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08.26.21

Biden delays Bennett meeting and governors after Afghan bombing in Kabul

08.26.21

Biden monitors Afghan violence, delays Bennett meeting

The meeting originally scheduled for Thursday morning U.S. time but was postponed until Friday following a deadly bombing in Kabul where at least two explosions hit the area of the airport, killing at least 13 people, including U.S. Marines
Associated Press| Updated: 08.26.21, 20:09

The White House hurriedly put off President Joe Biden's first in-person meeting with Prime Minister Naftali Bennett on Thursday and canceled a video conference with governors on incoming Afghan refugees after more than a dozen people were killed in explosions outside the airport in the Afghan capital, where throngs of people are scrambling to get to planes and evacuate.

The delay was said to be due to the deadly bombing in Kabul where there were at least two explosions in the area of the airport amid a huge and chaotic evacuation effort from Afghanistan on Thursday, the Pentagon said. A U.S. official says several Marines were killed and a number of other American military were wounded in the blast.

Biden was to host Israel's new prime minister, who is on his first visit to the U.S. since taking office. Biden also had planned to meet virtually with a bipartisan group of governors who have said they want to help resettle Afghan refugees fleeing their now Taliban-ruled country.

But deadly developments in the Afghan capital of Kabul forced the White House to tear up the president's schedule, as he monitored the airport situation that was prompted by the Tuesday deadline he set for removing American citizens and troops from Afghanistan.

Biden's meetings with Bennett were delayed until Friday, while the governors' meeting was canceled, the White House said. A regular briefing by government health and medical experts, scheduled for Thursday, also was postponed.

Two suicide bombers and gunmen targeted crowds massing near the Kabul airport Thursday, in the final days of a massive airlift that has drawn thousands of people seeking to flee the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan.

A U.S. official said the attack was "definitely believed" to have been carried out by the Islamic State group, whose affiliate in Afghanistan grew out of disaffected Taliban members who hold an even more extreme view of Islam.

Despite intense pressure to extend the Tuesday deadline, Biden has repeatedly cited the threat of terrorist attacks against civilians and U.S. service members as a reason to keep to his plan.

A U.S. official said U.S. military members were among the wounded. The official spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss ongoing operations.

The explosions detonated as the U.S. worked to get remaining Americans out of the country. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Wednesday that as many as 1,500 Americans may be awaiting evacuation.

Asked during an interview with ABC News about reports the evacuation could end on Friday, Ross Wilson, the U.S. ambassador to Afghanistan, declined to comment.

Wilson said "there are safe ways to get to the airport for those Americans who still want to leave. He added that "there undoubtedly will be" **some at-risk Afghans who will not get out before Biden's deadline.**

The airlift continued Thursday despite warnings of vehicle-borne bomb threats near the airport. The White House said **13,400 people** had been **evacuated in the 24 hours** that ended early Thursday morning Washington time. Those included 5,100 people aboard U.S. military planes and 8,300 on coalition and partner aircraft. That was a substantial drop from the **19,000 airlifted** by all means **the day before.**

Blinken emphasized at a State Department briefing on Wednesday that "evacuating Americans is our top priority."

He added: "We're also committed to getting out as many Afghans at-risk as we can before the 31st," when Biden plans to pull out the last of thousands of American troops.

The U.S. Embassy in Kabul, the capital, issued a security alert Wednesday warning American citizens away from three specific airport gates. Senior U.S. officials said the warning was related to ongoing and specific threats involving the Islamic State and potential vehicle bombs.

Blinken said the State Department estimates there were about **6,000 Americans wanting to leave Afghanistan** when the airlift began Aug. 14, as the Taliban took the capital after a stunning military conquest. About 4,500 Americans have been evacuated so far, Blinken said, and among the rest "some are understandably very scared."

The 6,000 figure is the first firm estimate by the State Department of how many Americans were seeking to get out. U.S. officials early in the evacuation estimated as many as 15,000, including dual citizens, lived in Afghanistan. The figure does not include U.S. Green Card holders.

