

# Trump's decision: with his Jerusalem move, Tump flings gas can over a region aflame

Thursday 7 December 2017, by [HUSSAIN Murtaza](#) (Date first published: 6 December 2017).

IN A MOVE that would break from decades of U.S. policy and potentially trigger major regional turmoil, President Donald Trump is reportedly set to announce that the United States will recognize the disputed city of Jerusalem as Israel's capital. The White House announced that Trump will deliver his remarks on the subject Wednesday, with the *New York Times* reporting that the president has already informed Israeli and Arab leaders about his plans.

The status of Jerusalem has long been a red line for Palestinians, as well as Arab and Muslim populations around the world that are sympathetic to their cause. With the Middle East already dealing with several major crises, the decision to change the U.S. position on this subject now is likely to inflame tensions both within Israel-Palestine, as well as the broader region. Responding to Trump's planned announcement, the State Department has instructed embassies worldwide to boost security, warning of possible violence in the days ahead.

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Trump's expected move on Jerusalem comes in the context of deepening pressure on Palestinian leadership from D.C. The House of Representatives today passed a bill approving the suspension of aid to the Palestinian Authority, while recent reports have claimed that Saudi leaders have delivered ultimatums to their Palestinian counterparts in a bid to force them into accepting the Trump administration's proposals for a negotiated end to the conflict — proposals that are said to be wildly at odds with Palestinian national aspirations.

Trump is still expected to sign a waiver on moving the embassy for another six months, raising speculation that the announcement of the change in Jerusalem's status is part of a strategy to pressure the Palestinians to accept an unpalatable deal.

"The peace process — whatever that is and whatever is left of it — was built on agreements that included a certain set of American guarantees about how the U.S. would approach final status issues, including the question of Jerusalem," said Yousef Munayyer, executive director of the U.S. Campaign for Palestinian Rights. "It now looks as though the Trump administration is trying to ram an agreement down the throat of the Palestinian Authority that would be disastrous for them and is using a number of different threats, such as the status of Jerusalem, as a means of doing this."

Regional countries and organizations, such as the Arab League and the 57-member Organization of Islamic Cooperation, have lodged objections to any possible change in the status of Jerusalem, while Palestinian factions have called for protests to be held in the coming days. However harsh the reaction, one might have reasonably expected it.

"This is something that no American president has dared to do before," added Munayyer, "because of the kind of pushback that they would receive in the region."

**Murtaza Hussain**

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\* The Intercept. December 6 2017, 12:33 a.m.:

<https://theintercept.com/2017/12/05/trump-jerusalem-israel-palestine/>