

U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry Urges Israelis and Palestinians to Work for Peace'



Milan, October 17 (RHC)-- U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry has called Palestinian President Mahmud Abbas and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to express concern over violent clashes between Israel and Palestine, a US official says. Kerry, who is in Milan, Italy as part of a European tour, talked to Netanyahu on Friday to discuss "how best to end the recent wave of violence, and to offer U.S. support for efforts to restore calm as soon as possible," the State Department official said.

Also on Thursday, Kerry called Abbas and "reiterated the importance of avoiding further violence and preventing inflammatory rhetoric, accusations and actions that will increase tensions," added the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity. The top U.S. diplomat said he "hoped to visit the region at the appropriate moment." According to U.S. and Israeli officials, Netanyahu and Kerry plan to meet in Berlin next week, but the exact details have not been announced yet.

The recent wave of tensions in the occupied Palestinian territories was triggered by the Israeli regime's imposition in August of restrictions on the entry of Palestinian worshipers into the al-Aqsa Mosque in East al-Quds.

Palestinians are also angry at increasing violence by illegal Israeli settlers, who frequently storm al-Aqsa Mosque, the third holiest site in Islam after Masjid al-Haram in Mecca and Masjid al-Nabawi in Medina. They say the Tel Aviv regime seeks to change the status quo of the compound.

Thirty-five Palestinians have been killed by Israeli forces in the occupied West Bank. Several more Palestinians have been killed by Israelis in the blockaded Gaza Strip.

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