

Abbas: We Won't Recognize Israel as a Jewish state

Palestinian leader defiant ahead of UN statehood bid, urges international community to back off; 'Don't order us to recognize Jewish state,' he says. Foreign Minister says world must tell Abbas state cannot come at Israel's expense

Elior Levy

The Palestinian Authority will not be recognizing Israel as a Jewish state, PA Chairman [Mahmoud Abbas](#) said Saturday, adopting a belligerent tone ahead of his planned statehood bid in September.

The Palestinian leader also criticized demands made by the International Quartet of his Authority, urging the international community to back off.

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The Palestinian leader also criticized demands made by the International Quartet of his Authority, urging the international community to back off. "Don't order us to recognize a Jewish state," Abbas said. "We won't accept it."

Speaking earlier Saturday, Abbas adopted a more moderate tone, saying that the PA's bid for UN recognition, planned for September, is not meant to isolate [Israel](#) or prompt a conflict with the United States.

The Palestinian president also seemed to present a somewhat more moderate position in his meeting with Foreign Affairs Commissioner Catherine Ashton over the weekend, in Ramallah.

Chief Palestinian Negotiator Saeb Erekat said that Abbas stressed before Ashton that the UN bid does not negate the continuation of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process.

Ashton reportedly told Abbas that while the European Union does not object to the Palestinian's UN bid per se, its final position in the matter will be determined according to the bid's content and phrasing.

Ashton further said that a real solution to the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians can only be achieved through negotiations.

Lieberman slams PA

Responding to the Palestinian leader's defiant message, Foreign Minister [Avigdor Lieberman](#) said the statement "reveals the true nature of the September motion: A Palestinian state to come in place of a Jewish state."

"Countries around the world must make it clear to Abbas that the only way the Palestinians will be able to have a state is by stopping their attempt to destroy the only Jewish state in the world," Lieberman said.

The foreign minister has adopted a tough attitude against the PA as of late, most recently blasting Ramallah for what he called its leaders' empty rhetoric vis-à-vis terror.

Following the recent terror offensive in southern Israel that left eight people dead, Lieberman said: "The events of recent days prove that the Palestinian rhetoric professing that they have abandoned terror in favor on diplomacy is as removed from reality as Ramallah is from the UN building in New York City."