

Ynet-News, October 01, 2020 – Thursday

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Two Haifa wards manned by IDF medics to treat civilians in Israel

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Israel lockdown law limits demonstrators to 1 km (0.6 miles) from their homes

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Syria affirms opposition to 'all agreements with Israel enemy'

Syrian diplomat rejects 'agreements, treaties with Israeli enemy' based on firm conviction such agreements harm Arab causes, Palestinian cause foremost' after Lebanon confirms border talks

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Syria affirmed Thursday that it remains staunchly opposed to any normalization agreements with Israel, hours after Lebanon announced it reached an agreement with Jerusalem to enter United Nations-mediated talks regarding a dispute over land and maritime borders.

A source in the Syrian Foreign Ministry told the official SANA news agency that Syria "was and will remain against any agreements or treaties with the Israeli enemy based on its firm conviction that such agreements harm Arab causes in general, foremost among which is the Palestinian cause, which has been proven by previous experiences, that normalization and signing treaties and agreements with this enemy only increased its arrogance and obstinacy."

This was also the country's first official response to Israel's recently signed U.S.-brokered agreements with the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain.

The two Arab states, while saying they still support a Palestinian state, share the concerns of Israel and the United States regarding neighboring Iran, a key ally of President Bashar al-Assad's regime.

Israel has carried out numerous airstrikes against Iranian assets in Syria, with Tehran seeking to establish a foothold in the country and thus create a land bridge with its regional proxies, such as the Lebanese Shi'ite terrorist group Hezbollah.

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Two Haifa wards manned by IDF medics to treat civilians in Israel

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Israel adds over century of virus deaths within three days, exceeding 1,600  
Health authorities confirm 5,507 new virus cases, placing national infection rate at 12.1%; 817 patients hospitalized in serious condition with 186 of them connected to ventilators

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Israel surpassed 1,600 coronavirus-related fatalities, counting over a century of deaths within 3 days and 29 of them in the previous 24 hours, the Health Ministry reported Thursday evening.

Health authorities have also confirmed 5,507 new cases of coronavirus out of 43,261 tests conducted by Thursday evening, with 1 in 8 of them yielding a positive result, placing the national infection rate at 12.1%.

Since the onset of the pandemic in Israel, 252,533 Israelis have tested positive for coronavirus and 71,956 of them are still battling the pathogen. Among the ill are 817 patients in serious condition, 186 of them connected to ventilators.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Thursday that if the current nationwide lockdown does not show any success in stemming the spread of the virus, "we will need to tighten it."

"The only way we can minimize the morbidity rate is through a tight lockdown," he said during a Facebook Live event.

"If the current regulations allow lowering the infection rate, we had done our job and do not need to change anything. If not, we will need to amend certain aspects," the premier said.

Netanyahu also said that ministers will meet on Monday to decide on any possible changes to the lockdown after examining available data.

Also on Thursday, the IDF announced Thursday it will open two dedicated coronavirus wards at Haifa's Rambam Medical Center, which will be manned by medical officers and personnel.

This will be the first time the military, which has a rich history of extraterritorial humanitarian relief missions across the globe, treats civilians within the country's borders.

09.30.20

Israel lockdown law limits demonstrators to 1 km (0.6 miles) from their homes

09.30.20

Israel officially limits protests in new coronavirus lockdown law

After an all-night debate, Knesset ratifies the controversial legislation, which bans Israelis from holding demonstrations more than 1 km (0.6 miles) from their homes; critics called the move a blow to democracy

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Israel's parliament approved a government-backed edict on Wednesday likely to stifle protests against Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu over alleged corruption and his handling of the coronavirus crisis.

The legislation, ratified after an all-night debate in the Knesset, bans Israelis from holding demonstrations more than 1 km (0.6 miles) from their homes, a measure the government said was aimed at curbing COVID-19 infections.

Critics of the new measure, which becomes part of Israel's second national lockdown that went into effect on Sept. 18, said it was really intended to block protests near Netanyahu's official residence in Jerusalem.

Hezbollah scoffs at PM claims, offers 'missile site' media tour

"What's the next step? Banning the opposition leader from addressing parliament?" Yair Lapid, who heads the opposition in the legislature, tweeted about the vote.

For weeks, thousands of demonstrators have gathered to call for Netanyahu's resignation.

Opinion polls show only about a quarter of the public has confidence in the way he has dealt with the pandemic, which had largely subsided during a March-May lockdown.

Hours before the vote, hundreds of Israelis protested outside parliament, calling the protest limit a blow to democracy.

Israel's lockdown, which closed schools and limited business operations, was imposed after new COVID-19 cases climbed to around 7,000 a day in a population of 9 million, overtaxing some hospitals.

Netanyahu says Israel has handled the health crisis relatively well and that he has no political motive in seeking to prevent protests. He denies any wrongdoing in three corruption cases against him.

But with infection rates still high, especially in ultra-Orthodox Jewish neighbourhoods where social-distancing compliance has been lax, Netanyahu said on Tuesday that lockdown measures, scheduled to last three weeks, might have to be extended for at least a month or longer.

Israel has reported 234,060 infections and 1,516 deaths from COVID-19, the respiratory disease caused by the coronavirus.

09.30.20

Israel supplies more than 60 % of Azerbaijan arms in war with Armenia

09.30.20

Azerbaijani military using Israeli-made drones in war with Armenia, official says  
Assistant to Azeri president shows appreciation for security cooperation with Israel after urging Armenian separatists to 'stop the occupation' in the disputed Nagorno-Karabakh region

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The Azeri military has been using Israeli-made drones in its military campaign against Armenia, assistant to Azerbaijan's president, Hikmet Hajiyev, said on Wednesday.

"If the Armenians are afraid of these drones they should stop the occupation," Hajiyev was quoted as saying, referring to a geographical area where intense battles are taking place.

Fighting has erupted between Armenian and Azerbaijani forces in recent days in the separatist region of Nagorno-Karabakh.

Dozens of troops have reportedly been killed on both sides as the UN Security Council held an emergency meeting on Tuesday and called the warring countries to reach a cease fire.

"We appreciate very much the cooperation with Israel -- especially the security cooperation," the president assistant told Walla News. "The goal is to strengthen the defensive capabilities of Azerbaijan. We are in a state of defense and this technology allows Azerbaijan the ability to protect the security of its citizens."

Israel has thus far refrained from publicly commenting on the uptick of violence between the two Eurasian countries. A strategic-defensive collaboration between Jerusalem and Baku was signed in 2016, as estimates in the media say that Israel supplies more than 60 percent of the Azeri military's arms.