Portuguese Parliament Calls for Palestinian State

Lisbon, December 19 (RHC)-- Portugal's parliament has accepted a resolution calling on the government to recognize Palestine's statehood. The resolution, jointly filed by the Portuguese center-right majority and the opposition Socialist party, proposed "recognizing, in coordination with the European Union, the state of Palestine as independent and sovereign."

Portuguese Foreign Minister Rui Machete said after the vote that the government "will choose the moment best suited" for the recognition of the Palestinian state.

Last week, France's upper house of parliament passed a resolution calling on the government to recognize Palestine as an independent state following a similar vote in the lower house.

Sweden is the only European country that has officially recognized Palestine's statehood, although several other parliaments of EU states such as Spain, Britain, and Ireland have also adopted similar bills, which demand that their governments recognize Palestine as a state. Israel has been angered by the motions submitted to European parliaments.

On November 29, 2012, the 193-member United Nations General Assembly voted to upgrade Palestine's status to non-member observer state.

Palestinians are seeking to create an independent state on the territories of the West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip and are demanding that Israel withdraw from the occupied Palestinian territories. Israel, however, has refused to return to the 1967 borders and is unwilling to discuss the issue of Jerusalem.

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