

# The Sabra Report

Raising Awareness and Encouraging Discussion About Israel

## Iran Nuclear Deal: Israel Warns Iran as Talks Progress

BBC, June 20<sup>th</sup> 2021

### Recap:

Following the election of hardliner Ebrahim Raisi to the presidency, Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennet called on the US and its allies to "wake up" to the threat of Iran as talks to revive Iran's nuclear deal progress.

### The Context

- ✧ Iran and Israel have long been involved in a shadow war since the Islamic Republic came into being in 1979. While the countries have engaged in tit-for-tat actions, they have so far avoided all-out conflict. Ayatollah Khamenei - Iran's supreme leader - has repeatedly called for the elimination of the state of Israel. In 2018, he described the country as a "cancerous tumor" that had to be removed from the region.
- ✧ In 2015, Iran and six other countries reached a major agreement that would temporarily delay Iran's nuclear weapon program in exchange for the lifting of sanctions that decimated its economy. Former US President Donald Trump, with former prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu's support, abandoned the accord in 2018, but the Biden administration has sought to re-enter the deal [1].
- ✧ Last month, Iran elected Raisi in a race widely seen as tilted in his favor. Raisi, who is himself under US sanctions for his links to past executions of political prisoners, expressed a willingness to reenter the deal but only if Iran is allowed to continue its missile development program as well as its support of terror proxy groups in the region. The sixth round of indirect talks took place this week in Vienna.
- ✧ US President Joe Biden sought to assure Israel that he would not tolerate a nuclear Iran as he met with outgoing Israeli President Reuven Rivlin saying, "Iran will never get a nuclear weapon on my watch." [2].
- ✧ Israel continues to covertly sabotage Iran's nuclear ambitions. Former President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad says the highest-ranking Iranian intelligence official in charge of countering Israeli spies in Iran was himself an agent of Israel. He also acknowledged that Israeli spies were involved in two explosions at a uranium enrichment facility and the theft of thousands of Iranian secret nuclear document from a warehouse near Tehran [3].

### Conversation Points:

- ✧ Why is America so keen on reengaging Iran?
- ✧ Should America reenter the nuclear accord under Raisi's terms?
- ✧ Can Israel count on America to look out for its interests?

## Israel May Have to Throw Away Nearly 1 million COVID Vaccines

Times of Israel, June 29<sup>th</sup> 2021

### Recap:

Israel will destroy 800,000 expiring coronavirus vaccine doses, worth hundreds of millions of dollars, if no buyers are found for them in the next two weeks.

### The Context:

- ✧ Over 5.5 million people have gotten at least one dose of the vaccine, with 13,000 more being vaccinated daily. Israel began encouraging teens to get vaccinated after case numbers began to mount, sparking a return to an indoor mask mandate.
- ✧ Israel has 1.4 million shots that will expire at the end of July but hopes to use 600,000 of them to vaccinate 300,000 teens. Israel is reportedly in talks with several countries to either purchase the vaccines or take them in exchange for vaccines they had been set to receive later.
- ✧ The Palestinian Authority (PA) was offered one million Covid vaccines but passed, saying the jabs were too close to their expiration date. 30% of eligible Palestinians have received at least one vaccine dose, received from Israel, Russia, China, the United Arab Emirates and the global Covax vaccine-sharing initiative. UN experts criticized Israel's failure to fully extend its vaccination program to Palestinians. The Israelis said the PA was responsible for managing health matters under its jurisdiction [4].
- ✧ The Health Ministry continues to recommend avoiding all unnecessary trips abroad, especially to countries under a travel warning [5].

### Conversation Points:

- ✧ Should governments continue to enforce lockdowns and mask mandates if Covid vaccines are readily available to the public?
- ✧ What is Israel's responsibility to Palestinians under PA control?
- ✧ Should the PA have accepted Israel's expiring vaccines?

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## UN Report Accuses Israel of 'Grave Violations' Against Children

Lazar Berman, Jerusalem Post June 28<sup>th</sup> 2021

### Recap:

An annual United Nations (UN) report on children in war accused Israel of hundreds of "grave violations" in 2020. The UN Security Council (UNSC) report said that 340 Palestinian children were harmed in the West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip over the past year. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres is the official author of the report [6].

**The Context:**

- ✧ Recruitment of child soldiers, attacks on schools and hospitals, killing and maiming, sexual assault and abduction of children could trigger inclusion on the grim list, which could result in sanctions. The report also includes Syria, Yemen, Afghanistan and Iraq.
- ✧ Critics of the report say a high number of allegations against Israel come from 3<sup>rd</sup> party NGO's instead of UN monitors themselves.
- ✧ 64% of the violations involve children who could not enter Israel for medical treatment, though Israel is not required to allow such entrances. Anne Herzberg, NGO Monitor's Legal Advisor, called on the UN to "provide accurate and consistent data in order to formulate the best policies to protect children in armed conflict [7]".

**Conversation Points:**

- ✧ Is Israel on the same plain as Syria, Yemen, Afghanistan and Iraq?
- ✧ What can the UN do to make their reports less farcical and more actionable?

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**Notes:**

1. [Biden Tells Rivlin He Won't Allow Iranian Nukes on His Watch](#), Jacob Magid, Tal Schneider and Ap Today June 28, 2021
2. [Biden To Rivlin: Iran Will Never Get a nuclear weapon On My Watch](#), Omri Nahmias, Jerusalem Post, June 29, 2021
3. [Ahmadinejad Claims Israel Infiltrated Iranian Intelligence](#), Iran International
4. [Covid: Palestinians Cancel Vaccine Swap Deal with Israel](#), BBC
5. [Coronavirus Cabinet Meeting Ends with No New Restrictions](#), Maayan Jaffe-Hoffman, Rossella Tercatin, Jerusalem Post June 27, 2021
6. [Un Report Accuses Israel of 'Serious Violations' Against Children](#), I24news, June 29, 2021
7. [Watchdog Group Says Un Report on Children and Armed Conflict Biased Against Israel](#), Algemeiner, June 28, 2021

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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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