Israel looks to fend off further PA moves in international arena

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A day after 14 countries on the Security Council voted in favor of a resolution against Washington’s decision to recognize Jerusalem as Israel’s capital, Israel was focused more on trying to stop further Palestinian moves in international forums than punishing the countries who voted for the measure.

As a result, foreign ambassadors were not summoned on Tuesday by the Foreign Ministry for a reprimand, nor were Israeli ambassadors recalled from any of the 14 countries who voted at the UN Security Council for the resolution.

Despite the support of 14 of the 15 Security Council countries, that resolution failed because the US cast its veto.

This was a marked change from a year ago, when Jerusalem reacted furiously following the passage of Security Council Resolution 2334 that called on Israel to “immediately and completely cease all settlement activities in the occupied Palestinian territory, including east Jerusalem.”

That resolution also said the settlements have “no legal validity” and are “dangerously imperiling the viability of the two-state solution.”

Following that vote, Israel recalled its ambassadors to Senegal and New Zealand, which were among the sponsors of the measure, stopped aid projects to Angola, canceled a visit of the Ukrainian prime minister, and summoned for a reprimand the ambassadors of the 12 countries with which it has diplomatic relations that voted for the measure.

As on Monday, 14 of the 15 countries on the Security Council voted against Israel on that anti-settlement resolution. The difference this time was that the United States voted against and cast its veto, while last year then-US president Barack Obama allowed the measure to pass as the American representative abstained.

While Jerusalem waged a furious diplomatic campaign ahead of the 2016 vote to try and upend that resolution, this time there was little diplomatic effort to get countries to oppose the Jerusalem resolution, knowing that the US would block it.

“Since we knew the US would veto the resolution, we didn’t want to waste our ammunition,” one official said.

Likewise, Israel has not taken any punitive measures or protested those countries sitting on the Security Council that voted for the measure.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who frequently touts the diplomatic inroads Israel has made with numerous countries around the world, regularly says that he expects that Israel’s improved ties with various states will bring about a change in their voting patterns at the UN.

He also regularly says that this could take up to a decade.

Among the countries on the Security Council that voted against the resolution and which Israel harbors hopes of changing their overall voting patterns are Uruguay, Ethiopia, Japan and Ukraine. Nevertheless, they all raised their hands in favor of the Egyptian draft resolution.

Rather than focusing on Monday’s vote, the Foreign Ministry is bracing for – and instructing its delegations abroad to try to fend off – Palestinian efforts to take the measure that the US vetoed to the General Assembly, where it would be certain to pass.

The ministry is also planning to push back against Palestinian efforts to gain entrance into other international organizations, as the PLO successfully did with UNESCO in 2011 and Interpol earlier this year.

A resolution calling for a withdrawal of the US recognition of Jerusalem as Israel’s capital may come to the General Assembly as early as this week.

After Washington cast the Security Council veto on Monday, Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas said the Palestinians would immediately start efforts to gain entrance into all the world’s international organizations.