

Ynet-News, November 11, 2020 – Wednesday

11.11.20 – We - - - News Placed in Nov 12 spot – Thursday
Iran allowed stockpile of 447 pounds has 5385.7 pounds, UN needs explanation

11.11.20 – We - - -
Objective to dramatically increase test is to identify asymptomatic carriers

11.11.20 – We - - - News Placed in Nov 11 spot – Wednesday
Gantz urged PA to resume talks which Israel stopped in 2014 with John Kerry

11.11.20 – We - - -
Exit lockdown & curfew only if increase infection, Schools will reduce days

11.11.20 – We - - - News
Syria needs refugees to rebuild, Damascus conference insist priority is stop bombing

11.10.20 – Tu - - - News
US imposes Iran-related sanctions to freeze assets of six companies blacklisted
Tuesday

11.10.20 – Tu - - - News Placed in Nov 10 spot – Tuesday
Ethiopia Nobel Peace Prize winner ordered merciless airstrikes on militia fighters

11.10.20 – Tu - - - News
GSA determined probes of voting irregularities where results were flawed

11.11.20
Iran allowed stockpile of 447 pounds has 5385.7 pounds, UN needs explanation

11.11.20
UN: Iran uranium stockpile violates atomic deal
IAEA reports Iran has continuing to enrich uranium to a purity of up to 4.5%, higher than the 3.67% allowed under the JCPOA after it announced all violations in advance after U.S. pulled out of nuclear deal
Associated Press| Updated: 11.11.20 , 22:54

Iran continues to increase its stockpile of low-enriched uranium far beyond the limits set in a landmark nuclear deal with world powers and to enrich it to a greater purity than permitted, the UN's atomic watchdog agency said Wednesday.

The International Atomic Energy Agency reported in a confidential document distributed to member countries and seen by The Associated Press that Iran as of Nov. 2 had a stockpile of 2,442.9 kilograms (5385.7 pounds) of low-enriched uranium, up from 2,105.4 kilograms (4,641.6 pounds) reported on Aug. 25.

The nuclear deal signed in 2015 with the United States, Germany, France, Britain, China and Russia, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, or JCPOA, allows Iran only to keep a stockpile of 202.8 kilograms (447 pounds).

The IAEA reported that Iran has also been continuing to enrich uranium to a purity of up to 4.5%, higher than the 3.67% allowed under the deal.

Iran has openly announced all violations of the nuclear deal in advance, which have followed the decision by the U.S. to pull out unilaterally in 2018.

The deal promises Iran economic incentives in exchange for the curbs on its nuclear program. Since the U.S. withdrawal and imposition of new sanctions, Tehran has been putting pressure on the remaining parties with the violations to come up with new ways to offset the economy-crippling actions by Washington.

At the same time, the Iranian government has continued to allow International Atomic Energy Agency inspectors full access to its nuclear facilities, a key reason the countries that remain parties to the JCPOA say it's worth preserving.

The goal of the agreement is to prevent Iran from building a nuclear weapon, something the country insists it does not intend to do.

A widely cited analysis by the Washington-based Arms Control Association suggests that Iran now has more than double the material it would need to make a nuclear weapon.

However, IAEA Director General Rafael Grossi told The Associated Press in an interview last month that his agency does not share that assessment.

Before agreeing to the nuclear deal, Iran enriched its uranium up to 20% purity, which is a short technical step away from the weapons-grade level of 90%. In 2013, Iran's stockpile of enriched uranium was already more than 7,000 kilograms (7.72 tons) with higher enrichment, but it didn't pursue a bomb.

In the quarterly report distributed to members on Wednesday, the IAEA said it still has questions from the discovery last year of particles of uranium of man-made origin at a site outside Tehran not declared by Iran.

The United States and Israel had been pressing the IAEA for some time to look into the Turqzabad facility, which Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu described to the UN in 2018 as a "secret atomic warehouse."

In the current report, the IAEA said the composition of the particles found there was "similar to particles found in Iran in the past, originating from imported centrifuge components." It said it found Iran's response to questions last month "unsatisfactory."

"Following an assessment of this new information, the agency informed Iran that it continues to consider Iran's response to be not technically credible," the IAEA wrote this week. "A full and prompt explanation from Iran... is needed."

