

10-Oct We  
Hurricane in Panama City Fl. Mike Pompeo : Iran spent \$16B to destabilize Mid-East

11-Oct Th  
UN labels 2-Tombs as Occupied by Palestine to sway US & Israel from exit of UNESCO

12-Oct Fr  
US may expand ports in Mediterranean: docked 1-Ship at Ashdod & honored Netanyahu

13-Oct Sa

14-Oct Su  
US, UN, Israel, Syria reopen Golan Heights crossing "Mainly trading Apples & Brides"

15-Oct Mo  
In Geneva, Palestine refuses peace until US funds UNRWA & removes Embassy

16-Oct Tu  
UN sent 4 trucks of Fuel to Gaza, Palestine use it to make firebombs of Kites & Balloons

17-Oct We  
Trump using financial, political & diplomatic pressure to force Iran out of Syria

18-Oct Th  
Gaza Rocket attacks on Beersheba stir EU & Netanyahu to promise return of Great Force

19-Oct Fr  
Israel moves Tanks to Gaza border, Hamas says rockets not from their orders

20-Oct Sa  
US Mike Pompeo placed Console to Palestine as division of US Jerusalem Embassy

21-Oct Su  
Israel deploys tanks on Lebanon border & sand wall for tanks to see over cement wall

22-Oct Mo  
Jordan king revokes 1994 deal of land from 1967 war as humiliating Israeli occupation

23-Oct Tu  
Kushner & US Ambassador David Friedman cite progress on Mideast plan

24-Oct We  
Jordan demands review of peace treaty with Israel & Jordan security is on high alert

25-Oct Th  
IAF strikes 8 Hamas positions along the Coast in response to Gaza rocket fire

26-Oct Fr

Trump sanctions Hezbollah to starve funds 35 yrs after 251 Marines killed in Beirut 1983

27-Oct Sa

Gaza 40 rockets send IDF to 80 targets, 11 killed in Pittsburg Synagogue shooting

28-Oct Su

20,000 housing units approved for Jerusalem Suburb

29-Oct Mo

Palestine says strife is playing into US plans for Gaza

30-Oct Tu

PLO pulls out of all agreements with Israel. Palestine may endorse it

31-Oct We

Indonesia refuse Australia's Embassy move; Trump moves 15k troops to Mexico Border

Wednesday, 31 October 2018 04:39 PM

Trump: Up to 15K Troops Could Be Sent to Border

President Donald Trump said Wednesday that the number of military **troops deployed to the U.S.-Mexican border could go as high as 15,000** as he draws a hard line on immigration in the lead-up to the midterm elections.

With his eyes squarely on next Tuesday's contests, Trump has rushed a series of immigration declarations, promises and actions as he tries to mobilize supporters to retain Republican control of Congress. His own Republican campaign in 2016 concentrated on border fears, and that's his focus in the final week of the midterm fight.

"As far as the caravan is concerned, our military is out," Trump said Wednesday. "We have about 5,800. We'll go up to anywhere between 10,000 and 15,000 military personnel on top of Border Patrol, ICE and everybody else at the border."

Trump rejected the idea he was "fearmongering" or using the issue for political purposes, but his escalating rhetoric in the waning days of the campaign season call into question the denial. Trump has railed against illegal immigration, including several caravans of migrants from Central America slowly moving toward the U.S. border. The caravan is still nearly 1,000 miles (1,600 kilometers) from the border.

He's also **promised to end so-called catch-and-release policies** by erecting tent cities to hold those crossing illegally. And this week he is asserting he could act by executive order to unilaterally end birthright citizenship for the children of non-U.S. citizens.

Trump's comments on Wednesday appeared to catch the Pentagon off guard.

The Pentagon on Monday directed 5,239 active-duty troops to deploy to the border to assist Customs and Border Protection agents in Texas, Arizona and California. That is in addition to 2,092 National Guard troops who have been along the border for several months on a separate, but related, mission.

On Tuesday, Air Force Gen. Terrence O'Shaughnessy, commander of U.S. Northern Command, which is supervising the new troop operation, disputed a news report that the active-duty total could reach 14,000.

"I honestly don't even know where that came from," he said. "That is not in line with what we've been planning."

O'Shaughnessy said the 5,239 number will increase, but he would not say by how much or when. Other officials have said that 2,000 to 3,000 additional active-duty troops are on standby for possible deployment to the border.

A deployment of 15,000 would bring the military commitment on the border to roughly the same level as in war-torn Afghanistan.

Trump on Wednesday did not back down from his controversial proposal to upend the very concept of American citizenship. In a morning tweet, he said the right to citizenship for babies born to non citizens on American soil "will be ended one way or the other."

He also claimed that what he terms "so-called Birthright Citizenship" is "not covered by the 14th Amendment."

However, the text of the amendment's opening Citizenship Clause is this: "All persons born or naturalized in the United States and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside." The citizenship proposal would inevitably spark a long-shot legal battle over whether the president can alter the long-accepted understanding that the 14th Amendment grants citizenship to any child born on U.S. soil, regardless of his parents' immigration status.

Speaker of the House Paul Ryan asserted Tuesday that "obviously" Trump could not upend that policy by executive order, drawing a tweeted rebuke from Trump. He said Wednesday that Ryan "should be focusing on holding the Majority rather than giving his opinions on Birthright Citizenship, something he knows nothing about!"

Speaking to reporters before leaving the White House for a campaign rally in Florida, Trump compared his plan to act by executive order to President Barack Obama's much-

maligned decision to use executive action to provide protections from prosecution and a path to work status for some people brought to the U.S. illegally as children.

"If he can do DACA, we can do this by executive order," Trump said, using the acronym for the Obama-era Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program. Trump and his Justice Department have argued that Obama action was unlawful.

Trump and many top aides have long seen the **immigration issue as the most effective rallying cry for his base of supporters**. The president had been expected to announce new actions at the border on Tuesday, but that was scrapped so he could travel instead to Pittsburgh, where 11 people were massacred in a synagogue during Sabbath services.

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Read Newsmax: Trump: Up to 15K Troops Could Be Sent to Border | Newsmax.com

**Newsletter Wednesday October 31, 2018**

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**'Australian Embassy move to Jerusalem would anger Indonesia'**

Indonesia, the world's largest Muslim country, would have "a very negative reaction" if Australia decides to follow U.S. and move embassy to Jerusalem, says former Australian PM Malcolm Turnbull • Australia must consider its national interests, he says.

Associated Press and Israel Hayom Staff

Former Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull | Photo: Reuters

Former Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull has warned that Australia can expect a negative reaction from Indonesia if it follows the United States by shifting its embassy to Jerusalem.

Turnbull, who lost the leadership in August this year, spoke to reporters after meeting Indonesian President Joko Widodo on the tourist island of Bali on Monday to discuss a bilateral free trade deal.

"The president expressed to me ... the very serious concern held in Indonesia about the prospect of the Australian Embassy in Israel being moved from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem," Turnbull told the Australian Broadcasting Corporation in an interview aired on Tuesday.

"There's no question that were that move to occur, it would be met with a very negative reaction in Indonesia.

"This is after all the largest majority-Muslim country in the world, so we have to be very clear-eyed about that and we have to take into account Australia's national interest and our interests in the region when we ... consider decisions like this."

Prime Minister Scott Morrison, who succeeded Turnbull, said on Tuesday no decision had been made yet on an embassy move.

Morrison sent Turnbull to represent Australia at a climate change conference in Bali because of the former leader's close personal rapport with the Indonesian president, who was disappointed that Turnbull's government colleagues replaced him in August in response to poor opinion polling.

Turnbull said he was confident that a free-trade deal between Australia, a nation of 25 million people, and nearby Indonesia, with a population of more than 260 million people, would be signed within weeks.

Turnbull also said Australia should stick with its policy of more than 40 years and keep its embassy in Tel Aviv.

Morrison, a long-time ally of Turnbull's who had argued against replacing him in the leadership ballot, floated the idea of shifting the embassy days before a by-election in Turnbull's Sydney electorate, which has a large Jewish population.

The government lost the by-election, which was forced by Turnbull's resignation from Parliament, and its single-seat majority in the House of Representatives.

"Australia will always make our decisions on our foreign policy based on our interests and we'll do that as a sovereign nation," Morrison told reporters.

"We'll consult, we'll listen to others, but at the end of the day ... I will always put our interests first."

The Trump administration turned its back on decades of U.S. policy last December by recognizing Jerusalem as Israel's capital, and in May, it moved the U.S. Embassy there. The decision angered the Muslim world and was a setback for the Palestinians, who see east Jerusalem, captured by Israel in the 1967 Six-Day War, as the capital of a future independent state.

Morrison said Australia remains committed to finding a two-state solution.

