

## The Diplomatic Report: A Monthly Review of Israel's Regional Foreign Policies

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### A. Israel and the Palestinians

- **Still no peace process, international community promotes two-state solution** - Against the backdrop of renewed violence in Jerusalem and Gaza, many countries reiterated their [commitment](#) to the two-state solution, including the establishment of a Palestinian state with its capital in East Jerusalem. [China](#), [the UAE](#), Russia, [the Quartet](#), Jordan and Canada were among the states and organizations that did so. The European Union [appointed](#) Sven Koopmans as its Special Representative for the Middle East Peace Process. Biden spoke with Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) for the first time since taking office against the backdrop of the violence in Jerusalem and fighting with Gaza. Secretary of State Blinken visited Israel and met with Prime Minister Netanyahu, Foreign Minister Ashkenazi and Defense Minister Gantz. Blinken [demand](#) that Israel compile a package of economic and other incentives to boost the Palestinian Authority (PA). He and Ashkenazi [agreed](#) to form a working group to advance civilian projects in the West Bank. At the same time, he demanded the Palestinians stop petitioning international organizations and fomenting anti-Israel incitement. [Blinken informed Abu Mazen](#) of plans to re-open the US Consulate in East Jerusalem.
- **Jerusalem sovereignty conflict turns violent, engages international arena** - Violent clashes [broke out](#) in Jerusalem, triggered by plans to evict Palestinian families from the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood and the resulting protests, and by tensions at the Damascus Gate and the Al-Aqsa Mosque during the month of Ramadan. The Foreign Ministry [portrayed](#) the Sheikh Jarrah events as a real estate dispute and attacked the PA and terrorist organizations for turning it into a nationalist issue, prompting angry [reactions](#). The Supreme Court postponed indefinitely its hearing on a petition against the evictions. The US administration urged Israel and the Palestinians to restore calm in Jerusalem, and [protested](#) the uprooting of residents from Sheikh Jarrah and Silwan. In a conversation with US National Security Adviser Sullivan, Israeli National Security Advisor Ben-Shabbat [rejected](#) the US intervention in the matter. Egypt, Jordan and other countries summoned Israeli ambassadors for clarifications or condemnations. [The UN](#) and many countries, among them the UAE, Bahrain, Sudan and Morocco expressed concern over the violence and urged Israel to guarantee freedom of worship and security for Palestinians in Jerusalem. France, Germany, Italy, Spain and the UK [called on](#) the Israeli government to rescind its approval for the construction of 540 new housing units in the Jerusalem neighborhood of Har-Homa.

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- **Another round of Israel-Hamas violence ends under US pressure with Egyptian, UN mediation** - Israel and Hamas [engaged](#) in another round of fighting that included Hamas rockets on Israeli population centers and Israeli aerial bombardments. [UN Envoy](#) Wennesland and Egypt mediated a ceasefire between the sides. Egypt sent a delegation to Israel and Gaza, and allowed humanitarian aid into Gaza even before the ceasefire entered into force. The US [vetoed](#) a French UN Security Council proposal, tabled in coordination with Egypt and Jordan, calling for a ceasefire, and blocked similar calls by Norway, Tunisia and China. As the fighting dragged on, the US turned increasingly critical of Israel. President Biden [spoke](#) with Netanyahu several times, pressing insistently for a ceasefire. Defense Secretary Austin called Defense Minister Gantz to express concern over the killing and wounding of Gaza civilians. The US [dispatched](#) Assistant Secretary of State Amr to Israel in a bid to de-escalate tensions. Israel's security cabinet approved the ceasefire conditioned on Hamas adherence to the understandings with Egypt. Biden praised Netanyahu for the ceasefire, stressed that the US supports Israel's right to self-defense and the equal rights of Israelis and Palestinians to free, safe, prosperous lives.
- **Diplomatic effort to mobilize international legitimacy for fighting in Gaza** - At the start of the military operation, Israel enjoyed broad backing for its actions, inter alia from the US, [the EU](#), Germany, Holland, Austria and additional European states. Greece, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, the UK and Germany expressed unreserved support, with their Foreign Ministers [accepting an invitation](#) by FM Ashkenazi and visiting Israel. Netanyahu spoke with Secretary of State Blinken and thanked him for the US support. Netanyahu and Ashkenazi spoke with their German counterparts Merkel and Maas, and thanked them for their country's backing. The UNGA convened at the request of Arab and Muslim states to discuss the violence. At the same time, condemnation was also voiced in the international arena of Israel's actions in Jerusalem, along with calls to stop the violence and reach a ceasefire. Demonstrations were held around the world and [public figures](#) denounced Israel on broadcast and social media. Against the backdrop of the fighting in Gaza, [political criticism](#) was expressed in Scotland over the bidding by an Israeli defense contractor for a traffic monitoring contract. The Foreign Ministry went on emergency footing to mobilize international support for Israel's continued struggle against Gaza terror organizations, and reported its achievements in the media.
- **The search for new Gaza aid mechanisms** - Even prior to the Gaza fighting, against the backdrop of tensions in Jerusalem, Israel allowed Qatar to transfer its monthly allowance for needy families (some \$10 million), and permitted Gazan business people to enter Israel. Once hostilities ended, Israel allowed a partial re-opening of Gaza's fishing zone that was closed off at the start of the fighting, as well as the transfer of humanitarian aid and passage of severely ill Gazans to Israel. Biden announced that the US was committed to ensuring humanitarian aid for Gaza, but only in cooperation with the Palestinian Authority, not Hamas. Blinken conveyed the same message during his visit to Israel. Egyptian President al-Sisi announced that his country would contribute \$500 million to rehabilitate the Gaza Strip, and King Abdullah of Jordan sent humanitarian aid to Gaza, too. Egyptian-mediated contacts on advancing an Israeli prisoner swap with Hamas reportedly resumed.
- **The law as a political tool in international diplomacy** - Some 185 Israeli human rights activists offered ICC Prosecutor Bensouda their help in investigating Israeli activity in the occupied territories. With the start of the fighting in Gaza and the violence in Jerusalem,

