

UK, France, Germany and Italy support Arab plan for Gaza reconstruction



London, March 9 (RHC)-- Britain, France, Germany and Italy have backed a proposal by Arab nations to reconstruct the Gaza Strip that would avoid displacing the territory's roughly two million residents from

their homeland.

In a joint statement on Saturday, the four European countries' foreign ministers said they supported the \$53 billion Gaza reconstruction plan, endorsed by Arab leaders, that counters US President Donald Trump's plan to take over the territory and permanently resettle its population.

"The plan shows a realistic path to the reconstruction of Gaza and promises – if implemented – swift and sustainable improvement of the catastrophic living conditions for the Palestinians living in Gaza," they said.

Earlier in the day, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) formally adopted Arab League's unified plan for the future of Gaza at an emergency meeting in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia earlier in the day. The OIC "adopts the plan ... on the early recovery and reconstruction of Gaza," the OIC said in a statement.

The 57-member body also called on the international community to support the regional initiative.

Egyptian Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty welcomed the OIC endorsement, expressing hope to gain support from the wider international community, including the United States.

Arab leaders ratified the Gaza reconstruction plan at an emergency summit in the Egyptian capital, Cairo. The Arab plan — proposed by Egypt — was rejected by both the US and Israel, claiming that it failed to address realities in Gaza.

Both the White House and the Tel Aviv regime said they stood by Trump's plan to expel the territory's Palestinian residents and transform it into a "Riviera" owned by the United States.

Trump proposed in February that Washington would take over control of the Gaza Strip — possibly with the help of U.S. troops — to create a "Riviera" of West Asia.

The U.S. president said the displaced Palestinians would have no right of return since, he claimed, they would have "much better housing" in Egypt, Jordan and other countries.

Trump's comments sparked widespread condemnation, with Palestinians viewing it as a clear endorsement of ethnic cleansing.

Meanwhile, Iran has strongly rejected the U.S. administration's bids "to forcibly relocate the population of Gaza," calling it a "clear violation of international law, including the Fourth Geneva Convention." Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi made the remarks while speaking at an extraordinary meeting of the OIC foreign ministers, convened to address Israeli aggression and crimes against the Palestinian people in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia on Friday.

He also stressed that any attempt to alter the "demographic and cultural fabric of the occupied Palestine" is inadmissible and contrary to the principles of justice and international law.

[SOURCE: PRESS TV and AFP NEWS AGENCY]

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