11.11.20

Objective to dramatically increase test is to identify asymptomatic carriers

11.11.20

Rafael to test employees arriving at work for coronavirus

According to pilot, government owned defense company workers to receive results within 6-8 hours, with employee found positive for virus to immediately enter quarantine in order to prevent outbreak among coworkers; more companies projected to join Yoav Zitun| Updated: 11.11.20 , 22:01

Rafael Advanced Defense Systems Ltd. announced Wednesday that it will be the first company to carry out coronavirus test on its employees as part of a contact tracing pilot proposed by the IDF's Home Front Command.

Workers will be tested upon arriving at work and will receive the results within six to eight hours.

An employee found positive for the virus will immediately enter quarantine in order to prevent an outbreak among coworkers.

Testing will not be mandatory, but rather encouraged by the company, as has been the case with the annual flu vaccinations.

Over 8,000 employees work at Rafael and arrive every day at its various facilities around Israel including between 4,000-5,000 non-company workers.

The arms developer claimed it observed public health orders very seriously, but several outbreaks have occurred in the past months, forcing many workers to quarantine.

The testing is expected to be carried out by Home Front Command soldiers and Health Ministry employees.

Another of the pilot program's objective is to dramatically increase the number of daily coronavirus tests, which has been dropping over the past week despite Israel's ability to conduct approximately 100,000 tests every day.

More companies are expected to join the pilot program, which has already been implemented in other countries.

In addition to workplaces, testing facilities are also expected to be put in malls and shopping centers, which will allow commerce there to remain open.

"One of the things that bother us the most is that we cannot know the real scope of coronavirus morbidity if we do not conduct enough tests," Ariel Blitz, commander of the Dan district in the Home Front Command, said.

"Asymptomatic carriers are walking around and infecting people. We held many discussions with municipal authorities on how we can expedite faster contact tracing. This is the 'money-time' to increase testing, while morbidity is low and the second wave of infections is probably behind us," he said.

11.11.20

Gantz urged PA to resume talks which Israel stopped in 2014 with John Kerry

11.11.20

Abbas aide: Palestinian leadership ready to resume Israel talks

Nabil Abu Rudeineh warns resumption of direct discussions on peace agreement will only be held under certain conditions, a day after Defense Minister Gantz calls on Palestinians to return to negotiating table

Liad Osmo, Ilana Ushomirsky | Published: 11.11.20, 17:04

A senior Palestinian Authority official said Wednesday that the PA was ready to resume negotiations with Israel at the point at which they stopped in 2014 or when Israel guarantees to abide by the agreements already signed.

The comments by Nabil Abu Rudeineh, an aide to Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, came a day after Defense Minister Benny Gantz urged the PA leadership to return to the negotiating table.

"The Palestinian leadership has failed to understand that now is the time to cease all excuses, return to the negotiating table and work together to find a solution," Gantz said during a Knesset debate on the Bahrain normalization agreement.

"I call on [Abbas] and the rest of the Palestinian leadership - if not for yourselves, do it for your children. They, the future generation, deserve a future of peace."

Foreign Minister Gabi Ashkenazi joined the call to resume negotiations, saying he believes additional countries will soon join the UAE, Bahrain and Sudan in signing agreements with Israel.

"This is an opportunity to call on the Palestinians to join this discourse, this path that we are beginning to chart. It is time for talks of unity and true peace, without preconditions," Ashkenazi said.

The last round of direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian leadership took place in 2013 and 2014 with U.S. mediation overseen by then-Secretary of State John Kerry.

Then Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu authorized then-Justice Minister Tzipi Livni to conduct talks with the Palestinians, who were represented by former PLO Secretary General Saeb Erekat.

Negotiations ceased in April 2014, after Israel delayed the fourth phase of a staged release of Palestinian prisoners and the PA decided to join UN institutions, a step it pledged to avoid during negotiations.

Since then, various initiatives have emerged, but none of them have developed into serious contacts, and the Palestinians have continued their policy of joining international bodies.

American ties with the Palestinians have also deteriorated during Trump's presidency due to measures they perceived as unilateral and biased in favor of Israel, including the recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and the relocation of the U.S. embassy from Tel Aviv.

