

Statement on the UAE-Israel peace deal & Israel's annexation plan



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Arab NGO Network for Development
شبكة المنظمات العربية غير الحكومية للتنمية

The Arab NGO Network for Development (ANND), on behalf of its member organizations, networks and partners, condemns the Peace Deal between the United Arab Emirates and Israel, and warns about the likely resumption of Israel's annexation plan in the West Bank.

The so-called 'Abraham Accord' between the UAE and Israel, which was struck on August 2020 13, constitutes a serious blow to the efforts of both Palestinians and allies to maintain pressure on Israel to end the system of occupation and apartheid that it oversees in Occupied Palestinian Territories.

By unilaterally making the decision to normalize relations and launch talks to establish cooperation with Israel, the UAE has violated the "Beirut Peace Initiative" of the League of Arab states launched in 2002 to halt any normalization until the Israel withdraw from all the occupied territories. By that, it has weakened the role of the Arab states in supporting the Palestinian struggle for their right to self-determination.

The UAE-Israel accord has also given credibility and legitimacy to the Netanyahu government, a right-wing extremist administration that maintains a suffocating blockade on the Gaza strip and has been expanding the colonial project of building illegal Jewish-only settlements in the occupied West Bank.

While the deal was portrayed by its proponents as positive for the Palestinians because it included suspending Israel's plan to annex territories in the west bank, the suspension is not a final cancellation of the annexation plan. This was evidenced by Netanyahu's statement on the same day of the accord, who said that he remained "committed to annexing parts of the West Bank", and that he agreed only to "temporarily suspend" the annexation.

The annexation plan is a policy for colonial expansion at the expense of Palestinians' human rights, including their rights to land, food, freedom, self-determination. The plan includes grabbing almost a third of the West Bank's territory, including the Jordan Valley where 60,000 Palestinians live and half of the West Bank's agricultural wealth is located. It also includes officially annexing the 235 illegal settlements in the West Bank, where more than 750,000 Israeli settlers live on Palestinian land. Proposed by Netanyahu during his electoral campaign last year, this annexation plan has been empowered by a green light from the United States Administration led by President Donald Trump, which proposed similar annexation in its so-called "peace plan" in January 2020. This annexation would be part of the agenda to annihilate any potential for Palestinian statehood, including by encircling the Palestinian population and cutting its access to the Jordan River. It would also impose further restrictions on freedom of movement, and pave the

way for further displacement and ethnic engineering, by allowing the construction of additional Jewish-only settlements and the demolition of more Palestinian homes which deprives indigenous populations from the right to land and housing.

By implementing this plan, Israel would be committing another flagrant violation of international law, specifically of the UN charter and the peremptory norms of international law which prohibit the use of force to acquire territory. The move, which would be legally invalid as the annexed land will remain considered occupied by international law, constitutes another example of Israel's behavior of impunity, enabled by weak action on the international level. Israel has annexed Palestinian land on many occasions in the past, including the annexation of East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights which were condemned by the United Nations Security Council without any meaningful countermeasures.

As civil society organizations committed to human rights and justice, we strongly condemn this plan. While the government of Israel has turned ignored all calls for justice and humanitarianism, the international community must consider all forms of pressure to ensure Israel cancels its expansionist plans, abide to the international law and the related UN resolutions. We also call on civil society organizations from across the world to support the efforts of the Palestinian people in occupied Palestine and the diaspora, to support the struggle against occupation and apartheid and push for permanent and sustainable solutions based on the international law, respect of Human rights and dignity of the Palestinian people. For that purpose, we call for the following measures to be implemented as a matter of high priority:

- A ban on arms trade and military-security cooperation with Israel.
- Suspension of trade and cooperation agreements with Israel.
- Prohibition of trade with the illegal Israeli settlements and termination of corporate business with Israel's illegal settlement enterprise.
- Investigation and prosecution of individuals and corporate actors responsible for war crimes/crimes against humanity in the context of Israel's regime of illegal occupation and apartheid.
- Support efforts at the United Nations to reconstitute the UN Special Committee against Apartheid and the UN Centre against Apartheid to investigate Israeli apartheid.
- Avoid any further unilateral normalization of relations with Israel as long as no clear solution for a fair and just peace agreement has been achieved, including a solution to the occupied Arab territories
- Cancellation of the Peace Deal between UAE and Israel and revitalize the "Beirut Peace Initiative" of 2002.