

## Haniyeh: Obama Israel Trip a “Trap” for Hamas, PA

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Hamas leader Ismael Haniyeh charged on Friday that the upcoming visit to Israel by President Barack Obama was a "trap" aimed at undermining the Arab population.

"We are convinced that Obama's visit will not produce the necessary breakthrough for our people," Haniyeh said at a sermon during weekly Muslim prayers in the Gaza Strip's Al-Omari mosque, according to the *AFP* news agency.

He urged rival Palestinian Authority Chairman Mahmud Abbas, who is due to meet Obama at his Ramallah headquarters, not to be deluded by the visit or sacrifice efforts to seal Palestinian reconciliation.

PA Chairman Abbas should "not fall into the trap of Obama's visit to the region and shut the door to reconciliation," said Haniyeh.

Obama's visit "will focus on regional developments and will only address our cause in a way to undermine Palestinian national reconciliation efforts and to relaunch the absurd so-called negotiations" with Israel, he said, according to *AFP*.

Obama is due in Israel at the end of this month in his first visit to the Jewish State since his inauguration in 2008.

On Thursday the president met American [Jewish community leaders](#) at the WhiteHouse and signaled that there would be no monumental US-brokered peace initiative on the [table](#) when he arrives in the region.

While rumors have been circulating regarding whether Obama would use his trip to forge a peace deal between Israel and the Palestinians, following a failed initiative in his first term, the president said that he was not aiming to resolve any specific policy issue in Israel, an American official told [the news](#) agency.

Obama did however say during the meeting that he would outline a "framework" that could evolve into a more concrete US diplomatic effort in the following year.

"The President reiterated America's unshakeable support for Israel and thanked the leaders for role they play in strengthening ties between the two nations," the US official said, adding that the trip would be "an opportunity to consult with the Israeli government about a broad range of issues -- including Iran, Syria, the situation in the region, and the peace process."