Morrison's first overseas trip as prime minister was to Indonesia, an ardent supporter of the Palestinian cause, in a sign of the importance Australia places on the bilateral relationship.

30-Oct Tu

PLO pulls out of all agreements with Israel . Palestine may endorse it

Newsletter Tuesday October 30, 2018

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In dramatic move, PLO pulls out of all agreements with Israel

Palestine Liberation Organization's Central Council suspends recognition of Israel until Israel acknowledges an independent Palestinian state, severs security and economic ties •

Decision is nonbinding, but PA President Abbas says he is inclined to endorse it.

Israel Hayom Staff

Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas | Photo: AFP

The Palestine Liberation Organization's Central Council declared that it was suspending its recognition of Israel until Israel agrees to acknowledge an independent Palestinian state within the 1967 borders and with east Jerusalem as its capital, Ramallah's Wafa news agency reported Monday.

The council further decided to suspend all security and economic ties with Israel, as outlined in the 1994 Paris Economic Protocol.

The decision, announced after a two-day meeting in Ramallah, is declarative and nonbinding, the report said.

According to the report, the PLO essentially wants to cease compliance with the 1993 Oslo Accord, on which the Israeli-Palestinian peace process is founded.

Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas would have to ratify the council's decision for it to actually spell the PA backing out of the Oslo Accords.

"In view of Israel's continued denial of the signed agreements, the PLO Central Council, in confirmation of its previous decision and considering that the transitional phase no longer exists, hereby decides to end the commitments of the PLO and the Palestinian Authority toward its agreements with the occupying power, suspend recognition of the State of Israel until its recognition of the State of Palestine on the June 4, 1967 borders with al-Quds [Jerusalem] as its capital; end security coordination in all its forms, and disengage economically from Israel on the grounds that the transitional phase, including the Paris Economic Protocols, no longer exist," the PLO said in a statement quoted by Arab media.

The organization further asserted that the Trump administration is "a partner of the Israeli occupation government and a part of the problem, not the solution," and lauded Abbas' efforts "in continuing to reject the so-called 'Deal of the Century' proposed by U.S. President Donald Trump and confronting it with all available means."

According to the report, Abbas was inclined to endorse the council's decision, saying that "the time has come" to put into actions previous council resolutions.

He called on Palestinians to unite behind the PLO as the "sole legitimate representative" of the Palestinian people.

The PLO's Central Council further stated that it holds Hamas, the Islamic terrorist group that ousted Abbas' Fatah government from the Gaza Strip in a military coup in 2007, for the prolonged failure of the Egyptian-brokered reconciliation efforts between the rival Palestinian factions.

It further affirmed its rejections of "various suspicious projects" meant to "split Gaza from the West Bank," referring to recent Egyptian and U.N. efforts to broker a truce between Hamas and Israel and facilitate an agreement that would alleviate the dire economic crisis in Gaza.

Abbas has admitted his government has been actively trying to torpedo these efforts, which exclude Ramallah, claiming that no such agreement can be reached without the Palestinian Authority's involvement.

Newsletter Monday October 29, 2018

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Abbas: Hamas serves US interests by refusing to cede control of Gaza

There will be no Palestinian state without Gaza Strip, PA President Mahmoud Abbas tells PLO executive • He says Hamas is adopting ideas of enemy that wants mini-state in Gaza, autonomy in West Bank • We will not cede one inch of east Jerusalem, he vows.

Daniel Siryoti and Associated Press

Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas addresses the PLO Executive Committee in Ramallah, Sunday | Photo: AP

Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas lashed out against the United States, Israel and Hamas in a speech to the PLO Executive Committee in Ramallah on Sunday, saying that Hamas' insistence on maintaining exclusive control over the Gaza Strip is playing into the hands of the U.S. and Israel.

"The era in which we now find ourselves is the most dangerous for the Palestinian people," Abbas said.

"There will be no Palestinian state established on temporary borders, no Palestinian state without Gaza, and certainly no separate Palestinian political entity in Gaza.

"Seeing as there is no more room to maneuver toward a solution, the time has come to implement the decisions we have reached on the issue of relations with Israel, the Americans and Hamas," he said.

Abbas said the Palestinians were facing difficult and important decisions, but did not go into detail. Instead, he rebuked the Hamas leadership for what he called its "shameful" handling of the Palestinian plight.

"Why do they look on from the sidelines at a sinking ship and instead of helping bring people together, they boycott the PLO Executive Committee conference?" he said. "If this is Hamas' position, they should give up their public Palestinian role."

Abbas, who fears that the U.S. is planning a proposal that would offer limited statehood in the Hamas-controlled Gaza Strip separately from Abbas' Fatah-controlled PA, accused Hamas of serving U.S. interests by refusing to relinquish control over Gaza.

Hamas routed Fatah from Gaza in a violent coup in 2007.

Abbas said Sunday that by refusing to cede control of Gaza, Hamas was "accepting the thoughts of the enemy, who plans to have a mini-state in Gaza and autonomy in the West Bank."

Abbas also had a message for U.S. President Donald Trump, starting with an Arabic curse against Trump's home – a curse Abbas has unleashed before, most notably in a two-hour address to the PLO Central Council in January.

Abbas said the Palestinians would not accept Trump's "deal of the century," the Trump administration's long-awaited outline to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

"What remains of Trump's deal of the century?" Abbas said.

"He canceled the Jerusalem issue when he moved his embassy to the city; he also canceled the issue of Palestinian [right of] return when he closed UNRWA [the U.N. agency for Palestinian refugees] and he had the unbelievable nerve to announce that the number of Palestinian refugees does not surpass 40,000. May his house be destroyed – 40,000 refugees?"

"We will not accept any deal in which east Jerusalem is not the capital of Palestine. Our enemies want us to tear the Palestinian state to shreds – one government in Gaza, a separate government in the West Bank, and the capital of Palestine in Abu Dis. With all



due respect to Abu Dis, all of the territory in east Jerusalem conquered in 1967 is the Palestinian capital, and we will not cede one inch."

Abbas also lashed out at Israel, claiming that the Palestinians were the original inhabitants of the land.

"We are the Canaanites, the legal owners of the land. All of the settlements are illegal, and we will not agree to any settlement or Jewish presence inside Palestinian territory," he said.

Newsletter Sunday October 28, 2018

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Gaza terrorists agree to truce after IDF strikes 80 targets in response to rocket fire  
Islamic Jihad fires some 40 rockets at Israel, Iron Dome intercepts everything aimed at populated areas • IDF says Iran had hand in the latest flare-up • Rocket hits point for evacuating wounded Palestinians • Residents of southern Israel demand action.

News Agencies, Lilach Shoval, Nikki Guttman and Israel Hayom Staff

The Iron Dome anti-missile system intercepts rockets launched from Gaza towards Israel over Ashkelon in southern Israel | Photo: Reuters

The Gaza-Israel Israeli border fell silent on Saturday under what Palestinians described as an Egyptian-mediated truce that followed massive Israeli airstrikes on terror targets in Gaza, mounted in response to the biggest salvo of Palestinian rockets for months.

The Palestinian Islamic Jihad, one of the armed groups operating in Gaza, said it fired the rockets in retaliation for Israel's killing of four Palestinians at a border riot on Friday. The Israeli Air Force hit more than 80 targets in response to about 40 Gaza rockets launched into Israel.

Video: Reuters

The Iron Dome rocket defense system intercepted 13 rockets, two hit the Gaza side of the border and the remainder fell in open areas in southern Israel, the IDF Spokesperson's Unit said.

Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories Maj. Gen. Kamil Abu Rokon said that one of the rockets hit an ambulance crossing used to transfer Gazans out of the strip in emergency humanitarian cases.

"To what low have the terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip sunk?" Abu Rukun wrote on his Arabic Facebook page.

Commander of the 947th Iron Dome Battalion, Lt. Col. Nir, said that "the air defense systems have been on high alert for several days in preparation for a variety of scenarios. Last night [Friday] we were also on alert and acted to counter many rockets from fired from Gaza. All the threats to populated areas were intercepted successfully."

There were no immediate reports of Palestinian casualties on Saturday as a result of the Israeli strikes, which targeted mostly terrorist training facilities and weapon storage sites.

Gaza's Health Ministry said that the main hospital in the enclave's north was damaged after a nearby Hamas training camp was bombed. Footage showed cables and wires dropping from collapsed ceilings in the wards.

In Gaza City, an airstrike hit an unfinished building, flattening the three-story structure. That building was later identified by Israel as Hamas' would-be security headquarters.

"After talks between the Islamic Jihad's leadership and the brothers in Egypt it was agreed that a comprehensive cease-fire will begin immediately," Islamic Jihad spokesman Daoud Shehab said. "The Islamic Jihad will abide by the cease-fire if the occupation [Israel] does the same."

