**Arab ministers said to push distinction between terror, ‘resisting’ Israel**

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http://www.timesofisrael.com/arab-ministers-said-to-push-distinction-between-terror-resisting-israel/

Arab leaders are reportedly calling for the Arab League to recognize fighting against Israel as legitimate and not a form of terror at the group’s annual summit in Jordan this week.

In preparatory meetings Monday ahead of the confab, which kicks off in Jordan on Wednesday, foreign ministers from the 22-member organization called for a distinction to be noted between “terrorism and legitimate resistance against the Israeli occupation,” according to a report in Arabic daily al-Hayat.

The report did not specify what was meant by “resistance” or if the Israeli occupation referred only to areas beyond the 1967 armistice line or all of Israel.

The diplomats also affirmed the right of the Lebanese to “liberate Shebaa Farms, Kfar Shuba Hills and the Lebanese part of the Ghajar village…to resist any aggression by lawful means,” according to the report, referring to areas on the Israeli-Lebanese border.

[A similar affirmation](http://www.timesofisrael.com/lebanon-has-right-to-defend-itself-against-israel/) was made by the group prior to the 2014 summit, but that was before the Arab League declared the Lebanon-based Shiite group Hezbollah a[terrorist organization](http://www.timesofisrael.com/arab-league-declares-hezbollah-a-terrorist-organization/) in March 2016.

If the declaration is approved by the leaders of the Arab countries when they convene tomorrow, it would constitute an apparent retreat from the decision made regarding the characterization of Hezbollah one year ago.

The foreign ministers also praised the election of Hezbollah ally Michel Aoun as Lebanon’s new president, saying he would help stabilize and unify his country. Last month, Aoun told Egyptian TV that [Hezbollah was required](http://www.timesofisrael.com/lebanon-needs-hezbollah-to-counter-israel-aoun/) to counter the Jewish state “as long as the Lebanese army is not strong enough to battle Israel.”

The declarations were part of a raft of policy resolutions set to be adopted at the Arab Summit.

One resolution rejected unilateral steps that “jeopardize the historic and legal status” of Jerusalem, Jordan’s foreign minister said Monday.

The council also condemned the commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the UK’s “shameful” Balfour Declaration, which noted that “His Majesty’s government view with favor the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people,” and called on the UK to recognize the state of Palestine, in part over Britain’s perceived responsibility for Palestinian suffering, according to the report.

The summit, hosted by Jordan’s King Abdullah II, is expected to focus on seeking common positions and possible leverage as US President Donald Trump weighs his approach toward the region.

Key participants include King Salman of Saudi Arabia, Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi and Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas. UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres and Staffan de Mistura, the UN and Arab League envoy for Syria, are coming, along with US and Russian envoys.

The leaders are expected to reaffirm a Saudi-led peace plan that offers Israel full relations with dozens of Arab and Muslim states in exchange for its withdrawal from lands captured in 1967. The Arab Peace Initiative, which would pave the way for a Palestinian state in East Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza, was first proposed in 2002.

The summit is being asked to endorse the plan “as is,” a request promoted by Abbas, who says reopening it to negotiations would further weaken the Palestinians.