

Sources say U.S. plans to open embassy in Jerusalem in May



Washington, Feb 24 (RHC)-- The United States is reportedly planning to open its embassy in Jerusalem in May, U.S. officials say. An official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said on Friday that most embassy staff will remain in Tel Aviv. "Come May, we're moving the ambassador and a small team to Arnona," the compound that currently houses the consular operations of the U.S. Consulate General in Jerusalem, the official said.

"What will happen by May, is a sign will be put up in Arnona identifying the facility as the US Embassy," the official added. Another U.S. official, also requesting anonymity, added that a new embassy building will be later constructed in another location in Jerusalem. U.S. President Donald Trump on December 6th defied global warnings and said Washington formally recognized Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and would begin the process of moving its embassy to the occupied city, breaking with decades of American policy.

His decision infuriated the Palestinians, who declared that Washington could no longer play a role as lead mediator in the Middle East peace process. It also sparked outrage across the Muslim world and even Washington's Arab allies.

The United Nations General Assembly on December 21st overwhelmingly voted in favor of a resolution that calls on the U.S. to withdraw its controversial recognition of Jerusalem as the Israeli capital. The

193-nation assembly adopted the resolution by a decisive vote of 128 to 9, with 35 abstentions.

Meanwhile, a senior Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) official has said Washington's decision to open its embassy in May to coincide with Nakba Day "is a provocation to Arabs." Saeb Erekat said that the move will result in "the destruction of the two state option, as well as a blatant provocation to all Arabs and Muslims."

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