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Jordan's Minister of Endowment and Islamic Sanctuaries and Affairs, Dr. Abdul Salam Al-Abbadi, has condemned reports by Israeli newspapers which assert that a historic deal between Israel's Undersecretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Vatican Representative in the Holy Land was ratified on the 29th of the last month.

The deal includes tax exemptions granted by the Israeli authorities to Vatican institutions operating in occupied Jerusalem. Within the deal, Israel will also grant the papacy a formal seat in the final supper room, "one of the upstairs rooms of the Islamic Waqf's mosque and a shrine to the Prophet David in Jerusalem."

In a press release issued by the ministry today, Al-Abbadi said that, "the general manager of Jerusalem endowments had communicated with the representative of the Vatican in the city to clarify what had been published in Israeli newspapers. He categorically denied the allegation and said that any matter relating to this room would be discussed with Jordan. He stressed that the Mosque of the Prophet David, his place on all facilities and floors, corners and Mehrabs are Islamic Waqf. With regard to being an important Islamic Waqf, the available historic, religious and legal documents prove this Islamic right as well as the fact that the historic, religious and legal rights in the mosque belong only to Islamic Waqf."

He added that the Islamic Waqf denounces the forced changes (de facto) that existed prior to 1967, and that it will not accept the continued prevention of Muslims from praying at the mosque of the Prophet David as well as the continued prevention of al-Dajani from burying their dead in their historical graveyard. He pointed out that the Israeli authorities have no right to give away what it does not own.

He pointed out that al-Dajani are the servants of the place and mosque; according to Bowl decrees granted to them over 560 years ago.

Moreover, the Israeli authorities had committed many crimes and irregularities when it changed inscriptions, writings and Quranic verses, removed the faience and tiles in the mosque, and banned al-Dajani from using their graveyard near the mosque.

The Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs of Jordan continued: "The attack on Muslim mosques and sanctities and the tolerance with those who desecrate them is an unacceptable injustice and will not grant the aggressor any proprietary right. The right remains that of the owner, no matter how long it takes or how many injustice it must endure."

Al-Abadi added that Islamic Waqf properties have their sanctity and legal and genuine grounds as well as the international conventions that state that they are not subject to sale, granting or waiver. As such, any agreement between Israel and any other party is void and is not recognized. He stressed that any deals made at the expense of the Islamic Waqf will be rejected.

He pointed out that diplomatic principles require the prior consultation and coordination of positions, not that deals are struck with Israel; this is a clear violation of international law and recognition of Israeli authority. He also stressed that this would not change the authentic Islamic right to this sensitive site.

Al-Abadi confirmed that he would reject any action taken by either Israel or any other party since any deals

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contracted with those who do not own the site are illegal. He called on the Arab League, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, and international and humanitarian organizations to quickly take the required actions to halt the unjust measures taken by Israel against the Islamic Waqf in Jerusalem.

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