The Trump administration later introduced its "deal of the century" blueprint for Mideast peace, which was rejected outright by all Palestinian officials. The U.S. also shut down the PLO mission in Washington and halted financial aid to the Palestinians. Abbas has stated several times in the wake of these steps that that he will not accept the United States as the sole mediator in negotiations with Israel and has proposed holding an international peace conference under the auspices of the United Nations.

In recent months, the Palestinians have further severed ties with Israel, including security coordination and the receipt of tax revenue collected by Israel, which has deducted the stipends paid by the PA to the families of terrorists either jailed in Israel or killed during an attack.

11.11.20

Exit lockdown & curfew only if increase infection, Schools will reduce days

11.11.20

Virus cabinet meeting stalls as PM mulls nightly curfews

Sources say nightly curfews will only be implemented if infection rate increases, which despite rise in coefficient, is still stable; Netanyahu also set to discuss proposal to bring students in grades 5,6 as well as 11,12 back to school

Itamar Eichner | Published: 11.11.20, 11:51

A meeting of Israel's coronavirus cabinet due to take place Wednesday looked to be delayed as Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was to hold a series of urgent consultations on the possible introduction of nighttime curfews.

The cabinet tasked with battling the pandemic was set to convene later in the day to vote on the third phase of the, which includes reopening of malls, open-air markets and gyms as well as bringing back to school children in fifth and sixth grade.

But, while the third phase of the exit plan was set to begin two weeks after the start of the second phase, the alarming increase in the infection coefficient looks as though it will cause an indefinite postponement and even prompt the government to implement additional measures.

Netanyahu is expected to hold at least two meetings with some of the government ministers, discussing with them the implementation of possible nightly curfews since health officials estimate the infection coefficient will continue to increase in the coming weeks.

Sources say the nighttime curfew in Israel will only be imposed if there is indication about the rise in contagion rate, which despite the increase in the infection coefficient, is still stable. The meeting will be attended by the head of the National Security Council, the health minister, the director general of the Ministry of Health, coronavirus czar, the head of public health services and the science and technology minister.

Finance Minister Israel Katz will also attend the meeting is expected to oppose any delay in further easing of lockdown restrictions, citing the immense damage the economy has sustained as a result of the prolonged nationwide closure. Other ministers, including Netanyahu himself, are expected to back the postponement of the third phase.

The prime minister will later hold a meeting discussing an outline presented by the Education Ministry, detailing the reopening of schools for children in grades five and six and students in grades eleven and twelve, who are studying for their matriculation exams.

According to the outline, which requires the approval of the cabinet, children in first through fourth grade will study at school five days a week, those in fifth and sixth grade will study at least three days a week, and eleventh and twelfth graders will attend in-class studies at least twice a week.

11.11.20

Syria needs refugees to rebuild, Damascus conference insist priority is stop bombing

11.11.20

Assad blames West for hindering return of refugees to Syria

Comments by Syrian president came after Russia-organized summit boycotted by Arab and Western countries and criticized by the UN and U.S., who insist first priority be making war-torn country safe for return

Associated Press| Published: 11.11.20 , 21:56

The Syrian government is working to secure the return of millions of refugees who fled war in their country, but Western sanctions are hindering the work of state institutions, complicating those plans, President Bashar Assad said Wednesday.

His comments came at the opening session of a Russia-organized two-day international conference in Damascus on the return of refugees. The event is being boycotted by many Arab and Western countries and has been criticized by the UN and the U.S. who say the time is not ripe yet for the return of refugees. They insist the first priority should be to make it safe for people to go back to the war-torn country.

Assad's forces have recaptured much of Syria, with the backing of his allies Russia and Iran, which helped tip the balance of power in his favor. But large areas remain outside government control, mainly in the north near the border with Turkey. The conflict that began with anti-government protests in March 2011 as part of the region's Arab Spring, quickly morphed into a civil war.

Tuesday's conference was held in a giant hall with participants, most of them wearing masks, observing social distancing because of the coronavirus. Many countries were invited but only 27 agreed to participate, including neighboring Lebanon and Iraq which host large numbers of Syrian refugees, according to state TV.

Neighboring Turkey, a main backer of Syrian opposition forces, was not invited. Another neighbor, Jordan, which also hosts Syrian refugees, did not participate.

