



DIVISION FOR  
PALESTINIAN RIGHTS

# Bulletin

on action by the United Nations system and  
intergovernmental organizations  
relevant to the question of Palestine

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## I. UN SECRETARY-GENERAL ADDRESSES THE FRENCH MINISTERIAL MEETING ON THE MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS

*On 3 June 2016, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon made the following remarks at the French Ministerial Meeting on the Middle East Peace Process in Paris” ([SG/SM/17816](#)):*

Monsieur le Président, je vous remercie ainsi que le Ministre Jean-Marc Ayrault d'avoir convoqué cette importante réunion sur le processus de paix au Moyen-Orient.

Cette conférence permet de souligner que la communauté internationale est déterminée à continuer à accorder la priorité à ce dossier et à coordonner tous les efforts déployés en faveur de la paix. Je vous remercie une nouvelle fois d'avoir pris cette initiative.

We have gathered out of deep concern over the inability to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict after nearly 50 years of occupation. We all agree that a two-State solution is the only viable option for a sustainable peace. Yet, we all can see that the two-State solution is at great risk just as Foreign Minister Ayrault said; it is threatened.

With the support of the international community, the leadership of Israel and Palestine must pull back from the brink by undertaking serious efforts to create the conditions which will enable a return to meaningful negotiations.

The obstacles to peace are clear. They include terror, violence and the incitement that fuel them; the ongoing settlement enterprise; and the lack of unity between Gaza and the West Bank. Meaningful negotiations require leadership on both sides with the courage and legitimacy to reach an historic compromise, and the political will to implement it.

Settlement activity is illegal under international law and Israel must cease its policy of expanding settlements, legalizing outposts and demolishing Palestinian

structures. These actions raise legitimate questions about its commitment to the two-State solution and to its obligations as the occupying Power.

At the same time, the Palestinian leadership must unequivocally combat violence and incitement, including by clearly condemning all acts of terror. It must also reunite all Palestinians under a single, legitimate and democratic Palestinian governing authority, in line with the PLO [Palestinian Liberation Organization] principles.

Both parties must ensure that their actions reflect their stated commitment to a two-State solution. Both parties need to stand up to extremists who are committed to derailing the peace process and seeking to hijack the agenda.

Changing regional dynamics and shared security concerns provide an opportunity to revisit the Arab Peace Initiative, with its vision of a comprehensive resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian and Israeli-Arab conflicts.

I welcome recent encouraging statements by His Excellency, the President of Egypt Mr. al-Sisi and the Prime Minister of Israel and encourage them to seize this opportunity with concrete and timely action.

I am committed to working with my fellow members of the Middle East Quartet and with our key stakeholders, including regional countries, to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, and in accordance with relevant resolutions of the United Nations Security Council.

The Quartet will soon issue a report reviewing the key obstacles to realizing this long-desired goal and recommending actions which, if taken now by both sides and by all of us, can create the conditions for a return to negotiations.

Members of the international community must exercise their collective and individual influence to help reach the common destination: they are an end to the

occupation which began in 1967, and the establishment of two States for two peoples living side by side in security and mutual recognition.

In that regard, I would like to inform you that I am planning to visit Israel and the State of Palestine around the end of the month to follow-up on these discussions today and I count on their leadership. Thank you. *Merci.*

## **II. UN SECRETARY-GENERAL CONDEMNS TERRORIST ATTACK IN TEL AVIV**

*On 8 June 2016, the Spokesperson for Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon issued the following statement condemning the terrorist attack in Tel Aviv ([SG/SM/17832](#)):*

The Secretary-General condemns tonight's terrorist attack in Tel Aviv in which at least four Israelis were killed by Palestinian assailants and another four injured. He conveys his condolences to the families of the victims and the Government of Israel.

The Secretary-General reiterates that there is no justification for terrorism nor

for the glorification of those who commit such heinous acts.

