

Egypt, Jordan to negotiate with Israel

by UPI

CAIRO - The Arab League has decided that Egypt and Jordan will lead negotiations with Israel on the initiative for peace with the Palestinians.

Arab League Secretary-General Amr Moussa said Egypt and Jordan would explain the initiative to the Israeli government because they had peace treaties with Israel. However, he said "there will be no Arab normalization for free," Haaretz reported Thursday.

"Once Israel stops its practices in the occupied territories, mainly lifting the sanctions on the Palestinian people, halting the building of settlements and the building of the (security) wall ... then a larger working group will be formed to contact the Israeli government," Moussa said in a statement from Cairo.

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert spoke Wednesday by phone with Jordan's King Abdullah II on the Arab peace initiative. Details of the conversation weren't published.

None of the Arab ministers specified when the contacts with Israel would be launched but Moussa said it "could be tomorrow or in a week," the Jerusalem Post reported.

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