## UN Poised to Approve Raising Palestinian Flag

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The United Nations is expected to vote on Thursday to allow the Palestinian flag to be raised at its headquarters in New York.

The General Assembly will vote at 3 p.m. (10:00 p.m. IST) on a draft resolution that diplomats say is almost certain to garner a majority in the 193-nation forum.

"It is a symbolic thing, but another step to solidify the pillars of the state of Palestine in the international arena," said Riyad Mansour, the Palestinian representative to the UN.

The draft resolution presented last week to the General Assembly would allow the flags of the Palestinian Authority and of the Holy See to be hoisted alongside those of the 193 member states.

Both the Vatican and "Palestine" have non-member observer status at the United Nations. But while the Vatican has largely supported the PA and even the concept of Palestinian statehood, it has vehemently and [repeatedly opposed](http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/199931) the PA's inclusion of the Vatican in its fight to have the flag raised in the UN.

If adopted, the UN would have 20 days to implement the move, which would be in time for a visit by PA chairman Mahmoud Abbas on September 30.

Mansour said the initiative had the potential to "give our people some hope that the international community is still supporting the independence of the state of Palestine."

"Things are bleak, gloomy, the political process is dead, Gaza is being suffocated. This flag resolution is like the small light of a candle to keep hope alive for the Palestinian people."

Diplomats says the only unknown is how broad support for the resolution will be, and in particular the attitude of the Europeans who have been divided over the initiative.

Both Israel and the United States, however, have expressed strong opposition, with Israel's ambassador to the body Ron Prosor slamming the move as "a blatant attempt to hijack the UN."

Earlier this week, Prosor also accused the Palestinians of trying to "score easy and meaningless points at the UN."

US State Department spokesman Mark Toner called the move a "counterproductive" attempt to pursue statehood claims outside of a negotiated settlement.