

# *France Rejects Israel 'Impartiality' Claims on Peace Initiative*

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Paris, May 16 (RHC)-- French Foreign Minister Jean-Marc Ayrault has dismissed allegations by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu regarding the impartiality of a Paris initiative to revive peace talks between Israel and Palestine.

Ayrault made the statement as he was leaving the Israeli-occupied territories on Sunday after a one-day visit meant to kick-start preparations for a French peace forum next month.

The French minister was reacting to comments by Netanyahu who had cast doubt on the impartiality of the forum citing France's support of a Paris-based UNESCO resolution last month on the flashpoint Al-Aqsa mosque compound in the occupied Jerusalem. The resolution made no reference to Israeli claims that the Temple Mount is also sacred to Jews.

The French-proposed forum, scheduled to begin on May 30, would bring together ministers from about 20 countries, the European Union and the UN but without Palestinian or Israeli representatives, to discuss the revival of peace talks that have been frozen since a U.S.-brokered initiative collapsed in April 2014

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