Quartet Drops Settlements Chapter From Peace Talks Report

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A new Quartet report on the issues plaguing the Israeli-Palestinian peace process will not address controversial legalities concerning the settlement enterprise, a senior Israeli source said on Tuesday.

The Quartet on the Middle East comprises the U.N., U.S., EU and Russia, and seeks to mediate peace efforts between Israel and the Palestinian Authority.

The report in question is expected to be released by the end of the week. According to the senior official, had the chapter on settlements been included in the report, whose findings are likely to be adopted by the U.N. Security Council, the Palestinians would have been able to use it to pursue legal action against Israel in the International Criminal Court in The Hague.

"The fact that this chapter was dropped from the report is a significant achievement for Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu," he said.

Still, even without the settlements chapter, the Quartet's report is said to be very critical of Israel's settlement policy, as well as the military policies exercised in Area A, which under the 1993 Oslo Accord is under full Palestinian jurisdiction.

The report also levels harsh criticism at the Palestinian Authority over its incitement to violence against Jews and Israelis, the lack of governance, and the strife between Hamas and Fatah, which continues to cripple the Palestinian government.

The report further states that both Israel and the Palestinians fail to promote steps that could facilitate the two-state solution.

Netanyahu [met](http://www.israelhayom.com/site/newsletter_article.php?id=34611) with U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry in Rome on Monday, and the Quartet had agreed to postpone releasing its report until after the meeting.

Netanyahu and Kerry discussed the French peace initiative. Netanyahu reiterated his preference for a regional summit over an international one, but sources familiar with the issue said the prime minister's conditions for holding a regional summit were deemed unacceptable by the Palestinians and other Arab nations.

The U.N. Security Council is scheduled to debate the stalled Israeli-Palestinian peace process on Thursday.