Sweden ‘to Seek Anti-Settlement Resolution’ During Security Council Presidency in January

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The Times of Israel

<http://www.timesofisrael.com/swedish-fm-vows-to-seek-anti-settlement-resolution-upon-assuming-unsc-presidency-in-january/?utm_source=The+Times+of+Israel+Daily+Edition&utm_campaign=7a66a7e310-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2016_12_17&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_adb46cec92-7a66a7e310-54939897>

Sweden will seek to advance a UN Security Council resolution condemning Israeli settlements when it assumes the council presidency in January, Swedish Foreign Minister Margot Wallstrom told Palestinian officials during a visit to the West Bank Friday.

 “We discussed our (upcoming) presidency,” Wallstrom said after meetings in Ramallah with Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas and Foreign Minister Riyad al-Maliki, according to the Swedish Expressen newspaper. “We hope that it will be possible for the Security Council to adopt a resolution on the settlements.”

The Security Council presidency rotates between member states on a monthly basis. Even if it gathers enough votes, a resolution against Israel is likely to be shot down by Washington, which holds veto power at the council, though Israel’s leaders have said they have some concern that the outgoing Obama administration might be less inclined to use its veto on a milder anti-Israel resolution in its final days in office.

“Sweden’s policy aims to create a future in which Israel and Palestine can live side by side,” Wallstrom said. “It is deeply worrying that young Palestinians are beginning to lose hope for the future after 50 years of occupation.”

Wallstrom toured Ramallah and Bethlehem during her stay on Friday.

Though she requested meetings with Israeli officials as well, her efforts were rejected — ostensibly due to schedule conflicts, though Israeli officials [have unofficially said the Swedish diplomat is unwelcome](http://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-to-boycott-swedish-fm-on-her-visit-to-region/) due to her controversial statements on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

“I asked to visit Israel. It is important to also have dialogue with those who do not share the same opinion,” Wallstrom said. “Unfortunately it was not possible.”

Expressen noted that critics of Wallstrom in Sweden have said her government demands too little of the Palestinians, providing generous aid while ignoring human rights abuses and systemic corruption.

Wallstrom said she had brought the matter up with her hosts, stressing that the Palestinians must “pull themselves together.”

“We have discussed this in all the meetings,” she said. “We come as friends, but real friends can be critical. Especially if they offer assistance and help.”

The 61-year-old Social Democrat has repeatedly enraged Israel, starting with Sweden’s recognition of a Palestinian state shortly after she became foreign minister in October 2014.

In the wake of last November’s terror attacks in Paris, she identified the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as one of the factors explaining why “there are so many people who have become radicalized” — comments Israel called “appallingly impudent.”

And in December of last year she called on Israel to halt what she called “extrajudicial executions” in response to attacks by knife-wielding Palestinians, following up with a demand for “thorough” investigations into the killing of Palestinians by the Israeli army.

Israel has made clear in the past that she would not be a welcome visitor in the country, and [in January Netanyahu](http://www.timesofisrael.com/netanyahu-calls-for-resetting-israels-ties-with-europe/) called her critiques outrageous, immoral, wrong and stupid.

“People are defending themselves against assailants, wielding knives, who are about to stab them to death. And they shoot the people. And that’s extrajudicial killings? So why is San Bernardino not extrajudicial killings? And the other day in Paris — a knife-wielding terrorist was shot to death. Is that extrajudicial killing? Does the Swedish foreign minister suggest that there be examinations of what happened there, in Paris. Or in the United States? This is definitely wrong. And it singles out Israel in an absurd way… I don’t want to call it by other names. I’ll just say this is an absurdity, and it’s outrageous,” Netanyahu said.

Israel’s deputy foreign minister Tzipi Hotovely blasted her comments as “a mix of blindness and political stupidity.”

In January 2015 Wallstrom cancelled a planned visit to the region after Israel made it clear she was not welcome. Sweden’s decision to recognize the state of Palestine in October 2014 infuriated Israel and prompted it to recall its ambassador to Stockholm. He returned a month later.