

Ynet-News, December 01, 2020 – Tuesday

12.01.20

Sudan using terrorism designation as a political tool to force a Congress vote

12.01.20

Bahrain & Israel will sign a memorandum to promote mutual tourism

12.01.20 – Tu - - - News Placed in Dec 01 spot – Tuesday

Gantz new low, agree to budget or Knesset will disperse and hold another election

12.01.20

US arms sales to UAE draw fire from 29 Democracy rights groups

12.01.20

Gantz disbanded the government this evening, now Likud must stop the paralysis

12.01.20

Sudan using terrorism designation as a political tool to force a Congress vote

12.01.20

Sudan threatens to freeze Israel normalization, New York Times reports  
Khartoum reportedly demands to be taken off Washington's list of state sponsors of terrorism by end of 2020 or else normalization process would be put on hold; the move is still pending Congress approval  
i24NEWS| Published: 12.01.20 , 23:04

The Sudanese leader told the American officials if Sudan is not be taken off the U.S. list of state sponsors of terrorism by end of 2020, the African country will freeze the process of normalization with Israel, the New York Times reported on Tuesday.

The two countries announced the normalization of diplomatic relations on October 23 after Khartoum reportedly agreed to the deal in exchange for being taken off Washington's list of state sponsors of terrorism, which grants Sudan immunity from lawsuits by victims of terrorism.

Although the Trump administration already started the process, it is pending a vote in Congress and the NYT reports that Chairman of the Sovereignty Council of Sudan Abdel Fattah al-Burhan told Secretary of State Mike Pompeo if the bill is not passed by the end of 2020, the normalization process would be put on hold.

Pompeo reportedly tried to reassure al-Burhan and promised that Congress will pass the bill in the coming weeks.

"The whole thing felt forced all along by an administration that wanted to use a terrorism designation as a political tool to try to get normalization with Israel," director of the Middle East security program at the Center for a New American Security Ilan Goldenberg told the NYT.

"When you cook up these kinds of very transactional deals with unrelated items that don't make much sense, this sometimes happens," he added.

As long as Sudan remains on the terrorism sponsors list, foreign investors may be reluctant to invest in the crisis-hit African nation, now receiving tens of thousands of Ethiopian refugees due to a civil war raging across the border.

12.01.20

Bahrain & Israel will sign a memorandum to promote mutual tourism

12.01.20

Bahrain delegation arrives in Israel for talks on boosting ties

Gulf diplomats during the 2-day visit set to meet both Netanyahu and Ashkenazi as well as sign memorandum of understanding that 'includes the establishment of a bilateral forum to promote mutual tourism'

AFP| Published: 12.01.20 , 21:58

A 40-strong Bahraini delegation arrived in Israel Tuesday for two days of talks on boosting economic cooperation and tourism after the two countries normalized relations in September.

The Gulf state of Bahrain followed the United Arab Emirates in signing up to a U.S.-brokered deal to establish full diplomatic relations with Israel, becoming the third and fourth Arab countries to do so.

Foreign Minister Gabi Ashkenazi had been due to visit Bahrain this week but the trip was canceled, diplomatic sources told AFP without elaborating.

The cancellation followed the assassination of an Iranian nuclear scientist blamed on the Israeli spy agency, Mossad.

Last month, Bahraini Foreign Minister Abdellatif al-Zayani held talks in Jerusalem with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo.

The latest delegation, led by Industry, Commerce and Tourism Minister Zayed bin Rashid al-Zayani, landed at Ben Gurion airport on Tuesday.

The delegation is scheduled to meet both Ashkenazi and Netanyahu on Wednesday.

The two states will also sign on Wednesday a memorandum of understanding that "includes the establishment of a bilateral forum to promote mutual tourism," an Israeli government statement said.

Tourism Minister Orit Farkash-Hacohen said that over the past two months, both countries had been working "hard to turn peace from an idea to a reality." "The tourism MOU between the countries is an important step in that direction," she said in the statement.

Authorities did not indicate whether the delegation would visit the Al-Aqsa mosque compound, Islam's third-holiest site, located in Jerusalem.

Many Palestinians are hostile to Arab governments normalizing relations with Israel without a comprehensive peace deal and oppose such visits.

The Waqf, which manages Muslim holy sites in Jerusalem's Old City, cannot bar any Muslim from visiting them.

12.01.20

Gantz new low, agree to budget or Knesset will disperse and hold another election

12.01.20

Gantz says Blue & White will vote to disperse Knesset

Defense minister drops bombshell during a press conference saying his party will vote for the no-confidence bill; but leaves a lifeline for PM to avoid elections if he agrees to pass 2-year budget; Likud call decision 'a new low'

Itay Blumenthal | Published: 12.01.20, 20:32

Blue & White Chairman and Defense Minister Benny Gantz said his party will vote in favor of a bill, calling to disperse the Knesset and hold another election.

On Wednesday, the Knesset will vote on a motion of no-confidence proposed by the opposition, normally a formality that is voted down virtually automatically by the government coalition.

"Netanyahu has decided to dismantle the government and drag the State of Israel into elections," said Gantz. "[Prime Minister Benjamin] Netanyahu promised unity, promised there would be no tricks, promised responsible management of the coronavirus crisis. Netanyahu did not lie to me - he lied to you," he said.

