

India will support Palestine cause, engage with Israel:President Mukherjee

12/10/2015 19:32 by admin

Amman: India will continue to extend unwavering support for separate statehood for Palestine while also engaging with Israel to forge an independent and long-standing bilateral relationship, President Pranab Mukherjee said here on Sunday.

The president also lauded Jordan's humanitarian support in sheltering 1.4 million Syrians, called for a concerted global action for a peaceful resolution of conflict in the troubled country, while also pushing its own case in forging a UN treaty on countering terrorism.

These were the gist of the visiting president's messages during his meetings with the Jordanian leadership on the second day of his visit here, and at a speech he delivered at the University of Jordan, which conferred a doctorate on him in political science.

"India supports a negotiated solution resulting in a sovereign, independent, viable and united State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, living within secure and recognized borders," the president said at the university.

"Our bilateral relations with Israel are independent of our relations with Palestine," he said.

"India has played a proactive role in garnering support for this cause in all multilateral fora. We have called upon both sides to exercise restraint and work towards a comprehensive resolution of the Palestinian issue."

Jordan is the only country in the Arab world, besides Egypt, which has a peace agreement with Israel.

The president also quoted Mahatma Gandhi, as drawn from a book written by Queen Noor: "'Palestine belongs to the Arabs in the same sense that England belongs to the English and France to the French'."

The Jordanian side was equally candid and said it saw Israel resorting to "state terrorism" against the people of Palestine, as clashes between the two sides continued unabated. This was also the text of a resolution that was passed by the Jordanian Parliament on Saturday, accusing Israelis of "sapping the rights" of Palestinians.

President Mukherjee, who earlier in the day opened a street, named after Mahatma Gandhi here, continued his engagements with the Jordanian leadership, during which he also took up the issue of ending conflict in Syria, while supporting Amman's endeavours.

Jordan has a population of 6.5 million and another 1.5 million -- or 25 percent -- have taken shelter in the country.

The Indian side said it strongly endorsed the June 2012 resolution of the Action Group for Syria that met at the UN office in Switzerland -- called the Geneva-I Communique -- that not only wanted an end to further military conflict, but also rapid steps for a credible political agreement, involving the people.

About the increasing Russian involvement in Syria, Anil Wadhwa, secretary, east in India's foreign ministry said there was major distinction and Moscow was primarily seeking to curtail the advancement of the extremist group Islamic State in Syria.

Since September 30, Russia has been carrying out airstrikes against certain positions of Islamic State which has been

criticised by the US as being directed at anti-government rebels.

The talks between the Jordanian and Indian sides also veered around terrorism -- of which the South Asian country has been a victim.

India pushed for a total compliance of United Nations Security Council Resolution number 1,353 of 2011 and the UN Global Counter Terrorism Strategy adopted in 2006, as also for the early adoption of the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism, that has been pending for over a decade.

President Mukherjee himself pushed for this convention strongly and said it will serve to put a curb against state-sponsored terrorism in the most effective manner, by getting countries to take steps that will not only suppress such acts, but also punish its perpetrators, abettors, financiers, facilitators and collaborators.

During his engagements here, the Indian side and the Jordanian sides signed a number of pacts, ranging from cooperation in maritime transport to information technology, besides some 10 in the field of education between the Jawaharlal University, Jamia Millia Islami, University of Delhi and IIT-Kharagpur, with their Jordanian counterparts.

- IANS