An IDF spokesperson declined to comment on Shehab's remarks. By nightfall on Saturday violence had abated, with no further reports of Palestinian rocket launches or Israeli air strikes in Gaza.

Egyptian security officials have been talking separately to Israeli and Palestinian leaders in an attempt to restore calm along the volatile border.

Hamas spokesman Fawzi Barhoum called the retaliatory airstrikes "despicable aggression, with the occupier trying to avoid ... an end to the siege [on Gaza]. This aggression will have serious ramifications in how we confront the occupation. Hamas will not allow the blood of unarmed protesters to be spilled for nothing. Israel is committing crimes against humanity and the Palestinian people because of internal political disputes."

On Friday, four Palestinians were killed during the ongoing Hamas-organized protests at the border, which have been held since March 30.

According to the Palestinian Health Ministry, 213 Gazans have been killed by Israeli forces since the protests started. However, Hamas itself has stated that dozens of the casualties were Hamas operatives rather than innocent civilian protesters.

IDF Spokesman in English Lt. Col. Jonathan Conricus said there had been no signs of Hamas trying to rein in Islamic Jihad. He also criticized Hamas for escalating the border

protests after Israel had tried to defuse tensions by allowing Qatari fuel shipments into Gaza to improve the supply of electricity.

Conricus also said Syria and Iran were involved in the weekend rocket attacks.

"Orders and incentives were given from Damascus with a clear involvement of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards' Quds Force," Conricus said, referring to the IRGC's black-ops arm.

"Our response is not limited geographically," he warned.

Israel regularly states that Iran is aiding terrorist groups in Gaza, but rarely connects Iran to specific attacks, such as the one on Saturday.

Shehab dismissed the allegation of foreign involvement as "an Israeli attempt to evade its responsibility" for the border deaths.

Defense Minister Avigdor Lieberman on Saturday held consultations with IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Gadi Eizenkot, head of Military Intelligence Maj. Gen. Herzl Halevi, and other senior security officials.

Defense officials refused to state on Saturday whether the latest round of violence was over, nor did they make any assessments as to whether recent events will lead to a larger-scale military conflict along the southern border.

Meanwhile, despite the success of the Iron Dome system, residents of Gaza-adjacent communities expressed frustration this weekend with the ongoing violence that has been a consistent threat for the past eight months.

Ariel Shagerman of Kibbutz Or Haner said, "We didn't sleep, and we don't mind not sleeping. We just expect the government to explain why we aren't sleeping."

Shagerman said his faith in the government was wavering: " Hamas wants to go to war and we're blowing up empty targets. How long can it go on like this? We want to sleep at night, to work in peace. We have a restaurant on the kibbutz that had over 100 reservations for tonight. Obviously, all of them were canceled," he said.

Sderot resident Leah Orman described her sense of "criminal neglect by the government. Eight months of fires and [arson] kites, and every time the rockets get close and want to kill you and there's no one protecting you. It's awful. We can't see the light at the end of the tunnel."

**Also Oct 28**

=== **Gunman kills 11 in Pittsburgh Synagogue shooting**

=== 20,000 housing units approved for Jerusalem Suburb

Newsletter Friday October 26, 2018

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| [Trump signs new Hezbollah sanctions bill in anti-Iran push](#)

Move expands list of parties facing sanctions for dealing with Iran-backed Lebanese terror group • Marking 35th anniversary of Hezbollah attack that killed 241 U.S. Marines, Trump says he aims to "starve Hezbollah of their funds, and they are starving."

Associated Press and Israel Hayom Staff

U.S. President Donald Trump speaks at the White House event marking the 35th anniversary of the Hezbollah attack that killed 241 U.S. Marines, Thursday | Photo: AP

U.S. President Donald Trump on Thursday signed new sanctions targeting Iran-backed Lebanese terrorist group Hezbollah.

"Over the past year, we have levied the highest sanctions ever imposed on Hezbollah – in a single year, by far," Trump said at an event commemorating the 35th anniversary of the Hezbollah attack on a U.S. Marines barracks in Beirut, which killed 241 U.S. peacemakers.

"Just a few moments ago, I signed legislation imposing even more hard-hitting sanctions on Hezbollah to further starve them of their funds. And they are starving for them," he said.

"We will target, disrupt and dismantle their operational and financing efforts, of which they have plenty.

"We will never forget what they did to our Marines in Beirut. No terrorist group other than al-Qaida has more American blood on its hands."

Speaking of Hezbollah's Iranian benefactors, Trump touted the reimposition of sanctions on Iran by his administration since withdrawing from the 2015 nuclear accord between Iran and world powers.

"Iran was instrumental in founding Hezbollah" and remains the group's "main patron today," Trump said.

Trump has promised even tougher action against Iran after most of the U.S. sanctions that were lifted under the nuclear accord are reinstated in November.

The latest legislation expands the list of parties that can be subjected to sanctions for doing business with Hezbollah.

Newsletter Thursday October 25, 2018

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| IAF strikes Hamas position in response to Gaza rocket fire

Israeli aircraft bomb eight Hamas targets throughout the coastal enclave, including a weapons arsenal and a training compound, after Gaza terrorists fire rocket at southern communities • IDF: Rocket not intercepted as it did not pose a threat to human lives.

Lilach Shoval, Nikki Guttman, News Agencies and Israel Hayom Staff

An Israeli strike on terror targets in the Gaza Strip | Illustration: Reuters

The Israeli Air Force targeted eight Hamas positions in the Gaza Strip following a rocket attack on southern Israel, the military confirmed Thursday. The incident marked the end of a weeklong stretch of relative calm on the volatile border.

The IDF Spokesperson's Unit said IAF aircraft bombed Hamas targets throughout the coastal enclave, including a weapons arsenal and a training compound. There were no immediate reports of Palestinian casualties.

Video: IDF Spokesperson's Unit

Gaza's media reported that Hamas had ordered its operatives to clear several compounds in anticipation of an Israeli raid.

The strikes came in response to an overnight rocket attack – the first firing from Gaza since a missile hit a house in the city of Beersheba a week ago, threatening to spark another full-fledged confrontation.

The military further confirmed Thursday that the Iron Dome defense system did not intercept the projectile fired from Gaza.

IDF data pegs Iron Dome's interception rate at 90%.

A military official told The Times of Israel that the interceptor did not miss its mark but rather was redirected after it became apparent the rocket was headed for an open area and did not represent a threat to human lives.

The rocket attack came as Egypt and U.N. Middle East envoy Nickolay Mladenov are trying to mediate a long-term truce between Israel and Hamas, the Islamist terrorist group that rules Gaza.

On Wednesday, the IAF struck a Hamas position in southern Gaza after it was confirmed it was being used as the base from which incendiary balloons were being sent across the border.

Newsletter Wednesday October 24, 2018

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Report: Jordanian MPs demand review of peace treaty with Israel

In wake of a decision to void clauses in 1994 peace deal leasing borderlands to Israel, hawkish lawmakers urge King Abdullah to exit treaty altogether • Security around Israeli Embassy in Amman increased ahead of a mass anti-Israel march planned for Friday.

Daniel Siryoti

King Abdullah addressing the Jordanian Parliament | Screenshot: YouTube

Members of the Jordanian Parliament on Tuesday demanded a special session be held to review the 1994 peace treaty with Israel, and some hawkish lawmakers urged King Abdullah to cancel the agreement altogether, local media reported.

The move followed an announcement by Abdullah on Sunday that he has decided to pull out of clauses in the agreement that allow Israel to lease two small areas – Baqura, known as Naharayim in Hebrew, in the northern Jordan Valley, and Ghamr in the south – from the Jordanians for 25 years.

The leases expire next year and the deadline for renewing them is Thursday.

Naharayim, a small parcel of land also called the "Isle of Peace," has become the center of recent friction between the longtime peace partners.

Gil Eliyahu / JINI

The Isle of Peace power plant near the Israel-Jordan border

The 1994 peace treaty, signed between then-Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Abdullah's father, King Hussein, is vastly unpopular in Jordan, where pro-Palestinian sentiment is widespread.

Activists and politicians have been vocal against a renewal of the lease clauses, which they say is "humiliating" and perpetuates "Israeli occupation" of Jordanian territory.

Tensions between Israel and Jordan have mounted in recent months over such issues as the contested status of Jerusalem and its holy sites, the stalled Middle East peace talks,

and last year's shooting of two Jordanian citizens by an Israeli Embassy guard in Amman, which ignited a diplomatic crisis. Relations thawed after Israel replaced its ambassador.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Sunday that his government will enter negotiations with Amman on the issue, but Jordan's Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi said Tuesday that there would be no negotiations with Israel over Jordanian sovereignty in the area.

The Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan and anti-Israel activists plan to hold a mass march in the Jordanian capital on Friday, demanding Abdullah nixes the peace deal with Israel.

