arab world, with the Palestinian leadership condemning it as a "stab in the back". Even U.S. allies in the region have been cautious in their response.

For Saudi Arabia, not only would a formal recognition of Israel be seen by Palestinians and their supporters as a betrayal of their cause, it could also hurt the kingdom's image as the leader of the Islamic world.

During a brief stop in the UAE on Wednesday, Pompeo held talks with Foreign Minister Abdullah bin Zayed Al-Nahyan and national security adviser Sheikh Tahnoun bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, and congratulated them "on the monumental achievement" of the Israel deal. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has denied reports that the UAE deal hinges on the sale of US F-35 stealth fighter jets to the Emirates, saying he opposes a move that could reduce Israel's strategic edge in the region.

Lovatt said that "it is possible that a lack of clarity on the US commitment to deliver F-35s to the UAE could have also played a part in slowing a second wave of normalisation".

08.27.20

UN weapons embargo on Iran will not be approved by Russia and China

08.27.20

Germany, Israel agree continued Iran arms embargo important

During a meeting at a villa where senior Nazis coordinated plans for the Holocaust, FM Ashkenazi tells reporters Iran seeks to 'spread' advanced weapons around the Mideast, while his counterpart says Germany is 'not naive about Iran'

Associated Press| Published: 08.27.20 , 12:57

German foreign minister agreed with his Israeli counterpart Thursday that an effort must be made to extend a weapon embargo on Iran, while stressing Germany still sees the landmark 2015 deal between Tehran and world powers as the best way to prevent the country from obtaining a nuclear weapon.

With a current U.N. arms embargo on Iran due to expire on Oct. 18, Foreign Minister Gabi Ashkenazi told reporters in Berlin an extension was needed to prevent Iran from getting "more advanced weapons systems and spreading them around the Middle East."

"We would like to see the European countries, not just Germany, preventing it," he said. "It's not helpful for the stability of the region."

Ashkenazi was in Berlin to attend a two-day meeting of European foreign ministers at the invitation of Germany, which holds the European Union's rotating presidency.

The United States wants a full extension of the embargo on Iran, which would almost certainly be vetoed by Russia and China in the U.N. Security Council, Germany's Foreign Minister Heiko Maas said.

Germany and others are currently trying to find some middle ground that would meet with Russian and Chinese approval - and not be vetoed by the U.S. in the Security Council.

"We are trying to reach a diplomatic solution so that there will be an arms embargo on Iran in the future," Maas said.

At the same time, he said Germany still sees the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action signed with Iran in 2015, promising the country economic incentives in exchange for curbs on its nuclear program, the best deal to prevent the country from developing an atomic weapon.

Israel is against the deal, and the U.S. pulled out unilaterally in 2018, leaving the others involved - Germany, France, Britain, Russia and China - struggling to keep it alive. Maas said concerns outside the JCPOA, like Iran's ballistic missile program and influence in Syria, Lebanon and Iraq, need to be addressed, but that "we want to preserve the JCPOA to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon."

"Iran must change its approach in the region, we are not naive about Iran," he said. "We know that Iran plays a dangerous role."

The two ministers met at the House of the Wannsee Conference memorial, a villa in southwestern Berlin where senior Nazis and bureaucrats coordinated plans for the Holocaust in 1942.

Ashkenazi said that as the son of a Holocaust survivor, it was particularly emotional for him to visit the place where the "evil and cruelty" of the genocide of 6 million Jews was plotted.

Maas said anti-Semitism still exists in Germany today, and the memorial serves as a reminder that "we should fight it with available means."

08.26.20

Turkey rejects US criticism of Istanbul passports & identities to Gaza Hamas

08.26.20

Turkey gave Hamas members passports, Israel says

Turkey hosts Hamas chief Haniyeh and other officials in Istanbul for the second time this year as terror group reportedly keeps financing, organizing terror acts from the Turkish capital

Reuters| Published: 08.26.20 , 22:25

Turkey has given passports to a dozen Hamas members in Istanbul, a senior Israeli diplomat said on Wednesday, describing the move as "a very unfriendly step" which his government would raise with Turkish officials.

Speaking days after Turkey's president met visiting Hamas leaders, charge d'affaires Roey Gilad said Israel had already told Turkey last year that Hamas was carrying out "terror-related activity" in Istanbul, but Turkey had not taken action.

The two countries have had a bitter falling out in recent years, despite strong commercial ties, expelling ambassadors in 2018. President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has repeatedly condemned Israel's treatment of Palestinians.

Gilad said Israel had proof that Turkey was providing passports and identity cards to members of Hamas, which runs Gaza and is considered a terrorist organization by the United States, Israel and the European Union.

