

5 nations sever ties with Israel over Gaza atrocities: Qatar and Mauritania join Venezuela, Bolivia, and Jordan, Arab leaders meet in Doha

The Agencies

Qatar and Mauritania reported that they severed political and economic ties with Israel in protest of the three-week-old assault on the Gaza Strip, the Palestinian Ma'an News Agency reported on Friday.

According to the Qatar-based network Al-Jazeera, the move was announced on Friday at an emergency meeting of Arab leaders in Doha.

Those among the VIPs at the summit were, *inter alios*, Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad and Syrian Foreign Minister Walid al-Moualem, senior Hamas leader Khaled Mesha'al, PFLP-GC Secretary General Ahmed Jibril, and Islamic Jihad's Ramadan Shallah, Iran's President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir, Lebanon's President Michel Suleiman, Qatar's Emir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani and Prime Minister Hamad bin Jassem bin Jabr al-Thani, Algeria's President Abdelaziz Bouteflika, Djibouti President Ismail Omar Guelleh.



Conspicuously absent from the talks were the representatives of the Palestinian Authority, Egypt, and Kuwait.

The Syrian Arab News Agency (SANA) reported that Chairman of the Hamas Politburo Khaled Mesha'al stressed on Friday the need for stopping the Israeli aggression on Gaza Strip, withdrawing occupation forces, lifting the siege and opening all crossing points, primarily the Rafah crossing point.



Ahmed Jibril, PFLP-GC (left), Khaled Mesha'al, Hamas (center), Ramadan Shallah, Islamic Jihad (right) at the "Arab Summit for the support of Gaza," Doha, Qatar Jan. 16, 2009 (Photo: SANA)

DOHA, Qatar, Jan. 16 (SANA)—President Bashar al-Assad said Friday that during these crucial moments, and as Arab leaders, it seems that our responsibilities are

serious in presenting a decisive and active response to the puzzled inquires in the mind of each Arab citizen of how to rescue the Palestinian people from the talons of this brutality.

In a speech at the emergency Arab Summit on Gaza, the President added "as an Arab nation... how could we give a suitable response to the occupation crimes as we watch the bodies of the children and their remnants disperse in each place."

President al-Assad affirmed that Israel, which has been existed on massacres, consecrated its continuity on violation and destruction and built its future on genocide, is an enemy that knows only the language of blood... and thus knows only the language of Arab blood that has been flowing since Israel was established.

“These massacres and acts of violations and destruction are fuel for the Israeli war machine in the process of building a pure Judaic state, which cannot be achieved without the forced displacement or extermination of the remaining non-Jews in Palestine.” President al-Assad said.

“We have talked in previous summits about plans that were being put, but today we are talking about plans that are being carried out... we warned against approaching the danger zone, but today the holocaust didn’t just start, but it is on its way to move to the next level which will include all Arabs if we don’t extinguish it immediately.”

The President added that the message sent by the Arab people through their unprecedented reactions require us to respond to it seriously, pointing out that it differs from previous messages as it says “walk with us... don’t go along with us,” which indicates that Gaza’s fate isn’t only the fate of its people, but is the fate of all Arabs, and Gaza’s battle is the battle of every Arab citizen.



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President al-Assad stressed that the emergency summit aims to support Gaza, not to seek settlements at the expense of Gaza to appease Israel or those who support it, and that the people who set the standards to differentiate between these two are the people and resistance of Gaza as they are decision makers, and the Arabs’ role is to

support them without hesitation in any way that bolsters their resilience, alleviates their suffering and leads to the solution that guarantees their safety and dignity.

“If the basis of our decision today is our support to the people of Gaza in the face of the new Israeli Nazi holocaust, and in addition to our

convictions of the righteousness of the Palestinian cause and the Palestinian people’s rights, then this cannot be complete without understanding the essence of the problem, which isn’t only about the occupation itself but also the nature of the enemy which we are confronting, based on decades of various experiences with it that vary from wars to failed peace attempts.”

“For our part as Arab countries, and in line with initiatives and in addition to verbal support, we must take a number of active steps, primarily the closing of Israeli embassies immediately, severing all direct and indirect relations with Israel, and brining the boycott into effect,” President al-Assad said, pointing out that at the beginning of the aggression, Syria decided

to cease the indirect peace talks indefinitely after consulting with Turkey.

Regarding the Arab peace Initiative, President al-Assad said “we consider the Arab Initiative dead, as the circumstances of approving it and the following events show that the more we present evidence of our serious desire to achieve peace, and the more concessions we make, the more Israel goes too far in its arrogance and disregard for our just rights.”

“The Arab Initiative is based on peace, and peace wasn’t achieved, so the initiative doesn’t really exist... Sharon killed it on the first day after announcing the initiative at the Arab Summit in Beirut in 2002... on the very next day Sharon invaded Jenin and murdered hundreds of Palestinians. That response was

a direct answer and a declaration of the Initiative’s death... but we insisted that it’s alive... the Initiative was withdrawn by

Israel, and what is left for us as Arabs is to transfer it from the record of the living to the record of the dead.”

