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Egypt's Sisi: UAE-Israel deal 'step to Mideast peace'

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Egypt's Sisi: UAE-Israel deal 'step to Mideast peace'

During phone call with Netanyahu, the Egyptian president warns against any unilateral decisions that 'would undermine chances for peace' and calls for renewal of talks between Israelis and Palestinians

AFP| Published: 09.02.20 , 18:41

Egypt's President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi said Wednesday the UAE-Israel normalization accord represents a step towards regional peace by preserving Palestinian rights and Israeli security.

The United Arab Emirates and Israel have agreed to normalize ties in a watershed U.S.-brokered deal under which the Jewish state has suspended annexation plans.

Palestinians, however, have condemned it as a "betrayal" of their cause.

In a phone call with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Sisi voiced his support for "any steps that would bring peace" to the volatile Middle East. He welcomed measures that "preserve the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, allow for the establishment of their independent state and provide security for Israel". The UAE-Israeli agreement announced on August 13 was a "step" in that direction", he said.

Sisi warned against any unilateral decisions that "would undermine the chances for peace" and called for talks between the Israelis and Palestinians. The UAE became the third Arab country to agree to normalize ties with Israel, after Egypt signed a peace deal in 1979 and Jordan followed suit in 1994. Arab leaders support a two-state solution to resolve the decades-old Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

They back Palestinian demands for a state based on borders before the 1967 Six-Day War when Israel seized the West Bank and Gaza, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

09.02.20

Virus czar warns students education opened September 1 in violation of orders

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Gamzu slams top rabbi over comments dismissing virus testing

United Torah Judaism MK tells Gamzu 'not to get involved' in ultra-Orthodox affairs after coronavirus czar warns that without adherence to public health orders and encouragement of testing, officials would 'have to make complex decisions'
Sivan Hilaie| Published: 09.02.20 , 18:16

Israel's coronavirus czar on Wednesday slammed a prominent Haredi leader for calling on students of religious institutions across the country not to get tested for COVID-19.

Ultra-Orthodox news outlet Kikar HaShabbat reported earlier that Rabbi Chaim Kanievsky, a leading adjudicator in the Lithuanian ultra-Orthodox movement, instructed heads of yeshivas to refrain from further testing of their students as it could lead to a closure of the institutions.

"Rabbi Kanievsky's statements are endangering the ultra-Orthodox community amid an ongoing pandemic," Prof. Ronni Gamzu said.

He added that **without increased** enforcement of public health regulations and encouragement of **testing**, the country's **leaders will be required** "to make complex decisions that may amount to **imposing a nationwide lockdown**." According to the latest data, over **800 students** studying at yeshivas and yeshiva-like institutions have **tested positive** for coronavirus **over the past three days** alone.

United Torah Judaism member, **MK Yitzhak Pindros**, later **criticized** Prof. **Gamzu** for his comments, **suggesting the czar doesn't** "get involved in what has proven to work for thousands of years," **adding that those who take advice from their elders never fail**. "**Gamzu's comments** since he assumed the position only helped to **worsen the virus'** infection rate, hopefully, **he will find more success managing a hospital**," he said, referring to the fact that Gamzu is the CEO of Tel Aviv's Ichilov Medical Center. Prof. Gamzu's comments came **during a visit** to the predominantly ultra-Orthodox settlement of Beitar Illit, which the Health Ministry **classified** as "red", indication an **exceptionally high infection rate**.

Despite its categorization as "red", most of the settlement's **educational facilities** **opened** up on **September 1** as usual, in **clear violation** of the Health Ministry's **orders**.

"We are **standing at an** infection rate of **14%** and the responsibility for this is in your hands," Gamzu said. "We need the full cooperation of municipal authorities and its **leaders**, and I am sure the residents will follow all rules and regulations. A quick **return to normalcy** is only up to you - **through adherence to regulations**, to keep you and your families safe."

