

Ynet-News, October 19, 2020 – Monday

10.19.20 – Mo - - - News Placed in Oct 19 spot – Monday
IDF closes roads & areas near Gaza Strip over possible Jihad sniper fire

10.19.20 – Mo - - - News Placed in Oct 20 spot – Tuesday
UAE cabinet ratifies accord with government official visit to Israel on Tuesday

10.19.20 – Mo - - -
UAE commercial flight arrived with 58 passengers will return to Abu Dhabi today

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Seminaries defy ban of no schools to open for any children above the age of six

10.18.20 – Su - - - News Placed in Oct 21 spot – Wednesday
Israel and UAE sign a deal on Tuesday for 28 weekly flights

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UN ends Iran arms embargo & travel bans despite US objections
Sunday

10.19.20 – Mo - - - News
US to pull Sudan from 1998 al-Qaeda blacklist after \$335m embassy victim payment

10.19.20
IDF closes roads & areas near Gaza Strip over possible Jihad sniper fire

10.19.20
IDF closes roads, agricultural areas near Gaza Strip
IDF says measures are part of 'engineering operation' in coastal enclave's vicinity, claiming 'there is no threat to nearby communities'; Israeli media reports move linked with concerns over possible Hamas sniper fire
i24NEWS| Published: 10.19.20 , 22:30

The IDF has sealed off roads and agricultural areas leading to and around the Gaza Strip on Monday, setting up roadblocks and checkpoints to block all outgoing and ingoing traffic in the area.

While the IDF stated it was conducting an "engineering operation" in the vicinity of the security barrier with Gaza, It did not specify the exact nature of the operation, adding additional details will be revealed shortly.

"There are no special instructions for the civilian Homefront and there is no threat to nearby communities," the IDF said.

"Agricultural roads near the fence have been temporarily restricted," it added, with Israeli media reporting the move was linked with concerns over possible Hamas sniper fire originating from the Palestinian enclave.

The operation comes at a time of increased friction between the Palestinian factions and Israel.

On Friday, a rocket was fired into Israel's south from the coastal enclave, landing in an open area. Additionally, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, along with other factions in Gaza, vowed to retaliate should Maher al-Akhras, a Palestinian prisoner who recently began a hunger strike, die while in Israeli custody.

Al-Akhras, a suspected Palestinian Islamic Jihad member - a charge that he denies - was brought in for administrative detention in late July. He has been on a hunger strike since the start of his detention, eating no food for some 85 days.

10.19.20

UAE cabinet ratifies accord with government official visit to Israel on Tuesday

10.19.20

UAE cabinet ratifies accord to Israel ahead of official visit

Ministers say peace deal would be 'an avenue of peace and stability to support the ambitions of the region's people, and enhance efforts for prosperity and advancement'

Reuters| Published: 10.19.20 , 18:07

The cabinet of the United Arab Emirates on Monday approved an agreement to establish full diplomatic relations with Israel that was signed in Washington last month, ahead of the first official visit by a UAE government delegation to Israel.

The UAE and fellow Gulf state Bahrain in September became the first Arab states in a quarter of a century to sign agreements to establish formal ties with Israel, forged largely through shared fears of Iran.

A cabinet statement said the Abraham Accord would be "an avenue of peace and stability to support the ambitions of the region's people, and enhance efforts for prosperity and advancement, especially as it paves the way for deepening economic, culture and knowledge ties."

Israel had ratified the deal in a cabinet vote and a parliamentary vote last week.

A UAE government delegation is due to visit Israel on Tuesday, accompanied by U.S. officials who arrived in Abu Dhabi on Monday from Bahrain, where they had joined an Israeli delegation on a trip to Manama to sign a communique formalizing nascent ties.

U.S. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin attended the first Abraham Accords Business Summit in the UAE capital where U.S. and Israeli delegations participated in meetings with senior Emirati officials on areas of cooperation, the U.S. embassy tweeted. Israel and the UAE have already signed several commercial deals since mid-August when they first announced they would normalize ties.

On Monday, they reached a bilateral agreement that will give incentives and protection to investors who make investments in each other's countries. Also on Monday, a commercial flight from the UAE landed for the first time, at Ben Gurion International Airport.

