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CENTER FOR MIDDLE EAST PEACE

Israel and Middle East News Update

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News Excerpts

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I24 News

Lapid Backs Two-State Solution in UN Speech

Prime Minister [Yair Lapid](#) expressed his support for a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in his [speech](#) at the UN General Assembly. It's the first time Lapid, as prime minister, has given a speech backing a two-state solution. Lapid made clear that the establishment of a Palestinian state must have security arrangements for Israel. It's also the first time since 2017 that an Israeli prime minister has publicly expressed support for a two-state solution. "An agreement with the Palestinians, based on two states for two peoples, is the right thing for Israel's security, for Israel's economy, and for the future of our children," Lapid said. "Despite all the obstacles, still today, a large majority of Israelis support the vision of this two-state solution. I am one of them," Lapid said. PA President [Mahmoud Abbas](#) is expected to give a fiery speech today, expressing his frustration with the stagnant peace process.

Arutz Sheva

TV Poll Predicts Narrow Majority for Netanyahu's Bloc

[A Channel 13](#) News poll conducted evening found that the Jewish Home Party, led by Ayelet Shaked, does not pass the electoral threshold. 58% of the participants in the poll think Shaked should drop out. In terms of the map of seats, the right-wing bloc led by [Benjamin Netanyahu](#) achieves the required majority of 61. Likud maintains its power with 32 seats while the Religious Zionism Party wins 14. Shas and United Torah Judaism maintain their strength with 8 and 7 seats. Lapid's Yesh Atid gains 25 seats, while the National Unity Party, which has not grown stronger since former Chief of Staff Gadi Eizenkot joined, continues to decline and wins only 11 seats. Labor and Meretz remain with 5 seats each, and Avigdor Liberman's Yisrael Beytenu falls to 5 seats. Hadash-Ta'al wins 4 seats after the split of the Joint List, and Ra'am remains at 4. [Dig Deeper "New Poll Shows Netanyahu Bloc Earning 62 Seats" \(Jerusalem Post\)](#)

Ha'aretz

Eight Wounded in Suspected Terror Attack in Central Israel

One person was stabbed, and several others were sprayed with pepper spray in central Israel in what Israeli police described as a [terror attack](#). The assailant, whom a police source said is a Palestinian from East Jerusalem, was shot dead by an off-duty border policeman. The assailant, armed with a knife and pepper spray, approached cars at an intersection by the city of Modi'in. He tried to open their doors and stab the people inside. According to police, there were eight victims in all: one stabbing victim, six who were exposed to pepper spray, and the off-duty police officer who was hurt in the struggle with the assailant. [Dig Deeper "Palestinian Strife Highlights Lost Hopes of Armed Youths" \(Associated Press\)](#)

Israel Announces 1,500 New Work Permits for Gazans

Despite simmering tensions throughout the West Bank, Defense Minister Benny Gantz announced an increase in work and trade permit quotas for Gaza Strip Palestinians by 1,500 starting next week, after Rosh Hashanah. According to the Defense Ministry, this raises the number of permits to a total of 17,000, but the increase in permits will be carried out in accordance with a situation assessment after the holiday and on the condition that peace is maintained across the southern border. The ministry plans to hike the quota up to 20,000. COGAT, the Israeli body in charge of Palestinian civilian affairs, has taken precedential steps on the subject in the past year. Shin Bet Director Ronen Bar also hinted to the leader of Hamas in Gaza, Yahya Sinwar, that promoting incitement against Israel will lead to adversarial measures from Jerusalem. "Either words or workers," he said. [Dig Deeper "Hamas Warns Over Jewish Visits to Jerusalem's Al-Aqsa Mosque" \(I24 News\)](#)

Associated Press

Facebook Violated Rights of Palestinian Users, Report Finds

Actions by Facebook and its parent Meta during last year's Gaza war violated the rights of Palestinian users to freedom of expression, freedom of assembly, political participation, and non-discrimination, a report commissioned by the social media company has found. The report from independent consulting firm Business for Social Responsibility confirmed long-standing criticisms of Meta's policies and their uneven enforcement as it relates to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict: It found the company over-enforced rules when it came to Arabic content and under-enforced content in Hebrew. It, however, did not find intentional bias at Meta, either by the company as a whole or among individual employees. The report's authors said they found "no evidence of racial, ethnic, nationality or religious animus in governing teams" and noted Meta has "employees representing different viewpoints, nationalities, races, ethnicities, and religions relevant to this conflict." Rather, it found numerous instances of unintended bias that harmed the rights of Palestinian and Arabic-speaking users.

