

Ynet-News, October 29, 2020 – Thursday

10.29.20 – Th - - - News Placed in Oct 29 spot – Thursday  
US intends 50 F-35 jet sale to UAE if agreed by Senate & House in 40 days

10.29.20 – Th - - -  
West Bank PA farmers & dubious Israeli in Burqa clash, arson spread to olive trees

10.29.20 – Th - - -  
Business owners protest lockdown in Tel Aviv & demand allow to reopen

10.28.20 – We - - -  
Palestinian seeking symbolic gesture, sued UK over 1917 Balfour Declaration

10.28.20 – We - - - News Placed in Oct 28 spot – Wednesday  
Israel, US sign deal to Ariel University research projects in West Bank & Golan

10.27.20 – Tu - - -  
Convoy of cars rally for Trump in Jerusalem, as majority of Jews vote Democrat

10.27.20 – Tu - - - News Placed in Oct 27 spot – Tuesday  
Greeks meet with Israel as Turkey claims jurisdiction around Cyprus & Crete

10.27.20 – Tu - - -  
Gantz; We are prepared, as IDF holds its biggest army drill of the year

10.27.20 – Tu - - - News  
Raid on Eilat city hall & bank alleged corruption involving municipal officials

10.27.20 – Tu - - - News Placed in Oct 26 spot – Monday  
Israel approved homes in Hebron Cave of Patriarchs area, before US election

10.27.20 – Tu - - - News  
Ex-IDF surgeon general Nachman Ash named as Israel's next coronavirus czar

10.29.20  
US intends 50 F-35 jet sale to UAE if agreed by Senate & House in 40 days

10.29.20  
White House moves ahead with sale of F-35 jets to UAE

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu responds to the report saying both Israel and the UAE face a common threat but adds it is important that the country's qualitative military edge is preserved

Reuters, Ynet | Updated: 10.29.20 , 23:29

The White House notified Congress it intends to sell 50 F-35 fighter jets made by Lockheed Martin to the United Arab Emirates, setting up a potential showdown with the U.S. legislature, which could vote to block the sales, sources said on Thursday.

The United States and the UAE aim to have a letter of agreement for the F-35 jets in time for UAE National Day celebrated on Dec. 2, Reuters reported in September.

The U.S. Senate Foreign Relations and House of Representatives Foreign Affairs committees, whose members have criticized the UAE's role in civilian deaths in Yemen, have the right to review, and block, weapons sales under an informal review process. Israel initially balked at the prospective sale but last year dropped its opposition after what it described as U.S. guarantees that Israeli military superiority would be preserved.

Netanyahu who denied early reports that the sale of the stealth fighter jets was linked to the UAE's decision to sign a peace deal with Israel, said the Israeli defense establishment had been in consultation with the Pentagon that ensures Israel's military superiority would not be compromised.

"We all face a common threat," Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, in an apparent allusion to Iran, told reporters on Thursday when asked about the Reuters report.

"But with that said, it was important that the (Israeli) defense establishment received this clear American undertaking to preserve our qualitative military edge," added Netanyahu, who earlier on Thursday hosted visiting Pentagon chief Mark Esper.

Representative Eliot Engel, chairman of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, confirmed that an informal notification was sent to Congress on Thursday. "As Congress reviews this sale, it must be clear that changes to the status quo will not put Israel's military advantage at risk," he said.

Typically the informal notification process for complex deals like the F-35 sale is 40 days.

"Rushing these sales is not in anyone's interest," Engel warned in his statement. Israel and the UAE had signed a U.S. brokered peace agreement in September.

10.29.20

West Bank PA farmers & dubious Israeli in Burqa clash, arson spread to olive trees

10.29.20

West Bank Palestinians' olive trees burn as U.N. urges protection for harvest

U.N. Middle East envoy Nickolay Mladenov calls on Israel to ensure the safety of Palestinian olive farmers amid attacks by 'by people believed or known to be Israeli settlers'

Reuters| Published: 10.29.20 , 20:15

For many West Bank Palestinians, the olive tree is both a revered cultural emblem and an economic necessity - but it has also become a focal point of a struggle between them and Israeli settlers for a land they both claim.

More than 1,000 trees owned by Palestinian farmers have been burned or damaged in the West Bank since the harvest began three weeks ago, according to a United Nations report.

