Palestinian Interpol bid heads to vote as Israeli lobbying falls short

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The Palestinian Authority’s latest bid to join Interpol is likely to go to a vote at the General Assembly later this week, despite Israeli and US efforts to stymie Ramllah’s aspirations to join the international law enforcement body.

The Foreign Ministry said Monday that the PA’s request was approved by Interpol’s Executive Committee and will be brought for a vote in the General Assembly, currently meeting in Beijing, later this week.

In an effort to disqualify the Palestinian bid, Israeli diplomats had reportedly been lobbying for the vote to be delayed, effectively scuppering the bid. Israel argued that the PA did not meet Interpol’s definition of a state, and therefore was not eligible for membership.

However, the international body decided to go ahead with the vote, which is scheduled to take place on Wednesday.

Nevertheless, the US is continuing to apply pressure to the PA to encourage it to withdraw its bid, according to Israel’s Ynet news website.

In addition, due to Israel’s lobbying efforts, before voting on whether to accept the PA, Interpol will hold a vote on what defines a state such that it is eligible to join. Israel is still hoping the group will accept a definition that will disqualify the Palestinian bid, according to the site.

Israel has expressed concerns that the PA’s membership in Interpol would result in sensitive information being leaked to Palestinian terror groups.

If the Palestinian membership request goes to a vote in the General Assembly, Israeli officials say the PA will likely be able to garner the necessary two-thirds majority.

On Saturday, Kosovo withdrew its bid to be accepted by the international policing body, despite having support from the US.

As a policy, Israel generally attempts to block the Palestinians from joining international organizations, which would give them de facto recognition as a state.

Last year, Israel successfully prevented the Palestinians from joining Interpol, with a 62 members of the Executive Committee voting to postpone the request.

The PA’s first request in 2015 was rejected by Interpol on grounds that it was submitted too late for discussion by that year’s assembly.

But this year, Palestinians have launched their own diplomatic efforts to secure membership in the world body.

PA police chief head Hazem Atallah met Interpol’s Secretary General Jurgen Stock in Lyon, France, last month to campaign for Palestinian membership.

Interpol, the world’s biggest international organization after the United Nations, enables member states to exchange intelligence and to work together to find ways to cope with international crime, from terrorism to human trafficking.