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Statement by the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs Regarding the Latest Developments in the Palestinian Territories

966-18-06-2007

A new, emergency government was formed and then sworn in by decree of the Head of the Palestinian National Authority, Mahmoud Abbas, on June 17. Russia together with the other members of the Middle East Quartet of international mediators gave support to the actions of PNA Head Abbas, who had used the constitutional powers accorded to him.

At the same time the Hamas leadership did not agree with this decision of Abbas and instructed the previous cabinet of ministers, led by Ismail Haniyah, to continue its work. As a result the Palestinian territories have turned out to be split into two parts and, judging by incoming reports, in the Gaza Strip, which is fully controlled by Hamas forces, the humanitarian and socioeconomic situation is sharply deteriorating. The total blockade imposed by Israel on this part of the Palestinian territories contributes to this significantly.

Moscow presumes that the new PNA emergency cabinet will take every necessary action to normalize the situation, improve the humanitarian situation in the Palestinian territories, and most importantly, end the inter-Palestinian standoff. This will require forging a broad dialogue among all Palestinian political forces, including Hamas.

In this context Russia welcomes the decision of the extraordinary meeting of Arab League foreign ministers in Cairo on June 15 to assist settlement of inter-Palestinian contradictions in cooperation with Mahmoud Abbas and the Palestinian Legislative Council.

Moscow is also convinced that, in the prevailing situation, the Middle East Quartet of international mediators should live up to its responsibility in full measure, and not only in resolving the present crisis, but also in restoring movement towards a comprehensive settlement in the Middle East.

June 18, 2007