The Oct 23 report by humanitarian affairs office UNOCHA has also logged 19 disruptions "by people believed or known to be Israeli settlers," with 23 Palestinian farmers injured.

While the settlers dispute those figures, in normal years peace monitors accompany the farmers to protect the harvest. But the coronavirus pandemic has made this harder.

Some Israeli activists are still deploying. "With COVID-19 it is impossible for foreigners to come, harder for Israelis," said one activist, Guy Butavia.

Olive farmers in areas near some Israeli settlements say they face problems each year.

"When we try to reach our fields, the army protects the settlers and prevents us from accessing our olives," said Adnan Barakat, council head of Burqa village, near Ramallah. In Burqa, Israeli settlers "stoned and physically assaulted Palestinian olive pickers on three occasions, triggering clashes", UNOCHA said.

Calling on Israel to ensure the farmers' safety, U.N. Middle East envoy Nickolay Mladenov told the Security Council on Monday: "Each year, the ability of Palestinians to harvest is compromised due to access restrictions, attacks and intimidation."

Yigal Dilmoni, head of Yesha, the main settler council in the West Bank, said most of the accusations came from "dubious" sources.

"For many years now, extremist organisations... have been carrying out provocative actions and exploiting the harvest season to incite against Israeli civilians," he said.

"I live on the ground and see thousands of Palestinians harvesting their olives daily without any problem."

Around 430,000 Israeli settlers live among three million Palestinians in the West Bank, territory that Israel captured in 1967. Settlers have also been targets of Palestinian stabbing, shooting and car-ramming attacks.

Palestinians claim the West Bank for a future state. But Israel cites its security needs and historical ties to the region.

Tensions rose this summer over Palestinian fears that newly re-elected Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu would implement pre-election promises to annex part of the West Bank.

Last week in Burqa, Reuters journalists there saw Palestinians and Israelis confronting each other. Israeli security forces intervened, firing tear gas and stun grenades towards Palestinians, who threw stones back.

A brush fire broke out amid the clashes and Israeli firing, and spread to nearby olive trees.

The Israeli military said security forces had coordinated with landowners to ensure safe picking, but were met with "rioters" hurling rocks.

"A few arson attempts were identified," a military statement said. "Troops responded with riot dispersal means... During the incident, a fire broke out and several trees were damaged."

The military said it "would not allow the olive harvest to be used in order to harm Israeli civilians or security forces."

10.29.20

Business owners protest lockdown in Tel Aviv & demand allow to reopen

10.29.20

Business owners burn tires during lockdown protest in Tel Aviv

Protesters accuse the government of not compensating them for the loss of revenue during the lockdown and say many will go bankrupt in days; 'This government can't run a schedule, I wouldn't even let them run a kiosk,' says one protester  
Alexandra Lukash, Itay Blumenthal | Published: 10.29.20 , 15:49

Dozens of business owners marched through Tel Aviv on Thursday, burning tires and holding signs in protest of the coronavirus lockdown, which has left them without a source of income.

The protests began just hours before Israel's cabinet was set to reconvene to discuss lifting some restrictions on the commerce industry, which sustained a heavy economic blow during the pandemic. Finance Minister Israel Katz has demanded small businesses, including street shops, be allowed to reopen as soon as next week.

On Yaffo Street in Tel Aviv, protesters burned tires and lamented the government's conduct, blaming it for abandoning them.

"The state decided it wants us gone. We must open businesses, we need our livelihood," Ilan Dayan, the owner of a women's clothes shop in Holon told the Ynet studio.

"We, the business owners, are in dire straits. The state isn't helping us with anything. We are not asking for much – open our stores and we will adhere to health regulations. If you want to tighten them, be my guest, just let us work."

Dayan also directed scathing criticism at the government for mismanaging the pandemic and the subsequent financial crisis.

"[The government] can't run a schedule, I wouldn't even let them run a kiosk... why are they doing this to us? Some sectors get leniencies and even the enforcement is unequal," he said.

Oded Babai, who owns a fashion business in Tel Aviv, said that political games between lawmakers are the cause of business owners' plights.

"I can't even follow who against whom anymore, but one thing is for sure, business owners are falling apart, people are collapsing and our inventory is piling," Babai said. "If we can't sell our inventory in the next two weeks, half of us in the fashion industry will go home."

"Where's my economy minister? Why is he silent? Small businesses are the backbone of our economy, paying 60% of taxes, and these criminals are killing us."

