

# Moscow Will Back Palestinian Bid for Statehood

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The Kremlin will back a Palestinian bid for statehood at the United Nations later this month, Moscow's envoy to the UN said.

Vitaly Churkin told Rossia-24 television late Monday that the government would back any approach that the Palestinians adopt in their efforts to seek UN membership.

A vote on Palestinian statehood is expected to take place later this year in the UN General Assembly. A decision there would be largely symbolic, but the Palestinians believe that a strong international endorsement will boost their position in future talks with the Israeli government. Both Israel and the United States oppose the Palestinian bid at the UN.

Churkin said the Palestinians could take their bid for UN membership forward by either securing a recommendation in favor of the move from the Security Council or by enlisting the backing of at least two-thirds of the General Assembly's 193 members.

"The main obstacle [in the Security Council] will be the United States, which does not hide the

fact that they would veto this resolution,” Churkin said.

Israel and the United States oppose the Palestinian UN initiative, saying a state must be established through negotiations.

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