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Subject: Hamas tells Abbas not to beg for Palestinian state (Reuters)

GAZA (Reuters) - Palestinians should liberate their land, not beg for recognition at the United Nations, the Islamist group Hamas said on Friday, firmly rejecting President Mahmoud Abbas's quest for statehood at the U.N. General Assembly.

Speaking hours before Abbas was due to ask formally that the United Nations recognise a Palestinian state, senior Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh said this would not bring independence.

"Our Palestinian people do not beg for a state. ...States are not built upon U.N. resolutions. States liberate their land and establish their entities," said Haniyeh who heads the Hamas administration in the Gaza Strip.

Hamas seized control of Gaza after a brief civil war against supporters of Abbas in 2007. The Palestinian president holds sway in the Israeli-occupied West Bank and recent efforts to bring about reconciliation between the two sides have stalled.

"The Palestinian people have been fighting and resisting and struggling for more than 60 years, offering up thousands of martyrs, thousands of prisoners...for the sake of liberating the land," he added, speaking to reporters after morning prayers.

"The state will not come about through this bargaining and this political blackmail," he said.

Hamas's founding charter calls for the destruction of Israel and has repeatedly criticised Abbas for trying to reach a negotiated peace deal brokered by the United States.

Abbas says he is turning to the United Nations for statehood recognition because almost two decades of on-off peace talks with Israel have failed to produce a lasting treaty.

However, the United States has said it will veto any statehood resolution, arguing that the unilateral move will make it harder to secure peace.

Haniyeh said the U.S. veto showed Abbas was wasting his time and should focus instead on resolving the political divisions with Hamas. "This is the choice to make, not running behind a mirage," he said.

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