

# *Hamas condemns new Israeli cabinet union between war criminals and the Zionist right*

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Gaza City, May 18 (RHC)-- The spokesperson for the Palestinian resistance movement Hamas has slammed the formation of the new Israeli cabinet as a union between “war criminals and Israel’s far right”, calling for Palestinian unity to counter it.

“The addition of war criminals into Israel’s far right government will exacerbate the challenges facing the Palestinian people,” Hazem Qassem said in a statement on Sunday. The remarks come after Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his former election rival and centrist Blue and White leader Benny Gantz swore in their new power-sharing cabinet earlier in the day.

The formation of new cabinet put an end to three rounds of inconclusive elections between Netanyahu – known for his hawkish rightwing policies - and Gantz, which led the Israeli military from 2011 until 2015. Qassem stressed in his statement that Palestinians will continue their resistance against Zionist occupation regardless of the developments.

“The people of Palestine will not pay the slightest attention to the formation of the new cabinet,” he said, adding however, that Palestinians will need to counter the new cabinet, which seeks to enact radical

measures such as the annexation of the West Bank, by focusing on unity and cohesion.

Netanyahu has set July 1st for the start of cabinet discussions on extending Israeli appropriation to settlements in the West Bank and annexing the Jordan Valley. Israel was given a green light to annex settlements and other strategic territory in the occupied West Bank after United States President Donald Trump unveiled the so-called “deal of the century” in January.

Palestinian groups have firmly rejected the joint Israeli-American initiative as a further encroachment upon Palestinian land and have called for a unified stance against the occupation.

In an opinion piece published earlier this week, former UN human rights investigator Richard Falk decried what he described as an emerging trend of “gangster geopolitics” shared between Tel Aviv and Washington. “Israeli-U.S. relations are being managed in accord with ‘gangster geopolitics,’ and without paying heed to international law or UN authority,” he said.

Falk added that Israel’s recent push to annex the occupied West Bank was a “dark tale” of utter disregard of international law being openly endorsed by the United States.

“It is a despicable act that sweeps law and morality aside while political space is forcibly cleared for land theft. It follows an incredible pattern of official behavior both in the US and Israel,” he said.

“As could be expected, Donald Trump's America is creating no friction, not even whispering to Netanyahu at least to offer legal justifications or explain away the negative effects of annexation on Palestinian peace prospects,” he added.

Falk highlighted that domestic supporters of Tel Aviv’s annexation plans defended the measures solely based on Zionist ambitions of Jewish control over the territories. “As with Israeli critics of annexation, supporters feel no need to explain, or even notice, the disregard of Palestinian grievances and rights,” he added.

The Princeton University professor also pointed to Washington’s refusal to ease sanctions on countries grappling with the coronavirus outbreak as another instance of an emerging trend of “gangster geopolitics”.

“Intensifying United States sanctions in the midst of the health crisis on already deeply afflicted countries such as Iran and Venezuela is one striking example,” he said. “Instead of suspension and empathy, we find a tone-deaf Washington almost gleefully upping its ‘maximum pressure’ policy, perversely grabbing the opportunity to ratchet up the pain level,” he added.

Numerous world leaders and figures, many within the United States, have called on Washington to stop its unilateral sanctions against Iran and other affected countries amid the coronavirus outbreak.

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