

Ynet-News, Aug 03, 2021 – Tuesday

08.03.21 – Tu- - - News Placed in Jul 30 spot – Friday
Qatar aid agreement of 27,695 Hamas officials & a list of PA families

08.03.21 – Tu- - - News Placed in Aug 04 spot – Wednesday
Israel reinstated Green Pass & 7-day quarantine for US & 17 other country travel

08.03.21 – Tu- - - News Placed in Jul 31 spot – Saturday
Israel ambassador asked 35 US governors to scrutinize companies scorning Israel

08.03.21 – Tu- - - News Placed in Aug 03 spot – Tuesday
Iran-backed forces hijack tanker & disable steering of at least five ships

08.03.21
Qatar aid agreement of 27,695 Hamas officials & a list of PA families

08.03.21
PA, Qatar reach agreement on transfer of aid funds to Gaza
After years of Hamas overseeing the delivery of the Qatari money into the Strip, Doha signs agreement that would see the Palestinian Authority take responsibility for transferring funds intended for needy families coastal enclave
TPS| Published: 08.03.21, 18:44

The Palestinian Authority and Qatar have reached an agreement on the transfer of the Qatari aid money to the Gaza Strip, after Hamas folded and accepted the new agreement and the involvement of the PA in the transfer process.

Palestinian Prime Minister Mohammad Shtayyeh confirmed Monday night that “the PA agrees to be responsible for transferring part of the Qatari grant to the Gaza Strip intended only for needy families.”

According to “the Memorandum of Understanding between the State of Palestine through the Ministry of Social Development and the Qatari Foreign Ministry through the Gaza Rehabilitation Committee,” the PA has agreed to transfer Qatari funds through banks subject to the supervision of the Palestinian Monetary Fund according to a list of names to be received from the Qatari side.

The transfer will be made using ATM cards and each bank that pays the amounts will issue special cards bearing the bank’s logo. The transfers include assistance to 100,000 beneficiaries from poor families as well as to 27,695 other beneficiaries, most of whom are Hamas officials.

After the funds are transferred to the PA banks, the Authority will issue magnetic cards that will be recharged each month, in the amount of \$100 and these will be handed over to the poor families in the Gaza Strip.

The parties agreed that the beneficiaries will be paid according to an agreed replacement mechanism, without deducting fees.

A senior Palestinian Authority official confirmed Tuesday that the funds intended for the 27,000 Hamas administration officials in the Gaza Strip will also be transferred through the PA banks and from them to the officials.

Hamas officials recently announced that they would agree to this mechanism if it was assured that no fee would be deducted from the family aid monies and that the list of names would include those that Hamas required Qatar to include in the lists now being handed over to the PA.

08.03.21

Israel reinstated Green Pass & 7-day quarantine for US & 17 other country travel

08.03.21

Israel places U.S., 17 other countries under severe travel warning

All arrivals from specified destinations will be required to quarantine for a minimum of seven days, regardless of whether they had been vaccinated for, or recovered from coronavirus

Ynet| Published: 08.03.21, 15:06

Israel on Tuesday placed the U.S. and 17 other countries under severe travel warning after Knesset approved a recommendation by the Health Ministry.

From August 11, all travelers from these specified destinations will be required to quarantine for a minimum of seven days, regardless of whether they had been vaccinated for or recovered from coronavirus.

The full list of nations to be added to the already existing countries requiring quarantine, which was approved by Knesset's Labor, Welfare and Health Committee, includes Ukraine, Italy, Iceland, Eswatini, United States, Botswana, Bulgaria, Germany, Netherlands, Tanzania, Greece, Malawi, Egypt, Czech Republic, France, Cuba, Rwanda and Tunisia.

The list of countries under severe travel warning currently includes Cambodia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Fiji, Georgia, Great Britain, Guatemala, Honduras, Kenya, Liberia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Namibia, Panama, Paraguay, Seychelles, Turkey, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

However, the ministry asked to remove Seychelles, Zambia, Paraguay, Costa Rica, Uganda, Liberia, Panama and Kenya from the list.

The coronavirus cabinet was set to convene on Tuesday afternoon, to approve additional restrictions, as the number of daily cases surpassed 3,000 for the first time since March. The Health Ministry said that 3,818 Israelis tested positive for COVID-19 on Monday. After more than 101,766 tests conducted, the positivity rate stood on 3.78%. Out of 22,345 active patients, 221 are in serious condition, with 46 connected to ventilators. The death toll since the start of the pandemic rose to 6,492.

Other than approving the new list of "high risk" countries, ministers were also said to mull expanding the scope of the Green Passport, which was reinstated last week, and limit the number of people allowed to congregate. Currently, children under 12 are exempt from the pass, but this is likely to change, as rules are expected to be tightened. Sheba Medical center, Israel's largest hospital, said on Tuesday that it was reopening its coronavirus intensive care ward after an increase in patients in need of respiratory assistance as virus cases surge.

08.03.21

Israel ambassador asked 35 US governors to scrutinize companies scorning Israel

08.03.21

Florida may drop Ben & Jerry's parent company over Israel boycott

Gov. Ron DeSantis says state funding for Unilever will cease unless Vermont-based ice cream manufacturer reverses decision to stop selling ice cream in West Bank settlements and East Jerusalem within next 90 days

Associated Press| Published: 08.03.21, 20:53

Florida won't put any state money into the parent company of Ben & Jerry's unless it reverses a decision to stop selling ice cream in contested parts of Israel, Gov. Ron DeSantis said Tuesday.

The Republican governor said the State Board of Administration added London-based Unilever to its list of "scrutinized companies" that boycott Israel. This means that if Ben & Jerry's position on Israel is not reversed in 90 days, Florida will not invest in or contract with Unilever or its subsidiaries.

