

Ynet-News, October 20, 2020 – Tuesday

10.20.20 – Tu - - - News Placed in Oct 17 spot – Saturday

Gaza tunnel triggered IDF underground barrier indicator at Israel border Sunday

10.20.20 – Tu - - - News Placed in Oct 16 spot – Friday

Czar's opinion that every citizen should be tested - as Cabinet lifts restrictions

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UAE desires embassies in Tel Aviv & Abu Dhabi; PA calls UAE visits shameful

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IDF exposes Gaza terror tunnel entering Israeli territory

Tunnel reportedly stretched dozens of meters into Israel but failed to breach an underground barrier system, therefore posing no real threat to border communities; military says it holds Hamas responsible

Yoav Zitun | Published: 10.20.20 , 21:44

The IDF on Tuesday announced it had pinpointed a terror tunnel dug from the Gaza Strip that stretched dozens of meters into Israeli territory.

The tunnel, likely belonging to one of the Palestinian enclave's terrorist groups, was found to extend from the southern Gaza city of Khan Younis to Kibbutz Kissufim in the northern Negev.

The military said it successfully located the tunnel after being notified of the threat by a nearly-complete underground barrier system tasked with locating and blocking tunnels stretching from the Hamas-ruled territory into Israeli soil.

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.

"IDF engineering forces operated in the area of the fence and located the terror tunnel following an indication received from an underground barrier system on the Gaza Strip border whose construction is nearly complete," an IDF statement read. "The terrorist organization Hamas is charge in and out of the Gaza Strip and will bear the consequences of terrorist acts against Israeli citizens."

The tunnel, reportedly, was only dug recently and was not one of 20 terror tunnels used by Hamas and Islamic Jihad and destroyed by the IDF during the Israel-Gaza conflict in 2014.

The military added that the tunnel did not breach Israel's underground barrier and posed no real threat to Israeli communities in the area. It is set to complete its investigation of the tunnel in the coming days before sealing it completely.

"We have yet to affiliate this tunnel with any organization, but to us, Hamas is responsible for everything that happens in the Gaza Strip," said IDF spokesman Brigadier General Hidaï Zilberman.

"We have seen that in recent years, tunneling has taken center stage among terrorist organizations. In this tunnel specifically, they have invested a lot of money instead of directing it to the welfare of the residents of the Gaza Strip."

Zilberman stressed that there was no link between the IDF's unusual choice to not respond to a rocket fired from the Gaza Strip into Israel on Friday and the investigation of the tunnel, which was only discovered on Sunday.

Following the alarming discovery, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said that "we continue to act resolutely on all fronts for the security of Israel and against any attempt to harm our sovereignty or our citizens."

10.20.20

Czar's opinion that every citizen should be tested - as Cabinet lifts restrictions

10.20.20

Coronavirus czar announces COVID-19 tests for every citizen

Gamzu says every Israeli could get tested without seeing a doctor first, an option reserved so far only for those residing in virus hotspots; virus cabinet postpones meeting due to disagreement on outline for reopening of education system

Adir Yanko | Published: 10.20.20, 18:37

Israel's top coronavirus health official, Prof. Ronni Gamzu, announced on Tuesday that every citizen will be able to undergo a coronavirus test without consulting a physician first.

So far, only citizens residing in "red zones", which have high COVID-19 infection rates, could get tested without seeing a doctor.

"The health maintenance organizations (HMOs) are ready and will execute this in the coming days. Everything will be open and available, and test results will also be available within hours," Gamzu said. "I want the entire state of Israel to have less than 5% positive test results, therefore we need more testing."

"I want each person to get tested, especially people who have the slightest suspicion of being asymptomatic patients. **In my opinion, as many people as possible should get tested**, there are enough test kits. I do not fear labs would collapse under the pressure. The HMOs are working and know the exact workload expected on the laboratories. There may be some hiccoughs here and there, but it's a price I'm willing to pay."

During his daily briefing to staff, the coronavirus **czar** also **called** on authorities **to raise fines for transgressions** of public health directives.

Gamzu also said that as of Tuesday, **Israel no longer has** any **significant "red"** coronavirus **hot spots** requiring localized closures.

He said this ahead of a meeting of the so-called Coronavirus **Cabinet**, which directs the government's response to the pandemic, to **discuss lifting further restrictions** as the country **emerges from a month-long nationwide lockdown** imposed in an effort to stem a spiraling infection rate.

The **meeting** was later **postponed to Wednesday due to disagreements** between the different parties on an **outline** for an exit plan for the **education system**.

