Abbas says Palestinians to seek full United Nations membership

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By [Ben Lynfield](http://www.jpost.com/Author/Ben-Lynfield)

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The Palestinians will seek full membership in the United Nations and join 22 international organizations in response to US recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas said in remarks at the start of a meeting with senior Palestinian leaders in Ramallah on Monday night.

Abbas elaborated on his theme from last week’s Islamic Conference Organization emergency meeting in Istanbul to the effect that Israel is unworthy of international recognition.

“There are no borders to Israel, and international law is against any recognition of it,” he said. “But they deceived the General Assembly by saying they would implement resolutions 181 and 194,” the former providing for the partition of Palestine and the latter the return of Palestinian refugees. “Until today they have not implemented them.”

Regarding the UN, Abbas said, according to Wafa, the official Palestinian news agency: “We will go once again and many times to get full membership. We are a state and an authority, and we have borders and we have the right to get the world’s recognition of us.”

The often angry remarks made no mention of abrogating the 1993 Oslo agreement, which was expected to be discussed at the meeting though not be annulled. The leadership meeting, including the PLO Executive Committee, the Fatah Central Committee, PA cabinet and security chiefs, was aimed at formulating a new strategy in light of US recognition of Jerusalem, which in the Palestinian view disqualifies the US from a mediating role in ending the conflict.

Having hoped for the last decade that the US could deliver Israeli concessions for a Palestinian state with east Jerusalem as its capital, Abbas must struggle now to come up with a new agenda.

[US President Donald Trump’s declaration](http://www.jpost.com/Middle-East/WATCH-LIVE-Trump-delivers-much-anticipated-announcement-about-Jerusalem-517201) did not uphold support for Palestinian statehood and was widely interpreted by Palestinians as giving Israel a green light to expropriate more land and build more settlements in the West Bank. PLO Executive Committee member Hanan Ashrawi termed it a “game changer.”

“We have to take legal, political and diplomatic measures,” Abbas said. “The US has chosen not to be a mediator for the peace process. We reject it as mediator. The US is with Israel and supports and backs it.”

The US was a “partner” to the Balfour Declaration and “was adopting the Zionist action since Zionism’s establishment until today,” he said.

Abbas’s policy of shunning any US role will be put to the test on Tuesday when he visits Saudi Arabia, a close US ally that has not shared in the vehemence of the Palestinian condemnation of Trump’s move. The Palestinians are hoping the European Union, which rejected the US declaration, will take on an activist role in peacemaking.

Abbas said it would be disclosed on Tuesday which 22 international organizations the Palestinians would join. But that would be only the beginning, he said.

“Every Monday we will join another 22 or 30 organizations,” Abbas said. “There are 522 organizations, and we have the right to be members of them.”

“Injustice has been committed against us, and the peak of the injustice is the US declaration that united Jerusalem is the capital of Israel,” he said.

Trump’s declaration refers only to Jerusalem, not united Jerusalem, and specifies that its borders are to be determined in negotiations.

Abbas outlined his vision for East Jerusalem, saying: “We want east Jerusalem as the capital for Palestine and a city open to the three monotheistic religions.” Jews, he said, “can pray there, practice their rituals and leave while the residents of Jerusalem, Muslim and Christian, stay in the city.”