



Press Release

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CITING POTENTIAL FOR PEACE, SECRETARY-GENERAL PLEDGES UN SUPPORT FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE

SECURITY, DEVELOPMENT AT MEETING TO SUPPORT PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY

Following is the text of remarks, as delivered today by Secretary-General Kofi Annan to the meeting in support of the Palestinian Authority in London:

All of us are here today to express our full and strong support for the reform efforts of the Palestinian Authority.

The Prime Minister is to be warmly congratulated for his timely initiative in bringing us together for this work, which is central to the search for peace in the Middle East.

This is a moment of promise and potential. The sense of expectation is palpable. There is a real feeling that, after long years of suffering, bitterness and despair, better days may lie ahead. When appalling acts of terror do take place, such as last Friday's bombing in Tel Aviv, we must all condemn them, while also affirming our resolve that such violence will not deter us. In the shadow of this latest tragedy, I am encouraged that both sides are working together to find those responsible and prevent further attacks.

Indeed, despite suffering old and new, we must do our best to keep our eyes on our long-standing objective: a just, lasting and comprehensive peace – so long desired, so long denied. And that means sustaining and building on the positive momentum that has developed in the last few months.

The historic elections in January showed the determination of the Palestinians to seek peaceful and democratic means of ending the occupation, resolving differences, running their affairs and building their nation. Mr. President, you have acted courageously to restrain violence. And you have articulated, with great clarity and purpose, a vision of your people's future based on dignity and justice.

That is why this is also a moment to consolidate international support for an independent, democratic, viable and contiguous Palestinian state. The Palestinian Authority's efforts to reform its institutions need and deserve support, in terms of both financial resources and technical assistance. The international community should also do its part politically to sustain the momentum generated by the breakthrough meeting last month at Sharm el Sheikh. Under the leadership of the Quartet, the international community should continue to support both parties in implementing the "Understandings" reached there, and in taking further steps towards full implementation of the [Road Map](#) and of Security Council resolutions [242](#), [338](#), [1397](#) and [1515](#). And, of course, we must promote a comprehensive peace on all tracks, including the Syrian-Israeli and Lebanese-Israeli tracks.

Here today in London, we are focusing our energies on mechanisms and means in three main areas of Palestinian reform: governance, security and economic development.

Good governance is essential if the Palestinian public is to have confidence in its leadership and public administration, and the international community is to sustain assistance. To its great credit, the Palestinian Authority has acknowledged the need for reform of its governing institutions and structures. Palestinians have adopted their own plan for reform, and undertaken a number of commitments in the context of the Task Force for Palestinian Reform. The United Nations and its agencies continue to help the Authority build up its capacity, and we look forward to working with the Authority and with other international partners to review the progress that has been made.

Security is likewise a fundamental factor in improving prospects for peace. Put simply, lack of security undermines everything – the day-to-day safety of Palestinians and Israelis, the long-term national aspirations of the Palestinian people and a settlement of the conflict itself. The United Nations welcomes the new coordinating group on security, which is meant to work towards the goal of an end to all acts of violence against Israelis and Palestinians, wherever they are. The United Nations will do its utmost to provide support to the new group, and to the security forces of the Palestinian Authority.

Economic development is the third pillar of the progress we hope to see achieved. A viable Palestinian economy is essential in its own right, but it can also make a vital contribution to governance and security. Without real and discernible change on the ground – such as more job opportunities and the removal of checkpoints and roadblocks – the Palestinian economy will continue to struggle, with all the prolonged, pervasive despair among the Palestinian populace that that implies. The international community must work constructively with the Government of Israel to create an environment in which this aspect of reform is also addressed. The United Nations welcomes a review of existing international aid structures and mechanisms. We will do our part to ensure they are as effective as possible.

The United Nations system has worked closely with the Palestinian Authority since its very formation. We have been a partner during periods of confidence,

and during difficult times when negotiations stalled and the terrible logic of violence took hold. We will continue to work with the Authority, the Government of Israel, the Quartet, donors and other partners to seize the current opportunity. The Quartet, as you know, will meet later today to review the situation and assess how to move forward. As we do so, let me stress that our work with the parties should build on proven, effective, successful mechanisms, in order to avoid duplication and to ensure consistency and coherence.

The prevailing mood is one of optimism. What makes this meeting so encouraging is that the parties have proclaimed to each other, to the world, and in clear, persuasive language to their own constituencies, their determination to work together. They have begun to recapture some of the goodwill that once brought a comprehensive solution tantalizingly close.

When peace processes are moving forward, anything seems possible. But when they stand still, they are actually moving backward, as positions harden, resentment builds, opportunities are missed, and the slightest provocation or misunderstanding risks sparking great damage. Such has been the experience, all too often, with the Palestinian-Israeli peace process. But at long last, we can all sense a new wave of movement. I urge everyone to engage, do the hard work, and turn today's opening into a real end to the conflict.

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