

Palestinians threaten to quit Oslo Accords over Trump peace plan



Ramallah, January 27 (RHC)-- Palestinian officials have threatened to withdraw from the Oslo Accords signed with Israel if U.S. President Donald Trump announces his Middle East peace plan this week. In a statement on Sunday, the Palestinian Authority's foreign ministry called for "a clear international declaration rejecting 'the deal of the century'" that it said would endanger regional stability.

Chief Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat said the Palestine Liberation Organization reserved the right "to withdraw from the interim agreement" if Trump unveils his plan. Erekat said the U.S. deal was "an attempt to destroy the two states," and would "open the doors of one person one vote from the river Jordan to the Mediterranean."

The Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement, signed in Washington in 1995, sought to put into practice the first Oslo peace deal agreed two years earlier. Sometimes called Oslo II, the interim agreement set out the scope of Palestinian autonomy in the occupied West Bank and Gaza.

Hamas leader Ismail Haniya on Sunday said the Middle East peace plan "will not pass" and could lead to renewed Palestinian violence. "We firmly declare that the 'deal of the century' will not pass. The new plot aimed against Palestine is bound to fail," and could lead the Palestinians to a "new phase in their struggle" against Israel, Haniya said in a statement.

The Palestinian criticism came as Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu headed to Washington, where Trump was expected to release the plan before Tuesday. The Palestinian leadership was not invited and has already rejected Trump's initiative amid tense relations with the US president over his recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's undivided capital.

The Palestinians see occupied East Jerusalem as the capital of their future state and believe Trump's plan buries the two-state solution that has been for decades the cornerstone of international Middle East diplomacy.

Netanyahu said on Sunday he hopes to "make history" during his upcoming trip to the White House for the expected unveiling of Trump's Middle East peace plan. Addressing his cabinet shortly before departing for Washington, Netanyahu described the current environment, characterised by close ties with Trump, as a once in a lifetime opportunity for Israel that "we must not miss."

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