

Palestine News Forum 28/1/16-2/2/16

1. Greek and Israeli PMs meeting (28.1.16)

The prospect of boosting cooperation between the two countries emerged from the expanded ministerial meeting between Greece and Israel. The fields of cooperation according to the agreement were tourism, public security and civil protection, transport, diplomatic training, energy and water. The two leaders gave special emphasis to the issue of cooperation in the fields of economy and energy, contributing mainly to the debate on creating gas transport network from the Eastern Mediterranean to Europe. Greek PM called the meeting very constructive and important, underlining the joint intention to proceed to practical cooperation with tangible effects on the growth and prosperity of the two countries. The issue of Cyprus was also discussed.

2. France will recognize PLO if conflict is not resolved (30.1.16)

France expresses the possibility of recognizing the State of Palestine if the conflict in the region is not resolved within the next weeks. France will focus on an international conference with representation of both sides including Europeans, Americans focusing on the two-state solution. French Minister of Foreign Affairs pointed to France's obligation as a member in the UN Security Council to continue pushing for the two-state solution.

3. Israel dismissed the French proposal for peace conference (31.1.16)

Israeli officials stated that France would be wrong on recognizing the PLO in case of unsuccessful peace talks since this gives Palestinians an incentive not to come along and compromise. Palestinian President Mahmud Abbas welcomed the French proposal, telling an African summit in Ethiopia that "the status quo cannot continue."

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4. IDF bans entrance in Ramallah (1.2.16)

Israel banned the entrance for the non-residents of Ramallah in the West Bank. Palestinians seeking to leave the city are also undergoing security checks. The move was also applied to foreigners, although United Nations officials, international and humanitarian NGOs and diplomatic staff were allowed to enter the city.