

MEMMO

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Israel Taking Important Steps to Support New Palestinian Government

Israel is working closely with the new government of Palestinian Authority (PA) President Mahmoud Abbas to prepare the groundwork for future negotiations on the creation of a Palestinian state and to help improve Palestinian living conditions. Israel has taken concrete steps to support Abbas, including transferring withheld Palestinian tax revenues and approving the release of Palestinian prisoners. In turn, the new PA government should continue to reject rapprochement with Hamas and take further steps to demonstrate its commitment to peace with Israel.

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

- Israel on July 1 released \$120 million in tax revenues to the new Palestinian government and pledged to return an additional \$600 million in withheld funds.
- The Israeli government on July 8 approved the release of 250 Palestinian prisoners affiliated with Fatah in order to bolster Abbas' new government.
- Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni met on July 8 with Palestinian Prime Minister Salam Fayyad to discuss ways to improve Palestinian living conditions without harming Israel's security.
- Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert has 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.
- Olmert is committed to meeting with Abbas on a regular basis 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." The two leaders met June 25 and again July 16.
- The Israeli military has scaled back arrest operations in the West Bank. Any new operation will now require approval from the senior army command except for incidents where there is specific intelligence concerning a potential threat.



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

- Nearly 180 wanted Palestinians in the West Bank are being granted amnesty after they sign pledges not to carry out attacks against Israelis.

Israel is also meeting humanitarian needs in Gaza.

- Olmert said 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.”
- Israel is facilitating the passage each week of thousands of tons of food, medicine and other supplies into Gaza. During the last week of June, Israel transferred to Gaza, 2,321 tons of flour, 1,656 tons of sugar, 224 tons of rice, 88.8 tons of beans, 2,490 tons of animal feed, 187 tons of powder milk among other supplies.
- Efforts to transfer humanitarian goods have been hampered by repeated Palestinian mortar attacks on the crossings. On July 9, terrorists fired five mortars at Kerem Shalom crossing, a key entry point for goods into Gaza.
- Israel continues to facilitate necessary medical treatment for Gaza residents in Israel. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) arranged for the transfer of more than 250 patients and 60 ambulances from Gaza into Israel between June 19 and July 8.

The new PA government must take further steps to combat terrorism, fight corruption and establish the rule of law in the West Bank for progress to continue.

- 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 terrorism 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 should take further steps to combat terrorism, fight corruption and establish the rule of law.