In Harsh Letter, Top Palestinian Negotiator Tells Foreign Diplomats Trump Envoy Greenblatt Has Turned Into Israel's Spokesman

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By [Jack Khoury](https://www.haaretz.com/amp/misc/writers/1.4968351) and [Noa Landau](https://www.haaretz.com/amp/misc/writers/1.4969059)

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<https://www.haaretz.com/amp/middle-east-news/palestinians/.premium-envoy-greenblatt-assailed-by-erekat-in-letter-to-foreign-diplomats-1.5994602>

In an unprecedented move, a senior Palestinian official sent a letter on Thursday to all foreign diplomats stationed in Ramallah assailing the American envoy to the peace process, [Jason Greenblatt](https://www.haaretz.com/us-news/.premium-saudi-crown-prince-to-talk-iran-mideast-peace-with-u-s-jewish-heads-1.5955829).

Saeb Erekat, who is the [Palestinians](https://www.haaretz.com/middle-east-news/palestinians)’ chief negotiator as well as secretary general of the [PLO](https://www.haaretz.com/misc/tags/plo-1.5598970)’s executive committee, also urged the diplomats to back the Palestinians at the [United Nations](https://www.haaretz.com/misc/tags/un-1.5598959) and other international agencies, including the International Criminal Court, in demanding an investigation into “ongoing Israeli crimes against Palestine and the Palestinian people.”

Erekat, who has met with Greenblatt many times since the latter took office, charged that since the mass demonstrations near the Israel-Gaza border began a few weeks ago, the U.S. envoy has “assumed the role of spokesperson of the Israeli Authorities” and “consistently repeated Israeli talking points.”

As an example, he cited a statement Greenblatt [issued about the demonstrations in which he warned Palestinian](https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-israeli-army-prepares-for-50-000-protesters-at-gaza-border-on-friday-1.5977304) demonstrators not to get too near the Israeli border, but said nothing about Israel’s obligation to avoid civilian casualties, as representatives of other countries and international organizations did.

Erekat also reiterated in the letter that the Palestinians will not accept Washington as an honest broker in the peace process. “It is clear that those who do not consider that the lives of Palestinians and Israelis are of equal value cannot possibly promote any plan that will be remotely close to a just and lasting peace,” he wrote. “Rather, the Trump Administration continues to adopt Israeli positions.”

Moreover, he continued, it is doing so even though Defense Minister [Avigdor Lieberman](https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/lieberman-contradicts-idf-there-s-no-humanitarian-crisis-in-gaza-1.5790605) “declared that ‘there are no innocent people in Gaza.’”

A senior Palestinian Authority official involved in the matter confirmed that the letter was indeed sent. He said the letter was intended to persuade the diplomatic corps, especially European diplomats, that nothing can be expected of the Trump Administration, so there’s no point in waiting for it to unveil its peace plan before formulating a position on the steps the PA is planning in international institutions.

“We keep hearing, ‘Let’s wait for Trump’s plan,’” the official said. “But in light of positions like those Greenblatt has voiced, there’s nothing to wait for.”