

Ban end on U.S. aid to Palestinians

by UPI

RAMALLAH, West Bank - The United States will end its ban on aid to the Palestinians after their president excluded Hamas from his new government, it was reported Sunday.

President Mahmoud Abbas received that promise Saturday from a senior U.S. official, The Sunday Telegraph reported.

Hamas gunmen routed Abbas's Fatah forces from Gaza last week in violence that killed more than 116. Fatah soldiers then consolidated their control of Palestinian territory in the West Bank and raised their national flag in Ramallah Saturday.

Jacob Welles, the American consul general in Jerusalem, said he expected the 18-month-old ban on U.S. aid to the Palestinians to end this week after Abbas swore in moderate Salam Fayyad as interim prime minister. Abbas dissolved the Hamas-led unity government Friday.

Palestinian intelligence officials told The Sunday Telegraph the takeover by Hamas was ordered by Iran in preparation for wider fighting this summer.

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