



PRESS RELEASE

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AIPAC EXPRESSES CONCERN OVER ABBAS' CONDUCT

AIPAC expresses grave concern about Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas' regrettable decision to suspend peace talks with Israel.

Furthermore, the suspension of talks by the Palestinian leadership comes just days after disturbing reports that President Abbas stated he would not rule out future violence against the Jewish state. "I do not support a return to armed struggle at this point in time," Abbas reportedly told the Jordanian newspaper Al-Duster. "But, at a later date, this could be an option for the Palestinian people."

Recent weeks have seen a serious escalation in Hamas-led violence against Israeli civilians. In just the last several days, Gaza-based Palestinian terrorists have launched more than 180 rockets and mortar shells into residential areas in southern Israel, including more than 20 longer-range, Katyusha-style rockets fired at the city of Ashkelon. Despite the rash of attacks, Israel remains willing to negotiate with the Palestinian Authority

The peace process is predicated on the Palestinian's renunciation of terror and a willingness by both parties to engage in direct, bilateral talks. Abbas' decision to pull out of negotiations with Israel, combined with his apparent willingness to endorse future violence, indicates a wholesale rejection of both fundamental conditions.

It is our hope that Abbas will clarify his recent remarks and return to the negotiating table. Israel must be permitted to take steps to defend its people and will face insurmountable difficulty in brokering a deal with a Palestinian Authority that glorifies terrorism. President Abbas must demonstrate the PA's commitment to peace with Israel by taking steps to dismantle terrorist infrastructure and ending anti-Israel incitement. This week's actions only work to undermine that effort.

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