About 500 Americans have been contacted with instructions on when and how to get to the chaotic Kabul airport to catch evacuation flights.

In addition, 1,000 or perhaps fewer are being contacted to determine whether they still want to leave. Blinken said some of these may already have left the country, some may want to remain and some may not actually be American citizens.

First published: 18:25, 08.26.21

08.26.21

Israel and Egypt ease Gaza blockade necessary to control Hamas from rearming

08.26.21

Israel to allow goods into Gaza in bid to ease tensions

Military says sanction relief contingent on continued security and stability along the border; **Egypt to reopen key border crossing** closed in **attempt to quell Palestinian aggressions** against Israel

Ynet,News Agencies| Published: **08.26.21**, 10:27

Israel said that it would be easing commercial restrictions on the Gaza Strip and will allow more goods into the Palestinian enclave following days of heightened tensions.

The announcement came on the heels of a Wednesday protest along the Israeli border during which hundreds of Palestinians called on the Jewish state to ease a crippling blockade.

The Hamas terrorist group which controls Gaza attempted to keep the crowds from approaching the border barrier to prevent a repeat of the intense clashes between Palestinian rioters and Israeli forces last Saturday which left one Palestinian dead and an Israeli border policeman critically wounded after being shot from point-blank range. COGAT, the chief IDF liaison body to the Palestinians, said in a statement late Wednesday that it would increase imports of new automobiles, commercial goods and equipment for civilian projects in the Gaza Strip, as well as issue more permits for Gazan merchants to enter Israel starting Thursday.

The easing of restrictions would be “contingent upon the continued preservation of the region’s security,” and could be further expanded if the border situation improves, COGAT said.

Hamas officials said Egypt would also be partially reopening its key border crossing with the Gaza Strip Thursday after it was closed in a bid to pressure the terrorist group into restoring calm along the border with Israel.

Egypt has been trying to broker a long-term ceasefire between the parties since May’s 11-day war in which around 260 Palestinians and 13 people in Israel were killed. Israel and Hamas have fought four wars and numerous skirmishes since 2007 when the militant group seized power in Gaza in an armed coup following its victory in the Palestinian elections. Israel and Egypt imposed a devastating blockade since Hamas took control, which Israel says is necessary to keep Hamas from rearming.

08.25.21

Israel scraps school program to identify those exposed, meant to limit quarantines

08.25.21

Israel scraps requirement for negative COVID tests at schools over legal hurdles

Despite decision to impose Green Pass restrictions on all educational facilities, Attorney General's office says no legal way to block children from entering schools; Education Ministry urges parents to test children

Ynet| Published: 08.25.21, 23:21

Israel on Wednesday reversed its decision to require children to present a negative COVID test at entrances to schools over legal difficulties in implementing the rule.

The move came just two days after the coronavirus cabinet voted to impose Green Pass regulations on all educational facilities, including children and staff members.

The decision was made after Attorney General Avichai Mandelblit's office said there was no legal way to prevent children from entering schools.

Deputy Attorney General Raz Nizri said a decision on enforcement of coronavirus restrictions at schools is in the process of being finalized by ministers of education, health and justice, and will be announced soon.

Earlier on Wednesday, Health Minister Nitzan Horowitz told Ynet that school principals will have to decide whether or not to prevent children who cannot present a negative test or proof of illness or vaccination, from entering school grounds.

The Education Ministry said in a statement that school officials were not authorized to decide who can enter the educational facility and that children must attend school in accordance with the Compulsory Education law.

However, parents are still urged to test their children for possible coronavirus infection before the start of the school year on September 1.

Parents are our vital partners in the national effort to bring children back to school and we are calling on them to take the necessary steps and give their kids the rapid test in the days leading up to September 1," the ministry said.

These steps are meant to protect the health of the children, their families and that of the teaching staff and will enable schools to operate safely and without disruption."