"Some are in the process, some already got (the documents), but we are talking about around a dozen," he said.

"We have already one document that we will present to the government in copy," he said. "Judging by the last experience we had by presenting a well-based portfolio to the government... and getting no reply, I must say I don't have high hopes that something will be done this time."

Turkey's Foreign Ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment. On Saturday, Erdogan hosted Hamas chief Ismail Haniyeh and other officials in Istanbul for the second time this year, prompting objections from Washington, which linked one of the men to terrorist attacks, hijackings and kidnappings. Ankara said it rejected the U.S. criticism.

Gilad said the Hamas members who received Turkish documents were financing and organizing terrorism from Istanbul, which Turkey has previously denied. Many of them came to Turkey under a 2011 deal between Turkey and Israel to exchange a captured Israeli soldier for more than 1,000 prisoners, Gilad said.

Hamas seized Gaza from forces loyal to Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas in 2007, and the group has fought three wars with Israel since then. Turkey says Hamas is a legitimate political movement that was elected democratically.

Gilad said the current tensions ruled out any cooperation on exploiting gas reserves in the eastern Mediterranean, where Turkey is challenging maritime claims by Greece, Cyprus and their allies.

Even if ties with Turkey were to improve, Israel would not "throw away" strategic alliances it has built up with other nations over the last 10 years, Gilad said. "Israel would not throw Greece, Cyprus or Egypt under the bus."

08.26.20

Palestinian Fatah and Hamas are united in their rejection of the Trump plan

08.26.20

Palestinian leaders stay the course as crises mount

In-depth: Years of failed peace talks, a growingly ambivalent international community and calls of corruption leave Palestinians few options to reach their goal of an independent state, including appeals to ICC, calls for boycott of Israel or change of political leadership

Associated Press| Published: 08.26.20 , 13:53

In three decades of failed peace efforts, the Palestinians have never faced a more hostile U.S. administration, a more self-assured Israel or a more ambivalent international community.

But even as their hopes for statehood have never seemed so dim, there's no indication their aging leadership will change course.

President Mahmoud Abbas remains committed to the same strategy he has pursued for decades — seeking international support to pressure Israel to agree to a Palestinian state in the West Bank, Gaza and east Jerusalem, lands Israel captured during the 1967 Six-Day War.

That quest seems even more quixotic after the United Arab Emirates' decision to establish diplomatic relations with Israel, which shattered the Arab consensus behind land for peace, a rare source of leverage for the Palestinians.

Other Arab nations are expected to follow the Emirates' lead, lending support to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's contention that Israel can make peace with its Arab neighbors without any concessions to the Palestinians.

The UAE agreement has also resurrected President Donald Trump's Mideast plan, which overwhelmingly favors Israel and was rejected by the Palestinians. It would remain the cornerstone of U.S. policy for another four years if Trump is reelected.

But while the odds are overwhelmingly stacked against them, the Palestinians make up nearly half the population between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River. Their leaders say Israel still needs their signature if it hopes to resolve the conflict, a source of frustration for Trump's son-in-law and adviser Jared Kushner, the architect of the plan. "There is an erroneous assumption that the Palestinians are defeated, and they have to accept the facts of their defeat," said Hanan Ashrawi, a senior Palestinian official. "The Palestinians are willing, generation after generation, to continue their struggle until we get our rights."

Here's a look at the Palestinians' options going forward:

The diplomatic route

The Palestinians' demand for a state based on the 1967 lines still enjoys broad international support and is enshrined in UN resolutions. Palestine was granted an "observer state" status in 2012, allowing it to join several global forums, including the International Criminal Court.

The Palestinians have requested an ICC war crimes investigation of Israel that could eventually see charges filed against political or military leaders. Israel is not a member of

the ICC and says there is no legal basis for any investigation, but its citizens could be subject to arrest in other countries if warrants are issued.

Those moves have put pressure on Israel, but have not led to any concessions. They also haven't prevented it from cultivating closer ties to Arab and African countries that historically supported the Palestinians, culminating in the agreement with the UAE. The Palestinians responded to the UAE agreement by calling for an urgent meeting of the Arab League and the 57-nation Organization of Islamic Cooperation, but the oil-rich UAE is a powerful member of both and the meetings have yet to materialize. The EU — divided and preoccupied with the coronavirus crisis — also seems unable to offer significant support.

Boycotts and international solidarity

In recent years, a Palestinian-led international movement has sought to mobilize grassroots support for a campaign of boycotts, divestment and sanctions.

BDS organizers say they are leading a nonviolent campaign for Palestinian rights modeled on the struggle against apartheid South Africa. Israel accuses them of seeking to delegitimize its existence.

