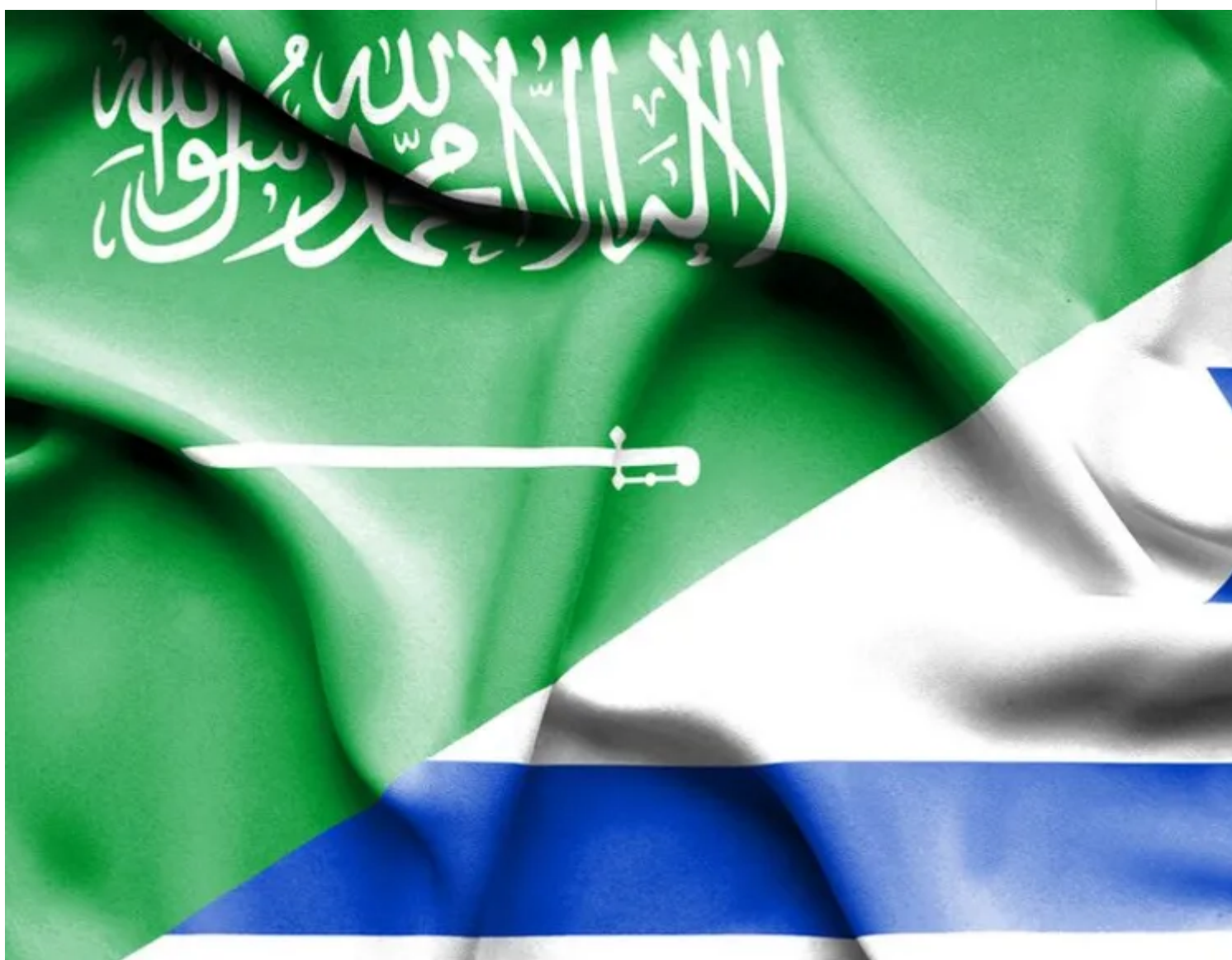


*Saudi Arabia slams Netanyahu's
suggestion it should host
Palestinian state*



Riyadh, February 10 (RHC)-- Saudi Arabia has condemned Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's suggestion that the kingdom's land be used to establish a Palestinian state.

In a statement on Sunday, the Saudi Foreign Ministry accused Netanyahu of attempting to "divert attention" from Israel's ongoing "crimes" in Gaza, including "ethnic cleansing."

"The kingdom affirms that the Palestinian people have a right to their land, and they are not intruders or immigrants to it who can be expelled whenever the brutal Israeli occupation wishes," said the Foreign Ministry.

On Thursday, Netanyahu responded to an interviewer on Israel's Channel 14 who misspoke by saying "Saudi state" instead of "Palestinian state."

"These dangerous and irresponsible statements confirm the approach of the Israeli occupation forces in their disrespect for international and UN laws and treaties and the sovereignty of states," said GCC Secretary-General Jasem Mohamed Albudaiwi.

The Saudi Foreign Ministry thanked the "brotherly countries" for denouncing Netanyahu's remarks.

Discussions of the fate of Palestinians in Gaza had already been upended by an earlier shock proposal from United States President Donald Trump for the US to "take over" and "own" Gaza, resettling Palestinians elsewhere in a move that would amount to ethnic cleansing. That suggestion, amid a fragile ceasefire between Israel and Hamas in Gaza, has also been roundly condemned by Arab leaders.

Trump has also said Saudi Arabia would not require the formation of a Palestinian state as a precondition to normalise ties with Israel, a claim Riyadh has repeatedly denied.

Israel's war on Gaza has killed at least 61,700 Palestinians including about 18,000 children, and wrecked much of the enclave's infrastructure. More than 14,000 more people are missing and are presumed to be dead.

The Hamas-led attack on Israel on October 7 that sparked the war killed 1,139 people and seized more than 250 captives, dozens of whom are still believed to be in the enclave.

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