

## Meeting Minutes

Jerusalem/Sheraton Plaza  
4 February 2008  
12:00 – 14:00

### Attendants

#### **Palestinian side:**

- Ahmad Qrei' (Abu Ala')
- Dr. Saeb Erekat
- Salah Ilayan

#### **Israeli side:**

- Tzepi Livni
- Tal Beker

**Livni:** Did you hear about the suicide attack? Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, affiliated with Fateh, declared its responsibility for the attack. I am talking with representatives of a movement that has claimed responsibility for the attack. What steps will you take?

**Abu Ala':** D'you want to show your anger? We're angry too.

**Livni:** I said I'll not halt negotiations because of this incident.

**Saeb:** I wouldn't say Fateh or Hamas until things are clear.

**Abu Ala':** The attack took place in Israel not in an area under Palestinian control. It took place in Dimonah, one of the most sensitive areas in Israel. The main issue here is that the perpetrators acted against the peace process; whether they're Fateh or Hamas isn't important.

**Livni:** What's Fateh doing with regard to Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade?

**Saeb:** They have been contained after they pledged to hand over all their arms to the Palestinian security apparatuses and refrain from carrying out any military action. Whoever didn't sign is outside the organization. The fault of Israel is that there were many who've committed themselves but Israel assassinated them.

We strongly condemn this attack and you've to be patient until it becomes clear who the perpetrators are. Hamas uses Fateh's name.

**Abu Ala':** Those who act against what Fateh's doing are against Fateh and against Abu Mazen.

**Livni:** Can you do anything against those who are against Fateh and the leadership?

**Saeb:** Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, the Popular Front, and the Unified Resistance Squad declared their responsibility for the attack, but I'm sure Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade will denounce it. All use the name of Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade.

**Livni:** What's the relation between Fateh and Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade? Is it possible to issue a communiqué that Fateh is opposed to Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade and condemn their actions?

**Abu Ala':** Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade is part of Fateh movement and they agreed to be part of the current security apparatus, even though this was not my position when I was a prime minister. I wanted the Brigade to remain as it was to confront Hamas. Some are funded by Hamas, Hizbollah, and others.

**Livni:** Does the Brigade have a leadership?

**Saeb:** Whoever pays is their leader.

**Abu Ala':** Some didn't sign the commitment and remained outside and Fateh doesn't pay them. After the opening of the passage, Hizbollah paid Hamas and them. Hizbollah smuggled money and arms and people to the Gaza Strip.

**Livni:** My question is that what if another Goldstein killed Palestinians, God forbid, and Kadima Party claimed responsibility? I'd have gone out and said that Kadima is against the perpetrator of the attack.

**Abu Ala':** We've always been opposed to such actions because they're not only against Fateh but against our national interest as well.

**Livni:** Can you say they're not part of Fateh?

**Saeb:** I'm sure the President will handle the matter well.

**Livni:** Not by condemnation only. We say he can always condemn but he's incompetent. We want more than just condemnation.

**Saeb:** Yesterday a communiqué was issued in the name of al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade calling for killing Salam Fayad. Another communiqué released by Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade was issued in which the Brigade denies any relation with the previous communiqué. The Brigade is divided.

**Livni:** What about the Gaza Strip?

**Abu Ala':** I accompanied President Abu Mazen in his trip to Cairo and we met with Minister Omar Suleiman and President Mubarak. It's become clear to the Egyptians that opening the borders isn't a game and what Hamas endangers Egyptian national security.

President Mubarak said they'll close down the borders after Sunday and whoever is caught on Egyptian territories will be considered illegal.

They want to work in accordance with the agreement signed in 2005, but Hamas refused this. They said harsh words to him and President Mubarak refused to meet with them. Minister Omar Suleiman met with them instead without any media coverage. The Egyptian told Hamas this was the last time they'd allow them to do such thing.

In Gaza the Egyptian position is taken seriously. Rafah is the only passage they've after you've closed the borders with Israel and thrown the ball into the Egyptian court.

