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'REAL TEST' OF SUCCESS IN ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN POLITICAL PROCESS DEPENDS ON OUTCOME OF NEW ROUND OF NEGOTIATIONS, PALESTINIAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE TOLD **Permanent Observer Hopes Talks Will Prove Cynics Wrong**

The real test of success in the political process between Israel and Palestine would come after the conclusion of negotiations currently taking place in Washington, D.C., the Permanent Observer for the State of Palestine said today, voicing hope that the cynics who believed the current talks would go the way of previous rounds of dialogue would be proved wrong.

Addressing the Committee on the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, Riyad Mansour said the current talks, which began last night, were only procedural in nature, and concerned the date and location of the next meeting, a timetable for discussions, and the level at which future talks would take place. Stressing that the negotiations could be the last chance to save the two-State solution, he said Palestine intended to uphold international law and to respect its obligations, commitments and agreements. He hoped Israel would do the same, although he saw many challenges on the horizon.

Israel, he said, would have to decide whether to help Palestine achieve independence or whether to continue confiscations, settlement construction and other such illegal policies and practices.

He drew attention to Palestine's responsible and flexible approach to negotiations, pointing out that they had refrained from joining the [Fourth Geneva Convention](#) and could join the Vienna instrument on diplomatic and consular relations to prove their good intentions in the negotiations and to ensure Israel did not have an excuse to refuse a return to negotiations.

He welcomed adoption by the European Union of [new guidelines](#) on its relationship with Israel, which he called a "very, very important development" and a practical measure that had encouraged the resumption of negotiations. Saying that the decision merely brought European Union policy into line with international law, he condemned Israel's reaction as a "bad signal and a negative omen".

The recent open debate in the Security Council had come at a "critical moment and a historical moment", he said, underlining that the success of the new developments depended on Israel's adherence to international law and acceptance of a future Palestinian State with pre-1967 borders. He welcomed its recent decision to release 104 political prisoners.

Touching on developments since the [Committee last met on 20 May](#), Abdou Salam Diallo, Committee Chairman, he also noted plans for the resumption of direct talks, and he, too, drew attention to the European Commission's new guidelines on its relationship with Israel and the recent Security Council debate.

He highlighted, among others, Israel's announcement to build 1,000 new homes in West Bank settlements; criticism by the Chairman of the Special Committee on Israeli Practices of Israel's continued detention of more than 5,000 Palestinian prisoners; and reports by a non-governmental organization that, so far this year, 1,790 Palestinians had been arrested and 16 shot dead by the Israeli military.

The representative of Pakistan welcomed the start of talks in Washington, D.C., and paid tribute to United States Secretary of State John Kerry for his persistent diplomatic efforts. Despite many false starts, it was important to retain hope, with every new round helping to establish what could and could not work. However, time was running out. West Bank settlements had doubled since 2000 and the demographic balance was shifting. The formula for success was on the table and talks should actualize the two-State solution on the basis of the 1967 borders.

Vice-Chairman Rodolfo Reyes Rodriguez (Cuba) briefed the Committee on the United Nations Meeting in Support of Israeli-Palestinian Peace, which had been held in Beijing on 18 and 19 June under the theme "Reviving the collective international engagement towards a two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict". He summarized the discussion, adding that current diplomatic efforts "should be given a chance". Support from key players such as China, the Russian Federation, the European Union and the United Nations was vital. The United Nations and its Member States had a responsibility to confront Israeli violations and to support the independence of the State of Palestine.

Should current diplomatic efforts get bogged down, he said, Palestinians were keeping other options open, such as peaceful popular resistance and joining international organizations and conventions, he said.

Also today, the Committee approved a request, presented by Ambassador Sacha Llorenty of Bolivia, to become a Committee member. The request would be forwarded to the General Assembly. Mr. Llorenty stressed his delegation's desire to more closely participate in "one of the most important struggles of mankind". Indeed, his country considered it a duty to support the Palestinian people, as what was at stake was peace, freedom and self-determination, as well as a decision about whether international law would be "flouted or respected", he said.

The representatives of Cuba and Turkey, along with Mr. Mansour, congratulated Bolivia on its request.

In other business today, the Committee considered its Bureau's recommendations for enhancing the Committee's cooperation with civil society, approving the Terms of Reference of the Working Group of the Committee, contained in Working Paper No. 4, as orally amended by the representative of Malta.

It also granted accreditation to five civil society organizations, as contained in Working Paper No. 5, bringing the total number of such organizations accredited to the Committee to 835, with 99 observer associations.

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