

Former top security official: If Abbas's PA won't fight terror, why should it exist?

Meir Ben-Shabbat, once Netanyahu's national security adviser, says PA chief playing 'dangerous game'; but insists Iran, not terror, should dominate agenda on Blinken's Israel trip

By Lazar Berman / Dec. 30, 2023

Israel's former national security adviser charged that Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas's failure to fight terrorism was a deliberate and risky gamble, but argued that Israel should not let the weekend terror attacks dictate the agenda of US Secretary of State Antony Blinken's visit this week.

[...]

Ben-Shabbat, now a visiting senior research fellow at the **Institute for National Security Studies at Tel Aviv University**, said that while the PA is not actively supporting terrorism, it is failing to combat it.

"The PA simply doesn't do its part," he said. "It doesn't want to be in conflict with anyone, so it lets the thugs in Nablus establish the Lion's Den terror group, it lets the thugs in Jenin store weapons and take over the refugee camp.

"And it leaves Israel to deal with the results."

If the PA won't fight terror, the former Shin Bet official said, it is not clear why the organization should exist.

"You [the PA] received permission to be here in the Oslo Process," Ben-Shabbat said. "You came here with enough people, you received weapons, you received responsibility. We always hear this statement that 'the PA can't. It can't in Gaza, it can't in Jenin, it can't in Nablus.' If you can't, then what are you doing here?"

Tensions have soared in the West Bank in recent months as the IDF has pressed on with an anti-terror offensive mostly focused on the northern West Bank to deal with a series of attacks that left 31 people in Israel dead in 2022.

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