The Secretary-General is shocked that the leaders of Hamas have chosen to welcome this attack and some have chosen to celebrate it. He calls upon the Palestinian leadership to live up to their responsibility to stand firmly against violence and the incitement that fuels it.

## **III. UN SECURITY COUNCIL CONDEMNS TERRORIST ATTACK IN TEL AVIV**

*The following statement was issued on 9 June 2016 by Security Council President François Delattre on the recent terrorist attack in Tel Aviv ([SC/12395](#)):*

The members of the Security Council condemned in the strongest terms the terrorist attack in Tel Aviv, Israel, on 8 June 2016, during which at least four civilians were killed and many more injured. They expressed their deepest sympathy and condolences to the families of the victims and to the Government of Israel. They wished a speedy recovery to those injured.

The members of the Security Council reaffirmed that terrorism in all its forms and manifestations constitutes one of the most serious threats to international peace and security.

The members of the Security Council underlined the need to bring perpetrators, organizers, financiers and sponsors of these reprehensible acts of terrorism to justice. They stressed that those responsible for these killings should be held accountable, and urged all States, in accordance with their obligations under international law and relevant Security Council resolutions, to cooperate actively with all relevant authorities in this regard.

The members of the Security Council reiterated that any acts of terrorism are criminal and unjustifiable, regardless of their motivation, wherever, whenever and by whomsoever committed. They reaffirmed the need for all States to

combat by all means, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and other obligations under international law, including international human rights law,

international refugee law and international humanitarian law, threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts.

#### **IV. UN HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS CONDEMNS GUN ATTACK IN TEL AVIV**

*The following [press briefing note](#) was issued on 10 June 2016 by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights:*

The High Commissioner condemns the gun attack in Tel Aviv on Wednesday in which four Israelis were killed and a number were injured. This is the largest loss of Israeli life in a single attack since the current surge in violence.

We are also deeply concerned at the response of the Israeli authorities, which includes measures that may amount to prohibited collective punishment and will only increase the sense of injustice and frustration felt by Palestinians in this very tense time. The response has included the cancelling of all 83,000 permits granted to

West Bank and Gaza residents to travel during Ramadan, the suspension of 204 work permits of individuals in the alleged attackers' extended families, and the sealing off of their entire home town by the Israeli security forces.

Israel has a human rights obligation to bring those responsible to account for their crimes. And this it is doing. However the measures taken against the broader population punish not the perpetrators of the crime, but tens – maybe hundreds – of thousands of innocent Palestinians.

#### **V. OCHA ISSUES 2015 ANNUAL HUMANITARIAN OVERVIEW “FRAGMENTED LIVES”**

*On 13 June 2016, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) issued its 2015 Annual Humanitarian Overview “Fragmented Lives” which revealed that the Israeli occupation is the main trigger of humanitarian needs among Palestinians in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The following are excerpts from the related [press release](#):*

...

According to the new report, fatalities and injuries among West Bank Palestinians by Israeli forces were the highest since OCHA began recording such figures in 2005, as were such casualties among Israelis from attacks by West Bank Palestinians. Among the main concerns in 2015 were the attacks on Israelis and the response of Israeli forces, including issues related to excessive use of force. In Gaza, the August 2014 ceasefire has largely held, as reflected in the relatively low number of fatalities, although casualties also rose in the final quarter of the year, alongside the deterioration seen in the West Bank.

While the number of Israeli settler attacks against Palestinians in the West Bank decreased in 2015, the number of Palestinian-owned trees damaged, stolen or uprooted (11,254) in settler-related incidents was the highest since 2006. By the end of 2015, there were more Palestinians held in Israeli prisons (over 6,000) than any year since 2010 and more Palestinian children held (422) than since 2008.

