UNSC to Informally Meet on West Bank Settlements Ahead of Trump Plan

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The United Nations Security Council is set to hold an informal meeting on West Bank settlements next Thursday, in advance of the anticipated rollout of US President Donald Trump’s peace plan, possibly as early as June.

The council last held such a meeting in 2016, under a mechanism known as the Arria Formula, which allows for a gathering of the council upon the request of a member state. No formal action can be taken at such a meeting.

Indonesian Ambassador Dian Triansyah Djani, whose country has taken over the UNSC presidency for the month of May, announced the meeting at a news conference in New York late Wednesday.

“We are thinking of having an Arria Formula on the issue for Palestine, particularly focusing on the issue of settlements,” Djani said. “That will happen on May 9.”

In December 2016, the UNSC approved Resolution 2334, which condemned Israeli settlement activity and disavowed Israeli sovereignty anywhere in east Jerusalem, including the Western Wall.

The resolution demanded “that Israel immediately and completely cease all settlement activities in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, and that it fully respect all of its legal obligations in this regard.”

Indonesia is among many UN member states which believe that Israel must comply with the resolution. At Monday’s Security Council meeting on the Middle East, many of those countries spoke out on the matter. They also expressed their concern that the peace plan of US President Donald Trump will deviate from the international understanding that the resolution of the conflict regarding the division of  land should be based on pre-1967 lines. “Our position is very clear on the issue of Palestine: we want to make sure that Resolution 2334 is faithfully implemented,” Djani told reporters in New York on Wednesday. “It is a priority for us.”

At the UNSC meeting on Monday, Israeli Ambassador to the UN Danny Danon defended the Jewish right to the Land of Israel, including the settlements.