

IRAN, TURKEY LASH OUT AT UAE OVER ISRAEL DEAL

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Iran and Turkey lashed out at their regional rival the United Arab Emirates (UAE) on Friday over its decision to normalise diplomatic relations with Israel, accusing it of betraying the Palestinian cause, even as much of the international community welcomed the move.

Iran's Foreign Ministry called the U.S.-brokered deal a "dagger that was unjustly struck by the UAE in the backs of the Palestinian people and all Muslims." Turkey said the peoples of the region "will never forget and will never forgive this hypocritical behavior" by the UAE.

The UAE, which has never fought Israel and has quietly been improving ties for years, said the agreement put a hold on Israel's plans to unilaterally annex parts of the occupied West Bank, which the Palestinians view as the heartland of their future state.

But the Turkish Foreign Ministry said the UAE had no authority to negotiate with Israel on behalf of the Palestinians or "to make concessions on matters vital to Palestine."

The agreement would make the UAE the first Gulf Arab state — and the third Arab country, after Egypt and Jordan — to have full diplomatic ties with Israel. The Palestinians say the deal amounts to "treason" and have called on Arab and Muslim countries to oppose it. Later on Friday, Turkish President Recep Erdogan said he was considering downgrading Turkey's relations with the UAE and recalling its Ambassador.

Oman welcomes move

Oman, a Gulf country that has cultivated closer ties with Israel in recent years, even hosting a visit by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu last year, meanwhile welcomed the agreement.

Germany's Foreign Minister Heiko Maas welcomed both the agreement and the decision to suspend annexation, and called to congratulate his Israeli counterpart Gabi Ashkenazi on "this historic step."

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