

Palestinian officials: Egypt works on Israeli-Hamas truce

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Palestinian officials reported on Wednesday that Egypt is working on a Gaza truce proposal to present to Israel and Hamas

The proposal aims to create calm that Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas regards as crucial for peace talks with Israel.

Egyptian mediator Omar Suleiman would present Israel and Hamas -- which shun one another -- with a five-point plan, said the Palestinian officials. Suleiman is due to come to Israel next week.

Meanwhile, one Palestinian official told Reuters that "a response from both sides should come within a few days," Western-backed Abbas is Islamist Hamas's rival but suspended negotiations last week in protest at an Israeli offensive in the Gaza Strip which killed more than 125 Palestinians, many of them civilians. Israel said its forces targeted Hamas rocket crews.

Abbas has since voiced readiness to return to talks if the Gaza violence is reined in, though visiting U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said a ceasefire was not a precondition.

The proposal would entail:

Hamas halting rocket attacks on Israel