Lebanon's outgoing Foreign Minister Charbel Wehbi addressed the gathering by videoconference and used the opportunity to call on the international community to help in the return of Syrian refugees. Lebanon is hosting the highest per capita number of Syrian refugees, who at one point made up nearly a quarter of the tiny country's population of 5 million. The country is now mired in an unprecedented economic and financial crisis.

Although Wehbi spoke from Beirut, Lebanon sent a delegation to attend the conference headed by the minister of social affairs, whose ministry is in charge of dealing with Syrian refugees. Lebanese are deeply divided between supporters and opponents of Assad.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, whose speech was read by the Russian president's envoy to Syria, described the sanctions as "financial strangulation" used to prevent the arrival of foreign aid and put up obstacles to prevent the return of the displaced to areas under government control.

Syria's state media quoted the head of the Russian National Defense Management Center Mikhail Mezentsev as saying that Moscow will allocate \$1 billion to reconstruct Syria's electricity networks and other industries.

Syria's nine-year war has killed about half a million people, wounded more than a million and forced about 5.6 million to flee abroad as refugees, mostly to neighboring countries. Another 6 million of Syria's prewar population of 23 million have been internally displaced by the fighting.

"We are working hard for the return of every refugee who wants to come back and help rebuild the country," Assad said in a speech aired at the beginning of the conference. But, he added, there "are major obstacles — including pressures exerted on refugees not to return and the illegitimate economic sanctions and the siege imposed by the American regime and its allies."

Assad said the European and U.S. sanctions on his government, imposed over the war hinder rebuilding efforts and improvement of infrastructure that was damaged by the war, which doesn't help the return of refugees.

In a video call with Assad on Monday, Russian President Vladimir Putin said large parts of Syria are relatively peaceful and that it was time for the millions of Syrians who fled to return home and help rebuild.

The Syrian Opposition Coalition criticized the conference, saying it cannot be organized "by the criminal who is responsible for the crime." The return of refugees can happen only after bombing of rebel-held areas stops and a political transition is achieved, the coalition added.

11.10.20

US imposes Iran-related sanctions to freeze assets of six companies blacklisted Tuesday

11.10.20

U.S. imposes Iran-related sanctions on individuals, companies

Treasury Department accuses entities of facilitating procurement of sensitive goods for Iran Communication Industries - an Iranian military firm blacklisted by Washington and the EU

Reuters| Published: 11.10.20, 21:01

The United States on Tuesday imposed Iran-related sanctions on six companies and four people, accusing the network of supplying sensitive goods to an Iranian military firm in the Trump administration's latest move to increase pressure on Tehran.

The U.S. Treasury Department in a statement accused the companies and individuals of facilitating the procurement of sensitive goods, including U.S.-origin electronic components, for Iran Communication Industries, an Iranian military firm blacklisted by Washington and the European Union.

The firm produces military communication systems, avionics and missile launchers, among other items, the Treasury said.

Tuesday's action, taken under an authority that imposes sanctions on weapons of mass destruction proliferators and their supporters, freezes any U.S. assets of those blacklisted and generally bars Americans from dealing with them.

"The Iranian regime utilizes a global network of companies to advance its destabilizing military capabilities," Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said in the statement.

"The United States will continue to take action against those who help to support the regime's militarization and proliferation efforts," he added.

Tensions between Washington and Tehran have soared since President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew in 2018 from the Iran nuclear deal struck by President Barack Obama and began reimposing U.S. sanctions that had been eased under the accord.

The move blacklisted Iran-based Hoda Trading; Hong Kong-based Proma Industry Co., Ltd.; DES International Co., Ltd.; Brunei-based Soltech Industry Co., Ltd.; China-based Naz Technology Co., Ltd.; and Iran-based Artin San'at Tabaan Company, as well as several individuals.

The Treasury said the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Columbia was also filing charges by criminal complaint against two companies and one individual that were hit with sanctions in Tuesday's move.

11.10.20

Ethiopia Nobel Peace Prize winner ordered merciless airstrikes on militia fighters

11.10.20

Ethiopia's Tigray conflict worsens, refugees flee to Sudan

Hundreds dead in airstrikes and fighting amid fears Ethiopia sliding into civil war given deep animosity between the Tigrayans and PM Abiy Ahmed, who comes from the larger Oromo ethnic group

Reuters| Published: 11.10.20 , 21:43

Refugees fled to Sudan on Tuesday and the African Union appealed for a cease fire in a north Ethiopian region where Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed is waging a military offensive against local leaders defiant of his authority.

