

Shtayyeh Blames Israel for Coronavirus Spike, Says He'll Bring in UN

Dima Abumaria / July 6, 2020

Palestinian officials say lack of control over lands part of reason for resurgence

The rapid rise in the number of persons infected with COVID-19 in the West Bank has taken place because the Palestinian Authority does not control its borders and the crossings to Israel, in addition to the latter's "racist measures," PA Prime Minister Muhammad Shtayyeh said on Monday.

[...]

Gilead Sher, a senior researcher at the Tel Aviv-based **Institute for National Security Studies** and a former aide to then-prime minister Ehud Barak, told The Media Line that Shtayyeh's allegations were groundless.

"The COVID-19 virus knows no boundaries, and in fact, Israel itself is currently undergoing a second wave of the epidemic, graver than the initial one," he said.

Sher added that since the beginning of the outbreak, Hamas, the armed group that rules the Gaza Strip, had quietly allowed dozens of Gaza doctors, nurses and other medical personnel to obtain COVID-19 training in Israel or from Israeli medical staff.

"From an Israeli perspective, the full dimensions of the multi-dimensional crisis in the region – health-wise, societal-wise and economy-wise – are as yet unclear," he elaborated. "Nevertheless, the virus crisis has not, and will not, fundamentally change trends and power dynamics in the Middle East."

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