

Arab League rejects unilateral Israeli projects and calls for end to occupation

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Cairo, February 10 (RHC)-- The Arab League has reaffirmed its rejection of any unilateral Israeli projects or steps in violation of the rights of the Palestinian people and international law. In their final statement after an emergency meeting in Cairo, the foreign ministers of the member states of the Arab League said they opposed any move by the Israeli regime that would “undermine the two-state solution, for which there is no alternative.”

They urged Israel to immediately resume negotiations with Palestine, and stressed the “adherence of the Arab countries to the two-state solution, which embodies the independent and sovereign Palestinian state,” according to Egypt’s official MENA news agency. They also urged all international bodies to make every effort to launch credible negotiations that can end the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories.

The ministers welcomed a ruling by the International Criminal Court (ICC) on its territorial jurisdiction in Palestine, which cleared its chief prosecutor to investigate Israeli war crimes over the objections of the Tel Aviv regime.

Addressing the meeting, Arab League Secretary-General Ahmed Aboul Gheit stressed that the Palestinian issue was the focus of Arab consensus, Arab News reported. “The Palestinian position must be strengthened internally and externally,” he said, warning that Israeli settlement activity in the West Bank and East Jerusalem al-Quds was a serious obstacle to the two-state solution.

He also renewed the Arab League’s commitment to supporting Palestine until it achieves official statehood. The meeting coincided with reconciliation talks in Egypt between the leaders of rival Palestinian factions Hamas and Fatah, which respectively rule the Gaza Strip and the West Bank.

“The Cairo dialog is the culmination of an effective process that began months ago, during which we worked together with the brothers in the Fatah movement and all the factions,” Ismail Haniyeh, the head of the Hamas political bureau, said in a statement issued earlier this week.

The meeting also comes as normalization deals signed between some Arab governments and the Israeli regime have enraged Palestinians and other Muslim nations, which have slammed the deals as a stab in the back of the Palestinian people. The governments of the UAE, Bahrain, Sudan, and Morocco have signed normalization deals with Israel.

Meanwhile, Egypt on Tuesday opened its Gaza border crossing “indefinitely,” allowing Gazans — who have been under a blockade imposed by the Israeli regime — to pass through Egypt to the outside world. “This isn’t a routine or normal opening. This is the first time in years that the Rafah border crossing is opening indefinitely. It used to open only three or four days at a time,” AFP cited an Egyptian security source as saying.

The Rafah crossing had been largely closed in recent months because of efforts to contain the spread of the coronavirus. “I’ve been waiting for six months for the crossing to open,” university student Ibrahim al-Shanti told AFP. “The repeated closures have cost me a semester of my studies. I hope it’s really permanent.”

Another Palestinian, Yasser Zanoun, urged political leaders to negotiate a permanent arrangement to ease Gaza’s worsening humanitarian plight, compounded by the pandemic. “This crossing must be open 24 hours a day, throughout the year. There are lots of humanitarian cases that are extremely dire,” said Zanoun.



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