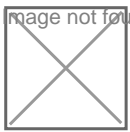


Israel's annexation plans will disintegrate Palestine into over 220 pieces of land



Ramallah, June 14 (RHC)-- The secretary general of the Palestinian National Initiative (PNI) has strongly condemned the Israeli regime's controversial plans to annex large parts of the occupied West Bank, saying such a move will break up Palestinian territories into 224 partitioned pieces of land.

"The Israeli administration is unequivocally planning to implement the annexation scheme, as it wants to exploit the opportunity of global preoccupation with the coronavirus pandemic and advance its plans even if [US President Donald] Trump concedes defeat in the upcoming elections," Arabic-language Quds Press International News Agency quoted Mustafa Barghouti as saying over the weekend.

He added: "[Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin] Netanyahu also wants to use the annexation plan as a cover-up in the face of accusations of corruption leveled against him. But more importantly, the scheme is at the heart of Zionism and is the largest land grab operation [by Israel] since 1948."

Commenting on the repercussions of the annexation plan, the PNI chief said the looming measure has "destroyed the possibility of the establishment of a Palestinian state, put an end to the prospect of negotiations with the Zionist regime, and demolished the [so-called] two-state solution."

Barghouti concluded that the most proper response to Israel's annexation plan is the one by the Palestinian Authority that severed all its agreements besides security coordination with the Israeli regime, and called for the formation of a joint Palestinian national leadership, dropping the strategy of betting on negotiations, and mounting popular resistance.

Israel's decision has enraged the Palestinians and drawn international criticism. German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas said on Wednesday that the European Union supports the so-called two-state solution for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and rejects any annexation plans.

"We are worried about the repercussions of the (Israeli) annexation decision," Maas said at a joint press conference with his Jordanian counterpart Ayman Safadi in Jordan's capital Amman, adding that the priority is "to bring the two sides to the negotiating table."

For his part, Safadi warned that any Israeli annexation of Palestinian land is a flagrant violation of international law, and could lead to institutionalized apartheid in the occupied territories.

"Jordan will continue working with international partners to prevent the annexation and save the region from drowning in further conflict," he said.

The Palestinian Hamas resistance movement has called on Arab countries to resort to urgent action aimed at preempting Israel's plan to annex huge swathes of the occupied West Bank. Netanyahu, who was sworn into office for another term on May 17, has set July 1 for the start of cabinet

discussions on extending Israeli “sovereignty” over settlements in the West Bank and the Jordan Valley.

In response to Israel’s decision, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas declared the end of all agreements signed with Israel and the United States on May 19.

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