

# Israeli and Palestinian ministers meet in Trump peace push



Israel and Palestinian officials held a rare high-level meeting in Ramallah as the United States seeks to kickstart stalled peace efforts, officials said on Monday.

President Donald Trump's special envoy for international negotiations, Jason Greenblatt, wrote on Twitter that the meeting on Sunday night in the West Bank city of Ramallah was attended by Palestinian prime minister Rami Hamdallah, Israeli Finance Minister Moshe Kahlon and senior Israeli defence ministry official Yoav Mordechai.

"Important progress last night between Israeli & Palestinian sides," Greenblatt tweeted.

"Meaningful steps forward on key economic issues—revenues, customs, and investment—that help support the search for peace," he added.

Mordechai's office confirmed his participation in the talks but said no more.

Official Palestinian news agency WAFA said that Palestinian finance minister Shukri Bishara also took part as well as head of intelligence Majid Faraj.

WAFA said the talks covered Israeli settlement building in the occupied West Bank, its blockade of the Gaza Strip and joint economic projects.

"A Palestinian-Israeli meeting discussed on Tuesday a number of important issues, foremost of which is the settlement campaign, lifting of the siege of the Gaza Strip and financial issues related to the financial entitlements of the Palestinian National Authority," WAFA said.

Israeli newspaper Haaretz said the gathering was the second by the same participants in the past six months.

It said that one project on the table was for an industrial zone adjacent to the southern West Bank village of Tarkumia which would employ local Palestinians and Israeli settlers.

Greenblatt and Trump's Middle East envoy and son-in-law Jared Kushner have been ferrying between Israeli and Palestinian leaders for months.

A White House official said on Sunday that both men had "recently returned from Saudi Arabia"—a previously unannounced visit—following Greenblatt's earlier talks in Cairo, Amman, Jerusalem and Ramallah.

"As President Donald J. Trump has clearly stated, he is personally committed to achieving a peace deal between Israelis and Palestinians that would help usher in an era of greater regional peace and prosperity," the official said.

"A few months ago, the president directed his advisers to continue discussions with regional partners about how best to support the peace effort," the official added.

"Those conversations are still ongoing."

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