About 2,500 Ethiopians have escaped across the border to Sudan from fighting in the restive Tigray region, with the exodus likely to swell fast, an official said.

Hundreds have died in airstrikes and fighting amid fears that Ethiopia could slide into civil war given deep animosity between the Tigrayans and Abiy, who comes from the largest Oromo ethnic group.

With access blocked to Tigray and communications largely down, it was hard to verify the state of the conflict.

State media said federal forces had captured Humera airport, near the borders with Sudan and Eritrea, along with a road leading from the town. The Ethiopian Press Agency posted photos that it said showed federal soldiers, backed by forces from the neighboring Amhara region, at the airport.

However, Humera residents were going about their lives normally, according to a communications office of the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), which governs the state of more than 5 million people.

State-affiliated broadcaster FANA said Ethiopia had arrested 17 military officers for disrupting communications systems used by federal forces in Tigray, exposing them to potential harm.

Abiy, who won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2019, ordered airstrikes and sent troops into Tigray last week after accusing the TPLF of attacking a military base. Tigrayans say Abiy's government oppresses and discriminates against them and behaved autocratically in postponing a national election.

Eritrea allegations

In a potential major escalation, Tigray leader Debretsion Gebremichael said the Eritrean government of President Isaias Afwerki had sent troops across the border to attack local forces in support of the federal push.

But he gave no proof and Eritrea's Foreign Minister Osman Saleh Mohammed denied it. "We are not part of the conflict," he told Reuters.

Eritrea and Ethiopia signed a peace deal two years ago, but Afwerki's government remains hostile to the Tigrayan leadership after its role in a devastating 1998-2000 war. Reuters reporters on Monday traveling in Tigray and Amhara saw trucks packed with militia fighters and pickups with mounted machine-guns rushing to the frontline for the federal government.

Warplanes have bombed arms depots and other targets, both sides say, while aid workers and security sources have reported heavy fighting on the ground.

Military and security sources in Amhara, on the side of the federal troops, have spoken of 500 deaths on the Tigrayan side and hundreds also from the national military.

The state-affiliated Fana broadcaster said federal troops had killed 550 Tigrayan "extremists" while another 29 members of local special forces and militia had surrendered.

The AU bloc called for peace talks and an end to hostilities. But Ethiopia said mediation was only possible if military hardware in Tigrayan hands was destroyed, federal officials were freed from custody and regional leaders arrested.

War fears

The 44-year-old Abiy is Africa's youngest leader and won his Nobel prize for democratic reforms and for making peace with Eritrea. But his militancy against Tigray has alarmed diplomats and a full-scale war could further damage an economy already reeling from the coronavirus crisis.

A former soldier who once fought alongside Tigrayans against Eritrea, Abiy took over in 2018 after a Tigrayan-led government had dominated politics since rebels from their region toppled Marxist military rule in 1991.

But his attempts to open up a repressive political climate also led to an explosion of ethnic problems, with hundreds killed and hundreds of thousands forced to flee their homes in clashes over the last two years.

Abiy believes he can quell the Tigrayan leadership militarily, diplomats told Reuters, though they are a battle-hardened group from the 1998-2000 war with Eritrea and the defeat of dictator Mengistu Haile Mariam in 1991.

TPLF forces and militia allies number up to 250,000 men and possess significant hardware, experts say.

"Operations will cease as soon as the criminal junta is disarmed, legitimate administration in the region restored, and fugitives apprehended & brought to justice — all of them rapidly coming within reach," Abiy tweeted on Tuesday.

Members of Amhara region militias ride on their truck as they head to face the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), in Sanja, Amhara region near a border with Tigray, Ethiopia

The TPLF has called him "merciless" with airstrikes.

Redwan Hussein, spokesman of a newly-established State of Emergency Task Force for the Tigray conflict, said federal soldiers had been forced to retreat over the border to Eritrea before regrouping and returning to fight local forces.

