

Palestinian reconciliation agreement on July 28

Contributed by Egypt News
Thursday, 02 July 2009

Egypt has again set a new date for signing a Palestinian reconciliation agreement. This came after Fatah and Hamas agreed to postpone the seventh round of dialogue

An Egyptian official source said the secretaries-general of the different Palestinian organizations would sign a Palestinian reconciliation agreement in Cairo on July 28, immediately after the next three-day round of talks, which will begin on July 25. Politicians linked such a step to US President Barack Obama's plan on peace in the Middle East

Egyptian intelligence chief Omar Suleiman had set a date on July 7 for the signing of the reconciliation agreement, but differences between Fatah and Hamas on the file of prisoners and some other points postponed it to late this month.

After an intensive round of talks between Fatah and Hamas over the past three days, it was agreed to form a joint security force in the Gaza Strip. The force will begin its work immediately after signing the agreement. It was also agreed to form a joint committee of all factions to coordinate and oversee the implementation of the agreement. The committee's task will end after the presidential and legislative elections, and laying down general principles to solve the problem of the detainees in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, the source said.

The dialogue will hold consultations on some disputed details. Egypt will invite the committees emanating from the dialogue to visit Cairo in the coming few days to formulate the agreed-upon points. Egypt will also hold consultations with all Palestinian factions and forces to solve the problem of the detainees.

Head of Fatah delegation in talks Ahmed Qurei said the controversy over the laws governing detention "postponed the file of the detainees" to the next round of dialogue.

There is still dispute over the election law. Fatah suggested that 80% of votes should be counted under the proportional system and 20% according to the constituencies system.

However, Hamas suggested that 40% should be counted under the constituencies system.

Head of Fatah parliamentary bloc Azzam al-Ahmed said: "We became closer to each other, but it seems that the devils are in the details. It is no exaggeration to say that the dispute was on the formulation of six words only."

Al-Ahmed, member of Fatah delegation to the dialogue, said there was disagreement on the word 'ministry,' as Fatah refused to recognize Ismail Haniyeh government in Gaza.

Fatah also sees that the role of the factional committee is to coordinate between the Government of Ramallah and the staff of ministries in Gaza. This was rejected by Hamas.

There are differences on the formation of the joint security force. We called for forming this force immediately after signing the reconciliation agreement, but Hamas said this force should not include more than 300 elements at border crossings, to be gradually increased to 3,000 before elections.

There is dispute over the dates and wording of the file of the detainees, he said, adding: "Fatah wants to deal with this file by law, but Hamas wants to deal with it by law and consensus."

Ezzat Rishq, a Hamas leader, said it was agreed to resume the work of the two joint committees, which were formed in the past to solve the problem of the detainees and to stop violations and media conflict between the West Bank and Gaza. Cairo will come up with a formula to end this file.

EGYPT NEWS