Daily virus cases surged to nearly 10,000 in the past days adding to many parents' concerns that their children will be exposed to COVID-19 from fellow students and staff.

A serology testing program for students, meant to identify those who had already been exposed to the virus and limit the number of children that may have to quarantine, was suspended on Wednesday after experiencing technical difficulty.

08.25.21

Top Haredi leader urged institutions to suspend teachers not vaccinated

08.25.21

Top Haredi leader calls to suspend unvaccinated teachers

Rabbi Chaim Kanievsky encourages getting COVID-19 vaccine, calling it 'godsend', and urges adherence to health regulations; Health Ministry hopes remarks would help persuade thousands of vaccine-hesitant educators

Kobi Nachshoni | Published: 08.25.21, 12:10

A leading Haredi spiritual leader on Tuesday urged the sector's educational institutions to suspend teachers who have not been vaccinated against COVID-19.

Rabbi Chaim Kanievsky, a prominent figure in the Lithuanian branch of ultra-Orthodox Judaism, is considered one of the world's most revered rabbis and many within his community consider his rulings to require total compliance.

"Teachers and educators who have not been vaccinated must not come to teach," Kanievsky said. "Vaccines are a godsend and must be taken to prevent Bitul Torah [wasting time that could be spent on religious studies] and illness." Kanievsky made the remarks during a visit of the head of Israel's coronavirus task force, Prof. Salman Zarka, at his Bnei Brak home. Zarka sought the rabbi's blessing for the success of the vaccination campaign in educational institutions and to encourage citizens to get the vaccine booster shot amid an alarming rise in morbidity in the ultra-Orthodox sector. "Every person should try to watch themselves in every way so as not to infect [others] or get infected... and to adhere to the health regulations," the 93-year-old said during the meeting. His latest statement carries significant weight as educators enjoy a special social status among the ultra-Orthodox community as those who pass on the word of the Torah to the next generation.

The Health Ministry hopes that the pressure from the so-called "Prince of Torah" would help persuade thousands of educators who were thus far hesitant to get the vaccine. Meanwhile, Israel on Wednesday logged almost 10,000 new daily coronavirus cases for the second day in a row.

The Health Ministry reported that 9,891 Israelis have tested positive for the virus out of some 150,000 tests carried out over the previous 24 hours, putting the country's infection rate at 6.69% — the highest such figure recorded since the pandemic made a resurgence in Israel.

08.25.21

Bennett urges US coalition against Iran & ruled out Gaza peace as rudderless

08.25.21

Bennett reiterates call to form regional coalition against Iran

Speaking to NYT, PM presents hawkish attitude towards Tehran's nuclear ambitions, while signaling willingness to cooperate with U.S.; says does not see solution to Israeli-Palestinian conflict in foreseeable future but won't pursue West Bank annexation

Ynet| Published: 08.25.21, 10:00

Israel must form a regional coalition against Iran in cooperation with the United States, Prime Minister Naftali Bennett told the New York Times in an interview published Wednesday ahead of his first official state visit to the U.S. since taking office.

In the interview with the Times, Bennett said he will present Biden with a plan to contain Iran on all fronts, including imposing new economic sanctions, mobilizing international pressure and continuing Israel's clandestine campaign against the Islamic Republic's nuclear arms program.

“What we need to do, and what we are doing, is forming a regional coalition of reasonable Arab countries, together with us, that will fend off and block this expansion and this desire for domination [by Iran]”, Bennett told the Times. This comes as **Tehran** was ramping up its production of **enriched uranium**, taking it ever **closer to nuclear military capabilities**.

Despite being an Iran hawk himself, Bennett presented a more amicable tone than that of his predecessor Benjamin Netanyahu, who has more than once found himself at loggerheads with U.S. officials, mainly due to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), or the Iran nuclear deal.

The 2015 deal was brokered by former U.S. president Barack Obama's administration, in which Biden served as vice president, and sought to **put checks and balances on Tehran's nuclear program**.