09.02.20

UAE mulling consulate in northern Israel, airlines begin a month after request

09.02.20

UAE mulling opening consulate in northern Israel

Gulf state officials says the country is weighing the **possibility** of **opening an embassy** in **Tel Aviv** and a **consulate in either Nazareth or Haifa**; Israelis will be able to apply for visas in the Emirati embassy, set to open within 3 to 5 months
i24NEWS| Published: **09.02.20** , 17:22

A senior United Arab Emirates official said Wednesday in the wake of the normalization agreement, the Gulf state is mulling opening an embassy and a consulate in Israel, which apparently will be located in northern Israel.

Israeli officials made a historic visit to the UAE on Monday, finalizing the details of the peace deal and Gulf state's sources now say one of the key issues Jerusalem and Abu Dhabi wish to advance going forward is the opening of its diplomatic missions.

According to reports, the Gulf state is **not settled on** launching the **embassy in Tel Aviv** alone, but is **also weighing** the possibility of opening a consulate in either the city of **Nazareth or** alternatively, in **Haifa**.

According to an anonymous official, as part of the imminent agreement between Israel and the UAE, **Israelis will be able to file requests for visas** in the Emirati embassy that is slated to open within three to five months.

The Transport Ministry said an official **request from UAE airliners for direct flights to Tel Aviv hasn't yet been made** and is expected to be **filed only after** the peace **agreement** is formally **signed**.

Flights to the **UAE from Israel** will reportedly **begin a month after an official request** has been submitted by the UAE airliners.

The historic **normalization** accord between Israel and the UAE was brokered by the United States and **announced three weeks ago**, with the official **signing** of the agreement is set to take place **in the coming weeks**.

09.01.20

Amid talks with Israel, UAE pursues F-35's at an air base US uses near Abu Dhabi

09.01.20

Amid talks with Israel, UAE pursuit of stealth jets rumbles in back ground

Israel has balked at any other **Middle East powers obtaining F-35** fighter jets, citing U.S. laws that it should maintain a military advantage in the region while the UAE has long expressed interest in acquiring it

Reuters| Published: **09.01.20** , 20:20

Amid historic normalization talks between Israel and the United Arab Emirates, **American officials** spent a morning at an **Abu Dhabi air base** housing U.S. stealth jets which the **Gulf state hopes to buy** despite Israeli objections.

White House senior adviser Jared **Kushner met** Emirati military officials at the UAE's **Al Dhafra air base**, where the U.S. keeps some of its **F-35** advanced stealth warplanes, highlighting the UAE's years-long drive to obtain the aircraft.

Israel, which has the F-35, has balked at any other Middle East powers obtaining the plane, citing U.S. laws that it should maintain a military advantage in the region.

Kushner, son-in-law to U.S. President Donald Trump, **arrived** in the Gulf Arab state on **Monday** on a two-day trip **with an Israeli delegation** for talks **with UAE officials** following their U.S.-brokered Aug. 13 accord to normalize relations.

The Gulf state, one of Washington's closest Middle East allies, has long expressed interest in acquiring the fighter jet made by Lockheed Martin Corp, which Israel has used in combat.

UAE Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Anwar Gargash has said normalization should remove "any hurdle" for the United States to sell the F-35 to the UAE.

A UAE official said the visit to the Emirati air base, which the U.S. also uses, near the UAE capital Abu Dhabi was not related to the F-35 issue, while another praised three decades of U.S.-UAE military cooperation.

"Our relationship has been built on trust and mutual support," Major General Falah al-Qahtani told reporters. "We have stood together to fight extremism in all of its forms."

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Monday F-35 plane sales were not part of the deal with the UAE, underscoring Israel's concern not to dilute its access to advanced American weapons systems in the region.

"The Americans acknowledged that. Our position hasn't changed," Netanyahu said.

He said that White House national security adviser Robert O'Brien made clear to him during a visit to Israel this week that the United States is committed to preserving Israel's military edge in the volatile region.

The United States has sold the F-35 to allies including Turkey, South Korea, Japan and Israel.

"The F-35 issue is a long-standing request of the UAE and it's not by any means a driver of reaching this accord," Jamal Al-Musharakh, chief of policy planning and international cooperation at the UAE foreign ministry, told reporters.

