

Mr. Speaker, Members of Knesset,

It is with great satisfaction and gladness that the Government of Israel is placing before the Knesset the treaty of peace between the State of Israel and the Government of Jordan, which has been initialled. Tomorrow afternoon, the peace treaty will be signed at the Arava border crossing near Eilat. Tomorrow afternoon, we all hope that decades of hostility, war and bloodshed will come to an end. The time of peace has arrived.

Members of Knesset,

For many years we lived in the face of the rifle-sights and battlements of Jordanian sharpshooters. Civilians were shot and killed, IDF soldiers fell in reprisal operations, while maintaining security and in war. For many long years, we lived in the shadow of other words: infiltrators, Mandelbaum Gate, the city line, the Fast Hotel, bi-weekly convoys to Mount Scopus, the Hebrew University, Abu Tor, archeologists shot at Ramat Rachel, death at Mevo Betar.

There are many among us who still retain memories of night battles in Nahalin, Husan and Kalkilya. Some of our best soldiers paid with their lives.

We withstood two major wars against the Arab Legion and the Jordanian army the War of Independence and the Six Day War. In both, we defended our homes. In both we achieved our goals.

Generations were brought up here in this pain-filled land on deeds and words rooted in the bloody battles waged against the Jordanians: the falling of Gush Etzion and the murder of some of its residents, the loss of the Old City of Jerusalem, the empty marketplace, those who could not pray on the Temple Mount; Ammunition Hill, Augusta Victoria, the High Commissioner's residence and Tel el-Ful, French Hill and Givat Hamivtar; the War of Attrition which claimed so many lives, and the shells fired on Beit She'an; infiltrations from Jordan into Yarden and Beit Yosef.

Each such name is a heated battle, each such name is a story, each such name is a legend. Each reflects daring and ardent people those who are no longer with us because they remained on the killing fields, and those who have reached this day of peace. It is to those who fell, and to you, the living, that this peace is dedicated. Statesmen wrote it, you fought for it.

Members of Knesset,

The road to peace between Israel and Jordan began officially at the Madrid Conference three years ago. But the dialogue between us and the Jordanians has taken many shapes, on both sides of the Jordan, for the past 70 years. All Israeli governments, all Israeli prime ministers, maintained contacts with Jordan and strove for peace with that country. Historians and scholars will have much to relate in the generations to come about the complex relations between Amman and Jerusalem, relations of love and animosity, of war and peace.

The time of peace with Jordan has now come. In Madrid and in Washington, in the Arava, on both sides of the Dead Sea, in Beit Gavriel on the shores of the Sea of Galilee, in the Knesset, in Eilat, in Aqaba and in Amman over the past year, we have moved step by step towards peace.

In the Washington Declaration, signed in the presence of the U.S. President on July 25 this year, we announced the end of belligerency, of war, between Israel and Jordan. We presented this Declaration to you, and it was approved in the Knesset by a large majority, reflecting the broad national consensus in favor of the efforts to achieve peace with Jordan, of which we are glad. In the days

that have passed since the Washington Declaration, the negotiations took on new momentum, and throughout the nights representatives of Israel and Jordan met and worked to formulate the draft treaty of peace between Israel and Jordan.

In addressing the opening of the winter session of the Knesset, I said that I believed that a peace treaty with Jordan would be signed before the end of the current year. We kept our promise.

Following intensive negotiations in Aqaba and in Amman, we have arrived at the momentous hour. Last week, the peace treaty was initialled in Amman. The draft treaty was approved by the government of Israel, and to the best of my knowledge, by the government of Jordan as well. Today we are presenting it for the Knesset's approval.

This is a time of grace, and a time of thanks. I would like to thank the many people in the various government ministries and the ministers who head them, certainly the Foreign Minister who invested great effort all those who worked day and night in order to arrive at this moving day. I would like to express special thanks to two faithful civil servants Elyakim Rubinstein and Ephraim Halevy. The praise which they deserve is boundless.

Mr. Speaker, Members of Knesset,

You have before you the peace treaty with Jordan, in Hebrew and in English, where the English text is binding. The peace treaty with Jordan comprises 30 articles, and includes five annexes which address among others boundary matters, boundary demarcation, the Baqura/Naharayim and Zofar areas. The treaty also deals with water issues, police cooperation, environment, and interim arrangements for mutual border crossings. I would like to bring your attention to the 'agreed minutes' which have also been placed before you, which deal with various activities or the interpretation of certain articles. A map is appended as well. The actual treaty contains aerial photographs and detailed satellite photographs.

