

*Palestinian prime minister
resigns over Israel's genocidal
war against Gaza*

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Ramallah, February 26 (RHC)-- Palestinian Prime Minister Mohammad Shtayyeh has announced the resignation of his government, which rules parts of the occupied West Bank, due to the escalating violence in the occupied territory and the war on Gaza.

“The decision to resign came in light of the unprecedented escalation in the West Bank and Jerusalem and the war, genocide and starvation in the Gaza Strip,” said Shtayyeh, who submitted his resignation to Palestinian Authority (PA) President Mahmoud Abbas on Monday.

"I see that the next stage and its challenges require new governmental and political arrangements that take into account the new reality in Gaza and the need for a Palestinian-Palestinian consensus based on Palestinian unity and the extension of unity of authority over the land of Palestine," he said.

Shtayyeh's comments come as U.S. pressure grows on Abbas to shake up the PA and begin work on a political structure that can govern a Palestinian state following the war. However, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has on numerous occasions rejected calls for the PA under Abbas to take control of a Palestinian state and govern Gaza.

Shtayyeh, who was appointed as prime minister in 2019, said in October that the current U.S. administration doesn't have the political will to end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. "They're managing it," he said.

Last week, Israeli lawmakers backed Netanyahu's rejection of any "unilateral" recognition of a Palestinian state. "The Knesset came together in an overwhelming majority against the attempt to impose on us the establishment of a Palestinian state, which would not only fail to bring peace but would endanger the state of Israel," said Netanyahu.

But the Palestinian Ministry of Foreign Affairs slammed the vote and accused Israel of holding the rights of Palestinians hostage due to the occupation of Palestinian territories. "The ministry reaffirms that the State of Palestine's full membership in the United Nations and its recognition by other nations does not require permission from Netanyahu," it said in a statement.

Since the signing of the Oslo Accords in the early 1990s, little progress has been made towards achieving a two-state solution. As the International Court of Justice hears from about 50 countries on the legal implications of Israel's occupation of the West Bank, the far-right Israeli Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich on Thursday announced plans to build more than 3,300 new homes in response to a shooting that killed one Israeli civilian.

Smotrich said the decision would begin an approval process for 300 new homes in the Kedar settlement and 2,350 in Maale Adumim, where the attack occurred.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said he was "disappointed" to hear of the Israeli announcement of the new settlements. "It's been longstanding US policy under Republican and Democratic administrations alike that new settlements are counter-productive to reaching an enduring peace," he said in Buenos Aires.

"They're also inconsistent with international law. Our administration maintains a firm opposition to settlement expansion and in our judgement this only weakens, it doesn't strengthen, Israel's security."

Violence in the occupied West Bank has escalated significantly after the October 7 Hamas attack on southern Israel that killed 1,139 people. Israel's retaliatory bombardments on Gaza have killed more than 29,000 Palestinian civilians, according to the strip's Ministry of Health.

Palestinian health officials also say at least 401 people have been killed by Israeli fire in the occupied West Bank during the same period.

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