

The Sabra Report

Raising Awareness and Encouraging Discussion About Israel

After 25 Years, Jordan Declines to Renew Israel's Access to the 'Island of Peace'

Steve Hendrix, Taylor Luck and Ruth Eglash, Washington Post, November 11th 2019

Recap:

In the latest sign of ongoing tension between the two countries, Jordan declined to renew Israel's access to land granted as part of the 1994 peace accord, ending a long tradition of cross-border openness.

The Context:

- Jordan and Israel have fought two wars since Israel's establishment in 1948. Under the terms of the 1994 treaty that ended hostilities, the enclaves of al-Baqoura and al-Ghumar, also known as Naharayim and Tzofar, which Israel controlled for over 70 years [1], would remain under Jordanian sovereignty while Israeli farmers maintained access to the land [2].
- Farmers will still have access to Naharayim although now only via border crossings however, farmers in Tzofar will lose access completely following this season's harvest [3]. A Tzofar official said the loss of cropland is a "death sentence" for 35 area farmers.
- Over the years, stagnation in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process and disputes over the Temple Mount have strained relations between Israel and Jordan. There is little support for cooperation amongst most Jordanians, many of whom are of Palestinian origin, and relations between the countries remain cold despite the treaty [4]. As a result, cooperation has stopped on key water projects, including a canal to resupply the dwindling Dead Sea, and Israel has restricted the import of Jordanian goods into the West Bank.

Conversation Points:

- Did Egypt and Jordan only sign peace agreements with Israel after realizing they could not erase the Jewish state from the map?
- Is the absence of progress in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process the reason bilateral relations between Israel and Jordan are cold?
- Was Amman's decision most likely a strategic one or a move to appease the Jordanian street?

In Landmark Ruling, EU's Top Court Says Settlement Product Labeling Mandatory

Raphael Ahren, Times of Israel, November 12th 2019

Recap:

The European Court of Justice (ECJ) ruled that products made in Israeli settlements may not be marketed as products of Israel.

The Context:

- The European Union (EU) believes Israeli West Bank settlements undermine the hopes for a two-state solution. Today, nearly 700,000 Israelis live in the land they view as integral to Judaism since its earliest days.
- In 2018, a French court granted Psagot winery's request not to enforce an EU directive to mark products manufactured in the settlements but also ordered the ECJ to review the decision since France is subjected to EU law [5]. Advocate General Gerard Hogan defended the ECJ's recent decision saying, "for many consumers, purchases may also be influenced by criteria such as environmental, social, political, cultural or ethical considerations [6]."
- Palestinian officials lauded the court's ruling and called on European countries to implement "what is a legal and political obligation." Israelis criticized the labeling as discriminatory and pointed to other countries involved in land disputes that are not similarly sanctioned [7].
- The ruling is a win for boycott groups since the ECJ's directive provides legal grounds to remove Israeli products from retail shelves [8].

Conversation Points:

- Why aren't other countries involved in territorial disputes subjected to comparable EU rulings?
 - Should products produced by Muslims and Jews in the same geographic location be labelled differently?
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Cozy, Low-Cost Capsule Hotels Come to Israel

Israel21c, November 7th 2019

Recap:

Tourists are embracing sparse accommodations to score centrally located hotels in Israel.

The Context:

- Capsule rooms are modular chambers holding not much more than a bed. A recent travel industry report expects the capsule hotel market to reach \$226 million by 2022 - a trend fueled by young urban travelers looking for inexpensive accommodations in major cities. The model has proven successful in Japan and Western Europe.
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- Capsule hotels now operate in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv and the Negev with accommodations starting as low as \$28 per day. A single pod typically contains a bed, TV, mirror, hangers, safe, lighting and ventilation system. Apps allow guests to check availability of toilets & showers and chat with fellow guests & staff.

Conversation Points:

- Will the Israeli capsule market ever reach the popularity of markets like Japan?
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Notes:

1. [Jordan king says rule over border enclaves restored as Israeli lease expires](#), Times of Israel, November 10th 2019
2. [Jordan reclaims borderlands as Israel ties under strain](#), Ali Younes, Al Jazeera, November 10th 2019 Israel,
3. [Israeli farmers lament the end of Jordan land deal](#), Elana Ringler, Reuters, November 10th 2019
4. [Jordan reclaims borderlands as Israel ties under strain](#), Ali Younes, Al Jazeera, November 10th 2019
5. [EU States Must Label Products from Israeli Settlements, Top Court Says](#), Noa Landau, Haaretz, November 12th 2019
6. [Grapes of wrath: Israel sours on West Bank winery in spat over EU labeling](#), RAPHAEL AHREN, Times of Israel, November 11th 2019
7. [Court Says EU States Must Label Israeli Settlement Products](#), US News, November 12th 2019
8. [EU Court Poised to Require Labeling Products from Yehudah and Shomron](#), Zalman Ahnsaf, Hamodia, October 31st 2019

The Sabra Report is a newsletter intended to stimulate conversation about Israel by recapping major events & providing context. Our conversation points are meant to encourage discussion amongst friends and family.

The Sabra Report is written by Irving Safdieh.

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