Displacement also remained a prominent concern. While no new displacement occurred in the Gaza Strip, at least 70,000 Palestinians remain displaced and facing difficult living conditions,

following the destruction of their homes during the 2014 escalation of hostilities. In the West Bank, displacement due to home demolitions decreased in 2015, but then rose dramatically in the first four months of 2016, with more structures demolished and more Palestinians displaced than in all of 2015 (598 vs. 548 structures demolished; 858 vs. 787 people displaced, respectively). These demolitions exacerbate the risk of forcible transfer facing Palestinian communities.

The report indicates that positive increases in the numbers of people and goods allowed out of the Gaza Strip by Israel in 2015 have continued into 2016, but that its nine-year long blockade continues to undermine livelihoods and prevent the realization of a broad range of human rights. Egypt's closure of the Rafah

crossing and the unresolved internal Palestinian political divide continue to exacerbate the humanitarian situation there.

Alongside these trends are increasing restrictions on humanitarian interventions. "Throughout the oPt, humanitarian actors are facing more and more difficulty in giving aid to Palestinians in need," said Mr. Carden. "Humanitarian assistance in Area C, for example, is increasingly obstructed or destroyed by the Israeli authorities, while access to Gaza continues to be impeded by permit requirements."

"We need a fundamental shift in the approach to the oPt," he concluded, "particularly far greater respect for international law and concrete efforts towards accountability for those who violate it."

## **VI. SECRETARY-GENERAL URGES END TO OCCUPATION IN REMARKS AT TEL AVIV UNIVERSITY**

*On 27 June 2016, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon spoke at Tel Aviv University where he urged an end to the occupation. The following are excerpts from his remarks ([SG/SM/17884](#)):*

...

During my visit, I will continue to deliver the same message: do not allow the extremists on either side to further fuel the conflict. Palestinian and Israeli leaders must stand firm against terror, violence and incitement. We need innovative thinking and action to tear down the walls of mistrust. I urge the "start-up nation" to help us all start up peace, start up understanding, start up reconciliation for a better world. Most of all, I urge you to be a global citizen. Be a proud citizen of your country. But, never forget that challenges know no borders and that you are also a citizen of the world. Embrace that understanding. Practise it in your daily life.

...

I want to thank you once again for this opportunity. Over the course of the next two days, I will speak to the leaders responsible for bringing peace to Israelis and Palestinians. I will discuss in-depth concrete actions to make words reality. As I do, I have a Hebrew word foremost in my mind; the word for responsibility — "achrayut". I have been told that it is based on the word "acher" — which means "the other, not me, the different one".

In other words, responsibility is more than taking ownership for one's actions — it is about seeing your actions through the prism of others' concerns — and seeking to understand their needs as your own. This wisdom teaches us that we cannot be a world of "us and them". We must be a world of "we the peoples" as the Charter of the United Nations describes. And all of

us have a responsibility — an achrayut — to build that world.

Leaders need to move beyond repeating the same phrases and expecting different results. It is maddening and it is not worthy of the future you are seeking to build. Indeed, it makes a mockery of all the technology and innovation that you are nurturing here each and every day.

I strongly believe that members of the international community must exercise their collective and individual influence to

help reach the common destination: an end to the occupation which will soon enter its fiftieth year, and the establishment of two States for two peoples living side by side in peace, security and mutual recognition.

Universities are a place of dreams — and there is nothing greater or nobler than the dream of peace. Let us work for it together for the future of Israelis and Palestinians and your shared destiny on this shared land and our shared planet. I thank you. *Toda.*

## VII. PALESTINIAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE CONVENES THE UN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE IN SUPPORT OF ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN PEACE IN GENEVA

*On 29 and 30 June 2016, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People convened the United Nations International Conference in Support of Israeli-Palestinian Peace in Geneva, under the title “Peace is possible – frameworks for a way forward”. The following are the message of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon ([SG/SM/17892-GA/PAL/1374](#)) delivered at the Meeting by Michael Møller, Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva, as well as the [Chairman’s Summary](#) issued after the Meeting:*

### **Secretary-General’s message**

Following is UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon’s message, delivered by Michael Møller, Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva, to the United Nations International Conference in Support of Israeli-Palestinian Peace, in Geneva today:

I am pleased to send greetings to the participants of this International Conference in Support of Israeli-Palestinian Peace.

