

Dubious Postponement of Netanyahu's Trial

By [Stephen Lendman](#)

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Hopefully delay isn't an escape hatch for Netanyahu to avoid long overdue justice.

Notably, charges of bribery, fraud and breach of trust he faces don't remotely rise to the level of his crimes of war, against humanity, and slow motion genocide committed against the Palestinian people.

These high crimes are what's most important to hold him accountable for in an international tribunal — followed by conviction on all counts and longterm imprisonment.

On Sunday, his trial scheduled to begin March 17 was postponed until May 24 on the same day his regime's justice minister Amir Ohana, a Likudnik Netanyahu loyalist, invoked emergency measures to combat COVID-19 — both issues unrelated to each other.

In response, the Jerusalem District Court announced the following:

"In light of developments regarding the spread of the coronavirus, and taking into account the latest guidelines given and the declaration of a state of emergency in the courts, we have decided to cancel the scheduled hearing."

Ohana declared a "state of emergency (to halt judicial proceedings except for largely undefined urgent ones) as part of the national effort to prevent the spread of the coronavirus."

Until proceedings were ordered largely halted for public health reasons, this action was only taken before for security reasons. Ohana changed the rules.

Following his announcement, the Movement for Quality of Government in Israel urged AG Mendelblit to stay the ruling, saying:

"This is a temporary minister in a temporary government that has never received the public's trust."

Ohana's ruling came days after the Jerusalem District Court rejected a request by Netanyahu's defense team to delay his trial for 45 days on dubious grounds of more time needed to receive and review all investigative materials related to the case.

Ohana's declaration means most, not all, judicial hearings are on hold. Some can go on at the discretion of courts, including issues "relating to the special emergency."

Halting proceedings on Netanyahu's case followed a recommendation by his health ministry

that “there is a real fear of serious harm to public health” — a dubious judgment unrelated to continuing court business normally.

On Sunday, Netanyahu’s health ministry said 200 Israelis tested positive for COVID-19, a minute percent of its population, showing no just cause for declaring a state of emergency.

Only two Israelis ill from the coronavirus are in serious condition, 11 in moderate condition, others with mild symptoms, according to the health ministry.

Around 40,000 Israelis are quarantined at home, including doctors, nurses, and pharmacists.

Tests for COVID-19 have been conducted on over 6,800 Israelis as of Sunday. The US with around 37-fold Israel’s population only tested about 11,000 people so far nationwide.

South Korea with around one-sixth the US population tests around 20,000 daily.

China through late February tested around 320,000 people, South Korea through March 13 nearly 250,000 people, Italy to date 86,000, Russia 77,000, Britain 30,000.

China’s Global Times cited the country’s Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, saying it provides 341,600 nucleic acid reagent test kits daily, enough to accommodate everyone in the country needing one with plenty available for export.

China’s BGI Group exported COVID-19 detection kits for testing around 310,000 people in 26 countries, including in Asia and Europe.

They’re available for export to the US in large numbers if permitted by the Trump regime — not so far.

He and his Health and Human Services Department (HHS) announced that tests will only be offered by his regime to individuals showing COVID-19 symptoms — instead of getting ahead of the curve to detect early and treat as needed, what’s vital in dealing with a highly contagious disease easily spread from person to person.

It’s unclear how many ill Americans were misdiagnosed with seasonal flu and treated accordingly.

While it’s highly unlikely that contagion in the US is anywhere near epidemic levels, in dealing with infectious diseases, widespread testing is important because it’s better to be safe than sorry.

Through mid-March, around 156,000 COVID-19 cases were reported worldwide, around 5,800 deaths from the disease — these numbers nowhere near suggesting a global pandemic.

According to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), there were 2,839,205 US deaths in 2019, including from the following diseases:

- Heart disease: 647,457
- Cancer: 599,108
- Chronic lower respiratory diseases: 160,201
- Stroke (cerebrovascular diseases): 146,383

- Alzheimer's disease: 121,404
- Diabetes: 83,564
- Influenza and pneumonia: 55,672
- Nephritis, nephrotic syndrome, and nephrosis: 50,633

Annual deaths from these diseases worldwide are at or near epidemic levels with no fear-mongering headlines blasted daily about them.

A few thousand COVID-19 infections in the US and a reported 59 deaths through Friday do not an epidemic make.

Around 40,000 Americans die in car crashes annually, around 36,000 from gun violence.

In 2019, there were 169,936 deaths by accidents and unintentional injuries, according to the CDC. There were 47,173 reported suicides.

All of the above numbers are far greater causes for concern in the US than COVID-19 — so far.

It doesn't mean that the virus can be taken lightly or can't rise to a much higher worrisome level.

It does mean that it hasn't so far and with proper steps taken at the federal, state and local levels, it should be controllable like other infectious diseases are handled.

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Award-winning author Stephen Lendman lives in Chicago. He can be reached at lendmanstephen@sbcglobal.net. He is a Research Associate of the Centre for Research on Globalization (CRG)

His new book as editor and contributor is titled "Flashpoint in Ukraine: US Drive for Hegemony Risks WW III."

<http://www.claritypress.com/LendmanIII.html>

Visit his blog site at sjlendman.blogspot.com.

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About the author:

Stephen Lendman lives in Chicago. He can be reached at lendmanstephen@sbcglobal.net. His new book as editor and contributor is titled "Flashpoint in Ukraine: US Drive for Hegemony Risks WW III."

<http://www.claritypress.com/LendmanIII.html> Visit his blog site at sjlendman.blogspot.com. Listen to cutting-edge discussions with distinguished guests on the Progressive Radio News Hour on the Progressive Radio Network. It airs three times weekly: live on Sundays at 1PM Central time plus two prerecorded archived programs.

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