

MEMMO

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Israel Pledges Far-Reaching Steps to Support New Palestinian Government

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert pledged Monday during a summit with Arab leaders to work closely with the new government of Palestinian Authority (PA) President Mahmoud Abbas. Olmert offered both to help prepare the groundwork for future negotiations on the creation of a Palestinian state and to help improve Palestinian living conditions. In turn, the new PA government must reject rapprochement with Hamas and demonstrate its commitment to peace with Israel.

Israel will work with the new Palestinian government to improve the lives of Palestinians and to lay the groundwork for talks on a Palestinian state.

- The Israeli Cabinet voted June 24 to “resume working with the Palestinian government, with its recognition of the principles of the international Quartet” and decided to transfer Palestinian custom revenues that were frozen when Hamas came to power early last year.
- Olmert pledged to work with Abbas to renew security and economic cooperation, improve freedom of movement of Palestinians in the West Bank and renew economic and trade relations.
- The prime minister also announced his commitment to win Cabinet approval for the release of 250 Palestinian prisoners affiliated with Fatah who have not been convicted of deadly attacks and who forswear terrorism.
- Olmert offered to meet with Abbas at least once every two weeks to “create the necessary political horizon and the appropriate conditions which will lead, as soon as possible, to discussions on the establishment of a Palestinian state.”



Prime Minister Olmert said Israel will support the new government of Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas.

Israel is also meeting humanitarian needs in Gaza.

- Olmert added that Israel will continue to provide Palestinians in Gaza with electricity, water, medical services, food and medicine, stressing that Israel has “no interest in punishing this population simply because it is ruled by a terrorist organization.”

- During the past week, more than 1,000 tons of food, 30 tons of medical supplies, 580,000 liters of diesel fuel, 325,000 liters of cooking oil, 98,000 vaccine doses, 537 tons of animal feed and 581 tons of straw and other basic necessities were brought into Gaza from Israel.
- John Ging, head of the U.N. Relief and Works Agency in the Gaza Strip, said after recent meetings with Israeli army officials that the agency has “found practical solutions to make sure that the humanitarian assistance that is needed for the civilian population in Gaza can get through.”

The new Palestinian Authority government must take steps to combat terrorism, fight corruption and establish the rule of law in the West Bank.

- Measures taken by Israel and the United States to support the new Palestinian government can only be continued if the PA begins an effort to fight terrorism, end corruption and establish good governance, critical steps needed to create the possibility for constructive negotiations with Israel and to improve the daily lives of Palestinians.
- The new PA must also maintain its commitment to the Quartet’s principles: recognizing Israel’s right to exist, renouncing terror and accepting previous Israeli-Palestinian agreements.
- U.S. and Israeli support for the new government is also based on its continuing rejection of an accommodation with an unreconstructed Hamas that opposes peace with Israel.
- U.S. and international monitoring and auditing of aid to the Palestinians should continue and Palestinian Prime Minister Salam Fayyad, in his capacity as finance minister, must maintain strict accountability and full transparency of the use of foreign assistance.

Basic Facts Summary

- Israel has pledged to work with the new Palestinian government to improve the lives of Palestinians and to lay the groundwork for talks on a Palestinian state.
- Israel is also taking steps to provide for the humanitarian needs of Palestinians in Gaza.
- While resisting rapprochement with Hamas, the new Palestinian Authority government must combat terrorism, fight corruption and establish the rule of law.