

בלמ"ס/מידי

אל: כל הנציגויות
דע: תפוצת הסברה
מאת: מח' מידע ואינטרנט – אגף תקשורת

הנדון: פגישת הנשיא עם שליח האו"ם סרי 24.2

Jerusalem, 24 February 2010

President Peres meets with UN Special Coordinator Serry (Communicated by the President's Spokesperson)

President Peres remarked on the holy sites recently declared national heritage sites: "We don't need to produce artificial conflicts. Israel will continue to grant freedom of worship to every religion in every holy place."

President Peres met today with Mr. Robert H. Serry, the U.N. Special Coordinator for the Middle East Process. The two discussed the peace process between Israel and the Palestinians, the situation in Gaza, the state of affairs with Syria, and the holy sites.

President Peres asked to open the meeting with a remark on the holy sites recently declared national heritage sites. The President said that extremist forces including Hamas were trying to incite the situation and produce artificial conflicts:

"Israel plans to invest significant amounts in infrastructure that will increase the accessibility of holy sites to all worshipers. By doing so it aims to honor and allow freedom of worship to all, irrespective of their faith, and protect the holy sites. There is no violation of Muslim or Christian religious rights in any holy place." The President requested that this clear message be delivered to the U.N. Secretary-General so as to stop those parties which wish to incite unnecessary conflict.

U.N. Special Coordinator Serry thanked the President for clarifying the issue. He added that following a series of meetings with leaders of the Palestinian Authority he believes the most serious obstacle to peace remains the lack of trust between both sides - that neither side believes the other will remain flexible and make significant advances in negotiations. Nevertheless, he also stated that with the proper steps there exists an opportunity to resume proximity talks.

The President firmly stated that there exists no alternative to discussion between Israel and the Palestinians. He added that every delay by the Palestinian leadership will only weaken the negotiations and the formation of an independent, Palestinian state alongside Israel: "There exists a consensus in Israel in favor of two states for two people. There exists no doubt in my mind that the opening positions of both sides will differ from their fallback position. You

cannot decide final positions at the start of negotiations. You cannot start a movie with a happy ending. Therefore, the sooner we sit down and talk the better."

U.N. Special Coordinator Serry informed the President that U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon plans to visit Israel and the Palestinian Authority soon to discuss several issues including how Israel can facilitate the movement of goods into Gaza. He added that there is no humanitarian problem in Gaza yet there exists a need for certain goods such as building materials for the rehabilitation of several buildings.

The President remarked that Israel left Gaza and has no intention of returning to it or controlling it. He added that situation in Gaza is totally in the hands of Hamas: "Hamas is a murdering body, a terrorist organization, and an Iranian agent that spends all its efforts in expanding its weapons arsenal through tunnel smuggling. Hamas uses building materials to construct these tunnels and strengthen its terrorist network. Israel will not compromise the security of its citizens by allowing such tunnels. The minute Hamas will abandon the use of terror, the entire situation in Gaza will immediately change for the better."

At the end of the meeting the U.N. Special Coordinator Serry thanked Israel for its enormous contribution to the rescue efforts in Haiti: "Israel's actions in Haiti have strengthened the positive relationship between the United Nations and Israel. We thank you for your efforts."

עד כאן.

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24 פברואר 2010