



DECEMBER 30, 2008

PALESTINE-ISRAEL

King Abdullah calls President Bush to discuss Israeli attacks in Gaza

Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz made an urgent telephone call to U.S. President George W. Bush on December 27 to discuss the Israeli attacks against Palestinians in the Gaza Strip.

Saudi Arabia has strongly condemned the flagrant Israeli aggression and called on the international community to take concrete action to stop the violence and preserve innocent life.

The King has been in touch with several other world leaders, including Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, Jordan's King Abdullah II and Qatar's Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, in his efforts to reach a diplomatic solution.

In addition, King Abdullah met with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas in Rawdhat Khuraim, near Riyadh, on December 27 to discuss the crisis. Afterwards, President Abbas expressed his appreciation of Saudi efforts to bring a halt to the Israeli strikes and to care for wounded Palestinians.

Saudi Arabia provides medical aid to Palestinians in Gaza

On December 27, King Abdullah ordered the delivery of all possible medical assistance to the Palestinian people in Gaza, including the evacuation of the injured to the Kingdom for treatment.

An emergency airlift was been organized, and the first shipment of medical supplies arrived in Al-Arish, Egypt, near Gaza, on December 28.

The first two Medevac aircrafts landed in Al-Arish the same day to receive injured Palestinians and transport them to Saudi hospitals.

FOREIGN RELATIONS

King Abdullah participates in GCC Summit

King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz arrived in Muscat on December 29 to lead the delegation of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the 29th Summit of Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states.

Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al-Faisal and several other top Saudi officials attended the meeting as well.

During the two-day summit, the GCC leaders discussed a wide range of political, economic, military, security and social issues.

A final communiqué, issued on December 30, praised the efforts of King Abdullah to facilitate interfaith dialogue, noting the successful dialogue conferences held in Madrid and New York last year.

On economic issues, the statement stressed the importance of achieving stable, reasonable oil prices that balance the needs of producers and consumers.

In the security field, the communiqué called for boosting international anti-terror cooperation by exchanging information, preventing the use of a country's soil to prepare, plan or incite terrorism and extraditing individuals involved in terrorism.

Concerning the violence in Gaza, the leaders of the GCC states vowed to put pressure on the permanent members of the UN Security Council to end the crisis. They expressed hope that US President-elect Barack Obama will pay close attention to the Middle East peace process and work towards establishing a viable Palestinian state. It confirmed the readiness of the Arab states to realize a just, permanent and comprehensive peace with Israel.

TERRORISM

Prince Saud Al-Faisal condemns terrorism during visit to India

Foreign Minister Prince Saud al-Faisal called for the formation of a special task force for combating terrorism under the umbrella of the United Nations, following a meeting with Indian officials on December 26.

At a joint press conference in New Delhi with Indian Foreign Minister Pranab Mukherjee, Prince Saud noted that terrorism aims at instigating conflicts between countries. "We should work together to counter this dangerous international phenomenon, forbid it from achieving its objectives and uproot it," he said.

Prince Saud presented Indian officials with a copy of the recommendations of the International Counter Terrorism Conference, which was held in Riyadh in February 2005, including a proposal by King Abdullah to establish an international center to combat terrorism.