Kushner, who traveled on to Bahrain from the UAE on Tuesday, said he hoped another Arab country would normalise ties with Israel within months.

No other Arab state has said so far it is considering following the UAE. Several have ruled out normalization under current conditions. Only two other Arab states have forged full relations with Israel - Egypt in 1979 and Jordan in 1994.

09.01.20

Israel & UAE sign partnership with a strong focus on innovation and technology
Tuesday

09.01.20

Israel, UAE agree on financial cooperation as Israelis leave Abu Dhabi
Netanyahu and Gulf state's media office announce deal aimed at joint investment and removal of financial barriers between the two states hours before El Al plane with the Israeli team on board takes off from UAE following a historic visit

Reuters, Ynet| Updated: 09.01.20, 14:20

Israel and the United Arab Emirates agreed on Tuesday to set up a joint committee to cooperate on financial services, aiming to promote investment between the two countries as Israeli delegation left the Gulf state following a historic visit.

A joint Israeli and U.S. delegation was Abu Dhabi on a historic 24-hour trip to finalize a pact marking open relations between Israel and the Gulf state. The team took off for Israel at 14:15pm, once again flying through Saudi Arabia's airspace.

Hours before the delegation left, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said in the statement that representatives from both countries signed the understanding.

"I welcome the first understandings signed in Abu Dhabi. These understandings will help us promote mutual investment and extensive collaborations," Netanyahu said. One focus, Netanyahu said, would be on "cooperation in the field of financial services and removing financial barriers for making investments between the countries, as well as promoting joint investments in the capital markets."

The countries will also collaborate in banking services and payment regulations, he said. UAE's media office later confirmed the deal via Twitter. "Abu Dhabi Investment Office and Invest in Israel set out plans for bilateral investment cooperation, during a landmark first meeting when both parties explored mutually beneficial areas of partnership with a strong focus on innovation and technology," said the statement.

Israeli officials have been quick to play up the economic benefits of the accord, which once formalized would also include agreements on tourism, technology, energy, healthcare and security, among other areas.

A number of Israeli and Emirati businesses have already signed deals since the normalisation deal was announced.

09.01.20

Netanyahu & Mossad director Cohen met UAE Prince in 2018 to start peace

09.01.20

Netanyahu secretly visited UAE in 2018 to kick start peace deal

Ynet learns that PM and Mossad chief met with the Gulf state's leader 2 years before the peace agreement was announced; Netanyahu hinted Monday information about some of his past meetings with Arab leaders yet to become public

Yossi Yehoshua | Published: 09.01.20 , 11:36

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu apparently made a secret visit to the United Arab Emirates and met with the Gulf state's leader two years before the historic peace agreement between the two countries.

A plane belonging to Israel's flag carrier El Al made history on Monday afternoon becoming the first Israeli aircraft to make a direct commercial flight from Israel to the UAE, where a joint Israeli and U.S. delegation is set to discuss the peace agreement with the Gulf state's officials. Netanyahu was not part of the delegation, headed by National Security Council (NSC) Director Meir Ben Shabatt.

Kushner in UAE: U.S. will preserve IDF edge, Palestinians must move forward
Ynet's sister publication Yedioth Ahronoth has learned that Netanyahu met with Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed back in 2018 during a secret visit where he was accompanied by the director of the Mossad intelligence agency, Yossi Cohen, who is said to have set up the meeting.

According to diplomatic sources, the meeting was successful and both parties kept close contact afterward.

Ben Shabatt held another meeting in Washington with UAE and U.S. officials in 2019. Sources said Israeli Ambassador to the U.S. Ron Dremer was also involved in the negotiation process between the two countries.

The Prime Minister's Office refused to comment on the report, but Netanyahu said during a press conference on Monday that information about some of his meetings with Arab leaders has yet to become public.

"I meet with many many leaders in the Arab and Muslim world, more than you'd think," Netanyahu said. "There are many things I cannot tell you about, but I do believe they will see light when the time is right. You could see the tip of the iceberg for yourselves in recent years."

