

## **Israel welcomes Donald Trump's decision to recognise Jerusalem as capital**

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**Tel Aviv:** Israel's justice minister Ayelet Shaked has said that US President Donald Trump's decision that he will recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital is a welcome move and that the Jewish nation encourages him to move the embassy de facto to Jerusalem from Tel Aviv.

### **A view of Jerusalem Old City seen from Mount of Olives**

The Minister said that Trump has to go beyond the paperwork stage and not be intimidated by Arab threats of violence.

"I wouldn't be worried about this event or the other. If Arab leaders take steps to prevent unrest, there won't be any unrest," Shaked said.

The reaction comes in the wake of Trump administration officials saying that President Trump has decided to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital despite intense Arab, Muslim and European opposition that such move will upend decades of US policy and risk potentially violent protests.

The decision has also garnered widespread condemnation from the Palestinians and the wider Arab world.

Turkey's Prime Minister Binali Yildirim said that Trump's expected recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital will make the region's problems "unresolvable."

"It was vital for the Middle Eastern region and for global peace that Trump not make such an announcement," Yildirim said.

"A declaration could cause religious clashes and destroy efforts toward formation of a Palestinian state," the PM added.

Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said that the "whole world is against" Trump's move.

Cavusoglu said that such a move would "not bring any stability, peace but rather chaos and instability."

He also said that moving the embassy to Jerusalem would be a "grave mistake."

Jerusalem is sacred to Christians, Jews and Muslims and is a contentious part of Israel-Palestinian negotiations.

On the other hand, Pope Francis has spoken with the Palestinian leader about the US decision and met a Palestinian delegation of religious and academic leaders.

Vatican officials said on Wednesday that the meeting was organized well in advance by the Vatican's interreligious dialogue office and that it was purely coincidental that it fell on the same day as the US announcement, expected in the early afternoon in Washington.

In his remarks, Francis said the Holy Land was the "land par excellence of dialogue between God and mankind."

"The primary condition of that dialogue is reciprocal respect and a commitment to strengthening that respect, for the

sake of recognizing the rights of all people, wherever they happen to be," he added.

The Vatican said that Francis also spoke by telephone on Tuesday with Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas after Trump called Abbas to advise him of his decision. The call came at Abbas' initiative.

The Vatican has long sought an internationally guaranteed status for Jerusalem that safeguards its sacred character for Jews, Muslims and Christians.

Meanwhile, Britain's foreign secretary Boris Johnson has expressed concern over Donald Trump's decision.

"Let's wait and see what the president says exactly, but we view the reports that we've heard with concern," Johnson said.

He told reporters at NATO headquarters in Brussels that Britain thinks "Jerusalem obviously should be part of the final settlement between the Israelis and the Palestinians" a negotiated settlement that we want to see.

"We have no plans ourselves to move our embassy," Johnson added.

- AP