

Abbas dissolves unity government

by UPI

GAZA - President Mahmoud Abbas Thursday dismissed the Palestinian unity government as Hamas took military control of all of Gaza.

Abbas' aides said Ismail Haniyeh is no longer prime minister, The New York Times reported. The president, leader of the Fatah faction, also declared a state of emergency in the West Bank and Gaza.

Hamas claimed to have taken control of the last remaining Fatah stronghold in Gaza City, the headquarters of the Prevention Security Force. The group, which is aligned with Fatah, has been a major target of Hamas since fighting between the groups resumed last week, the Financial Times reported.

Earlier Thursday, Abbas and Haniyeh both said after a telephone conversation that they wanted the fighting to end. There was no dip in violence.

Javier Solana, EU foreign policy chief, said Wednesday the union may consider joining a hypothetical peace force in Gaza while U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said "an international presence" is possible.

Hamas and Fatah formed the unity government in March in an effort to bring an end to economic sanctions imposed after Hamas gained a parliamentary majority.

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