

The Sabra Report

Raising Awareness and Encouraging Discussion About Israel

With UAE Deal, Israel Opens Tentative New Chapter with Gulf Arabs

Frank Gardner, BBC, August 18th 2020

Recap:

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is the first of the six Arab Gulf states to make peace with Israel. After Egypt's peace treaty with Israel in 1979, followed by Jordan's in 1994, UAE is the third Arab country to normalize relations with the Jewish State.

The Context:

- ✧ The UAE, a former British protectorate, became a sovereign nation in 1971 and enjoys extreme wealth thanks to its oil reserves. The country was motivated to establish peace to leverage Israel's expertise in biotech, healthcare, defense and cyber surveillance as well as gain goodwill with the US.
- ✧ The agreement was conditioned on Israel suspending its plans to annex West Bank territory the Palestinians seek for a state. The US verbally assured that annexation won't proceed without American consent [1]. The world was taken by surprise upon the deals announcement, most of all the Palestinians, who called it "a stab in the back" since they have yet to come close to getting a state of their own.
- ✧ Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu denied reports that the agreement included US military aid to the UAE. Following the Yom Kippur War in 1973, Congress promised to preserve Israel's "qualitative military edge" in the Middle East by considering Jerusalem's position before selling advanced weapons to its neighbors [2].
- ✧ The UAE, along with Bahrain and Saudi Arabia, share a deep mistrust of its neighbor, Iran. Where once Iran was largely confined to its national borders, today it has proxy militias in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Yemen. Israel shares this concern, especially when it comes to Iran's nuclear program.
- ✧ Morocco is likely to be one of the next Arab states to normalize diplomatic ties with Israel as it already has tourism and trade ties with Israel. Some 3,000 Jews live in Morocco, a fraction of the number from before the 1948 creation of Israel, but still the largest community in the Arab world [3].

Conversation Points:

- ✧ How might goodwill with the US and Israel benefit the UAE?
- ✧ Did the UAE throw in the annexation clause as a way to politely acknowledge the Palestinian cause while continuing to pursue its own interests anyway?
- ✧ What will the Middle East look like in 50 years if more Arab nations make peace with Israel?

Israel's Summer Temperatures Could Increase 5 Degrees by End of Century

Sue Surkes, Times of Israel, August 17th 2020

Recap:

Summer temperatures in Israel could warm by up to five degrees by 2100, potentially making 97 degree days in July and August the norm. This extreme scenario is under the condition that little is done to reduce global warming.

The Context:

- ☆ Climate scientists the world over predict hotter weather, less rain, and an increase in extreme events such as storms, floods, and heatwaves over the coming decades. The UN warned that the Middle East and North Africa are likely to suffer most from global warming.
- ☆ This summer, the middle east marked heat records in Baghdad (125 degrees) and Damascus (115 degrees) as well as extreme levels of heat in Israel and Lebanon [4].
- ☆ The Tel Aviv-Yafo municipality presented a detailed climate action plan, making it the first Israeli municipality program designed to cope with the threat of climate change [5].
- ☆ Israel is a signatory of the Paris climate agreement [6] and its Energy Ministry announced a plan to increase the use of renewable energy for the generation of electricity to 30% by 2030 [7].

Conversation Points:

- ☆ Why has the discussion about climate change become politically charged?

Jewish Agency: Israel To Have 250,000 Olim Over Next Five Years

Jeremy Sharon and Greer Fay Cashman, Jerusalem Post, August 16th 2020

Recap:

The Jewish Agency estimates that Israel will see an influx of 250,000 immigrants over the next five years. "This is a historic challenge that we must exploit, and the government needs to understand the opportunity and prepare a national program for absorbing this immigration wave," said Jewish Agency chief Isaac Herzog.

The Context:

- ☆ Four million Jews have immigrated to Israel through the Jewish Agency in over 70 years from 45 countries, and Israel now expects 250,000 immigrants over the next 3-5 years, most of them young and freelance professionals [8].
- ☆ The Agency says that it received 90,000 calls in the first half of 2020 requesting information on Aliyah, including a 31% increase in inquiries from western countries.

- ☆ 10,330 new immigrants came to Israel from January to July this year, compared to 19,943 in the same period in 2019. There was a 400% increase in Aliyah from North America [9]. The decline in immigration in 2020 is attributed to the pandemic and the mass cancellation of commercial flights.

Conversation Points:

- ☆ How has the coronavirus crisis generated new circumstances for many Jews living in the Diaspora to see new opportunities to move to Israel which may not have existed before hand?
 - ☆ Will the urge to make Aliyah settle once the pandemic is over?
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Notes:

1. [Bahrain Sudan May Follow UAE In Making Peace with Israel, Minister Says](#), Gwen Ackerman and Vivian Nereim, Bloomberg, August 17th 2020
2. [Netanyahu denies reports UAE deal includes okay for sale of advanced US jets](#), Times of Israel, August 17th 2020
3. [Morocco said likely to be one of the next states to normalize ties with Israel](#), Times of Israel, August 15th 2020
4. [Scorching Temperatures Bake Middle East Amid Eid al-Adha Celebrations](#), Falih Hassan and Elian Peltier, New York Times, July 31st 2020
5. [Tel Aviv outlines plan to face climate crisis](#), Rina Bassist, AI Monitor, August 6th 2020
6. Ibid.
7. [Temperature in Israel Will Rise 4 Degrees by 2100 if Climate Change Not Curbed, Study Shows](#), Haaretz, August 14th 2020
8. [Israel Expecting 250,000 New Immigrants in Next 5 Years](#), Aryeh Savir, The Jewish Voice, July 7th 202
9. [Jewish Agency predicts 250,000 new immigrants to Israel in next 5 years](#), MARCY OSTER, Times of Israel, August 18th 2020

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.

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