Your title is apt: “Peace is possible — frameworks for a way forward”. We must never give up hope of negotiating a settlement between Israel and Palestine. All that is lacking is the political will to make that happen.

The international community’s latest efforts to revitalize the peace process and

seek to build international consensus towards a resumption of negotiations include the upcoming report of the Middle East Quartet, and the recent French-led ministerial meeting.

The Arab Peace Initiative, with its vision of a comprehensive peace and an opportunity to build a regional security framework, can also be an important forum for dialogue.

I have just made my eleventh visit to Israel and Palestine. During my trip, I reminded the leadership on both sides of the imperative of taking prompt action to restore hope in a peaceful future and to preserve the two-State solution — the only way to meet the national aspirations of both peoples.

Israel’s settlement enterprise, illegal under international law, continues to expand in the West Bank including East

Jerusalem, undermining trust and constituting a significant threat to a viable Palestinian State. The continued designation of land in Area C for exclusive Israeli use; the steady expansion of settlements; the legalization of outposts; and the alarming spike in demolitions in 2016 are systematically jeopardizing the viability of a future Palestinian State and raise serious concerns about Israel's commitment to the two-State vision.

Violence, and the incitement that fuels it, also presents a major obstacle to rebuilding trust and restoring faith in a negotiated solution. There can be no justification for terrorism, nor for the glorification of those who commit such heinous acts. Palestinian leadership must live up to its responsibility to speak clearly and act firmly against violence and incitement.

Israelis and Palestinians alike are entitled to live in security — free from constant fear and threats. I am encouraged by the reduction in attacks against Israelis over the past few months. Israel must calibrate its response to avoid unnecessarily harming civilians, in accordance with its obligations under international law.

Turning to Gaza: the situation there is untenable. Nine years of closures and three rounds of hostilities between Israel and militant groups operating from Gaza have exacerbated the vast humanitarian challenges. Most Palestinians in Gaza need international humanitarian aid in the face of crises in housing, electricity and water, and a lack of sustainable development.

It is critical that donors fulfil their financial pledges for the reconstruction of Gaza. Hamas must end its military build-up and the construction of tunnels, which undermine humanitarian efforts and increase the risk of renewed violence. I call again on the Israeli Government to end

its closure of Gaza in line with Security Council resolution 1860 (2009). I also urge Egypt to open the Rafah crossing on a regular basis, particularly for humanitarian cases, while respecting its legitimate security concerns.

Reuniting the West Bank and Gaza under a single, legitimate and democratic Palestinian Government based on Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) principles is critical, not only to relieving the suffering of the Palestinian people in Gaza, but to empowering Palestinian leadership to negotiate a resolution to the conflict.

The United Nations remains committed to supporting a negotiated, just, comprehensive and enduring two-State resolution for the people of Israel and Palestine.

I personally commit to working with their leaders and the international community to advance their essential goals, until the last day of my tenure as Secretary-General of the United Nations.

In this spirit, please accept my best wishes for a successful event that looks at past peace initiatives and lessons learned, current peace initiatives, and the way forward.

### **Chairman's Summary**

The United Nations **International Conference in support of Israeli-Palestinian Peace** was convened at the United Nations Office at Geneva, on 29 and 30 June 2016, under the auspices of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (CEIRPP). Experienced peace negotiators, Member States, United Nations entities and civil society discussed lessons learned from past initiatives related to the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, assessed recent initiatives promoted by key

actors and considered new ideas for a lasting solution to the conflict.