"We are very excited to be here," the flight's captain Saleh Abdullah said. "Hopefully this is the beginning of a good relationship between UAE and Israel and if someone asked me a few months ago if I would be here making a speech in Tel Aviv, I would have said this is impossible," he said.

"Because we have brave men who believe in peace and we have Mohammed bin Zayed and Benjamin Netanyahu, because of them, they work together and we have peace," Captain Abdullah said adding he hoped the region would all live, in peace and harmony. On Tuesday, Israel and the United Arab Emirates will sign a deal to allow 28 weekly commercial flights between Ben Gurion airport, Dubai and Abu Dhabi, the Transportation Ministry said on Sunday.

The aviation deal will be signed by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at Ben Gurion airport and flights are expected to begin within weeks, the ministry said. The Etihad airliner will return later in the day to Abu Dhabi carrying Israeli businessmen, tourism industry executives and journalists. Itay Blumenthal contributed to this report.

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UAE commercial flight arrived with 58 passengers will return to Abu Dhabi today

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UAE commercial flight lands for the first time in Israel

The Etihad flight will return to Abu Dhabi later in the day carrying businessmen, tourism industry executives and journalist; Flight captain says historic flight was made possible by the actions of brave leaders as he expressed hope for peace and harmony in the region Itay Blumenthal| Updated: 10.19.20 , 09:18

A commercial flight from the UAE landed for the first time, at Ben Gurion International Airport on Monday.

The Etihad 787-10 Dreamliner arrived with 58 passengers on board and was greeted in a festive ceremony.

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10.18.20

Seminaries defy ban of no schools to open for any children above the age of six

10.18.20

Edelstein says illegally-opened schools will be fined, license revoked

Health minister urges parents not to send children to educational institutions that operate in violation of the law, most of which are religious; adds if reopening of kindergartens will lead to another spike in infection, decision will be reversed

Adir Yanko | Published: 10.18.20, 19:39

Health Minister Yuli Edelstein said Sunday, schools that have reopened in violation of government orders, will be "heavily fined" and their licenses will be revoked.

The comments came after hundreds of ultra-Orthodox seminaries and educational institutions for all age groups opened their doors on Sunday morning in violation of restrictions imposed by the government in an effort to contain the coronavirus outbreak.

Speaking during a press briefing, where he was joined by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, the health minister said that educational institutions that reopen in violation of health directives, "shouldn't complain later that the country is mistreating them".

"There is no permission to open any educational institution for children above the age of six," he said. "Anyone who does so will be subject to heavy fines, perhaps even the termination of their license and the denial of state budgets," Edelstein added.

"I call on all parents: do not send your children to educational institutions that operate in violation of the law ... This should be clear to everyone."

Edelstein added that if reopening of kindergartens and preschools will lead to another spike in COVID-19 cases, the government might reverse the decision.

"The lockdown and closure of certain institutions are not a punishment, but a medical treatment for the benefit of all citizens. If we are careful and adhere to the basic rules, such as masks and social distance, we can enter the winter period with reasonable infection rates," he said.

"I assure the citizens of Israel that there will be no compromises on the issue of maintaining public health."

10.18.20

Israel and UAE will sign a deal on Tuesday for 28 weekly flights

10.18.20

Israel, UAE to sign agreement for 28 weekly flights

Transportation ministry says it's been agreed El Al flights between Ben Gurion Airport, Abu Dhabi and Dubai, as well as charter flights from UAE to Eilat's Ramon Airport, will become operational within a few weeks

Ynet, Reuters | Published: 10.18.20, 18:14

Israel and the United Arab Emirates will sign a deal on Tuesday to allow 28 weekly commercial flights between Ben Gurion airport, Dubai and Abu Dhabi, the Transportation Ministry said on Sunday.

The agreement, which also allows unlimited charter flights to a smaller Ramon airport in Israel's southernmost city of Eilat and 10 weekly cargo flights, comes after Israel and UAE agreed to normalize relations.

The aviation deal will be signed by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at Ben Gurion airport and flights are expected to begin within weeks, the ministry said.

"This is a historic and exciting day for Israel, which is starting to experience the economic bloom with new markets and flight destinations," Transportation Minister Miri Regev said in a statement.

Regev thanked all the officials who made the agreement possible, wishing luck to "all the Israeli flight companies that will establish new air routes to Abu Dhabi, Dubai and other Gulf states down the line."

