

Abbas in Cairo for Palestinian unity talks

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Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas

Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas was in Egypt on Tuesday for talks with President Hosni Mubarak after a reconciliation meeting with the Islamist Hamas movement was put on hold.

"Fatah completely supported the Egyptian proposal... but then Hamas put down obstacles to achieving a reconciliation," Abbas told reporters in Cairo, in an ongoing war of words with the Gaza Strip's rulers.

Egypt has been struggling to broker a reconciliation agreement between the two main Palestinian factions, and this month proposed an agreement that would see new elections next June.

Fatah has signed the agreement while Hamas has repeatedly postponed its official response, saying that it needs more time to consider the deal.

Hamas won a majority in a 2006 parliamentary election and routed Fatah from Gaza more than a year later in a week of deadly fighting.

A Palestinian unity deal is seen as key for the resumption of peace talks between Israel and the Palestinians.

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