

Palestine Slams US 'Blackmail,' Says Jerusalem Not 'For Sale'

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The Palestinian Liberation Organization called President Trump's threat to countries voting against his Jerusalem decision extortion and blackmail.

The Palestinian leadership responded Wednesday to the U.S. threat to cut aid to countries defying Washington's decision to declare Jerusalem as Israel's capital saying such tactics of "extortion" would only isolate the United States globally.

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"President Trump should know that there are things that are not for sale or subject to blackmail, particularly issues of principle, legality and morality," Dr. Hanan Ashrawi, Executive Committee Member at the Palestinian Liberation Organization said in a statement posted on the group's website.

"Extortion is the most effective way for the US to isolate itself even further and to weaken its influence and standing globally. We will not be deterred or

intimidated.”

Ashrawi added that she was confident that most countries at the United Nations will honor their “legal and political obligations on Palestine” in the upcoming vote at the U.N. General Assembly.

On Monday the U.S. vetoed a draft resolution calling on Washington to withdraw its decision to recognize Jerusalem as Israel’s capital at the United Nations Security Council, while the 14 other members of the council voted in favor of the resolution.

Arab and Muslim countries, infuriated by President Donald Trump’s decision on Jerusalem, called for an emergency General Assembly meeting in order to vote on the draft resolution. The 193-country body agreed to hold the rare meeting and will be held on Thursday.

As a response to holding the special session U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Nikki Haley, in a letter to dozens of U.N. states on Tuesday seen by Reuters, warned that Trump had asked her to “report back on those countries who voted against us.” She bluntly echoed that call in a Twitter post: “The U.S. will be taking names.”

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Ashrawi's statement came just hours after Trump doubled down Wednesday on the threat, telling reporters that his administration would cut aid to those countries that "voted against us."

Last month the U.S. president ended decades of Washington's policy stating that the status of the city of Jerusalem must be decided as part of a peace agreement between Israel and Palestine, a position that most of the international community continues to fully support.

In the 1967 war Israel took over the eastern part of the city as well as the West Bank from the Jordan. In 1980, Israel annexed East Jerusalem and declared it as its capital, a move that was rejected by most countries in the world.

Palestinians and most of the international community consider East Jerusalem as occupied territory and the future capital of a sovereign Palestinian state.
