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STATEMENT BY MIDDLE EAST QUARTET

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

The Quartet welcomes the announcement by United States Secretary of State John Kerry that direct talks between Israelis and Palestinians have resumed on 29 July, with senior negotiators from both sides meeting in Washington, D.C., to begin final status negotiations.

The Quartet commends both President [Mahmoud] Abbas and Prime Minister [Benjamin] Netanyahu for taking this courageous decision in the interest of their peoples, and is determined to lend its effective support to the efforts of the parties and their shared commitment to achieve a negotiated two-State solution within the agreed timeframe of nine months.

The Quartet, recalling its previous statements, calls on all parties to take every possible step to promote conditions conducive to the success of the negotiating process and to refrain from actions that undermine trust.

The Quartet expresses its appreciation for the efforts of President [Barack] Obama and Secretary [of State] Kerry in helping the parties reach agreement to resume negotiations. The Quartet commends the Arab League for its constructive role in support of renewed negotiations, including its reaffirmation of the Arab Peace Initiative, recognizes many others in the international community for their important contributions and expresses hope that such efforts will continue.

While noting that much hard work lies ahead, the Quartet expresses its hope that renewed negotiations will be substantive and continuous and set a clear path towards a two-State solution, the end of conflict, and lasting peace and security for both Israelis and Palestinians. The Quartet intends to meet soon at the envoys level to discuss next steps.

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