10.20.20

UAE desires embassies in Tel Aviv & Abu Dhabi; PA calls UAE visits shameful

10.20.20

UAE FM in letter to Askenazi: We want to open an embassy in Tel Aviv posthaste
The **Emirates'** top diplomat sends warm words to Israeli counterpart, hoping to see reciprocal opening of diplomatic missions in both countries' financial hubs **as soon as possible**

Ynet, Reuters | Published: **10.20.20**, 17:13

United Arab Emirates Foreign Minister Abdullah bin Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan on Tuesday launched a letter to his Israeli counterpart, Gabi Ashkenazi, in which he **asks the Jewish state to open an Emirati embassy in Israel** and **expects** an **Israeli diplomatic mission to open soon in Abu Dhabi**.

"I have nothing but to full appreciation for all the efforts you are making to promote cooperation between our countries, and I have full confidence in your unconditional support for the opening of the diplomatic **missions in Tel Aviv and Abu Dhabi** as soon as possible," read the letter conveyed to Ashkenazi by a UAE delegation visiting in Israel.

Earlier on **Tuesday**, Prime Minister Benjamin **Netanyahu welcomed** the first-ever official United Arab **Emirates delegation** to Israel, hailing a "glorious day of peace."

Accompanied by Foreign Minister Gabi Ashkenazi and Finance Minister Israel Katz, the prime minister hosted the Emirati delegation - including the UAE's Minister of State for

Financial Affairs Obaid Humaid Al Tayer and Economy Minister Abdullah bin Touq al-Mari - at a special five-hour ceremony confined to Ben-Gurion Airport due to coronavirus measures.

The two countries are broadening their cooperation after normalizing ties last month under a U.S.-brokered accord, forged largely over shared fears of Iran.

The prime minister praised the newly inked diplomatic agreement between the two countries as the **start of a mutually beneficial relationship**.

"Jews and Arabs are descendants of one common ancestor - Avraham, Abraham," Netanyahu said, referring to the name of the accords Israel has recently signed with both the UAE and Bahrain.

"We are making history in a way that will stand for generations," he said.

"I think that the visit of such a high level delegation from the UAE... will show our peoples, the region and the entire world the benefit of having friendly, peaceful and normal exchanges."

Speaking after the prime minister, the CEO of the **U.S. International Development Finance Corporation**, Adam Böhler, announced a **new trilateral project** called the **Abraham Fund**, a \$3 billion **foundation** that will be **based in Jerusalem** and "strengthen economic resiliency" across the Middle East and North Africa.

Israel and the **UAE also signed four cooperation agreements on aviation, visa exemptions, protection of investments and science and technology**. All four agreements will be approved in a Knesset vote at a later date.

The visa exemptions agreement means that citizens of both countries can visit the other without undergoing a visa application process and is the first such treaty between Israel and an Arab state.

Israel and the UAE have already signed several commercial deals since mid-August, when they first announced they would establish full relations.

The UAE and fellow Gulf state Bahrain in September became the first Arab states in a quarter of a century to sign deals to establish formal ties with Israel, a move that **Washington** and its allies have said would foster regional **peace** and stability but which has been **rejected by the Palestinians**.

Etihad Airways Flight EY8014 carrying Emirati government officials and U.S. dignitaries left the UAE capital Abu Dhabi for Tel Aviv on Tuesday morning.

Wael Abu Youssef, a member of the Executive Committee of the **Palestine Liberation Organization**, on Tuesday **called the UAE visit "shameful"**.

Speaking in Ramallah, he said the **visit came amid Israeli settlement expansion in the West Bank**.

"The bilateral agreements that were announced today and the delegations that come and go, all of that offers the occupation a strength to escalate its aggression and its crimes against the Palestinian people and increases its intransigence and arrogance," he said.

In Gaza, Hazem Qassem, a spokesman for the Hamas terror that rules the coastal enclave, said: "**Such a visit will only encourage** the occupation to pursue the gradual **annexation of West Bank lands**."

The UAE, however, has been celebrating the new relationship as a victory for regional peace.

"This is a historical moment for the UAE country and Israel and we are looking forward to salaam [peace]... in the region," one of the Emirati pilots can be heard saying in a video posted on Twitter by U.S. Middle East envoy Ari Berkowitz.

U.S. Treasury Secretary Steven **Mnuchin** and **Berkowitz** were also at the ceremony, having arrived in Israel on the UAE flight, after accompanying an Israeli delegation to Bahrain on Sunday for a signing ceremony to formalize ties.