

## Abbas: No peace without J'lem as Palestinian capital

By KHALED ABU TOAMEH, JPOST—

Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas declared Wednesday that there would be no peace or a Palestinian state without Jerusalem as the capital of that state.

“We won’t accept any city other than Jerusalem as our capital,” Abbas said during a speech at a conference on Jerusalem in Ramallah.

“The responsibility for defending and restoring Jerusalem and purifying its holy sites is not that of the Palestinians alone, but the entire Arab, Islamic and Christian nation.”

Abbas urged Muslims and Christians to visit Jerusalem and its holy sites “to affirm the Arab and Islamic depth of the holy city.”

Abbas claimed that Israel does not like to see any Arab, Muslim or Christian in Jerusalem.

“There will be no peace without Jerusalem,” he emphasized. “There will be no Palestinian state without Jerusalem. There will be no security and stability without Jerusalem. They mention Bethlehem, Ramallah, Hebron. These cities are all dear to our hearts. But our capital is Jerusalem.”

Abbas also accused Israel of working toward “isolating Jerusalem from its Palestinian surrounding and emptying it from its [Arab] residents in violation of international law.”

He also claimed that Israel has begun changing Jerusalem’s demographic and geographic character by demolishing Arab houses, expelling Arab residents and building settlements in the city.

“Peace and settlements won’t meet,” Abbas said. “If they are thinking of settlements, there won’t be peace. This land belongs to us and they must uproot their settlements in order to achieve peace.”



