

Clinton defends US stance on colonies

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US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton on Wednesday defended Washington's stance on Israeli colonies and said the US wants to see a permanent halt in colony construction in occupied Palestinian territories

"We do not accept the legitimacy of settlement [colony] activity and we have a very firm belief that ending all settlement activity, current and future, would be preferable," Clinton said after meeting the Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in Cairo.

Only a few days earlier Clinton sparked Arab anger by hailing Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's "unprecedented" move when he offered "restrained" colony construction.

"We can't resume negotiations while Israel is moving full-force ahead to change the reality on the ground in Occupied Jerusalem and increasing the colonies," Palestinian Justice Minister Ali Khashan said.

"Our position will be weak in these negotiations, and Israel should stop all these measures," Khashan told Gulf News.

Palestinians need to stand firm regarding some issues to improve their position, however, resuming peace talks is an ultimate necessity, Egyptian analyst Jamal Abdul Jawad said.

He described Clinton's Cairo visit as "a mission to rescue US President Barack Obama's strategy in the Middle East after the damage inflicted on it because of Clinton's remarks in Israel".

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