

Fatah determined to settle differences with Hamas

Contributed by Egypt News
Tuesday, 16 September 2008

Palestinian Abbas's Fatah official reported Tuesday that Palestinian President ' Fatah movement is determined to settle crisis with Islamic Hamas movement

Nabil Shaath, who will represent Fatah to talk with Egyptian mediators, said "there is a unanimous agreement and commitment among Fatah and Abbas to end the split" between the Hamas-controlled Gaza Strip and the Fatah-dominated West Bank.

Hamas routed pro-Abbas forces and ousted his movement in the Gaza Strip last year. Abbas consolidated his power in the West Bank and Hamas tightened its grip on Gaza, making political separation between the two territories.

As Egypt mediates between the Palestinian factions to strike a reconciliation, Shaath said his movement "was ready to go for dialogue (with Hamas) to reach a deal on forming a national unity government."

The West Bank is ruled by a western-backed government that Abbas formed after he lost Gaza. Hamas controls Gaza with its own administration despite being fired by Abbas.

According to Shaath, the unity government "doesn't necessarily has to include members of both Hamas and Fatah and should be a caretaker one to rebuild the security institutions and prepare for holding early parliamentary and presidential elections."

Hamas said it took over the Gaza Strip to cut the way before pro-Fatah forces who wanted to block Hamas' rule. Hamas won the parliamentary elections in 2006.

Egypt has been hearing from the Palestinian factions on how to end Hamas-Fatah differences. The representatives have been visiting Cairo to present their views while Hamas and Fatah are expected to be invited to Cairo by the end of this month.

Egypt will call for a national Palestinian dialogue if Hamas and Fatah could agree on its agenda earlier.

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