

Letter on Jerusalem by HE Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad

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President Trump's announcement that the US now recognises Jerusalem as the Israeli capital has sent shock waves across, not only in the Middle East, but throughout the world.

Obviously the decision is cause for a major concern, as apart from throwing a spanner to the peace process, it is feared to unleash a new wave of violence across the region.

Apart from contravening the international laws upheld by the United Nations through its numerous resolutions since 1968, Trump has intentionally or otherwise affirmed the widespread suspicions that that US is a "dishonest broker".

Trump's contentions that recognising Jerusalem as the capital of Israel reflects historical and current realities is a blatant lie.

Under international laws and consistent with the UN charter, Jerusalem is an occupied territory. It was occupied during the 1967 war, and alongside the West Bank's Palestinian territories, it has been under brutal Israeli subjugation and oppression since.

Any recognition of Israel's sovereignty over these territories is a mockery of the international legal system.

Trump's announcement is also a reversal of nearly seven decades of American foreign policy. It also undermined one of the tenets spelt out in the 1993 Oslo Accord in which the US does not recognise Jerusalem, a sacred city to the three Abrahamaic religions - Islam, Christianity and Judaism - as the Israeli capital.

Prior to this, since 2015, the Israelis have ignored international outcry and made irreversible inroads into the Al-Quds holy sanctuary with access being denied to a large proportion of Muslim worshippers. Some 80 Israeli settlers lost no time in striding around the Holy Sanctuary yesterday, escorted by the Israeli security forces.

The White House has also chosen to reject calls by major world and religious leaders to rescind the decision.

Pope Francis felt compelled to break silence and urged Trump to respect the status quo on Jerusalem. That too seems to have no effect.

President Trump's announcement is unacceptable from any viewpoint and I urge him to realise the danger he had placed the whole region and the rest of the world from his

insensible and ill-advised decision.

My hope and prayers are that his decision will be rescinded by the next President of the United States.



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