The Conference was attended by 86 Member States, two Observer States, six intergovernmental organizations, eight UN system entities and 32 local and international civil society organizations. Eleven expert speakers addressed the Conference, which was open to the public. Twenty-seven Member States made statements during the opening session and a large number of participants made remarks or raised issues during the interactive discussions.

At the opening session, in a message to the Conference delivered by Michael Møller, Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva, **Secretary-General of the United Nations Ban Ki-moon** who had just completed his eleventh visit to Israel and Palestine, asked the leadership of both sides to take prompt action to preserve the two-State solution. He reminded them that the Arab Peace Initiative provided a vision of a comprehensive peace. Both Israelis and Palestinians were entitled to live in security. Israel's settlement enterprise was illegal and constituted a threat to the two-State solution. Violence and incitement were major obstacles too. He urged donors to fulfil their pledges for the reconstruction of Gaza. Reuniting the West Bank and Gaza under a single government based on PLO principles was of critical importance.

**The Representative of the State of Palestine, Nabeel Shaath**, Member of the Fatah Central Committee said, "I know peace is possible", observing that Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon was currently in Gaza, witnessing the tragedy . He argued that without a pivotal role of the United Nations and the international community peace would not be possible. He reminded the audience that one State was occupying the land of the other State, clearly demonstrating that the Israeli

government was not committed to peace based on the two-State solution. He added that apartheid in South Africa might have continued until today, if it was not for the international boycott. 23 years had passed since the Oslo agreements with no independent Palestinian State, nor an end to the occupation. He referred to the Iran agreement as an example to be followed with the international community acting together to support peace. Finally, he assured that Palestinians had not given up on the peace process.

The Chair of the **Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People** expressed the view that the almost 60 year-old Israeli occupation was one of the root causes of the instability and violent extremism in the region. He expressed support for the recent international efforts such as the forthcoming Quartet report, the French Initiative and the renewed interest in the Arab Peace Initiative. Settlements and indiscriminate attacks against civilians should cease immediately: both Israelis and Palestinians had a right to live in security. Despite the reduction in violence in recent months, there continued to be a real danger of escalation, as long as East Jerusalem remained occupied, the status quo of the Holy Sites was challenged, and Gaza was blockaded. He called for Palestinian reconciliation and for the international community to make a strong push to end the occupation.

In the first plenary session, participants discussed the **lessons learned from the Madrid Peace Conference, and the Oslo agreements** in light of the situation today. Despite initial achievements such as the mutual recognition between the PLO and Israel and the establishment of the Palestinian Authority, participants agreed that the breakdown of the process had produced a situation of despair. Whereas in the early 1990's, the United States, the only

superpower, used its leverage to bring the parties to the negotiating table, in today's world the peace process should be multilaterally driven, it was postulated. The lesson of the multilateral track negotiations of the 1990s was that they could only support, but not substitute for, bilateral diplomacy. Some raised the subject of sanctions against Israel, whereas a participant questioned whether sanctions were compatible with confidence building. The question of whether some interim agreements could have been renegotiated to improve living conditions for the Palestinians generated a lively debate. While Madrid and Oslo represented a historical breakthrough, they left the end game unclear. The Geneva Initiative sought to fill this gap by formulating a model peace agreement. A majority of Israelis and Palestinians supported the two-State solution but neither public believed it was achievable, which was becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy. If the Israelis and Palestinians saw that the world was serious about the two-State solution they would become serious too. "Do not give up on us", a participant from the region pleaded.