10.28.20

Palestinian seeking symbolic gesture, sued UK over 1917 Balfour Declaration

10.28.20

The 'Palestinian Godfather' who sued UK over Balfour Declaration

Industrialist Munib al-Masri, along with several activists, filed a lawsuit seeking compensation from Britain for the 'wrongs' caused by the 1917 proclamation, which pledged London's support for the creation of a national home for the Jews in Palestine  
AFP | Published: 10.28.20, 15:19

Sitting in an antique armchair in the dappled light of his Renaissance-inspired West Bank mansion, Palestinian billionaire Munib al-Masri raised a subject that has angered him for eight decades.

"Can you quote me the 58 words of Balfour's declaration?" he asked AFP, referring to the 1917 statement that set out London's support for a national home for the Jewish people in Palestine.

Sometimes referred to as the "Godfather of Palestine", Masri is the patriarch of a family empire that has interests in telecommunications, finance, industry and Palestinian real estate.

The 86-year-old lives alone in Beit al-Falestine (Palestine House), his mansion overlooking Nablus in the West Bank.

presidential candidate Joe Biden and iconic Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, whom Masri smuggled from Jordan to Syria in 1970 in the boot of his car.

He has served as a minister in the Jordanian government and in the Ramallah-based Palestinian Authority.

But despite his financial success, political achievements and advanced years, Masri told AFP that he remains consumed by the declaration by British foreign secretary Arthur James Balfour, seen as a precursor to Israel's creation in 1948.

Political rights

The Balfour Declaration begins by stating that "His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object".

After the sentence was read to him, Masri said: "you forgot the main thing." He then completed the declaration himself.

"Nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine."

"That tells you that we have no political rights," Masri said.

Earlier this month, he and several activists filed a lawsuit in Palestinian court seeking compensation from Britain for the "wrongs" caused by Balfour.

The largely symbolic gesture will almost certainly not force Britain to pay reparations, but Masri said filing the case fulfilled a childhood dream.

"I remember the day the teacher told us about the Balfour Declaration and its meaning," he recalled, perched next to his fireplace.

"I was eight years old. He read it and put it in my head. Since that day, I have been angry."

A big prison

The entrance to Beit al-Falestine includes a painting of St Mark's Basilica in Venice, hung across from a depiction of the Dome of the Rock mosque in Jerusalem.

Masri said the latter image serves as a reminder that Arabs "knew how to build domes" before the Europeans.

The center of the building features a marble Hercules statue.

There are also reminders of Palestinian setbacks, including frescoes of the "Nakba" (disaster) -- the Palestinian term describing Israel's creation -- and a portrayal of the "Naksa", the Arab defeat by Israel in the 1967 Six-Day War.

"Today is the worst period in Palestinian history," Masri told AFP. "We live in a big prison."

Masri also voiced concern over the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain establishing relations with Israel, which broke decades of Arab League consensus against normalization until the Palestinian conflict was resolved.

Masri's business interests include servicing Gulf oil companies.

Sudan has since said it will also establish ties with the Jewish state.

Share the cake

The father of six, with an untrimmed white beard, told AFP he had been enthusiastic about the Oslo peace accords in the 1990s but had since grown disillusioned.

He voiced hope that the Fatah movement of Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas can reconcile with its rival, the Islamist Hamas, to give the Palestinians a united voice.

Masri's political influence has waned, but he still writes letters in Arabic to Donald Trump, encouraging the U.S. leader to change course in the Middle East, even if he has little hope of a reply.

But Masri's main frustrations lie with Israel.

He argued that Balfour gave the Jewish state a blank cheque to occupy and even annex Palestinian territory and that now Israelis, in control of the lands, refuse to "share the cake".

10.28.20

Israel, US sign deal to Ariel University research projects in West Bank & Golan

10.28.20

Israel, U.S. sign deal extending funding to research projects in West Bank, Golan

Netanyahu says the amended agreements are a demonstration of the commitment of the Trump administration to a new approach in the Middle East, adding that the American peace plan provides a realistic solution for the Palestinians

Elisha Ben Kimon, Moran Azulay, Reuters | Updated: 10.28.20, 14:34

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and U.S. Ambassador to Israel David Friedman on Wednesday signed agreements extending scientific research cooperation to the West Bank and Golan Heights.