Much like Netanyahu, **Bennett will also advise Biden to abandon talks with Iran** on reviving the deal, from which former president Donald Trump withdrew in 2018, on the premise it was no longer relevant as the incoming administration in Tehran, led by ultra-conservative Ebrahim Raisi, is set to be more aggressive toward the West. In addition, Bennett said that he did not see a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the foreseeable future. He added, however, that he did not intend to extend Israeli sovereignty over large swaths of the West Bank — a move pursued, and later abandoned, by his predecessor.

The Israeli leader also **ruled out** the **possibility of peace talks with the Palestinians** during the term of the current administration, partly because the **Palestinian leadership is fractured and rudderless**, according to him.

“This government is a government that will make dramatic breakthroughs in the economy,” the Times quoted him as saying. “Its claim to fame will not be solving the 130-year-old conflict here in Israel.”

08.24.21

Hamas agrees to stop incendiary balloons to resume Qatari aid money

08.24.21

Report: Hamas agrees to stop incendiary balloons following Egypt talks

Decision comes after **spat of cross-border violence**, which also included **Gaza rocket fire** and retaliatory **Israeli airstrikes** on Hamas targets in Palestinian enclave

i24NEWS | Published: **08.24.21**, 19:16

Hamas agreed on **Tuesday to stop** launching **incendiary balloons** from the Gaza Strip into Israel following talks with Egypt, Palestinian newspaper Al-Ayyam reported.

Since an **Egyptian-mediated cease fire** brought an end to 11 days of fighting between Hamas and Israel in May, **Gaza** militants have **sporadically sent explosive-laden balloons**

into Israel which responded by launching airstrikes on Hamas targets in the Palestinian enclave.

Palestinians say the balloons are aimed at pressing Israel to ease restrictions on Gaza and allow aid to reach the territory. Balloons launched on Monday sparked fires in Israeli fields along the Gaza border, Fire and Rescue Services said.

Crossborder violence has spiked despite an Israel announcing last week it will resume the transfer of Qatari aid money to Gaza, a decision that had been seen as bolstering the fragile truce.

On Monday evening, Israeli warplanes bombed Hamas sites in the seaside territory in response to the launch of incendiary balloons that caused brush fires in southern Israel. The IDF said it hit a weapons factory belonging to the Islamist terror group in the southern town of Khan Younis, the entrance to a terror tunnel in Jabaliya and an underground rocket launching pad.

08.24.21

IDF strikes Hamas fire balloons sites & protesters throwing explosives

08.24.21

Israel strikes Hamas sites in Gaza over fire balloons

Hamas says a Palestinian teen reportedly killed in attacks that according to IDF targeted a weapons production facility and a rocket launch site; strikes came after balloons launched on Monday set off 9 fires in Israeli fields along Gaza border

Reuters| Published: 08.24.21, 09:50

Israeli warplanes bombed Hamas sites in Gaza in response to incendiary balloons launched from the Palestinian enclave that caused brush fires in southern Israel, its military said early on Tuesday.

One Palestinian teen was reportedly killed in the the attacks that targeted what the military said was a weapons production facility and a rocket launch site belonging to Hamas, the terror group that rules Gaza.

Since an Egyptian-mediated ceasefire halted 11 days of Israel-Hamas fighting in May, Gaza militants have sporadically sent balloons carrying incendiary material into Israel, drawing Israeli strikes on Hamas facilities.

Palestinians say the balloons are aimed at pressing Israel to ease restrictions on Gaza and allow aid to reach the territory. Balloons launched on Monday set off fires in Israeli fields along the Gaza border, Fire and Rescue Service said.

Cross-border violence has spiked despite an Israeli announcement last week of a resumption of Qatari aid to Gaza, a decision that had been seen as bolstering the fragile truce.