In the meantime, an Israeli delegation, along with several U.S. officials, landed Sunday at Bahrain to formalize the normalization agreement signed last month along with the UAE. The delegation, led by National Security Adviser Meir Ben-Shabbat, is accompanied by U.S. Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin, whose office said the mission seeks "expanded economic cooperation" among Israel, Bahrain and UAE.

An official involved in the visit said **Israel and Bahrain** will sign a communique upgrading their relationship: from the declaration of intent delivered at a White House ceremony on Sept. 15 to a **formal establishment of ties**.

10.18.20

UN ends Iran arms embargo & travel bans despite US objections
Sunday

10.18.20

UN arms embargoes on Iran expire despite U.S. objections

A **travel ban on** a number of Iranian military and paramilitary **Revolutionary Guard** members also **comes to an end**; Washington warns of sanctions against individuals or entities contributing weapons, training or material to Tehran
Associated Press| Published: **10.18.20** , 19:57

A decade-long UN arms embargo on Iran that barred it from purchasing foreign weapons like tanks and fighter jets expired Sunday as planned under its nuclear deal with world powers, despite objections from the United States, which insists the ban remains in place.

While **Iran** says it **plans no “buying spree,”** it **can now** in theory purchase weapons to **upgrade military armaments** dating back to before its 1979 Islamic Revolution and sell its own locally produced gear abroad.

In practice, however, Iran’s economy remains **crippled by** broad-reaching **U.S. sanctions**, and other nations may avoid arms deals with Tehran for fear of American financial retaliation. The **Trump** administration has **warned** that **any sales of weapons to Iran** or exports from Iran **will be penalized**.

The **Islamic Republic heralded the end of the arms embargo** as “a **momentous day for** the international **community** ... in defiance of the U.S. regime’s effort.” The Trump administration, meanwhile, says the expiration is moot since it reimposed all UN sanctions on Iran, including the arms embargo, via a clause in the nuclear deal Trump withdrew from in 2018, a claim ignored by the rest of the world.

“Today’s normalization of Iran’s defense cooperation with the world is a win for the cause of multilateralism and peace and security in our region,” Iran’s Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif wrote on Twitter.

U.S. Secretary of State Mike **Pompeo flatly rejected the expiration**.

“The United States is prepared to use its domestic authorities to sanction any individual or entity that materially contributes to the supply, sale, or transfer of conventional arms to or from Iran, as well as those who provide technical training, financial support and services, and other assistance related to these arms,” he said in a statement.

“For the past 10 years, countries have refrained from selling weapons to Iran under various UN measures,” Pompeo said. “Any country that now challenges this prohibition will be very clearly choosing to fuel conflict and tension over promoting peace and security.”

Sunday’s expiration of the arms embargo was, in fact, the proximate cause for the U.S. decision last month to move forward with the so-called “snapback” of international sanctions in Iran. The Americans tried unsuccessfully to get the UN Security Council to extend the embargo but suffered a humiliating defeat when only one country on the 15-member panel supported it.

In response, the administration announced that it had invoked “snapback” — a mechanism provided for in the Security Council resolution that enshrined the nuclear deal that allows any participant in the accord to restore UN sanctions if they determine Iran is not complying with its terms. The rest of the council, however, rejected U.S. standing to trigger snapback, saying it had lost its right to do so when Trump pulled out of the deal.

The United Nations banned Iran from buying major foreign weapon systems in 2010 amid tensions over its nuclear program. An earlier embargo targeted Iranian arms exports.

The U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency predicted in 2019 that if the embargo ended, Iran likely would try to purchase Russian Su-30 fighter jets, Yak-130 trainer aircraft and T-90 tanks. Tehran also may try to buy Russia’s S-400 anti-aircraft missile system and its Bastian coastal defense missile system, the DIA said. China also could sell Iran arms. Iran long has been outmatched by U.S.-backed Gulf nations like Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, which have purchased billions of dollars of advanced American weaponry. In response, Tehran turned toward developing locally made ballistic missiles.

Iran has blasted Gulf Arab purchases of U.S.-made defense equipment as “regrettably lucrative weapon deals” with some of those arms used in the ongoing war in Yemen. That conflict pits a Saudi-led coalition backing the country’s internationally recognized government against rebel forces backed by Iran.