The agreements which lifts the ban on funding scientific research projects conducted in the West Bank and Golan Heights, allows scientists and researchers from the Ariel University situated in a West Bank settlement, to cooperate with and receive funding from American institutions.

"We are righting an old wrong and strengthening yet again the unbreakable bond between our two countries," Friedman said at a signing ceremony

"I couldn't be happier or more proud to sign on behalf of the United States the amended and corrected BSF, BIRD and BARD agreements as well as the new Science and Technology Agreement," the ambassador said.

Netanyahu said the amended agreements are a demonstration of the commitment of the Trump administration to a new approach in the Middle East.

"By rejecting the failed mantras of the past, the Trump [peace] plan not only provides a realistic solution for the Palestinians...but it also put forward something else we see today. It opens Judea and Samaria to academic, commercial and scientific engagement with the US."

Past scientific accords with the U.S. government stipulated that Israeli research projects receiving U.S. grants could not be carried out in areas that came under Israeli administration in 1967.

The Trump administration last year effectively backed Israel's right to build West Bank settlements by abandoning a long-held U.S. position that they were "inconsistent with international law".

Under a peace blueprint that Trump announced in January and which Palestinians rejected as biased towards Israel, Israel would retain control of most of its West Bank settlements.

In May, Trump recognized Israel's annexation of the Golan Heights, a strategic plateau captured from Syria. He has also challenged international consensus by recognizing Jerusalem as Israel's capital and moving the U.S. Embassy to the holy city.

The United States are six days away from an election with the president trailing his Democratic opponent by 10 points in national polling.

10.27.20

Convoy of cars rally for Trump in Jerusalem, as majority of Jews vote Democrat

10.27.20

Trump supporters rally at U.S. Embassy in Jerusalem

Some two dozen vehicles join the procession organized by Republicans Overseas Israel; 'More people are waking and seeing who Trump truly is, that he's for the people and for the Jewish people,' says one supporter

Associated Press| Published: 10.27.20 , 21:13

A convoy of cars decorated with American flags and Trump 2020 banners on Tuesday drove from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, holding a rally outside the U.S. Embassy in support of the American president ahead of next week's election.

Some two dozen vehicles joined the procession, which was organized by Republicans Overseas Israel.

While Jews in the United States are expected to vote overwhelmingly for Democrat Joe Biden, Donald Trump is a popular figure in Israel.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has described him as the "greatest friend" Israel has ever had in the White House. Most of the people in Tuesday's convoy appeared to be American immigrants, though there were also some activists from Netanyahu's Likud party.

"More and more people are waking and seeing who Donald Trump truly is - that he's for the people and for the Jewish people," said Jacob Lieberman, who wore a Trump 2020 baseball hat and covered his face with an American flag. "What he has done for the Jewish people, there are no words, no words to explain. Exceptional president."



During his time in office, Trump has taken a number of moves welcomed by Israel - beginning with his recognition of contested Jerusalem as Israel's capital and the subsequent move of the embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. Trump also recognized Israel's annexation of the Golan Heights, has taken a softer line toward Israeli settlement construction on occupied lands and recently brokered diplomatic pacts between Israel and three Arab countries.

Republicans Overseas **Israel estimates** there are **300,000 U.S. citizens living in Israel**.

**10.27.20**

**Greeks meet with Israel as Turkey claims jurisdiction around Cyprus & Crete**

**10.27.20**

**Greece, Israel eye closer cooperation amid Turkey tension**

**Greek FM pledges to increase cooperation with Israel in an effort to counter Turkey,** which is **at odds with Greece over energy boundaries in the eastern Mediterranean;** 'Our region is not going back to the 19th century,' he says

Associated Press| Published: **10.27.20**, 18:30

Greece's government said Tuesday it wants to expand trade, energy, and military partnerships with Israel and other countries in the region to counter what it considers the hostile policy of neighbor Turkey.

Greece, Israel and Cyprus, which all are at odds with Turkey over energy boundaries in the eastern Mediterranean, hold regular meetings to promote cooperation in defense and energy. They pledged Tuesday to increase cooperation.

"Our region is **not going back to the 19th century**," Greek Foreign Minister Nikos Dendias said after **meeting in Athens** with his counterparts **from Israel and Cyprus**, Gabi Ashkenazi and Nikos Christodoulides.

