US lobbies Europe to back United Nations vote on condemning Hamas

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By AFP

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The United States is leading a push at the United Nations to win crucial backing from European countries for a resolution condemning Hamas, the Israeli ambassador said Tuesday.

The General Assembly is expected to vote Friday or possibly Monday on the proposed resolution condemning rocket firings into Israel and demanding that Hamas end the use of violence.

Israel’s Ambassador Danny Danon told reporters that US diplomats were in talks with their EU counterparts on the draft text. European backing would significantly boost chances of approval by the 193-nation body.

“The US is negotiating the language with the EU,” Danon told a briefing. “For us it’s very symbolic to have this resolution presented with the support of the EU.”

If adopted, it would mark the first time that the assembly has voted to condemn Hamas, the Islamist terror group that has ruled the Gaza Strip since 2007.

European diplomats said there were disagreements on the proposed US text, notably including references to UN resolutions and to the two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which is supported by the UN.

A draft text seen by AFP “condemns Hamas for repeatedly firing rockets into Israel and for inciting violence” and “demands that Hamas and other militant actors cease all provocative actions and violent activity.”

The European Union has put Hamas on its blacklist of terror groups, but the 28-nation bloc has struggled to come up with a united position on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

In June, US Ambassador Nikki Haley sought to amend an Arab-backed resolution condemning Israel for the violence in Gaza, but failed to win the required votes in the assembly.

The US amendment condemning Hamas received 62 votes in favor, with 58 against and 42 abstentions.

The Israeli ambassador said the US draft resolution had created a “win-win solution” for his government because it had forced capitals to turn their attention to Hamas.

On Thursday, the United Nations will hold events to mark the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinians, which commemorates the adoption of the 1947 partition plan intended to establish an Arab state and a Jewish state.