

# The Sabra Report

Raising Awareness and Encouraging Discussion About Israel

## What Is Behind Bahrain's Normalization Deal with Israel?

Farah Najjar, Al Jazeera, September 13<sup>th</sup> 2020

### Recap:

Twenty-six years after Bahrain welcomed an Israeli delegation for the first time, the small Gulf archipelago became the latest Arab country to normalize its relationship with Israel.

### The Context:

- ✧ Bahrain will become the fourth Arab nation to sign a peace deal with the Jewish state, following Egypt, Jordan and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) [1].
- ✧ At a time of regional upheaval, Gulf states are driven to work alongside Israel as a buffer against Iran and a way to solidify their relations with Washington. The Trump administration recently greenlit UAE plans to purchase American military hardware as a reward for its posture towards Israel [2].
- ✧ Palestinians criticized the deal as yet another betrayal, further undermining their efforts to achieve statehood. A meeting of the Arab League last week underscored the new realities when a resolution to condemn the UAE's move presented by Palestinian officials failed to pass [3]. The Palestinian government will now reevaluate its relations with the Arab League [4].
- ✧ A tweet by an Omani official welcoming Bahrain's deal fueled speculation that Oman will soon follow Bahrain's lead [5]. Qatar announced it didn't plan to join its Gulf Arab neighbors in establishing diplomatic relations with Israel until the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is resolved [6], pointing to terms laid out in Saudi Arabia's 2002 framework for normalizing ties with Israel [7].

### Conversation Points:

- ✧ Is Bahrain's agreement with Israel a sign that the country's main backer, Saudi Arabia, approves its overtures?
- ✧ Will Arab states forego the Palestinian cause to further their own interests?
- ✧ Is Qatar reluctant to normalize relations with Israel due to its deep ties with Hamas?

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## Jewish Terrorist Gets 3 Life Terms for Killing Palestinian Family In 2015 Arson

Michael Bachner, Times of Israel, September 14<sup>th</sup> 2020

**Recap:**

An Israeli man found guilty of carrying out a deadly 2015 firebombing that killed an 18-month-old Palestinian boy and his parents was sentenced on Monday to three life sentences. The court condemned Amiram Ben Uliel's "extreme and racist ideology."

**The Context:**

- ✧ Ben Uliel entered the Duma village and sprayed Hebrew graffiti on one home, then hurled Molotov cocktails into two others. The attack claimed the lives of Sa'ad and Riham Dawabsha and their 18-month-old son Ali. Five-year-old Ahmed was badly burned but survived.
- ✧ The gruesome nature of the killings shocked people on both sides of the divide and drew condemnation from Israeli and Palestinian leaders. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called the attack an act of terrorism [8].
- ✧ Human rights groups say Israel has taken greater action to prosecute Jewish perpetrators of violence against Palestinians in the most extreme cases but has invested few resources in clamping down on the broader problem [9]. Between 2005 and 2019, 91% of investigations were closed without an indictment [10].

**Conversation Points:**

- ✧ Why are 91% of cases of Jewish violence against Palestinians closed without an indictment?
  - ✧ Has a history of non-enforcement allowed cases of extremist Jewish violence against Palestinians to persist?
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## Coronavirus: Israel To Impose Three-Week National Lockdown

BBC, September 14<sup>th</sup> 2020

**Recap:**

The country's second lockdown begins on Friday and will last for at least three weeks. Israel faces a surge of Coronavirus cases with 4,000 new daily infections. Last week the government imposed a curfew in 40 high-risk towns and neighborhoods, the vast majority Arab and ultra-Orthodox communities [11].

**The Context:**

- ✧ The country has seen 1,108 deaths from Covid-19 and more than 153,000 confirmed infections. The new regulations limit indoor gatherings to 10 people and 20 outdoors. Schools and shopping centers will close, and Israelis must stay within 500 meters of their homes with the exception of travelling to work.
  - ✧ Housing Minister Yaakov Litzman, who leads an ultra-Orthodox Jewish party, threatened to pull his party out of the governing coalition due to the limitations placed on High Holiday services and familial gatherings.
  - ✧ Many nations are experiencing second surges of the virus; however, most governments are now imposing smaller local lockdowns in affected areas, rather than blanket national ones. Israeli officials played down the closure as a "social leisure lockdown" rather than a "full lockdown [12]."
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**Conversation Points:**

- ✧ How should Israel balance its need of public health and allowing Jewish tradition to continue?
  - ✧ Should the Jewish State have had more foresight and limited late summer interactions to prevent a high holiday lock down?
  - ✧ Why is Israel experiencing a strong second wave?
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**Notes:**

1. [PM to present UAE, Bahrain peace deal for Knesset approval](#), Ariel Kahuna, Israel Hayom, September 14<sup>th</sup> 2020
  2. [The Arab tide turns against the Palestinians](#), Ishaan Tharoor, Washington Post, September 14<sup>th</sup> 2020
  3. Ibid.
  4. ['Tomorrow, the Arab Peace Initiative Dies': Palestinian PM Blasts Israel-UAE-Bahrain Deal](#), Jack Khoury, Haaretz, September 14<sup>th</sup> 2020
  5. [PM to present UAE, Bahrain peace deal for Knesset approval](#), Ariel Kahuna, Israel Hayom, September 14<sup>th</sup> 2020
  6. [Qatar Rules Out Establishing Ties With Israel, Official Says](#), Zainab Fattah, Bloomberg, September 14<sup>th</sup> 2020
  7. [The Arab tide turns against the Palestinians](#), Ishaan Tharoor, Washington Post, September 14<sup>th</sup> 2020
  8. [Israeli Settler Gets 3 Life Sentences for Firebomb Attack on Family](#), Adam Rasgon, New York Times, September 14<sup>th</sup> 2020
  9. Ibid.
  10. [Jewish extremist who killed Palestinian family sentenced to life](#), The Guardian, September 14<sup>th</sup> 2020
  11. [Israelis angered by nationwide coronavirus lockdown: "They are punishing us"](#), CBS News, SEPTEMBER 14<sup>th</sup> 2020
  12. [New measures 'not even close' to a full lockdown, says top virus aide](#), NATHAN JEFFAY, Times of Israel, September 14<sup>th</sup> 2020
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**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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