Members of Knesset,

What does the peace treaty with Jordan contain? In the Washington Declaration we announced the end to the state of belligerency between Israel and Jordan. The peace treaty which will be signed tomorrow elevates our relations to the highest level full peace and it comprises everything: from full diplomatic relations, the appointment of ambassadors and the establishment of embassies, to environment, the economy, and every field of endeavor.

What did we argue about, discuss? About the demarcation of the international boundary, water, security, the refugee problem, the nature of bilateral relations in short, normalization. Normalization means an Israeli bus departing from the central bus station in Jerusalem for Amman; normalization means Jordanian commercial planes crossing Israeli airspace on their way to Europe.

The international boundary is delimited, according to the treaty, with reference to the Mandatory boundary between the land of Israel and Transjordan. I must note here that this boundary was defined only verbally at the beginning of the Mandate period, and, with the exception of several kilometers at its southern end, was never demarcated. We had to jointly delimit the boundary and agree on how to mark it. We agreed, following negotiations, on a boundary based on the Mandate boundary the armistice line between Jordan and Israel in 1949, which has appeared on our maps since the early days of the state.

However, both sides also agreed to take into consideration the reality that has been created over the years, by means of mutual, minor border corrections. Neither state conceded a single square

centimeter of land in relation to the boundary defined in the armistice agreement. These corrections will enable the settlements in the Arava to continue to cultivate the land as they do today. These lands will remain under Israeli sovereignty, and they will continue to use the same water for irrigation. The minor border corrections also took into account security considerations and the proximity to the Arava road. In one location, a special arrangement was agreed upon with regard to some of the lands of Zofar.

Members of Knesset,

The question of the transfer of land to Jordan in return for land transferred from Jordan to Israeli sovereignty was reviewed by the Attorney General, along with the other legal aspects of the treaty. To the extent that the implementation of the peace treaty will require legislation, appropriate bills will be submitted to the Knesset in order to complete the legislation within the three months allotted in the treaty.

The peace treaty with Jordan stipulates that the supply of water to the settlements in the Arava will be provided from the Jordanian side in the current quantity, and perhaps beyond that. Parallel to this, we shall transfer to Jordan considerable amounts of water, as detailed in the treaty, from the north. The existing wells, whether under Israeli or Jordanian sovereignty, will be operated technically by an Israeli company

under Jordanian sovereignty.

Minor border corrections could not be applied to the cultivated lands of the settlement of Zofar, which are located several kilometers inside Jordan, according to the new international boundary. A special arrangement was therefore agreed upon, to continue for 25 years, with an option of extension. This arrangement, which will allow for the continued cultivation of the land, is based on an arrangement previously arrived at through negotiation with regard to the small island [on the Jordan River] located near Ashdot Ya'acov. This tract of land, 830 dunams, under the private ownership of the Israeli Electric Company since the time of Pinhas Rotenberg, remained within Israeli territory after 1948, although under Jordan sovereignty. This is not a leasing arrangement but rather an arrangement that will allow for the continuation of current activity as well as for the development of joint projects with Jordan. The Arava settlements and Kibbutz Ashdot Ya'acov which will be affected by the arrangement have expressed their consent.

Members of Knesset,

With regard to water, Israel agreed to transfer to Jordan 50 million cubic meters of water annually from the northern part of the country. The parties agreed to establish two dams, on the Jordan and Yarmouk Rivers, once funds will be found for this purpose. These will provide Jordan with an additional, similar quantity of water. Future plans also include water projects in the Arava which will allow for joint development, in both Israeli and Jordanian sovereign territory.

Mr. Speaker, Members of Knesset,

The major purpose of the security provisions of the treaty is to ensure that neither state, and for us the emphasis is of course on Jordan, will be able to join a hostile coalition. We believe that the treaty provides an apt solution to this. Jordan committed itself to wage war against terrorism, both operatives and infrastructure, and to cooperate to prevent the infiltration of terrorists across the border between us.

