
Palestine Sues United States Over Embassy Move to Jerusalem

30/09/2018



The International Court of Justice said it received a complaint from Palestine of violation of international law.

Palestine has filed a complaint against the United States at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) at The Hague over Washington's illegal decision to move its embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, reports the Ramallah-based foreign ministry.

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The ICJ reported in a statement on Friday that Palestine was appealing on the grounds of the 1961 Vienna Convention of Diplomatic Relations, which states that a host country must locate foreign embassies in their territory.

Even though Israel controls Jerusalem militarily, after occupying the eastern part of the city during the 1967 war, it officially enjoys international special status and ownership is disputed.

Palestine requested the court declare the move illegal and "order the United States of America to withdraw (its) diplomatic mission from the Holy City of Jerusalem."

Palestinian Foreign Minister Riyad Malki told news agency Wafa the complaint aims to preserve the holy city character of Jerusalem, with its spiritual, religious and cultural dimensions, in line

with foreign policy.

“We defend our rights and our people,” said Malki, “and reject all forms of political and financial extortion.”

In order to proceed, the ICJ first has to rule if Palestine is considered a nation-state, even though it’s been recognized by the UN General Assembly as a non-member state since 2012.

Rulings by the ICJ are legally binding, but it has no means to enforce its decisions. Countries such as the United States, for example, are known for ignoring it.

In a controversial decision that sparked international rejection, U.S. President Donald Trump ordered the embassy to be moved to Jerusalem. Guatemala and Paraguay followed the decision shortly after, but the latter then moved back to Tel Aviv after a change of government.

Trials at the ICJ can last for years and no hearing has yet been scheduled.
