

# The Sabra Report

Raising Awareness and Encouraging Discussion About Israel

## Sudan-Israel Relations Agreed, Donald Trump Announces

BBC, October 24<sup>th</sup> 2020

### Recap:

Sudan is the fifth Arab country to officially recognize Israel. The deal comes weeks after similar moves by the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Bahrain. The two Gulf states became the first in the Middle East to recognize Israel in 26 years.

### The Context:

- ☆ Sudan opposed Israel since its founding in 1948 and Khartoum was the site of a declaration against normalization with Israel in 1967, when the Arab League swore "no peace, no recognition, no negotiations". Sudan fought against Israel in 1948 and 1967 and provided a haven for Palestinian guerrilla groups in the years to come.
- ☆ Sudan's political dynamics shifted with last year's overthrow of its long-time ruler Omar al-Bashir. Sudan's generals have supported establishing relations with Israel as a path to lift US sanctions and open the door to badly needed economic aid [1].
- ☆ In return for ending its "state of aggression" against Israel, Sudan will be removed from the US list of countries supporting terror and can start receiving crucial loans from international financing agencies. With this agreement, Israel will complete the creation of a safety barrier in the Red Sea, which includes Egypt, Jordan, South Sudan and Saudi Arabia.
- ☆ The UAE's foreign ministry welcomed Sudan's decision, calling it "an important step to boost security and prosperity in the region." The Palestinians say the recognition amounted to betrayal [2] while Iran's foreign ministry slammed Sudan for "clos[ing] its eyes [to] the crimes against Palestinians [3]."

### Conversation Points:

- ☆ Can a full regional peace be achieved without Israeli-Palestinian peace?
- ☆ Have Palestinians lost what they have seen as their "veto" over regional peace efforts?
- ☆ Is removal from America's terrorist blacklist an acceptable tool for an administration to leverage during negotiations?

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## 83% Of Israelis Believe Country on Way to Third Covid-19 Closure - Survey

Maayan Jaffe-Hoffman, Jerusalem Post, October 24<sup>th</sup> 2020

**Recap:**

83% of Israelis think the country is on its way to a third coronavirus lockdown and 56% do not trust the government's handling of the pandemic.

**The Context:**

- ✧ Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had wide public backing when he imposed the first lockdown, lasting from mid-March until late May, which flattened the first wave of COVID-19. But as infections soared after schools and businesses reopened, the cabinet bowed to pressure from some coalition partners and watered down limited lockdowns on infection epicenters to the extent that the curbs became ineffective. On September 18<sup>th</sup>, the entire country was once again put under full lockdown [4].
- ✧ Thousands of people have taken to the streets demanding Netanyahu resign over his handling of the crisis. The country, with a population of nine million, has reported nearly 280,000 COVID-19 cases and more than 1,800 deaths [5]. Israel's economy tipped into recession in the second quarter and is set to shrink by 6% this year. Israel's ultra-Orthodox community, which makes up 10% of the country's population, accounts for more than a third of Israel's virus cases [6].
- ✧ Senior officials, including Netanyahu and President Reuven Rivlin, have been caught violating their own orders since the start of the pandemic. Other ministers have come under fire over allegedly misleading contact tracers and visiting family over the holidays [7].

**Conversation Points:**

- ✧ Can Israelis be expected to take COVID regulations seriously if their leaders are openly flouting them?
  - ✧ If COVID will remain a reality for the foreseeable future, how can governments adopt policies that are sustainable yet effective?
  - ✧ Is there a government that can be looked at as an example for proper handling of the COVID pandemic?
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## Israel Moves to Ban 'Immoral' Animal Fur Trade

BBC, October 5<sup>th</sup> 2020

**Recap:**

Israel will ban the fur trade, making it the first country to do so.

**The Context:**

- ✧ Currently, anyone in Israel wishing to buy or sell fur must apply for a permit. Under the new rules, fur trade will only be allowed in cases of "scientific research, education or religious purposes". The exemption will likely apply to Israel's ultra-Orthodox community, among whom many of the men wear large round fur hats called shtreimels. Anyone found breaking the law will face a fine of up to \$22,000 or a year in prison. PETA, an animal rights group, applauded Israel's move.
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- ✧ Until now, only a handful of cities worldwide have banned the sale of animal fur. Last week, Nordstrom announced that it will end the sale of fur and other exotic animal skins by the end of 2021. Macy's and Bloomingdale's will also end fur sales by the end of 2020 [8].

**Conversation Points:**

- ✧ If the concern for animal cruelty is at the heart of the new law, should a religious exemption exist at all?
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**Notes:**

1. [Israel-Sudan Deal Is More Cause for Caution Than Celebration](#), Zvi Bar'el, Haaretz, October 25<sup>th</sup> 2020
2. [Trump Announces Israel-Sudan Peace Deal, Has Call with Netanyahu, Sudan Leaders](#), Jacob Magid, Times of Israel, October 23<sup>rd</sup> 2020
3. ['Ignition of New War:' Sudan Political Parties Reject Israel Deal](#), Al Jazeera, October 24<sup>th</sup> 2020
4. [Israel's Second Lockdown Carries A Hefty Economic Price](#), Maayan Lubell, Tova Cohen, Steven Scheer, Reuters, October 8<sup>th</sup> 2020
5. Ibid.
6. [Israel Extends Restrictions on Protests Amid Virus Lockdown](#), Ilan Ben Zion, Ap, October 8<sup>th</sup> 2020
7. Ibid.
8. [Israel To Ban Fur Trade](#), Anna Starostinetskaya, Vegnews, October 7<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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