

Palestine President Welcomes French Statehood Plan



Addis Ababa, February 2 (RHC)-- Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas has welcomed France's ultimatum to Tel Aviv that Paris will recognize Palestine as an independent state should a new push to revive Israel-Palestinian talks fail.

Abbas made the comments during an address to the 26th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union in the Ethiopian capital city of Addis Ababa. He highlighted the need to hold an international conference devoted to the issue and activate the United Nations Security Council's role vis-a-vis the Palestinian cause.

"We welcome the French initiative and affirm that the status quo cannot continue. Our people will continue to use political and legal methods, through a peaceful and popular resistance, to achieve our national rights," Abbas said.

Abbas' remarks came after French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius said Paris is planning to hold an international conference in the "coming weeks" to bring together the Israeli and Palestinian sides as well as the U.S. and some European and Arab states. Fabius further emphasized that France will recognize a Palestinian state if efforts to find a solution to the conflict failed.

Efforts to bring an end to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict collapsed in April 2014 and since then there have been no serious attempts to resume negotiations between the two sides. The Palestinian president further called for an end to the Israeli occupation, illegal settlement activities and seizure of Palestinian natural resources.

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