

# *Abbas Says Extension of Peace Talks Needs Tangible Israeli Steps*

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Ramallah, March 20 (RHC-NNN) -- Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas asked U.S. President Barack Obama to press Israel to release Palestinian prisoners and freeze Israeli settlement for the extension of the peace talks ultimatum, a Palestinian official said on Wednesday.

According to news reports, the meeting held in the White House this week between Abbas and Obama "was difficult and wasn't decisive in terms of agreeing on the framework peace deal or agreeing on extending the peace talks with Israel."

President Abbas reportedly told Obama that the Palestinian leadership opposes the extension of the talks, which it deems 'fruitless' and faces popular Palestinian pressure to end it.

Abbas also told Obama that the extension of the peace talks "needs tangible Israeli steps that convince the Palestinian public opinion, such as the release of prisoners and freezing settlement activities."

The peace talks between Israel and the Palestinians resumed last July and are supposed to end in April. However, both Israeli and Palestinian officials said no tangible progress has been made.

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