

Trump Accelerates US Embassy Transfer to Jerusalem

Much to the chagrin of the Palestinian Authority, US President Donald Trump announced on Saturday that he'd be accelerating the transfer of the American embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.

The US mission is slated to be moving in phases to its consular facility in the Jerusalem neighborhood of Arnona starting in May.

The first stages of the move are expected to see Ambassador David Friedman and a small personal staff take up offices at the Arnona facility, officially granting it the status of "embassy."

Later, a full embassy annex will be added to the complex, with a new embassy facility to be built elsewhere in the city during the years to come.

Israeli government ministers called Trump's announcement and "Independence Day gift," given that the May transfer coincides with Israel's 70th anniversary celebrations.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is expected to extend a formal invitation to Trump to visit Israel at that time to both join the anniversary celebrations and oversee the embassy's initial transfer.

Unsurprisingly, Palestinian leaders were furious over the announcement.

Lead Palestinian Authority negotiator Saeb Erekat, who recently told US Ambassador to the UN Nikki Haley to "shut up," issued the following overly-dramatic statement:

"The US decision to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital and now to move its embassy on the eve of marking 70 years since the Nakba, the ethnic cleansing of at least 418 Palestinian villages, and the forcible displacement of two-thirds of our people, shows the determination of the US administration to violate international law, destroy the two-state solution and provoke the feelings of the Palestinian people, as well as of all Arabs, Muslims and Christians around the globe."

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