Mandela's Grandson Urges Israeli Envoy's Expulsion from South Africa, Cutting Off of All Ties

Pretoria, August 7 (RHC)-- The grandson of South African anti-apartheid revolutionary and politician, Nelson Mandela, has called on South Africa's government to expel the Israeli ambassador to Pretoria and sever all diplomatic and business relations with the Tel Aviv regime.

On Sunday, Mandla Mandela, who is a member of parliament for the ruling African National Congress (ANC), urged the ANC caucus in legislature to pressure the government to send Arthur Lenk out of the country, and recall South Africa's Ambassador to Israel Sisa Ngombane, and cut all ties.

"History calls upon us to take similar measures to those taken by freedom, justice and peace loving communities that supported the global anti-apartheid movement against the brutal and illegitimate South African regime," he said. Mandela also praised the decision made by a group of ANC lawmakers to turn down an Israeli delegation's request to meet.

"Parliament has stayed true to Nelson Mandela's commitment to stand by the Palestinian cause until Palestine is free,'' he said in a statement. The Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu) also welcomed the measure. "Cosatu joins solidarity organizations, human rights bodies and other groups in welcoming the decision by the parliament of South Africa to turn down a request to meet with a visiting delegation from Israel," the group said in a statement.

Most South Africans have historically supported the Palestinians due to similarities between the Israeli occupation and South Africa's apartheid era. Mandela said in 1997 that "our freedom is incomplete without the freedom of the Palestinians." South African Nobel peace laureate Archbishop Desmond Tutu said in 2002 that his trip to Palestine had reminded him "so much of what happened to us Black people in South Africa."

The Israeli regime on the one side and Egypt, Jordan, and Syria on the other fought the Six-Day War on June 5-10, 1967. At the end of that war, Israel occupied the West Bank, East Jerusalem al-Quds, the Gaza Strip, and parts of the Golan Heights. Israel later withdrew from Gaza but has kept the coastal enclave under a crippling siege since 2007.

Palestinian authorities want the resolution of the conflict with Tel Aviv based on the so-called two-state solution along pre-1967 boundaries, but Israeli officials have so far refused the call.

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