

Palestinian leaders advise suspending recognition of Israel

Jerusalem (CNN) Palestinian leaders have called on the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) to suspend its recognition of Israel just days after Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas urged the group to “revise” its agreements with the Jewish state.

Abbas is head of the PLO, which formally represents all Palestinians. The Palestinian leadership has ratcheted up its criticism of Israel and the US since President Donald Trump’s controversial announcement that Washington recognizes Jerusalem as Israel’s capital.



Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas at a press conference in Paris in December

A PLO Central Council statement on Monday called on the organization to suspend its recognition of Israel, first affirmed by the Palestinian body in 1993, until Israel recognized the state of Palestine, based on borders that existed before the Six-Day War of 1967. The council also demanded that Israel revoke a decision to annex East Jerusalem and cease settlement activity in the West Bank.

The announcement came at the end of a two-day Central Council meeting, held in the West Bank town of Ramallah, in response to the policy announced by Trump

last month.

In a defiant speech on Sunday, Abbas called on the Central Council to “revise all the agreements signed between the PLO and Israel because Israel has brought these agreements to a dead end.”

Abbas said Israel had “ended the Oslo agreement” so the PLO Central Council must decide “where should we go from here?”



Oslo Accords Fast Facts

The Oslo accords brought into being the Palestinian Authority to assume governing responsibilities in the West Bank and Gaza, and included provisions for Israel’s eventual withdrawal from the West Bank.

During a speech at the PLO Central Council meeting, Abbas also appeared to confirm reports that the Trump administration has earmarked Abu Dis, a town adjacent to Jerusalem, as the capital of a future Palestinian state.

“Jerusalem is the eternal capital of the state of Palestine,” Abbas told delegates. “We are at a critical moment and our future is in danger... We are currently being offered Abu Dis as our capital.”



Abbas slams US, others in defiant speech

The White House has so far said little about its peace plans, and made no comment on any specific proposals it might have for the location of any

Palestinian capital.

In its Monday statement, the Central Council also called on the PLO to suspend security coordination between Israel and the Palestinian Authority.

Security coordination is regarded by both sides as one of the few successfully functioning elements of the 1993 Oslo accords, which marked the beginning of official negotiations between the PLO and Israel for a two-state solution.



Israel deals new blow to 2-state solution 02:37

The council statement said the PLO refused to recognize Israel as a Jewish state, while appealing to the United Nations to sponsor the peace process and reiterating PLO support for a peace initiative first proposed by Saudi Arabia in 2002.

The Arab Peace Initiative offers Israel “normal relations” with Arab countries in exchange for an independent Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital and the return of Palestinian refugees.

Abbas’ speech was highly critical of Israel, and received widespread condemnation from Israeli leaders, some of whom suggested it smacked of anti-Semitism.

The PLO Central Council meets only rarely and is generally regarded as passing its decisions on to the PLO Executive Committee for full implementation.

An earlier decision by the council in 2015 to cease security coordination was never implemented by the PLO executive.

Source: <http://www.cnn.com/2018/01/16/middleeast/palestinian-leader-israel-recognition-intl/index.html>

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