

Palestinians recall envoys to four EU nations after US embassy move



Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas gestures as he chairs a Palestinian National Council meeting in Ramallah on April 30, 2018

ABBAS MOMANI (AFP)

The Palestinian Authority (PA) has recalled its envoys to Romania, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Austria after their ambassadors attended an Israeli reception marking the US embassy's move to Jerusalem, it said Wednesday.

The statement from the PA's foreign ministry said the EU nations' ambassadors had attended the reception the day before the US opened its Israel embassy in Jerusalem on Monday.

The statement said that the PA considered the envoys' participation in the reception "a gross violation of international law and several United Nations resolutions that confirmed that Jerusalem is occupied territory since 1967 and forbid countries from moving their embassies to this city."

“The recalls are to consult with our ambassadors to these states about their positions and their commitment to the EU’s positions.”

Austria, Czech Republic, Romania, and Hungary broke with European consensus in accepting invitations to the Sunday reception, which most EU ambassadors declined in keeping with its official opposition to the embassy move.



Ivanka Trump takes a selfie at the US embassy in Jerusalem with husband Jared Kushner, Sara Netanyahu and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on May 15 2018.

Kobi Gideon/GPO

The European Union opposed the US move of its embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.

“We highly appreciate the commitment of most [EU] member states to international law and UN resolutions related to the Palestinian cause,” the PA statement said.

The embassy move and Washington’s recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel has deeply angered Palestinians, who see the Arab-majority eastern sector of the city as the capital of their future state.

Only a day earlier PA President Abbas ordered the top Palestinian representative in Washington to return home.

Husam Zomlot, the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) envoy in Washington DC, was expected to arrive back in Ramallah on Wednesday.

Zomlot was also recalled in December after US President Donald Trump's announcement of his decision to relocate the US embassy to the disputed city, which he also recognized as Israel's capital.

The Palestinian leadership has effectively refused to speak to Trump's team since the move was announced, including his son-in-law Jared Kushner, who is supposed to be spearheading a new drive for peace.

Zomlot himself has described the embassy move as another step toward "a full-fledged apartheid."

Asked for confirmation and comment on the Palestinian announcement, a State Department spokesperson referred *i24NEWS* to the PLO office.

(Staff with AFP)

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