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Subject: (Haaretz) Palestinians expected to leave direct talks

(Haaretz) - The Palestinian leadership plans to meet October 2 and is expected to officially decide to end negotiations with Israel if the renewed West Bank settlement construction is not halted. Those expected to attend the meeting include representatives of the PLO workers committee, the Fatah central committee, and the heads of other political parties. After making a decision, the Palestinian leadership is expected to announce that the final decision of whether to leave the talks will be made by the Arab League, who are planning to discuss the issue October 4. The head of the Palestinian negotiation team, Saeb Erekat, said "there are no half-way solutions on the settlements issue." In a statement released to the press after meeting with U.S. Consul General Daniel Rubinstein, Erekat called on the American government and the European Union to force Israel to stop all construction in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, in order to give peace a chance. Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Aboul Gheit said the Palestinians would not be able to remain in the peace talks after Israel's decision not to extend the moratorium. Gheit added that "despite the international efforts, I am not optimistic [about peace talks]".