Israel Hayom

British PM Truss Considering Moving Embassy to Jerusalem

Prime Minister Lapid met with British Prime Minister Liz Truss, with Truss reportedly telling Lapid she was considering moving her country's embassy in Israel to Jerusalem. According to a report in the UK's Telegraph, a Downing Street spokeswoman stated that Truss informed Lapid "about her review of the current location of the British Embassy in Israel." Truss had pledged she would make this move in a letter to the Conservative Friends of Israel during the race to become the next British premier. At the time, Truss said she understood the "importance and sensitivity" of the location. She would be following in the footsteps of former United States president Donald Trump, who first relocated the United States embassy in Israel to Jerusalem in 2017, with countries such as Honduras and Guatemala following suit. [Dig Deeper "Truss to Lapid: Eyeing Jerusalem Embassy Move" \(I24 News\)](#)

Israel to Sell Air Defense System to the United Arab Emirates

Israel has agreed to sell an advanced air defense system to the United Arab Emirates (UAE), two sources familiar with the matter said, in the first such known deal between them since they forged ties in 2020. The deal reinforces how, for some Arab states, resolving the decades-long Israel-Palestinian conflict has now been overshadowed by national priorities, such as security and the economy. Israel and the US-allied UAE share an ultimate fear that Iran will obtain a nuclear weapon, an ambition Tehran denies. Israel approved a UAE request in the middle of the summer and would supply the Gulf state with Rafael-made SPYDER mobile interceptors, two sources said, declining to provide further details due to the sensitive nature of the deal. A third source said the UAE had acquired Israeli technology capable of combating drone attacks like those that struck Abu Dhabi earlier this year. Israel's defense ministry and SPYDER manufacturer Rafael declined to comment. The UAE's foreign ministry did not comment. [Dig Deeper "Israel to Sell Air Defence System to the United Arab Emirates" \(Reuters\)](#)

US Sanctions Iran's Morality Police, Accuses It of Abuse

The US imposed sanctions on Iran's morality police over allegations of abuse of Iranian women, saying it held the unit responsible for the death of a 22-year-old in custody that has sparked protests around Iran. The US Treasury Department also accused the morality police of violating the rights of peaceful protesters and said it had imposed sanctions on seven senior Iranian military and security officials, including the chief of the Iranian army's ground forces. Public outrage in Iran over Mahsa Amini's death last week showed no sign of abating after days of protests in Tehran and other cities, with protesters torching police stations and vehicles and reports of security forces coming under attack. A senior State Department official, speaking to reporters on the condition of anonymity, said there would be more steps in the coming days but did not provide any details. Asked if the US government was ready to provide Iranians with internet service via satellite, the official said: "We're looking at what we can do to provide greater support to those who are trying to express themselves peacefully... and we'll have more to say in the coming days." [Dig Deeper "As Woman's Slaying Turns up Heat, Iran President Asks What About US Police Killings" \(Times of Israel\)](#)

