

Palestine urges probe into Israel's burial of radioactive waste in West Bank



A view of the Israeli Dimona nuclear reactor in the Negev Desert (Photo by Getty Images)

Ramallah, December 8 (RHC)-- Palestinian Prime Minister Mohammad Shtayyeh has called on the international community to launch an investigation into the issue of Israel's burial of nuclear, chemical and solid waste in the West Bank, citing increasing cancer rates in the occupied territory.

Speaking at a conference on climate change in the city of Ramallah on Tuesday, Shtayyeh said the landfills used by the Tel Aviv regime across the West Bank are a source of environmental pollution and pose a threat to the Palestinian people's health.

"Despite the measures we are taking to protect and preserve the environment, Israel continues to take measures that destroy it," he added. "We need to end the Israeli occupation, which has turned the occupied Palestinian West Bank into a massive landfill for dangerous and toxic wastes," he added.

The Palestinian premier also warned that the presence of an Israeli nuclear reactor in the Negev Desert and the burial of its radioactive waste have increased cancer rates in the nearby city of al-Khalil (Hebron).

"The cases of cancer in areas south of Hebron are the highest in Palestine, due to the burying of waste in a nearby location and the presence of a nuclear reactor," he said.

Israel, which pursues a policy of deliberate ambiguity about its nuclear weapons, is estimated to have 200 to 400 nuclear warheads in its arsenal. The occupying entity has refused to allow inspections of its military nuclear facilities or sign the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

Elsewhere in his address, Shtayyeh estimated that Israeli authorities have since 1967 uprooted 2.5 million trees, including 800,000 Palestinian olive trees.

Palestine's annual water budget is approximately 800 million cubic meters and Israel has "stolen" 600 million cubic meters of it, he said, adding the water theft is part of "Israel's systematic colonialist policies to turn our lands into desert and seize them."

The Palestinian Authority adopted the Greening Palestine Program 10 years ago and spent \$25 million to plant new trees in the West Bank and parts of the besieged Gaza Strip, according to the prime minister. "It is sad that every tree we planted in the Gaza Strip in the Beit Hanoun area was razed by the occupation forces during their repeated aggressions against the Strip."

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