

Senegal Defends UN Security Council Vote on Halting Israeli Settlements



Dakar, December 28 (RHC)-- Senegal has defended its recent UNSC vote to halt Israel's illegal settlement activities on Palestinian territories, after Tel Aviv recalls its ambassador to Dakar.

"Senegal's position must be saluted. The international community hails Senegal's stance, especially the Muslim nations," said government spokesman Seydou Gueye in a televised statement.

The UN Security Council Resolution 2334 was passed with 14 votes in favor and one abstention -- by the United States. It condemned the establishment of settlements by Israel in the occupied Palestinian territories as a "flagrant violation under international law," which it said was "dangerously imperiling the viability" of peace and the establishment of a Palestinian state.

"Senegal abided by its diplomatic vision. Since 1975, Senegal has been a member of the UN Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People," he added.

In relation to reports that Israel had also canceled all its aid programs in the west African nation, he noted that the government had not yet been officially informed of such a move. "When it is informed of such a

decision, it will issue a response," Gueye noted.

Meanwhile, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has summoned the U.S. ambassador to Israel to discuss Washington's abstention in the UNSC vote. Earlier, Israel summoned the ambassadors to Britain, China, Russia, France, Egypt, Japan, Uruguay, Spain, Ukraine and New Zealand over the resolution.

Palestinian factions in the occupied West Bank and the besieged Gaza Strip have collectively welcomed the resolution, with Foreign Minister Riyad al-Maliki describing the vote as a "victory for the Palestinian people." Prior to the vote, Tel Aviv attempted to block the vote and prompt a veto by its strongest ally, the United States.

More than half a million Israelis live in over 230 illegal settlements built since the 1967 Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories of the West Bank and East Jerusalem al-Quds.

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