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Vanunu: Israel's Nuclear Arsenal a Threat to Middle East

GAZA, August 23, 2005 (IPC + Agencies) - - The Israeli nuclear expert Mordechai Vanunu asserted that the Israeli nuclear arsenal is a threat to the entire Middle East region, calling on Israel to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Agreement (NNPA).



Vanunu, who was accused and imprisoned for 18 years by Israel for being the whistleblower of Israel's nuclear weapons, said in an interview with the French newspaper "L'Humanité" Monday that by refusing to sign the NNPA, Israel would be responsible for the

proliferation of nuclear weapons in the region sooner or later.

He also added that Israel would become capable of doing whatever it wanted, regardless of international laws or conventions, based on its nuclear threat.

As for the Israeli Apartheid Wall being built inside Palestinian territories, Vanunu affirmed that peace could not be achieved unless the wall would be torn down, pointing out that the continued construction of this wall in the West Bank and Jerusalem contradicted international law and legitimacy.

The Israeli nuclear expert told the newspaper that the Israeli withdrawal from Gaza Strip and northern West Bank was not enough, referring to the deteriorated conditions in the occupied East Jerusalem and the possible outburst of anger there at any time.

Though he was released after 18 years of imprisonment, Vanunu said he still feels like a prisoner, as he was deprived of free movement and traveling, and might go to jail again for speaking to journalists about "confidential information regarding the Israeli development of nuclear weapons."

In 1986, an Israeli court indicted Vanunu with spying, and he was secretly abducted by the Israeli foreign intelligence service

"Mossad" from Rome and moved to Tel Aviv where he was tried and sentenced to 18 years of jail.

Following his release, Vanunu sent an immediate letter to the Israeli Internal Security Minister, asking him to revoke his Israeli nationality, declaring that he didn't want any relations with Israel and would apply for asylum in one of the foreign embassies in Israel.

Following the letter, Israeli authorities imposed strict restrictions on Vanunu, to prevent him from revealing what they called "state secrets", and he was banned from leaving Israel for a year and from approaching airports and sea harbors for a renewable period of six months. He was also ordered to report all his meetings and movements, as well as asking for special permission before meeting foreigners.



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