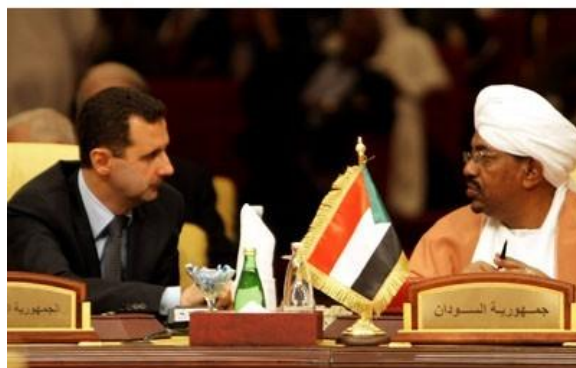
The President said “we have to stand by Gaza and its resistance materially and morally with all possible means and without any exception, and to do our best to support the Palestinian struggle in the face of the aggression, particularly opening crossing-

points for individuals, aid and relief as soon as possible.”

President al-Assad underlined support of establishing a fund to rebuild Gaza, calling for an international conference on this purpose...

“Legal procedures have to be taken to try Israel and its leaders in spite of our non-confidence in the justice of international relevant sides, and in order to let the history record them that they are not only racists but they are the most dangerous form of Nazis in the modern age,” the President said.

“The difference between resistance and terrorism is that the first is Arab and the second is Israeli... the first wants peace and the second wants war... the first is forced to fight to defend its rights and the second is based on murder and aggression.”



Syrian President Bashar al-Assad conferring with Sudan’s President Omar Hassan al-Bashir, Doha, Qatar. “These massacres and acts of violations and destruction are fuel for the Israeli war machine in the process of building a pure Judaic state, which cannot be achieved without the forced displacement or extermination of the remaining non-Jews in Palestine.” President al-Assad said. (Photo: SANA)

President al-Assad stressed that resistance has become a basic element of peace, and that those who want to achieve peace must support the resistance, adding “this is the difference between peace and surrender... peace without resistance in

the face of a brutal, criminal enemy will definitely lead to surrender.”

President al-Assad stressed that what is going on in Gaza isn’t merely a response to rockets, and that if there were no rockets they would have created them and launched them to create a justification, adding “this is one link in a long chain that aims to reach Palestine, which they imagined or claimed

to be a land without people after other countries settle these people or find an alternative homeland for them.”

“If we don’t read causes carefully then we can only produce incomplete, temporary solutions that will collapse quickly... this is why the peace process was a mere attempt that never developed into real peace, since Israelis have a true phobia of peace... those who make crimes cannot be good at making peace, and thieves usually don’t return what they stole voluntarily... they return rights only if they are forced to do that... this is the essence of resistance which is understood by resistance fighters, making resistance their path to peace through reclaiming rights from an enemy that only understands the language of power.”

“What is clear is that Israel hasn’t learned from history’s lesson... this is obvious since who doesn’t own the land doesn’t own history... and who has no history has no memory... Israel has based most of its schemes and plots on the thought that time, Zionist media and its supporters, and the constant frustrations will change the viewpoint of the coming Arab generations towards Israel,” President al-Assad said.

The President noted that a quick look to the events since the occupation of Palestine

shows a gradual awakening and a growing awareness in the Arab people towards its causes and a stronger determination in younger generations to avoid making the same mistakes as their predecessors.

“There can be no neglect, leniency, relinquishment or weakness... the peace of the strong isn’t given to the weak... the peace of the brave isn’t given to the cowardly... peace that isn’t given will be taken... rights that are seized are liberated... this means that time, which they counted on, has failed them just as their massive military machine failed them in Lebanon, which is also failing them today in Gaza regardless of the scale of destruction and the amount of their crimes.” President al-Assad said.



President al-Assad stressed that resistance has become a basic element of peace, and that those who want to achieve peace must support the resistance, adding “this is the difference between peace and surrender... peace without resistance in the face of a brutal, criminal enemy will definitely lead to surrender.” (AP Photo/Hassan Ammar)

He pointed out that willpower changed the concept of Israel expansion into retraction, beginning in Lebanon, then continuing in Gaza, and later in the West Bank and the occupied Syrian Golan, adding

“this willpower changed the concept of immigration in Palestinians to deep-rooted adherence to their land... this leaves Israel with no option other than submitting to peace and its requirements, which cannot be achieved as long as Israelis pride themselves on who can stain their hands with more Arab blood.”

President al-Assad stressed that peace cannot be achieved unless Arabs change it with their willpower, and that this peace will begin in Gaza, which is “small in size, grand in resistance, great in resilience,” adding that this peace begins by stopping the aggression, achieving ceasefire, withdrawing invading forces, and lifting the unjust siege which constitutes a non-military war and leads to a slow death to the Palestinians, noting that “people who are confronted with death cannot be blamed for anything.”

“We are a nation of peace, and our human, Arab and national morals have been based on peace... and because of this fact, we tried to forget the Israeli massacres of Dir Yassin, Kafr Qassem, Jenin, Qana and other massacres carried out against the Arabs... but Israel insists on reminding us with those realities,” the President added.

President al-Assad underlined that what is being committed by Israel of war crimes will give birth to nothing but new Arab generations with more hostility to Israel... and this means by reality that with each Arab killed children, scores of resistant children are born and the Israelis are digging by their own hands tombs for their sons and grandsons.



The empty chair of the non-attending Palestinian representative at a crisis summit in Doha, Qatar. Senior Palestinian official Yasser Abed Rabbo has slammed Qatar for hosting an emergency Arab summit on the Gaza war. Rabbo has accusing the Qatari emir of using Palestinian "blood" for political gain. (AFP/Karim Sahib)