While BDS has notched some successes, it has had no discernible impact on Israel's economy. Popular among left-wing activists in Western countries, it also has faced setbacks, including anti-BDS legislation in the U.S. and Germany.

Tareq Baconi, an analyst for the International Crisis Group, says the growing solidarity between Palestinian and Black Lives Matter activists "is an example of some of the pressure that can be brought to bear on Israel eventually. But this is, for the moment, too fragmented and not sufficiently powerful enough to have any kind of political leverage."

A one-state solution

In recent years a growing number of Palestinians and their supporters have suggested abandoning the two-state solution in favor of a single binational state for Jews and Palestinians or some kind of Israeli-Palestinian confederation.

The idea gained new attention last month when Peter Beinart, a prominent Jewish-American commentator, came out in favor of the idea.

The argument is that Israel's right-wing government and its sprawling West Bank settlements — now home to more than 500,000 Israelis — make any partition impossible. There have been no substantive peace talks in more than a decade.

One-state proponents say Palestinians should instead seek equal rights, including the vote.

While it has gained traction among intellectuals, the idea has little support in Israel or the Palestinian territories. A June poll carried out by the respected Palestinian Center for Survey and Policy Research found that just 37% of Palestinians support the idea, and only 6% would choose it over other options.

The Palestinian leadership remains staunchly opposed to a one-state solution, which would entail dismantling the Palestinian Authority and plunging into an uncertain future. Cleaning house

Many Palestinians argue that their leadership needs to pursue fundamental reforms. Abbas' popularity has plunged in recent years and the Palestinian Authority is widely seen as corrupt and incompetent.

There have been no national elections in nearly 15 years because of the bitter division between Abbas' Fatah movement and the Islamic militant group Hamas, which seized Gaza from his forces in 2007.

Fatah and Hamas are united in their rejection of the Trump plan and Arab normalization and in recent weeks have held joint meetings and rallies to project a united front. But several past attempts at a broader reconciliation have all failed.

That has left the 85-year-old Abbas entrenched at the head of an aging and inflexible Palestinian leadership.

Banking on Biden

The election of former Vice President Joe Biden would likely spell the end of the Trump plan. But few Palestinians believe a return to the Obama-era approach of trying to coax the two sides toward a negotiated settlement will succeed.

"It's very difficult to envision anyone doing more damage than Trump," Ashrawi said. "At the same time, I would like to caution against thinking that Biden is a knight in shining armor."

Biden "will go back to managing the conflict," said Ali Jarbawi, a political science professor at Birzeit University in the West Bank.

"Under the banner of a two-state solution you give money to the Palestinians, you tell the Israelis please don't do this and don't do that, and engage once more in negotiating that will take another 20 years," he said.

08.26.20

Pompeo speech for Trump from Israel riled the House of Representatives

08.26.20

Pompeo convention speech for Trump from Israel sparks criticism

Head of U.S. House of Representatives subcommittee announces an investigation into whether Pompeo's appearance at RNC via a recorded video from a Jerusalem rooftop, broke federal law and regulations

Reuters| Published: 08.26.20 , 09:30

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo praised President Donald Trump's foreign policy record in a Republican National Convention speech on Tuesday that Democrats criticized as a breach of protocol and perhaps the law.

Speaking in a recorded video from a Jerusalem rooftop during an official trip, Pompeo, a Trump appointee widely believed to harbor presidential aspirations, said the president

had exposed the “predatory aggression” of the Chinese Communist Party, while defeating Islamic State militants and lowering the threat from North Korea.

Even before he spoke, critics pounced, saying Pompeo had broken with decades of protocol in using his appointed office for partisan purposes.

The chairman of a Democratic-led U.S. House of Representatives subcommittee announced on Tuesday an investigation into whether Pompeo’s appearance broke federal law and regulations.

“The Trump administration and Secretary Pompeo have shown a gross disregard not only of basic ethics, but also a blatant willingness to violate federal law for political gain,” Joaquin Castro, head of the House Foreign Affairs Committee’s oversight subcommittee, said in a statement.

In a letter to Deputy Secretary of State Stephen Biegun, Castro said Pompeo’s appearance was “highly unusual and likely unprecedented,” and “may also be illegal.”

Rep. Joaquin Castro

Dem. Rep. Joaquin Castro (Photo: Gettyimages)

A State Department official told a pool reporter traveling with Pompeo that the secretary was appearing in his personal capacity and no State Department personnel or resources were involved.

John Bellinger, the top State Department lawyer under former Republican Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, said the agency had long barred senior political appointees from partisan activity, including attending party conventions, even if they might be permitted under the 1939 Hatch Act limiting the political activities of federal employees.

