

European lawmakers say Israel's illegal annexation impedes Palestinian self-determination



Brussels, July 30 (RHC)-- A group of European parliamentarians has condemned Israel's plan to annex large parts of the occupied West Bank as "illegal," saying the scheme, which will deprive the Palestinians of their right to self-determination, should not "pass unchallenged."

In a statement released in Brussels, the lawmakers from the UK, France, Ireland, Belgium and Sweden vowed to challenge the Tel Aviv regime's annexation bid in an attempt to "deter this criminal act."

"We, the undersigned, share our deep concern at the threat of illegal Israeli annexation of part of the occupied Palestinian West Bank. Unilateral annexation of any part of the West Bank would be a grave breach of international law, and a further obstacle to achieving equal rights and self-determination for Palestinians. Annexation must not pass unchallenged," the statement read.

Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu plans to annex about a third of the occupied West Bank, including settlements and the fertile Jordan Valley. The scheme is, however, on hold amid deep divisions within Netanyahu's coalition cabinet and against the backdrop of international condemnations.

The signatories to the document, titled “No to Israeli annexation plans,” stressed their approval of their respective governments’ statements that said the Israeli annexation would not be recognized because it violates international law.

They also commended the decisive votes in their parliaments in favor of the recognition of the Palestinian state on pre-June 1967 borders, warning Israel of consequences over the land grab initiative.

“We considered commensurate consequences in the event of annexation. We agreed that Israel’s international standing, already harmed by systematic illegal acts of settlement construction, would be damaged very significantly by any act of annexation – and that Israel should not benefit economically from these acts,” the European MPs said.

They further asked parliamentarians elsewhere in Europe and in the United States to join a coalition “to avert annexation and to preserve the prospect of Palestinian self-determination” within the so-called two-state framework.

The European lawmakers also expressed their support for an anti-annexation letter initiated by Avraham Burg, former speaker of the Israeli parliament (Knesset), and signed by 1,080 parliamentarians across Europe.

“Europe must take the lead in bringing international actors together to prevent annexation and to safeguard the prospects of the two-state solution and a just resolution to the conflict,” the letter read. “Acquisition of territory by force has no place in 2020 and must have commensurate consequences.”

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