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## News Analysis: Various scenarios await Abbas amid a series of Palestinian crises

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RAMALLAH, Sept. 18 (Xinhua) -- Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas is nowadays busy with preparing to go for a second risky trip to the United Nations in New York next week for the bid of recognizing a non-member Palestinian state in the UN General Assembly.

On Sept. 27, Abbas will drop the request to gain a membership of a non-member Palestinian state in the UN. This will be just one year after the failed attempt to gain the recognition of a full-member state in the UN, where the bid didn't gain the minimum support of nine UN Security Council state members.

Apparently, this year's trip won't be different from the one last year, mainly with the growing internal and external pressures on Abbas, who doesn't have enough options as the Middle East peace process and the negotiations with Israel are still stalled.

### Stalled peace frustrates Abbas

Political figures close to Abbas said the man is deeply despaired and had several times hinted to resign in response to the growing internal Palestinian crises and the non-moving peace process as well as the drop in the international efforts that used to strongly support it.

However, Saeb Erekat, the chief Palestinian negotiator and one of the prominent aides of Abbas insisted in statements he made to Xinhua that such leaks on Abbas disappointments "are nonsense," adding "Abbas decision focuses on applying the recognition to the UN no matter what the price is."

Erekat's reference to the price means what would be waiting for Abbas once he gets back from New York, mainly the Israel response and the campaign of incitement made by Israel's Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman, who had repeatedly said that Abbas is an obstacle for peace.

Lieberman also said that Abbas had lost his popularity among his people, where he called on the International Quartet for peace in the Middle East, which comprises the United States, the UN, Russia and the European Union to impose holding the Palestinian elections and replace him.

Ahmed Rafiq Awad, the political science professor at Beir Zeit University in the West Bank said that Lieberman's incitement on Abbas "doesn't represent his personal view, but represent the Israeli government's official attitude that is generally adopted against the Palestinians."

"I believe that Lieberman's attack on Abbas aims at terrifying the Palestinians to regret dropping the bid of recognition to the UN," Awad said. "What encourages Lieberman to attack Abbas is Abbas weakness, as the file of peace talks with Israel remained stalled."

Financial crises, internal division tire Abbas

In addition to the political pressure, the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) is currently facing severe financial crisis due to the lack of Arab and international donations. Abbas, 80, the architect of interim peace accords with Israel, is the man who always preferred to work away from the lights.

The man, who believes in peaceful means and condemn violence, succeeded late leader Yasser Arafat in the presidential elections held in 2005 in the Palestinian territories. He faced a big challenge since then due to his insistence to make peace with Israel through talks and not through armed struggle.

One year after he was elected as the president, his Fatah Party was ousted by its rival Islamic Hamas movement in the parliamentary elections held in 2006. Despite the political disputes between Fatah and Hamas, he insisted in the peaceful transmission of the authority to Hamas.

However, one year after Hamas dominated the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) or the parliament, and led the national unity government; Hamas had violently seized control of the Gaza Strip and routed Abbas security forces. Abbas control remained on the West Bank only.

To end the division and achieve reconciliation, Abbas agreed in Qatar with Hamas chief Khaled Meshaal to end the division and form a national unity government that Abbas chairs for six months. Within the six months, the government prepares for holding legislative and presidential elections.

Implementing the agreement is still stalled, where Abbas gained the largest ever popular support when he returned back from New York last year after he dropped the request of recognizing a full membership of a Palestinian state, where thousands of Palestinians considered him as a hero.

Jamal Muheisen, member of Fatah central Committee told Xinhua that the threats on Abbas are a proof that his policy is politically correct "where Israel and the countries that support it are wrong." He said that Israel would cautiously consider taking any action against him.

Abbas had repeatedly said that his first, second and third choices are the peaceful talks with Israel but these talks must be serious and must be preceded by a full Israeli freeze of settlement activities. He said Israel's insistence to keep peace stalled would urge him to go to the UN for the recognition of a state.

Abbas efforts may succeed to gain the recognition of 133 countries members of the UN General Assembly, where the United States won't be able this time to use the veto. Abbas aides revealed that intensive contacts are held to reach an agreement on supporting Abbas request.

Getting rid of Abbas unlikely

The UN bid influence will be only on the moral aspects without seeing any tangible influence on the ground of reality, therefore speaking about the scenarios of getting rid of Abbas is unlikely, according to observers and political analysts.

Hani al-Masri, a political analyst and director of Badil Center for studies and surveys in the West Bank told Xinhua that there are several obstacles which will face any scenario that leads to getting rid of Abbas "because it is hard to consider him a terrorist since he adopts peace and condemns violence."

"The second scenario is Abbas position, which rejects the resumption of any peace talks with Israel without the full stop of settlement activities, where there is a general Palestinian consensus and no opposition against his stance," said al-Masri.

He added that the alternative to Abbas, which is said to be Hamas movement, which had recently showed a great flexibility, "is not accepted either by Israel or the United States because Hamas still rejects the international requirements, mainly recognizing Israel and the signed interim agreements.

"Abbas is still very strong, where he is the chairman of Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and has a powerful control on all the official Palestinian institutions and establishments," said al-Masri, who ruled out the scenario of getting rid of Abbas sooner or later.

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