

World Leaders to Attend Palestine UN Flag-Raising Ceremony



United Nations, September 16 (RHC)-- The Palestinian ambassador to the United Nations says hundreds of world leaders have been invited to take part in a ceremony to raise the country's flag at the UN headquarters in New York later this month.

"We expect hundreds of leaders to be with [Palestinian] President [Mahmoud] Abbas to celebrate that moment and to participate in the ceremony," Riyad Mansour told reporters on Tuesday.

He hailed the flag-raising ceremony, due to be held on September 30, as a "beacon of hope" for all Palestinians, saying the gesture further reveals the determination of the Palestinian nation to seek the establishment of an independent state and a full UN membership.

"It will be a glorious day, a proud day for us," he stated, adding that Palestinians all over the world will also hoist the national flag at schools, businesses and their cars on the same day.

Last week, the UN General Assembly approved a resolution that allows the flags of the non-member observer states of Palestine and the Holy See to "be raised at (UN) Headquarters and United Nations

Offices following the flags of the member states."

As many as 119 countries voted in favor of the resolution, eight voted against, and 45 abstained.

Before the voting session, Washington and Tel Aviv expressed their opposition to the measure, with U.S. State Department spokesman Mark Toner describing it as "counterproductive" and Israel's envoy to the UN, Ron Prozor, dismissing it as "a blatant attempt to hijack the UN."

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