A mass demonstration was held in Amman last week as well, demanding the same thing.

"The people want national honor," the masses chanted.

Israel Hayom has learned that **Jordanian security forces have been placed on high alert** ahead of Friday's march and that both uniformed and plain-clothed officers will be stationed near the Israeli Embassy in Amman. The roads leading up to the embassy will be closed as well, as a precaution.

**Newsletter Tuesday October 23, 2018**

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**Kushner: US has 'made a lot of progress' on Mideast peace plan**

Top White House adviser says team is working on "in-depth" document and he hopes plan will elicit "a lot more reasons to be for it than reasons to be against it" • He says the gap between negotiators is bigger than the disagreements between the people.

Yoni Hersch

Senior White House adviser Jared Kushner | Photo: AP

The long-awaited Middle East peace plan promised by President Donald Trump's administration will enable Israelis to "have the security they want, and allow the Palestinian people to have the opportunity that they want, while respecting a lot of the bigger issues," senior White House adviser and Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner said on Monday.

Kushner was speaking at a politics forum hosted by CNN.

He said that despite the perceived stalemate in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, "we've made a lot of progress ... and the president's done a very good job of not allowing the old ways of thinking to constrain his actions."

Kushner has been tasked by Trump with leading the so-called "peace team," along with U.S. Ambassador to Israel David Friedman and Special Representative for International Negotiations Jason Greenblatt. The team has repeatedly said that the plan will call for compromises but they will not dictate the terms of a peace accord.

The administration has repeatedly shot down reports on the nature of the pending peace plan, stressing that it has not been shared with anyone outside the administration. It has also said the plan will formally be unveiled only when both sides are ready.

The Palestinians have said they will not consider any U.S. plan until Trump reverses his decision last December to officially recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital, which was followed by the opening of the U.S. Embassy in Jerusalem.

The decision outraged Palestinians, who envision parts of Jerusalem as the capital of a future Palestinian state.

Kushner told CNN that he was trying to go beyond previous paradigms to achieve a breakthrough, much as the president did when he decided on the Jerusalem move.

"I did the same approach, which basically was to go out and talk to people and to understand the situation today," Kushner said.

"I spoke to a lot of people in the region, I spoke to past negotiators, and what I realized very quickly was that we've been fighting about the same thing for the last 25 years, but not a lot's changed.

"And so we took an approach where we thought we would create a very in-depth document that goes through the issues. We thought something much more prescriptive. I've always found that when you're fighting over a concept, it's much easier to disagree than when you're fighting about specifics."

Kushner said that regardless of what shape the plan eventually takes, it would be up to the leaders on both sides to rise to the challenge and deliver peace to their respective peoples.

"If there's a reasonable leadership and there's a reasonable plan, then they'll come to the table," he said.

"I think that what we'll put forward will, hopefully, be something that people realize there are a lot more reasons to be for it than reasons to be against it. And I think that there's a bigger gap between the negotiators than there is between the people."



Last month, Trump voiced support for a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, but ultimately said he would support whatever deal both sides agree upon.

Newsletter Monday October 22, 2018

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Jordan cancels part of peace agreement with Israel

Amid rising domestic pressure, King Abdullah says he will not renew clauses in 1994 peace deal that lease borderlands to Israel • PM Netanyahu: Israel will enter negotiations with Jordan on the issue • Local farmers vow to "fight for our lives."

Ariel Kahana, Daniel Siryoti, Adi Hashmonai, Ronit Zilberstein, News Agencies and Israel Hayom Staff

Jordan's King Abdullah | Photo: AFP

Jordan's King Abdullah on Sunday said he has decided not to renew parts of his country's landmark 1994 peace treaty with Israel.

The king released a statement saying that he intends to pull out of clauses in the agreement that allow Israel to lease two small areas comprising 1,000 acres of agricultural land – Baqura, known as Naharayim in Hebrew, in the northern Jordan Valley, and Ghamr in the south – from the Jordanians for 25 years.

The leases expire next year and the deadline for renewing them is Thursday.

In Baqura, Israeli "rights" date back to the 1920s, when Russian Jewish engineer Pinhas Rutenberg obtained a concession in British Mandate Palestine to build a power plant there.

Both areas became part of Jordan after the kingdom gained independence in 1946. Israel seized control of Baqura in 1950 and Ghamr in the 1967 Six-Day War. Jordan regained sovereignty over the areas as part of the 1994 peace deal and agreed to grant Israeli farmers and military officers free access to both.

In the wake of the agreement, the power plant in Naharayim was named "Isle of Peace." In 1997, it became the scene of a gruesome terrorist attack, when a Jordanian soldier opened fire at a group of Israeli schoolgirls on a field trip, killing seven and injuring six others.

Sharon Gilad | Israel Hayom

The Isle of Peace power plant near the Israel-Jordan border

"These are Jordanian lands and they will remain [Jordanian lands]. We are practicing our full sovereignty on our land. Our priority in an era of regional turmoil is to protect our interests and do whatever is required for Jordan and the Jordanians," Abdullah said in a statement Sunday.

The king did not give a reason for his decision, but he has faced escalating domestic pressure to end the lease and return the territories to full Jordanian control.

A statement by the Jordanian Foreign Ministry said that "under the terms of the peace treaty, the lease would be automatically renewed unless either of the parties notified the other a year before expiry that it wished to terminate the agreement."

Jordan and Egypt are the only two Arab states to have peace treaties with Israel.

Jordan and Israel have a long history of close security ties and have also been expanding economic ties in the last year, including a major deal to export billions of dollars of Israeli natural gas to the kingdom through a pipeline that crosses their northern borders.

However, the peace treaty with Israel is unpopular and pro-Palestinian sentiment widespread in Jordan. Activists and politicians have been vocal against a renewal of the lease, which they say is "humiliating" and perpetuates "Israeli occupation" of Jordanian territory.

Tensions between Israel and Jordan have mounted in recent months over such issues as the contested status of Jerusalem and its holy sites, the stalled Middle East peace talks, and last year's shooting of two Jordanian citizens by an Israeli Embassy guard in Amman, which ignited a diplomatic crisis. Relations thawed after Israel replaced its ambassador.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu acknowledged that Jordan wanted to exercise its option to end the arrangement, but stressed the Israel "will enter negotiations with it on the possibility of extending the current arrangement."

Netanyahu said the "accord as a whole is an important thing" and called the peace deals with Jordan and Egypt "anchors of regional stability."

Kobi Gideon / GPO

King Abdullah of Jordan and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Amman, last summer

Former Israeli Ambassador to Jordan Oded Eran said he was not surprised by Jordan's decision, and said there was still time for the two countries to renegotiate the agreement.

He dismissed the possibility that Jordan might pull out of other parts of the broader peace treaty.

"For its own interests, the continuation of the adherence to the peace treaty is in Jordan's interest as indeed it is in the interest of Israel," Eran said.

Dr. Abdullah Swalha, founder and director of the Center for Israel Studies in Amman, told Israel Hayom that "there have been calls in Jordan to cancel these clauses for two years. Recently, 86 MPs signed a petition demanding this. There is no economic gain for Jordan here, so the king did it to appease public opinion."

He said he believed a deal could be reached regarding the leasing of lands in Ghamr, but stressed that "there is no scenario where Jordan relinquishes sovereignty over Baqura. Jews have some rights there and monetary compensation will probably be discussed, or Jordanian farmers would lease the land from the Jews, but we will not give up the land."

A senior Jordanian official denied reports that the move stemmed from Palestinian or Arab pressure.

"These lands belong to the Kingdom of Jordan, and in light of the regional reality in recent years, it is not appropriate for them to be leased [to a foreign entity]," he said.

He said Jordan's position was not a violation of the peace treaty, saying, "The king acted in accordance with the terms outlined in the clauses signed 24 years ago."

### Israeli farmers were stunned to learn of the move.

"It's like a bomb hit us. This means that years of work will go down the drain," said Dr. Eyal Blum, head of the Central Arava Regional Council.

"The agricultural lands here are very significant in terms of the area's security, national security and the agricultural sector in the Arava [Desert]. This means 30 agricultural farms in an area covering 345 acres will collapse. It is inconceivable that after all these years the order will change."

Erez Gibori, a farmer from Moshav Tzofar, said the area's farmers "are now fighting for our lives. If they close the gates to our lands, there's nothing for us here. We will leave. The state cannot abandon us."

The news "was a big surprise," said Jordan Valley Regional Council head Idan Greenbaum.

"We were very disappointed and saddened to learn of the king's decision. This came as a shock to us because we have a very good relationship with our Jordanian neighbors.

"This isn't the end of it, though. We expect the government to sit down with the Jordanians and reach an agreement that will allow us to continue farming these lands, as we have been doing for the past 70 years," he said.

