

Palestine urges Egypt and Jordan to boycott U.S.-led Bahrain talks



Ramallah, June 13 (RHC)-- Palestinians have requested Egypt and Jordan to boycott the U.S.-led Bahrain conference, slated for June 25th and 26th, to unveil Donald Trump's "Deal of the Century."

Egypt and Jordan's participation is considered especially important since historically they have been key players in Israeli-Palestinian peace efforts and are also the only Arab states to have reached peace agreements with Israel.

"The Palestinian [National] Authority urges Egypt and Jordan not to attend the Bahrain conference," Ebrahim Melhem, a spokesman for the government said. According to Tareq Baconi, an analyst with the International Crisis Group based in Jerusalem, Egypt and Jordan are facing tremendous pressure to attend the conference.

"This is a significant disappointment for the Palestinians because it is a breaking of the ranks in the Arab region. Their call to boycott has not been heeded," Baconi told Reuters.

Palestine will boycott the conference as Trump's peace plan is heavily biased towards Israel. The initiative, driven by Jared Kushner, Donald Trump's son-in-law and White House adviser, was billed by the U.S. president as the "Deal of the Century," when it was leaked in May.

After several postponements, Washington is planning a “Peace for Prosperity” workshop during the June dates in Bahrain to introduce economic components of the plan.

A draft of the 'deal' outlines a two-state solution that includes the creation of a “New Palestine” that will not be allowed an army, will share Jerusalem as its capital with Israel, and all illegal settlements in the West Bank will become a part of Israel.

Palestinians would be left with a smaller share of the West Bank and some areas on the outskirts of Jerusalem with no control over border migration. Western and Arab sources confirmed the outline of the plan.

In a letter dated June 10 to foreign diplomats in the Palestinian areas, Saeb Erekat Secretary-General of the Palestine Liberation Organization, said, "Our presence in Manama, (Bahrain) would only be used as a legitimization of the initiative that aims at depriving us of our rights."

Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates all confirmed their attendance at the summit, a White House official said. Israel is yet to be formally invited.

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