



Secretary-General
SG/2123
PAL/2070

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

MIDDLE EAST QUARTET STATEMENT ON AGREEMENT TO FORM

PALESTINIAN NATIONAL UNITY GOVERNMENT

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

The Quartet Principals – Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, United States Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, High Representative for European Foreign and Security Policy Javier Solana, German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier and European Commissioner for External Relations Benita Ferrero-Waldner – discussed by telephone today the situation in the Middle East.

The Quartet welcomed the role of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in reaching the agreement to form a Palestinian national unity government. The Quartet expressed hope that the desired calm would prevail.

While awaiting formation of the new Palestinian government, the Quartet reaffirmed its statement of 2 February regarding its support for a Palestinian government committed to non-violence, recognition of Israel and acceptance of previous agreements and obligations, including the Road Map.

Quartet members will meet on 21 February in Berlin to continue their consideration of these developments, and to review formation and implementation of the agreement on the government. They welcomed the upcoming 19 February trilateral meeting between United States Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and Palestinian National Authority President Mahmoud Abbas. The Quartet will discuss the way ahead at the 21 February meeting.

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