Newsletter Sunday October 21, 2018

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Anticipating Hezbollah clash, Israel builds barriers, deploys tanks on Lebanon border  
IDF erects artificial sand mounds to give troops better visibility into Lebanon, over the 6-8 meter (20-26 foot) cement barrier built along the border • Residents say mounds correspond to Hezbollah positions but defense officials say they are unrelated.

Adi Hashmonai

An IDF vehicle overlooks the border with Lebanon | Photo: Eyal Margolin / JINI

In recent weeks, residents of the Upper Galilee region have witnessed trucks unload countless mounds of sand and watched artificial hills slowly rise, with a tank or armored personnel carrier parked atop each one.

"The hills are being built close to the cement barrier the IDF has been building in recent months along the border," an area resident told Israel Hayom, referring to Israel's border with Lebanon. "Judging from what I've seen, they are being built opposite Hezbollah watchtowers in a manner that allows [Israeli soldiers] to see past the cement wall, into Lebanon."

"While they were building the [cement] barrier, I saw a tank overlooking the work, and now we see the same tank on the hill itself," he said.

However, defense officials told Israel Hayom that there was no connection between the location of Hezbollah's watchtowers and the location of the artificial hills where the tanks and APCs have been deployed.

According to one Israeli official, the purpose of the new positions is to give the IDF a field of vision beyond the cement barrier which has been built along the border in recent months.

The artificial sand hills are higher than the cement barrier, which is between and 6-8 meters (20-26 feet) high.

The sand mounds are part of the army's broader efforts to erect obstacles along the Lebanese border.

The IDF Spokesperson's Unit said: "The elevated hills were built for the tanks routinely deployed throughout the sector. The elevation was carried out to improve the tanks' field of vision and the effectiveness next to the barrier."

Newsletter Friday October 19, 2018

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Israel decides to ramp up forces along Gaza border amid truce bid

IDF bolsters troops on Gaza border a day after rocket destroys home in Beersheba • If Hamas upholds calm on Friday, Israel will respond with humanitarian gestures Sunday • Defense minister pushes for broad military operation; prime minister, IDF chief prefer diplomacy.

Yoav Limor, News Agencies and Israel Hayom Staff

Soldiers stand next to tanks as armored vehicles gather in an open area near Gaza, Thursday | Photo: Reuters

The Diplomatic-Security cabinet on Thursday decided to give a cease-fire with Hamas another chance, even as the IDF ramped up its forces along the Gaza border, one day after a Palestinian rocket destroyed a home in southern Israel.

If the calm is preserved Friday throughout the day, Israel will reopen its border crossings with Gaza early next week for fuel shipments and will expand the fishing zone off Gaza's coast.

The cabinet's decision followed a prolonged, often heated discussion on the matter. Defense Minister Avigdor Lieberman pushed for an immediate, comprehensive military offensive against Hamas, arguing that the situation in Gaza will not change, saying that even if calm is currently restored it will be soon be disrupted and Israel would have to take action.

Lieberman added that it was best to act at this time, before the weather and conditions in the diplomatic arena take a turn for the worse.

The defense minister's proposal was not presented to a vote and was strongly criticized by several ministers.

One cabinet minister even accused the defense minister of being driven by political considerations and told Israel Hayom that Lieberman was "pushing the region toward war to appear right-wing and hawkish. That's not defense policy, its election policy."

On Thursday evening, Lieberman released a statement saying it was "regretful and shameful that cabinet ministers are preferring petty politics at the expense of [IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Gadi] Eizenkot. It's unacceptable for cabinet ministers to blame the chief of staff for the policy they determine. It's crossing a red line and is detrimental to the security of the country."

Eizenkot was also the target of criticism, namely that his approach has failed to deter the enemy.

Eizenkot, for his part, arrived at the cabinet meeting straight from the airport after cutting short a visit to the United States. The chief of staff supported efforts to reduce tensions, spearheaded by United Nations special envoy to the Mideast Nickolay Mladenov together with Egyptian, American and European officials. Eizenkot has argued that Israel should only go to war "when left with no other option," and that the current situation does not apply.

The defense minister disagreed with Eizenkot and said Israel was already facing the "no other option" scenario, but Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu decided in favor of the chief of staff's position to give the diplomatic avenue another chance.

With that, the military was ordered to implement harsh measures against border rioters and terrorists who launch incendiary balloons and kites toward Israel.

Netanyahu's decision was based, among other factors, on the position of National Security Adviser Meir Ben-Shabbat, who believes Hamas is not interested in a war and will act to reign in the violence.

Ben-Shabbat has received messages from several individuals, Western and Arab, that the **rocket fire on Beersheba was carried out against the orders of Hamas' leadership**, and that the terrorist organization was searching for those responsible.

While cabinet ministers were instructed not to divulge details of the meeting, in order to preserve ambiguity and deterrence, the message relayed to Hamas was that calm will be met with humanitarian gestures. According to one senior official, Hamas' test will be on Friday throughout the day.

"We won't react over a lone balloon, but we will be watching the general trend closely," the official said. If there's widespread violence we'll respond strongly, but if Hamas acts to restrain the violence, it won't be met with a cold shoulder."

Assessments in Israel on Thursday were that Hamas was indeed working to minimize the violence. If that happens, as stated, Israel on Sunday will reopen the border crossings with Gaza and expand Gaza's fishing zone.

Also Thursday, an Egyptian mediation delegation shuttled between Israel and Hamas in Gaza in a stepped-up effort to forge a cease-fire and promote inter-Palestinian reconciliation.

Four Egyptian intelligence officials entered Gaza from Israel on Thursday afternoon, and then returned to Israel after meeting with Ismail Haniyeh, Hamas' top leader.

In Gaza, a Palestinian official said the Egyptian delegation was also in contact with Israeli leaders to curb the current tensions.

"The situation is delicate. No one wants a war," he said.

"The Palestinian factions are demanding an end to the Israeli blockade that strangled life and business in Gaza," he said.

Despite the cabinet's decision, some military and political leaders were pessimistic that calm could be restored along the Gaza border.

Mladenov, the U.N. Mideast envoy, urged all friends of Israel and the Palestinians to join the U.N. in calling on all sides "to step back from the brink" of war, calling Gaza a "powder keg."

"We remain on the brink of another potentially devastating conflict, a conflict that nobody claims to want, but a conflict that needs much more than just words to prevent," he told the U.N. Security Council in a video briefing from Jerusalem.

"I am afraid that there is no more time for words," Mladenov said. "Now is the time for action. And we must see very clear actions on all sides that de-escalate the situation. Otherwise, the consequences will be terrible for everyone."

Mladenov said Hamas and other terrorist groups must immediately stop "all provocations and attacks," attempts to breach the border fence, end the use of incendiary balloons and kites, and halt tunnel construction.

"Israel must restore the delivery of critical supplies to Gaza and improve the movement and access of goods and people," he said. "And Israeli security forces must exercise maximum restraint in the use of live ammunition."

Newsletter Friday October 19, 2018

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US downgrades Jerusalem diplomatic mission to Palestinians

In a blow to the Palestinians, Washington places Jerusalem consulate under embassy •

Top official says the move does not signal a change in administration's position on city's status, but PA officials accuse White House of "adopting Israeli narrative."

Ariel Kahana, News Agencies and Israel Hayom Staff

The U.S. Consulate in Jerusalem | Photo: AFP

The United States will merge the U.S. Consulate in Jerusalem, which serves Palestinians, with its new embassy in Israel, creating a single diplomatic mission, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said on Thursday.

The move effectively downgraded the status of the U.S.'s main diplomatic mission to the Palestinians.

The announcement, which was immediately denounced by the Palestinians and hailed by Israel, is the latest Trump administration decision to align with Israeli government views and a victory for U.S. Ambassador David Friedman, who had long sought to end the Jerusalem consulate's independent status but had faced resistance from within the State Department.

Friedman's push picked up steam in May after the Trump administration moved the embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem over the vehement objections of the Palestinians, who claim the eastern part of the holy city as the capital of an eventual state.

The consulate had for years served as a de facto embassy to the Palestinians but will now be known as the Palestinian Affairs Unit of the U.S. Embassy to Israel. It will remain in its current location, at least for now, the State Department said.

The step means that the Jerusalem consulate will no longer have a separate channel to Washington to report on Palestinian affairs and will no longer be run by a consul general with authorities tantamount to those of an ambassador.

The merger is intended to "achieve significant efficiencies and increase our effectiveness," Pompeo said in a statement. He stressed that it did not signal any change in U.S. policy toward the status of Jerusalem or the Palestinian territories.

"The United States continues to take no position on final status issues, including boundaries or borders," he said. "The specific boundaries of Israeli sovereignty in Jerusalem are subject to final status negotiations between the parties."



