



First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia Ivica Dacic met with Minister of Foreign Affairs of Palestine Riyad al-Maliki during the official visit of President Mahmoud Abbas to Serbia.

Following the meeting of the two Ministers, the Head of Serbian Diplomacy recalled the traditional and historic friendship between Yugoslavia and Palestine, between Tito and Yasser Arafat.

Minister Dacic said that Serbia had a clear political interest in developing friendly relations and cooperation with Palestine and that the opening of Serbia's Embassy in Ramallah was being taken into consideration.

Minister Dacic thanked the Palestinian Authority for their concrete and principled position concerning the territorial integrity of Serbia, i.e. the issue of Kosovo. He underlined that Serbia was in a position to help Palestine and the Palestinian people on many occasions throughout history, and it wishes to continue to do so.

Dacic emphasized that Serbia held the view that the peace process had to resume and that the two countries would continue to offer full understanding, to cooperate and coordinate their positions within international fora and to continue talks on cooperation in the fields of economy, culture and education. He added that both sides advocated setting up of a Joint Committee, cooperation between businessmen, facilitation of the visa regime, free trade as well as the renewal of ties between the universities.

"Visit by the Palestinian President has exceptional importance for further development of our relations", said the Head of Serbian Diplomacy.

The Palestinian Minister said that the visit to Belgrade was an opportunity to renew friendship and solidarity.

"We had cordial and friendly discussions, I felt the spirit of old friendship that prevailed. We have common views on many issues and there are shared elements to bring us to work together", said Al-Maliki, adding that he would invest efforts towards establishing the Joint Committee in order to deepen the relations further.

"I am optimistic that this meeting has laid foundations for further building of relations based on trust, respect, old friendship and solidarity", said Al-Maliki.

He thanked Serbia for its consistent position within all international fora in relation to the Palestinian issue.

The two Ministers signed the Memorandum of Understanding on Political Consultations between the two Ministries.