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Subject: (Haaretz) Peres to Abbas: Netanyahu is a trustworthy partner

Palestinian president calls Israeli counterpart to offer Rosh Hashanah greetings; Peres urges Abbas not to abandon peace talks.

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas called President Shimon Peres to offer greetings for the Jewish holiday of Rosh Hashanah. During the telephone conversation, Peres pleaded with Abbas to "trust [Prime Minister Benjamin] Netanyahu."

Against the backdrop of recently relaunched direct peace negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians, Peres urged the Palestinian president "not to abandon the talks before peace is achieved. There is no one more suited than you to achieve peace for your people, and for the entire region."

Abbas and other senior Palestinian negotiators have threatened to quit the U.S.-backed negotiations if Israel should resume construction in West Bank settlements. Last November, Netanyahu declared a 10-month moratorium on construction in settlements, but the freeze is set to expire at the end of this month, and it is not yet clear whether it will be renewed.

"Even if things don't appear perfect," Peres told Abbas, "the path toward peace and an independent Palestinian state is certainly preferable to an ongoing conflict and bloodshed. Even if there will be crises and disagreements, and the road will seem imperfect, I'm sure that new and creative solutions can be achieved."

Abbas replied that "we're serious and our goal is to achieve a peace agreement as soon as possible." To this Peres responded saying "I'm sure Netanyahu is a trustworthy partner."

Earlier, Abbas spoke with Netanyahu by phone. The two leaders offered mutual greetings for the holidays, the Muslim Eid el Fitr and Jewish Rosh Hashanah.