

Trump Freezes Obama's Last-Minute Release of \$220 Million to Palestine



Washington, January 28 (RHC)-- In his latest attempt to sideline the Palestinians, U.S. President Donald Trump froze his predecessor Barack Obama's last-minute \$220 million in aid payment to the Palestinian government, according to Palestinian officials.

Sources told the Times of Israel that U.S. officials informed Palestinian Prime Minister Rami Hamdallah Tuesday that the funds were not expected to be delivered anytime soon. Meanwhile, U.S. State Department spokesperson Mark Toner said his department was "currently reviewing last minute spending approved by the previous administration and will make adjustments if needed to ensure that it aligns with the priorities of the Trump-Pence administration."

The money had already been approved by the U.S. Congress in the 2015-2016 fiscal year and was slated for humanitarian aid efforts in the West Bank and Gaza, but at least two Republican members stood against it.

Traditionally, presidents have respected delays placed on funds, though these are not legally binding once the money is allocated. Tired of waiting for the Republicans to come around, however, Obama

decided to use his power to release the funds in the last hours of his presidency.

President Trump is poised to become one of the most friendly U.S. leaders in recent history toward Israel's continued colonization of Palestine. He has nominated David Friedman, a supporter of Israeli settlement expansion in the West Bank, as his ambassador to Tel Aviv.

His administration is also in the early stages of preparing for the controversial relocation of the U.S. Embassy in Israel to Jerusalem, a promise Trump repeatedly vowed to deliver on and had right-wing politicians cheering during his election campaign.

Several Israeli ministers praised his victory in November and said his reign would mean an end to the two-state solution and the prospect of establishing a viable Palestinian state. Meanwhile, the Palestinian leadership has vowed to withdraw its recognition of Israel if Trump delivers on the embassy move promise.

The news came as Israel approved building permits for thousands of homes in illegal settlements in the West Bank over the past week in expectation that Trump will row back on the previous administration's criticism of such projects.

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