The UN arms embargoes, however, did not stop Iran from sending weapons ranging from assault rifles to ballistic missiles to Yemen’s Houthi rebels. While Tehran denies arming the Houthis, Western governments and weapons experts repeatedly have linked Iranian arms to the rebels.

Six Gulf Arab nations that backed the extension of the arms embargoes noted arms shipments to Yemen in their objection to the resumption of any weapon sales to Iran. They also mentioned in a letter to the UN Security Council that Iran mistakenly shot down a Ukrainian passenger plane in January and its navy accidentally killed 19 of its own sailors in a missile strike during an exercise. The UN also linked Iran to a 2019 attack on Saudi Arabia’s main crude oil refinery, though Tehran denies any links and Yemen’s rebel Houthis claimed responsibility.

Sunday also marked the end of UN travel bans on a number of Iranian military and paramilitary Revolutionary Guard members.

Tensions between Iran and the U.S. reached fever pitch at the start of the year, when an American drone killed a top Iranian general in Baghdad. Tehran retaliated with a ballistic missile attack on U.S. forces in Iraq that injured dozens. Meanwhile, Iran has steadily broken limits of the nuclear deal in an attempt to pressure Europe at salvaging the accord.

In recent months, provocations on both sides have slowed as President Donald Trump faces a re-election campaign against former Vice President Joe Biden. Biden has said he's willing to offer Iran "a credible path back to diplomacy" if Tehran returns to "strict compliance" with the deal.

10.19.20

US to pull Sudan from 1998 al-Qaeda blacklist after \$335m embassy victim payment

10.19.20

Trump: U.S. to remove Sudan from terrorism blacklist after payment to victims
Deal could set in motion steps by Sudan toward establishing diplomatic relations with Israel which would give U.S. President Trump an opportunity to tout a new diplomatic achievement as he seeks re-election
Reuters| Updated: 10.19.20 , 21:44

U.S. President Donald Trump said on Monday the United States would remove Sudan from its list of state sponsors of terrorism after the country's new government pays millions to American victims.

"New government of Sudan, which is making great progress, agreed to pay \$335 MILLION to U.S. terror victims and families. Once deposited, I will lift Sudan from the State Sponsors of Terrorism list. At long last, JUSTICE for the American people and BIG step for Sudan!" Trump wrote on Twitter.

Earlier on Monday, two U.S. officials said that the Trump administration was close to an agreement with Sudan to remove Khartoum from the U.S. terrorism blacklist.

The deal could also set in motion steps by Sudan toward establishing diplomatic relations with Israel, one of the officials told Reuters, following similar U.S.-brokered moves in recent weeks by the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain. But details were still being worked out, the source said.

Rapprochement between Israel and another Arab country would give U.S. President Donald Trump an opportunity to tout a new diplomatic achievement as he seeks re-election on Nov. 3.

Sudan's designation as a state sponsor of terrorism dates to its toppled ruler Omar al-Bashir and makes it difficult for its transitional government to access urgently needed debt relief and foreign financing.

Many in Sudan see this as undeserved since Bashir was removed last year and Sudan has long cooperated with the United States on counter-terrorism.

A key sticking point in U.S.-Sudan talks has been Sudan's insistence that any announcement of Khartoum's de-listing not be explicitly linked to normalization with Israel. Differences remain between Sudanese political and military officials on how far and how fast to go in warming of relations with Israel.

Sudanese Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok told U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo in Khartoum in August the normalization issue should not be linked to Sudan's removal from the terrorism list.

One possibility, one U.S. official said, would be for Washington to first announce Sudan's delisting and then leave it to Sudan and Israel to go public later with an agreement on establishing forging relations.

The UAE and fellow Gulf state Bahrain in September became the first Arab states in a quarter of a century to sign agreements to establish formal ties with Israel, forged largely through shared fears of Iran.

The White House did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Negotiations related to Sudan's deposit in escrow of a \$335 million settlement to victims of al-Qaeda attacks on U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998 are expected to conclude in the next two days, one of the U.S. government sources said.

After that, the Trump administration would notify Congress of its intent to remove Sudan from the list. First published: 20:53 , 10.19.20