**Livni:** The ball didn't come from Israel, but from Egypt to Gaza. How can we stop it?

**Abu Ala':** But it reached the hands of Hamas and you know how to stop it if you want.

**Livni:** The ball has to be caught in Egypt.

**Abu Ala':** I didn't hear from you a stormy protest.

**Livni:** It seems that each party is working for its own benefit without any coordination; I mean the Israelis, Palestinians, and Egyptians.

**Abu Ala':** I've great doubts about your position towards the Gaza Strip.

**Livni:** Put every thing on the table and be clear and plain.

**Abu Ala':** You're supporting Hamas to segregate Gaza because your aim is separation.

**Livni:** The content of our work is to establish two states from the sea to the river, the state of Israel and the state of Palestine in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. We withdrew from the Strip.

**Abu Ala':** But you're still occupying the Gaza Strip.

**Livni:** How?

**Abu Ala':** You control the entire Gaza Strip.

**Livni:** We'll never concede anything with regard to our security needs. Our position is not to allow for the establishment of two Hamases in the Gaza Strip. We'll not give legitimacy to Hamas and we'll stop the smuggling of money and arms from Egypt. Did the opening of the borders appear to be a victory for Hamas?

**Abu Ala’:** Yes, they appeared to have ended the siege.

**Livni:** The Egyptians don’t do enough, and we’re sure they can do much more.

**Abu Ala’:** What can you do about Philadelphia Crossing?

**Livni:** We’re not there.

**Abu Ala’:** You’ve re-occupied the West Bank, and you can occupy the crossing if you want.

**Livni:** We can re-occupy the Gaza Strip. What is your position?

**Abu Ala’:** Our strategic position is that we want a state in the West Bank and the Strip with a safe passage.

**Livni:** By the way, the safe passage is a sensitive issue and we’ll discuss it later.

**Abu Ala’:** The borders of the Palestinian state with Egypt, Jordan, and Israel. What we want is to return to Gaza Strip not defeated but as a legitimate authority.

**Livni:** How?

**Abu Ala’:** Hamas must not feel that it’s achieving daily victories, sometimes with Israel and sometimes with Egypt, and Al-Jazeera Channel praises these victories. I hope Hamas will be defeated, not militarily I mean because we didn’t try this; we didn’t engage in a civil war. President Abu Mazen was wise enough not to give orders to Fateh members to use arms, otherwise we’d have had many casualties.

The Arabs are starting to understand the danger that is threatening them.

Palestinian control over Rafah Crossing will be a defeat for them, I mean Israel and Egypt and of course the Europeans because they’re part of the agreement. This will change the situation because they didn’t have freedom of movement.

Israel has to allow the entry of fuel and all basic goods. It was wrong of you not to let fuel and basic goods into Gaza. We’ve to work to compel Hamas to review its policies. They don’t work for their own interest but for the interest of Iran and sometimes Syria. Iran wants to use Hamas and Hizbollah in case it’s attacked.

**Livni:** How would the situation change? Through elections?

**Abu Ala’:** Elections come later and that’s why we refused to talk. We asked for the return of the situation to its previous state and for respecting our obligations. Then we can have elections.

**Livni:** D'you have doubts that we want to separate the Gaza Strip? Is this considered a threat or a victory for Hamas?

**Abu Ala':** D'you remember Rabin's saying: "I hope to sleep and wake up and see that the sea has swallowed Gaza."

**Livni:** We've a saying too. When you want to curse somebody you tell him "Go to hell" but we shorten it and say "Go to Gaza."

**Abu Ala':** What will affect Hamas is Rafah Crossing if work is resumed in accordance with the agreement signed in 2005.

**Livni:** Is their dream to establish a state in Gaza?

**Abu Ala':** Yes, and they will apply Islamic Shari'a and export their regime to neighboring countries.

**Saeb:** The battle with Hamas is unending. We've two schools: one says that the establishment of a state can be achieved through negotiations, and the other says that we've tried negotiations and they're an illusion; only resistance can lead to the establishment of a state.

When you besiege the Strip and cut off electricity and you see them cry over a sick child in candlelight—this is kind of victory they're seeking. They don't care about the suffering of the people.