Bensouda expressed concern that crimes against humanity were being committed and called for an end to the violence. "Reporters without Borders" [asked](#) the ICC Prosecutor to examine Israel's destruction of a Gaza high-rise housing media outlet offices. The families slated for eviction from their homes in Sheikh Jarrah, together with 190 civil society organizations, [appealed](#) to Bensouda to include their case in the ICC war crimes probe against Israel. At the same time, the UN's Human Rights Council [decided](#) to investigate Israel on suspicion of war crimes and human rights violations in the occupied territories and East Jerusalem, and within Israel, too. Israel rejected the resolution, describing the UN body as hypocritical and hostile to Israel, and accusing it of ignoring the firing of Hamas rockets at Israel. Russia, China, Argentina, Bahrain, Sudan and Mexico were among the countries that voted in favor; the UK, Germany and Czech Republic were among those that voted against.

## B. Israel and the Middle East

- Israeli-Egyptian ties strengthened as Egypt adopts mediation role** - Egypt [mediated](#) between Hamas and Israel, initially to avoid deterioration into fighting and subsequently to achieve a ceasefire between them. The Egyptian Foreign Ministry condemned the forceful entry of Israeli police into the Temple Mount/Haram al-Sharif compound, and called on Israel to respect international law and freedom of worship. Following the ceasefire, Egypt summoned Israel, Hamas and the PA to Cairo for talks on a long-term accommodation and on the MIA and prisoner issue. Ashkenazi [conducted](#) an official visit to Egypt, the first by an Israeli Foreign Minister in 13 years, meeting with Foreign Minister Shoukry and discussing with him the resumption of flights to Sharm El-Sheikh. Egyptian General Intelligence Service head Kamel [met in Israel](#) with Netanyahu, with National Security Advisor Ben-Shabbat and with Intelligence Minister Cohen, followed by meetings with senior PA officials. Reflecting Israeli efforts to strengthen economic ties with Egypt and reduce reliance on imports from Turkey, an Israeli firm signed a cement import deal with Egypt valued initially at \$30 million.
- Clashes in Jerusalem (and Gaza) exacerbate tensions with Jordan** - Prior to the outbreak of violence in Jerusalem and Gaza, a senior Israeli security official was hosted in Amman at an Iftar meal. With the outbreak of clashes, Jordan condemned the attack on worshippers in Jerusalem and demanded that Israel restore calm. Jordan's Foreign Ministry [summoned](#) Israel's envoy in Amman to protest the events. Jordan lobbied in the international arena against Israeli measures in Jerusalem. King Abdullah discussed the developments with PA Chair Abbas, Chancellor Merkel, President Erdogan and the chair of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff Milley. Jordanian Foreign Minister Safadi spoke, among others, with his Palestinian counterpart al-Maliki, [Secretary Blinken](#), and [Cypriot Foreign Minister](#) Christodulides. [Anti-Israel protests](#) broke out in Jordan, expressing support for the Palestinian residents of Sheikh Jarrah and [calling to expel](#) Israel's ambassador to Jordan, rescind the natural gas deal with Israel and abrogate Jordan's peace agreement with Israel. Jordanian demonstrators tried to cross the border into Israel, prompting an unusual clash between Israeli and Jordanian soldiers. The Jordanian Foreign Ministry summoned Israel's ambassador in Amman to condemn the detention of two Jordanians. The World Bank [confirmed](#) that the Dead-Med Canal would be removed from its list of planned projects due to the lack of Jordanian agreement on the parameters of the project.

