UN chief said to meet families of Palestinian terrorists in Ramallah

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UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres met with the families of imprisoned Palestinian terrorists after his Ramallah meeting with PA Prime Minister Rami Hamdallah on Tuesday.

In a statement, the UN said the sit-down was not planned and Guterres was confronted by the mothers of child detainees in the West Bank city, following his meetings with Palestinian officials.

“At the end of a meeting with Palestinian officials this afternoon in Ramallah, the secretary-general was informed that a group of Palestinian mothers of detained children wanted to give him a petition. Confronted with the situation, he received the group which presented him a petition,” a statement from a UN spokesperson said.

The statement came after the official Wafa Palestinian news agency reported on the meeting. While the UN said Guterres met with the mothers of detained minors, Wafa identified one of the women present as Latifa Abu Hamid, whose four adult sons are serving life sentences in Israeli prisons on various terror charges.

One of the Abu Hamid brothers was actively involved in the October 2000 lynching of two Israeli soldiers in Ramallah and another provided weapons during the Second Intifada for deadly terror attacks against Israeli civilians in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, according to the MEMRI watchdog. All were active members of terror organizations upon their arrest.

The Palestinian report also quoted Guterres as expressing sympathy for the prisoners’ plight, in comments the UN said were “fabricated.”

“Any quotes attributed to the secretary-general in this regard are fabricated,” it said.

Palestinians imprisoned for carrying out terror attacks against Israelis are often venerated by Palestinians as “martyrs.” Israel has long accused the Palestinian Authority of glorifying terrorism with its moral and financial support for the families of Palestinian terrorists, including with monthly stipends.

Israel argues that fiery speeches by Palestinian leaders, venomous posts on social media networks and the naming of public squares after Palestinians who killed Israelis have created a hate-filled climate. Abbas has spoken out against some of the violence wracking Israel in the past years, but Israel says his condemnations have been halfhearted.

Earlier Tuesday, Guterres condemned Israeli settlements said a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict remained the only viable option as he made his first visit to the West Bank since taking office. Guterres spoke after meeting Hamdallah in Ramallah following talks with Israeli leaders on Monday.

“I want to express very strongly [not only] the total commitment of the United Nations but my personal total commitment to do everything for a two-state solution to materialize,” he said, calling settlements in the West Bank and illegal and a “major obstacle” to peace.

“I have said several times there is no Plan B to a two-state solution.”

After meeting Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu Monday, Guterres criticized settlements but also said Palestinians must condemn terrorism.

He said on Tuesday that “it is important to create conditions for leaders of all sides to appeal for calm, to avoid forms of incitement, for violence to settle down.”

Israeli leaders have said Palestinian incitement against the Jewish state is a key reason why peace efforts have not advanced.

Peace efforts have been at a standstill since a US-led initiative collapsed in 2014.

Following the meeting with Guterres, Hamdallah called on the United Nations to compel Israel to abide by the rules of international law and impose what he said was international justice that has been absent for 70 years, the official Wafa news agency reported.