

Netanyahu Slams Swedish Prime Minister over Palestine Initiative



Tel Aviv, October 6 (RHC)-- Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has hit out on Sweden for a decision to recognize Palestine as a state. The Israeli prime minister's office released a statement on Sunday in reaction to the earlier decision by Swedish Prime Minister Stefan Löfven.

The statement said Israel "is opposed to any unilateral action that does not help to reach peace, but on the contrary just makes the prospect for it more distant."

Israeli Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman said earlier that Sweden's "new prime minister was in a hurry" and did not "study the issue in depth." Löfven announced the decision during his inaugural address to the parliament in Stockholm on Friday. Lieberman called on Löfven to focus on the problems "elsewhere" in the region, referring to the situation in Iraq and Syria.

Washington also reacted to the Swedish initiative with U.S. State Department spokesperson Jen Psaki calling the move "premature." "It's not the U.S. that decides our politics," Swedish Foreign Minister Margot Wallström said in response to

Psaki's comment.

The Swedish decision will have to be approved by the parliament to make the country the first EU state to recognize Palestine's sovereignty. Sweden was among the countries that voted to upgrade Palestine's status to non-member observer state at the United Nations General Assembly on November 29, 2012.

The observer state status grants Palestinians access to UN agencies and the International Criminal Court, where they can file formal complaints against the Israel.

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