**Israeli delegation in Saudi Arabia**

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Israel, the Jewish state, has remained under high criticism across the globe moderately but, particularly, in Muslim countries, it is seen as an invader and suppressor over Palestine and its cause. Undoubtedly, the concern of Muslim states is not unfounded. Israel’s current government with an ultra-rightist coalition has crossed the red line, and even its Western allies, including the US, have asked about their extreme atrocities. From illegal settlements to extra-judicial killings of innocent Palestinians, Israel is not bothered about condemnation. Sadly, under the US-brokered Abraham Accords the Gulf countries UAE and Bahrain established ties with Israel, however, Saudi Arabia did not recognize, and it also did not join the Abraham Accords. But recently, an Israeli delegation’s visit to Saudi Arabia raised many eyebrows.

An Israeli delegation attended UNESCO’s meeting in Riyadh. UNESCO, the United nation’s educational, scientific, and cultural organization, called a meeting for the World Heritage List of Cultural and Historical Sites. The five-member delegation of Israel reportedly arrived for the meeting to update UNESCO’s World Heritage list of cultural and historic sites. An official reportedly said, “We are happy to be here, it is a good step”.

However, the bilateral talks are not reported to stage or have taken place. But an Israeli delegation also included a security official, sitting behind a sign with his country name Israel in front of the desk. He also has been quoted that they (Saudi Arabia) treated us very well. Such statements from officials of an Israeli delegation show an inclination for reconciliation. These statements have been raising high alerts and especially would be considered harmful to Palestine’s cause and it would weaken the Palestine cause.

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Moreover, a UNESCO diplomat said that the agency’s director-general Audrey Azoulay had been leading to ensure the participation of an Israeli delegation, and he had an instrumental role in securing Israel’s presence in Riyadh. It grows speculation that he might have talked before with Saudi officials and ensured the presence of an Israeli delegation in Riyadh would undoubtedly be not possible without the consent of Saudi officials.

Considering the participation of an Israeli delegation and meeting of UNESCO in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, one cannot be evaded to ponder upon the thaw to some extent in the relationship between Saudi Arabia and Israel. However, Saudi Arabia being a leading Muslim country contained with two of Islam’s holiest places should not sew its lips on the raising of the matter of Palestine across the globe, specifically with international organizations such as the UNO and its groups. Israel has been outrightly continuing its atrocities on Palestinians.

It is the unreservedly appreciable step that Saudi Arabia is taking big steps to transform the kingdom into a global business and tourism hub. In this regard, it has taken wide leaps. It has established ties with Iran, once its extreme rival. But keeping eyes closed on the illegal settlements and usurpation by Israel over Palestine’s land and killing innocent Palestine under the guise of transformation cannot be accepted particularly by conscientious Muslim minds.

Besides, not only Saudi Arabia alone but also international organizations such as UNO should not forget the atrocities of Israel on Palestinians. It must play the role of implementing its charter on peace and settle the disputed matter between both countries with the widely recognized two-state formula. Israel’s Western allies including the USA should also come forward and play their outright role instead of just paying lip services.

After all, Saudi Arabia should outspokenly clarify the matter, and it should also extend unwavering support to Palestine’s cause. As a highly prominent country of Muslim Ummah, it should not keep Palestine’s Muslims anguish side for shifting its Petro-economy to a business economy. Not only Palestine’s Muslim concerns but also the matter of conflict between Israel and Palestine should be solved on a priority basis with the given formula of two-state under the charter of the United Nations organization’s peace, human rights, and conflict prevention and reconciliation.

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