

MEMO

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New Palestinian Government Taking Important Steps Needed for Peace

The new Palestinian government under President Mahmoud Abbas and Prime Minister Salam Fayyad has labeled the terrorist group Hamas “murderous” and banned its militias. The two leaders also have reiterated their recognition of the Jewish state and rejected the use of violence as a political tool. If followed with consistent action, these promising steps can serve as the foundation for negotiations with Israel. Arab states, for their part, must contribute to these efforts by isolating Hamas, condemning its tactics and promoting moderation.

Abbas has taken important first steps toward isolating Hamas and forming a government committed to peace with Israel.

Abbas dissolved the Hamas-led Palestinian government, firing Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh of Hamas by presidential decree and appointing Salam Fayyad as the new prime minister, finance minister and foreign minister.

Abbas ordered his elite presidential guard to take action against Hamas members in the West Bank in the aftermath of the terrorist group’s violent takeover in Gaza.

Abbas issued decrees officially outlawing the armed militias of Hamas and banned Palestinians from carrying weapons and explosives without a license.

PROMISING ACTIONS

STEPS AGAINST TERRORISM TAKEN BY PA PRESIDENT MAHMOUD ABBAS



EMPOWERING MODERATES

Abbas replaced the Hamas-led government with one headed by Salam Fayyad, an advocate of peace and financial transparency.



RECOGNIZING ISRAEL

Meeting Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, Abbas reiterated the Palestinian government’s acceptance of Israel’s right to exist.

DENOUNCING TERRORISTS

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas branded Hamas “murderous terrorists” following the group’s violent takeover of Gaza.



BANNING ILLICIT ARMS

Abbas outlawed possession of weapons by non-government forces in the West Bank.



Abbas and Fayyad have made important statements condemning Hamas and reiterating their commitment to peace.

Abbas denounced Hamas in the harshest terms, describing the terrorist group's violent takeover of Gaza as a "coup" that seeks to institute a "project of darkness," and said he would have no dialogue with "those murderous terrorists."

Abbas said Hamas seeks to undermine the Palestinian movement toward statehood, describing the struggle between the terrorist group and his Fatah Party as a battle "between those who are using assassination and killing to achieve their goals, and those who are using the rules of law."

Abbas explicitly rejected the use of violence as a means of achieving political objectives, declaring his commitment to "the peace process and the signed agreements with the Israeli side," to "renouncing violence and terror" and to recognizing Israel.

Fayyad told 800 Muslim clergy in the West Bank that the new government would not tolerate incitement coming from mosques and would collect weapons from armed groups.

The new Palestinian government must continue to take additional steps to combat terrorism, fight corruption and establish the rule of law.

- Measures taken by Israel and the United States to support the new Palestinian government will depend on consistent Palestinian implementation of these critical steps:
 - Maintaining its commitment to the internationally approved principles of recognizing Israel's right to exist, fighting terrorism and accepting previous Israeli-Palestinian agreements.
 - Continuing with its policy of rejecting an accommodation with an unreconstructed Hamas that opposes peace with Israel.
 - Upholding strict accountability and full transparency in the use of foreign assistance.

The Arab states must help Abbas by isolating Hamas diplomatically and economically.

Arab states must cut all financial support to Hamas, both public and private. In particular, Egypt has as a special responsibility to ensure funds are not smuggled from its territory into Gaza.

Arab states should provide funding to Abbas exclusively and should strongly discourage any rapprochement between Hamas and Fatah.

In order to provide Abbas and Fayyad the political cover they need to combat Hamas, the Arab states must publicly support their actions, reject terrorism and object to Hamas' violent tactics.

Arab leaders must do more to combat incitement in local media and help condition their own people for peace with Israel. Ending anti-Israel rhetoric in the region will help moderate Palestinians combat the extremists and reduce their influence.