

Ynet-News, September 26, 2020 – Saturday

09.26.20 – Sa - - - News Placed in Sep 25 spot – Friday

Fatah & Hamas meet in Istanbul on PA elections as Abbas seeks allies

09.26.20 – Sa - - -

Israel 8,221 new cases, 728 patients serious, 200 on ventilators; death toll 1,441

09.24.20 – Th - - -

National emergency debated may restrict everyone one kilometer from home

09.24.20 – Th - - -

Jordan, Egypt, EU desire East Jerusalem as Palestine capital

09.26.20

Fatah & Hamas meet in Istanbul on PA elections as Abbas seeks allies

09.26.20

Feeling snubbed over Israel deals, Abbas seeks extremist allies

Analysis: With Arab League refusing to condemn UAE, Bahrain agreements with Israel, the Palestinian president has decided to strengthen relations with Hamas and Islamic Jihad at the expense of ties to more traditional allies, including Egypt

Elior Levy | Published: 09.26.20 , 23:27

The normalization agreements between Israel and the UAE and Bahrain, coupled with the silent support of most of the members of the Arab League, have pushed Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas to look for fresh allies, even to the extent of embracing bitter rivals Hamas.

The new rapprochement began in recent weeks with a video conference between senior Fatah member Jibril Rajoub and Hamas deputy leader Saleh al-Arouri.

It continued with a virtual meeting of all Palestinian factions, during which many prominent Palestinian leaders took the stage, including Abbas, Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh and Islamic Jihad leader Ziyad al-Nakhalah.

It culminated in talks on Tuesday, when Fatah and Hamas officials began a round of face-to-face meetings in the Turkish capital Istanbul.

As a show of the importance of the new association, each organization dispatched top-tier members to Turkey. Fatah sent Rajoub and former speaker of the Palestinian Legislative Council Rawhi Fattouh while Hamas chose to keep the identity of its representatives under wraps, most likely for security reasons.

But Hamas issued a statement on Tuesday that Haniyeh had concluded his visit to Lebanon and left the country, making it a fair assumption that he himself was the organization's representative in Turkey, alongside his deputy Saleh al-Arouri.

The two organizations have held multiple meetings over the last decade, signing various reconciliation agreements with solemn, ceremonious declarations. But so far, these agreements have been on paper only and not been implemented in reality.

Now, however, both Fatah and Hamas claim that this time is different.

Even so a number of sources said that despite the optimistic spirit of the two parties, the first day of the Turkey talks did not end with a reconciliation agreement or even with a joint statement.

While Hamas demanded elections across all Palestinian institutions - presidency, parliament and Palestinian National Council - Fatah insisted on gradual voting, and first holding parliamentary elections only.

Another dispute between the parties concerned the method of elections.

Hamas wanted to form a unity government before the election, in order to maintain transparency but Fatah preferred to leave the current government in its current formulation and only form a new government after the elections.

Hamas was suspicious of Abbas' intentions, fearing he was only trying to give him legitimacy to remain president without offering the group anything in return.

Fatah, on the other hand, feared that Hamas would not actually hand over control of government ministries in Gaza to the Palestinian Authority and even falsify election results due to its grip on the Strip.

These talks between Fatah and Hamas, which on Thursday night led to an announcement of an agreement on holding elections, held further significance.

After a long period of Egypt having almost complete hegemony over Palestinian reconciliation efforts, Fatah and Hamas decided to hold these talks in Turkey, even as auspices, while relations between Ankara and Cairo are currently fraught with tensions. According to Lebanese newspaper Al-Akhbar, Egypt is livid with both Hamas and Fatah over this choice and the ouster of Cairo from the reconciliation process.

In addition, on the eve of the talks in Turkey, Abbas called Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and asked him to help as much as possible to guarantee the success of the elections and to even send Turkish observers to safeguard the purity of the elections when they do take place.

Ramallah has also announced it has decided to end the role of the Palestinian Authority as the rotating president of the Arab League, in protest of the League's refusal to condemn the agreements between Israel and the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain.

There are clear indications that Abbas, who is in a position of political weakness, has decided to strengthen his ties to extremists at the expense of his relations with his classical allies due to his sense that the moderate forces have decided to turn their backs on him.

09.26.20

Israel 8,221 new cases, 728 patients serious, 200 on ventilators; death toll 1,441

09.26.20

Israel breaks new daily coronavirus case count

For fourth consecutive day, Israel reaches new daily high with 8,221 new cases on Friday; Out of 728 patients in serious condition, 200 are connected to ventilators; death toll at 1,441

Ynet| Published: 09.26.20 , 22:00

For the fourth straight day, Israel reached a new daily coronavirus case count after the Health Ministry announced Saturday evening that 8,687 new diagnoses since Friday afternoon, bringing the total since the start of the pandemic to 226,586.

Also reported were 16 additional virus-related deaths, raising the national death toll 1,441.

Out of the 67,628 patients currently battling the disease, 728 are in serious condition, with 200 connected to ventilators.

The ministry also reported that by Saturday evening, 23,387 coronavirus tests were conducted, putting the infection rate at 16.6%, meaning 1 in 6 tests positive.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Saturday released a video urging Israeli Jews not to attend synagogue during Yom Kippur on Sunday and Monday.