The administration, Pompeo said, remains "strongly committed to achieving a lasting and comprehensive peace that offers a brighter future to Israel and the Palestinians. We look forward to continued partnership and dialogue with the Palestinian people and, we hope in the future, with the Palestinian leadership."

Although Pompeo sought to portray the move as a bureaucratic management shift, the downgrading of the consulate has potent symbolic resonance, suggesting American recognition of Israeli control over east Jerusalem and the West Bank.

Deputy Public Diplomacy Minister at the Prime Minister's Office Michael Oren welcomed the move, tweeting, "A great day for Israel, Jerusalem, and the United States. Closing the U.S. consulate in Jerusalem and transferring its responsibilities to the embassy ends the last vestige of American support for the city's division. Israel is deeply grateful."

Chief Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat denounced the decision, saying it was the latest evidence the Trump administration is "adopting the Israeli narrative" and working with Israel to impose a "Greater Israel" rather than a two-state solution.

"The decision has nothing to do with efficiency and a lot to do with pleasing an ideological U.S. team that is willing to disband the foundations of American foreign policy, and of the international system, in order to reward Israeli violations and crimes," he said.

Nabil Shaath, a top adviser to PA President Mahmoud Abbas, said it was a "very bad decision" that violated past agreements and continued President Donald Trump's decision to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital.

"Now, he is cutting the last connection he is said to have with the Palestinian people. He is practically saying Jerusalem is for Israel," Shaath said. "This decision has nothing to do with peace. It complicates peace and makes it impossible."

Newsletter Thursday October 18, 2018

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| If violence persists, Israel will act with great force against Gaza, PM vows

Diplomatic-Security Cabinet convenes an emergency meeting over Gaza escalation, most ministers agree a war with Gaza is not in Israel's interest • EU: Gaza rocket fire on Israel

**must stop**; indiscriminate attacks against civilians completely unacceptable.

Gideon Allon, Shlomi Diaz, Ariel Kahana, Yori Yalon, Gadi Golan, Reuters and Israel Hayom Staff

PM Benjamin Netanyahu speaking with reporters after a visit to the Gaza Division, Wednesday | Screenshot

If the attacks from the Gaza Strip do not cease "Israel will act with great force" to quell them, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Wednesday during a visit to the headquarters of the IDF's Gaza Division.

The visit took place shortly after Gaza terrorists fired two Grad rockets at Israel. One directly hit a two-story house in Beersheba, 40 kilometers (25 miles) from the border, lightly injuring six people. The other landed off the coast of a major central Israeli city, causing no damage or casualties.

Israeli fighter jets struck 20 Hamas positions in Gaza in retaliation, eliminating underground infrastructure, Hamas bases, weapon and rocket mills, as well as an undersea terror tunnel.

"I just concluded a situation assessment with heads of the IDF and the defense establishment," Netanyahu told reporters after the meeting. "The attacks against Israel on the fence, against the communities near Gaza, against Beersheba, everywhere, are very serious. As I said to the cabinet earlier this week, if these attacks don't stop, Israel will make them stop, and we will do so with great force."

GOC Southern Command Maj. Gen. Herzl Halevi told reporters that "Hamas presumes to rule Gaza and tells its residents how it is making their situation better. The fact is that the border riots, incendiary balloons and rocket fire only make things worse for them, as they prompt major Israeli strikes."

"The IDF is ready for any scenario and we know how to mount an even more forceful response if needed," he warned.

The escalation in Gaza also prompted an emergency meeting of the Diplomatic-Security Cabinet.

During the course of the five-and-a-half-hour meeting, local media reported that Hamas leaders went underground, anticipating a harsh Israeli response to Wednesday's rocket attacks.

Sources present at the meeting told Israel Hayom that the majority of the cabinet members believe that launching a military campaign in Gaza at this time would not serve Israel's interests.

Israel and Hamas have fought three wars over the last 10 years, in 2008, 2012 and 2014.

"Our objective is clear – if we can restore calm to the south by mounting a forceful response followed by a [cease-fire] deal, it would be better than all-out war. If that proves impossible, we may be on the brink of another armed conflict," National Infrastructure Minister Yuval Steinitz said.

Regional Cooperation Minister Tzahi Hanegbi noted that any decision on a potential military operation in Gaza would hinge on the situation in the northern sector, which he said was Israel's primary focus at this time. Israel borders Syria and Lebanon in the north.

"We have no interest in an operation in Gaza, big or small, but rather in restoring calm to the area. However, if they [Hamas] take steps that require a painful reminder from us, we will give them the most painful reminder we can," Hanegbi remarked.

A number of cabinet members again criticized Defense Minister Avigdor Lieberman for what they called his "ambiguous security policy."

Lieberman, who in recent days has said he supports dealing Hamas a "heavy blow," has yet to present any concrete plans for a potential military operation in Gaza.

The ministers were also surprised to learn that Lieberman had halted all fuel shipments to Gaza, not just the deliveries that are part of the Qatari aid to the coastal enclave.

The latter was meant to increase Gaza's power supply, currently enough to provide about four hours of power per day, by between two to four hours. Lieberman's decision means that within a week, the fuel supply in Gaza will run out, something everyone agrees would cause a humanitarian crisis.

Education Minister Naftali Bennett accused Lieberman of enacting counterintuitive policies by penalizing the residents of Gaza – already plagued by the dire economic situation and dilapidated infrastructure in the Strip – instead of Hamas.

Bennett again lobbied for harsher military responses against Palestinians trying to breach the security fence and against arson terrorist cells, saying that a "tougher approach on the border would prevent a wider escalation."

Also on Wednesday, U.S. Special Representative for International Negotiations Jason Greenblatt denounced Wednesday's rocket attack, tweeting, "This morning schools across Beer Sheva, Israel, were closed because of rocket attacks from Gaza. Once again, the regime in Gaza sets back the world's efforts to better the lives of Palestinians in Gaza and endangers and harms Israelis."

U.N. Middle East envoy Nikolay Mladenov also denounced the incident, saying, "The rockets fired at Beersheba were a dangerous escalation, part of a pattern of provocation meant to drag Israel and Gaza to another bloody war."

The European Union called on the Palestinian groups in Gaza to halt their rocket fire on Israel, saying attacks targeting civilians were "unacceptable."

"The rocket and mortar fire by Palestinian militants from Gaza towards Israel must stop immediately. Indiscriminate attacks against civilians are completely unacceptable. The first priority now is for de-escalation," the European Commission said in a statement.

Newsletter Wednesday October 17, 2018

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US said to be developing new strategy to drive Iran out of Syria

New strategy would not involve direct U.S. military operations against Iranian soldiers or proxies in Syria, but would underscore political and diplomatic efforts to force Iran out of Syria by imposing financial pressure, White House officials say.

Erez Linn, News Agencies and Israel Hayom Staff

U.S. President Donald Trump | Photo: Reuters

The Trump administration is developing a new strategy for pushing Iran's military and its proxy forces out of war-torn Syria, White House officials told NBC News on Tuesday.

According to the report, the new strategy would not involve direct U.S. military operations against Iranian soldiers or Iranian proxies in Syria, but would underscore political and diplomatic efforts to force Iran out of Syria by squeezing it financially.

Sources familiar with the plan said the U.S. would also impose sanctions on Russian and Iranian companies working on reconstruction in Syria.

"There's a real opportunity for the U.S. and its allies to make the Iranian regime pay for its continued occupation of Syria," Mark Dubowitz, chief executive at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, told NBC.

The report said U.S. defense officials had expressed concern that an increased focus on Iran and the presence of both militaries in Syria could pull the U.S. closer into the conflict in Syria.

Legal experts said an expansion of the U.S. military mission in Syria to directly target Iranian assets would put it on the wrong side of the Authorization for Use of Military Force Act passed by Congress in 2001.

The act greenlighted the use of military force against Islamic State terrorists in Syria but limits U.S. action to targeting groups responsible for the Sept. 11 attacks and their associates.

"If the new strategy means opening the door to using force against Iran or Iranian military forces in Syria there needs to be a new Authorization for Use of Military Force," Yale Law School Professor Oona Hathaway told NBC.

"Targeting Iran clearly falls outside the scope [of the authorization] which only includes groups with ties to 9/11. Iran doesn't meet that test. It would be amazing if [the Trump administration tries] to make the claim that this falls under the current AUMF. That would be stretching this AUMF way past its breaking point."

An administration official said that since last year **Trump's strategy on Syria has had four goals: defeating Islamic State, deterring Syrian President Bashar Assad from using chemical weapons, fostering a political transition in Damascus, and curbing what he called "Iranian malign influence in Syria so that it cannot threaten the region."**

**Newsletter Tuesday October 16, 2018**

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**Israel needs to deal Hamas a heavy blow, defense minister declares**

"We are not willing to tolerate the level of violence we have seen," **Defense Minister Avigdor Lieberman says** after weeks of escalating tensions • IAF hits Gaza terror cell launching arson balloons into Israel • Israelis living near Gaza: We prefer a war.

