

Israel, Turkey Hold Secret Talks in UAE

By [Middle East Monitor](#)

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Israeli and Turkish envoys yesterday flew to Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to hold secret backchannel talks on restoring diplomatic relations.

According to a Hebrew language report by [Ynet](#),

“an Israeli executive jet and a Turkish government executive plane took off at 09:00 [GMT] to the United Arab Emirates and stopped for a short time. The planes landed in Abu Dhabi at 14:30 and took off again [Monday] morning.”

The [Times of Israel](#) added that both aircrafts flew via the Jordanian capital Amman, but while “the flights are believed to be connected to the ongoing talks [...] neither government has confirmed their purpose”.

It is not known exactly what will be discussed by the two parties, but if the secret talks prove successful they are expected to return their respective ambassadors in early October, after the Jewish holiday season draws to a close, according to the *Times of Israel*.

Relations between Israel and Turkey have been severed since May when both countries became embroiled in a diplomatic spat against the backdrop of the [US embassy](#) move to Jerusalem and the Israeli massacre of Palestinian protesters during the [Great March of Return](#) in the [besieged](#) Gaza Strip. On 15 May, Turkey asked Israeli Ambassador Eitan Naeh [to leave](#) the country. In retaliation, Turkey’s consul general in Jerusalem Gurcan Turkoglu was summoned by the Israeli Foreign Ministry and asked to leave.

Relations were further soured when Turkish President, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, took to Twitter to condemn Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. He [tweeted](#):

“Netanyahu is the PM of an apartheid state that has occupied a defenseless people’s lands for 60+ yrs in violation of UN resolutions. He has the blood of Palestinians on his hands and can’t cover up crimes by attacking Turkey.”

Netanyahu [responded](#) via Twitter, saying:

“Erdogan is among Hamas’s biggest supporters and there is no doubt that he well understands terrorism and slaughter. I suggest that he not preach morality to us.”

The crisis deepened on 17 May when Turkish Deputy Prime Minister Recep Akdag [claimed](#)

that the Israeli and Egyptian governments had prevented a Turkish aircraft from transporting Palestinians injured in the Great March from Gaza to Turkey. Akdag called on the World Health Organisation (WHO) to intervene, explaining:

“I called the head of the World Health Organization and asked for support, similar to what they have done in the [2014 crisis](#) when they put pressure on [Israel].”



That the talks are being held in the UAE will also be seen as significant in light of the Gulf state’s normalisation of relations with Israel. In September, the UAE [agreed to allow](#) the Israeli national anthem to be played and the flag to be flown at an international judo tournament slated to be held in Abu Dhabi next month. The tournament will also see Israeli and Emirati judoists compete side by side.

Israel-UAE relations have also extended to security and political fields. In August it [emerged](#) that the UAE purchases Israeli security technology via a firm called Asia Global Technology, which is run by Israeli-American businessman Mati Kochavi. In June, an exposé by the *New Yorker* [revealed](#) that Israel and the UAE have been engaged in secret normalisation talks since the [Oslo Accords](#) of the 1990s. These meetings discussed the possibility of the UAE purchasing F-16 fighter jets from the US, which are known to be comprised of Israeli technology. The Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, Mohammed Bin Zayed, also gave his blessing for delegations of influential American Jews to be brought to Abu Dhabi to meet with Emirati officials and establish an intelligence-sharing relationship.

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