

# *Saudi Arabia allows Israeli commercial planes to use its airspace*

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Riyadh, December 1 (RHC)-- Saudi Arabia has agreed to let Israeli airliners cross its airspace en route to the United Arab Emirates after talks between Saudi officials and White House senior adviser Jared

Kushner, news agency Reuters and Israeli media outlets have reported.

Kushner and Middle East envoys Avi Berkowitz and Brian Hook raised the issue shortly after they arrived in Saudi Arabia for talks. “We were able to reconcile the issue,” an official from the administration of United States President Donald Trump told Reuters on Monday.

The agreement was hammered out just hours before Israel’s first commercial flight to the UAE was planned on Tuesday morning. The Israir flight was at risk of being cancelled with no overflight agreement.

The direct flights are an offshoot of normalisation deals Israel reached this year with the UAE, Bahrain and Sudan. The UAE has already reaped benefits from normalization, including the White House pushing forward with arms sales, including an advanced fighter jet, to the Gulf country.

Kushner and his team were to meet the emir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and the emir of Kuwait later this week. One goal of the trip is to try to persuade Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries to end a three-year blockade of Qatar.

Qatar has been under an air, land and sea blockade imposed by GCC members Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Bahrain, and non-GCC member Egypt, since June 2017. They cut ties with Doha after claiming it supported “terrorism.” Qatar has vehemently rejected the allegations, saying there was “no legitimate justification” for severing relations.

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