When asked about a report by Yedioth Ahronoth that a part of the deal between the countries will see the U.S. selling the Emirates the advanced F-35 fighter jets, the premier said the Americans have fully committed to maintaining Israel's qualitative advantage" and that he will further consult U.S. President Donald Trump.

The veteran Israeli leader also denied reports the peace deal will see his plan to extend Israeli sovereignty over Jewish settlements in the West Bank, and the strategic Jordan Valley, scrapped.

"It is not off the table. Historic things are happening here that are changing the map of the Middle East," the Likud chairman said. "Very good things are happening here, both for the State of Israel and for the Land of Israel."

Netanyahu also expressed hope he would be able to share future developments with coalition partners, Blue & White's Defense Minister Benny Gantz and Foreign Minister Gabi Ashkenazi, who were both left out of the peace process with the UAE.

"I hope that I will be able to update them in future agreements. During talks with the Emirates, there was an explicit request to maintain maximum confidentiality. I think I will have something to share with Gantz and Ashkenazi later because the policy I described here is maturing and brings results."

08.31.20

Qatari-brokered deal by Amadi, deescalated Gaza violence of balloon devices

08.31.20

Hamas, Israel reach agreement on deescalation of cross-border violence

Terror group says Qatari-brokered deal will bring in projects to help the enclave deal with the coronavirus pandemic; border crossing to be reopened, fishing zone expanded

Eyal Arbid, Yoav Zitun | Published: 08.31.20, 21:53

Hamas announced on Monday that it has reached an agreement with Israel to deescalate violence across the border.

The talks, which were mediated by the Qatari envoy to the Gaza Strip, Muhammad al-Amadi, "brought understandings between us and Israel to return calm to the region and prevent an escalation in violence," a statement by the terror group read.

The terror group also said that the agreement will include facilitating social projects to help tackle the dire humanitarian situation and rein in the spread of COVID-19 in the coastal enclave.

"As part of our efforts, several projects - which will serve our people - will be announced soon and help elevate their burden caused by the coronavirus pandemic gripping the Gaza Strip," the statement read.

Hamas says that the situation across the border will return to its "pre-escalation" standards.

Israeli officials confirmed reports of the agreement between the two parties and said that the agreement will see the transfer of Qatari financial aid into Gaza, the full reopening of the Kerem Shalom border crossing on Tuesday, and Gaza's fishing zone expanded to its pre-escalation area.

According to one official familiar with the issue, the terror organization's statement was an Israeli demand and that the sides will continue discussing further terms to the calm.

"Further deliberations on any further demands by Hamas will continue later, as the group stopped the launch of all balloon-borne incendiary and explosive devices from the Gaza Strip," Israeli officials said.

09.02.20

Israel, US & UAE will sign before Rosh Hashanah & Bahrain is expected soon
Wednesday

09.02.20

Report: Bahrain to announce normalization of ties with Israel soon

Senior Israeli official believes announcement will follow the signing of Israel's agreement with the United Arab Emirates.

Bahrain is expected to announce the normalization of ties with Israel very soon, a senior Israeli official told Kan 11 News on Wednesday.

According to the official, it is believed that the announcement will follow the signing of the agreement with the United Arab Emirates. The United States is interested in holding the signing ceremony before Rosh Hashanah, the report said.

Recent reports indicated that, in the wake of the Israel-UAE agreement, Bahrain has signaled that it aims to be the next country to sign an agreement with Israel.

The matter has reportedly been discussed for some time, but Bahrain is now pushing for it to happen sooner rather than later.

Bahrain, like other Arab countries, has no official diplomatic relations with Israel, though there have been reports in recent years of improved ties between the Jewish state and several Gulf countries.

Minister Yisrael Katz last year held a first public meeting with Bahraini Foreign Minister Sheikh Khalid bin Ahmed Al Khalifa during a visit to Washington.

Al Khalifa said in an interview on Israeli television several months ago that "Israel is historically part of the heritage of this whole region. So the Jewish people have a place amongst us."

Later, however, he reaffirmed his country's support for the Palestinian people's right to an independent Palestinian state along the pre-1967 borders with eastern Jerusalem as its capital.