

Palestine may completely sever relations with U.S. after position on Israeli settlements



Ramallah, November 28 (RHC)-- President Mahmoud Abbas has warned that Palestine could fully sever relations with the United States after the White House defied international law and backed Israeli settlements built on occupied Palestinian land.

“We are ready to go to a complete breakdown of relations with [the U.S.],” Abbas told Russian media, when Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank marked a ‘Day of Rage’ against Washington’s much-criticized policy shift on Israel’s land grab.

Last week, the administration of U.S. President Donald Trump effectively backtracked on Washington’s four-decade policy on the illegal status of Israeli settlements built in the West Bank. U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said Israeli settlement expansion was “not per se inconsistent with international law,” in an announcement that drew widespread international condemnation.

Mahmoud Abbas said that the measure had been condemned by “almost every country in the world,” and that Palestinian authorities would not allow the move to go unanswered. “The U.S. administration has long been hostile to the Palestinian people,” Abbas said, highlighting Washington’s earlier measures,

including cutting funding for the UN's aid program for Palestinian refugees and recognizing occupied Jerusalem al-Quds as Israel's capital.

Following the embassy transfer, Abbas rejected the U.S. as the sole mediator in Palestine's decades-long conflict with Israel due to its bias towards Tel Aviv, saying the Palestinians will not accept the deal the Trump administration has been unilaterally drawing up on the issue. The yet-to-be-unveiled deal, according to reports, undermines Palestinian territorial rights in exchange for specific economic incentives.

Citing Abbas on Tuesday, Russia Sputnik news agency said that the Palestinian Authority intends to turn to the International Criminal Court (ICC) and completely sever ties with the Israeli regime if it proceeds with a plan to annex the Jordan Valley in the West Bank. "As for [Israeli Prime Minister] Benjamin Netanyahu's intention to pass a law on Israel's annexation of the Jordan Valley, we are closely monitoring his steps in this direction," the Palestinian president said.

Netanyahu has promised to annex the Jordan Valley if he is re-elected, drawing sharp criticism from the Palestinians as well as countries in the Middle East. "If the Israeli premier really does something like this, we will turn to the UN, the International Criminal Court, and we'll finally and irrevocably sever all relations with Israel," Abbas added.

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