Confronting **Gaza protesters burning tyres and throwing explosives along the border** on **Saturday**, Israeli troops shot and wounded 41 Palestinians, critically injuring two, medics said. Palestinian gunfire seriously wounded an Israeli soldier, the military said.

Days before Saturday's violence, Gaza militants launched a rocket towards Israel that was shot down by its Iron Dome anti-missile system, in the first such attack since the May 21 cease fire.

More than 250 Palestinians and 13 in Israel were killed in the May conflict, during which Gaza militants fired rockets towards Israeli cities and Israel carried out air strikes across the coastal enclave.

Israel keeps **Gaza under blockade**, tightly restricting movement out of the territory that is home to 2 million Palestinians. **Egypt** also **maintains** restrictions on the **enclave**. Both cite threats from Hamas for the restrictions.

In the West Bank, the Palestinian Health Ministry said a 15-year-old was killed overnight in a clash with Israeli soldiers.

The Israeli military said its troops came under fire during an arrest raid near the city of Nablus.

A soldier opened fire on a **suspect who was about to throw a large object at the forces from a rooftop**, the military said, and "identified a hit". The health ministry said a 15-year-old Palestinian was killed in the confrontation.

08.25.21

MK Saeed Alkhrumi of Islamist Ra'am party that signed with Bennett dies at 49

08.25.21

MK Saeed Alkhrumi from Islamist Ra'am party dies at 49

Party says **MK** was rushed to a hospital in Be'er Sheva following a **heart attack** but was pronounced dead; he spent most of his life in Negev and as a Bedouin championed rights of community; 'All his life he served people of Negev,' party chief says

Ynet reporters| Published: **08.25.21**, 09:05

MK Saeed **Alkhrumi** **from** the Islamist **Ra'am party** died early Wednesday at the age of 49, the party announced.

He had suffered a heart attack and was rushed to Soroka Medical Center **in Be'er Sheva** where he was pronounced dead.

Alkhrumi's party and its leader Mansour Abbas made history earlier this year when they became the **first Arab party to** become part of a government **coalition** following a **deal signed with** now-Prime Minister Naftali **Bennett**.

He lived most of his life in the Negev in southern Israel and as a Bedouin championed the rights of the community. He also served as chairman of Knesset's Internal Affairs and Environment committees.

Abbas had arrived at the hospital earlier, recited a few verses from the Quran and paid tribute to Alkhrumi.

"We lost a man who did a lot for the Arab sector, especially for the Bedouin in the south," he said. "He was a diligent Knesset member and did a lot in recent years. All his life he served the people of the Negev.

"We have seen in recent months how worked with dedication, diligence and patience. He was loved by all of us. He was calm and patient. He was politically intelligent and flexible, a stable man who knew the rights of our people and our society. May God have mercy on him."

The Ra'am party in a statement send their condolences to Alkhrumi's "family, the tribe of the Negev, all members of the Islamic Movement and our Palestinian people."

Idan)

President Isaac Herzog also send his condolences, issuing a message on Twitter in both Hebrew and Arabic.

"I am shocked and hurt by the untimely passing of my friend. In his many roles, Alkhrumi was a wise and amicable public servant who faithfully represented the Bedouin community in the Negev. My deepest condolences to his family and friends."

08.22.21

Hamas insists it is the only legitimate faction in Palestine deserving Qatari aid

08.22.21

Ra'am may topple Bennett government if Israel confronts Hamas, Gaza source says
Group leader Sinwar said to believe 'he and Gaza are the reason for the continued existence of Bennett's government', content with newly approved mechanism for transfer of Qatari aid money

TPS| Published: 08.22.21, 18:28

Coalition member and Islamist party Ra'am might threaten to topple Prime Minister Naftali Bennett's government if Israel starts another conflict against Hamas, a source close to the Gaza Strip terrorist group claimed on Sunday.

According to a Palestinian source — which harbors close ties with Hamas' leadership in Gaza — the terror group's leader Yahya Sinwar is convinced that Ra'am chief Mansour Abbas will resign from Bennett's government if tensions between Israel and Gaza continue to escalate.