Nikki Guttman, Shlomi Diaz, Daniel Siryoti, Noam Dvir, Israel Hayom Staff and News Agencies

Defense Minister Avidgor Lieberman addresses the IDF Gaza Division, Tuesday | Photo: Ariel Hermoni / Defense Ministry

"We have reached a red line. Israel needs to deal a heavy blow to Gaza and Hamas," Defense Minister Avigdor Lieberman said at the culmination of a security assessment near the Gaza border Tuesday.

As clashes between Israel and Palestinian rioters in Gaza steadily escalate, Lieberman indicated that the remark was prompted specifically by events last weekend, when "in the

morning we permitted the U.N. to bring four truckloads of fuel into Gaza, and in the evening we sustained an outburst of violence – unlike any violence I can remember in a long time."

Lieberman called on the "entire cabinet" to reach a decision on the matter, saying the escalating violence has dictated "the direction we must take in terms of security."

The Diplomatic-Security Cabinet was expected to convene on Wednesday to discuss Israel's steps in Gaza.

Referring to increasingly violent border protests and a months-long Palestinian campaign involving firebombs launched across the border into Israel on kites and balloons, Lieberman said that "we tried to resolve the problem nicely by cooperating with the international community, with U.N. bodies and with anyone who wanted. We have exhausted the options and now the time has come to make a decision."

"My position has been very clear, and I have only grown more resolute," Lieberman continued. "We need to deal a heavy blow. It's the only way to restore the reality to what it was before and lower the violence level down to zero."

"We've seen the declaration made by Hamas leaders, including [Hamas political bureau chief] Ismail Haniyeh, who said in no uncertain terms 'no fuel and no salaries can stop Hamas from perpetrating violence. Our aim is to lift the blockade.' But lifting the blockade means one thing only – complete freedom to bring weapons and Iranian-backed Hezbollah fighters into the Gaza Strip, and that is something we will never agree to."

"We are not willing to tolerate the level of violence we have seen, week after week," Lieberman said.

Earlier Tuesday, Israeli aircraft fired at a Palestinian terror cell as it launched firebomb balloons from the northern Gaza Strip into Israel. No casualties were reported.

The airstrike followed a similar incident on Monday, in which the IAF targeted a Hamas position in southern Gaza after Palestinian terrorists tried to plant explosives along the security fence on the border. One of the explosives exploded on the Gaza side of the fence. No injuries were reported, but the fence sustained some damage.

Meanwhile Monday, 32 Palestinians were wounded during a mass protest along the beach near the Israeli border.

Protesters threw flaming tires over the fence while fishing boats hoisted Palestinian flags. Israeli forces responded with tear gas and live fire.

AP

Palestinians stage a protest on the beach at the border with Israel in the northern Gaza Strip, Monday

Hamas has been staging border protests for the past six months in hopes of easing the crippling Israeli-Egyptian blockade. It has intensified the protests in recent weeks as Egyptian-mediated cease-fire efforts have faltered.

The residents of southern Israeli communities, near the Gaza border, have been bearing the brunt of the Palestinian arson terror campaign. "Our biggest fear is for the children. We are teaching them, from a very young age, to duck under fire, and that balloons are not a toy anymore," said Eli Hangle, a resident of Kibbutz Zikim.

"I don't know why the government and the cabinet are taking their sweet time. Here, for us, it is anything but the usual routine. I prefer enduring a war for two or three weeks if it means this will end."

Sivan Katzir Gertel, who oversees the kibbutz welfare services and its emergency response team, noted that "over the last six months, there has been a lot of stress on the residents. We offer activities to alleviate stress."

"Last weekend, we weren't home and people sent us photos of the fire at the kibbutz. My son asked me, 'Mom, when we get home, will our house be burned down?' He was really upset about it," she said.

Newsletter Monday October 15, 2018

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Palestinian, Israeli delegations clash at parliamentary forum in Geneva

At meeting of Inter-Parliamentary Union, a group of 176 legislative bodies engaged in dialogue, Palestinian legislator accuses Israel of being an apartheid state, vows to boycott U.S. peace efforts • Israeli MK: Palestinians support terrorism and fund it.

Gideon Allon

MKs Sharren Haskel and Nachman Shai at the Inter-Parliamentary Union assembly on Sunday | Photo: Knesset spokesperson

Israeli and Palestinian lawmakers traded barbs Sunday at the 139th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union in Geneva.

The IPU is an international organization comprising 176 countries and entities that seeks to foster dialogue between members of various legislating bodies.

The Israeli delegation included MK Nachman Shai (Zionist Union) and MK Sharren Haskel (Likud).

The Palestinian delegation included legislator Azzam al-Ahmad.

During a meeting of the subcommittee on Middle East Questions, al-Ahmad said that "Israel was a racist state and has apartheid laws," and vowed that the Palestinians would continue their fight against the Jewish state "even if only one single child is left to fight for his rights."

Al-Ahmad went on to say that "if needed, the struggle will go on for many years."

The Palestinian Authority "will not accept any peace plan the United States presents unless it retracts its decision to relocate its embassy [in Israel] to Jerusalem, and unless it restores the funding to UNRWA [the U.N. agency tasked with helping Palestinian refugees] and supports the two-state solution," al-Ahmad listed his demands. Shai shot back, saying: "You support terrorism and fund it; and as usual, you never miss an opportunity to miss an opportunity. You have refused to even listen to what the Americans have suggested."

Shai stressed: "Jerusalem is Israel's capital, period." Haskel took aim at the UNRWA, accusing it of perpetuating the conflict by not distancing itself from Hamas and letting descendants of refugees apply for assistance. "We must make all funding to UNRWA be contingent on revising the definition of what a refugee is and on ending Palestinian incitement," Haskel said.

Newsletter Sunday October 14, 2018

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UN envoy Haley: Israel, Syria to reopen Golan crossing on Monday

Opening the Quneitra crossing on the Golan Heights on Monday "will allow U.N. peacekeepers to step up their efforts to prevent hostilities in the Golan Heights region," says U.S. ambassador • Haley urges Israel, Syria to ensure safety of UNDOF personnel.

Reuters and Israel Hayom Staff

U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Nikki Haley | Photo: Reuters

Israel, Syria and the United Nations have agreed to open the Quneitra crossing on the Golan Heights on Monday, U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley said on Friday.



Haley said in a statement that the opening "will allow U.N. peacekeepers to step up their efforts to prevent hostilities in the Golan Heights region."

The United Nations Disengagement Observer Force has been monitoring operations in a demilitarized zone established in 1974 between the Israeli Golan and the Syrian sector, but the peacekeeping mission was disrupted by Syria's civil war.

"We look to both Israel and Syria to provide U.N. peacekeepers the access they need as well as assurances of their safety. We also call on Syria to take the necessary steps so UNDOF can safely and effectively deploy and patrol without interference," Haley said.

Military police from Russia, a major ally of Syrian President Bashar Assad, have been patrolling on the Syrian side of Quneitra.

Defense Minister Avigdor Lieberman visited the Israeli side of the crossing on Sept. 27. He said then that in the past, traffic through Quneitra mainly comprised shipments into Syria of apples grown by Druze farmers on the Israeli Golan – and the entry of brides for partners on both sides of the armistice line.

Newsletter Friday October 12, 2018

Newsletters from:

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US Navy returns to Israeli port in sign of 'deep alliance'

USS Ross docks at Ashdod Port in first visit by U.S. Navy vessel to that port in two decades, perhaps signaling U.S. interest in broadening berthing options for Mediterranean Sixth Fleet • Israeli and U.S. officials say visit shows enduring partnership.

Reuters and Israel Hayom Staff

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his wife, Sara, tour the USS Ross at Ashdod Port, Thursday | Photo: Reuters

A U.S. Navy warship has docked in the southern Israeli port of Ashdod in the first visit by a U.S. Navy vessel to the port in almost 20 years. Officials from both countries welcomed the visit as a sign of their strong ties in the face of shared adversaries such as Iran.

Foreign navies generally prefer Haifa in the country's north as their Israeli port of call, so the arrival of the destroyer USS Ross at Ashdod may signal U.S. interest in broadening berthing options for its Mediterranean Sixth Fleet.

"This visit has significance. It symbolizes the deep alliance between Israel and the United States," Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said from the ship's deck, where he stood with his wife, Sara, and U.S. Ambassador to Israel Daniel Friedman.

"We are determined to defend ourselves against the Iranian military entrenchment in Syria," Netanyahu said. "President [Donald] Trump gave full support to this policy of ours, and the fact that this destroyer is visiting here today is an expression of that support."

The Netanyahus toured the ship, shaking hands with officers and sailors, and then took part in a ceremony on board.

