

# Olmert shatters Abbas's hopes; says Jerusalem uncompromised

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Israeli premier Ehud Olmert has affirmed Thursday that the Israeli sovereignty on the occupied city of Jerusalem will not be compromised, shattering all the hopes that PA chief Mahmoud Abbas had attached on the Annapolis conference.

Olmert's remarks came as he briefed journalists after meeting with US and Palestinian high-ranking officials in Washington D.C. where he also stated that he will exert all possible efforts to reach a deal with the Palestinians by the end of 2008 on condition the PA must carry out its obligations in fighting and uprooting the Palestinian resistance factions as stipulated in the roadmap plan.

The Hebrew radio also quoted Olmert as saying that the Israeli negotiations with the Palestinians will be based on "the fact that Israel is the homeland of the Jewish people", adding that the Israeli sovereignty on the occupied city of Jerusalem wasn't for negotiations.

Moreover, Olmert vowed to maintain the economic sanctions against Gaza Strip and that the IOF troops will pursue their activities in the tiny Strip and would "intensify them if needed".

At least six Palestinian resistance fighters from Hamas Movement were martyred in Israeli sea and aerial raids on the Strip over the past 24 hours. About 40 Palestinians patients had also perished due to the Israeli siege on the Strip and the closure of all crossings there.

Furthermore, Olmert acknowledged Abbas as "partner for peace", but he described him as "weak partner who doesn't possess the needed capabilities".

In spite of Olmert's clear statements, Abbas remained optimistic of the outcomes of the Annapolis conference, saying that the conference was "the start of the road towards establishing the independent Palestinian state".

"This (Annapolis conference) is the beginning of the Palestinian state that we hope it will be established in the year 2008, which is late for us; however, we achieved something in Annapolis towards the establishment of that state", Abbas said as he briefed journalists in Washington.

He also alleged, "We came to Annapolis for certain goal and we reached that goal. We didn't come for consolidation, but we came to kick off the [final status] negotiations and we got it".

In addition, Abbas claimed that US president George W. Bush was "keen" on reaching a

peace agreement between the Israelis and the Palestinians during his term in office, and that he (Bush) was moving in that direction, adding that the Americans promised to be “honest” brokers during the negotiations stage.

When asked to comment on the Israeli insistence to consider Israel as the homeland of the Jewish people, Abbas retorted, “There are two states Israel and Palestine, and it is not our duty to give specifications and descriptions of the Israeli state which comprises diversity of religions and races”.

Most of the influential Palestinian resistance factions, political parties, and civil society institutions had warned of the adverse repercussions of the conference on the Palestinian national issue.

Hundreds of thousands of Palestinian citizens in Gaza Strip demonstrated against the conference, vowing not to concede Palestinian legal rights or forswear the legitimate resistance against the occupation.

In the West Bank, however, all demonstrations against the conference were banned and those who tried to demonstrate were violently quelled by Abbas’s security men.

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