He acknowledged that Tigrayan troops had control of a compound of the Ethiopian military's powerful Northern Command in Mekelle, the capital of Tigray.

11.10.20

GSA determined probes of voting irregularities where results were flawed

11.10.20

Barr authorizes probes of vote irregularities as Trump mounts legal assault

U.S. AG's directive to prosecutors to 'pursue substantial allegations' prompted the top lawyer overseeing voter fraud investigations to resign in protest; Biden says Barr fueling Trump's 'far-fetched' allegations of fraud

Reuters| Published: 11.10.20, 08:30

U.S. President Donald Trump will push ahead on Tuesday with legal challenges to the results of last week's election after U.S. Attorney General William Barr told federal prosecutors to look into any "substantial" allegations of voting irregularities.

Barr's directive to prosecutors prompted the top lawyer overseeing voter fraud investigations to resign in protest. It came after days of attacks on the integrity of the election by Trump and Republican allies, who have alleged widespread voter fraud, without providing evidence.

Trump has not conceded the election to Democrat Joe Biden, who on Saturday secured more than the 270 votes in the Electoral College needed to win the presidency.

The Trump campaign has filed several lawsuits claiming the election results were flawed. Judges have tossed out lawsuits in Michigan and Georgia, and experts say Trump's legal efforts have little chance of changing the election result.

Barr told prosecutors on Monday that "fanciful or far-fetched claims" should not be a basis for investigation and his letter did not indicate the Justice Department had uncovered voting irregularities affecting the outcome of the election.

But he did say he was authorizing prosecutors to "pursue substantial allegations" of irregularities of voting and the counting of ballots.

Richard Pilger, who for years has served as director of the Election Crimes Branch, announced in an internal email he was resigning from his post after he read "the new policy and its ramifications."

Biden's campaign said Barr was fueling Trump's far-fetched allegations of fraud.

"Those are the very kind of claims that the president and his lawyers are making unsuccessfully every day, as their lawsuits are laughed out of one court after another," said Bob Bauer, a senior adviser to Biden.

Earlier on Monday, Trump's campaign filed a lawsuit to block Pennsylvania officials from certifying Biden's victory in the battleground state.

It alleged the state's mail-in voting system violated the U.S. Constitution by creating "an illegal two-tiered voting system" where **voting in person** was **subject to more oversight than voting by mail**.

It was filed against Pennsylvania Secretary of State Kathy Boockvar and the boards of elections in Democratic-leaning counties that include Philadelphia and Pittsburgh. Boockvar's office did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

'REHASH'

Jessica Levinson, a professor at Loyola Law School in Los Angeles, said the latest lawsuit in Pennsylvania was unlikely to succeed and "reads like a rehash of many of the arguments the Trump legal team has made in and outside the courtroom."

Trump's re-election team **asked for patience** on Monday **to pursue allegations** of voter fraud. "This election is not over, far from it," Kayleigh McEnany, the White House press secretary, told reporters at a briefing in what she said was her capacity as a Trump campaign adviser.

Biden, who has begun work on his transition to the White House, will give a speech on Monday defending the Affordable Care Act, the landmark healthcare law popularly known as Obamacare, as the U.S. Supreme Court hears arguments on a lawsuit backed by the Trump administration to invalidate it.

Trump and Republicans have repeatedly tried to do away with the 2010 law passed under President Barack Obama, with Biden as his vice president.

The **Supreme Court fended** off previous **challenges in 2012 and 2015**. The Court now has a 6-3 conservative majority after Trump's third appointee, Amy Coney Barrett, was confirmed last month.

As Biden begins work on his transition, his team is considering legal action over a federal agency's delay in recognizing his victory over Trump.

The **General Services Administration** (GSA) normally **recognizes a presidential candidate when** it becomes **clear** who has won so a transition of power can begin.

But that has not yet happened and the **law does not spell out when the GSA must act**.

GSA Administrator Emily Murphy, appointed by Trump in 2017, has **not yet determined** that **"a winner** is clear," a spokeswoman said.

A Biden transition official told reporters it was time for the GSA's administration to grant what is known as an ascertainment recognizing the president-elect, and said the transition team would consider legal action if it was not granted.

"Legal action is certainly a possibility, but there are other options as well that we're considering," said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, **declining to outline other options**.