He admitted that it appeared that reopening the entire country including the education system has been a mistake.

"The decision to open the event halls was made too quickly, same with the school system," he said. "The populist decisions to cancel the restrictions we, the government, implemented after cases began to climb was a mistake."

Knesset was due to reconvene Sunday in order to continue voting on the legal amendment to restrict the right to protest - ostensibly as part of coronavirus mitigation effort. Critics of the prime minister, have accused the government of taking advantage of the pandemic in order to stymie the months-long demonstrations outside Netanyahu's official Jerusalem residence over his handling of the crisis and his refusal to resign despite his corruption charges.

09.24.20

National emergency debated may restrict everyone one kilometer from home

09.24.20

Netanyahu: We are in a national emergency

PM says government had to make the right decision to increase lockdown restrictions in order to save lives, blames opposition leader for politicizing crisis

Ynet| Updated: 09.24.20 , 22:20

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Israel is facing a national emergency after morbidity and fatality rates from coronavirus continue to rise.

"We know that the pandemic will exact a heavy price and we will see more deaths," he said, "I am sorry to have to say this, but it is the truth."

In a televised address, the prime minister said that many other countries are experiencing a second wave of the virus and claimed that after successfully combating the first wave of the virus, his government allowed the economy to operate thus mitigating the financial cost to the country.

As new and more restrictive measures were being debated in the Knesset, Netanyahu said the more stringent lockdown, though harsh, would save lives.

"We have reached 7,000 new cases confirmed in a day and in the past 24 hours, 59 people have died," the prime minister said, "this is a terrible cost."

"The leadership must make the right decisions and that is what we have now done," he said.

The new measures that include a full lockdown on all but critical industry and essential commerce is to come into effect on Friday for a period of at least two weeks.

Netanyahu said he was "working on a vaccine for coronavirus," and on its availability in Israel as soon as possible. "There is a light at the end of the tunnel," he said.

Attempting to explain how the country found itself with the highest infection rate in the world per capita Netanyahu blamed "populist politicians" who pushed for the economy to reopen too swiftly.

He specifically pointed a finger at opposition leader Yair Lapid (Yesh Atid-Telem), accusing him of "endangering the lives of Israeli citizens" by politicizing Israel's recovery just as the country looked to be managing the coronavirus pandemic at the outset of summer.

Earlier Thursday evening, Lapid blamed the prime minister for Israel's high morbidity, saying "Netanyahu's failures are the reason for the second lockdown, not the coronavirus."

Netanyahu pushed back at accusations he opted to impose more restrictions in his efforts to block demonstrators who have been protesting outside his official residence for months calling for his resignation.

The new coronavirus bill that is set to come up for a vote in the Knesset would empower the government to block demonstrators from congregating in large numbers and at a distance of over one kilometer from home.

09.24.20

Jordan, Egypt, EU desire East Jerusalem as Palestine capital

09.24.20

Jordan, Egypt, EU urge renewal Israel-Palestinian talks

At meeting in Amman, foreign ministers cite need to 'rebuild confidence to allow the relaunching of the negotiation process,' say Israeli pledge to suspend annexation 'should become permanent'

AFP| Published: 09.24.20 , 18:51

The foreign ministers of Jordan, Egypt, France and Germany on Thursday urged Israel and the Palestinians to engage in "credible dialogue" to restore "hope" to the peace process.

"Ending the stalemate in peace talks, the creation of political horizons and the restoration of hope through credible dialogue must be a priority," the top diplomats said in a statement from Amman.

The meeting comes after the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain formally established full diplomatic ties with Israel, the third and fourth Arab states to do so after Egypt in 1979 and Jordan in 1994.

Talks between Israel and the Palestinians have been frozen since 2014, and a U.S. peace plan announced in January has been welcomed by Israel and rejected outright by the Palestinians as biased.

After Thursday's meeting, the ministers stressed "the urgency of the resumption of serious, meaningful and effective negotiations on the basis of international law and agreed parameters directly between the parties or under the UN umbrella."

"We call upon the parties to commit to past agreements and to resume credible dialogue on this basis," they said.

The meeting was also attended by the EU's envoy for the peace process.

The ministers also met Jordan's King Abdullah II, who reiterated a long-held position that ending the conflict required "a two-state solution with an independent (and) viable Palestinian state" based on pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as the Palestinians' capital.

The UAE and Bahrain signed accords normalizing ties with Israel at a September 15 ceremony hosted by U.S. President Donald Trump.

Under the deal with Abu Dhabi, Jerusalem pledged to suspend its planned annexation of territory in the West Bank.

"This suspension should become permanent," the ministers said Thursday, stressing the "importance" of the UAE and Bahrain deals.

"The Israelis and Palestinians must quickly resume dialogue," French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian told journalists.

"In the immediate term, we must rebuild confidence to allow the relaunching of the negotiation process, which is in the interest of both parties".

Jordanian Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi warned of the dangers of "a political stalemate in the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations."

"There has to be progress towards a comprehensive and just peace," he said.