Pompeo’s address also appeared to violate his own instructions restating the department’s prohibition on political activities - which applies to official and private time - sent to personnel in a July 24 cable reviewed on Monday by Reuters.

In his letter to Biegun, Castro wrote that it was “readily apparent” from documents in his panel’s possession that Pompeo’s appearance may violate the Hatch Act, federal regulations implementing that law and federal rules.

He asked that Biegun answer a series of questions by no later than Sept. 1 and arrange a briefing for lawmakers by the same date.

In his remarks to the Republican convention, Pompeo described what he called Trump’s foreign policy successes, including the president’s decision to move the U.S. Embassy in Israel to Jerusalem and holding talks with North Korean leadership.

“The primary constitutional function of the national government is ensuring that your family – and mine – are safe and enjoy the freedom to live, to work, to learn and to worship as they choose,” Pompeo said.

08.26.20

Turkey hosting Hamas– prompted US to suspend NATO F-35 & threaten sanctions

08.26.20

U.S. slams Turkey's Erdogan for hosting Hamas officials - Turkey rejects statement
State Department says Ankara's decision to hold meeting with terror group's leaders
'isolates Turkey, harms the interest of the Palestinian people and undercuts global effort
to stop fighting in Gaza'

Reuters| Published: 08.25.20 , 21:20

The State Department on Tuesday slammed Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's
over his recent hosting several leaders of Hamas in Istanbul.

Turkey rejected the statement its Foreign Ministry said.

In its statement the department said the officials were "Specially Designated Global
Terrorists" and the United States was seeking information about one member of the
delegation, Hamas' military wing founder Saleh al-Arouri, for his involvement in
multiple terrorist attacks, hijackings and kidnappings.

A Turkish government statement on Saturday said Erdogan received Ismail Haniyeh,
head of the Hamas Political Bureau, head of the organization's foreign branch Maher
Salah, al-Arouri and the group's representative in Turkey, Jihad Yaghmor.
According to media reports, Hamas briefed Erdogan on the "Palestinian cause" while
complaining about Israel's plan to annex parts of the West Bank, which has been put on
ice as part of the normalization agreement with the UAE.

The State Department said the Saturday meeting was the second time this year Erdogan
had welcomed leaders of the armed Islamist group that has controlled Gaza for over a
decade, after a meeting on Feb. 1.

"President Erdogan's continued outreach to this terrorist organization only serves to
isolate Turkey from the international community, harms the interests of the Palestinian
people, and undercuts global efforts to prevent terrorist attacks launched from Gaza," it
said in a statement.

"We continue to raise our concerns about the Turkish government's relationship with
Hamas at the highest levels."

U.S. ties with NATO ally Turkey have been strained over issues such as Ankara's
purchase of Russian S-400 defense systems, which prompted Washington to suspend
Turkish involvement in its F-35 jet program and threaten sanctions.

08.27.20

Pelosi: Biden Shouldn't 'Legitimize' Trump By Debating Him

08.27.20

Pelosi: Biden Shouldn't 'Legitimize' Trump By Debating Him

speaker of the house nancy pelosi speaks to press

Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., speaks during a news conference at the Capitol in Washington, Thursday, Aug. 27, 2020. (AP Photo/J. Scott Applewhite)
By Marisa Herman | Thursday, 27 August 2020 01:11 PM

Short URL|Email Article|Comment|Contact|Print| A A
House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said she would nix all presidential debates ahead of the November election, The Hill reports.

She told reporters on Thursday that she doesn't think former Vice President Joe Biden should debate President Donald Trump.

"I do not think that the president of the United States has comported himself in a way that anybody has any association with truth, evidence, data and facts," she said, adding, "I wouldn't legitimize a conversation with him nor a debate in terms of the presidency of the United States."

She said Trump will "probably act in a way that is beneath the dignity of the presidency," during debates. She called his actions during the 2016 debates with former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton "disgraceful."

"He does that every day," she noted. "But I think he will also belittle what the debates are supposed to be about."

Rather than debate in "an exercise in skulduggery," Pelosi suggested Trump and Biden take separate stages and answer questions about their policies in a "conversation with the American people."

She noted that the Biden campaign "thinks in a different way about this."

A Biden campaign spokesman said the former vice president looks forward to debating Trump. Democrats have been divided on whether Biden should participate in presidential debates, The Hill reports. Some say he should skip out while others say he shouldn't be afraid to take on the president.

"We've had presidential debates for a long time now, and it's been a way for a lot of people around the nation to be able to see the candidates in action," Sen. Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass., said of the debates.

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