

Palestinian Leader Wants Peace Talks This Year With Israel

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Putin, right, greeting Abbas during their meeting at a state residence. **Grigory Dukor**

NOVO-OGARYOVO, Moscow Region — Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas said Thursday that he hoped peace talks with Israel would restart this year, although the chances of a resumption seemed slim.

Abbas made his comments during a meeting in Moscow with President Vladimir Putin, who said Russia would do all it could to promote peace in the region.

"We ... hope that substantive peace talks will start this year, although the hopes are probably not very high," Abbas said through an interpreter at talks at a state residence outside Moscow.

"We hope that in the end we will reach a political solution based on the two-state principle," he said.

Peace talks broke down in 2010 over Palestinian objections to Israel expanding settlements

on occupied land that the Palestinians want for a state. Israel has called for a resumption of the talks without preconditions.

Russia, a member of the Quartet of Middle East peace mediators along with the United States, the United Nations and the European Union, has criticized the Israeli settlement expansion.

Putin has tried to balance relations with Arabs including the Palestinians, dating back to the Soviet era, with improved ties to Israel during his 13 years in power.

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