"Millions of citizens are heartbroken, businesses are closing down and more and more people are in distress and poverty, all while the State of Israel is still without a budget. So, Blue & White will vote to dissolve the Knesset."

He nevertheless left the lifeline for Netanyahu if he agrees to pass the two-year budget. "Netanyahu, the burden of proof is on you. Immediately table the [two-year] budget for the government, make sure to pass it and ensure unity."

Coalition Chairman MK Miki Zohar issued a response shortly after Gantz's speech, calling the decision "a new low".

"While the Likud works only for the public in dealing with the coronavirus crisis, Blue & White work only for Benny Gantz to become prime minister," he said.

"They are dissolving the Knesset and dismantling the government while harming the citizens of Israel for a political whim."

The unity government has spared over the structure of the 2021 budget with Netanyahu and his right-wing coalition partners willing to vote only for a very short term version of the budget, contrary to the coalition agreement.

If the long-term budget is passed, Netanyahu would be forced to commit to the rotation agreement next year and yield power to Gantz. But if the government collapses, Netanyahu would remain as prime minister throughout the three-month election campaign and until a new coalition is formed.

Netanyahu would also benefit by further delaying the budget talks. That would give more time for the coronavirus vaccine to arrive and the economy to begin recovering next year, presumably giving him a better chance in elections.

Opinion polls predict that Netanyahu's Likud Party would still emerge as the largest party in parliament in the next election, but with far fewer seats than it currently has. Gantz's Blue and White has plummeted even further, making it in both their interests to compromise and avoid a new election.

Lawmakers on both sides of the aisle, however, believe the no-confidence bill has a good chance of passing, spelling the immediate dissolution of the government and the unprecedented launch of Israel's fourth general election in two years.

On Tuesday, both Minister of Economy Amir Peretz and Minister of Welfare Itzik Shmuli from the Labor party, which is part of the coalition, said they would vote with the opposition to dissolve the government.

The MediaLine, Associated Press contributed to this report

12.01.20

US arms sales to UAE draw fire from 29 Democracy rights groups

12.01.20

U.S. arms sales to UAE draw fire from 29 rights groups

U.S. law allows senators to force votes on resolutions of disapproval on major arms deal but need two-third majorities in both the Republican-led Senate and Democratic-led House to survive a presidential veto

Reuters| Published: 12.01.20 , 08:06

Twenty-nine arms control and human rights organizations have signed a letter opposing the sale of \$23 billion worth of missiles, fighter jets and drones to the United Arab Emirates and asking the U.S. Congress to block the deal.

"The hope is to stop these sales altogether," said Seth Binder, advocacy officer at the Project on Middle East Democracy, who spearheaded the effort. "But if that is not possible in the short term, this sends an important signal to the incoming Biden administration that there is a diverse group of organizations that oppose delivery of these weapons."

Three U.S. senators earlier this month proposed legislation to halt the sale, which includes drones from privately held General Atomics, Lockheed Martin Corp F-35s and missiles made by Raytheon, setting up a showdown with President Donald Trump weeks before he is due to leave office.

U.S. law allows senators to force votes on resolutions of disapproval on major arms deal. However, to become effective resolutions must first pass both the Senate and the House of Representatives. The measure would also need two-third majorities in both the Republican-led Senate and Democratic-led House to survive a presidential veto.

Trump administration officials briefed the Senate Foreign Relations Committee about the deal on Monday evening.

Democratic Senator Chris Murphy, a sponsor of the resolutions of disapproval, responded later on Twitter: "Just a mind blowing number of unsettled issues and questions the Administration couldn't answer. Hard to overstate the danger of rushing this."

The sale was approved following a U.S.-brokered agreement in September in which the UAE agreed to normalize relations with Israel.

The letter from the rights groups, sent to lawmakers and the State Department, said the planned arms sale would fuel continued harm to civilians and exacerbate humanitarian crises due to conflicts in Yemen and Libya.

Signatories include human rights organizations from the region, including the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies and Mwatana for Human Rights.

The UAE embassy said in a statement, "Aligned closely with US interests and values, the UAEs highly capable military is a forceful deterrent to aggression and an effective response to violent extremism."

12.01.20

Gantz disbanded the government this evening, now Likud must stop the paralysis

12.01.20

Attacks on Gantz in Likud: 'Rock-bottom'

MK Zohar: 'While Likud works only for public in dealing with coronavirus crisis, Blue and White work only for Benny Gantz to be PM.'

Arutz Sheva Staff, Dec 01, 2020 8:55 PM

Coalition Chairman MK Micky Zohar attacked Blue and White Chairman Defense Minister Benny Gantz, following his speech tonight in which Gantz announced his party would support the dissolution of the Knesset, and his attacks on Netanyahu.

"Gantz's speech against the Prime Minister and the Likud is the beginning of his election campaign. The personal attack against Netanyahu - rock bottom," says MK Zohar.

"While the Likud works only for the public in dealing with the coronavirus crisis, Blue and White work only for Benny Gantz to be Prime Minister," Zohar adds.

MK Nir Barkat reacted to Gantz's announcement, "Gantz disbanded the partnership in the government this evening. Now the Likud must take the lead in order to stop the paralysis we've entered, change direction in the war on coronavirus, and save the livelihoods of hundreds of thousands of citizens.

"We must bring a clear victory in the elections and 40 seats to the Likud; only in this way will we bring governmental stability to Israel," Barkat added.