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Abbas says willing to meet with Netanyahu during stay in New York

Haaretz (Analysis)

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Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas told Fox News on Monday that he was willing to meet with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu during their mutual stay in New York.

Abbas, who is currently in New York holding meetings in preparation for the UN vote on Palestinian statehood told Fox News, "I will meet any Israeli official any time," although he added that "there is no use if there is nothing tangible."

Abbas also included a message to U.S. President Barack Obama in the interview. "You promised me a state by September 2011. I hope you will deliver," he said.

Earlier, Abbas met UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon at the UN headquarters and reaffirmed that he planned to ask this week for a Security Council vote on Palestinian membership despite the certainty of a U.S. veto, his spokesman Nabil Abu Rdaineh said.

Earlier on Monday, Netanyahu called Abbas to meet with him in New York in a statement he gave before leaving for the UN headquarters, where he will be trying to thwart the Palestinian statehood bid.

Israeli officials, meanwhile, have said the Palestinian move could spur retaliation - which could exacerbate the financial crisis facing the Palestinian Authority because of a shortfall in aid from Arab states.

Netanyahu said on Sunday he expected that the Palestinian bid for UN state recognition would fail and that this might help them "come to their senses" and rejoin direct peace talks.

Abbas in New York is pushing ahead with plans to seek full UN membership for a Palestinian state, a move the United States and Israel say could lead to disaster.

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