

RELEASE IN FULL

From: Sullivan, Jacob J <SullivanJJ@state.gov>
Sent: Monday, May 14, 2012 7:16 PM
To: H
Subject: FW: Transfer of Bodies?

Interesting if true.

From: Hale, David M
Sent: Monday, May 14, 2012 4:48 PM
To: Sullivan, Jacob J; S_SpecialAssistants; Sawyer, Julie L; Feltman, Jeffrey D; Dibble, Elizabeth L; Sutphin, Paul R; Russell, Melissa H; Bitar, Maher B; Grantham, Chris W; Holtsnider, James W; Buzbee, John R; Sayles, Ambrose G; Vasquez, Edgar J; Schwartz, Jonathan B
Subject: Transfer of Bodies?

Abbas asked, as we know from DR's readout, but I don't know if this story about the Israeli response is accurate. Checking with posts. Given late hour there may not have clearer picture till morning.

Israel meets Abbas' request to release bodies of terrorists to Palestinian Authority

In meeting with Netanyahu's Envoy Isaac Molho, Abbas requests transfer of bodies; PM calls transfer a 'show of faith.'


By Barak Ravid | May.14, 2012 | 8:54 PM



Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas attends an interview with Reuters in the West Bank city of Ramallah May 8, 2012. Photo by Reuters

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Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu decided on Monday to return 100 bodies of Palestinian terrorists buried in Israel to the Palestinian Authority.

According to an Israeli official, Netanyahu agreed to Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas request to transfer the bodies. "We are hoping that this step will increase faith and help foster a renewal of the political process with the Palestinians," said the official.

Saturday night, Netanyahu's special envoy, lawyer Isaac Molho, arrived in Ramallah and met with Abbas. Molho passed on a letter to the Palestinian Authority president, regarding a renewal of the political process. During the discussion that followed, Abbas expressed three requests, that Israel show flexibility and bring about the end of the Palestinian prisoner's hunger strike, the transfer of Palestinian bodies buried in Israel, and the release of Palestinian prisoners held since before the Oslo Agreements.

The Israeli official noted that Molho updated Netanyahu as to Abbas' requests, and the Prime Minister decided to transfer 100 bodies of terrorists, as a show of faith to the Palestinian Authority, that could possibly speed up the renewal of talks between the two sides. "The Palestinians were informed of the transfer of bodies and responded very positively," said the senior official. "At this point there is no decision to release Palestinian prisoners," he added.

Israel had previously agreed to transfer the bodies to the Palestinian Authority in July 2011, however Netanyahu and Defense Minister Ehud Barak changed their minds at the last minute, because of pressure from families of terror victims, and fear that the transfer could harm the deal in progress to release Gilad Shalit.