

RELEASE IN FULL

---

**From:** Abedin, Huma <AbedinH@state.gov>  
**Sent:** Thursday, October 20, 2011 1:04 AM  
**To:** H  
**Subject:** Fw: Fayyad: time not ripe for Israeli-Palestinian talks (Reuters)

---

**From:** OpsNewsTicker  
**Sent:** Thursday, October 20, 2011 12:30 AM  
**To:** NEWS-Mahogany; NEWS-NEA  
**Subject:** Fayyad: time not ripe for Israeli-Palestinian talks (Reuters)

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - The time is not right for meaningful Israeli-Palestinian peace talks, Palestinian Prime Minister Salam Fayyad said Wednesday, saying they are only likely to produce a blame game rather than a settlement.

The so-called Quartet of Middle East peace mediators has failed to meet its own goal of bringing the two sides into direct talks, instead scheduling separate meetings with them on Oct. 26 in the hope of eventually bringing about negotiations.

Speaking to a nonprofit group that promotes the cause of Palestinian independence, Fayyad said there is little point in such talks without first establishing "terms of reference" -- diplomatic jargon for the rough parameters of a solution.

"My own assessment is that conditions are not ripe, at this juncture, for a meaningful resumption of talks," Fayyad told a black-tie dinner hosted by the American Task Force on Palestine.

"All it is likely to produce under current conditions is defensiveness on the part of the parties ... leading to a positioning game ... to try to establish a position where it is the other' party's fault," he added.

A prisoner exchange on Tuesday, in which an Israeli soldier held by Hamas in the Gaza Strip for more than five years was swapped for hundreds of Palestinian prisoners held by Israel, has raised hopes that peace talks can resume.

The U.S. State Department announced on Tuesday that the Quartet -- comprised of the European Union, Russia, the United Nations and the United States -- would hold separate talks with Israeli and Palestinian officials in Jerusalem on Oct. 26.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office issued a statement on Tuesday blaming the Palestinians for the fact that face-to-face talks between the parties are not planned.

"We express regret that during the meeting set for October 26 there will not be direct talks between the parties because of the objection of the Palestinians. Only direct talks without preconditions will allow a peace process to take place," the Israeli prime minister's office said in a written statement.

Fayyad told guests at the dinner not to be "misled" by such statements, saying "it's not for lack of talks that this process has not produced."

"It's precisely because those talks happened so many times before but not on a basis of terms of reference that are really consistent with what is required to bring this conflict to an end in a manner that is remotely related to what international law requires," he added.

The Palestinian Authority has said it will not return to direct peace talks until Israel ceases building Jewish settlements on West Bank land occupied by Israel during a 1967 war and that the Palestinians want for a state.

*NewsTickers alert senior Department officials to breaking news. This item appears as it did in its original publication and does not contain analysis or commentary by Department sources.*