UN Security Council to vote Monday on rejecting US Jerusalem decision

December 17, 2017

The Times of Israel

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/un-security-council-to-vote-monday-on-walking-back-us-jerusalem-decision/>

The United Nations Security Council will vote Monday on a draft resolution that would reject US President Donald Trump’s decision to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, diplomats said.

Egypt on Sunday requested the vote for the next day. On Saturday, it presented the measure that is likely to be vetoed by the United States.

The one-page text, seen by the AFP news agency, does not specifically mention the US or Trump.

The draft resolution stresses that Jerusalem is an issue “to be resolved through negotiations” and expresses “deep regret at recent decisions concerning the status of Jerusalem.”

“Any decisions and actions which purport to have altered the character, status or demographic composition of the Holy City of Jerusalem have no legal effect, are null and void and must be rescinded,” it said.

Breaking with the international consensus, Trump this month announced that he would recognize Jerusalem as Israel’s capital and move the US embassy there from Tel Aviv, sparking protests and strong condemnation.

US Vice President Mike Pence will visit Jerusalem on Wednesday, wading into the crisis over one of the most controversial issues in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Israeli envoy to the UN Danny Danon on Saturday slammed the Security Council bid as another Palestinian attempt to rewrite history.

“No vote or discussion can change the clear reality — Jerusalem is the capital of Israel, now and always. We will continue to fight for the historical truth, this time, together with our allies,” Danon said.

The vote comes two days after Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said that Muslim nations would ask the United Nations for an “annulment” of Trump’s December 6 decision.

It is highly unlikely that any resolution would pass the Security Council, where the US is one of five permanent members with a veto. US Ambassador Nikki Haley is a staunch supporter of Israel, who has made eliminating UN bias against Israel a key goal. Haley praised Trump’s recognition of Jerusalem as “the just and right thing to do.”

Erdogan said the initiative would start at the UN Security Council, where a vote would carry more weight, but promised, if it is vetoed there, that “we will work within the UN General Assembly for the annulment of this unjust and lawless decision.” General Assembly decisions are non-binding.

The draft UN resolution “affirms that any decisions and actions which purport to have altered the character, status or demographic composition of the Holy City of Jerusalem have no legal effect, are null and void, and must be rescinded in compliance with relevant resolutions of the Security Council,” Reuters reported.

It also “calls upon all States to refrain from the establishment of diplomatic missions in the Holy City of Jerusalem, pursuant to resolution 478 (1980) of the Security Council.” Trump in his declaration said he was giving instructions for the eventual relocation of the US Embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.

Earlier Sunday, Erdogan said he would move the Turkish Embassy to East Jerusalem “soon.”

Jerusalem’s status is perhaps the most sensitive issue in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Israel sees the entire city as its undivided capital, while the Palestinians want the eastern sector, which the international community regards as annexed by Israel, as the capital of their future state.

In his address from the White House, Trump said that after repeated failures to achieve peace, a new approach was long overdue. He described his decision to recognize Jerusalem as the seat of Israel’s government as merely based on reality.

Trump, whose declaration was hailed by Israel’s Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and by leaders across much of the Israeli political spectrum, stressed that he was not specifying the boundaries of Israeli sovereignty in the city, and called for no change in the status quo at the city’s holy sites.

In December 2016, toward the end of the Obama Administration, the [Security Council voted through a resolution](https://www.timesofisrael.com/choosing-not-to-veto-obama-lets-anti-settlement-resolution-pass-at-un-security-council/) that “underlines that it will not recognize any changes to the 4 June 1967 lines, including with regard to Jerusalem, other than those agreed by the parties through negotiations.”

Bitterly opposed by Israel, the vote passed 14-0 with the US abstaining. [Trump’s transition team reportedly tried](https://www.timesofisrael.com/report-flynn-tried-to-sway-voting-on-un-settlements-resolution/) to block the resolution.

On Wednesday, an emergency summit of Muslim and Arab nations — the 57-member Organization of Islamic Cooperation — declared East Jerusalem the capital of Palestine and urged the world to recognize the state of Palestine.

With the Islamic world itself mired in division, the Wednesday summit in Istanbul fell well short of agreeing on any concrete sanctions against Israel or the United States.

But its final statement declared “East Jerusalem as the capital of the State of Palestine” and invited “all countries to recognize the State of Palestine and East Jerusalem as its occupied capital.”

The statement declared Trump’s decision “null and void legally” and “a deliberate undermining of all peace efforts” that would give impetus to “extremism and terrorism.”

It also said Trump’s move was “an announcement of the US administration’s withdrawal from its role as sponsor of peace” in the Middle East, echoing Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas.

Using unusually strong language, Abbas at the summit warned that there could be “no peace or stability” in the Middle East until Jerusalem is recognized as the capital of a Palestinian state.

Moreover, he said that, with Trump’s move, the United States had withdrawn itself from a traditional role as the mediator in the search for Mideast peace.

“We do not accept any role of the United States in the political process from now on. Because it is completely biased towards Israel,” Abbas said.

Trump’s announcement last week prompted an outpouring of anger in the Muslim and Arab world, where tens of thousands of people took to the streets to denounce the Jewish state and show solidarity with the Palestinians.

Hamas, the terrorist group that rules Gaza, has called for a new intifada against Israel and [urged Palestinians](https://www.timesofisrael.com/hamas-urges-palestinians-to-confront-soldiers-settlers/) to confront soldiers and settlers. Abbas’s Fatah movement called for days of rage in response to Trump’s declaration.