- The Abraham Accords tested by Jerusalem violence and Gaza fighting** - The UAE urged Israel to restore calm in Jerusalem, respect Jordan's role in protecting Islam's holy sites and the status quo. Emirati Crown Prince Bin-Zayed [convened](#) an urgent meeting of parliament members from Arab states to discuss events at Al-Aqsa and in Sheikh Jarrah. The UAE, Bahrain, Morocco and Jordan conducted talks with Israel's Foreign Ministry urging Israel to de-escalate tensions in Jerusalem and remove the barriers from Damascus Gate. Following the breakout of fighting with Gaza, Emirati Foreign Minister Bin-Zayed [called](#) for an end to the violence, expressed his condolences to the victims on both sides, and stressed the importance of the Abraham Accords. The chair of the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee Barbivay [discussed](#) the violence in Jerusalem and Gaza, as well as parliamentary cooperation, with her Emirati counterpart al-Nuaimi. Bahrain [denounced](#) Israel's actions at Al-Aqsa and voted in favor of a UN Human Rights Council resolution to investigate Israel. Bahraini Foreign Minister al-Ziyani called on the Israeli government to respect international law. Moroccan Prime Minister Othmani spoke with Hamas leader Haniyeh and [congratulated](#) him on his movement's struggle against Israel, expressing support for the liberation of Jerusalem and Palestine from Israeli occupation. Demonstrations against Israel and the fighting in Gaza were held in 40 cities, including in front of the parliament in Rabat. Israel's envoy to Morocco Govrin attacked Othmani's support for Hamas. On the other hand, Moroccan Foreign Minister Bourita [took part](#) in the annual AIPAC conference, welcomed the agreements between Israel and Morocco and stressed the need to resume the Israeli-Palestinian peace process.
- Forging of economic, civilian and military relations with the UAE** - Israel and the UAE [signed](#) a tax treaty to avoid double taxation. The Ministry of Economy and Trade invited Israeli companies to answer a questionnaire in order to improve and advance trade relations with the Emirates. Emirati Ambassador to Israel al-Khajah [met](#) with the spiritual leader of the Shas party Cohen. Israel's top diplomat to the UAE Na'eh [participated](#) at the opening of an exhibition commemorating the Holocaust. The first Emirati student [enrolled](#) at the Interdisciplinary Center in Herzliya. A Tel Aviv University delegation visited the UAE and signed a cooperation agreement with Khalifa University. Israel's Securities Authority [authorized](#) Israeli investors to trade on Dubai's gold and commodities exchange. Israeli and Emirati firms signed agreements on solar energy and cyber cooperation. The Ministry of Tourism launched a [campaign](#) in Dubai to encourage tourism to Israel. Israel took part in the Arab tourism fair in Dubai. Ashkenazi hosted an online Iftar meal with his Bahraini and Emirati counterparts to mark Ramadan.
- Is Saudi Arabia shifting direction?** - Saudi Arabia informed Iran that it was willing to forego normalization with Israel for the sake of renewed relations with Tehran. Its suggestion came against the backdrop of Iraqi-mediated [negotiations](#) between Saudi Arabia and Iran, inter alia in order to end the war in Yemen. Saudi Arabia reportedly [closed](#) its airspace temporarily to Israeli overflights, resulting in delays of flights to Dubai. The Saudi King condemned the rioting in Jerusalem, blaming Israel for the violence and expressing support for the Palestinian people. Saudi Arabia [convened](#) the Organization of Islamic Cooperation to condemn Israel over the violence in Jerusalem and call for a ceasefire with Gaza.
- Conflict with Iran continues in various arenas** - Mossad chief Cohen [met](#) at the White House with President Biden, National Security Advisor Sullivan and CIA Director Burns to discuss the nuclear agreement with Iran. Iran condemned Israel's actions in Jerusalem

and Gaza and urged the international community to intervene. During the fighting in Gaza, Israel downed an unmanned aircraft – [reportedly Iranian-made](#) – that penetrated its air space near Beit She'an on the Jordanian border. At the same time, several rockets were fired from Lebanon at Israel. Israel continued to attack Iranian targets in Syria. The Foreign Ministry congratulated Austria on its [decision](#) to define Hezbollah as a terrorist organization.

