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U.S. Vetoes UN Resolution Rejecting Trump's Jerusalem Declaration; 14 States Back Motion First U.S. veto at Security Council since Trump took office ■ Nikki Haley calls resolution 'an insult' that won't be forgotten

Noa Landau Dec 18, 2017 7:10 PM

The U.S. vetoed a UN resolution seeking to reaffirm Jerusalem's status as unresolved, after 14 UN Security Council members voted in favor of the resolution Monday, in response to U.S. President Donald Trump's decision to recognize it as Israel's capital.

This was the first time the United States exercised its veto power at the UN Security Council since Trump took office.

Following the vote, Haley said called the vote "an insult" and said that it won't be forgotten. She further said about the U.S. veto: "We do it with no joy, but we do it with no reluctance," and that "The United States will not be told by any country where we can put our embassy."

She added, "The fact that this veto is being done in defense of America's role in the Middle East peace process is not a source of embarrassment for us; it should be an embarrassment to the remainder of the Security Council."

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu thanked the U.S. for vetoing the resolution. "Thank you, Ambassador Haley. On Hanukkah, you spoke like a Maccabi. You lit a candle of truth. You dispel the darkness. One defeated the many. Truth defeated lies. Thank you, President Trump." Netanyahu tweeted.

Palestinian Ambassador to the UN Riyad Mansour said that "with this veto, the U.S. has missed an opportunity to rectify its illegal decision from December 6." He further added that the U.S. "remains on the wrong side of history" and that the Palestinians "reiterate that [Trump's] decision has no legal effect on the status of Jerusalem.

Israeli Ambassador to the UN Danny Danon attacked the resolution saying that "members of the Security Council can vote another hundred times to criticize our presence in Jerusalem, but history won't change. While the Jewish people celebrate the holiday of Hanukkah that symbolizes the eternal connection to Jerusalem, there are people who think that they can rewrite history. It's time for all countries to recognize that Jerusalem always was and always will be the capital of the Jewish people and the capital of Israel."

He further added that "each country has the right to establish its own capital, but when it comes to Israel, there are people who think that they can cast doubt on our decision. We are grateful to the U.S. for its steadfastness in standing with the State of Israel, and the truth."

Haley: Anti-settlements resolution prevents peace

Earlier, UN Middle East envoy Nickolay Mladenov spoke about developments in Israel, East Jerusalem, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip, since resolution 2334 against Israeli settlements was passed a year ago. Mladenov noting settlement growth, number of terrorist attacks, and statistics regarding violence. He cited settlement construction, continued violence against civilians and incitement and the Palestinian reconciliation deal as the main developments.

Regarding settlement construction, Mladenov said that since the resolution's passing, "some 1,200 units in the occupied West Bank were approved for construction, approximately 460 of them in the settlement of Ma'ale Adumim," as well as new housing units in the "new settlement of Amihai, a new neighborhood in Kochav Yaakov, and a new site near Alon Shvut." He also said that new "construction of infrastructure in Givat Hamatos...would solidify the ring of settlements isolating East Jerusalem from the southern West Bank."

Mladenov added that during the period, "the authorities demolished or seized 61 structures" which meant that "110 people, including 61 children were displaced and the livelihoods of over 1,000 people were affected," including "over 10 Bedouin communities" who "remain at heightened risk of demolition and displacement."

Mladenov provided statistics regarding violence between Israelis and Palestinians, showing that "in 2017, there were 109 shooting, stabbing, ramming and bombing attacks conducted, compared to 223" attacks in 2016. He said that in 2017, "72 Palestinians and 15 Israelis were killed" compared to "109 and 13, respectively, in 2016." He condemned terror

attacks, and criticized "indiscriminate rocket attacks and tunnel construction" by Gaza militants.

Mladenov warned of the "growing risk that the parties may revert to more unilateral actions," and said that the lack of a peace proposal is "undermining moderates and empowering radicals."

Haley noted that a "given the chance to vote again [on resolution 2334], I can say with complete confidence that the United States would vote no," and would exercise its veto power. The resolution, which criticized Israeli settlements, passed after the Obama administration chose to abstain.

Haley criticized resolution 2334 saying that while it "describes Israeli settlements as impediments to peace," in reality, "it was resolution 2334 itself that was an impediment to peace," because the Security Council once again acting and "injecting itself" between Palestinians and Israelis. She further added that "if the United Nations' history in the peace efforts proves anything, it is that talking in New York cannot take the place of face-to-face negotiations between the regional parties. It only sets back the cause of peace, not advance it."

Haley referred Trump's announcement that he would recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital: "Resolution 2334 demanded a halt to all Israeli settlement activity in East Jerusalem – even in the Jewish Quarter of the Old City. This is something that no responsible person or country would ever expect Israel would do. And in this way, Resolution 2334 did what President Trump's announcement on Jerusalem as the capital of Israel did not do: It prejudged issues that should be left in final status negotiations."

Haley slammed resolution 2334 for the creation of the BDS blacklist, calling it "an ugly creation of the Human Rights Council: the database of companies operating in Jewish communities," and calling the list "yet another obstacle to a negotiated peace."

Haley said that the UN is "a disproportionately hostile place for the Middle East's most enduring democracy," Israel.

The Palestinian leadership threatened earlier turn to the UN General Assembly if Washington vetoes the resolution, as expected. The Palestinian United Nations envoy raised this option in remarks published in Saudi daily Arab News on Monday, ahead of a Security Council vote on an Egyptian-drafted resolution about Jerusalem's status which the United States is expected to veto.

The draft says 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”.

Trump’s December 6 decision to recognize Jerusalem as Israel’s capital and to move the U.S. Embassy to the city has provoked widespread anger and protests among Palestinians as well as broad international criticism, including from top U.S. allies.