What will destroy Hamas is for us to reach an agreement. They wager on our failure.

If you decide as some Israeli politicians blinded by anger sometimes behave and separate the Gaza Strip—this will be a victory for Hamas.

**Abu Ala':** To reach an agreement with us will be an accomplishment not because we're good people, but we're the only option for peace.

**Livni:** Agreement requires compatibility. If we agree, will we be able to market our agreement or will Hamas use it against you?

**Abu Ala':** If we're convinced about the agreement then we'll know how to convince people about it.

**Livni:** Saeb and Tal have completed work on the structure and this is good because through it we know where we're heading. These are the main issues and we can add more issues, if there are any.

## Structure of an Agreement

1. Preamble
2. General Provisions
3. Borders
4. Settlements
5. Passage Agreements
6. Security
7. Refugees
8. Jerusalem – I (Holy Places)
9. Water and Environment
10. Economic relations **& Infrastructure**
11. Civil Spheres and Arrangements Regarding Infrastructure  
**State to State Relation**
12. Legal Relations
13. Culture of Peace – People to People  
**Civil society & Culture of Peace**
14. Steps towards **the Establishment of** the Palestinian State and Implementation Arrangements
15. Coordination and Cooperation and Dispute Resolution Mechanism
16. End of Conflict, p. (Reparations) and Finality of Claims
17. Prisoners
18. Final Clauses

**Abu Ala’:** The best place to discuss the holy places is State to State Relations.

**Livni:** I’ve an objection to Reparations which doesn’t appear in any previous agreement. You can put it forward but I’ll object to it since I can’t ask you to bring back to life those who were killed in terrorist attacks. We’re talking about the future and not the past.

**Abu Ala’:** We did put it forward during our talks with Shlomo Ben Ami.

**Tal:** But it was never one day a major issue.

**Abu Ala’:** Why don’t we put it for discussion?

**Livni:** Putting it for discussion means we agree to it. During the past session I suggested reviving multi-lateral negotiations in issues that don’t embarrass you or us. I’d like also to make another suggestion but you don’t have to respond now. I believe it’s possible to activate work groups in issues of water, environment and economic growth.

**Abu Ala’:** Let’s start with water since the US is the sponsor of this work group, as well as of regional security and arms control.

**Livni:** What about if we ask two specialized people from each party to present their suggestions to us regarding what we see proper for the activation of multilateral talks

**Abu Ala’:** It’s not you or me who decides. I’ve talked with Condoleeza Rice.

**Livni:** What about inviting Russia to the follow up conference of Annapolis Conference? Do we really need such a conference? What will we say in this meeting?

**Abu Ala’:** It may be good to bring Syria in!

**Livni:** Do you want us to talk with Syria? We’ve always believed that you don’t prefer our talk to have two tracks.

I’ll talk to Condoleeza Rice about multilateral talks.

I want to bring specialized people in the field of borders, water, and security to our meetings but not all at one time. After we hear what they’ve to say we’ll ask them to work among themselves because there’s a lot to do and this will take time.

**Abu Ala’:** Let’s convince ourselves first that we’re achieving something. Let’s let Saeb and Tal start talks about the preambles and general regulations, and we start talks about borders and security.

**Livni:** I suggest to have people specialized in maps to talk about borders, settlements and security.

I’ve some ideas about settlements and we want to see what will happen with regard to options: if we decide to evacuate settlements what will happen to the assets; what about the future of civilians (settlers) if we decide to have some settlements within the borders of the Palestinian state; what will happen to the Palestinians if we decide to annex some settlements to Israel; lease.

**Abu Ala’:** I suggest that Saeb and Tal put the drafts for borders, settlement and security.

**Livni:** In the presence of specialized people and we bring one with us to the meeting for each case.

**Abu Ala’:** Strategically, we want security for our sake first and you’ve your security needs as well. We’ll sit together and discuss the matter over.

I won’t convince you with what I’ve decided strategically; and you won’t convince me with what you’ve decided either.

---