Lapid Receiving Hypocritical Backlash for Proposing the Two-State Solution

By Ben-Dror Yemini

- The forbidden words "two states" slipped out of Prime Minister Yair Lapid's mouth, sparking an uproar. How dare he? The Likud immediately pointed fingers at him for wanting to "hand over our homeland's territory to our enemies." Right-wing Justice Minister Gideon Sa'ar claimed that "establishing a terror state in Judea and Samaria (West Bank) will endanger the security of Israel." Even Naftali Bennett, the alternate prime minister to Lapid, mind you, sharply condemned this idea. What's all the fuss about? Can we really say there was a prime minister in recent decades who did not propose the idea of two states? Ehud Barrak pitched it. Ariel Sharon promoted the "Road Map for Peace," which included a phase of establishing a viable, sovereign Palestinian state. Ehud Olmert also proposed it. And Benjamin Netanyahu, who vouched for this solution in his Bar-Ilan speech in 2009, also moved forward with it through talks with former US secretary of state John Kerry and in his adoption of Trump's "Peace to Prosperity" plan, which pushed for a two-state solution.
- So, what exactly is the problem now? According to his previous suggestions, Netanyahu apparently also wants to "hand over our homeland's territory to our enemies" He's allowed to, yet Lapid is not? There is no chance a two-state solution could actually take place, given that the Palestinians - just as they have every other time - will refuse every offer Lapid brings to the table. Yes, whoever sees straight, would be right to say that a Palestinian state would most likely be a terror state or a Hamas state, or an Iranian satellite state. But this discussion is irrelevant because it doesn't matter what Israel proposes – the Palestinians will continue to refuse. So why make an offer in the first place? Well, because in the international arena, we must be clear that Israel will always be open to peace. Israel has always said yes, and the Palestinians have always said no. The direct outcome is that Israel prospers while the Palestinians suffer.
- What exactly do the Likud, Bennett, and Sa'ar want to happen? Do they prefer we trade places with the Palestinians? That we start saying no and the Palestinians say yes? Have they lost their minds? Even Netanyahu was proven to understand this is not an option. There is nothing new in the news that election campaigns cause the Likud to shout out offensive exclamations that turn Israel into a peace denier. But it is now attacking the prime minister for doing exactly what he should - acting in accordance to the national interest. He is not letting the Likud's scandalous campaigns set the tone in his decision making. We need to remember that whoever so tenaciously rejects a two-state solution, will lead us to the worst disaster of all - a one-state solution.

Yair Lapid's Gamble on the World

By Ariel Schmidberg

- It may be that “what happens in Las Vegas stays in Las Vegas,” but this isn’t always true of what happens at the United Nations General Assembly in New York. Speeches on the most important stage in the world do not change international reality, and their practical meaning is very limited. But they can have an effect at home. Something Prime Minister Yair Lapid was well aware of when he spoke in favor of a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. But if anyone is stressed by Lapid’s words — fear not. No Palestinian state will be established in the coming years, and certainly not because of a speech at the UN. With Israel only a month and a half until elections, it’s no coincidence that Lapid, one of Israel’s most calculated politicians in recent years, chose to stir up a storm around his speech more than 24 hours before he even delivered it. Those around the prime minister have made it clear that the logic is simple: “We are heading for elections,” said his people, “we need to put our positions on the table.”
- This may be logical, but reality and history prove that it usually works exactly the opposite way, and the nearer we get to elections, the more politicians make every effort to hide controversial positions that may alienate potential voters. From the 1990s until 2016, every Israeli prime minister who spoke at the UN mentioned the “two-state solution.” Including, in case you forgot, Benjamin Netanyahu. But since 2016, the political (and international) reality has changed, and the issue has been abandoned. The big difference between Netanyahu and Lapid is that so far as the Israeli public is concerned when Netanyahu talks about two states at the UN, Israelis see it as part of the ceremony and accept it as part of the UN ritual, nothing more.
- No one ever thought it a practical plan. On the other hand, Lapid’s credibility is much higher, and from an electoral point of view, this may come back to haunt him. Lapid’s choice of words is both interesting and intriguing. Throughout his political career, he has positioned himself firmly in the center of the political divide, a stance that allowed him to comfortably navigate political storms on fundamental issues. This time, however, Lapid chose to spotlight the most complex and controversial issue among the Israeli public. Bringing the two-state solution back to the table attracts voters from the left at a time when — according to all estimates — the election will be decided by swing voters who are to be found firmly in the center-right of the political map.
- Is it possible that Lapid realized that he would not be prime minister, and this was his way of attracting voters from all the left-wing parties so he could become the undisputed leader of the opposition? On the international side, we should not forget that the attention of world leaders is not focused on Israel — it’s focused on two central issues: the war in Ukraine and the violation of human rights in Iran. The thought that the world is preoccupied with Israel is very provincial.
- For many years, Lapid criticized the well-remembered gimmick speeches of former prime minister Netanyahu (like the one where he held up a crude drawing of a bomb), so his

intention was to try to turn the essence into a gimmick. It is not clear if this is a tactical or strategic move. What is clear is that the prime minister's action, at such a sensitive time ahead of the elections and in the midst of what appears to be a renewed wave of terrorism, may cost him votes and, ultimately, the elections.