

Russia denounces U.S. decision on Israeli settlements in West Bank



Moscow, November 20 (RHC)-- The Russian Foreign Ministry has denounced a statement by U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo that Washington will no longer treat Israeli settlements in the West Bank as inconsistent with international law.

"We regard this decision of Washington as another step aimed at scrapping the international legal base of the Middle East settlement, which will aggravate the already tense situation in Palestinian-Israeli relations," a ministry statement said.

Russia reaffirms its principled position reflected in a United Nations Security Council resolution, which states that building such settlements in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967 violates international law, it said.

The U.S. announcement also hampers a Palestinian-Israeli settlement on the basis of the two-state principle, as well as the establishment of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East, the statement added.

Russia urges all parties involved to refrain from steps that could provoke a new dangerous escalation in the region and impede the creation of conditions for the resumption of direct Palestinian-Israeli negotiations, the ministry said.

Pompeo said at a press conference earlier this week that the U.S. decision, which reversed four decades of U.S. policy on the issue, had been made based on the "reality on the ground."

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