

Historic Flight From Israel to Morocco Reinforces President Trump's Peace Deal

Today President Donald Trump's son-in-law and White House senior adviser, Jared Kushner, flew on the first direct commercial flight from Israel to Morocco, making history since the peace deal the president signed earlier this month.

Meir Ben-Shabbat, Israel's national security adviser, who was also on the flight, said that "history is being written before our eyes."

Kushner is heading the American delegation in Rabat, where a series of agreements will be signed between Morocco and Israel, according to officials.

The 24-hour trip will allow the two countries to sign four agreements, one allowing direct flights between the two countries. The other agreements will focus on tourism, agriculture and general financial issues.

Morocco became the fourth Arab state to normalize ties with Israel this year after the Trump administration brokered agreements with United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Sudan.

The Palestinians severed ties with the U.S. after Trump recognized the contested city of Jerusalem as Israel's capital in late 2017. The Palestinians rejected Trump's Mideast plan early this year, paving the way for the U.S. to turn its focus to Israel's separate agreements with Arab countries, ABC News reports.

At a news conference, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu praised Kushner for showing "how wrong these naysayers were," and said Israel is "deeply indebted" to the

Trump administration.

Ivanka Trump tweeted:

After U.S. brokered peace deal, El Al Airlines operates first Israel-Morocco flight on December 22, 2020 ☐☐

– Ivanka Trump (@IvankaTrump) December 22, 2020

“We have several agreements we are looking to conclude on the trip, and hopefully it will pave the way toward a very warm peace,” Kushner said at a press conference on the tarmac before the flight.

White House Assistant to the President and Special Representative for International Negotiations Avi Berkowitz tweeted a video with the pilot declaring, “This marks history in the making.”

Another historic first flight with the team! Tel Aviv – Rabat

– Avi Berkowitz (@aviberkow45) December 22, 2020

U.S. Ambassador David Friedman recalled the illustrious history of the Jewish people of Morocco and thanked Trump for his efforts on behalf of this deal and the Abraham Accords in general.

In honor of the flight, El Al decorated the plane with graphics of a Hamsa and the Israeli, Moroccan and U.S. flags, seen in the video from the U.S. Embassy Morocco below:

The historic El Al flight #LY555 from Tel Aviv has landed in Rabat!

– U.S. Embassy Morocco (@USEmbMorocco) December 22, 2020

Over 50,000 Israeli tourists visit Morocco each year, but up until now, they have had to travel via third countries.

Morocco is home to North Africa's largest Jewish community, which dates back to ancient times and grew with the arrival of Jews expelled from Spain by Catholic kings from 1492. It reached about 250,000 in the late 1940s, 10% of the national population, but many Jews left after the creation of Israel in 1948, reports.

"As this new Middle East moves forward, I hope that all countries will focus on pursuing common interests for the benefits of their citizens, instead of being held back by stale thinking and old conflicts," Kushner said at a press conference. {eo}