

UAE gives Israeli delegation permission to attend international conference



Conference of the States Parties
to the United Nations Convention
AGAINST
CORRUPTION

Abu Dhabi, December 17 (RHC)-- The United Arab Emirates has given permission to an Israeli delegation of senior officials to take part in an international conference, as the Persian Gulf littoral state is warming diplomatic relations with the Tel Aviv regime after years of clandestine relations.

The Palestine Information Center reported that Israeli delegates, headed by deputy attorney general Dina Zilber, arrived in the Emirati capital of Abu Dhabi on Monday to participate in the eighth session of the Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption, which kicked off on December 16 and will run through December 20th.

The report added that the Israeli delegation is made up of high-ranking officials from the public prosecution, criminal investigation and the so-called justice ministry. The development came only a day after it was reported that Israeli authorities are hoping to reach out to Arab peoples through participation in the Expo 2020 Dubai, which the biggest and most luxurious city of the UAE is going to host for 173 days.

“To us, the added value is in the Arab and Muslim visitor,” said Elazar Cohen, the Israeli foreign ministry's point man for the expo, which is organized by the Paris-based Bureau International des Expositions (BIE).

An auditorium below the pavilion will offer visitors an interactive multimedia experience, the foreign ministry's director general Yuval Rotem told AFP. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has described the Israeli expo pavilion as part of "the continued progress of normalization with the Arab states."

The 70-year-old chairman of the Likud – National Liberal Movement alleges that building relations with Arab countries will push the Palestinians toward a 'peace deal' with the Israeli regime.

The UAE's most populous city of Dubai is expected to allow tourists holding Israeli passports to attend the Expo 2020. "Israeli and the UAE's authorities have been in talks for a while in order to allow those with Israeli passports to attend the expo in Dubai," an unnamed source within the expo's management team told the daily at the time.

The source added: "These talks are happening because both sides want to see the expo turn into the biggest exhibition in the world. The UAE invested tremendous amounts of money and thought into the event and they want Israelis to be welcomed as well."

Another source said the event in Dubai could be a great pilot run during which Israeli tourists would be allowed into the country, and it can be a signal that the UAE "might leave its doors open to Israeli tourists permanently."

The Israeli foreign minister, Israel Katz, told a ministerial meeting in Jerusalem al-Quds on August 6 that he was working toward "transparent normalization and signed agreements" with a number of Arab Persian Gulf littoral states.

Katz visited Abu Dhabi on June 30 for a UN environmental conference, where he discussed cooperation against Iran, as well as economic and transport collaboration, Israeli i24NEWS television news network reported.

On October 26 last year, the Israeli culture and sports minister, Miri Regev, traveled to the UAE to accompany Israel's judo team at the Abu Dhabi Grand Slam 2018. Her visit marked the first of its kind by an Israeli minister to a Persian Gulf littoral state.

The president of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) said last December that the then chief of staff of the Israeli military, Gadi Eisenkot, had secretly traveled twice to the UAE a month earlier, and had met with senior officials there. Mort Fridman said an agreement on the sale of Israeli military hardware to the UAE was struck during the meeting.

Earlier this year, Israel re-launched a "virtual embassy" in a bid to "promote dialogue" with the Persian Gulf Arab states. Arab countries — except for Jordan and Egypt — have no formal relations with the Israeli regime.

Israel's trade with Persian Gulf states is estimated to stand at about \$1 billion annually, according to a study published by the Tony Blair Institute for Global Change in August 2018.

"The Palestinian cause is no longer at the forefront of Arabs' interests, as it used to be for long decades," he said. "It has sharply lost priority in light of the challenges, threats and problems that face countries of the region."



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