In the **second plenary session**, participants explored the **emerging approaches to resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict** emphasizing the importance of the French Initiative in restarting negotiations, the need for "carrots and sticks" for Israel, the importance of Palestinian unity, the centrality of the Arab Peace Initiative and the possible enlargement of the Quartet to include additional actors. It was acknowledged that as the two-State solution became the agreed paradigm, its implementation became increasingly problematic. This analysis had led to the launch of the French Initiative which was praised as an attempt to resume negotiations. The Quartet, it was argued, had failed to bring together the "power of the US, the money of the EU and the

legitimacy of the UN," its decision-making weakened by rules of unanimity and by domestic US politics. The Quartet failed to monitor the Roadmap implementation or to hold Israel accountable for settlements. Some of Quartet actions, such as the conditions imposed on aid following the Hamas electoral victory, exacerbated Palestinian divisions and ran counter to democratic principles. Expanding the Quartet to include key regional and European players could be helpful, but was likely to be resisted by the current members. The forthcoming report would hopefully offer some constructive criticism and identify obstacles to peace and possibly provide a basis for a Security Council resolution to push the peace process forward.

It was recalled that a 2001 Saudi initiative later became the Arab Peace Initiative (API) and was endorsed by the OIC, and was updated in 2013 to allow for land swaps. Some Israelis were willing to support the Initiative, though it was never accepted by the Government. The API provided an end game, in a way which did not threaten Israel's future and security, with necessary regional legitimacy and backing for decisions to be made by both sides. There was a call for the API to be endorsed by the Security Council and in the context of the French Initiative, and for individual countries to pledge to implement it.

In the **final plenary session**, experts and participants discussed **ideas for the future**. International mediators should not "jump into empty pools," said a former UN Under-Secretary-General: the conditions for mediation are not ripe until the parties have reached a conclusion that the costs of conflict outweigh the costs of an agreement. Poorly timed mediation efforts can do more harm than good, as can having multiple competing mediators. It was clear also that the parties should also bring about change internally. As the

Israeli Government was unlikely to transform itself, younger generations of Israelis were those who could effect change. Arab Israelis should be more involved as peace would not be possible without taking them into account. A participant proposed rebuilding the organizational structure of the peace camp in Israel, promoting the economic development of the West Bank and Gaza, having the Knesset endorse the two-State solution, moving along the Roadmap, gaining the support of traditional and religious elements in both societies for peace process, and entering a dialogue about the two-State solution with settlers to isolate the extremists and sway the undecideds. Israelis acknowledged that the Palestinians held “the key to the Arab world” while Palestinians warned against current attempts to break the Arab unified position regarding Palestine.

Civil society could help move forward the peace process through protection against violence, monitoring human rights, monitoring of implementation of agreement between Israel and Palestine, advocacy, promoting inter-group social cohesion and facilitating dialogue. Challenges for civil society engagement in such a context were the political stalemate, the lack of political will, non-implementation of former agreements and the context of increased violence. A clear strategy by the international community on civil society involvement in peace processes was also lacking. Inclusive processes which prioritized key groups such as women stood a better chance of success, as the Colombia example demonstrated.

In closing remarks, the **Chairman of the CEIRPP, Ambassador Fodé Seck**

underlined the role of civil society in building an environment conducive to peace. He called for the international community to redouble efforts so that finally Israelis and Palestinians could live in peace.

**United Nations Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs Miroslav Jenča** stated that despite setbacks over the years, most people on both sides still supported the idea of two States — Israel and Palestine — living side by side. Understandably, the failure to reach a lasting and sustainable peace has led to frustration and a loss of hope for Palestinians and Israelis alike. He assured that the United Nations stood ready to support any measure or initiative that aims to avoid a further deterioration of the situation on the ground and to reinvigorate the peace process. He expressed hope that the forthcoming Quartet report would encourage the parties to start taking positive steps to demonstrate their commitment to, and create the conditions for, an eventual return to negotiations for a lasting sustainable peace.

**The Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations, Ambassador Riyad Mansour** stressed that the Palestinian people were tired of the empty promises of the international community and tired of the occupation; the French Initiative and the revival of Arab Peace Initiative provided some hope. But he warned that there was no more time left. Regretting that the Quartet report had been delayed, he said that if it did not recommend practical steps to end the occupation then the Quartet would fail in being relevant. If it did, it would provide an important contribution and would help and complement the French Initiative.