## C. Israel and Europe

- **Europe recognizes Israel's right to defend itself but highlights importance of international law** - EU foreign ministers [discussed](#) the clashes in Jerusalem and fighting with Hamas, calling for a ceasefire, expressing their concern over the violence, recognizing Israel's right to self-defense in a proportional manner and in keeping with international law, condemned Hamas for firing rockets at civilians and called on Israel to stop the evictions in Sheikh Jarrah and allow elections in the PA. Hungary [opposed](#) the call for a ceasefire and thus prevented the EU from issuing a joint declaration. European envoys [visited](#) the families from Sheikh Jarrah slated for eviction, and attended the court hearing of families facing eviction in Silwan. Israel condemned what it called foreign intervention in its internal affairs following comments by several European ambassadors and foreign ministers regarding the violence within Israel. Ashkenazi [discussed](#) the matter with EU Foreign Minister Borrell, who acquiesced to Ashkenazi's request and announced Europe's recognition of Israel's right to self-defense and condemned the Hamas rocket firing. The Foreign Ministry [exposed](#) the diversion of European funds to the PFLP, arguing that it was a Palestinian terrorist organization. The Irish Parliament [unanimously approved](#) a resolution denouncing Israel over its de facto annexation of lands in the West Bank.
- **"Green corridor" between Europe and Israel?** - The EU [added Israel](#) to its list of green countries (which do not pose a risk of Covid-19 infection), followed by the UK. Israel and the Czech Republic [discussed](#) mutual recognition of vaccination certificates in order to resume bilateral tourism.
- **France displays involvement in the region** - Netanyahu spoke with French President Macron, who condemned Hamas for firing rockets at Israel, expressed his support for Israel's right to self-defense and his concern over the killing and wounding of Gaza civilians. France joined with Germany, Egypt and Jordan in an effort to advance a ceasefire. French Foreign Minister Le Drian warned that unless a two-state solution is advanced, Israel risks turning into an apartheid state. In response, Ashkenazi [summoned](#) the French Ambassador for a dressing down and expressed Israel's objections to Le Drian's comments.
- **Europe seeks to draw red lines for Belarus, Israel is mum** - While the European Union imposed extensive personal and economic sanctions on Belarus, including a ban on flights over its air space, Israel was silent, avoiding a response to the call by former Belarus opposition leader Sannikov and even allowing Belarusian planes to land at Ben-Gurion Airport.

## D. Israel and the Mediterranean Basin

- **Turkey adopts confrontational stance vis-a-vis Israel** - President Erdogan [tweeted](#) harsh condemnation of Israel's actions at Al-Aqsa Mosque and said his country stands by the Palestinians. His tweet went out [in Hebrew](#), too. Erdogan held talks with various leaders, among them Abbas (Abu Mazen), Haniyeh, King Abdullah of Jordan, the emirs of Qatar and Kuwait, and Russian President Putin, and urged international intervention to stop Israeli aggression. Defense Minister Akar and Foreign Minister Çavuşoğlu joined his call. A [protest](#) was held outside the Israeli consulate in Istanbul, with demonstrators screening a Palestinian flag alongside the Turkish flag on the building walls. On the other hand, an Israeli foundation promoting cooperation between Israeli and Arab artificial intelligence experts [expanded](#) its activity to Turkey. The Israeli foundation and its Turkish partner held a launch event with the participation of Middle Eastern and North African entrepreneurs.
- **Maritime border negotiations with Lebanon continue, still without agreement** - American-mediated talks between Israel and Lebanon on delineating their maritime border [resumed](#) with a meeting at UNIFIL headquarters in Lebanon between a Lebanese and Israeli delegation, led by the director of Israel's Energy Ministry Adiri. Progress has yet to be achieved.

## E. Israel's Foreign Service

- **Working conditions and appointments** - The government continued to hold up approval of 35 diplomatic appointments made by the Foreign Ministry some six months prior. The union of the Ministry's diplomats [threatened to petition](#) the Supreme Court against the continued delay. In accordance with the emerging coalition agreements, Yesh Atid Chair Yair Lapid is expected to serve as Foreign Minister and Alternate Prime Minister. Knesset member Issawi Frej will serve as Minister of Regional Cooperation.