Palestinians Say They Seek ‘Accountability’ For Settlements with UN Vote

April 9, 2016

By [AP](http://www.timesofisrael.com/writers/ap/) and [Times of Israel staff](http://www.timesofisrael.com/writers/times-of-israel-staff/)

The Times of Israel

<http://www.timesofisrael.com/palestinians-seek-accountability-for-settlements/>

A Palestinian official said Friday that a draft proposal for a new UN Security Council resolution seeks “accountability” for Israeli settlement building.

Palestinian Authority Foreign Minister Riyad al-Malki said the draft stresses the “violence and terrorism of the settlers.”

The international community considers the settlements illegitimate while Israel says settlements and other core issues such as security should be resolved in peace talks.

The draft resolution, already distributed to Arab nations at the UN in New York, was immediately condemned by Israel’s Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu who said Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas “is taking a step that will push negotiations further away” to end the decades-old Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Peace Now, a dovish Israeli group that tracks settlement construction, said Israel began building 1,800 new settlement homes in the West Bank in 2015.

The Palestinians claim the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem as parts of a future state, a position that has wide global support. They view Israeli settlement construction as illegal and a major obstacle to resolving the conflict.

Though Israel’s closest ally, the United States has nonetheless opposed new settlements, saying they are an impediment to peace between Israel and the Palestinians. At the same time, the Obama administration in 2011 didn’t want the Security Council to take up the issue, arguing it would complicate peace negotiations.

Whether the US administration would adhere to that position and veto a similar resolution if it was put to a vote in the coming weeks remains to be seen.

The Israeli newspaper Haaretz, which first reported on the resolution, said the Palestinians want the Security Council to vote when Abbas is in New York on April 22 to attend the high-level ceremony where more than 130 countries are expected to sign the landmark climate agreement reached in Paris in December.

Netanyahu accused Abbas of avoiding direct negotiations, and Israel’s UN Ambassador Danny Danon said the only way to promote negotiations must start with the Palestinians “condemning terrorism and stopping the incitement.”

“They are continuing to deceive the international community by putting forward initiatives that do nothing to better the lives of either side of this conflict,” Danon said.