

European Union rejects Trump's so-called Deal of the Century



Brussels, February 5 (RHC)-- The European Union's top diplomat has rejected the annexation clause featured in U.S. President Donald Trump's Middle East plan, which is widely viewed as a scheme aimed at sidestepping international law and legitimizing Israel's occupation of Palestinian territories.

EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell made the remarks in a statement that he made from Brussels on Tuesday, a day after ending a short tour of the Middle East that had taken him to Jordan and Iran.

"The U.S. initiative, as presented on 28 January, departs from these internationally agreed parameters," Borrell said of Trump's proposed plan resolving the decades-long Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

EU governments attach no legal status to the settlements that have been built on the Palestinian territory of the West Bank and Syria's Golan Heights since Israel's occupation of the lands in 1967, he said, repeating the bloc's stance on the matter.

Last week, Trump unveiled the outlines of his so-called 'Deal of the Century,' which envisioned the recognition of Jerusalem al-Quds as Israel's "capital" -- although Palestinians want the occupied holy city's eastern part as the capital of their future state.

Trump also said that under the plan, Israel would be annexing the settlements that the Israeli regime has built in the West Bank since the occupation. This is while all previous foreign-mediated agreements between the Palestinians and Israelis as well as repeated United Nations' resolutions have mandated Tel Aviv to withdraw behind the 1967 borders.

Palestinians, who had already spurned the plot, repeated their opposition to it soon after Trump's announcement. Borrell further said: "Steps towards annexation, if implemented, could not pass unchallenged."

"To build a just and lasting peace, the unresolved final status issues must be decided through direct negotiations between both parties," Borrell said, noting the issues of the borders of a Palestinian state and the final status of Jerusalem al-Quds were among those still in dispute.

The EU says it does not think that U.S. President Donald Trump's initiative for resolution of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict stands the chance to succeed. While in Jordan, the European official also said he did not think that the U.S. initiative stood the chance to succeed.

"The experience over the past 50 years has shown that without agreement among all sides, no peace plan has the chance to succeed," he said amid uniform Palestinian rejection of the scheme.

Earlier, Trump even formally recognized Jerusalem as Israel's "capital," and Syria's Golan Heights as the Israeli regime's "sovereign territory," exceeding all his predecessors in terms of pro-Tel Aviv favors.

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