

## **Dr. Saeb Erekat Statement to the Press in Response to President Trump's Recognition of Jerusalem as the Capital of Israel**

PLO Palestine

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Unfortunately President Trump just destroyed any possibility of a two state. He has taken an action to recognize Jerusalem as capital of Israel. This is in total contradiction of agreements signed between Palestinians and Israelis, Article 7 to the Interim Agreements specified that no side should take any action that may preempt or prejudice issues reserved for permanent status, including Jerusalem. This step, this prejudging, dictating, closing doors for negotiations, and I think President Trump tonight has disqualified the United States of America to play any role in any peace process.

The Palestinian leadership will call for an emergency session for the Palestine Central Council to study this speech and to review all the options available and take the proper decisions concerning many issues. At the same time I would say that crossing these red lines tonight for President Trump, speaking about moderation, speaking about non-violence, I think tonight he is strengthening the forces of extremists in this region as no one has done before.

This is an act, a statement that is totally uncalled for, totally unacceptable. East Jerusalem is occupied territories. No country on Earth has recognized Israel's annexation of East Jerusalem, except for President Trump tonight. He is in total violation of international law, human rights, and he is turning the conflict between Palestinians and Israelis from a political one into a religious one. That's a very dangerous situation.

I call upon the international community to stand shoulder to shoulder with us in order to preserve international law, in order to preserve the terms of reference provided for the agreements signed. But I think dictating the future of Jerusalem, dictating the status of Jerusalem by a speech given for internal politics is absolutely unacceptable and I think that the prospect of a Palestinian state without East Jerusalem being its capital is not realistic.

The Palestinian leadership, I know will hold an emergency session for the Palestine Central Council in order to study and review and take the decisions for the future concerning our relations with Israel, the role of the United States, which I think the President disqualified his country from any role whatsoever. As a chief Palestinian negotiator, how can I sit with these people if they dictate on me the future of Jerusalem as Israel's capital, when they dictate on me a voting Taylor Force Act cutting aid to the Palestinians, when they issue a statement closing the PLO office in Washington, and then now it's all just being more Israeli than the Israelis. It's being more extremists Israelis than the Israelis, and I think this speech serves no Palestinians, no Israelis. It's just really throwing the whole region into chaos, international chaos, and to borders we don't want to go to.