Cooperation projects include a **planned electricity grid interconnection between Israel, Cyprus and the Greek island of Crete by undersea cable** by the end of 2023.

**Tension** in the region has spiked since the summer **after Turkey expanded its oil and gas maritime research missions to waters in which Greece says it has jurisdiction.**

Ankara argues that it has been largely excluded from regional energy exploration, insisting that Greek islands near its coastline should not project maritime zones for commercial exploitation.

**10.27.20**

Gantz: We are prepared, as IDF holds its biggest army drill of the year

10.27.20

Gantz: Hezbollah is Lebanon's problem, not Israel's

The defense minister says Lebanon 'will ultimately pay the price for any aggression' coming out of the country, during his tour of the northern border, where the IDF is holding its biggest army drill of the year

Ynet| Published: 10.27.20 , 18:06

Defense Minister Benny Gantz on Tuesday said the Iran-backed, Lebanese terror group Hezbollah is "Lebanon's problem, not Israel's."

Speaking at the northern border, where the IDF is holding its biggest military exercise of the year, Gantz said that Lebanon "will ultimately pay the price for any aggression" coming out of the country, including that initiated by the Shi'ite terror group.

"We are here, prepared for the moment that I hope never comes," the former IDF chief stressed.

"The defense establishment needs to guarantee our security 365 days a year, on every front. The IDF's preparedness is an essential component in Israel's security. I commend the broad-scale training exercise taking place currently throughout the country.

He also issued a warning to Palestinian militants in the Gaza Strip. "Our enemies do not rest – not in the north, not in the south, not near nor far – and we will continue to defend the people of Israel, continue to deter our enemies, continue to impede their expansion, and stay prepared for any scenario."

Gantz went on to congratulate Prof. Nachman Ash on his appointment as Israel's next coronavirus czar, replacing Prof. Ronni Gamzu.

"The Defense Ministry and IDF take a full part in the battle against coronavirus... this is an opportunity to congratulate Prof. Nachman Ash on his appointment as coronavirus czar," said Gantz.

"Nachman and I have known each other for years and he will get all the assistance he needs from the defense establishment so that he can succeed in his role. We will keep bolstering the virus response, we will keep defending our borders, and we will keep building our forces. That is our job."

10.27.20

Raid on Eilat city hall & bank alleged corruption involving municipal officials

10.27.20

Eilat officials nabbed as police bust alleged corruption ring

VP of Mercantile Discount Bank, senior civil servants, major contractors among eight people detained on suspicion of suspected bribery, tender rigging and other violations; city's mayor says he is 'sure police will get to the truth'  
Eli Sinyor | Published: 10.27.20 , 16:52

Nine people were arrested Tuesday, including the vice president of a major commercial bank, as police broke up an alleged corruption ring involving Eilat municipal officials.

The Mercantile Discount executive was arrested along with the eight other suspects during a raid on Eilat city hall and the bank's offices over suspected bribery, tender rigging and other violations. Another eight people were detained for questioning in the matter.

A statement from the bank's parent company Israel Discount Bank, said that police investigators arrived Tuesday at the offices of Mercantile Discount Bank, where they conducted searches, collected documents and computer data and detained employees for questioning.

The bank said it had not been provided with information regarding the details of the investigation, including the nature of the suspicions.

The Eilat raid came after the Israel Police Lahav 433 crime unit accumulated a substantial amount of alleged evidence raising suspicions of corruption within Eilat municipality and several affiliated bodies.

The investigation is being conducted by Lahav's National Unit for Combating Financial Crimes, in collaboration with the Israel Tax Authority.

The detainees are suspected of bribery, fraud and breach of trust, as well as offenses under the Prohibition on Money Laundering Law and offenses under the tax laws.

The detainees include very senior public servants in Eilat local authority as well as two major contractors in the city who were arrested on suspicion of bribery.

The city hall suspects are accused of rigging public tenders in favor of the two contractors and other business owners in exchange for kickbacks and other benefits. Eilat Municipality said that it is not aware of the details of the investigation at this time.

"We do not have any details related to the investigation at present," Eilat Mayor Meir Yitzhak Halevi said. "I am sure that the police will get to the truth as it completes its investigation."

