# Abbas Threatens to Stop Abiding by Oslo Accords in UN General Assembly Speech

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<http://www.jpost.com/Arab-Israeli-Conflict/WATCH-LIVE-Abbas-gives-major-address-to-UN-General-Assembly-in-New-York-419482>

Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas dropped his promised bombshell at the UN General Assembly on Wednesday, when he threatened to stop abiding by the Oslo Accords, which have governed the relations between Israel and the Palestinians for more than two decades.

“Israel has destroyed the foundations upon which the political and security agreements are based,” Abbas said.

“We therefore declare that we cannot continue to be bound by these agreements and that Israel must assume all its responsibilities as an occupying power, because the status quo cannot continue....

As long as Israel refuses to cease settlement activities and release of the fourth group of Palestinian prisoners in accordance with our agreements, it leaves us no choice but to insist that we will not remain the only ones committed to the implementation of these agreements.”

Although he directly referred to the Oslo Accords, he stopped short of stating that they had been annulled, and instead relied on watered-down language that tempered the impact.

Senior Palestinian officials have said that Abbas changed the text from concrete action to a threat under pressure from US Secretary of State John Kerry.

The Palestinian leader also did not clearly announce the dissolution of the Palestinian Authority or the canceling of security cooperation with Israel, as some speculated he would. Nor did he resign.

Abbas warned that either the PA would be a transitional power moving toward independent statehood, or Israel must take full control of the Palestinian people as an occupying power.

“Either the Palestinian National Authority will be the conduit of the Palestinian people from occupation to independence, or Israel, the occupying power, must bear all of its responsibilities,” he said. “The state of Palestine, based on pre-1967 borders with east Jerusalem as its capital, is recognized by 137 countries and should be considered a state under occupation, as was the case for many countries during World War II.”

His words come as the international community renews its efforts to jump-start the peace process, which has been frozen since the US-led efforts to hold direct negotiations between the two parties fell apart in April 2014.

In response, the Prime Minister’s Office charged that Abbas’s speech was filled with falsehood and promoted incitement. It once again called on the Palestinian leader to resume direct talks.

“Abu Mazen’s speech was deceitful and encourages incitement and lawlessness in the Middle East,” Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said, using the Palestinian leader’s nickname.

The reaction did not respond to Abbas’s threat to dissolve the Oslo Accords.

“We expect and call on the [Palestinian] Authority and its leader to act responsibly and accede to the proposal of the prime minister of Israel and enter into direct negotiations with Israel without preconditions,” Netanyahu said. “The fact that he – time and again – has refused to do so is the best possible proof of the fact he does not intend to reach a peace agreement.”

The Quartet was expected to meet in New York late Wednesday afternoon to discuss a resumption of the peace process. But US Secretary of State John Kerry and EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini said after Abbas’s speech that they were committed to the process of direct negotiations.

“We need to restart the peace process,” Mogherini said on the sidelines of the General Assembly. “There is no alternative to direct negotiations.”

Netanyahu, who is already in New York, will address the General Assembly on Thursday in a speech that is expect to focus on Iran, but also on the frozen peace process.

On Sunday, Netanyahu called on Abbas to return to the negotiating table. The Palestinian leader rebuffed those efforts in an opinion piece that appeared on the Huffington Post website on Tuesday, in which he said he opposes direct talks as long as Israel remains an “occupying power,” and would only engage in a multilateral process.

A clear time frame is also needed to for “ending the occupation,” he said on Wednesday in his speech before the General Assembly, as he welcomed French and European efforts to form an international support group to achieve peace.

“It is no longer useful to waste time in negotiations for the sake of negotiations,” Abbas said.

He also accused Israel of deliberately sabotaging the peace process.

“You are all aware that Israel undermined the efforts made by the administration of President Barack Obama in past years, most recently the efforts of Secretary of State John Kerry aimed at reaching a peace agreement through negotiations. The policies and practices of the Israeli government and the positions of its prime minister and cabinet members lead to a clear conclusion: It is working extremely hard to destroy the two-state solution,” Abbas said.

The PA leader condemned violent Israeli attacks against Palestinians. The UN must provide international protection for the Palestinian people, he said.

Abbas also urged the UN to grant Palestine, which has only observer status at the UN, full recognition and membership. He added that it was “unreasonable and painful” that the question of Palestine “unjustly remains unresolved.”

“The question of Palestine was one of the first just issues brought before the United Nations from the time of its inception, and yet it remains unresolved until this moment,” he said.

Abbas opened his speech by speaking against “Israeli violence” on Jerusalem’s Temple Mount.

“Extremist Israeli groups are committing repeated, systematic incursions upon Al-Aksa Mosque” under the protection of the Israeli government, he charged, adding that Israel was attempting to take control of the Temple Mount compound, which houses the Aksa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock, under the custodianship of Jordan and the Wakf Islamic religious trust.

“The Palestinian people will not allow the implementation of this illegal scheme,” Abbas said, adding that Israeli actions had aggravated “the sensitivities of Palestinians and Muslims everywhere.”

In his statement to the press, Netanyahu addressed Abbas’s accusations that Israel was attempting to violate the status quo on the Temple Mount by allowing Jewish visitors to the site.

“In contrast to the Palestinians, Israel is strictly maintaining the status quo on the Temple Mount and is committed to continuing to doing so in accordance with the agreements between us and the Jordanians and the Wakf,” he said.