The source's claims come after Israel attacked several Hamas targets in Gaza on Sunday in retaliation for the riot on the perimeter fence on Saturday during which one IDF soldier was gravely wounded by a bullet to the head.

The source added that Sinwar, "knows that he and Gaza are the reason for the continued existence of Bennett's government."

"That is why he is not afraid to put pressure on the Israeli government," the source added.

“After all, Mansour Abbas is [affiliated with] Qatar, and Yahya Sinwar is [also affiliated with] Qatar, which makes Qatar the common umbrella for both of them,” he explained. “[That is why] Sinwar is not afraid of making tactical moves against Israel... Although he remains careful not to let this devolve into a full-on confrontation. With these moves, Sinwar intends to expedite a complete solution for the Gaza Strip,” the source added. The sources also said “he is sure” that financial aid from Qatar will eventually reach the Palestinian enclave, as well as Hamas officials in the territory whose salaries are paid by the Qatari grant each month.

Israel agreed last Thursday to resume the transfer of Qatari aid money to the Gaza Strip following an agreement between Doha and the UN over the transfer mechanism. The Jewish state has long pursued an alternative mechanism to facilitate the transfer of funds from the affluent Gulf state to Gaza to support impoverished families without the money falling into Hamas' hands.

The source added that Sinwar is content with the agreement because it “leaves Qatar as the main player in the Gaza arena.”

“This is an Israeli and American mistake, but we are already used to the mistakes of the United States in the region,” added the source, who also referred to Israel's recent statement, which described the agreement as an “achievement.”

“Although Israel prefers to describe it as an achievement and a change in the equation with Hamas, it is clear to Sinwar that the agreement serves him and he understands that these are media tricks by the Israeli government,” the source asserted.

“Hamas will continue to prove, under the auspices of the current Israeli government, that it is the only factor in the Palestinian arena and that this is the basis for the legitimacy it did not receive in the elections canceled by Palestinian President and Palestinian Authority chief, Mahmoud Abbas.”

08.26.21

At least 12 US troops of the 70+ killed in Kabul airport from 2-bombs

08.26.21

At least 12 U.S. troops killed in Kabul airport attack, officials say
Pentagon spokesman confirms multiple American fatalities after 2 blasts tore through crowds thronging airport gates; although official number of dead stands at 22, the unofficial tally puts the number of casualties at 70; Islamic State claims responsibility
Reuters| Published: 08.26.21, 22:12

At least a dozen U.S. troops were killed and several others wounded in Thursday's suicide bombings at Kabul airport, sources claimed, in what the Pentagon said was a “complex attack” during its evacuation mission from Afghanistan.

In a statement, Pentagon Spokesman John Kirby confirmed multiple U.S. fatalities but did not give details. The U.S. service members were among those killed when **at least two blasts** tore **through crowds** thronging the airport gates.

Two U.S. officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, told Reuters that **at least a dozen U.S. personnel were killed**. Officials said that number could change and was expected to increase. Several other U.S. troops were wounded, the officials said.

A Taliban official said at least 22 people including children had been killed in the attack and 52 were wounded, though it was clear from video footage that those figures could be as high as 70.

In a statement, Islamic State claimed responsibility and said one of its suicide bombers had **targeted "translators"** and collaborators with the American army".

U.S. General Frank McKenzie, head of U.S. Central Command, told reporters in a briefing that the threat from Islamic State persisted alongside "other active threat streams".

The suicide bombing attacks came after the United States and allies urged Afghans to leave the area around the airport because of a threat by Islamic State militants.

The **U.S. military death toll** in the **Afghanistan war since 2001 stood at roughly 2,500**. In an alert issued on Wednesday, the U.S. Embassy in Kabul had advised citizens to avoid traveling to the airport and said those already at the gates should leave immediately, citing unspecified "security threats."