10.27.20

Israel approved homes in Hebron Cave of Patriarchs area, before US election

10.27.20

Israel to approve settler homes in flashpoint Hebron area, group says

Peace Now says attempts by Israeli authorities 'to squeeze in' building permit ahead of U.S. elections is an 'unscrupulous act that threatens Israel's national interest and relations on the world stage'

AFP| Updated: 10.27.20 , 14:45

Israel is set to approve construction of Jewish settler homes in a flashpoint area of the West Bank city of Hebron for the first time since 2002, the NGO Peace Now said Tuesday.

It condemned what it called an attempt to "squeeze in" the approvals before next week's U.S. presidential election when Donald Trump faces Democratic challenger Joe Biden, who views such settlements as illegal.

Peace Now, which tracks settlement construction in the West Bank, said Israeli military authorities had given the green light to the construction of 31 settler housing units "in the heart of Hebron".

Hebron is considered a West Bank powder-keg where around 800 Jewish settlers live under hefty IDF security, surrounded by around 200,000 Palestinians.

The city includes the site known to Muslims as the Ibrahimi Mosque and to Jews as the Cave of the Patriarchs, which is revered by both faiths.

The Israeli military body responsible for civilian affairs in the West Bank, COGAT, took steps to approve new settler units in central Hebron in 2017.

Peace Now and the Hebron municipality challenged that project in court.

In 2018, Israel's government allocated more than NIS 21 million (\$6.2 million) to the project, according to Peace Now.

The Jerusalem District Court had told the state that the project cannot go ahead until the legal challenge is resolved, with a hearing set for January 31, Peace Now said.

But Israeli authorities told the court on Sunday that they would issue the permits within a week, the non-government group said.

"The state was quick to issue the building permit even though the court has explicitly ruled that work should not start until the... hearing takes place," said Peace Now's statement.

"The state explains to the court that although the court order prohibits the commencement of the works, it does not prohibit the issuance of the permit itself," it added.

Peace Now linked the timing of the approvals to next week's U.S. presidential election.

Trump has not criticized Jewish settlement construction in the West Bank.

Biden was the vice president in the Barack Obama administration that considered Jewish settlement building in the West Bank illegal, a position in line with international consensus.

"The attempt to squeeze in this construction of 31 settlement units before the U.S. election is an unscrupulous act that threatens Israel's national interest and relations on the world stage," Peace Now said.

About 450,000 Jewish settlers live alongside roughly 2.7 million Palestinians in the West Bank, which Israel has captured during the 1967 Six-Day War.

10.27.20

Ex-IDF surgeon general Nachman Ash named as Israel's next coronavirus czar

10.27.20

Ex-IDF surgeon general Nachman Ash named as Israel's next coronavirus czar  
Professor will spend some time working alongside predecessor before Ronni Gamzu returns to role as head of Ichilov Medical Center in Tel Aviv on Nov. 13; Ash had held senior roles in Health Ministry and Maccabi HMO  
Adir Yanko | Published: 10.27.20, 14:16

The Health Ministry on Tuesday named Prof. Nachman Ash as the replacement for coronavirus czar Prof. Ronni Gamzu.

Gamzu, who took up the position in August, said he was committed to returning to his role as the head of Tel Aviv's Ichilov Medical Center on November 13. Before that, there will be an overlap in order to ensure a smooth transition.

Ash, 56, served as the IDF surgeon general, retiring in 2011 after 25 years of service with the rank of brigadier general.

He received his medical degree from Tel Aviv University in 1986 and completed a Master's degree in Medical Informatics at the Harvard-MIT Division of Health, Sciences and Technology in Boston.

Ash is also a professor at Ariel University. His wife, Dr. Shifra Ash, is the head of pediatric oncology at Rambam Healthcare Campus in Haifa.

Between 2012 and 2013 he served as the Health Ministry's senior deputy director-general for Health Informatics, which uses information technology, communications and healthcare to improve patient care.

During that time, Ash was responsible for Health Information Technology and Information Management for Israel's health system.

In August 2013, Ash joined Maccabi Healthcare Services as the chief director of the Sharon district in central Israel. He currently serves as Maccabi's Deputy CEO for Health Affairs.

Dr. Zeev Feldman, deputy director of the Israel Medical Association, praised the appointment, saying that, "with my prior acquaintance with Nachman, I am not surprised by his willingness to enlist in this national mission."

"I hope that the rational voices will be heard and we do not fall victim to political bickering and personal interests," Feldman added. "Prof. Ash's success will be a success for us all."