

Israel News Digest



Christian Friends of Israel

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Abbas Insults US Ambassador

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas on Monday called the US ambassador to Israel a “son of a dog” because of his support for Israeli settlers in the West Bank.

Abbas, speaking at a Palestinian leadership gathering, also blamed Hamas for a bomb attack last week on the convoy of Palestinian Prime Minister Rami Hamdallah in Gaza, remarks that threatened reconciliation efforts with the Islamist group.

The Palestinian leader accused Ambassador David Friedman of defending settlers in the West Bank by saying that they were building on “their land”. The slur drew rebukes from the diplomat and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

In an angry tone, Abbas said: “The son of dog says they build on their land? He is a settler, and his family are settlers, and he is the US ambassador in Tel Aviv. What should we expect from him?” Pretty strong words from someone who has no military power as well as very little political power.

Friedman responded during a speech in Jerusalem on combating global anti-Semitism, saying: “His response was to refer to me as son of a dog. Anti-Semitism or political discourse? Not for me to judge, I leave that all up to [others].”



David Friedman, U.S. Ambassador to Israel (Public Domain, via United States Department of State, U.S. Embassy Tel Aviv).

US Middle East envoy Jason Greenblatt issued a statement calling Abbas’ comment “highly inappropriate.” He said the Palestinian leader needed “to choose between hateful rhetoric and concrete and practical efforts to improve the quality of life of his people.”

Trump’s announcement on Jerusalem [as Israel’s capital] delighted the Israeli government but infuriated Palestinians, who have staged regular protests since then.

Israel regards Jerusalem as its eternal and indivisible capital, although that is not recognized internationally. Palestinians feel equally strongly, saying that East Jerusalem must be the capital of a future Palestinian state. In reality the Palestinians would have no interest in East Jerusalem, if Israel were not to claim Jerusalem as its own capital.

As for the United States, Washington’s patience with the P.A. leadership is nearly spent.

Ever since President Donald Trump came to the White House, US-Palestinian relations have been tense, to say the least. Trump’s overt affinity for Israel, and his unwillingness to tolerate the outrageous



PA President Mahmoud Abbas (AFP/Abbas Mornani via timesofisrael.com, “Abbas doesn’t believe Trump will move US embassy to Jerusalem”, January 3, 2017).

claims and demands of Palestinian leaders is, according to most Israelis, a breath of fresh air. Of course, the Palestinian Authority sees the situation quite differently. President Mahmoud Abbas has become so upset by the Trump Administration that he's taken to spouting personal insults against American diplomats. That in itself shows that he has no clout whatsoever and has taken to verbal abuse as his only weapon.

President Trump: "Abbas Skating on Thin Ice"

A day later, White House and US State Department officials warned Abbas to curb his hostile rhetoric. "President Abbas's comments were outrageous and unhelpful," said State Department spokeswoman Heather Nauert.

"We urge the Palestinian Authority to focus its efforts on improving the lives of the Palestinian people and advancing the cause of peace. The administration remains fully committed to those goals."

The US Congress is set to vote in the coming days on a bill that includes significant cuts to American foreign aid to the Palestinian Authority, which Trump has indicated must be earned by good behavior and a willingness to make peace with Israel.



Abbas (R) meets with US Middle East envoy Jason Greenblatt, (Abbas Momani / AFP via timesofisrael.com).

Washington's patience for the Palestinian Authority leadership is nearly spent.

On a different subject, Saudi Arabia is revamping its education curriculum to eradicate any trace of Muslim Brotherhood influence and will dismiss anyone working in the sector who sympathizes with the banned group, the education minister said. Promoting a more moderate form of Islam is one of the promises made by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman under plans to modernize the deeply conservative Muslim kingdom.



Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman Al Saud. (courtesy The White House, via Wikipedia.com).

The education ministry is working to "combat extremist ideologies by reviewing school curricula and books to ensure they do not reflect the banned Muslim Brotherhood's agenda," Ahmed al-Isa, Saudi Arabia's Minister of Education, said on March 20, 2018. It would "ban such books from schools and universities and remove those who sympathize with the group or its ideology from their posts," he added.

Earlier this month, Crown Prince Mohammed told CBS in an interview that Saudi schools have been "invaded" by elements of the Muslim Brotherhood, which has been designated by Saudi Arabia as a terrorist organization along with other terrorist groups such as al-Qaeda and ISIS. The young crown prince has already taken some steps to loosen Saudi Arabia's ultra-strict social restrictions, scaling back the role of religious morality police, permitting public concerts and announcing plans to allow women to drive. (J.Post)

"I urge, then, of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people – for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness"
- 1 Timothy 2:1-2.

In Messiah,

Lonnie C. Mings



Christian Friends of Israel
invites you to celebrate

Israel's 70th Birthday
April 16-19, 2018
in Jerusalem

Contact: events@cfjjerusalem.org

