Security Council Likely to Vote on Settlements Friday Despite Egyptian Reversal

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By AFP and AP

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<http://www.timesofisrael.com/security-council-likely-to-vote-on-settlements-friday-despite-egyptian-reversal/>

A UN Security Council resolution criticizing Israeli settlements will likely go up for a vote Friday despite original sponsor Egypt pulling its support, after four countries agreed to present a draft resolution, diplomats said.

New Zealand, Malaysia, Senegal and Venezuela stepped in after Egypt, under pressure from US President-elect Donald Trump, withdrew the measure.

“Most likely, we will have a vote soon,” French Ambassador Francois Delattre told reporters.

“The key goal that we have here is to preserve and reaffirm the two state-solution,” said Delattre. “The text that we have does not exclusively focus on settlements. It also condemns the violence and terrorism. It also calls to prevent all incitement from the Palestinian side so this is a balanced text.”

Diplomats said the same draft resolution would be submitted to a vote, at the request of the four countries.

The draft resolution demands that “Israel immediately and completely cease all settlement activities in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem.”

It states that Israeli settlements have “no legal validity” and are “dangerously imperiling the viability of the two-state solution” that would see an independent Palestine co-exist alongside Israel.

The four member states had warned earlier that [they would push ahead with the resolution](http://www.timesofisrael.com/security-council-members-threaten-to-push-anti-settlement-draft-if-egypt-wont/) if Cairo stood by its decision to delay.

“In the event that Egypt decides that it cannot proceed to call for vote on 23 December or does not provide a response by the deadline, those delegations reserve the right to table the draft … and proceed to put it to vote ASAP,” wrote New Zealand, Venezuela, Malaysia and Senegal in a note they presented to Egyptian officials, [according to Reuters](http://www.reuters.com/article/us-israel-palestinians-un-idUSKBN14B033?il=0).

Egypt had said earlier its president received a call from Trump in which they both agreed to give the incoming US administration a chance to try and resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The call came hours after Egypt indefinitely postponed the UN vote on its resolution, following pressure from Israel and Trump, who had called on members to veto it.

A statement from the Egyptian presidency said the two men spoke by phone early Friday and agreed on “the importance of giving a chance for the new American administration to deal in a comprehensive way with the different aspects of the Palestinian issue with the aim of achieving a comprehensive and a final resolution” to the decades-old conflict.

Egypt requested Thursday that its resolution demanding Israel halt settlements be postponed after Jerusalem launched a frantic lobbying effort.

An official in Jerusalem later Thursday accused the Obama administration of [attempting a diplomatic “hit”](http://www.timesofisrael.com/trump-saved-israel-from-targeted-strike-by-obama-at-un-official-in-jerusalem-quoted-saying/) against Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and the settlements by planning to let the resolution pass, and a second Israeli source said the administration, in its final days, was [violating a “core commitment”](http://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-reportedly-went-to-trump-on-un-draft-after-failing-to-sway-obama/) to defend Israel at the UN.

“After becoming aware that the (US administration) would not veto the anti-Israel resolution, Israeli officials reached out to Trump’s transition team to ask for the president-elect’s help to avert the resolution,” an Israeli official told AFP on Friday.

“The [Trump] phone call touched on the draft resolution before the United Nations Security Council on Israeli settlements,” a statement from Sissi’s office said.

Trump, who had campaigned on a promise to recognize Jerusalem as Israel’s capital, bluntly said Washington should use its veto to block the resolution.

“The resolution being considered at the United Nations Security Council regarding Israel should be vetoed,” he said in a statement.