Our Jordanian neighbors also raised the refugee issue. The negotiations were not easy. Article 8 of

the treaty addresses this issue. It notes that the Arab-Israeli conflict gave rise to human problems on both sides, not only on one. The treaty defines frameworks to deal with the problems of the refugees and displaced persons. Of course, and this is the basic premise of all parties, these problems can only be resolved on a bilateral basis.

The reference to the sites holy to Islam in Jerusalem reiterates precisely the wording in the Washington Declaration, with no addition or detraction. The treaty makes no other reference to Jerusalem.

Most of the remaining articles of the treaty deal with bilateral matters, namely normalization. A series of negotiations was decided upon, from culture and science to the war against crime and drugs, transportation and roads, civil aviation, posts and telecommunications, tourism, environment, energy, the development of the Jordan Rift Valley, health, agriculture, and the Aqaba/Eilat area.

A joint committee will monitor the negotiations on economic agreements. These include, of course, the termination of boycotts and the formation of trade agreements, including a free trade zone.

Members of Knesset,

We very much wanted the people of Israel to actually sense the peace. It was therefore agreed that even before the establishment of diplomatic relations and before the completion of the tourism agreement within three months, controlled mutual tourism will begin immediately after the exchange of the instruments of ratification of the treaty. According to Jordanian law, the Jordanian parliament will ratify the agreement only after the signing ceremony tomorrow, and the instruments of ratification will be exchanged after the ratification of the treaty by the government of Israel. I presume that this will take place within about 10 days.

The agreed minutes also include a mutual commitment to consult on all economic and monetary issues in Judea and Samaria, in order to prevent detriment to either side.

Mr. Speaker, Members of Knesset,

The peace treaty presented today for the approval of the Knesset is a balanced document, which each side can see as fulfilling his major demands, and so it should be. For only a peace between two satisfied parties is a lasting peace. In this peace, there are no losers. In this peace, we are all winners.

This is the second peace treaty for the Israeli people, following after the peace treaty with Egypt signed by the late Prime Minister Menahem Begin. It constitutes another important step in consolidating the status of the Jewish people in the land of Israel, its historic homeland.

The peace treaty is not only a political agreement, but a fundamental and substantial change in our lives here. No longer are we a people living apart. This is a profound and fundamental change, which will affect our daily lives trucks will leave Haifa carrying freight to Amman; planes will take off from Sde Dov in Tel Aviv and land 30 minutes later in Amman; businessmen will fly to Jordan in the morning to close a deal and return in the evening to Jerusalem; families will take their children on a trip to Petra, three hours from Tel-Aviv. This change will affect each and every one of us, every day.

A word about Syria: We want to believe that the peace treaty with Jordan will advance an agreement with Syria. We do not yet have an agreement with Syria; talks yes, agreement no. The agreement with the Kingdom of Jordan, following upon the treaty with Egypt and the agreement with the

Palestinians, proves that patience has its compensation, that there is validity in a serious approach.

I cannot conclude without addressing the problem of terrorism the current terrorism carried out by the enemies of peace, the radical Islamic terrorist organizations who are responsible for 90 percent of the terrorist attacks carried out against us from among the Palestinian population in Judea, Samaria and Gaza, as well as the Lebanese organizations which carry out attacks against IDF and SLA forces in southern Lebanon. This terrorism hurts us, and we have been living with it for a long time.

There are those who ask: What is the sense of peace if terrorism continues? I say to them: I cannot promise that terrorism will cease. I can only promise that, in the end, we will defeat it. Peace is the only way to isolate terrorism. Peace will prove to the peoples of the region that there is an alternative.

Mr. Speaker, Members of Knesset, citizens of Israel,

Last week, we stood at night on the balcony of the royal palace in Amman, and saw the lights of Jerusalem glowing. So near, only several dozen kilometers away, but 46 years of hostility separated Amman from Jerusalem. Members of Knesset, from now on the road is safe.

The government of Israel is today submitting to the people of Israel the peace treaty initialled with the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. In Jerusalem and Amman, in Eilat and Aqaba, in Irbid and in Tiberias, a new page in the history of the State of Israel will be opened tomorrow, a wonderful page. Blessed is the people who have achieved this.

I shall conclude with the words of the prophet Isaiah: 'How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger of good tidings, that announceth peace; the harbinger of good tidings, that announceth salvation.' [Isaiah 52:7]

Members of Knesset, I ask that you approve the treaty of peace between Jordan and Israel.

Thank you.