"As a matter of law and principle, the state of Florida will not tolerate discrimination against the state of Israel or the Israeli people," the Republican governor said in a news release. "I will not stand idly by as woke corporate ideologues seek to boycott and divest from our ally, Israel."

The decision, similar to those in other states, comes after Vermont-based Ben & Jerry's announced last month that it will stop selling its products in Israeli territory sought by the Palestinians such as the West Bank and contested east Jerusalem.

The company's founders, Bennett Cohen and Jerry Greenfield, said in a recent New York Times opinion piece that they no longer control the company but approve of the action in Israel as reflecting their progressive values. The company has a long history of advocating for social justice.

"We are also proud Jews. It's part of who we are and how we've identified ourselves for our whole lives. As our company began to expand internationally, Israel was one of our first overseas markets. We were then, and remain today, supporters of the State of Israel," the founders said. "But it's possible to support Israel and oppose some of its policies, just as we've opposed policies of the U.S. government."

Unilever's 400 brands include a wide variety of familiar consumer goods such as Dove personal care products, Lipton tea, Hellmann's mayonnaise, Sunlight soap and, of course, Ben & Jerry's ice cream.

The company did not immediately respond to a request for comment Tuesday in Florida's action. But its CEO, Alan Jope, said last week that Unilever is "fully committed" to doing business in Israel despite the decision to stop some sales there by Ben & Jerry's. Florida officials say the company told them in a call Wednesday that there are no plans to change Ben & Jerry's stance on Israel. It wasn't immediately clear what kinds of investments or contracts Florida currently has with Unilever or its subsidiaries.

"We'll continue working with the SBA to ensure Florida law is upheld for those who target our friends in Israel," said Jimmy Patronis, Florida's chief financial officer. Israel does not differentiate between the West Bank settlements and the rest of its territory. When home-rental company Airbnb announced in 2018 that it would no longer list properties in the West Bank, Israel harshly condemned the move and eventually pressured the company into canceling the decision.

Israel's ambassador to the United States and United Nations, Gilad Erdan, recently sent a letter to the governors of 35 U.S. states urging them to punish Unilever under anti-boycott laws such as that in Florida.

08.03.21

Iran-backed forces hijack tanker & disable steering of at least five ships

08.03.21

Iran-backed forces believed to have seized tanker off UAE coast, maritime security sources say

Revolutionary Guard rejects claims as 'hostile action' by Israel and West; British paper says London working on assumption that 'Iranian military or proxies' boarded Asphalt Princess off Fujairah, where Israeli-managed tanker attacked last week is now docked
Ynet, News Agencies | Updated: 08.03.21, 22:12

Iranian-backed forces are believed to have seized an oil tanker in the Gulf off the coast of the United Arab Emirates, two maritime security sources said Tuesday.

The claim came after Britain's maritime trade agency reported a "potential hijack" was unfolding off the coast of the UAE's Fujairah Emirate.

The Times of London reported Tuesday evening that British sources believe the Asphalt Princess vessel had been hijacked and were "working on the assumption Iranian military or proxies boarded" the ship.

Iran's foreign ministry said reports of security incidents involving several ships near the UAE coast on Tuesday were "suspicious" and warned against any effort to create a "false atmosphere" against Tehran.

Iran's Revolutionary Guards also denied that Iranian forces or allies were involved in action against any ship off the UAE coast on Tuesday, saying the incident was a pretext for "hostile action" against Tehran, Iranian state television said on its website.

"According to information from security sources, Iran's armed forces and all branches of the Islamic Resistance in the Middle East have nothing to do with the incident in the Gulf of Oman," the Guards said in a statement carried by the website.

It said the incident was a move by Western countries and Israel "to prepare the public opinion of the international community for hostile action against the honorable nation of Iran."

The report from the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) of a "potential hijack" at least five ships in the area said that they had lost control of their steering.

It wasn't immediately clear what was happening off the coast of the Fujairah Emirate in the Gulf of Oman, days after an Israeli-managed oil tanker was attacked in the same area.

Fujairah dock is currently hosting MV Mercer Street, the tanker involved in the attack that killed two crew members - a Briton and a Romanian. The United States, Israel and Britain said Iran was behind the attack.

The five vessels announced via their Automatic Identification System trackers that they were "not under command," according to MarineTraffic.com.

That typically means a vessel has lost power and can no longer steer. One of them later began moving.

The ships broadcast their warnings at around the same time as UKMTO, which is part of the Royal Navy, advised vessels to exercise extreme caution in the area some 61 nautical miles east of Fujairah.

It provided no details regarding the vessel or vessels involved.

The U.S. military's Mideast-based 5th Fleet and the British Defense Ministry did not immediately return calls for comment. The Emirati government did not immediately acknowledge the incident.

An Oman Royal Air Force Airbus C-295MPA, a maritime patrol aircraft, was flying over the area where the ships were, according to data from FlightRadar24.com.

The United States and Britain said on Sunday they would work with their allies to respond to last week's attack on the MV Mercer Street, a Liberian-flagged, Japanese-owned petroleum product tanker managed by Israeli-owned Zodiac Maritime.

NATO also on Tuesday implicated Iran in the attack, saying that its members "remain concerned by Iran's destabilizing actions in the region, and call on Tehran to respect its international obligations."

Iran denied involvement in the suspected drone attack and said Monday it would respond promptly to any threat against its security.

Prime Minister Naftali Bennett warned Iran on Tuesday that Israel was enlisting an international response to Iran's alleged attack, but added that if necessary, "we are able to act alone."

Iran and Israel have exchanged accusations of carrying out attacks on each other's vessels in recent months.

First published: 18:07, 08.03.21