

Palestine News Forum 16/3/16-23/3/16

1. UN Secretary General criticised Israel's settlements expansion (16.3.16)



Source: Al-Arabiyah

Israel's decision to declare 234 hectares near Jericho in the West Bank was criticized by Ban Ki Moon, whereas the UN spokesperson stated that this decision is undermining the viability of a future Palestinian State solution. The UN Spokesperson, underlined that all Israeli settlements are illegal under international law. "Settlements constitute a violation of international law and contradict commitments made by Israeli authorities in favour of a two-state solution," the spokesman said.

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2. Israel expands settlements in the West Bank (16.3.16)



Source: Al-Arabiyah

Israeli Prime Minister and Israeli Defense Minister approved the designation of 580 acres in the occupied West Bank near the Dead Sea and the Jericho as “Israeli state land”. Peace Now, an NGO which tracks and opposes illegal Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank since the 1967 war, said the reported seizure of land represented the largest land confiscation in the occupied West Bank in recent years.

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3. Germany and France criticised Israel (17.3.16)



Source: Al-Arabiya

Germany and France also issued a statement criticizing Israel for its appropriation of Palestinian land. The European Union remains firmly opposed to Israel's settlement policy and actions taken in this context, including demolitions and confiscations.

4. Two Palestinians injured an Israeli officer before being killed (18.3.16)



Source: Al-Arabiya

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In the north area of the occupied West Bank, two Palestinians were killed by Israeli forces for stabbing an Israeli officer. Israeli officers shot the two men, causing their death.

5. Condemnation of the Greek MFA for vandalism in Monastery (18.3.16)

The Minister of Foreign Affairs in Greece condemned the vandalism by unknown Israelis in the Greek Orthodox Monastery of St. John the Baptist in the West Bank on Sunday, February 29/March 13, 2016, Cheesefare Sunday, the Monastery of St. John the Baptist and Forerunner. Greece recognizes the historic value of the Monastery, which has been supported for ages. The Patriarchate expressed conviction for this “unacceptable vandalism.” Over the past several years, having obtained a special permit from the Israeli army, this ancient monastery is being maintained by the subvention of the Rum Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem, which has undertaken to restore the damages it had suffered during the Six Day War of 1967.

On Clean Monday, the 1/14 of March 2016, the supervisors of the conservation work underway discovered that the central gate to the monastery had been secured from the inside by unknowns using a bolt, which allowed them to commit acts of vandalism, namely: writing slogans on the walls of the first-floor rooms above the church, and breaking into a room and destroying the computer that contained all archives of works carried out. Also, they have apparently caused damages to the interior walls of the rooms, removing tools, two generators, and other items which they apparently loaded on a truck waiting by the monastery’s outside wall, as indicated by the tire tracks on the desert road.