U.S. Sixth Fleet spokesman Commander Kyle Raines said in a statement to Reuters that the port visit "reinforces the strong and enduring partnership between our two nations."

Both Haifa and Ashdod face shelling threats – Haifa from Hezbollah rockets in Lebanon and Ashdod from Palestinian rockets from the Gaza Strip.

Raines did not refer to any such threats specifically, but said, "We conduct extensive analysis of all port facilities and communities where our ships pull into and have the ability to adjust our force protection measures as necessary to ensure the safety of our sailors."

Newsletter Thursday October 11, 2018

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UNESCO declares major Jewish heritage sites part of 'occupied Palestine'

U.N. cultural agency adopts agenda items labeling Cave of the Patriarchs in Hebron,

Rachel's Tomb in Bethlehem as "under occupation" • Vote on resolution set for April •

Meanwhile, rare Israeli-Palestinian compromise raises hopes Israel won't exit UNESCO.

Ariel Kahana, Reuters and Israel Hayom Staff

UNESCO headquarters in Paris | Photo: Reuters

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization on Wednesday adopted two agenda items declaring that the Cave of the Patriarchs in Hebron and Rachel's Tomb in Bethlehem are part of "occupied Palestine."

The agenda items, which will come up for a vote next April, state that the two sites - both key Jewish heritage sites - are "an integral part of occupied Palestinian territory" and

condemn Israel's construction of a security fence and "other measures aimed at altering the character, status and demographic composition of the occupied Palestinian territory."

Both draft resolutions were sponsored jointly by Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, Qatar and Sudan. UNESCO's 59-member Executive Committee reportedly approved the resolutions within minutes.

UNESCO is known for its anti-Israel bias. According to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, the Paris-based agency has adopted 71 resolutions against Israel since 2009, and only two resolutions that condemn all the other countries together.

In May 2017, UNESCO declared Israel an "occupying force" in Jerusalem in a resolution supported by Russia, China, Brazil, Iran, Malaysia, Mauritius, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Vietnam, Sweden, Russia, China, Brazil, Nicaragua and Chad.

In January, with the support of 21 envoys, UNESCO passed a resolution characterizing the Cave of the Patriarchs as a Palestinian World Heritage Site.

The body's consistent anti-Israel bias prompted the United States and Israel to announce they would withdraw from UNESCO. Washington said it would opt for an observer-state status, while Israel is expected to exit the agency completely.

Both moves are set to come into effect on Jan. 1, 2019.

Two weeks ago, Netanyahu declined an invitation to participate in a UNESCO conference on anti-Semitism, citing the organization's "persistent and egregious bias against Israel."

As for Israel's planned departure from the U.N. cultural body, Netanyahu said that "in withdrawing from UNESCO in 2017, we made a clear moral statement that UNESCO's anti-Semitism will no longer be tolerated."

"If and when UNESCO ends its bias against Israel, stops denying history and starts standing up for the truth, Israel will be honored to rejoin," Netanyahu said.

Meanwhile, however, in a rare display of consensus, Israeli and Arab diplomats agreed on resolutions concerning Jerusalem and Palestinian education on Wednesday, as UNESCO seeks to convince Israel to change its mind about quitting.

Under UNESCO's mediation, the Israeli, Palestinian and Jordanian delegations compromised on resolutions covering the protection of Jerusalem's Old City and Palestinian education.

The texts promote schools and training programs, while divisive issues were set aside in annexes of the agreements.

Two European diplomats said the compromises had raised hopes that Israel could be persuaded to postpone or even cancel its decision to quit UNESCO.

Passing a resolution would allow stalled UNESCO projects to continue by setting aside the disputes.

"UNESCO is playing on diplomatic ambiguity to get the ball rolling again," said one of the diplomats.

When asked whether Israel would reconsider its decision to quit UNESCO, an Israeli Foreign Ministry spokesman declined to comment.

The texts are set to be reviewed again in April, after Israel is due to leave the organization.

In a statement, UNESCO Director Audrey Azoulay said the compromise "reminds us of the need to sit around the table here at UNESCO and show goodwill. These are the foundations of the consensus reached again today."

Israeli-Palestinian peace talks have been suspended since 2014 and efforts to revive them have so far been unsuccessful.

The Palestinians were admitted into UNESCO in 2011, against objections from Israel, which argues that the Palestinian Authority should not be admitted as a member-state of U.N. bodies until it achieves statehood through an agreed process at the culmination of peace talks.

A UNESCO diplomatic source said the compromise showed that Israel and the United States should reconsider exiting the agency, given years of the previous stalemate at the body.

"There is a real question here for the Americans and especially for the Israelis to see what conclusions they draw from this decision," the source said.

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Despite successful tests, Israeli moon mission postponed to 2019

No official reason is provided for the delay in the launch of SpaceIL's craft, originally scheduled to be sent into orbit in December • Israel Space Agency announces \$2 million grant for SpaceIL to continue developing breakthrough space technology.

Ilan Gattegno and Israel Hayom Staff

SpaceIL's dishwasher-size spacecraft | Photo: Reuters

Israel's moon mission will be postponed to 2019, the SpaceIL NGO, who is planning it, announced Wednesday.

SpaceIL's dishwasher-size craft was scheduled to be launched into space in December 2018. The organization did not provide the reason for the delay.

The spacecraft, whose assembly was recently concluded, has successfully completed a series of integration tests, including extreme atmospheric and acoustic noise test simulating launching and landing conditions, to ensure that its systems will operate once in orbit.

Also on Wednesday, the Israel Space Agency announced plans to award SpaceIL a 7.25 million shekel (\$2 million) grant to continue developing breakthrough space technology.

Support for the NGO will include financing the scientific experiment as part of which the spacecraft will measure the moon's magnetic field, school lectures, educational activities, and a cyber championship, Channel 12 reported.

Last week, the ISA and SpaceIL announced that once the spacecraft is launched, American space agency NASA will assist in tracking and communicating with it as it prepares to land on the moon. To this end, the spacecraft will be fitted with a laser reflector that would broadcast its lunar location to NASA.

SpaceIL will also share with NASA the data collected on the magnetic field at the landing site.

Newsletter Wednesday October 10, 2018

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Iran spent \$16B to destabilize Middle East, US State Department says

Since 2012, Tehran has spent billions to support terrorist groups, prop up Syrian regime during the civil war, State Department finds • Syrian President Assad has so far received some \$4.6 billion from Iran, Hezbollah gets \$700 million a year, report says.

Neta Bar, Yoni Hersch and Israel Hayom Staff

Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei | Photo: AFP

The U.S. State Department recently published an unprecedented report detailing the financial resources Iran invests in destabilizing the Middle East.

The report estimated that over the past six years, the Islamic republic has spent some \$16 billion to prop up Syrian President Bashar Assad's regime and fund Iranian-backed militias across the Arab world.

Assad has so far received about \$4.6 billion from Tehran, which also gives its largest regional proxy, Lebanon-based Hezbollah, more than \$700 million a year, in addition to supporting other militias in Iraq and the Houthi rebels in Yemen.

According to the 48-page report, the Gaza Strip-based Hamas and Islamic Jihad terrorist groups have receives upward of \$100 million from Iran in recent years.

"We know that Iran uses its economic revenues to finance terrorism. There is no country in the world that sponsors and supports terrorism more than Iran," a State Department official said.

The report also touched on Iran's ballistic missile program, saying that for years, Tehran has been violating the international restrictions imposed on it and has been delivering ballistic missiles to the Houthis.

The report urges the international community to join forces in an effort to counter the Islamic republic's ballistic missile program.

"The United States will continue with its aggressive sanctions policy against Iran, as the president has instructed," the report said.

The cyber threat posed by Iran was also discussed at length in the report.

"Iran's cyber efforts undermine and endanger international norms for free and open use of the internet," it said, adding that there is clear evidence linking Iran to cyberattacks on government and commercial sites in Israel, Saudi Arabia and Qatar.

"The policy President Trump has laid out comes to terms fully with the fact that the Islamic Republic of Iran is not a normal state," U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo wrote in the introduction to the report.

"It is important for the world to understand the scope of the regime's recklessness and malfeasance. ... We will engage with any nation prepared to take a stand with us against the chaos and brutality that Iran imposes on its citizens and spreads in spades around the world.

"We know many countries share our concerns and our yearnings for a more secure and stable Middle East, as well as a freer Iran. We encourage nations and businesses across the world to examine the record enclosed here, and answer the call to address the challenge of Iran head-on," Pompeo wrote.

### Recent Crests

- (1) 6.09 ft on 10/10/2018
- (2) 2.33 ft on 05/28/2018
- (3) 3.17 ft on 10/08/2017
- (4) 2.46 ft on 06/21/2017
- (5) 2.73 ft on 01/22/2017