

MEMMO

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Abbas Undermines Peace Efforts

Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas' slanderous address to the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) on September 26 represented a direct affront to those seeking peace in the region. In contrast, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu laid out a positive agenda for peace in his address on September 29, while rejecting Abbas' claims against the Jewish state. The United States should continue to urge President Abbas not to take counter-productive, unilateral steps in international fora, while continuing America's long-standing support for Israeli-Palestinian peace talks.

Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas' speech at the UNGA represented a cruel rebuff to both reality and the peace process.

- In his address to the UNGA, President Abbas perpetrated the vicious lie that Israel committed genocide against the Palestinian people.
- President Abbas also announced his plan to sidestep peace talks by submitting a resolution to the United Nations Security Council, setting a deadline for Israel's withdrawal to pre-June 1967 lines. The imposed outcome Abbas seeks will bring neither peace nor a Palestinian state; these can only result from an Israeli-Palestinian agreement.
- In an affront to the United States' exhaustive efforts towards peace, Abbas signaled that the U.S.-sponsored peace process is over. "It is impossible, and I repeat – it is impossible – to return to the cycle of negotiations that failed to deal with the substance of the matter and the fundamental question," Abbas stated.



President Abbas affirmed the right to resist the "colonial, racist Israeli occupation."

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu rejected President Abbas' claims and laid out a positive agenda for peace.

- Responding to President Abbas' allegation of genocide, Prime Minister Netanyahu asked, "In what moral universe does genocide include warning the enemy's civilian population to get out of harm's way or ensuring that they receive tons, tons of humanitarian aid each day, even as thousands of rockets are being fired at us?"
- The Prime Minister also spoke of efforts to achieve peace with the Palestinians, and suggested that "a broader rapprochement between Israel and the Arab world may help facilitate an Israeli-Palestinian peace."
- Prime Minister Netanyahu reiterated his commitment to peace, noting that it "would enable Israel to realize its full potential and to bring a promising future, not only for our people, not only for the Palestinian people, but for many, many others in our region."

The United States should continue to stand with Israel and press the Palestinian leadership to return to negotiations.

- The State Department condemned President Abbas' remarks to the UNGA. "Such provocative statements are counterproductive and undermine efforts to create a positive atmosphere and restore trust between the parties," State Department Spokeswoman Jen Psaki said on Friday.
- The United States and international community should continue to urge President Abbas to return to bilateral negotiations with Israel and avoid counter-productive, unilateral steps at the United Nations or the International Criminal Court.
- The United States should continue expanding broad opposition towards Abbas' unilateral actions, and be prepared to veto resolutions brought before the United Nations Security Council that unfairly single out Israel.