

**Canadian Friends of Peace Now
Shalom Achshav Peace Foundation**

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NEWS

CFPN PRAISES ABBAS'S INDICATION OF FLEXIBILITY ON RIGHT OF RETURN ISSUE

TORONTO—(Tuesday, February 18, 2014) – Canadian Friends of Peace Now (CFPN) is encouraged by Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas's statement that "we do not seek either to flood Israel with millions (of refugees) or to change its social composition."

His comments were his clearest suggestion yet that he might accept Israel's demands that Palestinian refugees be permitted to "return" only to a future Palestinian state.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had accused Abbas in January of being unwilling to accept that Israel should not be "deluged" by refugees as part of a deal to achieve Palestinian statehood.

Abbas spoke to about 300 Israeli students in the West Bank city of Ramallah and his remarks were intended to send a message of moderation to Israel and the U.S. It would have been even more encouraging had he delivered these remarks directly to his own people.

The last time Abbas expressed flexibility on the "right of return" was in an interview with Israeli television in November 2012. His comment that he had no right to re-inhabit his birthplace of Safed (in northern Israel) provoked a backlash among Palestinians and forced him to walk back the statement soon after making it.

But at least Abbas appears to be trying to lay the groundwork for a strategic shift on the "right of return," one of the most contentious issues in final status talks. Netanyahu, in contrast, has shown no such flexibility on his demand that the Palestinians recognize Israel as a Jewish State. That demand, too, will have to be compromised.

For further information, please call: 416-322-5559.

CFPN is a Zionist organization that is dedicated to enhancing the State of Israel's security through peace and to supporting Israel's Peace Now movement.

CFPN has chapters in Toronto, Montreal and Ottawa.