A source familiar with U.S. congressional briefings said U.S. officials strongly believe that the Afghan affiliate of Islamic State, known as Islamic State Khorasan (ISIS-K), after a historic name for the region, was responsible. ISIS-K is opposed by the United States and the Taliban.

Kirby said one blast occurred near the airport's Abbey Gate and the other close to the nearby Baron Hotel.

"The explosion at the Abbey Gate was the result of a complex attack that resulted in a number of US & civilian casualties," Kirby said on Twitter.

A **massive airlift of foreign nationals** and their families as well as some Afghans has been **under way since the day before** Taliban forces captured Kabul on **Aug. 15**, capping a swift advance across the country as U.S. and allied troops withdrew.

The United States has been racing to carry out the airlift before its military is set to fully withdraw from the country by Aug. 31. There was no indication from the White House that Biden plans to change the **Aug. 31 withdrawal target** as a result of the attacks, a source familiar with the situation told Reuters.

Biden was in a meeting with security officials about the situation in Afghanistan, where the United States is in the final steps of ending its 20-year war, when the explosions were reported, according to a person familiar with the matter.

Biden, Secretary of State Antony Blinken, Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin, Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman General Mark Milley and Vice President Kamala Harris monitored events via video links.

A Western diplomat in Kabul said that areas outside the airport gates had been "incredibly crowded" again despite the latest warnings.

The United States and its allies have mounted one of the biggest air evacuations in history, bringing out about 95,700 people, including 13,400 on Wednesday, the White House said on Thursday.

Blinken said on Wednesday that there were still about 1,500 U.S. citizens in Afghanistan, and that at least 4,500 U.S. citizens had already been evacuated from the country.

08.26.21

UK evacuated over 12,000 from Afghanistan, sees very credible threat imminent

08.26.21

UK sees very credible threat of imminent IS Kabul airport attack

Britain's foreign ministry advises people not to travel to area, where thousands are waiting for flights out of Afghanistan ahead of an Aug. 31 deadline, with armed forces minister saying intel on possible suicide attack 'much firmer'

Reuters| Published: 08.26.21, 10:52

There is "very, very credible" intelligence that Islamic State militants are planning an imminent attack on those gathering at Kabul airport in an attempt to flee Afghanistan, British armed forces minister James Heapey said on Thursday.

Late on Wednesday, Britain's foreign ministry advised people not to travel to the Kabul Hamid Karzai International Airport where thousands are waiting for flights out of the country ahead of an Aug. 31 deadline when the United States and its allies will pull out their remaining troops.

Heapey confirmed that intelligence of a possible suicide bomb attack by IS militants had become "much firmer".

"There is now very, very credible reporting of an imminent attack, and hence why the Foreign Office advice was changed last night, that people should not come to Kabul Airport, they should move to a safe place and await further instructions," Heapey told BBC radio.

In later remarks he said: "I can't stress the desperation of the situation enough. The threat is credible, it is imminent, it is lethal. We wouldn't be saying this if we weren't genuinely concerned about offering Islamic State a target that is just unimaginable."

Heapey said there were still very large crowds of desperate people outside the airport which was "a real concern for everybody".

"I think there is an appetite amongst many in the queue to take their chances, but the reporting of this threat is very credible indeed. There is a real imminence to it."

He said that Western nations were relying on the Taliban for security outside the airport, and that despite the warnings there were a large number of people still waiting there.

"There is every chance that as further reporting comes in, we may be able to change the advice and process people anew, but there is no guarantee of that," he said.

Britain has already evacuated more than 12,000 people from Afghanistan since its rapid fall to the Taliban and was planning 11 more flights on Thursday.

"We think there's around 400 eligible people, mostly British citizens/dual nationals, in country. Clearly, we are working hard to find routes to safety for them," Heapey said.

"I just have to be really honest with people and say that there is every possibility, as we've been saying all the way through, that we won't get everybody out, and the security situation worsening as it has, makes that more likely."