

Iran warns Israel seeking Gaza-style genocide in occupied West Bank

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Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmaeil Baghaei

Tehran, February 3 (RHC)-- The Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman has called on the international community to stop Israel from repeating its Gaza genocide against Palestinians now in the occupied West Bank, where the regime has intensified its raids.

"Despite the ceasefire in Gaza, the [Israeli] crimes and killings continue in the West Bank. As human rights rapporteurs warned, it seems that the crime of genocide is going to be repeated in the West Bank," Esmail Baghaei said at a weekly news conference on Monday.

The Iranian top diplomat called on the international community to take "a serious action" to prevent the repetition of the Gaza genocide in the West Bank. "The international community should not allow the normalization of killing," he said.

Commenting on an anti-Israel alliance recently formed in the Netherlands, Baghaei reiterated the Islamic Republic's support for any initiative aimed at stopping the Israeli crimes. "The main goal [of this alliance] is to end the impunity of the Zionist regime for the genocide in Gaza," he said, adding that Iran has supported any initiative towards the goal.

He denounced the West's support for Israel in the Gaza war through supplying lethal weapons, noting that the Israeli leaders must be tried for the crimes committed by the regime.

On Friday, representatives from South Africa, Malaysia, Namibia, Colombia, Bolivia, Chile, Senegal, Honduras and Belize announced the formation of The Hague Group to end the Israeli occupation and coordinate legal, diplomatic and economic measures against Israel's violations of international law. Among its objectives, the group aims to prevent the supply of weapons to Israel, which could be used in committing crimes against Palestinians.

Commenting on U.S. President Donald Trump's remarks on the relocation of Gazans, the spokesman said: "No group can comment on Gaza's future except the Palestinians themselves."

Late last month, Trump touted a plan to "clean out" the Gaza Strip and relocate its residents to Jordan and Egypt either "temporarily or long-term." Trump's remarks sparked widespread condemnations from Palestine, the UN and the Arab world as a potentially fatal blow to the so-called two-state solution.

Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi said, "The deportation or displacement of the Palestinian people is an injustice in which we cannot participate." Jordan's King Abdullah II also rejected any forced displacement of Gazans.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Baghaei dismissed Israeli claims that Iran was "smuggling" tens of millions of US dollars to Lebanon's Hezbollah resistance movement. He stressed that the allegation was aimed at preventing the reconstruction of Lebanon after the deadly Israeli aggression.

Last November, Israel was forced to accept a ceasefire with Hezbollah after suffering heavy losses following almost 16 months of fighting and failing to achieve its goals in its aggression on Lebanon.

Commenting on the appointment of Abu Mohammed al-Jolani, the commander of the Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) militant group, as Syria's new "president", Baghaei reiterated that "any government that is supported by the Syrian people is supported by us."

"We hope that the transitional period will lead to the formation of an inclusive government that represents all Syrians."

The HTS used to occupy some areas in northern Syria after being pushed back by Damascus and its allies following the outbreak of foreign-backed militancy in the country in 2011.

On December 8, however, it seized huge swathes of the rest of the country during lightning advances amid heavy Israeli airstrikes against the nation, which Tel Aviv had begun carrying out under the pretext

of preventing outbreak of the violence into the occupied Palestinian territories.

During the presser, Baghaei announced that Ali Mousavi, a former director general at the foreign ministry, was named as Iran's ambassador to the UK.

Meanwhile, Baghaei noted that the Iranian foreign minister on Sunday summoned Sweden's ambassador to protest the "unconstructive" measures taken against the head of the Imam Ali Islamic Center in Sweden over "baseless" claims.

Baghaei said Iranian cleric Mohsen Hakimollahi, who was detained in Stockholm and faces deportation, committed no crime. "This is not compatible with human rights at all."

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