

Brazil's Lula Praises Palestinian Patience

Contributed by Marina Sarruf
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Brazilian President Lula met this Monday, May 9, with the secretary general of the League of Arab States, Amr Mussa, the President of the Palestinian National Authority, Mahmoud Abbas and Prime Ministers of Mauritania, Sghair Ould M'Barek, of Lebanon, Mohammad Najib Mikati and of Syria, Mohammad Naji Otri.

According to the foreign relations advisor for the presidency of the republic, Marco Aurélio Garcia, the five heads of state recognized the importance of the summit.

According to Garcia, who was present at the meetings that took place at the Brazilian Foreign Office (Itamaraty), the importance of Brazil serving as an intermediary between the Arab world and South America was praised.

Apart from that, he believes that the summit will serve, mainly, to unfold of the multilateral political, economic and commercial plan. "The meetings were very warm and positive," stated the spokesperson.

In the last two years, Garcia stated that closer ties between Brazil and the Arab countries helped increment foreign trade with the region, both in exports and in imports.

Last year, the country's bilateral trade with the League of Arab States was around US\$ 8 billion. "We have reached figures that show an increase of over 50%," he said.

The advisor believes that meetings like this summit, which includes the presence of 1,250 Arab and South American businessmen, is going to collaborate even more with the economic relations between both regions.

"What we have noticed is that there will, undoubtedly, be good political relations and an increase in trade relations," stated Garcia.

According to him, another point covered in the meeting with the Arab heads of state was the Palestinian question. "President Lula stated that Brazil is still supporting the peace effort within the traditional lines of Brazilian diplomacy," he said.

According to Garcia, Lula praised the patience of the Palestinian president with regard to conflicts that the country is going through and made a personal reference, that he himself waited for many years to become President and that this permitted great reflection.

Anba