

## Brazil Wishes Arafat's Dreams Will Be Kept Alive

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The Brazilian government released a note mourning the death of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) President, Yasser Arafat. The statement also talks about Brazil's desire that Palestinians will continue fighting for Arafat's ideals.

"The Brazilian government expresses their most sincere condolences for the passing of president Yasser Arafat, historical leader in the fight of the Palestinian people for their self determination," said the text issued by the Itamaraty, the Brazilian foreign office.

"In this moment of pain and sadness, President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva sympathises with the mourning of the Palestinian people," it adds.

Arafat died in the early morning in the Percy Military Hospital, in the surroundings of Paris (France), where he had been hospitalized since the 29th of October. He was 75 years old.

There is still no clear information on the cause of death, but his health condition had been worsening over the last 20 days.

Last week he went into a coma and was transferred to the hospital's intensive care unit. On Tuesday he went into a deeper coma and had a brain haemorrhage.

Trusting that the new Palestinian leaderships "will know how to keep alive the ideals of their untiring representative," the Itamaraty reassures the Brazilian government's support for the creation of a "free and sovereign" Palestinian state.

The Brazilian government has always supported the creation of a Palestinian state and a peaceful solution for the conflict with the Israelis, so much that the Brazilian government decided to open a representation office in Ramallah, led by ambassador Bernardo de Azevedo Brito, where one of the main objectives was to help find a diplomatic solution for the impasse.

In 1975, Brazil authorized the opening of a diplomatic representation of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in Brasília, capital of Brazil.

In 1993, this representation was promoted to the category of "Special Palestinian Delegation", led by an ambassador, and with diplomatic status similar to that of many other international organizations based in the country.

Today, the position is taken by ambassador Musa Odeh, who is also the dean of the Arab Country Ambassador Council in Brazil.

In 1995, before becoming president of the PNA, and still as the major leader of the PLO, Arafat visited Brazil and was hosted by the President at the time, Fernando Henrique Cardoso.

Earlier this year, a delegation of Brazilian representatives visited the West Bank to manifest solidarity to the Palestinian people, and were hosted by Arafat, by the prime minister, Ahmed Qorei, and by the president of the Palestinian parliament, Rouhi Fatouh.

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