



Secretary-General SG/2162

Department of Public Information • News and Media Division • New York

STATEMENT BY MIDDLE EAST QUARTET

The following statement was issued today by the Middle East Quartet (United Nations, Russian Federation, United States, European Union):

The Quartet expressed its strong support for the resumption of Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, which can resolve all final status issues within one year. The Quartet reaffirmed its full commitment to its previous statements, which provide that negotiations should lead to an agreement that ends the occupation that began in 1967 and results in the emergence of an independent, democratic, contiguous and viable Palestinian State living side by side in peace and security with Israel and its other neighbours. The Quartet also confirmed its determination to support the parties throughout the negotiations and in the implementation of an agreement.

Noting that mutual trust and confidence are critical to successful negotiations, the Quartet reiterated its call on Israel and the Palestinians to promote an environment conducive to progress, including by refraining from provocative actions and inflammatory rhetoric. The Quartet noted that the commendable Israeli settlement moratorium instituted last November has had a positive impact and urged its continuation. The Quartet recalled that unilateral actions by either party, including settlement activity, cannot prejudice the outcome of negotiations and will not be recognized by the international community. The Quartet called upon both sides to fulfil their obligations under the Road Map. The Quartet encouraged the parties to work together to find a way to ensure that negotiations continue in a constructive manner and urged the international community to support their efforts.

The Quartet underscored its commitment to a just, lasting and comprehensive Middle East peace, including Israeli-Syrian and Israeli-Lebanese agreements. In the spirit of the Arab Peace Initiative, the Quartet called on Arab States to support Israeli-Palestinian negotiations and progress on the other tracks by taking bolder steps to foster positive relations throughout the region and to combat violence and extremism.

Recalling that change on the ground is integral to peace, the Quartet reaffirmed its support for the Palestinian Authority's August 2009 plan for building the institutions of a Palestinian State within two years. The Quartet commended the significant progress towards that goal as reported by international institutions to the 21 September 2010 meeting of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee. The Quartet took particular note of the statement in the *Economic Monitoring Report* of the World Bank that: "If the Palestinian Authority maintains its current performance in institution-building and delivery of public services, it is well-positioned for the establishment of a State at any point in the near future."

The Quartet called for Israel to take further steps to facilitate Palestinian state-building and economic growth. The Quartet welcomed measures Israel has already taken to improve day-to-day life for Palestinians, including the easing of restrictions on movement in the West Bank and improved Gaza access, and commended the work of the Quartet Representative in helping to achieve that change. The Quartet further called upon Arab States and the international community to provide immediate and sustained support for the Palestinian Authority.

The Quartet reaffirmed that the current situation in Gaza is not in the interests of Palestinians or Israelis and restated its desire to see progress on the implementation of all aspects of Security Council resolution 1860 (2009). Reconfirming its statement of 21 June 2010, the Quartet welcomed the significant shift in Israel's Gaza policy since June 2010 and called for further efforts by all concerned to ensure the unimpeded flow of humanitarian aid, commercial goods and persons to and from Gaza and to address Israel's legitimate security concerns. The Quartet also took positive note of approvals of United Nations and other international projects in Gaza and expressed its desire to see further progress in the near future. The Quartet reiterated its support for efforts to restore Palestinian unity based on the commitments of the Palestine Liberation Organization.

The Quartet condemned in the strongest possible terms continuing violence against Israeli and Palestinian civilians, in particular the 31 August 2010 attack near Hebron, for which Hamas claimed responsibility while threatening additional attacks. The Quartet urged a complete halt to all violence and reiterated its call on all parties to ensure the protection of civilians and to respect international humanitarian and human rights law. The Quartet reiterated its call for the immediate release of Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit.

The Quartet committed to remain actively involved on all tracks and to encourage and review progress. The Quartet agreed to meet regularly and to task the envoys and the Quartet Representative to intensify their cooperation, to maintain contacts with the Arab League Committee on the Arab Peace Initiative, and to formulate recommendations for Quartet action. The Quartet reaffirmed its support, in consultation with the parties, for an international conference in Moscow at the appropriate time, concurrent with direct negotiations.

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