**PA says it will submit anti-settlement UN resolution within days**

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Just hours after the Palestinian leadership said it plans to move forward a UN Security Council resolution condemning settlements, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said he expected US President Barack Obama not to support action against Israel at the world body.

“[We will] begin to submit a resolution condemning settlements to the UN Security Council in the coming days,” Palestinian Foreign Minister Riyad al-Maliki told the Voice of Palestine, the official PA radio station. Palestinian leaders including PA President Mahmoud Abbas have said on numerous occasions over the past few months that the Palestinian leadership intends to submit a UNSC resolution.

If such a resolution is brought before the Security Council, all eyes will be on Obama to see whether he will direct the US to vote for it, abstain, or cast a veto. In 2011 Obama vetoed a UNSC resolution condemning the settlements. By contrast, in 1979, the US – under then president Jimmy Carter – abstained on an anti-settlement vote, allowing it to pass.

PLO Executive Committee Member Ahmad Majdalani told *The Jerusalem Post* on Monday that he believes the US will abstain.

“We have ongoing contacts with the US administration about the forthcoming UNSC resolution and our assessment is that the US will abstain from taking a position,” Majdalani said.

Netanyahu, at a memorial ceremony at Mt. Herzl for soldiers killed in the 1956 Sinai campaign, contrasted the strong US support Israel enjoys today, to what existed in 1956 when the US and Russia compelled Israel to withdraw from the Sinai.

”I expect that in the twilight of President Obama's tenure he will stand by what he said in 2011, that the way to achieve peace does not run through Security Council resolutions, but rather direct negotiations with the Palestinians, which has been the US position for years,” Netanyahu said.

At the UN General Assembly in 2011, Obama said of the Mideast conflict: “Peace will not come through statements and resolutions at the United Nations – if it were that easy, it would have been accomplished by now.”

Ultimately, he said, “it is the Israelis and the Palestinians who must live side by side. Ultimately, it is the Israelis and the Palestinians – not us – who must reach agreement on the issues that divide them: on borders and on security, on refugees and Jerusalem.”

Netanyahu has referenced this speech numerous times in recent months, amid concerns that Obama might support some measure at the UN inimical to Israel's interest in the final days of his presidency.

Israeli diplomatic officials said that while Jerusalem was carefully following the issue, at this time it was speculative to say whether the Palestinians would indeed bring a resolution, and how the US would respond if they did.

Maliki, in his interview with PA radio station, added that states affiliated with the Non-Alignment movement and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) have already pledged to support a resolution against the settlements, and consolations with Arab states are ongoing.

Abbas attended both the meeting of the OIC in March and the Non-Alignment Movement in September, where he called on member states to support a UNSC resolution condemning settlements.

Maliki said the resolution will be submitted and brought to a vote after consultations with Arab states are completed.

Jordan and other Arab states reportedly were disappointed that the Palestinian leadership insisted on advancing an abortive UNSC resolution in December 2014 that called for Israel to withdraw to the Green Line within three years.

Abbas and PLO Executive Committee Secretary General Saeb Erakat have since renewed their commitments to coordinate the submission of UNSC resolutions with their Arab counterparts. One western diplomatic official said that the Arab Quartet – made up of Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and the United Arab Emirates – has not been overly supportive of an anti-settlement resolution at this time. The reason, the official said, is because these countries do not want to give Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas any “prize” as he continues to thwart the orderly succession process they want to see put into motion inside Fatah.