

U.S. Embassy road signs installed in Jerusalem as Trump ignores Palestinian claim to city



Jerusalem, May 7 (RHC)-- U.S. Embassy road signs went up in Jerusalem Monday ahead of next week's opening of the mission in accordance with President Donald Trump's recognition of the city as Israel's capital.

Workmen installed the black-and-white signs, in English, Hebrew and Arabic, along roads leading to a U.S. consulate building in south Jerusalem that will be remodeled as the embassy when it is formally relocated from Tel Aviv on May 14.

"This is not a dream. It is reality. I am proud and moved to have hung this morning the first new signs that were prepared for the U.S. Embassy," Jerusalem Mayor Nir Barkat wrote on Twitter.

But Palestinians do not share this enthusiasm. "This (embassy) move is not only illegal but will also thwart the achievement of a just and lasting peace between two sovereign and democratic states on the 1967 borders, Israel and Palestine living side by side in peace and security," Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat said in a statement.

At the consulate site, mechanical diggers cleared the area as workers posted embassy signs along city roads and hung U.S., Israeli and Jerusalem flags from street lights.

The U.S. president ended decades of Washington's policy stating that the status of the city of Jerusalem must be decided as part of a peace agreement between Israel and Palestine, a position that most of the international community continues to fully support.

In the 1967 war, Israel took over the eastern part of the city as well as the West Bank from Jordan. In 1980, Israel annexed East Jerusalem and declared the whole city as its capital, a move that was rejected by most countries in the world.

The western side of the city is part of the widely-accepted territory of the state of Israel which was founded in 1948 after the end of the British Mandate for Palestine. The Palestinian leadership and most of the international community consider East Jerusalem as occupied territory and the future capital of a sovereign Palestinian state.

In March, Guatemalan President Jimmy Morales said that his country would relocate its embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem on May 16, two days after the U.S. move.

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